



POETRY WORKSHOP

The Five Senses and the Magic of Metaphor

Poetry is about feeling, imagining, sensing, interpreting. And its reading or recitation can cast a kind of magic spell...Remember that listening to poetry is as important for the student as writing it.

In the inaugural 100Views program, the school chose the beach as their icon. A walk on Bondi Beach provided inspiration for a five senses poem. Composing a series of metaphors on the beach, gave rise to another, richer poem. This was followed by the students sketching their icon.

Preparing for a Poetry ‘Walk’

After the students have acted, sung, danced, percussed the chosen poem in groups (Poetry Workshop Part 1)will listen with more concentration to some readings of poetry from you. And have more insight into the ‘shape’ of poetry (Poetry Workshop 2).



Collect some poems that have some connection to the chosen icon, be it a beach or a mountain, a special building, a track or a landscape. Read some of these poems out loud during the day. Not every poem need be commented upon as there might be just a quiet enjoyment of some poetry. However, the following questions provide starting points for discussion of the shared poem.

Sample teacher script after readings:

- What do you see in your mind's eye as you listened to this poem?
- What particular words do you remember/like/dislike?
- How does the poem make you feel?

Collecting Power Words

Students should be encouraged to 'collect' words for their icon, searching dictionary and thesaurus. They need some powerful vocabulary to work with for their poems. Charts on the wall of their Power Words will encourage their usage.

Sea Poems/Mountain Poems

Read some sea poems or mountain poems (or whatever is relevant to the icon) to give the students a richer vocabulary. Talk about the poet's use of words. Think about some Power Words of their own.

Record some of these Power Words that are food for thought for the poem
e.g. the beach

Nouns such as promenade, seaweed, starfish, horizon, currents

Verbs such as explore, wade, surf, soar

e.g. the mountain

Nouns such as snowdrifts, altitude, tracks, quest

Verbs such as trek, struggle, endeavour, celebrate

Then add some adjectives to describe

e.g. the sea,

Adjectives such as furious, salty, infinite, tranquil, hazy

e.g. the mountain

Adjectives such as secretive, icy, dangerous, majestic, mystical

When all students have added some Power Words, chant some of these icon words.

Ask the students to write down (secretly) their ten favourite words to take on their five senses walk. If it is not possible to go outside, the walk can be

done inside. Explain it is a listening, looking, touching, smelling tasting walk.



The Five Senses

Explain that we experience the world through our five senses. We can use these experiences and our imagination to create something NEW.

Sample script:

Let's concentrate on our five senses

- **touch** something near you, a book, a hand, and describe the feeling to your partner
- **smell** the air – what do you smell – all good smells, some bad ones?
- **remember** the best thing you've ever tasted and the worst
- **look** closely at something nearby – a window, the desk, and describe something you might never have noticed about it before
- **listen!** Close your eyes for about 30 seconds and just listen. Is there really silence?



Tell the students that they are going on a five senses walk and to take their secret Power Word list, and think of more possible words as they go...

Issue each student with the two major writing sheets, some crayons or coloured pencils and sketching paper plus a board. A contained could be taken to collect 'treasures' for closer inspection whilst writing their poem.

The example of the five senses walk given here is for the beach, but can be adapted for whatever icon.

During the Walk

Before venturing onto the beach itself, sit on the promenade steps and look at the sea. Feel the rhythm of the waves and look at the swimmers, the surfers and the sun bathers, **as if with new eyes**. Ask the students to imagine they are visitors from the desert and have never seen the sea or waves at the beach. Then remind them they are going on a five sense walk.

Walk slowly over the sand, looking listening and collecting and paddle in the water. Then taste the water and return slowly up the sand sharing what you've seen or found. Sit alone to write the Five Senses Poem

I see _____
I smell _____
I taste _____
I touch _____
I hear _____

This outline for a poem is then built upon. Allow time for the **Five Senses Poems** to be written, reminding the writers to use their secret words to expand the poem in any way they can.

A Metaphorical Walk.

Then walk to another place where the vista is somewhat different. Tell the students they are about to write more powerfully because they will be using the wonderful tool of metaphor. This will help them to think creatively in describing what they see and conveying it to the readers of their poem.

Explain that a metaphor is **a fresh comparison** that expands the meaning of the image they are creating; that they will be comparing what they see such as the beach, the sand, the clouds to something else, so that the reader can 'see it' too.

You might like to explain here that when you use the word 'like' it is called a **simile** e.g.

The sand is like a long yellow ribbon.

However, if you drop the word 'like', it is called a metaphor e.g.
The sand is a long yellow ribbon.

Tell the students to write their metaphor for the nouns you have chosen, in the case of the beach:- sand, waves, rocks, horizon, surfer. As they compose their metaphor or fresh comparison, ask them to leave the next line blank to fill in later.

Line 1. The sand is.....

Line 2 Leave blank

Line 3 The waves are

Line 4

Line 5 The rocks are

Line 6

Line 7 The horizon is

Line 8

Line 9 The surfer is

Line 10

When the students have written their first metaphor, choose a few students to share them and be positive with their efforts. Remember that the metaphor has to make sense, so you wouldn't accept something like, 'The sand is a fire engine!'

Then suggest the second metaphor, working through the five images, each time leaving a line.

When they've completed all five images, tell them to go back and expand on each metaphor. For example,

The sand is a long yellow ribbon

That dances into the waves.

At this stage you will probably be surprised at the diversity and freshness of the comparisons that the students make. And often they are surprised too. By completing the five metaphors and expanding them, they have a poem.

Then it's time to sketch their icon e.g. the beach. Ask them to concentrate on something they have collected and draw that close focus with the beach in the background. The whole exercise of the five senses walk and the metaphor writing is to help students to look and see the beach **in a different way**.

This is the same process with whatever icon, i.e. sketch the beach, the monument, the mountain, always encouraging the students to look with fresh eyes. This is replicated in the Art Workshops where students are asked to look closely at the icon, again with 'fresh eyes.

NB When the students are asked to paint or draw something from their life with the chosen icon in the background, (just as the Japanese artist Hokusai did for his 100 Views of Mt Fuji) they may also like to write a new poem to go with it; or include a poem already written.

Reading and writing poetry stirs imaginative thinking.

And poetry is word power.

Enjoy helping the students make poetry of their own!

From the book The Art of the Snowflake
By Kenneth Libbrecht

