

WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE COME FROM
A 2 PART UNIT TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND
THEIR UNIQUENESS AS ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE
HISTORIC RECORD
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❖ **Introduction Goals and aims:**

According to the text, Understanding by Design, by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, Empathy is, “The ability to get inside another person’s feelings and world view.” It is critical that students build a mature empathetic understanding for others. This unit is intended to help students find connections to others and themselves in the classroom. This unit will also allow students to see their role as active members of the historic record

❖ **Rational**

As we develop empathy, we must apply self-knowledge, the ability to see who we are and where we come from. With this ability, one can understand the uniqueness of others; one can find communalities with others while respecting their differences.

❖ **Alaska Standards:**

1. The student will realize that history is a record of their individual experiences that links them to past, present, and future.
2. The student will be able to integrate historical knowledge with historical skill to participate as a life long learner.

❖ **Enduring Understandings:**

Students will understand that they are connected to history individually and as a member of a unique culture in and out of the classroom.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

Students will examine through the following concept questions: who am I; where have I come from; and who has influenced me?

❖ **Key Knowledge and Skills:**

The student will articulate their unique place in history both in small group and class setting.

The student will write journal entries describing their connection to their unique history.
The student will show empathy for the unique insights and experiences of other students.
The student will gather primary source material from his or her own historical life.
The student will apply thinking skill while using research techniques.

❖ Activities:

Pre-activity homework: students will collect photograph to show a chronology of their lifetime from early childhood through contemporary times. Photos should be of a variety to include: self, parent(s), grandparents, relatives, activities, hobbies, friends, etc.

Day 1:

1. Break the class into random groups of four.
2. Each group member will have approximately 3 minutes to share their pictures with the group.
3. After 12 minutes the groups mix so that each person is with new people and the story telling resumes.
4. Repeat until five minutes is left in class.
5. Homework: have each student choose the photo they most enjoyed sharing. In their journal they should do a 10-minute writing starting with the line: I REMEMBER.... Instruct them to list every detail that comes back to them. They should also include what is not shown in the photo:
 - ❖ Who was there?
 - ❖ Where were you?
 - ❖ Who is taking the photo?
 - ❖ What did you feel at the time?

What details of the five senses do you remember?

Homework: students will use the photographs (or photocopies) to decorate the inside covers of their historians journals (a basic journal or note book—I have students purchase a diary like journal for my class). Both the inside cover and first page should be filled.

Day 2: Open with a reading of the first two Paragraphs of **Angela's Ashes** by Frank McCourt published by Scribner 1996 ISBN: 0684874350. This will show the students that it is possible to look back over time to find the details to bring writing to life. The book has a great old photo of McCourt to show as a visual. Students will journal for thirty minutes to describe the choices they made for inclusion of the photos on the first page. This is a free write period. The students can describe the whom, what, and where or they may focus on the value attached to the experience that each photo holds. After thirty minutes the students will be asked to choose a section of writing they felt most connected to or interested in. In a group of four each student will articulate the rationale of their choice.

Homework: The student will make a single choice of a photo to do an expanded write on (15 to 20 minutes). The students are encouraged to go beyond the photo and tell the story behind the picture. The students may choose to tell a story that is related to a photo yet not directly connected.

Day 3: Students will arrange their seating to face each other in a circular format. Each student will show their journal and tell the story behind the photo they choose to focus on.

Day 4: The teacher will open a class seminar with a statement like: “Much like Jane I too had a similar experience”—the connection should be related to the journal share from the previous day. This can be expanded to, “Unlike John, we did not”. The purpose is to get students to discuss communalities and differences in life style and culture.

PART 2 **WHO THEY WERE AND WHERE DID THEY COME** **FROM**

Homework: Each student will be asked to bring in an object that fits in the hand that was given to them by an adult who has made a significant impact on them—due on day 5.

Day 1: Student will sit in the circular fashion. Each student will share the story of the object. Who gave it, why was it given, when was it received etc. The student should share why this person is significant to them.

Homework: Students will be responsible for researching a time line of the life of their significant person. This can be through direct interview or indirect. It may even be partially based on conjecture or assumption. If the latter is the case it is important for the student to note this.

Day 2&3: Students will use appropriate library technology to retrieve, organize and note in their journal the time line to research the big historical events that the significant adult lived through. Each student will be responsible for documenting sources.

Day 4: The class will seminar on the finding of historical consecutiveness of culture, those we are associated with, and our place as an active member of history.

❖ Assessment:

Journal entries will be graded on a completion basis.

Seminar grades will be based on the following:

Active participation with comments that connect to culture, concepts presented from journal readings, or connected to other student’s experiences will receive 80% to 90%. Students who participate as active listeners will receive 70% to 75%.