



***Coming to America: Immigrant Stories from Across the World***

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East Mecklenburg High school

This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
Secondary ESL English and Language Arts Classes

**Keywords:** ESL, Language Arts, English, Immigrant, Memoir, Digital Stories

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** Many of my ESL students have vivid stories from their home countries which they have not shared with others. Some may not even realize how fascinating their stories may be to others. This curriculum unit serves as a way for my students to share their stories, their culture, and their experiences with other students, family, and friends. While teaching high school, I have discovered that teenagers rely heavily on technology in their everyday lives (as do I). Because of this, students will take their journal writings to create a digital story related to their home country. This curriculum unit is also intended to show students the therapeutic effects of private journal writing as well as publishing writing for a specific audience.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to **15 students in grade 10 ESL English.***

*I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

## **Coming to America: Immigrant Stories from Across the World**

*Rebecca Lintz*

### **Introduction**

I have never been much of a writer. As an English major, I always enjoyed reading literature, but dreaded the writing courses I was required to take. Once I began teaching, I learned about grammar rules as I taught my students. English Language Learners need knowledge of various grammar rules in order to succeed in their adopted country. And they need teachers with a depth of knowledge to teach them these rules. From that point, I enjoyed writing in a technical sense, but still not in a creative way. I think part of this was the thought of being criticized for my writing. How would I inspire my students to write and share creatively, if I was not comfortable doing so myself? After taking up journal writing with the seminar Exploring Memoir through Charlotte Teachers Institute, I have felt more comfortable writing freely, knowing that no one else would read what I had written unless I wanted them to. But the fear of my writing going public is still there in the back of my mind.

In teaching high school English as a Second Language, I have discovered that many teenagers are apprehensive to writing as well. Whenever I introduce a writing assignment, I get the chorus of groans from across the room. Sometimes they even try to bargain. “Can we read this story instead? We’ll all pay attention and we can start the writing tomorrow!” In starting this seminar, I wonder if my students’ apprehension is similar to mine. Perhaps they don’t like writing because they don’t feel comfortable fully expressing themselves, knowing that I will be reading it? Perhaps some of their apprehension is due to their limited abilities in writing in English. Either way, I hope to break down some of these barriers and help students feel better about writing in both a technical and a creative sense.

According to Patricia Huskin in her article “Engagement Strategies for Increasing Student Writing Success” writing should be taught across all curriculums. This is a push that many Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools are moving towards. One suggestion to increase engagement Huskin has is to use peer review. She states, “Students generally care about how their writing appears to their peers and this small group review process can facilitate growth in confidence and the writing process.”<sup>1</sup> I tend to use peer revision and encourage students to share their writing with others. My hopes are that, as Huskin says, this will help my students to build confidence in their writing. .

This unit is designed for a high school English as a Second Language classroom. I will plan to teach this unit with my 10<sup>th</sup> grade ESL English class; however, I feel that it could be used in any secondary grade level ESL class. All of the activities we do can be easily

adapted to the different literacy levels of English Language Learner students or even used in the mainstream classroom.

## **Rationale**

Growing up in a small town in rural Ohio, the big city was always a dream of mine. After going to college in Chicago, moving back to small town Ohio, and then moving to Charlotte, I feel like I have found my place. Now that I have been in Charlotte for almost five years, I feel like I don't belong in small town Ohio anymore. When I visit, friendships are strained. Things that seemed normal and natural for many years are foreign to me now. I'm sure this is partly due to the change in where my home is, but also partly because I have changed and grown a lot in the last 5 years. I know moving a few states away from my past pales in comparison to the distances many of my students have traveled, but I can't help but wonder if my students are experiencing something remotely close to what I am. Do they feel estranged from their past? Their cultures? Their family and friends? Do they feel torn between keeping their culture and feeling like they belong in a foreign land? Through my curriculum unit, I am striving to help my students find a balance between their past life and their new life in the United States.

Many of my immigrant students grow up dreaming of a life in America. Things that we take advantage of, like secure buildings and roads, technology, easy communication, etc., are luxurious to some immigrants coming from refugee camps with limited means, or countries where running water is a luxury. It's an exciting, yet terrifying time for young people. Not only are they beginning in a new school, which can be stressful enough to a teenager, but they are starting in a new school where very few, if any, people speak the same language as they do. They are in new schools where the routines and schedules are very different from what they are used to. Some of them come from schools where they can pay money to their teachers for a higher grade, or the teachers hit the students for not doing homework or breaking dress code. These differences can all be very confusing to a newly arrived immigrant.

Often times the ESL classroom is where these students feel most comfortable. At East Mecklenburg High School, ESL students have one or two sheltered classes of mostly or all ESL students, but may be the only English Language Learner in their other classes. Our students feel comfortable in this setting since they aren't the only ones struggling with English. In their larger, content area classes, they may be the only English Language Learner, and therefore are much more quiet and self-conscious about speaking or volunteering in class. Unfortunately, sometimes teachers see this as a sign of disrespect or the student being lazy rather than them being shy or scared to do something wrong. Whenever I ask students why they don't volunteer in other classes, but they do in their ESL classes, their answers are always the same—"We don't want the other kids to laugh at our accents. Everyone in here has an accent." I try to establish a comfortable environment where students are excited to volunteer and participate in class, but even so,

some students are apprehensive. Most students go through a ‘silent period’ when learning a new language. Students should be allowed to speak when they feel comfortable, and they should be allowed to remain quiet when they need to. Students should be encouraged, but not forced to speak in their new language, since they need time to adjust and take in their new language before using it. <sup>ii</sup>

The students are proud of their background and heritage, but still want to be similar to and liked by the other students at the school. I remember when I was in college in Chicago, I would make it a point to look like I lived in the city. I didn’t want to look like one of the tourists on the street. I wanted the tourists to ask me for directions and would never ask for directions when I was lost. It seems silly and isn’t necessarily the same, but I wanted so badly to belong in my new home while still respecting and loving where I came from. I think my students experience something similar to this as well.

Research shows that it is important for immigrants to retain their culture and language in a new land. In my high school ESL classrooms, I have seen students mix their old cultures with the new. Many of them wear the clothing they see in popular culture of The United States. They quote the songs and YouTube videos that are popular at the time and are often more in tune with popular culture than I am. Aside from keeping their native language, many of our ELL students attempt to fit in with the general population of the school.

In attending the seminar Exploring Memoir, I have learned how therapeutic writing can be. I have felt more comfortable with writing about personal things knowing that no one else will read it unless I want them to. One of my goals in this unit is to have students feel the therapeutic effects of writing their stories. I want them to feel comfortable about writing whatever they are feeling in a safe space.

## **Demographics**

East Mecklenburg High School is one of the top high schools in Charlotte Mecklenburg School district. East Mecklenburg received a Bronze rating from the U.S. News and World Report as one of the Best High Schools in the Nation. <sup>iii</sup> The school currently serves around 1,900 students. The population of East Mecklenburg High School is very diverse. Of the 1,900 students, about 170 are English Language Learners, which only amounts to about 9% of the entire population of the school; however, there are many other cultures and backgrounds represented as well. Of the ELL students, at East Mecklenburg, 9% are from Mexico, 7% from Myanmar, and 4% from Nepal, but there are many students from other backgrounds as well. The students at my school speak around 40 different languages at home. East Mecklenburg is also 61% economically disadvantaged, with many of our ELL students falling into that category. <sup>iv</sup> Many of our English Language Learners have entered the country without documentation or under refugee status, escaping war torn countries and instability. Some of my students have

experienced and witnessed things as children that I could not imagine dealing with as an adult.

The makeup of my English as a Second Language classes are always very unique and diverse. This year, I have refugees from Burma, Nepal and Somalia. I have students with and without documentation from places like El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. I also have students from various backgrounds in Vietnam, Iran, Sierra Leone, and Eritrea. Of these students, most have been in the United States for two years or less, although a few immigrated almost 5 years ago. Since my students come from various backgrounds, they have varying degrees of English ability. As with any classroom, differentiation is very important in the ESL classroom.

