



Writing Fundamentals

Launching

Generating Ideas II: Read the World Like a Writer

Rationale:

Writers are curious, keen observers of their world. Students are encouraged through the literature they read to explore the world around them and attempt to describe their own observations in writing and drawing.

Preparation:

- *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers
- Chart paper
- “What I Hear at Home” (see Appendix)

Teaching:

Inform

Today we’re going to talk about how important it is that we as writers are always paying attention to the world around us. Writers are curious. They observe the people, places, and things around them. They are inquisitive, that is, they ask questions, and they use what they learn and observe as subject material for their writing. And that’s something we all can do!

Present

Hold up *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers and say: This book is about a little girl who is especially observant. She goes on regular walks in the park with her dad and her dog, Major, and she notices a lot of details about the many people and places they pass. Her observations are special though because instead of just telling us what things look like, she shares with us what the world around her sounds like. She tells us about what she sees, but what brings them to life for us are the sound words she uses to recreate all the people and things she hears.

Read some sample sounds from the book. Choose your favorites and read with lots of energy and enthusiasm, stretching out the sound words, over-enunciating letters, and modulating your voice to emphasize the onomatopoeic nature of these sounds. Especially fun ones to read are: the “twick twick” of Major’s toenails (p. 5), the “whithh whithhh” of lawn sprinklers (pp. 9–10), the many car noises (pp. 11–12), the “waaa waaa” of a baby, and the “bomp-bomp” of a basketball being dribbled (pp. 13–14).

Engage

The last page of Showers’s story invites students to close their eyes and listen to the sounds around them. Join them in this, and as a class, sit quietly without talking for as long as possible. Have students write down or share orally the sounds they hear as they listen.

Reiterate

Like the little girl in *The Listening Walk*, writers are good observers of people and things. She sees people and things with her eyes, but she brings them to life for us by using sound words that recreate what all the things she passes sound like. Choose something from your world to write a new piece, or choose a topic that you like from your Writing Folder and add details that show the reader what this person, place, or thing sounds like.

Conference Questions:

- What sound words did you write today?
- How did you decide what letters to use?

Extension:

- *Extend today’s discussion of sensory details to the other senses writers utilize by reading “Riding on the Train” from *Honey, I Love* by Eloise Greenfield. Each verse begins with a different sensory perception (e.g., “I see,” “I hear,” “I feel”).*
- *Distribute copies of the Appendix for students to complete at home. Students should sit still and quiet somewhere in their house, or they can go with another family member on a listening walk through their neighborhood and list or draw the sounds they hear.*

Appendix:

“What I Hear at Home”



Name: _____

Date: _____

What I Hear at Home



The sound I heard...	What it was...