

Writing Activity

Common Core Standards: English Language Arts Standards: Writing, Text Types and Purposes—W.3.2b–W.8.2b

Descriptive Writing



My Town

Warm up for this activity by having a class discussion about the neighborhood where the school is located. What are some of the physical features? What are some of the human features? What are the most interesting details about the neighborhood? List your students' ideas on the board. You may also want to write a paragraph or two as a class by calling on individual students to contribute sentences.

Distribute copies of the model neighborhood and town descriptions given below. Ask your students to explain the difference between describing a neighborhood and a town. Ask students to identify specific details in the models. Does each model include every single possible detail? Why not? Point out that choosing good details becomes even more important when you are describing something large or complicated. Also, students should choose details that give readers a really strong idea of what the town is like. For example, if there's a river, that's probably an important feature. If the town is filled with sycamore trees, they no doubt add a lot to the look of the place.

What details stand out about your students' town? What makes it unique? Which details would be fun to include? Your students will write up a list of "five senses" details about the town on the "My Town" graphic organizer provided in preparation for writing 1–2 descriptive paragraphs. When they are finished with their lists and their descriptions, have them share their writing with a partner and get feedback. Then they should add at least two details to improve their work. After revising, students will share their writing with the class. What are some of the different ways students described the town? What details did different students choose? Did any students choose the same details? If so, why? Are there any descriptive strategies that turned out particularly well?

Name: _____

Date: _____

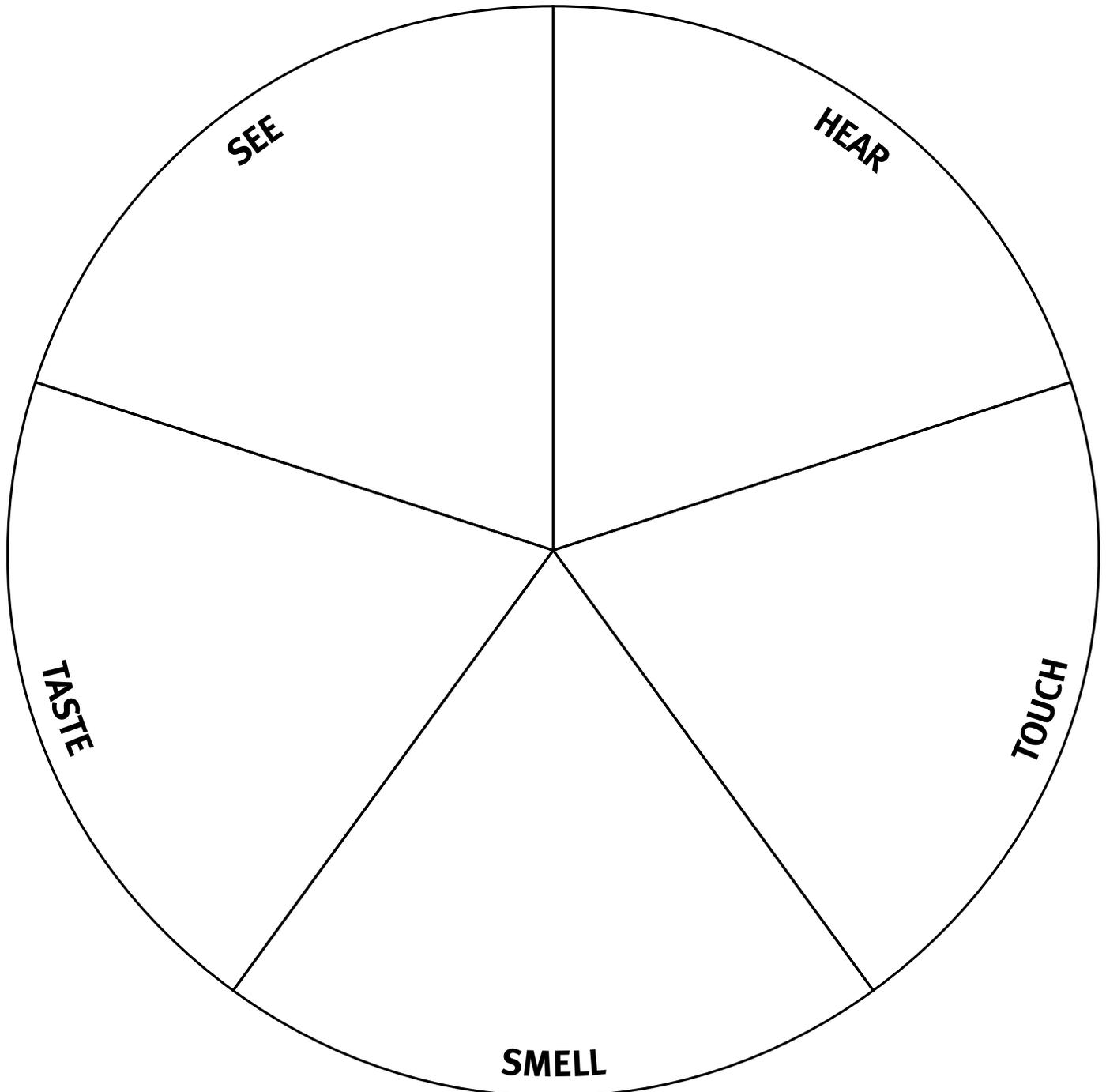
Writing Activity

STUDENT HANDOUT (1 OF 2)



Descriptive Writing My Town

Use the graphic organizer below to list details about your town. Try to pick colorful, fun details that will show someone who has never been there what the town is really like.



Writing Activity

STUDENT HANDOUT (2 OF 2)

MODELS

MY NEIGHBORHOOD

I live in a neighborhood that's still partly country even though there are some warehouses, too. I like the way you can see fields and pastures in between the houses. For example, there's a pasture with two brown horses right down the street from my house, and our next-door neighbor has a peach orchard on the other side of his house. The lady across the street has roses in her front yard and chickens in the back. Her rooster wakes me up in the morning. The other thing I like is the big old trees that lean over the road on both sides. I can walk to my school because it's only five blocks away. On the next to last block, a little stream runs along behind a fence. That's where I cross the street to my school. I think you would like my neighborhood.

MY TOWN

My town is Glenbrook, which has a lot of houses. The houses in my neighborhood pretty much look alike. My mom says it's because they were built at the same time by the same builder. When we drive out of my neighborhood down Taylor Avenue, first we pass a couple of churches and more houses. Those houses are older and don't look so much alike. Then we come to a shopping center with a Homeland grocery store and some fast food restaurants: Sonic, McDonald's, and Chick-Fil-A. If you turn right on Main Street you go by more stores, a Subway, and then a good park with a swimming pool. That's where I spend a lot of time every summer. My big sister plays tennis at the tennis courts in the park, so she always takes me to the pool.

Out past the park they're building a new housing development. They have a bunch of backhoes and bulldozers out there. The place is mostly dirt right now, but there's a sign showing what the houses will look like when they're done. On the edge of town you come to another park that's more of a wild park. It has a picnic area with trees and barbecue grills. Then there's a trail that goes into the woods. The trail makes a big circle and comes back. We go for picnics and hiking there sometimes. You have to watch out for poison ivy. The best part of the hike is when you come to a pond and you can catch frogs. When you get back the hamburgers are done cooking and it's time to eat! Those are some of the places I remember most when I think about my town.