



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	150 minutes

Essential Question

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

Summary

Students might view writing as dull and boring, and often it is. This lesson is designed to shift students' thinking by spicing up dull writing using descriptive and sensory language. Students begin by viewing and interacting with objects as they brainstorm applicable descriptive adjectives and sensory details. They move on to discuss examples and non-examples of descriptive writing and discover the appeal of sensory images. In the culminating activity, students create original compositions in which they integrate descriptive and sensory language, and then share their creations with their classmates. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 8th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 7 through 8, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students describe hidden objects for their peers as their peers draw what they believe to be the object. Comparisons are made, and the idea of sensory imagery is discussed.

Explore

Students view, touch, taste, listen to, and smell different objects and collaboratively brainstorm lists of descriptive adjectives and sensory details.

Explain

Students discuss the usefulness of descriptive words and sensory details in their writing and present both examples and non-examples as evidence to back up their ideas.

Extend

Students draft an original composition, integrating descriptive words and sensory details, and then peer-review another student's work.

Evaluate

Students share their compositions with the class, and volunteers pick out instances of descriptive words and sensory details. Students engage in a self and peer evaluation concerning their use of descriptive words and sensory details.

Standards

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

- [Descriptive and Sensory Language Examples and Non-Examples—Sweet and Savory Writing - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Descriptive and Sensory Language Examples and Non-Examples—Sweet and Savory Writing - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Descriptive and Sensory Language Examples and Non-Examples—Sweet and Savory Writing.docx](#)
- [Descriptive and Sensory Language Examples and Non-Examples—Sweet and Savory Writing.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Sweet and Savory Writing.pptx](#)
- [Sensory Details Frayer Model—Sweet and Savory Writing - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Sensory Details Frayer Model—Sweet and Savory Writing - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Sensory Details Frayer Model—Sweet and Savory Writing.docx](#)
- [Sensory Details Frayer Model—Sweet and Savory Writing.pdf](#)
- [Sensory Details and Descriptive Language Rotation—Sweet and Savory Writing - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Sensory Details and Descriptive Language Rotation—Sweet and Savory Writing - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Sensory Details and Descriptive Language Rotation—Sweet and Savory Writing.docx](#)
- [Sensory Details and Descriptive Language Rotation—Sweet and Savory Writing.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Sensory Details and Descriptive Language Rotation handouts (attached, one per student)
- Sensory Details Frayer Model handouts (attached, one per student)
- Descriptive and Sensory Language Examples and Non-Examples handouts (attached, one per student)
- Everyday household/classroom items for the Engage activity: plastic cups, markers, pencils, remotes, sports equipment, cell phones, dice, marbles, playing cards, etc.
- Sensory items for the Explore activity: cotton balls, pine cones, music streaming from a device, candy, candles, assorted photographs, etc.
- Brown paper bags
- Writing materials: paper, pencils, and pens
- Copy paper
- Highlighters or colored pencils (optional)

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Prep

This lesson requires some prep work to gather and organize items for the Engage and Explore activities. Engage activity: You'll need to gather various common household or classroom items for students to describe. The household/classroom items can include things like plastic cups, markers, pencils, remote controls, sports equipment, cell phones, dice, marbles, or playing cards. Whatever you have on hand will work just fine. Place each item in a brown paper bag to conceal it, making sure to have one bag with one item inside for every two students in your class. Explore activity: You'll need to gather various sensory items for students to view, touch, hear, smell, or taste. The sensory items can include cotton balls, pine cones, music streaming from a device, candy, candles, photographs, etc. Set up various stations around the room for students to visit, each containing different sensory items. You'll need enough stations so that you have enough to accommodate small groups of 3–5 students. But, you might choose to have a plethora of options so that all students are able to participate in a variety of ways. For stations involving food items, make sure to take note of any student allergies or dietary restrictions, and plan accordingly. Additionally, make sure it's clear that students are not to taste any items that are not edible!

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson, beginning with slide 4. Provide each student with a blank sheet of copy paper, and then ask students to find an [Elbow Partner](#).

For this activity, one student in each pair will be provided with a brown paper bag with an object inside. That student will describe what is in the bag (without actually stating what the item is), while the other partner will draw the item on their paper. The partner who is drawing should ask clarifying questions and carry on a discussion with the partner who is describing the object. When the drawing is finished, the partner who was drawing should examine the object and see how it compares to the drawing. Pairs should then trade bags with another pair and repeat the process with the roles of drawing and describing reversed.

Teacher's Note: Modeling

Consider modeling the activity with the whole class before students begin working in their pairs. One option is to ask a student volunteer to describe an object to you as you draw it. (Project your drawing on the board using a document camera, or draw directly on a whiteboard or chalkboard.) Alternatively, have two volunteers "act out" the process in front of the class, or describe the object to the class as they all draw it. This last option could be a fun way to compare the different images that students construct based on the same description.

