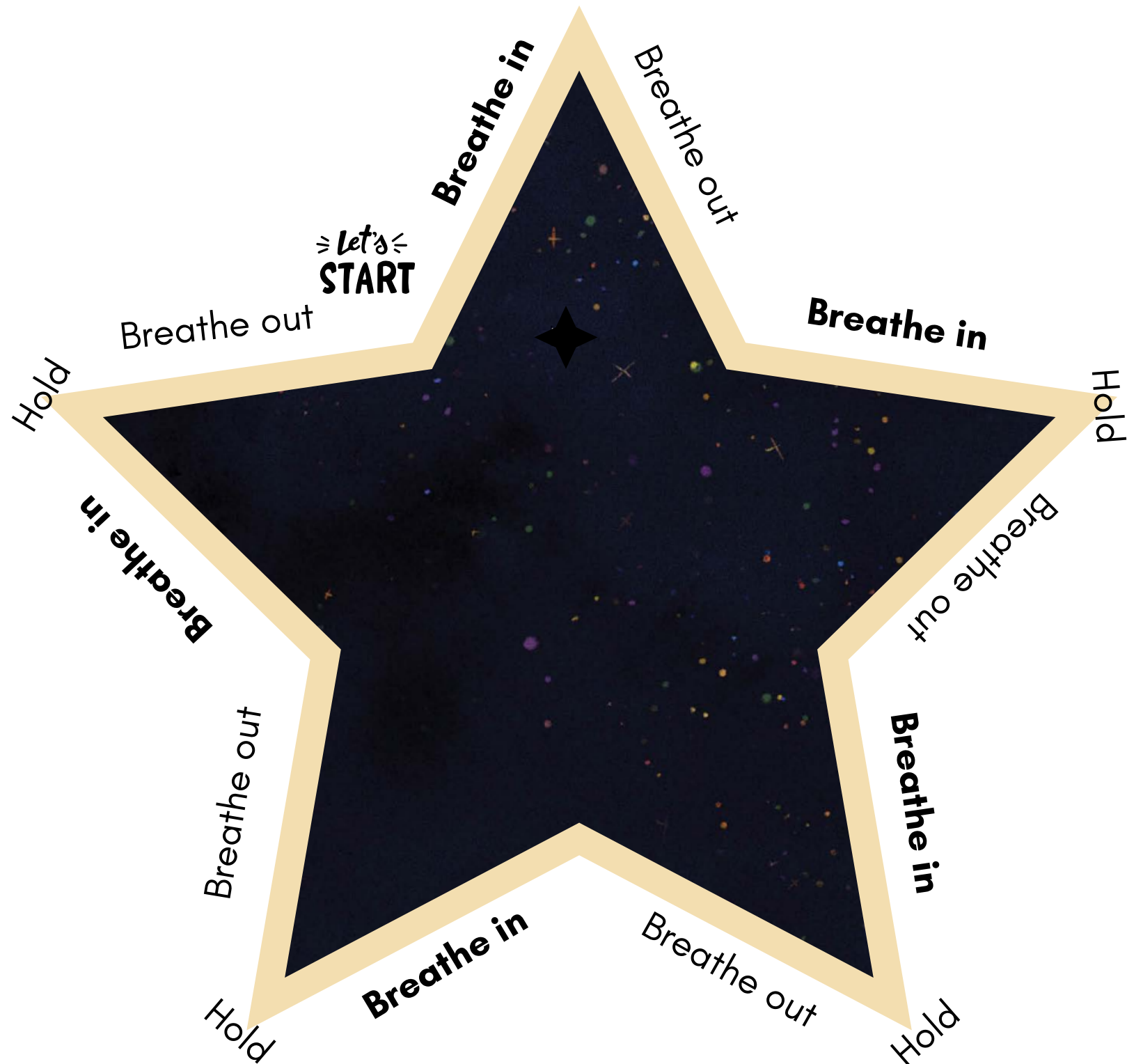


## TEACHING & ACTIVITY GUIDE

# STAR BREATHING

Trace your finger up one side of the star, while you take a deep breath in. Hold your breath at the point and breathe out as you slide down the other side. Keep going until you've gone around the whole star.



