

# MARWA ARSANIOS

*A Letter Inside a Letter: A Poetic Exploration of Connectedness and Ownership*

**Grades 6th-12th: may be adapted for various grade levels**



## OBJECTIVE

This lesson allows students to understand how the ownership of land has changed and the impact it has culturally and geographically. Using discussion and poetry, students will develop personal connections with what it means to feel or experience ownership or a lack of ownership.

## VOCABULARY

- Land Acknowledgement
- Land Rights
- Archive
- Nature Ownership
- Identity

## MATERIALS

- Local Land Acknowledgements(see resources)
- Paper
- Pencils/Pens/Markers

## Before Hand

Discuss how Arsanios uses an archive of personal stories to connect with the viewer, and how that connectedness acts as a catalyst for curiosity, leading to a deeper understanding of a person or group's history. (See Educator Guide).

## Discussion

- How does listening to other people's stories create connectedness? For instance, when a friend opens up to you about something they are going through, how does your perception of them change? Does it change at all?
- What is the benefit of listening to other people's experiences?
- How does the artist use listening as a tool to talk about ownership of land and nature?

## Procedures

- As a class look at some of the local Cincinnati Land Acknowledgements (see resources below). To learn about what a Land Acknowledgment is, see resource two.
- By reframing the discussion questions above, ask students to think about how their ideas of the land we live on may be different after reading the Land Acknowledgements. Did they learn anything new? How do they think that new knowledge can be used?
- Using a pen or pencil, have students underline (if they each have a copy) or write down 3-5 words or phrases that stand out to them within the Land Acknowledgement/s.
- Have students do a quick write about various aspects of their identity and how those aspects may or may not pertain to ownership (ownership of personhood, self, land, space, time, objects, ideas, etc).
- Have students discuss their quick write in small groups.
- Using their keywords from the Land Acknowledgement/s and their quick write/discussion, ask students to write a letter to their past or future self. This letter could take the form of a poem, drawing, collage, or an actual letter.

## Resources

1. CAC Land Acknowledgment  
([https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UBd9t3D-lhcmV\\_0YahNgCvNCPSgdM3po?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UBd9t3D-lhcmV_0YahNgCvNCPSgdM3po?usp=sharing))
2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT — Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition ([gcnativeamericancoalition.com](http://gcnativeamericancoalition.com))
3. Land Acknowledgement | Diversity and Inclusion - Miami University ([miamioh.edu](http://miamioh.edu))
4. Land Acknowledgement | Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati ([ensemblecincinnati.org](http://ensemblecincinnati.org))