

P.E.A.F. Poetic Elements are Fun!

Grade Level: Fifth Grade
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Length of Unit: Five to six lessons. (They can be taught consecutively or throughout the year.)

I. ABSTRACT

This unit looks at various elements of poetry (simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, and imagery.) Each lesson defines the element or elements, and then expands on them with hands-on activities, cooperative activities, or guided writing of original student poems. Several wrap-up activities are suggested to help students recognize and remember these basic building blocks of poetry.

NOTE: This unit can be used as written, or can be pulled apart as support for your existing plans. Each lesson can be a quick activity or expanded to a two or three day lesson. Feel free to pick and choose, or simply pull out activities.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives:

1. Students will develop an understanding of poetic elements as the basic building blocks of poetry and creative writing.
2. Students will explore poetic elements through individual and group activities.
3. Students will recognize various poetic elements in poems, songs, or other creative writings.

B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*:

1. Poetry terms: onomatopoeia, alliteration (p. 110)
2. Literary terms: Imagery, metaphor and simile, personification (p. 111)
3. Poems: "Fog"(Carl Sandburg)
"Jabberwocky"(Lewis Carroll)
"Trees" (Sergeant Joyce Kilmer)
"Barbara Frietchie" (John Greenleaf Whittier)

(These and more Core Knowledge poems, as well as other poems not listed in the sequence, are used as support and assessment tools in relation to poetic elements they may contain. They are not discussed or taught in depth.)

B. Skill Objectives

1. Students will define the poetic element(s) in their poetry notes.
2. Students will create their own similes and metaphors in a cooperative group setting.
3. Students will, as a class and individually, identify examples of a specific poetic element in various poems.
4. Students will design and create a poster that illustrates personification in a literal sense.
5. Students will write their own drama using onomatopoeias in a group setting.
6. Students will use synonyms and imagery to improve a descriptive sentence.
7. Students will write a descriptive paper about a portrait / picture using imagery.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. For Teachers:

1. *What Your 5th Grader Needs To Know* edited by: E.D, Hirsch Jr.
2. *Writing Poetry* by: Shelley Tucker (A super book, especially for teaching simile/metaphors and personification.)

3. *Teaching Poetry: Yes You Can!* by: Jacqueline Sweeney (An excellent source of poetry examples to support various elements. It's also full of quick ideas to help students write original poetry.)
- B. For Students:
1. The students will have a basic understanding of the difference between creative writing (poetry and fiction) and expository writing (essays, textbooks, etc.)
 2. The students should have already been exposed to the terms synonym/antonym and their meanings.

IV. RESOURCES

- A. Poems listed in lessons found in *What Your 5th Grader Needs to Know*.
- B. Simile / Metaphor cards (see lesson one)
- C. Personification poster example (see lesson two)
- D. Onomatopoeia poster example (see lesson three)
- E. A magazine picture of a person for each student. (Old *National Geographic* pictures work great!) (See lesson four)
- F. An overhead or copy of various poems that contain the covered poetic elements. (There are several suggestions in each lesson and in the bibliography, but any poem with those elements will do.)
- G. Overhead projector / chalkboard
- H. Large construction paper or tagboard.
- I. Markers / crayons / etc.
- J. Tape / CD player (only if you choose songs to represent your poetic elements.)
- K. (Optional) Reinforcement worksheets for lessons. (See Appendix B, D, and F)
- L. (Optional) Test over these poetic elements. (See Appendix G)

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Simile / Metaphor Madness

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an understanding of poetic elements as the basic building blocks of poetry and creative writing.
 - b. Students will explore poetic elements through individual and group activities.
 - c. Students will recognize various poetic elements in poems, songs, or other creative writings.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Simile and Metaphor
 - b. Poems: "Fog" (Carl Sandburg)
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will define the poetic elements in their poetry notes.
 - b. Students will create their own similes and metaphors in a cooperative group setting.
 - c. Students will, as a class and individually, identify examples of similes and metaphors in various poems.
- B. *Materials*
 1. Definitions of a simile and metaphor (either on overhead or on chalkboard.)
 2. Student notebook paper pen / pencil for notes.
 3. A book (any type will do, it's for a prop.)
 4. 3 X 5 cards – at least two different colors (some blank and some already prepared – see # 5 below) (See Appendix A)

