

Common Core Standards Addressed:

W.3.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

RL. 3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RL.3.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

Learning Goals:

Students will...

Understand that descriptive writing engages readers and paints a clear picture of a story.	
<p>Know</p> <p>Descriptive language: shows rather than tells, and creates a vivid visual for the reader.</p> <p>Simile: compares two objects using the words "like" or "as"</p>	<p>Do</p> <p>Describe an object using descriptive language and similes.</p>

Materials Needed:

Levin Thumps and the Gateway to Foo by Obert Skye

Paper

Pencils

Procedures:

- Read the first sentence of *Levin Thumps* aloud to the students.
 - "It was forty degrees above warm"
 - Right away, how does the author hook the readers with this sentence?
 - Why do you think he chose to introduce the story this way, instead of saying "It was a hot day"?
- Tell students that Obert Skye does a really good job of painting a picture of a scene with his words. In this paragraph, he shows us exactly what it would feel like to be in this story.
- Continue reading the rest of the paragraph.
- Explain that good writers show, not tell.
 - Instead of simply *telling* us that it was hot outside, Skye shows us what it felt, looked, and even smelled like. He paints us a clear picture of the setting.
 - Did you notice any good descriptive words in this paragraph? Some examples are: sizzled, droop, majestically, & multicolored.
- Reread this sentence – "The day felt like a windowless kitchen where the oven had been left on high for an entire afternoon."
 - What kind of sentence is this? (Simile)
 - Remind students that similes compare objects using "like" or "as".
 - How is this better than saying "It is hot"?
 - One way to use descriptive writing is through the use of similes.
 - You could also talk about the personification or metaphors found in this passage with more advanced students.

- Next, tell the students you are going to describe an object and see if they can guess what it is (this example is a pencil, but you can use whatever object you like).
 - Start with words that aren't very vivid. "It is yellow, small, and does not bend."
 - The students are probably not going to be able to guess the word using this description.
 - Explain to the students that when we write, we want to use really descriptive and detailed words to help readers get a clear idea of what we're talking about.
 - It was hard to guess what the object was because the description was not very vivid.
 - Have students try to guess the object again, this time using good descriptive language. "It is narrow and sleek, shiny and yellow as the sun. On one end, it has a sharp lead tip, pointed like a shark tooth. The other side is a thick pink rubber."
 - Discuss with students why this description made it easier to guess the object.
 - Why is it important that we use strong descriptions in our writing?
- Have the students practice this skill on their own. Each student should first pick one object in the room without letting anyone know what it is.
- In the first round, students have one minute to write about their object using as many *descriptive words* as they can. They should not actually mention the name of the object they are describing.
 - In the second round, students are still focusing on describing the same object as before. This time, they have one minute to describe the object using as many *similes* as they can.
 - They should then pair up with a partner and try to guess each other's words based on the descriptions they wrote.

Learn about Obert Skye at <http://www.bentonvillelibrary.org/assets/YLF/pdfs/skye-bio.pdf>.