
Unit 4: School Bells

Unit Overview:

Purpose: School bells ring in our memories. The sounds, the sights, the smells bring back indelible images. These sensory images from your school experiences will draw readers in to share the memory with you. It can be a very personal one, one that is more universal, or both. The comparisons of similes and metaphors will help readers to recreate your memory, and probably they will relate it to one of their own.

FCAs: Similes & Metaphors 40; Imagery 40; Avoid Clichés 20

Procedure:

1. Write down the names of early schools that you attended, where they were located, who your teachers were; who your best friends, rivals, enemies, loves were; remember things that happened that were memorable—successes, failures, disappointments, surprises, delights.
2. Choose one memory that you would like to recreate in words. Begin to list, cluster, free write the sensory details of the experience. What did you see, smell, touch, taste, and hear?
3. Organize this wealth of details. Shape the lines into poetic form. Include vivid comparisons to show how mean the teacher was (“as mean as a starving tiger”) and how deeply you blushed when you opened that valentine (“as red as a poppy”). End with what makes the experience unforgettable, either stated or implied.
4. Read your first draft aloud to yourself. Tinker with it, adding overlooked details, choosing a better word, omitting an unnecessary one, moving others to better positions.
5. Then read your poem to a friend or classmate. Let him or her ask you questions. Add any answers or additional “stuff” those questions make you remember. Use the editing sheet as a guide.
6. Word process your final draft. Include your brainstorm, first draft, and editing sheet.

Schedule:

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| Day One | Write about school memories; then discuss them. Share pictures from school. Select one memory about which to write a poem. |
| Day Two | Bring to class your brainstorm of images and details and feelings of the memory. |
| Day Three | Bring your first draft to class. Read it aloud to your editing group. Note their suggestions. |
| Day Four | Edit your first draft. |
| Day Five | Submit the final draft followed by the editing sheet, first draft, and brainstorm. |

Unit 4 School Bells Lesson Plan

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

Start with a journal entry recalling a school memory—most embarrassing, proud, frightening, funny, amazing moments. Have students read these aloud, sharing memories. Hearing the memories of others stimulates those of all the listeners in class. Then have them add to their journal entry a list of 5-10 memories that they could write about. They can exchange journals with a classmate who will help pick the one topic to develop into a poem.

Activity/Brainstorm

Using the five senses to provide details of the experience is helpful. Another technique is guided imagery. Have the class close their eyes. Then describe walking into a school building, down a hall, and into a classroom. What do they see on the right? On the left? The desks? Teacher? Bulletin boards? Decor? Activity? Sounds? Smells? Then have them open their eyes and free write the images and details. Still another device is to ask students to bring to class photos or a yearbook from elementary or middle school.

Edit

The chosen details must support the mood of the piece. Eliminate those which do not. Add those needed to complete the picture and/or enhance the mood.

Evaluation is based on how well the images and figurative language recreate the experience and the mood.