

## **Prewriting: Bio-Poem About an Historical Person, or an Author**

Line 1: First name

Line 2: Person's Title/Claim to Fame

Line 3: Four words that describe the person

Line 4: Lover of...(three themes, things or ideas)

Line 5: Who believed...(one or more ideas)

Line 6: Who wanted...(three things)

Line 7: Who used...(three methods or things)

Line 8: Who gave...(three things, or titles of works)

Line 9: Who said...(give a quote)

Line 10: Last name

## **Prewriting for Bio-Poem: Thinking About Myself**

Myself (Adjectives that describe me)

My Strengths

My Weaknesses

Who or What Do I Love?

What Makes Me Sad?

What Makes Me Angry?

What Do I Need?

What Do I Give?

What Do I Fear?

What Would I Like to See?

## Bio-Poems

- Line 1 Your first name only.
- Line 2 Four traits that describe you.
- Line 3 Sibling of....(or son/daughter of)
- Line 4 Lover of....(3 people or ideas)
- Line 5 Who feels....(3 items)
- Line 6 Who needs....(3 items)
- Line 7 Who gives....(3 items)
- Line 8 Who fears....(3 items)
- Line 9 Who would like to see (3 items)
- Line 10 Resident of (your city); (your road name)
- Line 11 Your last name only.

### *Examples of Auto-Biographical Poems Written by Teachers:*

Robert

Honest, happy, content and established,  
Brother of Lawrence, James and Elaine,  
Lover of the freshness of spring, the laughter of Paula and the beauty of fresh green growth,  
Who feels joy when traveling, loneliness in the dark, and happiness in a warm school room,  
Who needs sunshine, rain and privacy,  
Who gives friendship, encouragement and smiles,  
Who fears pain, hunger and the end of a good book,  
Who would like to see contentment for man and animal, laughter in people's lives and more  
appreciation for good literature,  
Resident of Lake Oswego;  
Pilkington Street,  
Hamm.

Martha

Strong, serene, shy, sometimes silly,  
Friend of big furry dogs, confused students, and John,  
Lover of lemons, float trips in fall, and the smell of woodsmoke in January,  
Who feels stirred by new ideas, actualized by love, and calmed by the still core of a Quaker meeting,  
Who needs a new book, a quart of cottage cheese, and so many hours a week to herself,  
Who fears her wild imagination, her big appetite, and the habit of losing her keys,  
Who would like to see no more sentence fragments, zucchini casseroles, or cigarette stubs.  
Resident of "inner-city" Columbia; South Williams Street,  
Patton

Arthelia

Patient, cheerful, old, studious,  
Daughter of Charles and Lula Lysinger,  
Lover of trees, blue skies, piano music,  
Who feels annoyed at apathy, fat, lazy at times,  
Who needs exercise, crossword puzzles, reading time,  
Who gives a listening ear, time to clubs, presents to the Presbyterian Children's Home,  
Who ears the future of the U.S.A., water bugs, poor health,  
Who would like to see a better school system, herself winning a big sweepstakes, less injustice  
in the workplace,  
Resident of Grandview, Missouri; Parker Avenue,  
Pritchard

## Biographical Poem about an Author

Sally Buckner

The following can be used as the basis of a sketch of a character in a work of fiction, or as a biographical sketch of an author or the subject of a non-fiction work.

THE MODEL	THE FRAME
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FLANNERY O'CONNOR</b></p> <p><i>...the peacocks cry all night long: help me, help me.</i></p> <p>Four miles from Milledgeville on a farm Over five hundred acres She raised chickens (and peacocks).</p> <p>She talked of grotesques, Southern style—of freaks who felt The call to preach, Of praying violent men with something In the blood driving them Onward but inward....</p> <p>She held their attention With strong Georgia phrases Drawing pictures of a people In a land all of their own, shifting Suddenly from darkness to hard sunlight, Caught in the giant hands of fate and the will of God.     But the violent bear it away.     A good man is hard to find.</p> <p>The crutches lean against the wall Unnoticed and forgotten. In the shade of the trees The peacocks strut.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">But at night in the mellow darkness They cry... All night long... Help me. Help me.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Name of the person or character</b></p> <p><i>Quotation from the person/character</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Place</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What he/she did there</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Something central to the person's reputation (A writer's subject matter; a person's or character's concerns.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Something about the person's style or manner; his/her idiosyncrasies, habits, etc.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If possible, paraphrase a key phrase</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Something physical that symbolizes the person/character, or represents him/her.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A setting or event which adds mood or feeling.</p>

--Sam Ragan

from *The Tree in the Far Pasture*, John Blair Publishers

Auxiliary Learning:

1. Biographical facts about Flannery O'Connor; traits of her work
2. Power of images.

## Historical Bio Poem Formats

Use the following format to write a poem about a historical figure. You may give more or fewer details than the format demands. Also, the details you provide may be single words or short phrases. Be as accurate and complete in your description as possible.

Title

- Line 1: First name
- Line 2: Person's Title
- Line 3: Four words that describe the person
- Line 4: Lover of...(three things or ideas)
- Line 5: Who believed...(one or more ideas)
- Line 6: Who wanted...(three things)
- Line 7: Who used...(three methods or things)
- Line 8: Who gave...(three things)
- Line 9: Who said...(give a quote)
- Line 10: Last name

\_\_\_\_\_

Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Line 3: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

Line 4: Lover of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

Line 5: Who believed \_\_\_\_\_

Line 6: Who wanted \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

Line 7: Who used \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

Line 8: Who gave \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

Line 9: Who said \_\_\_\_\_

Line 10: \_\_\_\_\_

*Examples from the Content Areas:*

Thomas

Intelligent, talented, inventive, brave

Son of Peter and Jane

Lover of his country, books, and God.

Who feels strongly about his government, hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man, and great love for music.

Who fears our country going to war with France, giving his men the wrong decision, and too much formality in the White House.

Who would like to see peace with other countries, federal jobs based on ability, and expansion of the United States.

Resident of Albemarle County, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

Jefferson

Inquisitor

Cynical, bold, all knowing, and fearless,

Friend of no one, peer of few,

Lover of self, wisdom, and unconquerable knowledge,

Who feels neither pity nor compassion nor the love of God,

Who needs no man, save for himself,

Who fears the kiss that warms his heart and the coming tide which will not retreat,

Who radiates cold shafts of broken glass, and who fits all mankind with collar and chain,

Who would like to see the deceivers burned and Christ to be humbled before him.

Resident of ages past.

The Grand Inquirer

(from: Yoshida, J. (1985). Writing to learn philosophy. In Ann Ruggles Gere, Ed., *Roots in the sawdust: Writing to learn across the disciplines* (p. 124). Urbana, IL: NCTE.

*Middle School Students' Examples About NC African American Writers*

Hinton

Writer.

Intelligent, understanding,

Lover of art and literature.

Who believed literature was important.

Who wanted people to see how sympathy was used.

Who used his understanding to teach others.

Who gave his talent and knowledge to the public.

Who said, "Literature is of great importance."

Brown

Winifred

Novelist.

Englishwoman, intelligent, writer, and brave North Carolinian.

Lover of novels, Raleigh, and writing.

Who believed in recording family happenings.

Who wanted to be famous, to be a good novelist, and to be a spokesperson for North Carolina

Who used North Carolina families and their anecdotes.

Who gave us "Matilda Berkely," family anecdotes, and perfect writing.

Gales

## Bio Poem for a Character in Literature

Perhaps you are familiar with the Bio Poem as an intriguing technique that performs two roles simultaneously: first, it forces writers to analyze themselves, and too, it reveals much to readers (about the author) which could take weeks to discover simply by observation. Teachers can use the Bio Poem to help students get to know one another at the beginning of a school year, and they can also expand the Bio Poem assignment to include artwork. For example, students could post their poems next to sketches of their silhouettes on the walls of their classroom.

Another way to modify the Bio Poem exercise is to have students write poems about characters they have studied in a novel or observed in a film. Consider the following format as one way your students could write Literary Character Bio Poems:

### Title

- Line 1: First name of character
- Line 2: Four adjectives that describe the character
- Line 3: Character in \_\_\_\_\_'s story (author's name)
- Line 4: Lover of...(three things, people, or ideas)
- Line 5: Who feels...(three listings)
- Line 6: Who fears...(three listings)
- Line 7: Who would like to see...(three listings)
- Line 8: Major or minor character in " \_\_\_\_\_ " (name of literary work)
- Line 9: Last name of character

### Charlie

Struggler, fighter, winner, proud  
Character in Daniel Keyes' story  
Lover of the thought of being normal, Algernon, his work  
Who feels sad when he finds out about his "friends,"  
Happy to beat Algernon, confused over the inkblots.  
Who fears senility, death, failing  
Who would like to see himself normal, the world happy, Algernon alive  
Major character in *Flowers for Algernon*  
Gordon

### Doctor

Eccentric, curious, singular, old,  
Friend of Medbourne, Killigrew, Wycherly, Gasscoigne,  
Lover of Sylvia, magic, a rose,  
Who feels isolated, alone, old,  
Who needs friendship, experimentation, love,  
Who gives medicine, free champagne, second chances,  
Who fears his own youth,  
Who would like to see results, happiness, common sense,  
Resident of Massachusetts,  
Heidegger.  
(based on Hawthorne's "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment")