



Brushstrokes

Communication: Using Descriptive Language



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Grade Level	7th – 8th Grade	Time Frame	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	120 minutes

Essential Question

How do people communicate with one another? How does the type of communication we engage in affect our message? What sensory details and descriptions are present in our world?

Summary

In this lesson, students listen to a song while completing a painting activity. They collaborate to paint a list of descriptive words on their canvases based on the song. Considering the song lyrics as poetry, students analyze the song, focusing on descriptive language and sensory details. Students then create their own poems modeled after the song lyrics. Throughout this lesson, students focus on various modes of communication and how different media affect understanding and interpretation.

Snapshot

Engage

Students write about different modes of communication, paint in response to a song, and then rotate to other paintings, listing descriptive words that align with each one.

Explore

Students edit and revise the set of descriptive words for their own paintings and contribute to a class set of words related to the song and paintings.

Explain

Students analyze song lyrics as poetry, looking for figurative language, sensory details, and descriptive word choice.

Extend

Students create original poems modeled after song lyrics.

Evaluate

Students revisit the idea of varied communication and complete an Exit Ticket that focuses on what and how they learned. Students' paintings, analyses, and original poems are all options for assessment.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards (6-12)

WME301: Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages when the effect is simple

WME302: Interpret basic figurative language as it is used in a passage

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 7)

7.4.W.2: Select language in writing to create a specific effect according to purpose.

7.7.R: Compare and contrast the effectiveness of techniques used in a variety of alphabetic, aural, visual, spatial, and/or gestural content from various perspectives.

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 7)

8.4.W.2: Select language in writing to create a specific effect according to purpose.

8.7.R: Determine the intended purposes of techniques used for rhetorical effects in a variety of alphabetic, aural, visual, spatial, and/or gestural content from various perspectives.

Attachments

- [3-2-1 ICAP Review—Brushstrokes - Spanish.docx](#)
- [3-2-1 ICAP Review—Brushstrokes - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [3-2-1 ICAP Review—Brushstrokes.docx](#)
- [3-2-1 ICAP Review—Brushstrokes.pdf](#)
- [Gist—Brushstrokes.docx](#)
- [Gist—Brushstrokes.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Brushstrokes.pptx](#)
- [What a Wonderful World Lyrics \(Sample Responses\)—Brushstrokes .pdf](#)
- [What a Wonderful World Lyrics \(Sample Responses\)—Brushstrokes.docx](#)
- [What a Wonderful World Lyrics—Brushstrokes - Spanish.docx](#)
- [What a Wonderful World Lyrics—Brushstrokes - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [What a Wonderful World Lyrics—Brushstrokes.docx](#)
- [What a Wonderful World Lyrics—Brushstrokes.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- 3-2-1 ICAP Review (optional; attached; one per student)
- *What a Wonderful World* Lyrics (attached; one per student)
- *What a Wonderful World* Lyrics (Sample Student Responses)
- Gist (attached; one per student)
- Copy paper, poster board, or white butcher paper
- Painting supplies: watercolor paints, paintbrushes, water jars, paper towels, etc.
- Writing materials: pens, pencils, and paper
- Student devices with Internet access (optional)

35 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to facilitate the lesson. Display **slides 2-4** to introduce the essential questions and learning objectives.

Display **slide 5**. As an introduction, start the [5-minute timer](#) and ask students to engage in a [Quick Write](#) about ways in which they communicate with others on a regular basis. Ask them to write about specific types and examples of communication. When the timer ends, ask students to share with an [Elbow Partner](#) and then ask for volunteers to share with the whole class.

Next, have students listen to a song. The song we have chosen for this lesson is "*What a Wonderful World*" written by Bob Thiele and George David Weiss and performed by Louis Armstrong.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=A3yCcXgbKrE>

Teacher's Note: Song Choice

Feel free to choose another song if you prefer but be aware that it will alter some activities later in the lesson.

Display **slide 6**. For the first round, play the [What a Wonderful World](#) video and ask students to listen to the song and read the [lyrics](#) without writing or doing anything. This enables students to use their listening skills as they focus just on the music and words without being responsible for any sort of product.

Display **slide 7** and get students set up with painting supplies. Explain to students that as you continue to play the song, you want them to paint their interpretation of the song as they listen. Their paintings should express themselves in whatever way the lyrics and music inspire them. They can paint their moods, reactions, thoughts, etc. The activity should be open-ended.

Encourage students to express themselves freely and to try a variety of colors, brushstrokes, etc. Advise students that they will have 10 minutes to complete their paintings. Play the song again and ask students to paint as they listen. Repeat the song a few more times until students have had sufficient time to complete their paintings.

When students have finished, display **slide 8**. Ask students to take out a sheet of notebook paper and lay it down next to their painting. Then ask them to take a pen or pencil and rotate to another student's painting for a [Gallery Walk](#). As students view their classmate's paintings, have them add one or two descriptive words to the paper. Students should think beyond the surface to describe the paintings. For example, naming colors and shapes is not as significant as using words such as *swift*, *bold*, *connected*, *whole*, etc. Allow students time to rotate to several paintings and continue adding to the descriptive word list next to each painting.

Optional Career Connection

Enhance students' engagement through artistic career exploration using the [K20 ICAP - Tattoo Artist - Ink Me Up](#) or [K20 ICAP - Mural Artist from Yo Bro - Think Big Picture](#) videos. As students watch, have them complete a [3-2-1](#) reflection using the **3-2-1 ICAP Review** handout (attached) and invite them to share out after the video.

15 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 9** and ask students to return to their own paintings. Give students a few minutes to view the lists of words that their peers compiled to describe their paintings and make any revisions that they feel are necessary. Encourage students to add at least three of their own descriptive words. Students can also delete words that they feel are not relevant to their paintings.

When students have finished, they should have a detailed list of words that accurately describe their individual paintings that they can refer to as they write an original poem later in the lesson.

Optional Extension

Ask students to take their lists and rearrange the words from *least* to *most* descriptive without deleting any. This process could generate substantive conversation around the connotation of certain words and provide a way to practice evaluating word choice based on an author's purpose.

Display **slide 10**. Using a version of the [Strike Out!](#) instructional strategy, ask each student to identify the top three most descriptive words related to their paintings. After they've decided, ask them to come to the board and write the words or add them to the blank chart on **slide 11**. Once all students have had a chance to add their words, encourage students to analyze the list and work as a class to *strike out* words that they find less descriptive or not relevant. The end result should be a class list of descriptive words that students can refer to in addition to their individual lists as they write their poems.

Optional Tech Integration

Consider having students submit their words using the word cloud feature in [Mentimeter](#) or via another Word Cloud application.

20 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 12**. Have students revisit their [Quick Writes](#) to edit and revise their writing. As they revise, encourage students to consider the role of non-verbal communication and elaborate on the importance and relevance of the non-verbal communication types they have been exploring in this lesson—written words and pictures (referring to their experiences in the previous activities). Start the [5-minute timer](#) on slide 12 for students to review their original Quick Writes to edit as they see fit.

Display **slide 13**. Use the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy to structure a discussion with students about how their writing and viewpoints changed from the beginning of the lesson to now:

1. Give students a few minutes to think about the essential questions and formulate their own responses.
2. Pair up students to discuss their individual responses and formulate a shared response. (Now is a great time to use a creative pairing strategy, or you can allow students to choose their own partners.)
3. Ask each pair to share out with the class

Display **slide 14** and pass out the attached **What a Wonderful World Lyrics** handout (attached) to each student. Now that they have considered how people communicate, have students analyze the lyrics using a modified version of the [CUS and Discuss](#) strategy. Ask students to collaborate with their partners from the previous activity to locate instances of figurative language, sensory details, and descriptive word choice and discuss how each is used to enhance the communication style of the song lyrics. Ask students to annotate as follows:

- C = Circling the imagery (sensory details);
- U = Underlining the figurative language and labeling the type in the margin;
- S = Starring the descriptive words.

Teacher's Note: Descriptive Words

Concerning descriptive word choice, ask students to consider how words from the song relate to their painting/descriptive word choice activity from the previous section. Encourage students to make a connection between the painting activity, the descriptive words, and the song itself. Students should discover that nonverbal communication often relies on specific word choice and vocabulary, especially in written work or a reaction to a piece of art.

Once students have completed their annotations, engage them in a whole-class discussion and ask for volunteers to share what they noticed in the poem, especially in terms of figurative language, sensory details, and descriptive word choice. Mark students' observations and annotations on a class copy of the song lyrics.

Teacher's Note: Modeling

Annotating the lyrics as part of the whole-class discussion can serve as an excellent model for students who might struggle with this particular skill.

Possible Student Responses

Students should notice vivid sensory details, especially visual details: *trees of green, red roses, skies of blue, clouds of white, colors of the rainbow, faces of people*, etc. The sense of sound is also present in the phrase *I hear babies crying*. Review the **What a Wonderful World Lyrics (Sample Responses)** attached with sample responses for the CUS and Discuss activity.

35 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 15**. Instruct each student to create a poem based on their paintings.

Display **slide 16** to review the definitions of figurative language, sensory details, and descriptive words. Students should focus on these elements as they write with the goal of making their paintings come to life with words.

Optional Extension

Ask students to revisit their original lists of descriptive words from the Explore activity. Students may take their original lists and arrange them a second time according to another choice that poets have to make, such as economy of language. Students may arrange the words from *most economic* (words that carry the most weight or say the most) to *least economic* (words that do not do a lot of work). Then they can compare the lists. Students might discover that there are words that say a lot but are not necessarily descriptive, or vice versa. As authors, students may have to make compromises to emphasize economy. Ask students to explain how they would make those decisions.

Return to **slide 15** to review the guidelines for the poem. Ask students to get out their individual lists of descriptive words and their lyrics to *What a Wonderful World*, as they'll be referring to these as they write. Students should incorporate descriptive words from their own lists and from the class list, and they should model their poems after the lyrics to *What a Wonderful World* both in terms of structure and theme. Students' poems should use the following structure:

- Five stanzas;
- Four lines per stanza (except for stanza 5, which has two lines);
- (Optional) A rhyme scheme similar to *What a Wonderful World* (The song's primary rhyme scheme is /AABC/ but stanza 3 is /AABB/ if students want to deviate.)

After students have a clear understanding of the requirements, give them time to write. Display the class list of descriptive words for them to refer to during this time.

Teacher's Note: Student Ownership

Allow students autonomy and ownership of their poems. While they are modeling their poems after the song's structure and theme, they should take them in a direction that works best for them. The parameters for this assignment should be flexible. Therefore, adherence to the rhyme scheme should be optional based on the needs of the individual students.

Teacher's Note: Pair Writing

Give students the option of creating a poem of their own or working with a partner. Some students will thrive in a pair setting and prefer that to working individually.

5 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 17**. As an [Exit Ticket](#), students reflect on what they've learned about nonverbal communication through their experiences in this lesson.

Pass out one copy of the **Gist** handout (attached) to each student. Structuring this reflection using the [Gist](#) instructional strategy focuses students' thinking and requires them to use precise and concise language. Students' responses should address the lesson's essential questions (repeated on **slide 18**) and be limited to 28 words or fewer. Encourage students to refer to their Quick Writes and other products from this lesson to assist them with their reflections.

Optional Tech Integration

Consider using [Padlet](#) or [K20 Jam](#) for students to compose and share their Gist summaries.

When students have finished writing, ask them to share their responses with a small group or with the whole class. If using Padlet or K20 Jam, encourage students to provide responses to their peers as well.

Teacher's Note: Formative Assessment

In addition to the Exit Ticket, students' paintings, descriptive word lists, song lyric annotations, and original poems are all potential options for assessment. Consider giving students a choice of which piece from this lesson they are most proud of and have them turn that in for a grade.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). CUS and discuss. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/162>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk / carousel. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gist. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/3289>
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). K20 Center 5-minute timer. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/EVS_yYQoLJg?feature=shared
- K20 Center. (2024, February 5). K20 ICAP - Mural artist from Yo Bro - Think big picture. [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/s8XEgjVnevg?feature=shared>
- K20 Center. (2023, March 14). K20 ICAP-Tattoo artist - Ink me up. [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/2QHk3hmJQU0?feature=shared>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). K20 Jam. Tech tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/4457>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Strike out. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/136>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-pair-share. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Quick write. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1127>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mentimeter. Tech tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645>
- Weiss, George David and Thiele, Jr. Bob. (n.d.). Lyrics. What a wonderful world. <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/9825539>
- Piquant. (2010, November 25). Louis Armstrong - What a wonderful world (lyrics) [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3yCcXgbKrE>