5. Overhead or copy of poem containing similes or metaphors. Suggestions: "Riding in an Airplane" (Dorothy W. Baruch), "A Dragon-Fly" (Eleanor Farjeon), "Fog" (Carl Sandburg), "A Bird Came Down the Walk" (Emily Dickinson), "Sonnet XVIII" (Shakespeare), "A Pelican" (Jack Prelutsky), "A Pizza the Size of the Sun" (Jack Prelutsky), the song: "The Rose" (sung by Bette Midler) (great for metaphors)
6. (Optional) Simile/Metaphor worksheet for reinforcement. (See Appendix B)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Simile: The comparison between two unlike nouns (person, place, or thing) using *like* or *as* to bridge the connection.
2. Metaphor: The comparison between two unrelated nouns (person, place, or thing.)

D. *Procedures / Activities*

1. Motivator: Ask students to complete the following phrase. "Life is like" Most students will immediately finish the phrase with "a box of chocolates." Explain that this popular phrase is a great example of what they will be learning about today ... similes.
2. Have students copy the definition of a simile and metaphor onto a piece of paper and label it "Poetry Notes." They will continue to add definitions to this paper for the rest of this unit and can continue to add more poetry notes for the rest of the year.
3. Next, hold up a book. Then point to a door. Ask what these two nouns might possibly have in common. Explain that when one would hold a book, he or she wouldn't normally think of a door, but that's the whole point of similes and metaphors. Write down similarities between a book and a door as a class:

A book and a door both open. They both can close. They can both look beat up but still be useful and important. Etc.

Explain that the class has just created a simile (if you use *like* / *as*)

A book is like a doorway. It takes you to a new place when you open it.

Also discuss that without some explanation, the comparison doesn't make sense. Forest Gump doesn't just say, "Life is like a box of chocolates." He explains why the two very different nouns are related.

When you state a simile or metaphor and give several reasons why they are similar, this is called an extended simile or metaphor. Writing one of these and giving it a title is a great way to introduce poetry that doesn't have to rhyme.

4. Give students a few examples of similes and metaphors and have them tell you as a class whether they are similes or metaphors by listening for the *like* or *as*. Clue: the word simile has an "I" in it and so does like.

The moon is like an egg in the sky. (simile)

Trees are hair for the earth. (metaphor)

Night is a nap for the day. (metaphor)

Grandmas are comfortable pillows to cry on. (metaphor)

The ocean is like a giant playground for fish. (simile)

IMPORTANT: Emphasize that similes / metaphors are more effective when the two nouns being compared are completely different. The stranger the comparison, the more it makes you think. Comparing tears to lakes is not as striking as comparing tears to a toilet plunger. (Tears are toilet plungers. They unclog your eyes and let your emotions flow freely.)

5. **ACTIVITY:**
Divide students into groups of four or five. Give each group five to ten 3 X 5 cards of one color, and five to ten 3 X 5 cards of another color. Have them write random nouns down on each card. Make sure they include emotions as well.
NOTE: You may want to have some cards pre-made to help the process. (See a list of simile metaphor card ideas in Appendix A.)
 6. Collect the cards and shuffle like colors. Divide colors up evenly between groups. Challenge the students to make as many similes and metaphors they can between the two different nouns on the different colored cards. Allow five to ten minutes. Then share some of their original similes and metaphors.
- E. *Assessment / Evaluation / Reinforcement*
1. Display/hand out/read a poem that contains similes and/or metaphors. Ask students to identify any similes / metaphors they see and point out what two nouns are being compared. This may be done formally for a grade or informally for reinforcement. Suggested poems: (See Materials for this lesson.)
 2. (Optional) Simile/Metaphor worksheet for reinforcement. (See Appendix B)

