

This is My Story

Grades 7 & 8

2 Class Periods

Program Segment

- Kleinhans for the Community (approximately 9 minutes)

Objectives

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the history and background of a chosen organization, park, and/or landmark in their communities.
- Students will find their voice and style in creative writing, using subject matter from individual experience, imagination, and storytelling.
- Students will demonstrate insightful reflections on chosen subject matter.
- Students will practice writing vivid scenes, insightful narratives, and distinguish personal essay writing.

Instructional Resources

- *Kleinhans' Gift to Buffalo*
- Access to the internet and/or library resources
- Creative Writing Prompt Sheet

Procedures

CLASS PERIOD 1

1. The teacher will start the lesson by explaining that *Kleinhans' Gift to Buffalo* tells the story of Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo, NY, and further explain that Kleinhans Music Hall is a community-convening space that many people have been to for shows and performances since it was built. The teacher should ask how many of the students have been to Kleinhans. If the students remember or are comfortable, they can share stories of their visits to Kleinhans.
2. The teacher will explain that *Kleinhans' Gift to Buffalo* tells the story of Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo and then show the memory segment of the documentary.
3. The teacher will ask students to think of a memory: Do they have a favorite place in their community? A physical space that they can connect to a special memory? Examples can include a church, national park, community center, etc.
4. The teacher will instruct students to write a personal, creative, and descriptive essay on their favorite memory at this space. This essay should include descriptive language, explore their senses, and reflect on their memory in as much detail as possible. The students should refer to the Creative Writing Prompt Sheet.



Photo courtesy: Joy Scime

CLASS PERIOD 2

1. If the students have completed their creative writing essay on their memory, they should begin researching the history and background of this place. How long has it been open? Does this organization participate in any community advocacy work (making donations, festivals, etc.)? Students can use the internet, newspaper archives, etc.
2. Students will then add a paragraph at the end of their creative essay that includes an overview of civic and community engagement of the special place they had the memory of. Students should include any research about how this place or organization has given back to, or celebrated, the community.

Assessment Task

- Students will hand in their creative essay that includes a paragraph based on their research.

Extension Activity

- Have students break into small groups and share what they have found about their selected place or organization. Students should then discuss ideas on how they could actively participate in community and civic engagement opportunities in their communities. Each group should present their research and thoughts to the class.

Adaptations for Grades 9-12

- Students can research ways to volunteer at the organizations they have chosen.

Photo courtesy: Kleinhans Music Hall





Kleinhans' Gift to Buffalo **Creative Writing Prompts**

Where is your special memory? _____

When thinking about this specific memory; where were you? Were you in a park, a restaurant, a community center, etc.? Who was with you?

Be as descriptive as possible: describe the weather, setting, what you were wearing, what you were eating, what sounds did you hear?

Why is this memory so special to you? Does the space that your memory took place still exist?

How does this memory make you feel? When you think of this memory, can you smell, taste, or hear anything? Does anything remind you of this memory/space?

Does this space hold community events? Is it involved in any advocacy, philanthropic, or civic efforts in your community?

Try making an outline! Create a rough draft where you can outline all of your ideas and descriptions. Group your points into paragraphs and be sure to have a clear introduction and summarize in your conclusion.