

MINNESOTA WRITING PROJECT
DEMONSTRATION LESSON TEMPLATE

Title: Team GORP – Making Metaphors with Munchies

Grade appropriate: 4th – 8th

Approximate length of time to complete lesson: Two to three hours for writing and two hours for creating final draft, depending on how involved the final drafts become.

Objective (s) to be covered: Individual Goals – Creating a metaphor poem constructively - searching for metaphors & teaching about figurative language, metaphors/similes, only after poems are done, and the GORP is eaten.

Team Goals – We use this on our first team day in October. It becomes a metaphor we use all year long for discipline/management, and more importantly, as a unifying team identity for our team, counselors & administrative staff

Specific standards addressed: 1. Recognize and interpret similes, metaphors, and words with multiple meanings. 2. Write frequently in a variety of forms, including but not limited to the following: poems, stories, plays, essays, journals, letters, directions, editorials, business communications and reports.

Brief summary/outline: Self-contained, two-day unit

1. Group practice –

Brainstorming: Define either characteristics of a person everyone knows (we use the team teachers) or we declare our favorite food and then list how we are similar to that food. (This is a great way to model that our promise to our students that they will be respected if they are honest and can support their positions....we talk a bit about kindness, how to give feedback to a person about their characteristics/personality. Each year we've done this, one student at least has said something not very complimentary, but very true, about one of us and the students have waited, nervously, to see our response. When we agree with their evaluation of us as a person, ask for clarification/support, or talk openly about how it feels to hear that, we achieve so much from such a simple conversation.)

Writing: Write a short poem about each teacher, comparing them to their favorite foods, with students working together to find unique word choices and think aloud instruction from teachers.

2. Student work –

Individual student work - Students do brainstorming independently first, then ask their best friend on the team, or seat partners, depending on the year & student mix, to add to their list of personal characteristics and/or to name three words they think of immediately when they see the student.

Students then create their own metaphor poem, comparing themselves to their favorite snack food.

Once the poems are written – with no guidelines except that they “capture themselves” on paper with comparisons to their food – we mix all the munchies together and students try to describe the team mix. We name it. We eat it. We explore it together and send it to the assistant principals/office staff to sample. Students then work in small groups to write a team GORP poem they will present to the team and hang above their individual poems. (One year, with a particularly difficult group of students, we scooped out a small bowl and poured vinegar on it...representing that the actions of just a few can sour the flavor of our team, with all its unique, yummy flavors. It was a strongly remembered experience for the students all year, with them saying “don’t be vinegar” to each other and for our assistant principals, who used it as a way to start conversation during discipline actions.)

3. Figurative Language Instruction –

At the end of the entire activity, we discuss figurative language, the difference between simile and metaphor, and have students do a museum walk – look but don’t touch, quietly, all along our hallway to find examples of figurative language, especially if it really helped them see the how the comparison was made.

Extensions – Create a team package for the GORP mix, calibrate recipes for recreating it for larger groups in math, do a Food Network type review of the mixture, both literally and figuratively about our team

Resources:

- Backpack stationary or final draft paper – we use butcher block
- “Artsy stuff” – papers, scissors, glue, colors
- A small supply of munchies - granola, cookies, chips, fruit bites, etc., in case someone can’t bring food to school easily. (* Note – remember to have a couple of sugar free selections for diabetic students and be aware of any nut allergies.)
- Brainstorming individual sheets
- Thesaurus/dictionary

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