

Descriptive Writing

1. Place a large stuffed toy on a table in front of the classroom. Provide time for students to look at, touch, and closely examine the toy.
2. Tell students that descriptive writing paints pictures in the reader's mind. Tell them that writers use descriptive words to help the reader see, hear, taste, touch, and smell what the author is writing about.
3. Ask students to brainstorm words and phrases that describe the stuffed toy. Record the words on the board. Encourage students to suggest interesting words they have seen or read in books in addition to the words they often use. Record their ideas on the chalkboard. This can be done in a semantic map.
4. Write the following prompt on the chalkboard to provide students with a start for their paragraph. We have a stuffed toy in our classroom. It is.....
5. Ask students to suggest sentences to add to the paragraph. Write their ideas on the chalkboard. As ideas have been used in the paragraph, mark them off of the semantic map.
6. After the first draft is written, ask students to make suggestions for revisions. Encourage students to use more descriptive words and phrases, reorganize the paragraph so it is clearer, add more details, and so on.
7. Remind students again that good descriptive writing creates a picture in the reader's head. Present the class's paragraph to another teacher, the principal, the librarian, or another class of students, and ask the reader(s) to draw the subject of the paragraph.
8. If the reader's drawing is not accurate, guide students back to their paragraph to see if they can make it clearer and/or more accurate.
9. Guide students through writing other descriptive paragraphs about objects, people, or events. Encourage students to incorporate elements of descriptive writing into their own writing.

Practice and Reinforcement Activities

1. Provide texts and times for students to read widely in various genres.
2. Read aloud to students from various genres.
3. Engage students in a "scavenger hunt" for samples of writing in a specific genre.
4. Share models of writing in various genres with students

Description

Expository text is used to describe places, objects, people, and events. When we read history or biography, the descriptive language helps us “see” places and people in our mind’s eye. The writer of descriptive expository text is an expert at selecting details and using words, especially adjectives, to communicate to the reader. Young children participating in interactive writing lessons are asked to think about how something looks or how they felt at a certain time, to come up with details, put them into words, and organize the text so that it communicates to others. An example of that is a “character web” or graphic organizer that children use to note their observations of Goldilocks.

The pleasure they take in coming up with descriptive words to paint a picture of goldilocks will later serve as a stimulus for them to make their own writing more interesting.

Another example is “What happens to the inside of an apple when air touches it?”

In this example, children pose a question, make prediction, illustrate their observations at the beginning and end of the experiment, and write one statement about what they learn.

e.g. It turns brown
Lemon juice stays white

The children must think carefully about how to describe the apple to others who read the piece. The piece is produced with the support of conversation and the teacher’s expertise at writing words. The text is well beyond what we would expect individual early readers to produce on their own. When placed on the wall, this interactive writing provides a string model that children can refer to when they do their own descriptive writing. Valuable word solving takes place during the working on the piece, involving words like brownish and inside. The experience, talk and composing involved in writing the piece, is even more important in the children’s learning.

Children can also make connections between narrative and expository text, a skill often tested at higher grades. One example is a missing poster for the Gingerbread Man.

Question:

What happens to
the inside of
an apple when air
touches it?

Prediction:

- The apple will turn the color of lemon juice.
- The apple will rot.
- The apple will become softer.
- The apple will look dirty.
- The apple will turn brown.
- The lemon juice will turn green.
- The apples with lemon juice will be a different color.

Observation at beginning:



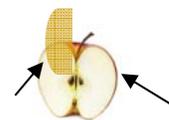
apple

+



lemon juice

end

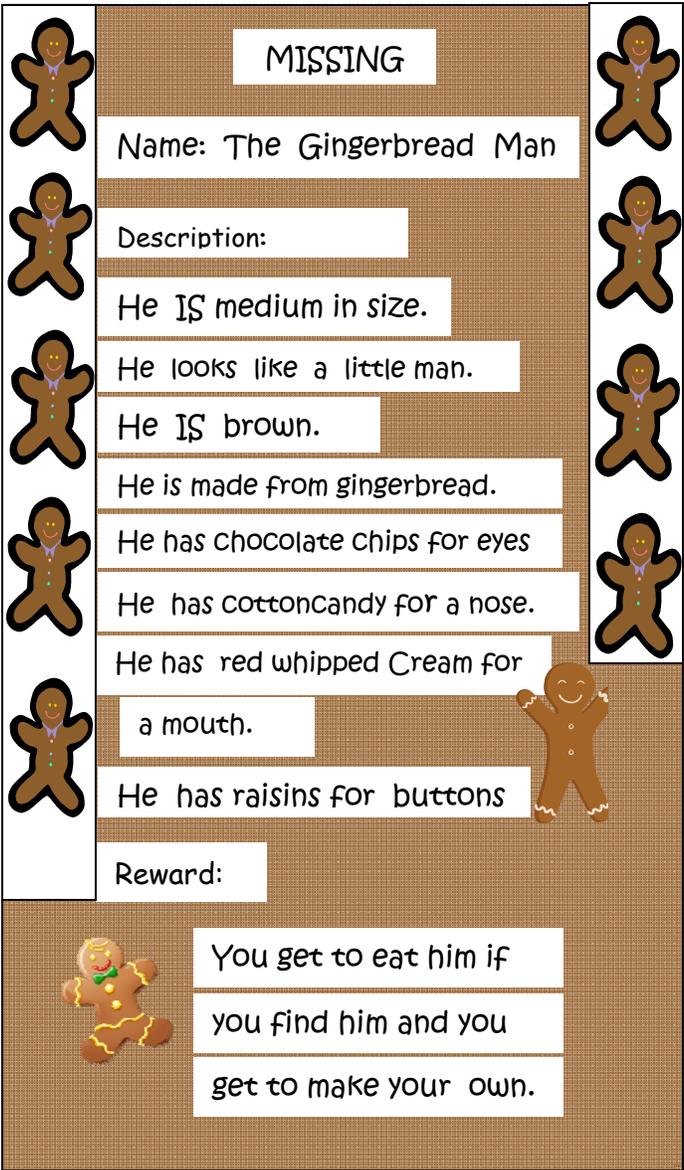


Plain - with lemon juice

What we learned:

It turns brownish

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MISSING

Name: The Gingerbread Man

Description:

He IS medium in size.

He looks like a little man.

He IS brown.

He is made from gingerbread.

He has chocolate chips for eyes

He has cottoncandy for a nose.

He has red whipped Cream for
a mouth.

He has raisins for buttons

Reward:

You get to eat him if
you find him and you
get to make your own.