**Memory Poem Assignment**

**Student Name:**

**Read as a class:**

**Memory Poem**

**My First Memory (of Librarians)**

by Nikki Giovanni

This is my first memory:

A big room with heavy wooden tables that sat on

a creaky

wood floor

A line of green shades—bankers’ lights—down

the center

Heavy oak chairs that were too low or maybe I

was simply

too short

For me to sit in and read

So my first book was always big

In the foyer up four steps a semi-circle desk

presided

To the left side the card catalogue

On the right newspapers draped over what looked

like

a quilt rack

Magazines face out from the wall

The welcoming smile of my librarian

The anticipation in my heart

All those books—another world—just waiting

At my fingertips.

**My Memory Library**

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Imagine if I was given one moment,  
just a single slice of my past.  
I could hold it close forever,  
and that moment would always last.  
  
I'd put the moment in a safe,  
within my heart's abode.  
I could open it when I wanted,  
and only I would know the code.  
  
I could choose a time of laughing,  
a time of happiness and fun.  
I could choose a time that tried me  
through everything I've done.  
  
I sat and thought about what moment  
would always make me smile.  
One that would always push me  
to walk that extra mile.  
  
If I'm feeling sad and low,  
if I'm struggling with what to do,  
I can go and open my little safe  
and watch my moment through.  
  
There are moments I can think of  
that would lift my spirits every time.  
The moments when you picked me up,  
when the road was hard to climb.  
  
For me to only pick one moment  
to cherish, save and keep  
is proving really difficult,  
as I've gathered up a heap!  
  
I've dug deep inside my heart,  
found the safe and looked inside  
There was room for lots of moments;  
in fact, hundreds if I tried.  
  
I'm building my own little library,  
embedded in my heart,  
for all the moments spent with you  
before you had to part.  
  
I can open it up whenever I like,  
pick a moment and watch it through,  
My little library acts as a promise  
I'll never ever forget you.

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| **Write about a childhood memory.**  **Picture the event. Write a paragraph.** | **Describe the light during the event. Use key words and/or phrases.** |
| **Describe the sounds you remember. Use key words and/or phrases.** | **Do you have any questions about the memory? Write the questions here.** |
| **What are your feelings about the**  **event? Use key words and/or phrases.** | **Write some of the most important**  **words from the other five rooms.** |

**Improving Memory Poems**

1. *Select.*We remember certain aspects of our life because they made an impact on us. Think about a memory you have, and why you believe that memory comes to mind so quickly.
2. *Develop*. Expand on the memory itself. For example, how old were you when this happened? Which people were involved? Is it a single event that you can pinpoint, or is it a more general time in your life? What is more important to your recollection of this memory -- specific details, or more general impressions?
3. *Feel*. Write about what emotions you feel when you remember this time in your life. Does this memory make you feel happy, wistful, angry or hurt? Why? No matter what, poetry is a fantastic way to explore and accept whatever you're feeling.
4. *To share or not to share?*Is this a memory that you have often shared with others, or have you kept it to yourself? How come? Writing a poem can help you preserve a private memory for you to keep and enjoy, or to help you express something you may have struggled with before.
5. *Reflect.*After you have written about the memory, how do you feel now? Are you happy or peaceful, relieved or upset? These emotions can be just as important to your poem as the emotions from your past.
6. *Look forward.*Our past is a huge part of what shapes our future. Have you learned anything new from these memories? Are there feelings and experiences you want to recreate, or actions you'd like to carry out differently next time? Any of these things can be a part of the poem you're writing, or inspiration for a future project.