

Sweet and Savory Writing

Descriptive Writing

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Grade Level	7th – 8th Grade	**Time Frame**	3-4 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	125 minutes

Essential Question

What makes writing appealing to a reader? How can we, as writers, paint a picture in our readers' minds?

Summary

This lesson is designed to shift students' attitude towards writing by guiding them to use descriptive and sensory language. Students begin exploring descriptive language by describing objects and brainstorming adjectives. Students then discuss examples and non-examples of descriptive writing and improve pieces of writing by adding sensory details. At the end of the lesson, students demonstrate their mastery of the topic by creating original compositions that feature descriptive imagery and sensory language. This lesson is currently aligned to eighth grade standards, but would be appropriate to teach in seventh grade with adjusted standards.

Snapshot

Engage

Students describe objects to each other and draw the objects described to them then compare their drawings to the original items. Students then participate in an ABC Graffiti activity in which they brainstorm examples of descriptive language.

Explore

Students collaborate to read poetry and identify instances of imagery in the work.

Explain

Students assess the use of imagery in examples of descriptive writing.

Extend

Students write a rough draft of a narrative essay using imagery, then review another student's work.

Evaluate

Students review the final drafts of their peers' essays and evaluate the use of imagery.

Standards

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

KLA 501: Revise vague, clumsy, and confusing writing
KLA 505: Use the word or phrase most appropriate in terms of the content of the sentence when the vocabulary is uncommon

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.3.R.4: Students will evaluate literary devices to support interpretations of literary texts:
- simile
- metaphor
- personification
- onomatopoeia
- hyperbole
- imagery
- tone
- symbolism
- irony

8.4.W.2: Students will select appropriate language to create a specific effect according to purpose in writing.

Attachments

- ABC Graffiti Chart—Sweet and Savory Writing.docx
- ABC Graffiti Chart—Sweet and Savory Writing.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Sweet and Savory Writing.pptx
- Narrative Essay Model—Sweet and Savory Writing.docx
- Narrative Essay Model—Sweet and Savory Writing.pdf
- Sensory Language Frayer Model—Sweet and Savory Writing.docx
- Sensory Language Frayer Model—Sweet and Savory Writing.pdf
- Sweet and Savory Language—Sweet and Savory Writing.docx
- Sweet and Savory Language—Sweet and Savory Writing.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- ABC Graffiti Chart document (attached; one per station)
- Sensory Language Frayer Model handout (attached; one per student)
- Sweet and Savory Language handout (attached; one per student)
- Narrative Essay Model handout (attached; one per student)
- “Blackberry-Picking” by Seamus Heaney (linked; one per student, per group)
- “Onions” by William Matthews (linked; one per student, per group)
- “Folding Won Tons In” by Abraham Chang (linked; one per student, per group)
- Household or classroom items (for example: plastic cups, playing cards, cotton balls, candles, etc.)
- Brown paper bags
- Writing utensils
- Highlighters or colored pencils
- Markers

25 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Prep

Engage preparations: For the Engage portion of the lesson, gather various common household, classroom, or food items. These items may include things like markers, remote controls, cell phones, dice, marbles, sports equipment, or any other items you have on hand. Conceal each item in a brown paper bag. Gather enough items so that every two students receive one bag with one item inside.

Explore preparations: Prior to the lesson, print out copies of each poem linked in the Materials section so that every student receives a copy of one of the poems.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Introduce the essential questions and learning objectives of the lesson on **slides 2–3**, then display **slide 4** and provide each student with a blank sheet of copy paper. Tell students to find an Elbow Partner and decide which person is Partner 1 and which person is Partner 2.

Give each pair one of the brown paper bags with an object inside. Instruct Partner 1 to describe what is in the bag to Partner 2 without revealing what the object is. Tell Partner 2 to draw the object on their sheet of paper while Partner 1 describes it.

Tell Partner 1 to use descriptive words that appeal to the five senses when describing the object. Explain that they should describe how the object feels, what it smells like, and whether it makes any sound, before looking in the bag and describing what it looks like.

Tell Partner 2 to draw and ask clarifying questions as Partner 1 describes the object. Explain that once Partner 2 is finished drawing, both partners should examine the object and compare it to the drawing.

Tell students that once they are finished describing their object, they should trade bags with another pair, switch roles, and repeat the process.

Teacher's Note: Modeling

Consider modeling the activity with the whole class before students begin working in their pairs. You may consider asking a student to describe an object as you draw it, either on a piece of paper projected on to the board, whiteboard, or chalkboard. Alternatively, you may have two student volunteers act out the process in front of the class or have a volunteer describe an object to the class as the class draws it. You may consider the latter option, as it may be fun for the class to compare how different individuals all drew the same item.

Allow students time to complete their drawings, then display **slide 5**. Review the terms sensory imagery, kinesthetic imagery, and tactile imagery with the class and give examples of each term.

Transition to **slide 6** and facilitate a whole class discussion using the questions present on the slide. Ask students to consider how they have to visualize the object during the “What’s in the Bag?” activity. Guide students to connect the activity to imagery in descriptive writing. Emphasize that this lesson focuses on creating descriptive and sensory imagery and integrating imagery into writing.

Take the objects from the “What’s in the Bag?” activity group the objects into four to five smaller groups. At

Teacher's Note: Grouping Objects

Group the objects according to characteristics shared by the objects. For example, if you used food items, you may consider grouping the items by fruits, vegetables, grains, etc.

Organize students into groups of three or four and give each group a different color of marker. Display **slide 7** and introduce the ABC Graffiti activity to students. Inform students that each station includes groups of objects that were used in the "What's in the Bag?" activity.

Inform students that they have two minutes at each station to brainstorm sensory words that describe the objects at their station. Tell students that they should work together to come up with multiple descriptive words then add the words to the ABC Graffiti Chart present at the station. Encourage students to use their knowledge of sensory language as they brainstorm. Once time is called, they should rotate to the next station.

Transition to **slide 8** and start the two-minute timer. As students work, walk around the room to oversee the activity. Once time is up, have students rotate stations then restart the timer. Repeat the process until every group of students has visited each station.

Have students return to their seats at their original station and show **slide 9**. Tell students to read the words and phrases that others added to the ABC Graffiti Chart at their station and have them consider how the words relate to each other. Instruct students to invent a summary statement that synthesizes all of the information present on the chart. Read aloud the following example statement present on the slide:

"The words and phrases used to describe the objects at this station all relate to sound."

Allow students time to work and walk around the classroom, assisting groups as needed. When it appears that most groups have finished their statements, invite groups to share out.

25 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: Printing Poems

Navigate to the poems linked in this section and print off copies for students to annotate.

Organize students into groups of two or three then display **slide 10** and introduce the Categorical Highlighting activity. Inform students that they will read a poem as a group and identify sensory details in the work. Review the five senses they should identify in the poem and introduce the colors students should use to annotate each sense as follows:

- Pink = Sight
- Blue = Sound
- Green = Taste
- Yellow = Touch
- Orange = Smell

Teacher's Note: Categorical Highlighting

You may change the colors listed above depending on what you have available. You may also have students underline passages with colored pencils or crayons if you don't have five colors of highlighters available.

Assign each group a poem and pass out one copy of the poem to each group member. Give each group a set of highlighters to use when annotating the poem. The poems for this activity can be found in the Materials and are also linked below:

- Blackberry-Picking by Seamus Heaney
- Onions by William Matthews
- Folding Won Tons In by Abraham Chang

Allow students time to read the poems and highlight sensory details.

Display **slide 11** and introduce the Think-Pair-Share activity. Have students pair up with a partner who read a different poem, then instruct students to compare the senses they highlighted in their poems. Have students discuss how the sensory language they identified contributed to their understanding of the poem.

Once all students have discussed their annotations, facilitate a whole class discussion and invite groups to share out.

30 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 12** and distribute one copy of the **Sensory Language Frayer Model** handout to each student.

Review each quadrant of the Frayer Model and tell students to fill in each section with information that relates to sensory language as they watch the TED Ed video. Explain that students must identify characteristics of sensory language, create a definition of the term, and identify examples and non-examples of sensory language.

Transition to **slide 13** and play the video *How to Write Descriptively - Nalo Hopkinson*.

> **Teacher's Note: Video**
>
> Consider playing the video twice to allow students to process the information once before filling in their Frayer Models.

Draw a Frayer Model on the board that matches the Frayer Model given to students. Conduct a whole class discussion over the video and invite students to share out their responses to each quadrant of the model. As students share out, fill in the model on the board and have students add their classmates' responses to their own models.

Display **slide 14** and distribute copies of the **Sweet and Savory Language** handout. Introduce the activity and explain to students that they will read and analyze the excerpts present on the handout. For each example, they will read the text, then complete the following:

1. Underline or highlight examples of descriptive and sensory language.
2. Rate the effectiveness of the sensory language as high, medium, low, or none.
3. Choose two low-scoring examples and rewrite them with more effective sensory language.

The instructions for the activity are also reproduced on the handouts.

Allow students to work individually or with a partner to complete the activity. Move around the room and answer any questions as necessary.

30 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Essay Annotation

This portion of the lesson has students write an essay using sensory language. Decide in advance whether you'd prefer students to complete the essay digitally or on paper. In the Evaluate phase of the lesson, students must highlight passages in another student's work, so consider how you will have students annotate the essays if you choose a digital option.

Display **slide 15** and introduce the following narrative essay prompt:

- Write a brief narrative that describes a specific meal or food. Use at least five examples of sensory language and appeal to each of the five senses (touch, taste, sight, smell, sound) at least once.

Explain to students that they must create a narrative that incorporates imagery and sensory details that appeal to all the senses.

Pass out one copy of the **Narrative Essay Model** handout to each student. Read the narrative aloud and have students follow along on their papers. Explain that a narrative is a story and that students may choose whether to write their narratives in first or third person. Encourage students to use their Frayer Models and notes on sensory language to to assist them with writing their narratives.

Show **slide 16** and introduce the brainstorming activity. Tell students to consider topics for their narratives and introduce the following prompts to help them choose a topic related to food. The prompt suggestions include:

- The meal that changed everything
- The best meal you've ever had
- A food that brings back specific memories
- A food that you will never eat again

Tell students that they have 10 minutes to brainstorm ideas for their essay. Explain that once they have an idea they like, they should also use the time to outline their narratives.

Begin the ten-minute timer on the slide and observe students as they work. If students finish their outlines before time is up, direct them to begin writing their narrative.

Teacher's Note: Essay Requirements

Slide 17 includes a set of essay requirements. However, you may adjust these requirements based on the abilities of your students and the amount of time you prefer to spend on this lesson.

After students have had time to brainstorm, transition to **slide 17** and introduce the essay requirements. Tell students that they will use these requirements to create a rough draft of their narrative essay. Emphasize that this rough draft is about students writing down ideas in words and they will refine it later. Allow students time to work on their drafts.

Teacher's Note: Timing

This portion of the lesson has no set time, so you may give students as much time as you feel they need to complete the drafts. Consider setting a time limit and displaying a timer of your choice and adjust the amount of time students are given based on the needs of your class.

Because these drafts are short rough drafts, students may complete them quickly and you do not need to set aside too much time for this activity.

When most students have finished their drafts, display **slide 18** and have students find a partner. Tell partners to exchange pieces and read each other's work. As they read, they should identify instances of descriptive and sensory language. Have them also provide written feedback on their peers' papers and verbal feedback on the use of descriptive and sensory language.

Allow students an adequate amount of time to collaborate with a peer reviewer. Once they have done so, have students begin the final drafts of their narratives. Encourage them to take the feedback they received into consideration as they write their final drafts.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Once students have completed their final drafts, display **slide 19** and introduce them to the second Categorical Highlighting activity. Have students trade papers with a partner and highlight examples of imagery that relate to the five senses, similar to how they annotated the poem from the Explore phase of the lesson. Ensure that each student has a set of highlighters or other writing utensils that correspond to the following colors used to represent the five senses:

- Pink = Sight
- Blue = Sound
- Green = Taste
- Yellow = Touch
- Orange = Smell

Teacher's Note: Categorical Highlighting

If you adjusted the colors in the Explore phase on slide 10, consider adjusting the colors for this portion of the lesson on slide 19 to ensure that each sense is always represented by the same color.

Begin the five-minute timer slide and allow students time to review their partners' papers. After time is up, have students return their papers to the original owners. Have all students turn in their highlighted final drafts.

Resources

- Heaney, S. (1966). *Blackberry-picking*. Poetry Foundation. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50981/blackberry-picking
- K20 Center. (n.d.). ABC graffiti. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/96
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Categorical highlighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/192
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Frayer Model. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/126
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-Pair-Share. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). *K20 Center 2-minute timer* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcEEAnwOt2c
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- Matthews, W. (n.d.). *Onions*. Poetry Foundation. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/37525/onions
- Spring, A. (1999). *Folding won tons in*. The Asian Journal. https://www.columbia.edu/cu/aj/archives/ajspring99/page04.html
- TED-Ed. (2015, November 16). *How to write descriptively - Nalo Hopkinson* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSoRzTtwgP4