



Going on a Poem Hunt

by Michaela Morgan

This activity does not start with the hearing or reading of a poem. It starts with an exploration. Take your students on a Poem Hunt.

Activity

First, remind the students of the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Omit some senses if they are irrelevant to a particular exploration (e.g. to discourage tasting of inappropriate objects!) or if you feel the activity is too challenging for some. Smells are particularly challenging to capture and describe, but encourage students to give it a go anyway..

Compare the poet to an explorer. He or she uses all their senses and tries to look at the world with open eyes, all senses on the alert – as if they have newly discovered the world.

Go on a poem hunt to make poetic sentences. Take a clipboard with the Poem Hunt Worksheet I've provided in this resource out to the playground or around the school or use it on a school outing. An exploration of the school hall including a storage cupboard can produce some excellent descriptions!

You can add imagination to the list for some children (I imagine/I think/I feel/I dream) to try to capture mood.

When the words and sentences have been captured, take the worksheets of rough notes back to the classroom to be rewritten and redrafted. Cutting out all unnecessary words and making changes will improve the description and make them more like a poem. It is important to do several whole-class redrafts to show the way.

For example:

*I see a tree
it is bent
like an old man*
becomes
I see a tree, bent like an old man.

*I hear some other children
whispering to each other
like the wind*
becomes
I hear children, whispering like the wind.

I smell the air. It's a nice fresh breeze
becomes
I smell the fresh breezy air.

*I touch a stone
it is warm
like a pet*
becomes
I touch a stone, warm as a pet
or
I pet a stone, warm to my touch

All these 'poetic sentences' together make a senses poem. Small changes can still be made to improve the poem. Words can be taken away or added.

For example:

*I see a tree, bent like an old man.
I hear children, whispering like the wind.
I smell the fresh breezy air
and touch a stone, warm as a pet.*

Finally, the students think of a title for their class poem about senses.

Finished.

Poem Hunt Worksheet

I see a

It is [describe it]

It is like a

I hear a

It is [describe it]

It is like a

I smell a

It is [describe it]

It is like a

I touch a

It is [describe it]

It is like a

Further work and Cross Curricular Links

- ◆ The young poets on their poem hunt have been like explorers, looking around a place carefully. A link with this theme of exploration could lead to work on famous explorers, moon exploration etc.
- ◆ Link with geography. Make a map of the area explored (e.g. the playground) and make a map of the area.
- ◆ Science – link with work on the senses.
- ◆ IT: Key in poems. Use a digital camera to record images that accompany the descriptions.

(from How To Teach Poetry Writing Workshops)

