Assignment: Autobiographical Poem OR I Am Poem

Essential Questions: To what extent am I a product of both my environment and my culture? What symbolizes my journey, hopes, ideals, values, and dreams?

Objectives: IWBAT write an autobiographical narrative poem using relevant and descriptive details that reflects both my environment and my culture heritage. (8W.3, 8W.4)

Directions--Autobiographical Poem: Spend some time visiting with your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles--anyone at least one generation older than you. Consider where have you grown up--maybe you have lived in several places or maybe just in one area. What has happened to you that has had a lasting impact on your life--broken appendages, family, blessings, heartaches, loss, joy, etc. Formulate a poem with a minimum of 20-25 lines, broken into as many stanzas as you want. Your poem does not have to be centered in the page like the example on the back. Include a minimum of 4 different examples of figurative language, literary devices, or poetic devices. You must underline or highlight each example and label it off to the side. The label must be correct in order to receive credit for a device. Use the rough draft organizer below to help generate ideas for your narrative poem. The final must be typed on a separate sheet of paper.

Important names ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Adjectives that describe YOU ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Important places in your life ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Description of where you have grown up the most ______________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Things, people or ideas that you love ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Things that evoke strong feelings ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Things you need or want ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Your most positive qualities ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Things you fear ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Things you have dreamed about ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Events that have happened in your life ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
Places/things you would like to go, see, or do ______________________, ______________________, ______________________, ______________________
My Roots--Wrapped Around My Heart
by Gaylene Simones

I am from the gritty sandy soil
That gets into your eyes, hair,
and nostrils on a windy day.
I am from the corralled cows
in the muck, mud, and manure
after a heavy rainfall.
I am from the Silver Maples--my sanctuary, tall and strong
that endured for more than a century--
the natural seat in a tree formed by four trunks
spreading out in all directions.
I’m from corn, alfalfa, bluegrass, meadowland
threatened by the hot scorching sun and the fear of prairie fires.
Tornadoes, wind, lightning, hail.
Burning cold winters--causing fiery frozen fingers and feet.

I am from Harry and Eleanor--God rest their souls--
Old names--strong, resilient,
who built a solid unit of four.
Allan, Roberta, LeRoy, and me--
still strong, persevering, loving, and complete.
I’m from burns scorched into an arm long before my time.
To a pitchfork stabbed into a leg during my time.
From epilepsy--pain, loss, stoicism, and lard.
I’m diabetes--passed through the blood that flows
through my veins.

I’m from Norway, England, Germany, and France.
I’m from the northern lights and stars spread
across some of the darkest skies you’ll ever see.
From BIG RED--Cornhusker Land
Dreams of leaving and fears of leaving
Dreams of returning and fears of returning.

From love at 20--to a broken heart--ripped, crushed, torn to shreds
repaired, healed, loved, sanctified.
Our Father, Amen, and Holy Mary Mother of God.
Graced with Shannon and Samantha--
lives to share, blessings beyond compare.

I am like pictures in an album followed by blank pages.
I’m still evolving.
I embrace all that I am and all that I am from
and anticipate with joy all that I will be.
I Am, I Exist, I Will Always Be...
By Gaylene Simones

Gaylene (Gay Gay)
Gritty, Resilient, Lover of Language and All Things Written,
Life-long Learner
Daughter of Harry and Eleanor
Sibling to Allan, Roberta, and LeRoy
Wife to John
Mother to Shannon and Samantha
Aunt to Many
From the sandy soil of Nebraska to the wild west of Oregon--finally Idaho.
Who Loves my husband of 35 years, my children beyond infinity,
animals--especially my four-footed children who yell at me when I’ve been
gone too long, music, drama, and WORDS.
Who Cares about the environment, freedom, peace, and tranquility.
Who Needs better health, less stress, TIME to READ, more sleep.
Who is like a slinky--Flexible, an ear to bend--Listener, a Friend in need,
and most of all an Individual
Who Fears for our planet, that there is never enough money, and that what I do is
not always enough.
Who Dreamed of being a detective, an archeologist, but NEVER a teacher
Who is--a teacher
Who Endures diabetes, high blood pressure, and lack of sleep
Who would like to visit England, Norway, and Australia and New Zealand
Who Visits Rhode Island and Oregon as often as I can.
From Carpenter to Simones, this is
ME
Due Date ____________________

Grade Sheet--Autobiographical Poem

Title and author of poem _______/10

20-25 lines (minimum) _______/40

Figurative Language, Literary devices _______/40
or poetic devices--4 minimum
Underlined and correctly labeled

Presented (either small group or whole class) _______/10

Total Autobiographical Poem _______/100

Possible deductions:
Written in pencil -10 pts
Sloppy -15 pts
Missing MLA heading -5 pts

Figurative language/Literary devices/poetic devices:
Metaphor—compares two unlike things without using ‘like’ or ‘as’—non-literal reference—poetry is food for the soul.

Simile—compares two unlike things using the words ‘like’ or ‘as’—like a wild tornado

Personification—giving human-like qualities to animals or inanimate objects—the sun smiles on me.

Imagery—words or phrases used to describe that directly appeal to the senses—The yellow hot, blistering sun warmed every inch of my body.

Alliteration—words that begin with the same consonant sound—lifelong learner, listener

Assonance—words that have a common vowel sound placed close together—and an animal approaches

Consonance—the repetition of a consonant sound within a series of words—The white tiger tripped over the dish during the night.

Oxymoron—two contradictory words placed together that make sense—deafening silence.

Onomatopoeia—words whose sound suggests the meaning—pop, ding, bang, zip.

Hyperbole—a deliberate extravagant and often outrageous exaggeration—My jaw dropped to the floor.

Idiom—a phrase particular to a culture or region that doesn’t literally mean what it says.

Allusion—making a reference to another piece of famous literature, art, person or event—a Garden of Eden

Repetition—the deliberate use of a word or phrase more than once to create emphasis or specific effect.

Parallel Structure—similarly constructed words, phrases, or clauses that appear in a sentence or paragraph.
   (Can be mistaken for repetition)

Rhyme—words at the end of a line have the same vowel sound pattern, ie. heard and word

Rhythm—intentional use of types of punctuation, line length, syllabication, # of stanzas or figurative language