Many of my students are considered SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education). Many times, students quit school at a young age for various reasons. Sometimes they quit so they can work and help give money to their families. Sometimes they don't have access to education because they cannot afford it. Sometimes they just choose not to attend school on their refugee camps. Whatever the reason may be, they may quit school at age 10 or 11. By the time they move to the United States at age 16, they have a 5 or 6 year gap in education. Since we cannot put a 16 year old in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade class, these students are put into 9<sup>th</sup> grade in high school, but they are missing critical pieces of their education. Sometimes students begin in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the age of 18 or 19 with a large gap in their education. Many times, these students don't finish school because they 'age out.' Even if they are young enough to finish high school, they sometimes only attend for a few years to learn a little English, and then get jobs to work and help their family. These are the most common of the many complications in an ESL classroom. Even the students who don't have a gap in their education can sometimes be behind their grade level in their country. Some of their countries don't hold their students to the same standards as we do in the United States, so even though they have been attending school regularly, they may still be behind in their education.

## **Objectives**

My first goal of this curriculum unit is that students will be able to define and give examples of a memoir. In order to do this, students will read and analyze various memoirs from immigrant and non-immigrant writers.

Students will become more comfortable with their writing through journaling and sharing in full class and small group settings. While attending the Exploring Memoir seminar, I have learned that writing can be very therapeutic.<sup>v</sup> Sometimes just writing the random thoughts that pop into my head can feel therapeutic to me. My main goal is to have students feel comfortable writing their feelings and thoughts and hopefully they will use journaling even outside of school.

The final goal is that students will develop and publish a digital story of one of their writings. This will be something they can share with others by easily giving them the link to their channel on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). They can keep these private if they would like, or they can share with others. I hope that they will show these digital stories to people in their lives now and in the future, although that will not be a requirement of the assignment.

## **Teaching Strategies**

### Independent Reading

The students in my sophomore ESL English class will be working on this unit. We will begin by reading memoirs by a variety of authors and discussing what defines a memoir. Students will do independent study of many memoirs.

My students also have some apprehension towards reading aloud or individually. Whenever we do any reading, they usually want me to read aloud to the class while they follow along. Many of my students are illiterate in their native languages or Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). Even the students who are literate in their native language struggle with reading in English. Based on these factors and the varying reading levels of my students, we will read both children's book memoirs and short stories. Even though it is a high school class, most of the readings will be set to an elementary to middle school level, or they will read adapted versions of some memoirs as that is where most of my students' reading levels are in English, whether they be literate in their native language or not.

### Journaling

Once we have read many memoirs and have a good idea of what makes a memoir, we will begin writing in journals. Students will be given general guidelines for writing, but will have a lot of freedom. Most of the writings will be geared towards their life in their home country. We will develop a list of possible writing topics together. Students will choose which prompts they would like to write on. They will not be required to write about each topic. There will also be some 'free writing' times where students choose to write about something that may not be on the list. This could also be where they continue a previous writing, react to or reflect on some of the readings we have done, or they write about something completely different.

In their article, "The Write Stuff," Carol Booth Olson, Robin Scarcella, and Tina Matuchniak argue that it is important to have a "culturally relevant writing community" in order to increase student motivation. This can be done three ways. The first way is to link what the students are learning to their background, history, and culture. The second

way is to “welcome students’ voices, giving them an element of choice in learning tasks.” The final way to increase students’ motivation in writing is to “engage students in meaningful and collaborative reading and writing activities.” The authors mention that these are so important because “motivation can determine whether adolescents engage or disengage from literacy learning.”<sup>vi</sup> Throughout this curriculum unit, I plan to base many of my lessons and activities with students on this idea of engaging students

### Around the World Share

One of my favorite activities to use in my classroom is what I call an “Around the World.” I do this activity in a variety of ways, but the main idea is that students spend a certain amount of time at certain ‘stations’ set up in the room. Sometimes they do this and have a conversation with a different partner at each station. Sometimes there are projects or writing assignments for the students to read and react to at each station. During this curriculum unit, we will use this activity for the latter. I will post memoirs written by students around the room. Students will do a gallery walk where they read and write reactions to some of the different memoirs.

