

Colors of the Season - a poetry writing activity

By Eric Ode

Suggested grade level: 3 through 5

With some modification, this activity could be used with younger students

Here's a beautiful poetry writing activity for any time of the school year. You might even consider using this activity as a kick-off while you move into each new season. You'll find this project leaves plenty of room for individual expression and gives every student opportunity for success at his or her own level.

Poetic devices:

figurative language

sensory/descriptive language

We'll start by creating one poem as a class. First brainstorm together things (nouns) associated with your season. Build a word bank on the board. Don't stop too soon. You'll want plenty of words to work with.

Next, talk about the colors associated with several of the items. Are there some on the board which can be grouped together by color? Are there some which may be different colors or more than one color?

Begin your sample poem by writing on the board a starter phrase such as this:

Spring is yellow

like a duckling,

Here you may wish to discuss how writers often use figurative language to make their writing more interesting. Spring is not actually a color at all. It is a season. But we are poets. We're allowed to play with language.

Now add to your first stanza by choosing a second and third item of the same color until you have something like this:

Spring is yellow

like a duckling,

a daffodil,

and the center of an Easter egg.

Read the stanza together. How do the students feel about the stanza? Would it be more interesting with more descriptive language? Think about the senses - sight, smell, touch, hearing, taste. Play with the phrasing, finding appropriate adjectives to improve the stanza. When you have finished, you may have something like this:

Spring is yellow

like the soft feathers of a baby duckling,

the silky petals of a daffodil,

and the spongy, round center of an Easter egg.

As you transition into the students writing their own poems, challenge them to create three stanzas, three supportive lines each. Each stanza should focus on a different color. Encourage them to come up with ideas not found in the word bank and, of course, to include interesting descriptive language. Have the students illustrate their final versions. Here is a sample poem:

SPRING IS YELLOW

By Eric Ode

Spring is yellow

like the soft feathers of a baby duckling,

the silky petals of a daffodil,

and the spongy, round center of an Easter egg.

Spring is pink

like sweet smelling cherry blossoms,

little pink jelly beans,

and the twitching nose of a curious bunny.

Spring is white

like a skittering cloud,

Grandma's Sunday shoes,

and my little sister's new raincoat.

Visit Eric's web site

www.ericode.com

for poems, lessons, and other resources.

Eric Ode

info@ericode.com

P.O. Box 1324

Sumner, WA 98390

(253) 826-2115