



Color Poem

Background for the Teacher

Definition: A color poem is a poem written using similes to describe a color from every sense—except sight. It requires students to think about a topic that is primarily visual but describe it without using any visual references.

Skills Needed: using similes for comparison, precise word choice

Materials: 3–4 crayons in red, green, blue, yellow, orange, black, purple, white, and brown; reproductions of Sensational Colors worksheet (page 75), Color Poem worksheet (page 76), and Color Poem Response and Assessment Sheet (page 78) for each writing group; scraps of various colored materials, such as cardboard, foil, carpet, burlap; scissors; glue; poster board; markers

Preparation: Reproduce the Sensational Colors worksheet and the Color Poem Response and Assessment Sheet. Gather other materials needed for the lesson.

Lesson Plan

Prewriting

1. Ask students to close their eyes. Call on one student and ask that student to describe what the color red looks like. Most likely, the student will have difficulty and end up saying something like, “Red is red. I don’t know!” The student might make comparisons to red objects, saying, “Red is like strawberries or a fire engine.” Ask the student to further describe, saying “I don’t know what a strawberry looks like. What do you mean?” You may need to assist by offering, “Perhaps red on a strawberry is rough but sweet-tasting.”
2. Have students describe another color in the same manner, trying to avoid visual images and instead offering other sensory descriptions—texture, taste, sound, or smell. If a student uses a visual comparison (“Yellow is like the sun.”), prompt the student to offer more information using other senses: “Yellow is burning, bright, and hot.”
3. Distribute one crayon to each student. Instruct students to sit with other students who have the same color of crayon. This will be their writing group for the color poem.

Drafting

1. Tell students that they will be writing a poem about a color. They are to write the poem as if they were writing it for a person who has a visual handicap. The person may not know what certain objects look like so they cannot write about things that are the color. Instead, instruct students that they are to describe their color from each of the other senses: sound, smell, taste, and feel.

Color Poem *(cont.)*

Drafting *(cont.)*

2. Remind students that they will be using similes to compare their color to different sounds, smells, tastes, and textures.
3. Distribute the Sensational Colors worksheet to each group of students. Review the directions with them before completing the sheet.
4. When groups have completed the brainstorming worksheet, share several sample color poems (page 74) with them. Point out particularly effective word choices. Elicit student feedback regarding the comparisons the authors used. Note the structure of the poems for students.
5. Instruct groups to review their ideas from the Sensational Colors worksheet and select those ideas which make the strongest comparison for each sense. Tell students to use their ideas to draft each line of the color poem. Provide a color poem outline (page 76) for students to use, if necessary, for drafting their poems.

Revising/Editing

1. Once the poems are drafted, students should share their color poems with peer responders. Provide the Color Poem Response and Assessment Sheet for this purpose. Peer responders should check to make sure that each line describes the color through a different sense, that no visual comparisons have been used, and that similes are used in each line. Responders could also make suggestions for stronger word choice as appropriate.
2. Following peer response, students should make any necessary revisions before writing a final copy of the poem.

Publishing

Students could write their final copy of the color poem in the same color ink as their topic and mount it on poster board. They could then cover the poster board with scraps of material that matches their topic color. Try to obtain a wide variety of textured materials such as corduroy, silk, cotton, flannel, wallpaper samples, corrugated paper, carpet samples, etc. This will provide a textured backing to enhance their “non-visual” color poem.



Student Samples of Color Poem

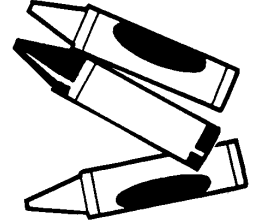
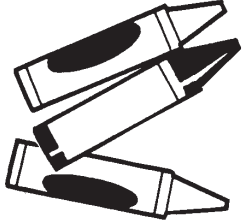
White

White is like the sound of ice cubes clinking in a glass.

White is like the smell of freshly picked daisies from a green, green meadow.

White is like the taste of sweet, creamy ice cream on a hot summer day.

White is like the feel of a soft, fluffy pillow comforting you to sleep.



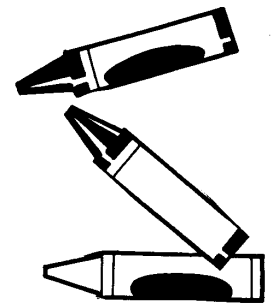
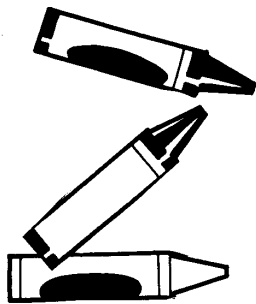
Blue

Blue smells like the fresh, salty ocean as the breeze blows across it.

Blue sounds like a peaceful river flowing through the forest.

Blue tastes like a slippery, sweet lollipop energizing you in the middle of the afternoon.

Blue feels like soaring through the air with the birds and the clouds.



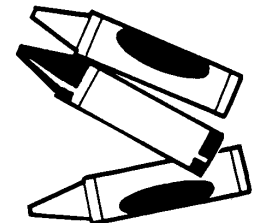
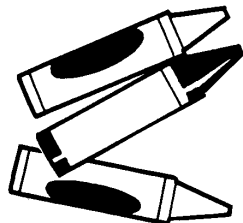
Brown

Brown is like the taste of rich, thick chocolate as you smooth it around on your tongue.

Brown is like the smell of tangy spices, soaking into barbecued meat.

Brown is like the sound of construction equipment, struggling to move the earth.

Brown is like the feeling of sluggishness, like lying around all day.



