

## Descriptive Writing

**Overview** Students will use descriptive words and phrases to practice for an upcoming personal narrative by going outside and describing their surroundings.

**Lesson  
Planner**

Time Required	1 hour
Key Concepts/Terms	Metaphor, Simile, Adjective, Personification, Hyperbole
Prerequisites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of expectations for outdoor classroom conduct</li><li>• Knowledge of concept maps.</li></ul>
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10-minute field study outside</li><li>• Remainder of lesson inside</li></ul>

**Standards**

**MD VSC 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading/Language Arts**

- 4.1. Compose texts using the prewriting and drafting strategies of effective writers and speakers
- 4.2.b. Describe in prose and/or poetic forms to clarify, extend, or elaborate on ideas by using vivid language such as imagery and figurative language

**Objectives**

Students will complete a graphic organizer and write a paragraph in order to describe something outside using as much descriptive language as possible.

**Materials  
Required**

- Paper for taking notes outside
- Pencils
- Chart paper
- Multiple class sets of colored utensils (i.e. 20 red markers, 20 blue markers, 20 purple markers, etc.)
- Clipboards with notepaper or notebooks
- Lined paper for writing description

**Background Information**

At this point in their writing classes, students have been learning specific language use/grammar skills. They will begin learning about descriptive language (a skill they've already discussed previously in the school year) leading up to writing a personal narrative.

Some types of descriptive language that students can be encouraged to use:

- Imagery – using words and phrases that appeal to the senses
  - Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification
  - Alliteration
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**Procedure**

Follow the steps in the table below to conduct the activity. **Sentences in bold are suggestions for what teachers might say to students.** *Items in italics are possible teacher answers to questions.*

Phase	Step	Action
<b>Engage</b>	<b>1</b>	<p><u>Ten Minute Exercise:</u> Introduction to concept maps/outdoor learning.</p> <p>If students are unfamiliar with concept maps and/or using the schoolyard as a classroom, begin by creating a concept map together as a class to go over rules and expectations for learning outside.</p> <p>As you go through the concept map, think aloud for how you are choosing where to draw your bubbles to connect different concepts on the map. For instance,</p> <p><b>“I am going to write the idea first and then put a bubble around it to make sure my bubble isn’t too big or too small for my information.”</b></p> <p>Or</p> <p><b>“I am going to connect this idea to that one instead of the main topic since they are related.”</b></p> <p>Or</p> <p><b>“That’s a good idea! Where would you connect that idea on our concept map?”</b></p> <p>Have in mind some expectations for outdoor learning specific to your schoolyard that you want to be sure students include. For instance,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Regular school rules still apply (respect each other, listen to the speaker, follow directions, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>No yelling, screaming, tapping on/waving into windows that will disrupt class learning inside the school building.</i></li> <li>• <i>“Look, learn, and let go” when you see insects.</i></li> </ul>

	2	<p><u>Concept Map (10 Minutes)</u></p> <p>In groups, have students discuss what they want to select from outside to describe with descriptive language. Give them a time limit. You should also give them a boundary limit since students may only be allowed outside to observe in a certain area. Some examples might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A particular tree, bush, or flower</li> <li>• A butterfly or bird they frequently see</li> <li>• A leaf</li> <li>• A garden</li> </ul> <p>Each group should write their object in the center circle for their concept map.</p> <p>Then, on the board, present to students (or have them volunteer) types of descriptive language they can learn. The list can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simile</li> <li>• Metaphor</li> <li>• Imagery</li> <li>• Alliteration</li> <li>• Personification</li> <li>• Hyperbole</li> <li>• Adjectives</li> </ul> <p>Students should begin listing some words in one color on their concept maps to describe their object using the above types of descriptive language.</p>
<b>Explore</b>	3	<p><u>Directions (5 minutes)</u></p> <p><b>Outside, with your group, find your object. Take notes about ways to describe your object now that you are seeing it up close. Brainstorm together or take notes quietly independently to be shared back inside.</b></p>
	4	<p><u>10-Minute Field Study</u></p> <p>Bring students outside. Keep track of the time, giving students ample warning for when it's time to head back in. Have students find their objects and begin taking notes.</p>

<b>Explain</b>	<b>5</b>	<p><u>Concept Maps</u> (10 minutes)</p> <p>Once back in the classroom, have students add to their concept maps in a new color the new ideas and ways of describing their object that they came up with outside. Encourage students to label their descriptions – is it a simile, alliteration, an adjective? They should add what they came up with outside and continue adding new ideas that they come up with.</p>
<b>Evaluate</b>	<b>6</b>	<p><u>Writing</u> (10 minutes)</p> <p>Students should now have an opportunity to write a descriptive paragraph or poem about their object. They should use the ideas from their concept map, their graphic organizer. They can write one piece together as a group or individual pieces.</p>
<b>Elaborate</b>	<b>7</b>	<p><u>Sharing</u> (5 minutes)</p> <p>Student groups should have a chance to share their organizers and the paragraphs or poems they came up with to describe their objects.</p> <p>As a follow-up, artists can have a chance to illustrate their descriptions. Perhaps a brochure of the school grounds can be created with photographs and descriptions of objects in the schoolyard. Or students can exchange descriptions with other groups without their objects named and try to find the object described.</p>

**Vocabulary**

Understanding of the following terms is required in this activity.

Term	Definition
Simile	A comparison of two things using like or as.
Metaphor	A comparison of two things without using like or as.
Imagery	Words or phrases that appeal to the senses.
Alliteration	Repeated consonant sounds at the beginning of words or within words.
Personification	Giving something that is not human human characteristics.
Adjective	A part of speech that describes something.
Hyperbole	An exaggeration not used to mislead but to emphasize a point or description.



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