After you've given pairs time to complete their drawings, display slide 5. Ask students how this activity required them to visualize the object being described. Point students toward the idea that visual imagery is an important part of descriptive writing, and explain that this lesson is designed to help them integrate descriptive and sensory imagery in their own writing.

Explore

Display slide 6 and organize students into groups. (The size of the groups will depend on how many stations you have set up.) Pass out copies of the Sensory Details and Descriptive Language Rotation handout.

Explain to students that they will have a few minutes at each station to interact with the objects and fill out their charts along the way. Be sure that students know that their goal is to brainstorm as many descriptive words (adjectives) and sensory details as possible as they visit each station. Ideally, they will have the chart fully completed by the time they have visited all stations. Encourage students to collaborate with their group members as they brainstorm words and phrases to add to their charts.

Set a timer for a specific amount of time (anywhere from 3–5 minutes), and once time is up, ask students to rotate to the next station. Continue this process until students have visited each station. Feel free to use the timer provided in slide 7.

Have students return to their seats and display slide 8. Commence a whole-class discussion about what students came up with. Draw a chart on the board to fill in as different students share out their ideas. Encourage students to update their individual charts during this discussion, using information from the whole-class chart to add to their own ideas.

Explain

To more articulately define and understand the concept of sensory details, students will create a [Frayer Model](#).

Display slide 9 and distribute copies of the Sensory Details Frayer Model handout to students. Alternatively, have students sketch a Frayer Model template in their notebooks.

Working collaboratively, encourage students to fill in each section of the Frayer Model, relying on their prior knowledge and their experiences thus far in this lesson. Students should determine a definition, characteristics, examples, and non-examples of sensory details.

Once students have had time to fill out their Frayer Models, conduct a whole-class discussion. Draw a Frayer Model on the board and fill in the squares as students share their responses. Encourage students to revise their own models based on ideas that their peers share.

To help them get a better sense of how descriptive language and sensory imagery can affect our writing, students are now going to look at some examples and non-examples of effective writing in relation to descriptive and sensory language.

Display slide 10. Distribute copies of the Descriptive and Sensory Language Examples and Non-Examples handout. Allow students to work individually or with a partner as they read and analyze the writing excerpts. (The excerpts are printed on their handouts and are also shown on slides 11–14.) For each example, students should do the following:

1. Underline or highlight instances of descriptive and sensory language
2. Rate the effectiveness of the example regarding the use of descriptive and sensory language (high, medium, low, or none).
3. Rewrite the examples that did not rate as highly descriptive to make them more descriptive.

As students work, move around the room and answer any questions that arise.

Extend

Students will use their understanding of descriptive and sensory language to create an original piece of writing that incorporates elements of each.

Display slide 15. For this piece of writing, students are free to choose a genre. Options include poems, descriptive paragraphs, and short narratives. Once students decide on a particular genre, they should brainstorm a list of descriptive and sensory words that they would like to use in their pieces. Students should refer back to the previous activities and use those ideas as a jumping-off point.

After students brainstorm ideas, ask them to write rough drafts of their pieces. Since the length of this particular work is short, students should be able to accomplish this rather quickly. Remind students that a rough draft is just that—rough. The goal is for students to get their ideas and words down on paper.

As students complete their drafts, instruct them to find a partner and trade pieces. Students should read one another's drafts, looking specifically for instances of descriptive and sensory language. Encourage students to provide written and verbal feedback for their peers, especially in terms of descriptive and sensory language.

Once students have collaborated with a peer reviewer, they should each write final drafts of their pieces, being sure to take any feedback into consideration.

Evaluate

After students complete their final drafts, display slide 16. Ask for volunteers to share their writing with the whole class. As classmates listen to a work being read aloud, ask them to take note of instances of descriptive and sensory language. Give them an opportunity to share out what they noticed after each student reading. Encourage students to consider what came to mind as they listened to their peers' work and share any particularly interesting or relevant imagery with the class.

Optional Activity: Draw What You See

Display slide 17. As an optional activity that aligns with the essential questions, ask students to draw the images that they get in their heads as their peers read their work. After each reading, class members can compare their drawings.

Optional Activity: Color Coding

Display slide 18. As a method of self- or peer-evaluation before students turn in their writing, consider having them color-code instances of sensory language using highlighters or colored pencils. Students can either code their own writing or switch with a partner to code a peer's work.

Resources

- Carothers, L. (n.d.). Sensory words. Waunakee Community School District.
<http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/faculty/lcarothers/EffectiveWriting/Descriptive/Sensory%20Words.pdf>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/ccc07ea2d6099763c2dbc9d05b00c4b4>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Frayer Model. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505d709>
- Wilson, D. H. (n.d.). Writing guide: Descriptive & sensory detail. Wright State University.
<http://www.wright.edu/~david.wilson/eng1100/sensorydetails.pdf>