



Writing Wild

Overview:

Students discover natural objects in the outdoors marked by tags that direct them to write a reflective sentence about the object.

Objectives:

- Students will independently process their interactions with the natural world through the written word.
- Students will make close observations of the natural world
- Students will understand vocabulary words pertaining to grammar.
- Students will form complete written sentences.

Subject Areas: Language Arts

Grade Levels: 3rd-6th Grade

Topics: Plants, Animals, Water, Weather

Great Lakes Literacy Principles:

2. Natural forces formed the Great Lakes; the lakes continue to shape the features of their watershed.
5. The Great Lakes support a broad diversity of life and ecosystems.
6. The Great Lakes and humans in their watersheds are inextricably interconnected.

Materials:

12 Grammar vocabulary cards
Grammar vocabulary worksheet

Procedure:

Preparations: (all of the preparation can be done by students, depending on time):

- Prior to the class period, the instructor will need to create (or have students create) a set of cards with the following words:

Metaphor	Alliteration
Emotion	Simile
Fact	Comparison
Personification	Smell
Sound	A quote (ie: "What would this object say if it could talk?")
Texture	Opinion

Depending on the level of your class, you may want to make an explanation for each word on the back of the card, for example on the back of the "Personification" card, write "Write a sentence about this object that gives the object human characteristics"

- In your outdoor setting, each card needs to be assigned to an object- a tree, plant, creek, rock, patch of sand, bird's nest etc. The card should be leaned on or fixed to the object with tape or string. It may be helpful if the cards are brightly colored.

Lesson Body:

- In the outdoor or indoor setting, review the terms on the cards. Perhaps ask for examples of each using a classroom object as your subject.
- To begin the lesson, explain the following procedure. There are two options here- you may allow the class to roam at will and find all of the cards on their own (be aware of the class' impact on the place!). This gives them time to explore outside on their own, an opportunity that contributes to a strong ongoing relationship with the place. However, you may also want the kids to walk to each card one at a time in order. When students find a card, they are to write a sentence on their worksheet next to the word on the card they found. If they find a tree with the word "Metaphor" taped to it, they might write, "The tree was a grandfather, bent over and ancient."
- When each student has visited each card, carefully collect the cards and clipboards.

OPTION: If your class has a Polaroid or digital camera, take a picture of each object to post in your classroom along with the group writing. You could also have the students draw sketches of the objects to post.

- Now gather your students in a large group for a share out and discussion of the activity.

Discussion options:

There are two forces at work here. One is the need for close observation in order to write the sentence. How did you write? What did you notice that you might not have noticed otherwise? What sentences were the most challenging or the easiest?

The other discussion thread is the differing perspectives students are likely to have of the same object. Discuss the writer's perspective- perhaps draw attention to two starkly contrasting sentences written about the same object. How do we as writers arrive at such differing places? Are these differing perspectives helpful or hindering to our writing as a class? Why or why not? Are there places in the class besides writing where different perspectives show up? How do they affect our class?

Follow up options:

- Have each student choose a sentence that they like but did not write themselves. They can use this sentence as the beginning of a paragraph about the object, returning to the object to observe it closely for inspiration.
- As an art follow up, use the pictures/drawings of the object as the centerpiece around which all the sentences can be written. Post the pictures and writing in the classroom.
- Have the class choose a sentence from each object observed and string them together into a poem. Because the poem reflects aspects of so many objects in one place, the poem becomes a tribute to the place itself. This concept ties into the idea of ecosystem- many small living and non-living things come together to form an ecosystem, just as many small observations of objects come together to form a "place poem".

Teacher Reflection:

Please find "comments" section on the curriculum page.



Name: _____

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Texture: Describe how this object feels when you touch it.

Smell: Describe the way this object smells to you.

Sound: Write a description of the sound this object makes.

Opinion: Write something you think or believe about this object.

Emotion: Describe an emotion you have about this object. (Connection to self.)

Fact: Write down a sentence that shares a fact about this object. (example: The mountain is 32,000 feet tall.)

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Quotation: What would this object say if it could talk?

Simile: Compare this object to something using “like” or “as.” (example: The mountain was as tall as a skyscraper. The skyscraper was tall like a mountain.)

Metaphor: Compare this object to something else without using “like” or “as.” (example: The mountain was a skyscraper tall and sharp in the sky.)

Personification: Write a sentence about this object that gives it human characteristics. (example: The mountain angrily reached into the sky attempting to spear a cloud.)

Alliteration: Describe an object using alliteration. (example: The majestic mountain maintained an imposing silhouette against the marbled sky).

Comparison: Compare this object to another object. (example: The mountain towers like a skyscraper.)

