

Beyond The Boring: Writing with Primary Students

Grade level: Appropriate for all writers; used with elementary students in grades 1 – 3.

Approximate length of time to complete lesson: Each activity is a “mini lesson” (10 minutes) used in a writing workshop. Lesson length dependent on amount of writing time included.

Objective: To increase the use of descriptive language in writing about a place or an event.

Anticipatory Set: Read a favorite picture book or excerpt from a story that has vivid images of a setting or an event. Have students discuss the elements that make the images so effective.

Activity #1 – “Draw What You See”

Materials: Large sheets of newsprint paper and a pencil

Directions:

1. Have students think of a place, any place, where a story might take place.
2. On large piece of paper students draw EVERYTHING they “see” at the place.

Activity #2 – “This is the place...”

Materials: Lined paper and pencils

Directions:

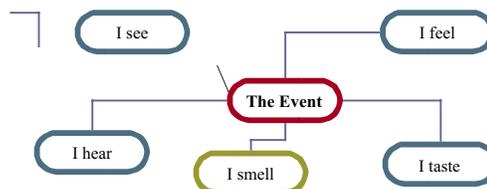
1. Ask students to look at their drawings from Activity #1.
2. Have them make a list of everything they see at this place.
2. Every sentence on the list must start with “This is the place...”

Activity #3 – “Five Senses Scene”

Materials: Large sheets of newsprint and pencils

Directions:

1. Ask students to think of an event from their lives:
2. Have them write the event in the center of the paper and create a web around the event, using the five senses.



3. Students choose one of the 5 senses and list everything they can remember from the event that fits under that heading.
4. Students move to another one of the senses (you can limit their time on each one or they can work on completing this during free time) and list everything they can under that heading.
5. Have them continue through the five senses.

Follow up activities:

1. Students generate a rough draft of “the place” and/or “the event.”
2. The piece is added to the rough draft pocket in their writing folder.

3. Students may choose to revise this piece (during their free time or during another writing workshop time when we are revising) and eventually “publish” it.

Resources:

Donald H. Graves, *WRITING: Teachers & Children at Work*
ISBN 0-435-08203-5

Adele Fiderer, *Teaching Writing: A Workshop Approach*
ISBN 0590-49202-0

Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*
ISBN 0-385-48001-6

Jon Hassler, *My Staggerford Journal*
ISBN 0-345-43288-6

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