Lesson Two: Personification: It's Humanly Possible

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an understanding of poetic elements as the basic building blocks of poetry and creative writing.
 - b. Students will explore poetic elements through individual and group activities.
 - c. Students will recognize various poetic elements in poems, songs, or other creative writings.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Personification
 - b. Poems: "Trees" (Sergeant Joyce Kilmer)
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will define the poetic element in their poetry notes.
 - b. Students will design and create a poster that illustrates personification in a literal sense.
 - c. Students will, as a class and individually, identify examples of a specific poetic element in various poems.

B. *Materials*

1. Definitions of personification (either on the overhead or on a chalkboard.)
2. Poetry notes
3. Example of Personification Poster (See Appendix C)
4. Large construction paper, markers/ crayons for students' posters.
5. Overhead or copy of poem containing examples of personification. Suggestions: "The Potato's Dance" (Vachel Lindsay), "The Sun" (John Drinkwater), "The Brook" (Alfred Tennyson), "April Rain Song" (Langston Hughes), "Trees" (Sergeant Joyce Kilmer), "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" (Emily Dickinson).

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Personification: The assigning of human traits to things, colors, qualities, and ideas.

Five ways to write personification:

- 1) Use verbs that name human actions. (Love remembers the good times. / Cats tango in the street.)
- 2) Write with adjectives that generally are used to describe people. (The embarrassed clock covered its face with its hands. / The worried peas glanced at the boiling water.)
- 3) Refer to objects, ideas, qualities, and colors using *He* or *She*. (I called out to the ocean and *she* waved back. / My car is stubborn, *he* wouldn't start.)
- 4) Give things human body parts. (The tree stretched its arms. / Our watches shook hands.)
- 5) Give an object friends, a home, or a job. (Judgement works at the bank. / Green's best friend is envy.)

D. Procedures / Activities

1. Motivator: Write PERSONIFICATION on the board. Ask what the root word of this term is (person). Have a few students guess what personification means.
2. Have students write the definition of personification, the five ways to write personification, and the examples in their poetry notes.
3. Write several nouns on the board (oceans, waves, cars, wheels, trash, birds, machines, heart, math, sun, necklaces, glasses, etc.) As a class, come up with an example of personification using the five ways in their notes. (The car honked his horn. The birds danced through the air. The heart screamed when it was attacked. Etc.)
4. ACTIVITY:
Show an example of a personification poster to the students. (See Appendix C) (It's a good idea to make up a larger version for the class to see, however.) Explain that they will be making their own. They need to choose a noun that is not human and write a phrase about it using personification. They then need to illustrate that phrase literally. (If their phrase is "The heat beat down on the sidewalk, they need to draw a picture of heat wearing boxing gloves beating on a sidewalk.)

E. Assessment / Evaluation / Reinforcement

1. Display / hand out / read a poem that contains examples of personification. Ask students to identify any personification that they see and point out which of the five methods from their notes is being used. (More than one method is possible.) You may also assign the students homework of writing two or three examples to go with the five methods in their notes. (10-15 sentences total.) Suggested poems: (See Materials for this lesson.)

Lesson Three: Alliteration / Onomatopoeia: Crash and Crunch!

