

The Art of Writing

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How can art help students grow as writers? What are the similarities between the creative processes used by visual artists and writers? By breaking down writing into traits and using art to teach those traits, you can help students increase their understanding of the components of writing so they'll be better equipped to express their ideas through writing.

Ideas Trait

Teaching students that ideas are all around us and everyone's experiences and observations are valued helps writers develop confidence in their own ideas. Through discussing artworks, we can guide students to identify the messages and ideas artists and writers express through their medium. In addition, allowing students to record their ideas in pictures prior to writing is a means to unlock their self-expression.

Organization Trait

After generating ideas, many students struggle with organization. Providing graphic organizers and teaching organizational formats can help students

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shape their work. By sharing ways artists organize their artwork, such as underpinnings, thumbnail sketches, and maquettes, students learn that, like writers, artists use techniques to help them plan and organize projects.

Word Choice Trait

By making connections between an artist's and a writer's toolkit, the grow-



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ing writer understands the craft tools they have for writing. Artists have the elements of art and principles of design, and writers have the elements of style and principles of grammar. Each choice impacts how the piece is received. Modeling with mentor text, students learn that the toolkits of both artists and writers contain repetition, use of white space, figurative language, active verbs, and alliteration.

Voice Trait

Voice is the author's own inner-self that speaks to the reader. How can the voice trait be taught using artworks? Through studying the commonalities of an artist's body of work, students learn to recognize characteristics of the artist. Two ways to teach this trait through art include:

- Describe similarities between paint-

ings by the same artist.

- Describe a painting, create a new title, and justify why the title fits the painting.

Sentence Fluency Trait

Sentence fluency is about rhythm and flow. How does the piece sound when read out loud? Are there places where the writer disrupted the flow? Students learn techniques writers use to create flow, such as varying sentence beginnings, length, and word choice. Three ways to teach this trait through art include:

- Discuss real-world objects that flow.
- Analyze artworks for flow.
- Create artwork that demonstrates movement and flow through the use of lines, colors, and objects.

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