

Texture Poetry

The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch

Jane Baber
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Grade Level	10th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	1-2 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	minutes
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, American Literature		

Essential Question

How can the feeling of a physical object mirror the feelings of a character?

Summary

In this lesson, students will explore how the sense of touch functions in The Great Gatsby by composing poetry that makes connections between character and an associated object's texture.

Snapshot

Engage

Students work together in groups to analyze objects of various textures in order to practice descriptive vocabulary.

Explore

Having established how to describe an object's texture, students reflect on a person's relationship to the texture of an object.

Explain

Using the skills practiced to describe an object and a person's relationship to how an object feels, students analyze how characters in *The Great Gatsby* can be understood through the sense of touch. Students also compose a poem where they connect a character from the novel to the texture of an object associated with that character.

Extend

Students read their poems to the class, allowing their peers to guess which character the poem is about based on the description of the character's object.

Evaluate

Student poems are evaluated using the attached rubric in the The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch handout.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR302: Draw simple logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 10)

10.1.S.3: Conduct formal and informal presentations in a variety of contexts supporting their message with evidence and using verbal and nonverbal cues.
10.3.W.1: Compose narratives reflecting real or imagined experiences that:

- include engaging plots involving well-developed, complex characters resolving conflicts
- establish narrator(s) that enhance(s) the narrative
- are intentionally sequenced in a way to achieve a specific effect
- provide clear descriptions, using precise language, sensory details, and dialogue
- include varied syntax to enhance readability
- emulate literary elements and/or literary devices from mentor texts

10.4.W.2: Select language to create a specific effect in writing according to purpose and audience.

Attachments

- Lesson Slides—Texture Poetry.pptx
- The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch - Spanish.docx
- The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch - Spanish.pdf
- The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch.docx
- The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch.pdf

Materials

- Small objects of various textures for "Texture Bags" (cotton balls, sandpaper squares, rice, marbles, etc.)
- Texture Words handout
- The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch handout
- Lesson Slides (attached)

Engage

To begin, organize students into groups. For this activity, five groups are recommended, although that number can be adjusted to meet the needs of your class size.

Prior to moving into groups, you will put together "Texture Bags". To do this, you will need five paper lunch sacks, each filled with objects of various textures. For example, one sack may be filled with sandpaper square, one with makeup sponges or cotton balls, one with rice, one with marbles, etc.

Once students are in groups, either pass out a "Texture Bag" to each group or have one student from each group bring one to their table. Give students five minutes to work together feeling the contents of the bag at their group; as they feel the contents of their bag, students should start compiling a list of adjectives that describe the texture of the bags' contents. Use **slide 3** for guidance for this stage. Tell each group to keep their guesses about the contents a secret, as they will try to have the other groups guess about it later. As students are feeling and discussing the contents, and most likely making guesses about what objects are inside, pass out copies of the Texture Words handout to each group; this is simply a packet of many words that can be used to describe texture, and may help students broaden their descriptive vocabulary.

Teacher's Note: Five Senses

Since this lesson is focused on one of the five senses, consider having a short whole class discussion about what the five senses are. Who can name them all? What can be said about each? Why are they important when reading a novel?

After students have had enough time to create a list of words to describe the contents of their "Texture Bag", instruct them to channel their reactions into writing a Two-Minute Paper. The instructions for the Two-Minute Paper can be found on **slide 4** in the attached **Lesson Slides**.

After the two minutes is up and students are done writing, have them share out their writing. Consider having one volunteer from each group share with the whole class, then ask the class to guess what was in each group's "Texture Bag" based on their writing.

Explore

Next, now that students have actively worked with how to describe an object's texture using a range of descriptive language, they will work toward establishing how people relate or connect to an object's texture.

Start a whole class discussion with the question, "Does texture affect the way we relate to or connect with an object?"

Sample Student Responses

Possible student answers may include:

- "There are some things with certain textures that I wouldn't want to hold, like something slimy or something sharp."
- "Some objects may feel the same, but we react to them differently, like a hard nail vs. a hard piece of candy."

Take time to hear students' ideas, then display the pictures on **slide 5** of the pillow and the hamster. Ask students to describe the textures that both have in common.

Sample Student Responses

Possible student answers may include "soft" or "fluffy".

After waiting for student responses, move to **slide 6** which displays the question "What are the differences between the way you would hold these objects?

Sample Student Responses

Possible student answers may include, "You would lay on a pillow, but not on the hamster" or "You hold a pillow tightly, and sometimes hit it to get it fluffier, but you wouldn't do that with the hamster". The student responses to this will probably be pretty wacky!

Give students a few more examples on **slides 7 and 8** and hold whole class discussions of the different relationships to and with the texture of an object. Ask, "What do the different reactions to how we would hold these objects reveal about our own character?"

Explain

Now that students have worked both with how an object feels and how that texture can relate to us personally, display the essential question on **slide 9**, "How can the feeling of a physical object mirror the feelings of a character?"

Display **slide 10** with photos with texture to compare. On this slide, ask students to look at the picture and reflect on how different characters from *The Great Gatsby* would react. Look at the fragile flower; how would Jay Gatsby react compared to how Tom Buchanan would respond? What about Daisy? How would they handle the flower differently? Even though the flower has the texture "fragile", the three characters would have different reactions, and these different reactions would reveal different feelings or traits of the characters. In this way, the feeling of an object, it's texture, can reveal or mirror the traits or feelings of a character.

Next, using **slide 11**, students will choose one character from *The Great Gatsby* and write 1) a metaphor and 2) a simile from the perspective of their character, describing the flower. Share examples from volunteers with the whole class.

Teacher's Note: Simile and Metaphor

Assist as needed while students are writing their metaphors and similes. Consider using examples like this reaction of Jordan Baker to a golf club to assist: "First, it is like my royal scepter, tall and smooth and one that will lead me to rule a love over the boy next door". In this example, it is revealed, without revealing the character or the object, that Jordan has confidence and an interest in Nick Carraway (the "boy next door" to Jay Gatsby).

Once students have shared their examples, pass out copies of the "The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch" handout. Inform students that they will be writing Texture Poetry.

Using **slide 12**, inform students that they will need to choose ONE character and ONE associated object about which to write.

On this handout is a place for brainstorming as well as a format that students can use to guide them through their poem composition. Consider also encouraging students to break away from this format if they desire. Encourage students to use the pre-writing done with their Two-Minute Papers and the Texture Words handout to help with descriptive word choice.

Extend

Once students have had time to complete their Texture Poetry, consider having students share their poems with their small groups or have volunteers read to the whole class. During the reading of their poems, the rest of the class can guess at the end which character the poem is about and which object has been described.

Evaluate

On the The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Touch handout, there is a simple rubric that can be used to evaluate these poems. Consider also using **slide 3** as a reminder for students. The slide informs students that their final poem will include the Texture Poem and the rubric. This rubric is attached as both a PDF and a Word file, so it can either be modified as needed.

Resources

- 30 Days of Poetry by Zain Sanburn, http://slideplayer.com/slide/2812262/
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Two-Minute Paper. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f506cf73