### Creating

After writing and sharing many journal entries, students will choose one entry to develop further. With this entry, students will bring in pictures or find pictures online to create a digital story. These digital stories will act as a great memory of their countries and life before the United States. We will watch examples of digital stories as a class and as individuals to get ideas about how to frame our own digital stories. Not only will my students learn more about their own cultures and the cultures of their classmates, but I will also learn more about some of these cultures that I sometimes knew nothing about before teaching these students.

Since my students have varying degrees of English abilities, there will be scaffolding for some students. Those with less English ability, will have sentence starters and examples given to them to help with getting started with the journal writing. Examples of digital stories will be shown to all students to help understand what is expected of them.

### **Classroom Lessons/Activities**

#### Building Background 2-3 days

Since many ESL students are unfamiliar with different genres of writing and reading, students will begin the unit by reading many different memoirs. I will provide many short memoirs for the students to read and discover individually or with a partner over the course of a day. This will be set up as a free reading time. The memoirs will be placed in the middle of the room. Students will pick 3-5 memoirs to read over. I will not give the

students any background information before reading. Instead, students will then fill in a graphic organizer about the memoirs as they read which can be found in Appendix 2.

After reading and analyzing memoirs, we will discuss what was similar and what was different between the different stories. We will also discuss whether we thought these stories were true or not, and why. After that, I will explain what a memoir is. We will discuss what is typically included in memoirs (based on what we have already seen), who writes memoirs, and why they are written and read. Students will take guided notes on a Power Point presentation I show them.

After taking notes and discussing what a memoir is, the class and I will read the memoir “Only Daughter” by Sandra Cisneros together. In this memoir, Sandra Cisneros discusses being the only daughter in a Mexican-American family with 5 brothers. She discusses her culture and family in great detail. I think this is a great example to show the students in order to get them thinking about their own culture, family, and identity.

#### Brainstorming (1 day)

Next, my students will get in small groups to brainstorm possible writing topics about their native countries. If students are struggling, I may give an example like, “Describe your school in your country.” Once my students have brainstormed many possible topics, we will come together and share as a class. I will generate a list of writing topics to be given to each student during the next class.

Allowing students to help generate the list of possible topics is important in order to make the writing relevant to the students. If they see that I, the teacher, and we, the class value their ideas, they will be more excited about their assignments. Also, my hope is that they will be more excited to write on topics that they helped choose since these should be more interesting to them.

#### Reading and Writing (2-3 days)

Students will each receive a copy of the questions we generated together. Over the next few days, the students will be expected to write short pieces on the various topics we came up with together. The list we generate will have 20-25 writing topics, but during this time, students will only write on 8-10 topics. This way, they can write about the prompts that most interest them and the ones they have the most to say about. These pieces will each go in their individual journals and will not be read by anyone (including me) unless they want them to be. While we are writing short memoirs, we will also be reading and discussing memoirs from many different backgrounds (some memoirs we will read are listed in the Bibliography for Students). At this stage, students with less language ability will be given sentence starters to help get them started. Sentence starter examples:

I am from... my country is located... I love my country because... I miss my country because...  
One holiday we celebrate in my country is... on this day, we...  
The main food in my country is... it tastes like...  
School in my country is very different from the United States... one difference is... one similarity is...

At the end of this stage, students will pick one memoir to develop further. This memoir will be one that they don't mind sharing with me and their peers. They will read their chosen memoirs with a partner and do some peer editing and revisions together. Before we begin this, I will model some ways to improve their writing. Some examples of this will be taken from what I learned during my Charlotte Teachers Institute Seminar. For example, students will be encouraged to:

- Eliminate extra words which aren't needed.
- Replace linking verbs with action verbs for stronger sentences.
- Check for correct homophone usage.

