

## ART AND WRITING—NOT AN IMPOSSIBLE IDEA

Artists using writing all the time—not only IN their work, but ABOUT their work. They must create artist’s statements, résumés, media releases, short bios, rationales, mission statements, etc.

- Many artists write about their work or ON their work. Ex: H. Rousseau describing “Sleeping Gypsy” in a letter to a friend (see the document “text\_rousseau”).
- Any time YOU write, you are helping students read and write.
- Students can incorporate writing with their art at ALL grade levels.
- Pay attention to capitalization, punctuation, and grammar!

**Check with teachers on each grade level to be sure to use the correct terms: descriptor/adjective, etc. Do NOT assume you know how/what they are teaching, or you will confuse the student and defeat the whole purpose of helping them write.**

**Kindergarten: You do the writing for them—**

- They tell you the title of their work.
- They tell you a sentence describing their work.
- They tell you why they have selected a favorite piece of artwork.
- They copy words off the board that are pertinent to their work. For example, if they are making a card they might need to know how to write “Happy”.

**First Grade: SEE ABOVE**

They may need to have you write some of this, especially at the beginning of the school year. Later, they should do their own.

Ex: They draw something they do at the fair, or the beach, and title their work,  
They write words people are saying in their picture.

HINT: Write the words first, THEN draw a word bubble (“callout”)

**Art appreciation:** Have them fill in the blanks about an artist studied that day. On the same piece of paper they can do a quick sketch of their favorite work.

Today we studied about \_\_\_\_\_. This artist was born in \_\_\_\_\_. My favorite artwork is “\_\_\_\_\_”.

Today we studied two artists. My favorite was \_\_\_\_\_. I like the painting “\_\_\_\_\_”.

**All other grades:** SEE ABOVE, but they write their own.

Be sure to have words written on the board for all to see. Emerging readers/writers NEED this. Those struggling need it even more. Try to organize the words so they can be easily “accessed” visually. DO NOT ASSUME STUDENTS KNOW THE WORDS. If you put it on a poster, you can use it next year!

**Write about a character in a painting: What is the lion thinking in “The Sleeping Gypsy”?**

**Write a letter home:** tell someone about a particular piece of artwork you think the person would like, and why (idea from Dr. David Burton):

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Dear Grandfather,

I just saw a painting by Henry O. Tanner called “The Banjo Lesson”, and I think you would like it. This made me think of you, because I remember when you showed me how to play checkers.

**Silly Sentences:** Students select three different cards giving them an animal, a place, and a situation. Students put these together into a sentence, and illustrate the sentence. Also great for a substitute lesson plan. Make cards, laminate and use over and over again.

**Inventory:** Students make a list of items in a painting (nouns), and THEN add descriptors (adjectives) in front.

Step 1: list nouns

moon

lion

person

Step 2: put descriptors/adjectives in front:

full moon

curious lion

sleeping person

NOTE: Making an inventory list, even if YOU are doing the writing, is a great way to get grumbling students engaged in looking at art, rather than making art.

**Evaluations:** Students answer questions about a completed project they have done—

The title, materials used, size/dimensions, what they liked and disliked about the project, what they learned, what would they do differently next time.

**Research:** Students must write answers to research questions. Students work in teams of two.

NOTE: go to websites ahead of time, and make links on the computer, so students are looking at the same page you were looking at, tell them in what paragraph they will find the answer. Write out each step. Save for next year.

**Poetry:**

Cinquains: Students write cinquains (sin’•kanes)—5-lined poetry—about their artwork, or famous works of art. These can be superimposed on the images, or printed out separately and put under their work or around the image(s) of artists they have studied. They are usually done with a limited number of words.

one word		one noun		WAVE
two words		two adjectives		HIGH, DANGEROUS
three words	OR	three verbs		CRASHING, SWALLOWING, HURTING
two words		a phrase		HOW SCARY!
one word		one word		KANAGAWA

Haiku: Students write haiku about their work, or the work of others.

Three lines(5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables)

**Love letters:** Students write to a contemporary artist, tell them which one of their works they like the most, and why. DO NOT SEND THESE, unless they are edited almost perfectly (they could end up in someone’s “look what passes for acceptable in education these days” email)

Students could also send to an artist in the past.