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an understanding of poetic elements as the basic building blocks of poetry and creative writing.
 - b. Students will explore poetic elements through individual and group activities.
 - c. Students will recognize various poetic elements in poems, songs, or other creative writings.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Alliteration and Onomatopoeia
 - b. Poem: "Jabberwocky" (Lewis Carroll)

3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will define the poetic element in their poetry notes.
 - b. Students will write their own drama using onomatopoeias in a group setting.
 - c. Students will, as a class and individually, identify examples of a specific poetic element in various poems.
- B. *Materials*
1. Definitions of alliteration and onomatopoeia.
 2. Poetry notes.
 3. (optional) If possible, get a clip of the old Batman show fight scenes with the bubbles saying, “Pow!” “Wham!” Etc.
 4. Large construction paper or tagboard.
 5. Markers, crayons, Etc.
 6. Overhead or copy of poem containing alliteration and onomatopoeia. “Jabberwocky” is ideal for these poetic elements.
 7. (Optional) Alliteration / Onomatopoeia worksheet for reinforcement. (See Appendix D)
- C. *Vocabulary*
1. Alliteration: When the same beginning consonant sound is used in two or more words that are close together.
 2. Onomatopoeia: The formation of words that sound like or suggest the objects or actions being named.
- D. *Procedures / Activities*
1. Motivator: Ask students if they know any tongue twisters. Chances are, they are examples of alliteration. (Peter Piper picked a)
 2. Write the definition for alliteration on the board. Have students copy it to their poetry notes.
 3. **ACTIVITY:**
Have students stand up. Teach them the song, “My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean.” Whenever they hear the “B” sound, have them either stand up or sit down.
 “My Bonnie lies over the ocean. My Bonnie lies over the sea. My Bonnie lies over the ocean. Oh, bring back my Bonnie to me! Bring back, bring back, oh, bring back my Bonnie to me, to me! Bring back, bring back, oh, bring back my Bonnie to me.”
 4. Next, show or explain a clip from the old Batman TV series when a bubble would come up with a word like “ Wham!” or “Kaboom!” in it. This is an example of onomatopoeia.
 5. Write the definition for onomatopoeia on the board and have students write in their notes.
 6. Brainstorm some more examples of onomatopoeia as a class. (swish, swoosh, drip, clunk, eek, etc.)
 7. **ACTIVITY:**
Divide students into groups of four or five. Have them write a melodrama using large bubbles of onomatopoeia (like the Batman shows.) This can either be a quick activity or it can take a couple of days – depending on how involved you want your dramas to be. All must participate and they must use at least five examples of onomatopoeia. The large bubbles allow for audience participation as well.

E. *Assessment / Evaluation / Reinforcement*

1. Hand out copies of the poem “Jabberwocky” by: Lewis Carroll. Read this poem as a class and identify examples of alliteration and onomatopoeia. This poem has great examples of both poetic elements and is just plain fun to read! Other poems for reinforcement: “Rat for Lunch” (Jack Prelutsky), “Riding in an Airplane” (Dorothy W. Baruch).
2. (Optional) Alliteration / Onomatopoeia worksheet for reinforcement. (See Appendix D)

Lesson Four: Imagery: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an understanding of poetic elements as the basic building blocks of poetry and creative writing.
 - b. Students will explore poetic elements through individual and group activities.
 - c. Students will recognize various poetic elements in poems, songs, or other creative writings.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Imagery
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will define the poetic element in their poetry notes.
 - b. Students will use synonyms and imagery to improve a descriptive sentence.
 - c. Students will write a descriptive paper about a portrait / picture using imagery.
 - d. Students will, as a class and individually, identify examples of imagery in various forms of creative writing.

B. *Materials*

1. Definition of Imagery (either on overhead or on chalkboard.)
2. Poetry notes.
3. A magazine portrait / picture of a person for each student. (Old *National Geographic* pictures work great!)
4. Students will need paper / pencil for their imagery writing.
5. Examples of imagery in poems or books. (I suggest you pull a description using imagery from one of the current books or stories your class is currently reading.)
6. (Optional) Imagery worksheet for reinforcement. (See Appendix F)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Imagery: Writing so that you can see images in your mind.

D. *Procedures / Activities*

1. Motivator: Tell students to listen to the two descriptions you are about to read.
The bird catches an insect over the water. The sun sets. At dawn, a bird catches another insect.

Hovering over the hot, damp swamp
a small, red bird swoops down
on an insect.

Light blue shades of atmosphere
and smoldering heat fill the air.
Whooping sound of wild birds
awaken the swamp

from its lazy, midday dreams.

Sun fades away
into the back pocket of earth.
Misinformed shadows
petrify the man in the bush who awakens
knowing lazy sun and heat
have beaten him with a sleepy stick.

Sun peeks around the corner,
spreading arms in all directions,
driving night and darkness away.
A little, red bird appears
hovering over the swamp
and swoops down
On an insect with illuminated wings.

VINCE FREEMAN, age 13

Writing Poetry p. 51

Ask: “Which description can you see in your mind? Why? What poetic elements were used to help you visualize the swamp? (Make sure to point out how the author used similes, metaphors, personification, and onomatopoeia to describe the scene.)

Explain that imagery is writing using descriptive phrases, poetic elements, and action verbs to write a picture for a reader.

2. Write the phrase, “The girl was happy” on the board. Then ask students, individually or as a groups to come up with descriptive words or phrases for “the girl.” What kind of girl? How old? What was she wearing? Etc. Then expand on “was happy.” How can you let someone know she was happy? What was she doing? What actions or expression lead you to believe that she was happy? Challenge students to expand the description using some of the poetic elements they have learned about thus far. The phrase could turn into:

The little Eskimo girl with a nose like a button was squealing with delight as the little rag of fur in her lap kept licking her face.

3. Find some examples of imagery in a book / story your class is currently reading. Have students point out what techniques the author used to paint a picture for the readers.

4. **ACTIVITY:**

Hand out a portrait / picture to each student. Have them study it for several minutes. Then have them jot down descriptive phrases or observations about the person in their picture. Take the students through the whole writing cycle if you wish. This is also a good activity to use with computers.

You may have students write a simple description or compose a short story using imagery. Either way, the goal is to have a reader be able to match their paper up with the correct portrait.

When all of the final drafts of the paper have been turned in, hang the pictures up on a bulletin board with numbers next to them. Staple the papers below the pictures, but not matched up with their descriptions. Write the number of the picture that matches up with the description on the back of the paper. (This is a great activity for a hallway bulletin board.) Have your class and different classes read through the stories / descriptions and try to guess with which portrait each one goes. (See Diagram in appendix E)

- E. Assessment / Evaluation / Reinforcement
 1. Grade the imagery descriptions about the portraits and observe if other students can match up the descriptions with their correct pictures.
 2. (Optional) Imagery worksheet for reinforcement. (See appendix F)

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. One of my favorite closing activities at the end of the year or a poetry unit is to do a poetry reading. Students can either read their own original poems or bring in other pieces. I set up a stool in the front of the classroom and sometimes bring in refreshments as well. I've even made a coffeehouse setting and had the "poet" wear a beret. After each student has read his or her selection, I have other students identify any of the poetic elements they recognized. "I heard a simile" or "I liked the imagery when she said..." This also exposes the students and myself to new poems.
- B. A written test covering these poetic elements is also available. (See Appendix G)

VI. HANDOUTS / WORKSHEETS / APPENDIX

- A. Simile / Metaphor Cards List
- B. Simile / Metaphor Worksheet
- C. Example of Personification Poster
- D. Alliteration / Onomatopoeia Worksheet
- E. Imagery Bulletin Board Diagram
- F. Imagery Worksheet
- G. Test

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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 - "A Dragon-Fly" p. 130
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 - "The Sun" p. 262
 - "The Brook" p. 272
 - "April Rain Song" p. 74
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 - "A Bird Came Down the Walk" p. 48-49
 - "Jabberwocky" p. 53
 - "Trees" p. 49
- Prelutsky, Jack. *A Pizza the Size of the Sun*. New York, New York: Scholastic Inc., 1994. 0-590-37469-9.
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 - "Rat for Lunch" p. 126
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- "Sonnet XVIII" p. 6
 - "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" p. 69
- Sweeney, Jacqueline. *Teaching Poetry: Yes You Can!*. New York, New York: Scholastic Inc., 1993. 0-590-49419-8.

(I didn't list any poems, but this book is full of great examples for reinforcement.)

Sweeney, Jacqueline. *50 Fantastic Poems With Wonderful Writing Prompts*. New York, New York: Scholastic Inc., 1999. 0-590-66265-1

(I didn't list any poems, but this book is full of great examples for reinforcement.)

Tucker, Shelley. *Writing Poetry*. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1992. 0-673-36039-3.

“Swamp” p. 51

Simile / Metaphor Card Ideas

One color of 3 X 5 cards:

love anger war school marriage
books family faith news smiles
tears computer T.V. movies football
puppies ocean fear forest cars
God freeways jealousy prayer
school board classroom laughter

Different Color of 3 X 5 cards:

war jello seeds pillows watchchair
mountain circus piano music carpet
cats cartoons songs Bible tree
warninglight ants bees rainbow mud
storm snake slime beefstew carrots
vines worry hammer train

Simile / Metaphor Madness!

Simile: A comparison between two unlike nouns (person, place, or thing) using **like** or **as** to bridge the connection.

Metaphor: The comparison between two unrelated nouns (person, place, or thing.)

After each word below, write a simile or metaphor. The simile or metaphor can be a few words or a phrase. Be creative and original! Look for interesting and unusual comparisons.

Examples) A book is a doorway. (met) Hatred is like a disease. (sim)

Tears are:

The ocean is:

School is like:

Headaches are:

Teeth are like:

Football is like:

Time is:

The wind is like:

_____ as loving as a _____.

_____ as mean as a _____.

_____ as strong as _____.

_____ as deep as _____.

The heat beat on the
pavement mercilessly.

(P.E.A.F.) Appendix C



Name: _____

Crash and Crunch!

Using alliteration, write at least five words after each letter or letter blend.

Example) B: bring, back, Bonnie, box, boat
Br: broom, bring, brisk, bright, breathless

D:

F:

L:

P:

R:

S:

W:

St:

Pl:

Bl:

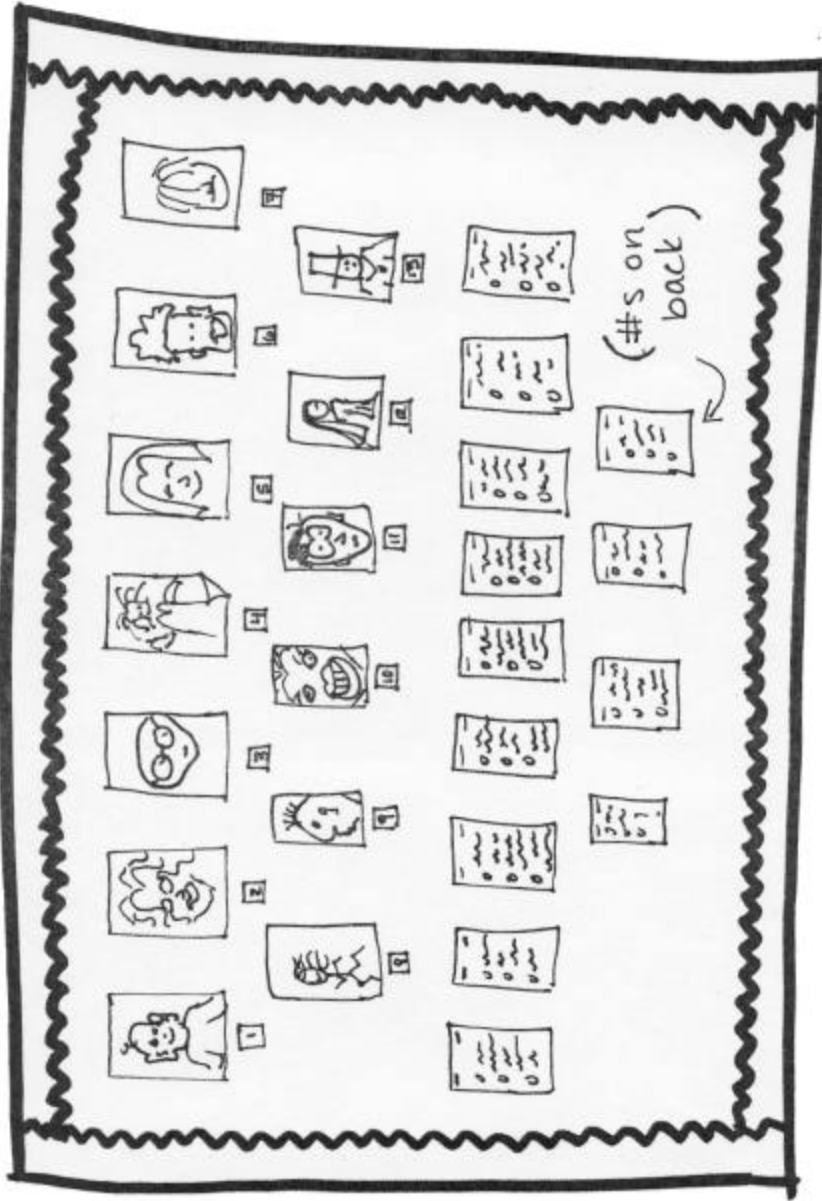
For each situation below, write at least three sentences describing what is happening using onomatopoeia. Underline all onomatopoeias.