Once we have completed a peer revision and edit, we will do an 'around the world' activity. During this activity, students will have their memoirs posted in various places throughout the classroom. Each student will be given sticky notes to write reactions on and stick to the memoir they read. Students will have 5 minutes on a classroom timer to spend at each station. In those 5 minutes, students will read the posted memoir, write a connection or question on the sticky note, and leave the sticky note with the memoir for their classmate. Students will visit 4-6 memoir stations, so that at the end, each student has 4-6 connections and questions on sticky notes to read.

After my students decide which memoir to develop further, they will also be asked to begin compiling pictures which relate to the subject matter of their memoir. Students can bring actual photographs from home which will be scanned into the computer, or digital copies if they have them. They will also be encouraged to find pictures of their countries and landmarks using Google if they would prefer to do it that way instead or if they do not have copies of pictures from their country.

### Digital Stories (3-4 days)

Students will begin watching digital stories. We will use the graphic organizer in Appendix 3 to organize the digital stories that we watched. As a class, I will show one digital story from [www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org) for the students to watch. Then, we will fill in the first row in the graphic organizer together. This way, students will understand what is expected of them. Next, students will watch 3 more digital stories on the same website

with a partner and fill in the rest of the graphic organizer. We will come together and share the things we noticed, liked, and didn't like in the digital stories. Then, students will individually write their reflection piece on what they think is important to include in a digital story. We will also watch a tutorial on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) which will teach students how to create a digital story using Windows Movie Maker.

After analyzing digital stories, students will put their memoir on the storyboard in Appendix 4. They will draw pictures of what they plan to put in each slide of their digital story. On the lines below the picture, students will write the parts of their memoir they plan to read while this picture is shown. The storyboard organizer will have room for up to 8 slides (the minimum required for the assignment) with extra sheets available to students who create a longer digital story. At this stage in creating, I will show my students the rubric which they will be graded on (Appendix 5), so they are aware of my expectations while they are in the beginning stages of creating their final product.

Students will create their digital stories using Windows Movie Maker. Using their storyboards, they will show the pictures they have compiled which relate to the memoir they wrote (their country, schools, family, traditions, etc.), play music in the background (possibly traditional music from their countries), and record their own voices reading their memoir over the pictures and music. Students' final digital stories are expected to be between 8 and 14 slides and at least 2 minutes in length.

Once students have completed their digital stories, they will be uploaded on their own individual channels on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). This way students can share their stories with family and friends in their home countries if they wish to do so. One of my goals is for students to have these stories to share with future generations or other people they may know who are unable to visit their home country.

## Assessments

Students will be assessed both formally and informally throughout this unit. Informal assessments will be done with the journal entries the students write. As mentioned, I will not read the journal entries unless students ask me to read them. Instead, students will be graded on participation for this portion of the unit. As long as students are writing and participating, they will be receiving credit.

Formal assessments will be done periodically throughout the unit as well. Students will be assessed with the graphic organizer on memoirs they fill out at the beginning of the unit as well as the graphic organizer they fill out while watching digital stories with a partner. At the end of the unit, my students will turn in a rough draft of their memoir which has been revised and edited, their storyboard, and the link to their digital story. Once all of these parts are turned in, students will be assessed using the rubric found in Appendix 5.

## **Appendix 1: Teaching Standards**

### Content Objectives/Common Core Standards

English Language Learners are held to the same standards as other students in the school to an extent. We follow the same Common Core standards, but adapt them to what our students ‘Can Do’ based on their Access Test or W-APT scores from the previous year. These tests look at the students’ abilities in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening in English. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools describes their grading policy for English Language Learners as:

Student work should be graded in accordance with what they “Can Do” based on English language proficiency levels. Classroom teachers should design and modify instruction, assignments and tests based on students’ English language proficiency levels in reading, writing, listening and speaking as determined by the WIDA W-APT or ACCESS test. The WIDA Can Do Descriptors highlight examples of what students can do at each English proficiency level. It is a grade specific resource designed to guide teachers in planning for meaningful activities with ELLs.<sup>vii</sup>

That being said, this curriculum unit will address the Common Core standards listed below, but they will be adapted to the level of what each individual student ‘Can Do’ based on their 2015/2016 Access Test scores.

