



Writing Fundamentals

Poetry

Revision I: Poets Add Details

Rationale:

Poets enhance their writing by adding descriptive details and specific examples. Students identify details used by the poets they read and then revise an earlier draft to add details to their own poems.

Preparation:

- Transparency or copies of “Things” from Eloise Greenfield’s *Honey, I Love*
- Chart Paper
- Writing Folders
- “Picture a Poem” (see Appendix)

Teaching:

Inform

In a lot of ways, poems are like photographs. They provide a detailed snapshot of a person, place, thing, or thought the poet wants to share with us. But since poets have to use words instead of cameras with film, they have to include a lot of details to give readers a clear picture of what happens in their poems and what they are about.

Present

Let me show you what I mean. *Place Greenfield’s “Things” on the overhead, or give students individual copies, and read it.* I love this poem for so many reasons! It sounds so musical, but I think what I love best about it is the imagery Eloise uses. The details about where she went and what she learned really helps readers see the final picture she wants them to have in their heads. Eloise could’ve just said, “a lot of things don’t last but poetry does.” But that isn’t a poem because there are no details. One sentence doesn’t always paint the whole picture.

Engage

Can you help spot the details, the examples Eloise gives readers of things she does and places she goes on this day she is recounting? *Begin a chart with the title “Eloise’s “Things””; read the first stanza again, charting the details that Eloise provides:*

- went to the corner
- bought candy
- walked in the store
- “ain’t got it no more”

What do you think happened to the candy? That’s right, she ate it! *Ask students to help you chart the images and details in the second stanza:*

- went to the beach
- built a sandhouse
- played on the shore
- “ain’t got it no more”

What do you think happened to Eloise’s sandhouse? Did the ocean get it? Whatever happened, readers know that sand castles don’t last, so they’re not

surprised when she tells them she “ain’t got it no more.” But at the end of the poem, she tells her readers about something that does last. Let’s chart the details she tells about at the end:

- went to the kitchen
- lay down on the floor
- made a poem
- “still got it”
- “still got it”

Because Eloise gives such great examples and details, readers can really see her laying on the floor with the paper out in front of her, drawing and writing her poem and happy to have found something she likes that lasts. Because of the many clear images and details Eloise uses, readers can really see her point that candy and sand castles are fun for a moment, but writing and sharing poetry are fun forever! In the end, she repeats her important detail or thought. Why do you think she does that? I think she does it because she wants those important words to stay with her readers.

Reiterate

The details Eloise uses create clear images in the readers’ minds so they can understand exactly what happened to make her feel so happy about writing a poem. Let’s think about some details that we could add to one of our drafts in progress. What images, details, or examples could you add to a poem to show your reader even more clearly what you mean? Are there any details you want to repeat like Eloise does? *Distribute copies of the Appendix and have students use it to write or draw three new details about the topic of a poem draft they have selected to revise. (List and story poems produced for Drafting I & Drafting II are especially well suited for this activity.)*

Conference Questions:

- What details did you add as you revised your poem today?
- What ideas did Eloise’s poems give you for using, adding, or repeating details?

Extension:

Continue charting and examining details and images in favorite poems.

Appendix:

