



# **GREAT HOOSIERS**

## **6-8 | Lesson 3**



# LESSON 3

## TEXT TITLE

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*"Mari Evans, Poet and Activist"* by Kisha Tandy, The Polis Center

## TEXT MAIN IDEA

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In *"Mari Evans, Poet and Activist,"* author Kisha Tandy shares details about where Evans was born, her education and her most important work. She also informs the reader that Evans was a TV producer and was on staff at multiple universities. Finally, as the author concludes with Evans' work as an activist and the many awards she received, she shares that Evans struggled to gain the financial success she would desire because she was a Black writer.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

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

- Who is Mari Evans?
- How does culture influence the voice of a poet?

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE

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

A biography (nonfiction) differs from a Personal Narrative (literary nonfiction) in that the biography is an account of real events without the use of literary devices. While facts and details may be the same, the text will not reveal to the reader any emotion or insight.

### LITERACY OBJECTIVE

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

Differentiate between literary nonfiction and nonfiction text and establish the purpose for writing each one.

### STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

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Compare and contrast the structure of two or more related works of literature (e.g., similar topic or theme), and analyze and evaluate how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. (8.RL.3.1)

## LAUNCH (5 MINUTES)

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### 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.

*As we continue getting to know Mari Evans, we will read a short nonfiction biography about her life. Much of what we read is considered nonfiction. When you hear nonfiction, what do you think of?*

**Students will create a list in their journal under the heading “Nonfiction Details.” After one minute, poll the class to see how many details they were able to write. They will have a list similar to this:**

- Facts
- Details
- Ideas
- People
- Events
- Text features

*In our reading today, we will be focused on the details. The author’s purpose for writing can be found in the details highlighted throughout the text.*

## READ ALOUD / ENGAGE (15 MINUTES)

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**Read “Mari Evans, Poet and Activist” by Kisha Tandy, The Polis Center.**

**Read paragraphs 1-4.**

**Give students time to make notes of details in each paragraph. However, explain to students to keep their notes concise and to paraphrase. Model thinking aloud.**

*Hmmm... I notice the author began with where she was born: Toledo, Ohio. She was part of the Black Arts Movement in the 1960’s, which makes sense to me because they were concerned with Black pride. She even created a TV show called The Black Experience. She was a professor at IUPUI along with other colleges and wrote several books, plays and music.*

**Ask the students what they feel is the main idea for paragraphs 2-4. They should share answers like:**

- They list important work Evans accomplished.
- They share the contributions Evans made to literature and education.
- They highlight important moments in her career.

*Continue reading the remaining paragraphs of the article. In your Reflective Journal, write the details of the paragraphs and the main idea of paragraphs 5-6 and paragraph 7.*

*With a partner you will complete a Venn Diagram comparing what you learned from “My Father’s Passage” in Lesson 1 and 2 with the text from today.*

**Give students a Venn Diagram and have them work together to compare and contrast the two texts used so far in this unit.**

**Extension: to incorporate personalized learning, students can work independently through the Edpuzzle: A Tribute to Mari Evans.**

## **DISCUSS (10 MINUTES)**

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*What is most likely the reason the author included paragraph 5? Based on the organization of this text, what is the author’s purpose?*

### **Exemplary Responses:**

- The purpose of the biography of Mari Evans is to inform the reader of important details of her life. The reader is able to learn about Evans’ life from birth until just before she died as the author lists events in chronological order.
- By listing the events of Mari Evans life in chronological order, the reader can clearly follow the events in her life. The author used this structure to help the reader understand her career path as it led her to fame.
- The author most likely included paragraph 5 because it shows Evans’ determination to continue writing even though she had obstacles. In spite of the fact she was not respected as some of her peers, she continued to write.
- Even though Evans had a lot of success, by including paragraph 5, the author lets the reader know she was still not respected by some people. This paragraph shows Evans’ love for writing and reaching her people.

**Supporting Questions:**

- *How is the biography organized?*
- *What new information did the biography share?*
- *What does paragraph 5 tell the reader about Mari Evans' culture?*
- *How is the personal narrative and the biography the same?*
- *How is the personal narrative and the biography different?*

**WRITING (15 MINUTES)**

Great job reading "Mari Evans, Poet and Activist" and comparing it to "My Father's Passage." Now you will complete a "because, but, so" writing exercise. You will be given three sentence prompts that will allow you to elaborate on your understanding of the two texts using this strategy. Remember, in order to support your response, you must include evidence from the text. The prompt is as follows:

**Both "My Father's Passage" and "Mari Evans, Poet and Activist" shared important insight into the life of Mari Evans because...but...so...**

**EXIT TICKET**

- 1. What is the most likely reason that the author included paragraph 3?**
  - a. To describe Evans' lack of focus on any particular genre of writing.
  - b. To inform the reader that she was able to premiere a poem at the Children's Museum in 1977.
  - c. To share that teaching was actually Evans' first job before she became a writer.
  - d. To highlight that Evans' career included teaching as well as an extensive collection of poetry, books, plays and songs.
- 2. What is the main idea of paragraphs 5 & 6? Use text evidence to support your answer.**
- 3. Using text evidence, describe the author's purpose for including paragraph 5.**