



GREAT HOOSIERS

6-8 | Lesson 2



LESSON 2

TEXT TITLE

"*Shaping Memories: Reflections of African American Women Writers*," edited by Joanne Veal Gabbin. Paragraphs 16,18, 26-27. **Note:** For students this will be paragraphs 7-10.

TEXT MAIN IDEA

In "*My Father's Passage*", Evans begins by sharing a personal story of her father and how he was the most influential person in her life. She goes on to give a descriptive account of her journey as a writer as she stumbled upon poetry. She later expresses her motivation for writing as a connection to her culture. Evans' use of imagery to describe who she is and how she writes is evidenced in her description of her father, "An oak of a man..." and "who hear the music and can catch a beat."

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

The unit essential questions developed in this lesson are...

- How does culture influence the voice of a poet?

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

By engaging in this lesson, students will know/understand that...

Evans' pride in her culture contributed to the bold approach to her writing, as she too sought to connect with the people in her community. She was not exclusive in her writing, in that she did appreciate if others embraced what she had to say. Her purpose for writing helps to illustrate her voice in her work.

LITERACY OBJECTIVE

By engaging in this lesson, students will strengthen their ability to...

- Use imagery to provide a descriptive account of a memorable event. Students will highlight the key details of this memory using similes, metaphors and other forms of figurative language.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

- Write narrative compositions in a variety of forms that – a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters. b. Organize an event sequence (e.g., conflict, climax, resolution) that unfolds naturally and

logically, using a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. c. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. e. Provide an ending that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. (8.W.3.3)

LAUNCH (5 MINUTES)

Teacher Notes:

- Continue using the anchor chart to keep track of the key understandings for the essential questions.
- Remind students to track their thoughts and ideas in their Reflection Journal.
- Show the following video clip from 4:20-5:30. Ask students if they know who Congressman Andre Carson is? Ask students to pay attention to what he says about Evans and their relationship. Make sure students take notes in the designated area of their Reflective Journal: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cC330W7lpsI>)

When you hear the word culture, what do you think of?

Allow students to respond using white boards or sticky notes. Students will provide answers like: food, clothes, music, hair, etc. Have students write the following definition:

- The culture of a group of people is its shared attitudes, values, social forms, customary beliefs and material traits. (Zaretta Hammond)

Yesterday, we learned a little about Evans' journey into writing and how she was influenced. Today, we will continue reading excerpts from "My Father's Passage" to understand the subject matter she was most interested in conveying to the world, the Black American experience. Evans felt personally responsible for connecting her community together and lifting up her culture through her expression of art. Through her use of imagery, style and rhythm we will discover her poetic voice, who she is and what she values behind the words.

Have students make a note about voice in their journal.

READ ALOUD / ENGAGE (15 MINUTES)

Read excerpts from "Shaping Memories: Reflections of African American Women Writers."

Highlight the following vocabulary as you read by asking students to make inferences regarding the meaning of each word before sharing a quick definition. Determine which words should go into their journal:

- **rhetoric:** effective or persuasive speaking or writing
- **allegation:** a claim of fact not yet proven to be true
- **universality:** involving or being shared by all people
- **catalyst:** any substance that increases the rate of a reaction
- **serendipity:** development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way
- **aesthetic:** beauty and appreciation of
- **fortitude:** courage in pain or adversity

Read paragraph 7.

Stop to model your thinking about the text.

Hmmmm... poetry doesn't always have to rhyme or have any particular form. However, it seems Evans believes Black poets effortlessly ("easy application") use imagery and have a certain rhythm and style. Yet, when she says "no allegation of universality," this creativity has no set form. It is still very different, creative, and new.

Read paragraphs 8-10.

Quickly, ask the students if they think "nod Black heads over common denominators" means to unify a community or separate a community? Why? (MRS)

Listen for responses and call on 1 or 2 students to respond:

- Unify, because a common denominator in math is a shared multiple. So, they are agreeing about something they have in common.

Class, we see the word serendipity as something good or beneficial that happens by chance. With that understanding do we believe Evans only intends for Black Americans to experience her work or does she appreciate when anyone connects to her work?

(Thumbs up for only Black Americans. Thumbs down for anyone.)

Also, we see she feels responsible to continue her father's journey through life as she has gained his strength, knowledge of politics and ability to write. What line from the text tells the reader the story she feels responsible for sharing with her community?

Give students time to identify the text and allow them to respond using white board or sticky note. Students should list the following text:

- “This is who we are, where we have been and where we are. This, is where we must go. And this, is what we must do.”

What words would you use to describe Evans' voice?

Students may respond in ways that reflect the following characteristics:

- Strong
- Loyal
- Determined
- Compassionate
- Focused
- Driven

DISCUSS (10 MINUTES)

How is Evans' voice revealed in her purpose for writing?

Exemplary Responses:

- Evans' purpose for writing is to connect with her community when she writes, “Reaching for what will nod Black heads over common denominators.” In this way Evans uses a bold, proud voice to express her admiration for her culture.
- Evans exhibits a fearless sense of pride when she writes, “If there are those outside the Black experience can hear the music and catch the beat.” While she embraces acceptance from all people her purpose is to connect with those in her community.

Supporting Questions:

- *What is culture?*
- *Why is it important to have pride in who you are?*
- *Does pride in one's culture require you to think less of another culture?*
- *What words from the text help the reader understand Evans' poetic voice?*

WRITING (10 MINUTES)

This has been another great discussion. We have gotten to know Mari Evans through who inspired her to write and how her poetic voice was developed. We will now think back to the person we identified to be influential in our lives. Using imagery, write a paragraph describing who that person is and what influence they have made in your life. Finally, share how you believe they will reflect who you become. This can be either someone you know or someone you admire.



EXIT TICKET

1. Which sentences support the idea that Evans sought to unify her community?

- a. "Reaching for what will nod Black heads over common denominators." (Para. 8)
- b. "This, is where we must go. And this is what we must do," (Para. 10)
- c. "So when I write, I write reaching for all that." (Para. 8)
- d. "I am a continuation of my father's passage..." (Para. 9)

2. What does Evans believe has contributed to the way she thinks about politics? Use text evidence to support your answer.

3. In what ways do literary devices like similes and metaphors add to a text? Provide examples from the text to support your answer.