# Discussion Questions: Exploring What Shapes Us

## Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will engage with the book *Where We Come From* by John Coy, Shannon Gibney, Sun Yung Shin, and Diane Wilson to explore the elements that shape who we are: place, ancestors, movement, struggle, determination, and hope.

## Materials

- *Where We Come From* by John Coy, Shannon Gibney, Sun Yung Shin, and Diane Wilson
- Whiteboard and markers
- Copies of the book
- Art supplies for drawing or writing (optional)

## Introduction

1. Begin the lesson by discussing the concepts of what shapes us. Have students in large or small groups discuss elements that shape a person; place, language, stories, movement, struggle, and hope.
2. Introduce the book *Where We Come From* and briefly discuss how the four authors wove together their individual stories to explore what shaped them. Have them listen for the things that shaped each author.
3. Read *Where We Come From*.
4. Discuss all the different things that shaped each author. What helped them become who they are today?
5. Have students think about the places, people, food, and stories that have shaped them. Have students draw or write for 5-10 minutes.
6. Have students share what has shaped them. Encourage them to explain the significance of the people, places, or things that they have chosen to write or draw.
7. Facilitate a brief discussion after each sharing to explore common themes and insights.
8. Encourage students to continue thinking about things from the past and the present that have given them hope, delight, and a better understanding of where they come from.



# Create a Bio Poem

## Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to create a poem that is inspired by ***Where We Come From***.

## Materials

- Paper and pencils for each student
- Sample poems for reference. We encourage educators to share their own poem.

## Introduction

1. Begin the lesson by asking students if they have ever written a poem before and what they know about different types of poems.
2. Explain that today's lesson will allow students to follow a unique formula to create a bio poem. A bio poem is a type of poem that follows a specific format or formula to describe a person. It typically consists of several lines or stanzas, each with a designated purpose, and the end result is a concise yet descriptive portrayal of the individual. Here is the format for the bio poem:

Line 1: First name

Line 2: A simile that describes something about you to something in nature. A simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things or ideas using the words "like" or "as" to create a vivid and imaginative connection. For example: "Cunning like a coyote." "Eyes as bright as morning light."

Line 3: Who comes from... For example: "Who comes from hockey rinks cold enough to see your breath." "Who comes from desert sand."

Line 4: Who feels... For example: "Who feels happy building a snow fort."

Line 5: Who fears... For example: "Who fears crowded spaces."

Line 6: Who needs... For example: "Who needs seasons of all kinds."

Line 7: Who gives... For example: "Who gives courage in a game."

Line 8: Who would like to see. For example: "Who would like to see Alaska."

Line 9: Resident of... For example: "Minneapolis."

Line 10: Last Name

3. Discuss each line briefly and provide examples to clarify the formula.
4. Pass out and read a sample bio poem. One can be found on page 5 of this guide. Or create your own and share as a personal example.
5. Provide each student with a blank sheet of paper and a pencil.
6. Instruct students to choose a person (it can be themselves or someone else) to write a bio poem about.
7. Encourage them to brainstorm traits, characteristics, and other details about the chosen person before starting to write.
8. Have students follow the bio poem formula on page 4 or use the formula as a prompt to create their own poetry.
9. Have students share their work.

# Bio Poem Formula

A bio poem is a poem with a very specific formula. It describes a person, and it is 10 lines long. You can write a bio poem about yourself or about someone else; the formula works either way.

Line 1: First name

Line 2: A simile that describes something about you to something in nature. A simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things or ideas using the words "like" or "as" to create a vivid and imaginative connection. For example: "Cunning like a coyote." "Eyes as bright as morning light."

