



# About Me Poems & Activities

## Dreams and Friendship Exchange

*Activities connecting Dream Flag schools based on a program of the U.S. State Dept. in Macedonia.*

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### ALL ABOUT ME

This month, students will start with simple ways of getting to know each other, focusing on likes, dislikes, hobbies, and other interests. They will study at some Hughes poems about people, draw up lists of questions for each other, get answers to those questions, then write their own poems to describe the interviewed person!

→ Read the 2014-15 Dreams & Friendship Blog Entry that was the basis for this lesson [HERE](#).

(<https://medium.com/@dreamsandfriendship/all-about-me-cinquain-poems-cbe95292c80e> )

#### #1 Hughes Poems

These are Langston Hughes poems about people—who they are, what they're like. All can be found in the Hughes anthology *Dream Keeper and Other Poems*, but many are available online as well. Pick and choose a few to discuss. They are more complex than poems students will likely compose but offer a wide range of approaches for describing a person.

1. "Winter Sweetness" –focuses on the place that defines the person.
2. "Quiet Girl" – tells about what she looks like (and his feelings) from what's *not* there.
3. "Poem" – talks about the loss of a friend and compares him to a poem.
4. "Sailor" – focuses on the images of a tough man that are not tough.
5. "Beggar Boy" –a harsh poem that asks questions about how someone with so little can have joy.
6. "Minstrel Man" –focuses on the contrast between outward happiness and inward grieving.
7. "When Sue Wears Red" –an early poem of Hughes that focuses on the beauty of the girl he sought.
8. "Dream Variation" – a poem filled with motion and joy about being yourself.

#### #2 Collecting Information

Direct students to create a list of questions to ask their exchange partners. This could be others in a different state or country or others in the same class! Focus on the individual—not family or other people. Remember "it's all about me!" What foods do you like, sports, kinds of clothes, TV shows, online sites, animals, etc? Have students write up a test list, try it out with a friend, then modify it in case some questions are too hard to answer or don't fit in. Have them type up the list if possible, then email or send in some other manner to the exchange person. If one group is larger than another (likely), then pair two or three students with one. The One will have to choose one of the paired group to write about in the next step.

#### #3 Portrait in a Poem

After collecting answers to the questions, the students have to compose a poem describing the person they interviewed. First have students create a simple cinquain poem about the person. Here is a good site for a lesson on that form:

[ReadWriteThink Lesson from NCTE: Composing Cinquain Poems](#)

(<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/composing-cinquain-poems-quick-51.html?tab=4> )

Have them make the cinquains in a final written and decorated form to share online with photos or Skype. Stop there, or challenge the students to write an additional poem about the interviewee, using some method that Hughes does in his poems. Have them choose one and then write a variation of it with their subject.

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*These curriculum ideas are the collaborative effort of US State Department staff including Abigail Jones, Ann Tran, and Borka Taneska, Dream Flag Project Director Jeff Harlan, and collaborating teachers Julijana Zlatevska and Catherine Baur Mabry.*