



Who Am I?

creating and editing descriptive writing

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Grade Level	7th – 8th Grade	Time Frame	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	100 minutes
Course	Composition, Creative Writing		

Essential Question

How can sensory details add to a piece of writing? What makes me who I am?

Summary

In this lesson, students will use self-reflection to create a piece of descriptive writing. Students will use sensory details, organizational strategies, and the revision process to produce a short descriptive piece of writing.

Snapshot

Engage

Students complete a focused free-write to begin crafting paragraphs for the body of a writing assignment regarding their identity.

Explore

Students view a short video that explains how to add sensory details to sentences, then brainstorm descriptive words pertaining to the five senses.

Explain

Students read a blog excerpt and identify the sensory details in the reading. Then, students write their paragraphs with added sensory details.

Extend

Students peer edit with partners, providing and receiving feedback on their paragraphs. Then, students complete a rewrite based on the peer editing process.

Evaluate

In groups of four, students read each other's revised paragraphs, discussing commonalities and strong descriptive language.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 7)

7.2.W.1: Students will apply components of a recursive writing process for multiple purposes to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.

7.2.W.4: Students will edit and revise multiple drafts for organization, transitions to improve coherence and meaning, using a consistent point of view.

7.8.W: Students will write independently over extended periods of time (e.g., time for research, reflection, and revision) and for shorter timeframes (e.g., a single sitting or a day or two), vary their modes of expression to suit audience and task, and discover different perspectives.

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 7)

8.2.W.1: Students will apply components of a recursive writing process for multiple purposes to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.

Attachments

- [3-2-1 Exit Ticket Handout.docx](#)
- [3-2-1 Exit Ticket Handout.pdf](#)
- [My Life in a Photograph.docx](#)
- [My Life in a Photograph.pdf](#)
- [Peer Revision Checklist.docx](#)
- [Peer Revision Checklist.pdf](#)
- [Sensory Details and Memoirs Excerpt.docx](#)
- [Sensory Details and Memoirs Excerpt.pdf](#)
- [Sensory Word List.docx](#)
- [Sensory Word List.pdf](#)
- [Who Am I Lesson Slides.pptx](#)

Materials

- Sensory Word List handout (attached)
- Peer Revision Checklist handout (attached)
- My Life in a Photograph handout (attached)
- Who Am I lesson slides (attached)
- "Sensory Details and Memoirs" excerpt from a blog by Lee Martin (attached)
- 3-2-1 Exit Ticket: Writer's Review (attached, one per group)
- Block of sharp cheddar cheese (optional)
- Highlighters

Engage

Begin the lesson with the attached lesson slides. After displaying the title slide, move to the essential questions on **slide three**. Pass out the attached graphic organizer titled "My Life in a Photograph" and continue to slide four. Invite students to participate in a focused free-write. Set the [linked timer](#) in this slide for five minutes. Remind students to write continuously until the timer runs out, even if it doesn't feel like high-quality writing. To encourage the writing process, try [playing calming music](#). Links to both the timer and the music are found on slide four and in the Resources below.

Teacher's Note: Modeling A Free-Write

Let students know that their goal during a free-write is to transfer as many ideas as possible to paper. Remind them that they shouldn't worry about grammar, spelling, or even writing in complete sentences during this exercise—there are no right or wrong answers. Each free-write is unique. Consider modeling this exercise by using the same handout and timer. To encourage building relationships, also consider sharing your own "My Life in a Photograph" free-write with the class.

Call on volunteers from the class to share a few answers from each section of the handout.

Explore

Tell students they will build on parts of their free-write to create descriptive paragraphs about themselves. They will do so by using sensory details, because most readers can relate to the five senses—sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. To give an idea of how to create sensory details in writing, show **slide five** and share [this video](#) with the class. The full URL can be found in the slide notes and in the Resources below.

Teacher's Note: Creating Sensory Awareness

The "Sensory Details" video features a wedge of sharp cheddar cheese to prompt the class. To engage students and heighten sensory awareness, consider displaying a block of sharp cheddar cheese. Later, the class will have an opportunity to see, touch, and smell it.

After the video, assign each student to a partner. Display **slide six**. Using the image of a block of cheddar cheese as an example, ask partners to work together to create a sentence that describes the visual "look" of a block of cheddar cheese. Encourage students to think in terms of describing the cheese to a blind person. How descriptive can they be? Allow a few minutes for partner discussion and writing. Ask each group to share their best example.

Display **slide seven**. Ask students to now consider the sensory detail of touch. How does it feel? How can they describe the texture of cheddar cheese? Can they think of other things that feel similar which they might compare it to? Allow a few minutes for partners to discuss and create a descriptive sentence. If available, allow one student at a time to touch the block of cheddar cheese. Ask each group to share their descriptions.

Display **slide eight**, which gives directions for the Pair Square activity. Combine pairs to make groups of four. Pass out a copy of the attached Sensory Word List handout to each student. Ask each group to add three more descriptive words to the list for each of the five senses. In a round-robin style, identify one of the senses and have students call out one sensory description their group added. Have the rest of the class add these words to their own lists. Continue this activity until students have added another three to four sensory words to each of the five senses.

Explain

Now that they have practiced writing with sensory detail, tell students they will look for sensory details in someone else's writing. Pass out the attached excerpt "Sensory Details and Memoirs," by Lee Martin. This short piece is about the author's childhood memories. If necessary, see Martin's original blog post [here](#). Display the directions for this activity, using the strategy [Categorical Highlighting](#), on **slide nine**. Have students work individually to highlight words or phrases that lend sensory detail to these paragraphs.

Teacher's Note: Optional Scaffolding

For students who have difficulty reading, it may be helpful for the teacher to read the excerpt aloud first. If additional scaffolding is necessary, consider having each student work with a partner to find sensory details.

Allow 5–7 minutes for this activity. Ask students to share examples of sensory details they found in the excerpt. If desired, this activity can also be used as an additional lesson assessment alongside those in the Evaluation section below.

Ask students to revisit their "My Life in a Photograph" free-write and choose two topics they wrote about. Students should now begin developing two paragraphs based on these topics, adding sensory details. Display the directions for this activity on **slide 10**. Ask students to develop their topics into at least two paragraphs using complete sentences. The Sensory Word List developed by the class may serve to help students expand their ideas into descriptive sentences and paragraphs.

Extend

After each student has completed two paragraphs, pair each student again with a partner. Pass out the attached Peer Revision Checklist handout and discuss with students how to peer review someone else's writing. Students will need a set of highlighters for this activity. Move to **slide 11**. Ask students to let the Peer Revision Checklist be their guide as they trade papers and review each others' work.

After students have completed the activity, have them return the reviewed paragraphs to their partners, along with the Peer Review Checklist and comments. Ask each student to edit their writing based upon their partner's notes. Finally, have students should make a clean, final copy of their writing to turn in with the Peer Revision Checklist attached.

Evaluate

Depending on your needs, you have several options for lesson assessment. The students' edited paragraphs serve as one assessment. The Categorical Highlighting activity in the Explain section can serve as an optional assessment. Two other options are detailed below.

Optional Assessment: Writer's Review

Display the directions for this [Exit Ticket](#) strategy in **slide 12**. Sort students into groups of four. Have each student pass their writing to the next group member. Repeat. After each group member has read each piece, ask students to discuss what each piece has in common and what they find to be the most descriptive use of sensory details. Pass out the attached 3-2-1 Exit Ticket Handout for students to complete and turn in. The Exit Ticket is arranged in a [3-2-1](#) format: three things the student learned from reading classmates' writing; two phrases from classmates' writing exemplifying the best use of sensory details; and one sense (sight, smell, touch, taste, or sound) the group considers the easiest to write about.

Optional Assessment: Read Aloud

If time allows, consider asking for volunteers to read aloud their final paragraphs to the class. Students may also share a picture of themselves when they were younger. The Peer Revision Checklist can be used to assess students' finished paragraphs as they present.

Teacher's Note: Integrating Technology

Consider showing students how to use [Flipgrid](#) to post and share their writing digitally. Flipgrid is an application that allows students to design, create, and view short videos of their work.

Resources

- Clock, O. C. (n.d.). Online-Stopwatch. Retrieved from <https://www.online-stopwatch.com/candle-timer/>.
- Flipgrid video creator (2019). Flipgrid.com. Retrieved from: <https://info.flipgrid.com/>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 3-2-1. Strategies. Retrieved from <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5059a7b>
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. Retrieved from <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505d6f2>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Categorical highlighting. Strategies. Retrieved from <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/fc74060730ea745c8c4f356aa204c85d>
- Martin, L. (2016, Dec. 5). Excerpt from sensory details and memoirs. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://leemartinauthor.com/2016/12/05/sensory-details-memoirs/>
- Newman, R. (2018, March 30). Sensory Details. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWIGhi0IVmw&feature=youtu.be>
- Study music. (2014). Two hours of soft piano music- concentration and focus on learning. YouTube.com. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrGPkzy6mFo&feature=youtu.be>