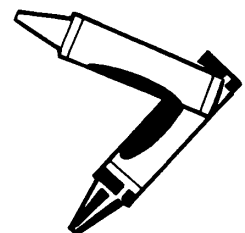
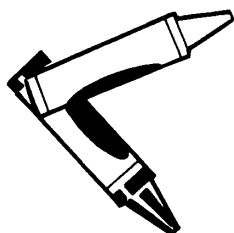
Pink

Pink tastes like light, sugary cotton candy you get at the circus.

Pink smells like a baby just after a bath.

Pink sounds like tiny, glass wind chimes blowing in the breeze.

Pink feels like a light feather tickling your skin.



Sensational Colors

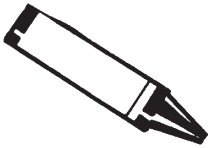
Directions: Complete the following items about your color.

First, think of things that are made or come in your chosen color. For example, if you are writing about yellow, a banana, the sun, and a raincoat are all yellow things.

These things are _____:
(your color)

You cannot simply name and write about the things that you just listed in your poem. Just think about the items in your list to help you complete the rest of this worksheet, describing your color by using the other four senses.

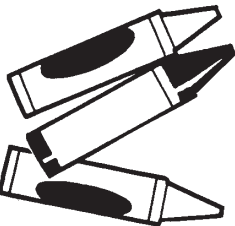
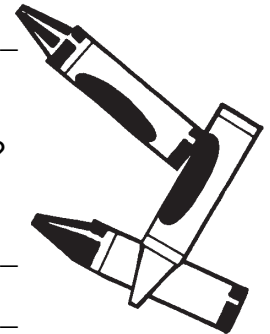
What does _____ sound like?
(your color)



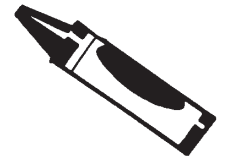
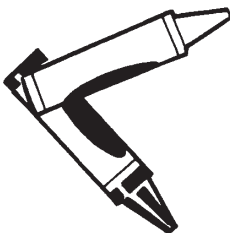
What does _____ smell like?
(your color)



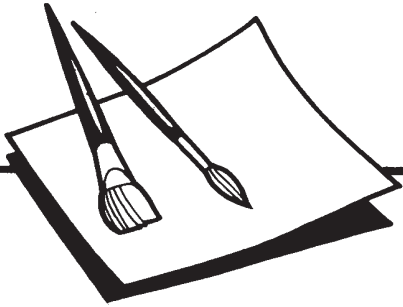
What does _____ taste like?
(your color)



What does _____ feel like?
(your color)



Color Poem

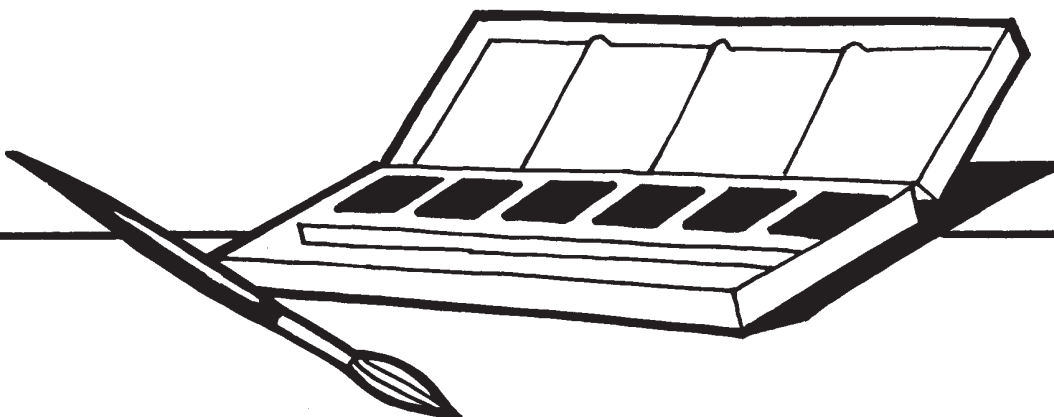


_____ is like the sound
of _____.

_____ is like the smell
of _____.

_____ is like the taste
of _____.

_____ is like the feel
of _____.



Content Connections for Color Poems

Social Studies

Suppose your social studies teacher has asked you to describe an abstract concept, such as fear, jealousy, peace, or love. Your teacher would like you to write a poem describing the assigned word in the same manner you described a color. Think about the meaning of the assigned word. Think about how the word makes people feel. Think of objects or people that remind you of the word. Write a poem that describes the assigned word by telling what it smells like, sounds like, tastes like, feels like, and looks like. (**Example:** Fear is like the smell of . . .)

Fine Arts

Suppose your fine arts teacher has asked you to describe a piece of artwork without using any visual references. Your teacher would like you to write a poem describing the art in the same manner you described a color. Think about how the art makes people feel. Think of the smells, sounds, and tastes that the art brings to mind. Write a poem that describes the artwork by what it smells like, sounds like, tastes like, and feels like. (**Example:** The Mona Lisa is like the sound of . . .)

Color Poem Response and Assessment Sheet

Author's Name _____

Poem Title _____

Responder's Name(s) _____ Date _____

Responder:

Did the author . . .

- describe the color through a different sense on each line of the poem?
- use no visual comparisons?
- use similes to make each comparison? (Look for the words "like" or "as.")
- use the best possible word choice?

Revision suggestions: _____

Author:

Before writing your final copy, have you . . .

- made any necessary revisions from your peer response session?
- checked for proper spelling?
- checked for proper capitalization?
- checked for proper punctuation?

Complete the following statements to provide some information about your writing:

I had a hard time _____.

My favorite part of the poem is _____.

I would like to write another color poem sometime. (Circle one.)

Yes No

Teacher:

_____ correct format of poem
_____ appropriate word choice
_____ neatness
_____ correct spelling and mechanics

Score: _____