#### Literacy. RI.9-10.7-

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

-Students will do this while they read various memoirs and watch digital stories.

#### Literacy. W.9-10.3-

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequence.

-Students will write about experiences and events in their lives throughout the entire unit. These writings will be housed in their individual journals.

#### Literacy. W.9-10.6-

Use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

-Students will use Windows Movie Maker and [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) to create and publish their digital stories.

#### Literacy.SL.9-10.4-

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

-Students will write a memoir that follows a logical sequence and is easy for readers and listeners to understand. They will also ensure that the content of their memoir is suitable for their audience.

Literacy.SL.9-10.5-

Make Strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence to add interest.

-Students will use digital media to add interest and understanding for their audience.

Literacy.L.9-10.4a-

Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

-While reading and studying memoirs, students will be expected to use context to figure out the meaning of any unknown words or phrases.

## Appendix 2: Memoirs Graphic Organizer

Story One Title:	Who was this mainly about?	What happened in the story?	Do you think it was a true story? Why?
Story Two Title:	Who was this mainly about?	What happened in the story?	Do you think it was a true story? Why?
Story Three Title:	Who was this mainly about?	What happened in the story?	Do you think it was a true story? Why?
Story Four Title:	Who was this mainly about?	What happened in the story?	Do you think it was a true story? Why?
Story Five Title:	Who was this mainly about?	What happened in the story?	Do you think it was a true story? Why?

### Appendix 3: Digital Stories Graphic Organizer

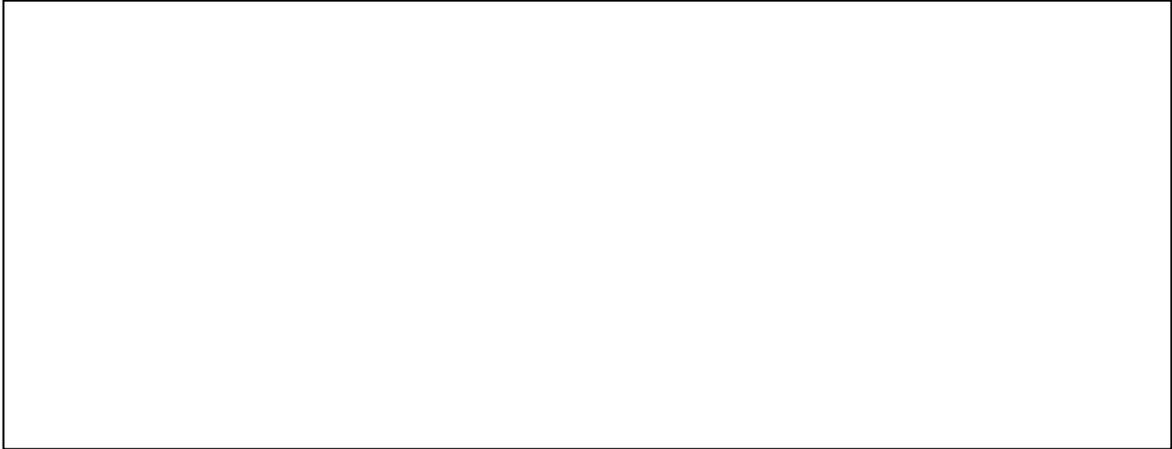
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*With your partner, go to [www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org). At the top, click on “stories.” Choose 3 stories with different themes to watch and fill in the graphic organizer below:\*

What was the title?	What did you notice?	What did you like? Why?	What did you not like? Why?

