

Topic: Descriptive Writing	Duration: 4 days
	Grade: 4
Subject Area:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English language arts
Learning Intentions or Objectives (SWBAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will have an understanding of the definition of descriptive writing Students will be able to explain key characteristics of descriptive writing Students will be able to explain and provide examples of showing and telling sentences Students will be able to write an effective showing paragraph derived from a telling sentence
Subject Competency:	<p>Competency 1: -To read and listen to literary, popular, and information-based texts</p> <p>Competency 2: -To write self-expressive, narrative, and information-based texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">
Essential Knowledges:	<p><u>Reading strategies</u> -Use of pictures and other graphic representation to interpret texts -Questions and talk with others to clarify and enrich interpretations</p> <p><u>Response process and reading</u> - Use of personal, social, and cultural background experiences to interpret texts</p> <p><u>Writing system: Understanding of language</u> - Identification of purpose of writing</p> <p><u>Writing process</u> - Using graphic organizers - Sharing owns writing with peers</p> <p><u>Knowledge of texts: Reading-writing connections</u></p>

	- Guided discussion and questioning of texts read, listened to and produced in order to discover how the texts work
Cross Curricular Competencies:	Competency 1: To use information Competency 3: To exercise critical judgment Competency 4: To use creativity Competency 5: To adopt effective work methods Competency 8: To cooperate with others Competency 9: To communicate appropriately

Classroom Management	Classroom management will be carried out by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive reinforcement 2. Reinforcement of classroom rules 3. Point system (lose points= consequence)
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Differentiated Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pair students with a stronger student to help with organization and paying attention 2. Provide more time for students with IEPs and learning difficulties 3. Accommodate needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For students who require more help, I make sure to re-explain instructions and/or steps of an activity. 4. Use a variety of teaching methods to cater to different learning styles (for example: visuals, interactive games, manipulatives, group work, individual work, and considering students' interests. 5. Prepare more for those students who finish quicker than others 6. Be flexible!
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Lesson 1

Introduction to Descriptive Writing

Materials

- Powerpoint file (descriptive writing)
- Smartboard
- Objects: A candle, tin can, teddy bear,
- Exit cards
- Notes on descriptive writing

Introduction (15 minutes)

- **Explain to students**, “Before we left our on March break, we did a journal entry about a meal we would make for our family. But, for this journal entry, I wanted you to really describe what you were going to make by using your 5 senses. For example, I wanted to be able to smell your meal, taste it, and picture it in my mind as I read your entry. This type of writing is called **descriptive writing**.”

Class Discussion

- **Ask students**, “How would you define descriptive writing? In other words, what is descriptive writing?”

Notes: Students answers will vary.

- **Explain to students**, “Descriptive writing uses sensory detail to paint a word picture of a person, place, object, scene or even an emotion.”
- **Give students the chance to brainstorm the following questions:** “Why do you think we use descriptive writing when we write stories?”
 - Makes stories more interesting and gives details
 - To make scenes realistic and memorable
 - To help readers experience an emotion
 - To bring characters to life
 - To convey clear ideas, even complex ones
 - To help readers feel like they are on the scene
- Have students reflect back on their journal entry. **Ask students**, “How did you make sure to use descriptive language when writing about a meal you would make for your family? Can you give me an example? If you did not, can you now come up with something interesting to say to describe you meal really well?”

Hint: Think of your 5 senses and make sure the reader can paint a picture of the words in his/her mind.

- **Explain to students,** “Here are some key characteristics to help you write a well written descriptive piece.”

1. Vivid sensory detail

Sun glared in my eyes through the half-open blinds. I heard the sound of plates and glasses clanking, so I knew my mom was busy making breakfast. I pulled the itchy wool blanket over my head, but the warm smell of toast lured me out of the bed. As I entered the kitchen, I saw my mom slathering jelly on the steaming bread. I took a bite, and the sticky sweetness of the jelly made my mouth water.

2. Figurative language (similes and metaphors)

- The dragon flew as fast as the wind.
- My dog is as slow as a turtle.
- He has a heart of stone

3. Precise language

- Adjectives, action verbs, and specific nouns

4. Organization

- Find your topics
- Find out what you want to write about first, second, and third
- Start writing!

Body (20 minutes)

Activity

- **Explain to students,** “ You are aliens from an unknown planet vacationing on Earth. As you enjoy your stay on Earth, you come across a foreign object. You are so intrigued by the object that you want to send a message home describing your new discovery.”

Note: The objects will have already been pre-selected for students to observe.

- **Remind students,** “For this activity, boys and girls, you will have to activate all of their 5 senses to describe your object of choice. I want you to do this so that you can practice using your 5 senses to help you write descriptively.”