Example) Bird flying: The bird whooshed through the air and zoomed down on a mouse. The mouse screeched.....

Sliding down a water slide:

Riding a scary ride at an amusement park:

Appendix E



Imagery Bulletin Board:

- Staple portraits and number them.
- Mix up imagery papers and staple to board. (Only tops)
Write the # of the portrait the paper is describing on the back of the paper.

Name: _____

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Imagery

Imagery: Writing so that you can see images in your head.

Rewrite five of the following phrases using descriptive writing, similes, metaphors, personification, and action verbs when possible.

Example) The bird caught a bug.
A small, red bird swooped down and captured a frightened grasshopper in its merciless beak.

- 1) The boy flew his kite.
- 2) The lioness caught her prey.
- 3) It rained outside.
- 4) The gymnast did a flip.
- 5) The leaf floated down the river.
- 6) The team scored a touchdown.
- 7) The hikers were caught in a landslide.

Write at least two sentences about the following subject paying close attention to details.

Example) Your hand: My hand has rough, hard calluses on the tips of my fingers from playing guitar. There are lines crisscrossing each other everywhere from creases and old scars. My fingerprints curve gently in round loops at the tips of my thumbs.

- 1) **Your shoe:**
- 2) **The beach:**
- 3) **The area under your desk:**

Poetic Elements Celebration of Learning

Mark S for Similes and M for Metaphors.

- _____ She was slow like a turtle.
- _____ The mountain was a fortress.
- _____ Love is a flower that gently blooms.
- _____ The road wound like a snake.
- _____ Hate is water on a stove.
- _____ She danced like a leaf in a stream.
- _____ Red as a tomato.
- _____ Raining like a waterfall.
- _____ Life is a box of chocolates.
- _____ Her hair was a sea of mahogany.

Write three sentences using alliteration. (Use a different sound for each sentence.) (Each sentence must have three words of alliteration.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write five examples of onomatopoeia.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What is imagery? (in your own words)

Using imagery, rewrite the following sentence.

(Add as much imagery as possible)

The storm looked strong.

Write a metaphor with at least three supports saying why the two nouns are similar.

What are the five kinds of personification?

Write one example for each type.

1)

ex)

2)

ex)

3)

ex)

4)

ex)

5)

ex)