

Bio-Poems


Purpose: Consider factors that shape identity, such as experiences, relationships, hopes, and interests.

ADVISOR NOTES:

1. Model the Bio-Poem Format

To help your advisees get to know you, create your own bio-poem that you share with the group before they write their own. You could also provide a student example as a model, but it will be a more powerful experience for your advisees if they see you taking the same social and academic risks that you are asking of them. Visit facinghistory.org/advisory-media to access the student example and to learn more about the teaching strategy.

APPROXIMATE TIME:
30 minutes

MATERIALS:
 **HANDOUT**
Bio-Poem Template

2. Create Space for Advisee Voice and Choice

You can adapt the bio-poem format to include other categories, such as personal heroes, mantras, or beliefs. Allowing advisees to suggest categories that they think should be included in their bio-poems invites participation and ownership.

PROCEDURE:

1. Brainstorm Ideas for a Bio-Poem in Journals

- Tell advisees that they will be creating short poems that explore aspects of their identities. You can share your own bio-poem now or later in the period.
- Start by having advisees brainstorm ideas for their bio-poems in their journals. Read each category listed below and give them time to list their ideas. Let them know that they don't need to write complete sentences. The purpose of this journal response is to generate as many ideas as possible.
 1. Adjectives that you would use to describe yourself
 2. Relationships in your life (e.g., friend, brother, daughter)
 3. Things you love
 4. Important memories
 5. Things you fear
 6. Accomplishments
 7. Hopes or wishes
 8. Home (location)

2. Advisees Write Their Bio-Poems

- Pass out the handout **Bio-Poem Template**. Let your advisees know that they don't have to follow the order or categories on the template if they have other ideas. Some of your advisees will need this structure, while others will find it too restrictive.
- Give advisees time to draft their own poems, drawing ideas from their identity charts and journals.
- Time allowing or in the next advisory meeting, distribute white paper and markers so advisees can re-write and illustrate their bio-poems. If you have space, after your advisees share their work, hang the final versions of their poems on a bulletin board or wall of your advisory room.

3. Share Bio-Poems

There are many ways that advisees can share their bio-poems with the group. They can post them around the room for a **gallery walk** (visit facinghistory.org/advisory-media to learn about this teaching strategy) or read them in pairs or triads. Or you can try one of these sharing strategies:

- Advisees can read their bio-poems to the group. Each reader is assigned a "responder." After the bio-poem is read aloud, the responder comments about something he or she heard that was particularly interesting or surprising.
- Sit in a circle and ask advisees to pass their poems to their neighbor. Give time for a thorough reading. Have advisees silently write comments or questions in the margin. Every three to four minutes, have advisees pass the poems on to the next person. Repeat as time allows. At the end of the allotted time, advisees should have a poem filled with comments and questions. Be sure to remind advisees about their contract and expectations for appropriate comments.



Bio-Poem Template

Directions: Use ideas from your journal to create your own bio-poem that reflects the things you value, your experiences, your interests, and your hopes and dreams. Feel free to add more categories or lines to your poem. You should make it your own!

(First name)

(Adjectives that describe you)

Who loves

And who is scared

Who learned

Who hopes

Who lives

(Last name)