Explain the following instructions:

- Each student must pick one object of interest. Once students know what they want to describe, they must answer the following questions:
 - Write about what you see first (no touching)
 - Then, describe how the object feels
 - Does your object make any particular sound?
 - Describe how the object smells like
 - Imagine and describe how the object would taste like
- **Note:** Even though the student may know the object, he or she cannot use the name of the object as he/she describes it.
- **Explain to students**, “You will all have to write to 3-5 lines describing your object. This is to be completed in your journal”
- **Remind students**, “When you are writing your piece, remember your goal is to give your reader a picture of what you are writing. Describe your objects well using your 5 senses, use figurative language and specific adjectives. Also, make sure your ideas are well organized and clear to the reader.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

- Give time to some students to read their descriptive piece. Highlight key characteristics and elements within students writing piece to help reinforce effective descriptive writing.
- **Note:** Have students finish their piece at home if they are not done
- Give students an exit card and have them write down one important thing they learned about descriptive writing.

Descriptive Writing



Remember, descriptive writing uses sensory detail to paint a word picture of a person, place, object, scene or even an emotion.

Four things to remember:

Sensory detail

Paints a picture that appeals to the reader's senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste!

Figurative language

Similes and metaphors help to paint a clear picture in the reader's mind.

Precise language

Use specific adjectives, nouns and strong action verbs to give life to story.

Organization

Organize writing in order of importance or in chronological order.

Lesson 2

Show, don't tell!

Materials

- Students' journals
- Blackboard or whiteboard
- Showing, Not Telling: What does it mean? notes

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Remind students**, “Last class we defined and explained important characteristics of descriptive writing. We also did a small activity in class to write a short descriptive piece by activating our 5 senses. This writing activity was there to help us to think of important details and necessary words to describe our unknown object.
- **Tell students**, “Today we will be focusing on the idea of showing rather than telling in writing”.
- **Ask students**, “What if I told you to take your journals out right now and asked you to write about your favourite toy in the whole entire world, but instead I told you to show me rather than tell me. What would you do? What does *Show, don't tell* mean?”
- Answers will vary, but discussion should touch base on the following ideas:
 - ***Show, don't tell* enables the reader to experience the story through action, words, thoughts, senses, and feelings rather than simple statements. The idea here is to choose appropriate and specific detail necessary for a writing piece.**

Body (15 minutes)

- Present students with the following sentence: **The wind was cold.**
- **Explain to students**, “ This sentence is an example of a telling sentence.
- **Ask students**, “Do you know why this would be considered a telling sentence?”
 - Lacking detail
 - Does not describe the cold wind
- **Explain to students**, “As a class, we will re-write this sentence so that it comes to life!”
- **Ask students**, “What does ***the cold wind*** feel like? Think of an image in your mind

and let's capture it in words."

- **Ask students**, "How do you feel when you are cold?"
 - Chilly
 - Goosebumps
 - Uncomfortable
- **Ask students**, "Is enough detail provided to visualize the cold wind?"
- **Explain to students**, "Telling sentences have linking verbs followed by an adjective. Showing sentences uses action verbs to demonstrate the adjective from the telling sentence. An example of a showing sentence can be the following:
The icy wind whipped across my skin, making goose bumps appear.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

- **Explain to students**, "At your home tonight, wander around and find three telling sentences that you can bring back to class tomorrow."
 1. One sentence needs to have a person as its subject
 2. Second sentence needs to have a place or location as its subject
 3. The final sentence needs to have a thing as its subject.

Tomorrow you will be transforming those telling sentences into showing descriptions for your journal."

Note: In class, have students divide one of their journal pages in 3 and at the end of each line they will write their telling sentence.

Extension/Continuation of lesson (20 minutes)

- Next class, show students the three telling sentences that you came up with and show how you turned those sentences into showing sentences
- Have students come up with 3 showing sentences that help demonstrate the telling sentence, leaving room for an illustration.
- Once students have finished writing their showing sentences, tell them to refer to that page in their journal whenever they need to be reminded on the difference between a telling and showing sentence.

Showing, Not Telling: What does it mean?

You can add strength to your sentences by allowing your readers to hear, see, and feel the activities in stories. Rather than just telling readers what happened, use the following **strategies**:

1. Show the action

Telling: He was angry.

Showing: He threw his soda bottle at my head.

2. Use detailed description

Telling: The weather was bad, showing his angry mood.

Showing: Matching his angry mood, the moon refused to shine that night, the storm clouds swirled in angry circles, and the wind blew icy gusts against his neck.

3. Use dialogue

Telling: I made it clear that we needed to leave the party, but he said that he wanted to stay for one more dance. Reluctantly, I agreed.

Showing: "Let's go home now," I urged.

"Come on, the night's still young," he replied.

"Let's stay for one more dance."

"Okay, but that's all - just one more dance," I insisted.

4. Give concrete details

Telling: On the way home, he drove the car so recklessly that he frightened me.

Showing: On the way home, he raced his Cherokee through the narrow streets, slashed onto Morgan Boulevard, ran two red lights, and squealed to a stop in my driveway. I sat gasping in fear, unable to speak or to open my door.

5. Specific is terrific!

Telling: He stood too close to me.

Showing: He stood about half a meter away, so close I could smell his garlic breath.

Lesson 3

The Twits

Materials

- Chapter book, *The Twits*, by Roald Dahl
- Loose leafs
- List of telling sentences
- Graphic organizer worksheet

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Explain to students**, “ Today I will be reading a fun chapter from a book called *The Twits* by Roald Dahl. This author shows how to use **showing** skills rather than **telling** skills. I hope this chapter will inspire you to explore Mr. Dahl’s books because his books can teach you a lot about descriptive writing and developing ideas.”

Body (15 minutes)

- Before reading the chapter, share the following sentence on the board, “*His beard was dirty*”
- **Ask students**, “What details might you add to this telling sentence in order to make all readers see the exact same dirty beard in their minds?”
- **Ask students**, “What comes to your mind when you think of a dirty beard?”
- Read the chapter from The Twits entitled "Dirty Beards."
- After reading the chapter, highlight that Mr. Dahl used remarkable showing language.
- **Ask students**, “In your own words, explain how Mr. Dahl used showing sentences to help the reader know how dirty his beard is?”
- **Explain to students**, “The purpose of showing in writing is to make sure all the readers get the same picture in their minds. Mr. Dahl doesn’t **tell** us Mr. Twit’s beard was dirty. Instead he **shows** us how filthy it is in his chapter entitled “Dirty Beards”

Conclusion (10 minutes)

- Using the details from the chapter, have students briefly sketch a drawing of Mr. Twits beard.

Note: The main task here is for students to understand that when writing people have to be able to visual the words in their mind.

- Once students have completed this task **ask the following**, “Could someone draw such a detailed picture after reading something you write?”
- **Explain to students**, “Next class, we will be working on showing and not telling writing. I will present you all with several telling sentences for you all to choose from. Your writers job is to transform that telling sentence into a nicely developed showing paragraph that provides unique and interesting details to a reader.”

Extension/ Continuation (20 minutes)

- Give students a list of telling sentences
- Remind students that they will be using these telling sentences to create a well-developed showing paragraph.
- To help students organize their ideas, pass out a graphic organizer. Read instructions carefully to students and go over any pressing questions. Students must feel out the graphic organizer before writing the descriptive paragraph.
- **Tell students**, “Remember, use strong verbs to **show** the details! Paint a picture in your reader's mind with excellent adjectives and specific nouns that would put better pictures in your reader's mind. You can use any notes to help remind you how to write a good descriptive paragraph. Use your dictionary and thesaurus.”
- After you have created a well-developed **showing** paragraph detail-, insert your original **telling** sentence somewhere into your paragraph. Will it work better as your paragraph's first sentence, its last sentence, or as a sentence somewhere in the middle?
- Have students re-write their revised paragraph in their journals
- When students are done writing, have them read their piece to a friend.
- Have students answer the following question, “What details in the paragraph helped you paint a picture in your mind?”

- Have students give verbal feedback to their peers
 1. What is something you enjoyed about the piece?
 2. How did this paragraph help you improve on your showing writing?
 3. What is one thing you would suggest to your peers so he/she can improve on his/her showing skills.

Descriptive writing piece (to be evaluated):

This unit will help direct students into writing a well-developed and detailed writing piece. With all the information obtained from these three lessons, students will have the chance to both fix and re-write their piece on a meal they would make for their family, or to come up with a story.

If they chose to re-do their journal entry, they must consider the definition of descriptive writing and key characteristics. They must refer to all their notes on descriptive writing including notes on telling vs showing sentences. I will revise students' first entry and compare to the next to see if students were able to apply what was learned in class.

If students opt for creating a story, they can use telling sentences to help direct them to a showing writing piece. Again, they will be encouraged to use all their notes on descriptive writing and showing writing.

List of Telling Sentences

Choose **one** of the following telling sentences:

- ❖ My grandfather is funny.
- ❖ I had a busy day today.
- ❖ My mother had a bad headache.
- ❖ Performing stunts on a skateboard can be dangerous.
- ❖ My friend makes me laugh.
- ❖ He was nice.
- ❖ My room was messy.
- ❖ I am not a morning person.
- ❖ Her hairstyle is wild.
- ❖ Our family vacation was a disaster.
- ❖ Taking tests makes me nervous.
- ❖ My father is a good man.
- ❖ Lying is not a good idea.
- ❖ I was scared.
- ❖ The twins are completely different.
- ❖ She saw the car accident from the sidewalk.
- ❖ The room was crowded.
- ❖ She takes things way too seriously.
- ❖ He can dish it out, but he can't take it.
- ❖ My dog is lazy.

Name: _____

Student Checklist
Descriptive Writing



	YES ✓	NO ✗
I have sensory details and figurative language to paint a word picture to my reader		
I used precise nouns, adjectives, and verbs		
I used showing writing rather than telling writing in my story		
I organized my ideas in chronological order		
I have well-developed sentences and ideas		
I reviewed grammar, spelling, and punctuation		
I am confident with my showing paragraph		

What are some challenges you faced while writing your story (be specific):
