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DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

WHAT THIS EPISODE IS ABOUT

In this episode, students will learn tips and techniques for writing descriptive essays. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- ✎ define the term *descriptive writing*
- ✎ apply the writing process to writing a descriptive essay
- ✎ write and revise an organized descriptive paragraph

VIDEO SUMMARY

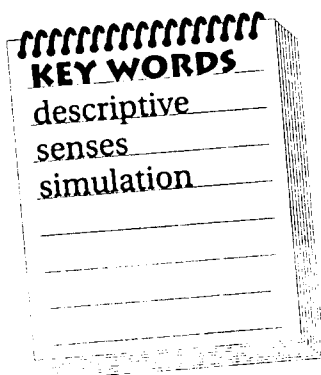
The students in the writing club learn that their next assignment is to write a descriptive essay. Ms. Scott does a writing experiment with Bradley.

Bradley wears a mask over his eyes and dips his hand into a box. He describes the gooey, cold, slimy substance that he can feel but can't see. Then he smells and tastes the substance. It's a mixture of strawberry gelatin and cold spaghetti.

Ms. Scott says that students will learn to use and sharpen their five senses—touch, taste, hearing, sight, and smell—as they do research for their descriptive essays. A good descriptive essay includes many sensory words and vivid details that help the reader feel as if he or she were actually there with the writer, experiencing the same thing.

Kyle considers a list of places he could describe, and he decides to visit the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. Kyle, Sarah, and Bryan tour the space-travel exhibits and ride the Space Shot simulator, which creates a few moments of weightlessness.

Later, Kyle writes a vivid descriptive essay about what it was like to ride the Space Shot.



BEFORE VIEWING THE VIDEO

Have students close their eyes and imagine a favorite food. Ask: "What color is it? What does it smell like? What does it taste like? What kind of texture do you feel in your mouth when you are eating it? What sound does the food make when it's cooking or when you bite into it?"

Next, ask students to make a list of the descriptive words that come to mind as they imagine their favorite foods.

Tell students to watch the video to see how the writing process is used to write a descriptive essay.

WHILE VIEWING THE VIDEO

1. After Bryan makes a list of places to describe in his essay, PAUSE the video and ask students to brainstorm a list of possible places at school to describe—for example, the playground, the cafeteria, the music room, the gym, etc.
2. After Kyle writes the rough draft of his Space Shot essay, PAUSE the video and ask students to make a list of descriptive phrases about the place they have chosen to describe. Make a class list of some descriptive phrases on the board.

Ask students to write a descriptive paragraph about their place. Encourage them to use some of the phrases they created.

3. After Kyle revises his rough draft, PAUSE the video. Ask students to exchange papers with a classmate. Each student should offer constructive suggestions for revising the partner's descriptive paragraph. Students should point out and encourage colorful, descriptive phrases that paint vivid "mind pictures" for the reader.

AFTER VIEWING THE VIDEO

After the descriptive essays are revised, each student should publish a final draft of the descriptive essay. You may wish to use a bulletin board to display the paragraphs, along with drawings or photos of the places that students have described.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Place several objects inside a box. Have students try to describe the objects inside the box without seeing them. They may use any of their other four senses. After all of the objects have been described, open the box and discuss the accuracy of the descriptions.



INTERNET RESOURCES

WritingDEN
http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/index.htm

U.S. Space & Rocket Center
<http://www.ussrc.com/>

Bill Nye Labs Online
<http://nyelabs.kcts.org/>