Reflect: What do you think is important to include in a digital story to make it more interesting to others? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4: Digital Storyboard



Slide One: \_\_\_\_\_

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Slide Two: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 5: Final Rubric

### Finished Product Rubric

4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points
Finished product contains 8-14 slides, music, and the student reading his/her written memoir.	Finished product contains 1 more/less than the required slides OR is missing music. Finished product does have student reading his/her written memoir.	Finished product contains 2 more/less than the required slides OR is missing music. Finished product does have student reading his/her written memoir.	Finished product contains 3 more/less than the required slides AND is missing music, but does have student reading his/her written memoir.	Finished product contains 4 or more more/less than the required slides AND is missing music OR the student is not reading his/her written memoir.
Demonstrates superior use of grammar, mechanics, and style with meticulous attention to detail.	Demonstrates sufficient use of grammar, mechanics, and style with some attention to details.	Demonstrates below average use of grammar, mechanics, and style with little to no attention to details.	Demonstrates poor use of grammar, mechanics, and style.	Contains multiple errors in grammar, mechanics, and style which inhibits understanding of the audience.
The digital story is expertly organized in a logical sequence which flows with the narrative.	The digital story is effectively organized in a logical sequence which flows with the narrative.	The digital story is organized in an acceptable sequence which mostly flows with the narrative.	The digital story is put together in an acceptable sequence, but does not make sense with the narrative.	The digital story is put together carelessly and does not make sense with the narrative.
Student speaks with superior pace and projection without vocalized pauses (um, uh, etc.) or silent pauses (unless for dramatic effect)	Student speaks with appropriate pace and projection without vocalized pauses (um, uh, etc.) or silent pauses (unless used for dramatic effect)	Student speaks with inconsistent pace or projection, and may have a few vocalized pauses (um, uh, etc.) or silent pauses not used for dramatic effect.	Student speaks with poor pace or projection, and uses many vocalized pauses (um, uh, etc.) or silent pauses which are not used for dramatic effect.	Student speaks with unacceptable pace and projection, and uses many vocalized pauses (um, uh, etc.) and many silent pauses which are distracting.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Points

## Resources

### Materials for Classroom Use

Journals—students will each have a journal to do writing and reflecting throughout the unit.

Timer- this will be used to keep time during the ‘around the world’ activity

Sticky notes- these will be used to write comments on their classmates’ memoirs during the ‘around the world’ activity.

Laptop computers—students will have access to the laptop computers in my classroom in order to watch digital stories, look up images for their own digital story, and create their digital story.

Windows Movie Maker- Students will use this program, which is already loaded onto the laptop computers in my classroom, to create digital stories.

Headphones or earbuds—students will use headphones or earbuds while watching digital stories with a partner. They also will use these when working on their own digital stories.

Memoirs listed under Reading List for Students—these are memoirs the students will read and study individually and together.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GREeD2icUo>- A video tutorial of how to create a digital story using Windows Movie Maker

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)- students will be expected to upload their completed digital stories to their individual channel.

[www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org)- students will watch digital stories to gain an understanding of digital stories and get ideas for their own digital stories.

### Reading List for Students

Hest, Amy. *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*. Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1997. This children’s book tells the story of a young Jewish girl coming to America, where she works to try to raise money to bring her grandmother to America too.

Levine, Ellen. *I Hate English!* New York: Scholastic, 1989. This story is very relatable to the English Language Learner. A young girl and her family immigrate to America from

China. The young girl understands her teachers and classmates, but does not want to use English. She much prefers the Chinese language she is used to.

Young, Ed, and Libby Koponen. *The House Baba Built: An Artist's Childhood in China*. New York: Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2011. Ed Young recounts his childhood home in Shanghai. His home feels like a safe place for the young boy and his family and friends as a war is going on outside.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*. New York: Penguin Group, 2014. This short book is a collection of poems about Jacqueline Woodson's childhood. She speaks of being a black girl in the 1960s as well as being torn between calling both South Carolina and New York home.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1988. This story follows a quilt for four generations. The first generation made the quilt with old clothing in order to remember their lives in Russia. The quilt is then passed down from generation to generation and used for weddings, births, and even funerals.

Beah, Ishmael. *A Long Way Gone: memoirs of a boy soldier*. New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007. This book is a heart-wrenching memoir written by a boy soldier in Sierra Leone. It's a great resource for higher level students, although some ESL students may struggle with it.

Cisneros, Sandra. "Only Daughter." In *Edge: Reading, Writing & Language*, 134-145. Hampton Brown, 2014. Only Daughter is a short memoir by Sandra Cisneros which is in the textbook I use with my class. In this memoir, Sandra Cisneros tells her story of growing up the 'only daughter' in a Mexican-American household of nine.

#### Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

Gibney, Tara. "Teaching Memoir in the Elementary School Classroom: A Genre Study Approach." *The Reading Teacher* 66, no. 3 (2012): 243-253. This article follows a sixth grade teacher's journey with teaching memoir and would be a great resource for any teacher beginning a memoir unit.

Stanton, Andrea. "Teaching Immigrant Memoirs: Making History Personal." *Syrian Studies Association Newsletter* 15, no. i (2009): 7;23. This article deals with teaching memoir to Muslim immigrants in non-Muslim societies, but could easily help any teacher who is teaching memoir to immigrants.

Kraus, Carolyn. "The Discovery that Changes Everything: Teaching Memoir Writing with Documents." *Pedagogy: Critical approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 9, no. 3 (2009): 547-554. This article

addresses teaching memoir writing through documents. Some examples in the article are documents children have found that show they have a long lost sibling or a document that contradicts a story you have heard your entire life. I did not choose to use documents in memoir writing for my classroom, but it is an interesting idea, and there are many interesting examples in the article.

Zinnser, William. *Writing About your Life: A Journey into the Past*. New York: Marlowe and Company, 2004. In his book, William Zinnser gives advice for writing your own personal memoir. This advice could be given to students as well to help facilitate confidence in their personal stories.

Temes, Roberta. *How to Write a Memoir in 30 Days: Step by Step Instructions for Creating and Publishing your Personal Story*. White Plains: Adult Trade Publishing, 2013. As the title suggests, this book is a step by step process on how to write and publish a memoir.

Myers, Linda. *The Power of Memoir: How to Write Your Healing Story*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010. One of the main things I learned through my Charlotte Teachers Institute seminar was the therapeutic side to writing. This book is a great resource that shows the healing side of writing.

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<sup>i</sup> Huskin, Patrica. "Engagement Strategies for Increasing Student Writing Success." *Education* 136, no. 3 (2016): 283-290.

<sup>ii</sup> Gibbons, John. "The Silent Period: An Examination." *Language Learning: A Journal of Applied Linguistics* 35, no. 2 (1985): 255-267.

<sup>iii</sup> "US Best High Schools," *USNews.com*, accessed on September 8, 2016, <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/north-carolina/districts/charlotte-mecklenburg-schools/east-mecklenburg-high-14567>

<sup>iv</sup> "East Mecklenburg High School," *schools.cms.k12.nc.us*, accessed on September 8, 2016, <http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/eastmecklenburgHS/Pages/Default.aspx>

<sup>v</sup> Utley, Allison and Garza, Yvonne. "The Therapeutic Use of Journaling with Adolescents." *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health* 6, no. 1 (2011) 29-41.

<sup>vi</sup> Booth Olson, Carol, Scarcella, Robin, and Matuchniak, Tina. "The Write Stuff." *Educational Leadership* 73, no. 5 (2016) 39-44.

<sup>vii</sup> "Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools High School Grading Procedures Plan," *my.cms.k12.nc.us*, accessed on August 15, 2016,

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<http://my.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/schoolperformance/Principal%20Communications/High%20School%20Grading%20Plan%20--2016-%202017.pdf#search=grading%20policy>