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Poem-ing and the Art of Descriptive Language

Potential Audience: Pre-K-6th Grade

Program Type: Arts Curriculum

Description: POEM-ING AND THE ART OF DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE is an interactive literary arts and literacy program for young readers and writers in PreK-6th grade that encourages students to work collaboratively as “sensory detectives” to identify vivid details in a piece of mentor writing. Then, in small groups, students will hone their use of descriptive writing using their senses. The program invites students to write a descriptive color poem collaboratively and to write one independently.

Time Length: 45-60 minutes


Presentation Procedures/Assessment:

1) Author will share how writing is not done in isolation and explain “the team” behind my novels. Collaboration is the key to success in the arts (and life), so today we’ll be writing collaboratively and descriptively. What is description, you ask?

2) Imagine an event that happened to you, something very positive or negative, that you cannot forget. It’s so vivid in your mind that you can picture exactly where you were, who you were with, maybe even what you were wearing, and what happened. Turn and talk with a partner and describe the event in detail.

3) Why do you think the details are so vivid for these memories? (There’s science behind it.) Explain how scents and textures, for example, hold memories. Discuss both my novels and how they are based on vivid impact events.

4) Share one of my poems and a mentor poem that rely heavily on descriptive language. Students will play ‘sensory detective’ and try to identify all five senses in the pieces.

5) I will then display three interesting objects, and the students will vote on which one to write about. Small groups will be assigned only one sense with which to describe the object. Then, we’ll collectively write a descriptive piece. Each group will stand and read their passage as part of our collective description of the object.

6) “You’re a Poet and You Didn’t (or Maybe You Did) Know It!” The group, along with the author’s facilitation, will compose a collaborative color poem using vivid description.

7) Finally, students will independently compose a color poem. A rubric will guide student creation and assessment.

8) Students will share their descriptive color poems in small groups.

Next Day Extension: Students can write “exquisite corpse” poems collaboratively. Leave directions for educator.

Objectives:

- I can identify vivid descriptive details.
• I can use my senses to describe an object.
• I can collaborate with my peers to write a color poem using vivid descriptive details.
• I can independently write a color poem using vivid descriptive details.

Common Core Standards:

W.TTP.3 g. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

L.VAU.6 Acquire and accurately use grade-appropriate general academic and domain specific words and phrases; develop vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

RL.CS.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including allusions to other texts.

SL.CC.1 Prepare for collaborative discussions on grade level topics and texts; engage effectively with varied partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing one’s own ideas clearly.

Collaborative Color Poem Examples: