

“Sense” of Place

Sensory Language Grade Levels 6-8

Objectives: In order to understand the essential question of, “How has the landscape in the community changed over time?” students use concrete details and sensory language for reflecting on thoughts and feelings about a local place. Students free-write, discuss, peer-edit, and revise an essay in order to interpret historic photographs with words, particularly by illuminating the senses. *Time Needed: 5 hours*

Vermont’s Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities:

1.4 Reading Range of Text (respond to a range of media, **images**, and text)

1.5 Writing Dimensions (write with purpose, organization, voice/tone, and details)

5.11 Literary Elements and Devices (metaphor, imagery, figurative language)

Grade Level Expectations:

Reflective Essay W6-8:17 (using patterns of cause/effect, comparison, and classification)

- Relate personal experiences to concepts, patterns, and ideas
- Make the connection between the image, thought, and experience
- Create a sensory monologue
- Show evidence of thoughts/feelings, questioning, comparing, connecting, or interpreting

Materials & Resources:

Landscape Change Program Archive, www.uvm.edu/perkins/landscape

Images: For example, LS06099, “Flood of 1927.”

Creating a “Sense” of Place Prompt List sheet (below)

Figurative Language Prompt List sheet (below)

Activities:

1. Hook Your Students Students free-write about a dramatic landscape photograph using prompts related to texture, emotion, senses, etc. (below), then share ideas, and interpret a history.	4. Culminating Activity Students project their image and provide a two-minute oral presentation reflecting on the image. <i>Option:</i> Publish work into a school newspaper, class book, or team website.
2. Introduce Concepts Students explore images from the <i>Landscape Change Program</i> , select an image for an interpretive free write, bring in from home an object that illuminates an important sense in the photograph, and share sensory responses.	5. Assessment Personal Essay Rubric (below).
3. Apply Skills Students write a personal reflection of their photograph using Figurative Language prompt (below); then peer-edit, discuss with teacher, and make a final draft.	6. Extensions Present work to parents or community. Create dioramas of photographs that include smells, sounds, and textures related to the image. Retake “after” photographs and compare to “before.”

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Lesson Plan Details

Detailed summary of curricular format:

Overview: Students will observe historical photographs within their town, community, or other topics of interest then select four images that pique their interest the most. From these, they will write a personal essay in response to their observations. Students may recall an event or story that connects them to this local place, or simply create an interpretation of this moment in time. They may draw upon historical facts, scientific facts, or their own imagination. The purpose is to observe and interpret the photograph with words, particularly by illuminating the senses.

1. Day One: The Hook (One 40 minute class): Show a dramatic photo of a scene in the school community (example: Flood of 1927: LS06099). Have students respond in a free-write to the below observation prompts (10 minutes):

- List some of the objects in the image.
- What are some of the textures?
- How does the photo show movement?
- What do you see in the foreground? In the background? Up high? Down low?
- When do you think this occurred?
- Is there anything living?
- Complete the phrases
- Simile: This place looks/sounds/smells like . . .
- Metaphor: This place is a . . .
- If I were at this place I would feel . . .
- This photo shows the emotion . . .

Have each student share one idea from their free-write (10 minutes)

Propose more interpretive questions to the whole group. Have students respond to the below prompts:

- What is this photo depicting?
- Where was the photo taken?
- What occurred here?
- When was the photo taken?
- Who do you think took the photo?
- Why was the photo taken?
- What do you think occurred just before the photograph was taken?
- What do you think occurred just after the photograph was taken?

2. Day Two: Explore photos from the town (One 40 minute class): Introduce the students to searching for images on the Landscape Change Program website <http://www.uvm.edu/perkins/landscape/>
Provide exploratory time for the students to search within their towns, the larger community, or topics of interest. Have students select and print four images that they find the most striking.
For homework, have students complete the following:
 - Select one of the four images they printed to repeat the in-class observation and interpretation free-write activity (see attached).
 - Bring in one object to illuminate a single important sense represented in the photo (For example, to show the smell of a barn, a student might bring in a cow patty. To show the cold, a student might bring in snow or ice in a cooler. To symbolize texture, a student might bring in sand, old wood, or water. To show sound, a student might bring in a recording).
3. Day Three: Sensory descriptors (One 40 minute class)
Part one (20 minutes): Have students form groups to share their sensory representation of the photo.
Part two (20 minutes): Review observation writing—smells, sounds, sights, textures, tastes. Revisit figurative language techniques—metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, alliteration, idiom, personification, hyperbole, etc. (attached). Have students write one of each type of figurative language to their existing description of their selected photo.
For homework, write a first draft reflection of the photo. Use the attached prompt list.
4. Day Four: Editing (One 40 minute class).
Students will bring in the draft response and photograph for editing. Provide peer editing and teacher conference time for students to polish their pieces.
For homework, have students polish for a final draft writing piece.
5. Day Five: Two-minute Power Presentations (Two 40-minute class)
Students will visually display their photo (on a projector) and provide a 2-minute oral “power” presentation reflecting on the image
6. Day Six/Seven: “Publish” work into a school-wide, community-wide newspaper; school bulletin board; class book; or team website. Students could also hold a symposium or poster session presenting their work to peers, parents, or the community.

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Creating a “Sense” of Place Prompt List

Writing in Response to a Historical Photograph

On a separate sheet, respond to below prompts for your historic photo.

Observation prompts:

- List some of the objects in the image.
- What are some of the textures?
- How does the photo show movement?
- What do you see in the foreground? In the background? Up high? Down low?
- When do you think this occurred?
- Is there anything living?
- Complete the phrases
- Simile: This place looks/sounds/smells like . . .
- Metaphor: This place is a . . .
- If I were at this place I would feel . . .
- This photo shows the emotion . . .

Interpretive prompts: interpretive questions to the whole group. Have students respond to the below prompts:

- What is this photo depicting?
- Where was the photo taken?
- What occurred here?
- When was the photo taken?
- Who do you think took the photo?
- Why was the photo taken?
- What do you think occurred just before the photograph was taken?
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Figurative Language Prompt List

Authors use figurative language or figures of speech to make their writing more interesting and colorful. Here are several different types of figurative language that you should incorporate into your writing.

SIMILE: Compares two unlike things using the words *like, as, than, similar to, resembles, etc.*

Examples: His whiskers made him look *like* a goat.
 His mouth *resembled* a large cavern.
 The mayor is as slippery *as* an eel.

METAPHOR: Compares two unlike things without using the words like or as. It says something is something else. A metaphor can be a particular word, phrase or sentence which suggests a similarity between to things.

Examples: His goat whiskers made me laugh.
 She started off, a hunchback princess dragging her sack behind her.
 The blinding white snow blanketed the pasture.

PERSONIFICATION: When a writer attributes human characteristics to objects.

Examples: The wind *moaned* in the night.
 The leaves *danced* in the breeze.
 The cabin *clung* for dear life to the side of the mountain.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM: When a writer attributes distinctly human characteristics to animals.

Examples: The lioness beamed with joy as her kittens played in the grass.
 The octopus conducted an orchestra of fish as she descended to the ocean bottom.

ONOMATOPOEIA: is the use of words that imitate sounds. It provides a rich visual and auditory experience.

Examples: a human laugh = hee hee, ha ha!
 car horns = beep, beep - honk!
 eating potato chips = crunch, crunch!

HYPERBOLE: is a writing device which uses exaggeration to make a point.

Examples: Make a sundae for me that’s a *mile high*!
 Coach Allen *exploded* with anger.
 It was so hot that you could fry an egg on the driveway.



ALLITERATION: is the repetition of initial consonant sounds or middle vowel or consonant sounds. It is common in poetry and children’s books.

Examples: Bold Ben bakes big bagels.
 Amy always answers abruptly.
 Hissssss, hissss Misssster Sssssnake! Sssssslippy, sssslither, ssssliding,
 sssssneaking through the grasssssss.

IDIOMS: A particular language or usage of a group, community, or culture; a speech form or mode of expression peculiarly self-contained in its meaning, beyond its constituent words; grammatically peculiar but common phrase to the ear. The use of idioms bring color and flavor to the language - and brevity too.

Examples:	<i>lost his marbles</i>	means	acting crazy
	<i>pulling my leg</i>	means	joking
	<i>raining cats and dogs</i>	means	raining very hard
	<i>beat around the bush</i>	means	not coming to the point of a subject



“Sense” of Place Rubric

Name _____ Date: _____ Title of Piece: _____

REFLECTIVE ESSAY: Writing to Explore and Analyze (Standard 1.12)

Language Arts Writing/Ms. Fary

Teacher Score	Student Score	Criteria	Exceeds Standard (5)	Accomplished Writing (4) * MEETS STANDARD *	Proficient Writing (3)	Basic Writing (2)
30	30	<p>PURPOSE: Focuses on an event, person, or place that holds significance Explores and analyzes Analyzes how the experience influenced who you are Uncovers deeper layers of meaning and life lessons learned</p>	<p><i>Score point 5 meets all the criteria listed in score point 4 and offers even more:</i> This paper memorably presents the occasion for reflection, often with the fine detail of the naturalist or autobiographer in extended detail, setting up a reflection that is exceptionally thoughtful and convincing. 30</p>	<p>Describes the experience and how it made an impression upon you Expresses extensive reflection Analyzes ideas by looking at them from multiple angles and/or moving through successively deeper layers of meaning Creates an enjoyable piece of writing 28</p>	<p>May be brief or the occasion may dominate May be thoughtful and predictable May focus on personal or general reflection rather than presenting a balance Limited reflection and analysis 25</p>	<p>Simple statements of belief or reflection may be implicitly embedded in the title or topic sentence May take the form of autobiographical illustrations or a single incident Little or no reflection and analysis 23</p>
20	20	<p>ORGANIZATION & COHERENCE: Presentation of the reflection is at the same time as the retelling of experience Experience is described in a natural progression of ideas (in order) Has an clear opening, body, and reflective conclusion Transitions occur throughout</p>	<p>Ideas are present in an original fashion Reflection is implicit, embedded in a way that leads the reader from the specific to the abstraction that underlies it Paper may end with a conclusion but without a sense of conclusiveness 20</p>	<p>Achieves coherence through natural progression of ideas, not through application of external organizational patterns Has an enticing introduction that sets the occasion for reader, a detailed body, and a conclusion that provides one final reflection Utilizes transitions where needed 18</p>	<p>Coherent, often relying on external organization patterns rather than lines of thought Transitions weak Length of paragraphs too long or too short Experience ends abruptly 16</p>	<p>May have lapses in coherence Stays generally on topic but may have internal digressions Transitions weak Severe paragraph disorganization No sense of conclusiveness 15</p>
20	20	<p>ELABORATION/ DETAILS VOICE: Has vivid sensory details Includes five examples of figurative language Shows the reader the experience Maintains a precise, controlled, thoughtful voice and style</p>	<p>This paper often shows a metaphoric use of language using imaginative yet precise language in its attention to subtleties of thought. Paper reveals a deepening insight 20</p>	<p>Experience shown and felt, not told Precise and appropriate language Concrete details that elicit reactions Sensory language Uses pacing, dialogue, and action Appropriate figurative language 18</p>	<p>Uses some details and sensory language Uses predictable patterns, word choices, details Limited figurative language Story is told not shown 16</p>	<p>Shows little purposeful use of strategies for elaboration May be limited to lists of details or of generalizations Uses simple, generic language Missing figurative language 14</p>
10	10	<p>G.U.M./FORMAT Proper use of grammar, usage and mechanics Words, sentences and paragraphs flow Has a creative, relevant title</p>	<p>Mastery of conventions Mistakes intentional Complex sentence structure Clever use of words 10</p>	<p>Solid control of conventions Some minor errors Complex sentence structure Imaginative title 8</p>	<p>Some control of conventions Errors unintentional Simple sentence structure 6</p>	<p>Frequent distracting errors Errors unintentional Simple sentence structure 4</p>
20	20	<p>PROCESS: Evidence of editing Meeting deadlines Constructive feedback</p>	<p>Sought ways to make your piece exceptional Drafts completed on time Careful and complete editing Feedback taken to improve piece 20</p>	<p>Improved piece consistently from draft to draft Drafts completed on time Good effort to revise and edit 18</p>	<p>Fair effort to revise and improve piece Most drafts turned in on time Took some feedback 16</p>	<p>Poor effort to improve piece Late or no drafts turned in Didn't follow directions Feedback not considered 14</p>
100	100					