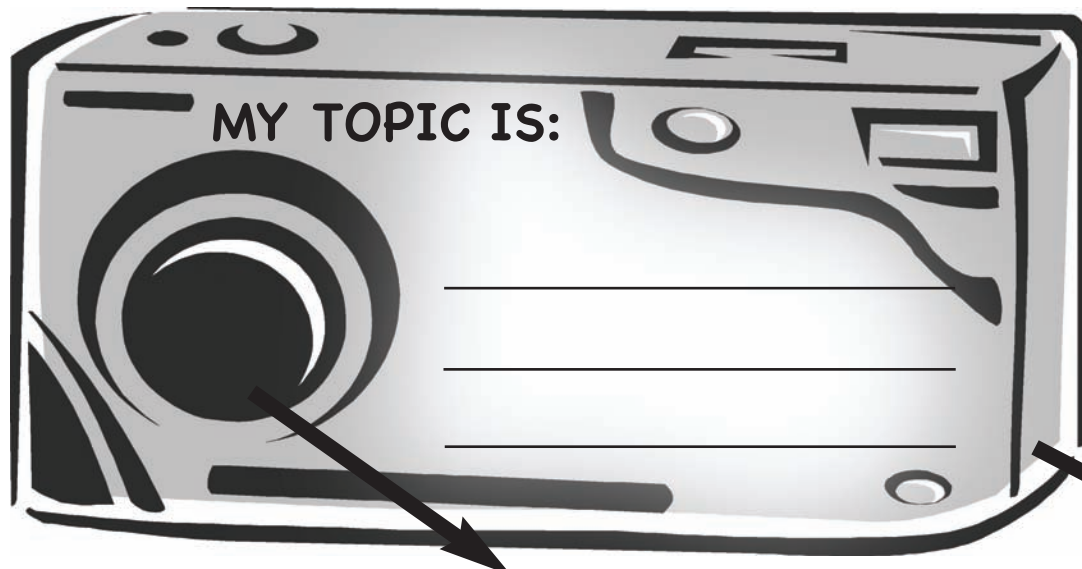
“Picture a Poem”



Name: _____

Date: _____

Picture a Poem



Detail

Detail

Detail



Collecting I: Writing What We See, Feel, & Hear



Rationale:

When writing poems with the intention of memoir, poets want the poem to feel true to the reader. One way they achieve this is by including sensory images.

Preparation:

- *Seeing the Blue Between* pp. 78–79 and 46–47
- *Becoming Joe DiMaggio* pp. 43–44
- *Baseball, Snakes and Summer Squash* pp. 9–10
- “Ways to Include Sensory Images” (see Appendix)

Teaching:

Inform

Lillian Moore is a poet who often writes with the intention of memoir. Let’s read what she has to say about poetry. *Read pp. 78–79 of Seeing the Blue Between.* Today we will talk about how to make our poems “true” by including sensory images.

Present

Sensory images are images that call upon our senses. Our senses include: seeing, feeling, tasting, hearing, and smelling. Including sensory images is especially important when writing poetry with the intention of memoir. These images help bring the reader into the writer’s experience. Let’s look at how some poets have included sensory images in their poems.

Read “Missing.” In this poem, Maria Testa includes words spoken by her grandfather Joseph’s sister. Including dialogue is a great way to help the reader hear what you have heard.

Donald Graves uses dialogue in his poem, “First Baseball Glove.” *Read the poem.*

In his poem “Seeing the World” Steven Herrick also includes dialogue. In addition, he does a great job of including other sensory images. *Read the poem.*

In this poem we hear what he hears, we see what he sees, and we can begin to feel what he felt.

Engage

Open your notebook and find a poem you have written with the intention of memoir or capturing a moment. As you reread that poem, look for a place or places you could add sensory images. It may be dialogue or a visual description or a feeling. Go ahead and add at least one thing right now. *Give students a few moments to do this. Circulate to lend support. Have one or two students share.*

Reiterate

Today during writing time, work on rewriting a poem you have written including sensory images, or write a new poem with this in mind.

Conference Questions:

- What do you want the reader to feel? How can you make this poem more “true”?
- What other sensory images could you add?

Extension:

Sometimes students won’t include dialogue because they don’t remember what was said. Relieve this anxiety by model-writing a poem in dialogue. Be sure to explain that you don’t remember what exactly was said, but you can imagine what might have been said. Look through your poetry collection for poems that include other sensory images.

Appendix:

“Ways to Include Sensory Images”



Ways to Include Sensory Images

<p>Sound</p>	<p>dialogue, sound words and descriptions, onomatopoeia</p>
<p>Sight, Taste, and Touch</p>	<p>detailed descriptions, strong adjectives, metaphorical language</p>
<p>Feelings</p>	<p>internal dialogue, descriptive language, comparisons, strong adjectives</p>