Line 3: Who comes from a type of landscape: For example: "Who comes from frozen lakes and snow-covered hills."

Line 4: Who feels. For example: "Who feels happy skating in my park's ice rink at night."

Line 5: Who fears. For example: "Who fears crowded spaces."

Line 6: Who needs. For example: "Who needs seasons of all kinds."

Line 7: Who gives. For example: "Who gives care to my little brother."

Line 8: Who would like to see. For example: "Who would like to see Alaska."

Line 9: Resident of. For example: "Minneapolis, Minnesota"

Line 10: Last Name

# Sample Bio Poem



Mia

Quiet like a tidepool, but heart like a pounding wave,

Who comes from another shore,

Who feels peace at the beach,

Who fears the sting of a jellyfish,

Who needs shells to collect,

Who gives breadcrust to the seagulls,

Who would like to see my old home, my friends,

Resident of both sides of the ocean

Pham

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# We Come from Stardust Science Activity

*We come from stardust,  
our bodies made of ancient elements.*

Read the following passage from page 44 of *Where We Come From*: “We come from stardust.’ Yes, this is true. Nearly all the elements in our bodies are made up of atoms that came from stars that exploded billions of years ago. In addition, Dakhóta people are called Wičhánŋpi Oyáte, Star People, whose spirits came from the Creator along the “spirit road” known as the Milky Way. They emerged at Bdoté, the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. Both modern science and Dakhóta stories agree that we come from stardust.”

Share the following key facts and research findings with the students:

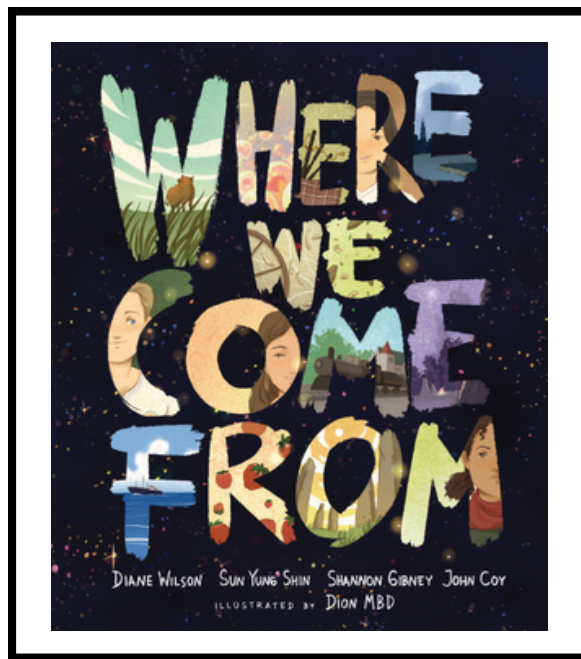
- Elements such as hydrogen and helium, which are the most abundant elements in the universe, were created during the Big Bang.
- Heavier elements, including carbon, oxygen, and nitrogen, were formed inside the cores of massive stars through a process called nucleosynthesis.
- When these massive stars eventually exploded in supernovae, they scattered these elements into space.
- Over billions of years, these elements came together to form celestial bodies like planets, including Earth.
- These elements are essential for life as we know it and make up the building blocks of organic molecules that make up everything including us.
- Videos to explain the Big Bang:

**Smithsonian Channel:** <https://youtu.be/xIV-k39Kukw?feature=shared>

**Australian Academy of Science:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94am14uQ9fQ>

**Neil deGrasse Tyson - The Most Astounding Fact:** <https://youtu.be/kl0J6Le5MpM?feature=shared>





## Where We Come From

Ages: 5-10 HC: 978-1-5415-9612-2 • \$18.99 (list) • \$14.24 (S&L)

Multi-user eBook \$31.99 • (list) • \$23.99 (S&L)



Photo by Ne-Dah-Ness Greene

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