

IDLEWILD & SOAKZONE PRESENTS



WRITE HERE,  
WRITE NOW

AN EXCITING LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

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# The Writing Process

Good writing, like good cooking, usually involves a *process* or series of steps rather than just one step. Writing is somewhat like preparing a delicious sauce: it is probably better if the “cook” lets it “simmer” awhile, “tastes” it occasionally, and decides what “spices” are needed. The usual steps in the writing process are these:

- ⇒ PRE-WRITING: Choose a topic; brainstorm; decide how to organize your ideas.
- ⇒ DRAFTING: Get your ideas down on paper; know that first drafts can usually be improved upon.
- ⇒ REVISING: Read it over yourself; share your work with others for suggestions; use a thesaurus and dictionary to improve word choice; add or take out as necessary.
- ⇒ EDITING: Proofread for grammar, punctuation, and spelling; check for run-ons, fragments, etc; have others check your work for correctness and completeness.
- ⇒ PUBLISHING: Display the piece at home or at school; enter it into a collection of your work; give it to someone; send it to an appropriate reader or publication.

Most of your prewriting and some of your drafting will be done here at Idlewild. The revising, editing, and publishing stages would be best completed at home or at school.



# Describing the Senses in Writing

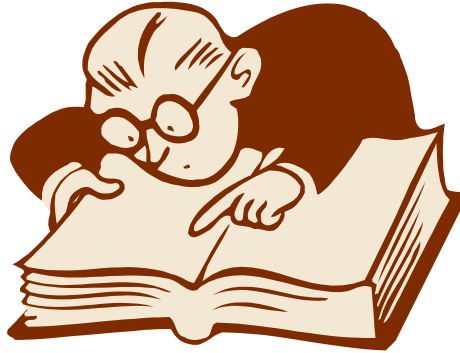
In order to draw the reader into your writing, you must describe how things look, taste, smell, feel, and sound. In this exercise you will notice sensory details that can help you recreate an experience and share it effectively with others.

You will need a pencil and blank paper from the back of this packet. You should now choose a picturesque spot in Idlewild and make yourself comfortable. Listen carefully as your teacher guides you through a tour of your own senses as you prepare to write about Idlewild.



The memories you capture on paper today will help you to write vivid, descriptive passages that will draw the reader into your writing. Be sure to save your pre-writing pages in your working folder to use as a springboard for other writing exercises back in the classroom or at home.

# You Are a Wordsmith!



Just as a blacksmith forges and hammers iron into shapes, a wordsmith works with words to find just the right fit for a great piece of writing. A wordsmith's tools are usually a thesaurus and a dictionary.

A thesaurus is a dictionary of synonyms (words that have similar meanings) and antonyms (words that have opposite meanings) which can help you find the best words for the message you wish to convey to your reader. When you use a thesaurus, you will find that it is easy to be a good writer. For instance, if the only word you can think of to describe the motion of the paddle boats is “slow”, the thesaurus can give you more picturesque suggestions such as “leisurely”, “gentile”, “slow-sailing”, or “easy-moving”. If you had already used the word “slanted” to describe the floor of Confusion Hill, the thesaurus will suggest other terms like “tilted”, “sloping”, “leaning”, or “inclined”. Using a thesaurus is like having a personal writing coach.

The dictionary should also be handy whenever you write to help you be certain that the words you choose have the meaning you wish to convey. For example, the word “fastidious” may sound to you as though it has something to do with speed, but the real meaning is “reflecting a meticulous or demanding attitude; difficult to please.”

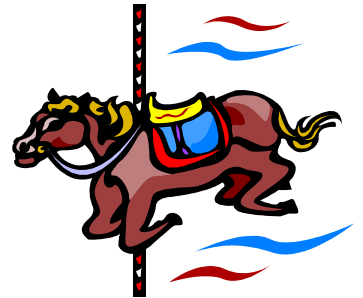
The dictionary and thesaurus are tools which can give vivid, specific meaning to your words, and will give you confidence in your writing. Once you start using these writer's tools, you will find that your writing will improve rapidly!

Be sure to have a dictionary and thesaurus nearby when you begin to write your own prose or poetry. Oh—and don't forget to show your work to the quality control people – your peer editors!

# Highlighting HAIKU

Haiku is a Japanese form of poetry that does not rhyme. There are just three lines in a Haiku verse, totaling seventeen syllables. Since so few words are used, the words are chosen carefully to convey a vivid picture.

Line 1: 5 syllables  
Line 2: 7 syllables  
Line 3: 5 syllables



Here are some examples:

Icy lemonade  
Wets my mouth and soothes my throat  
Couldn't taste better.

ω

Nature wakes at dawn  
Sunrise over the lagoon  
No people allowed.

ω

The wild, wild, Wild Mouse  
Frightens and surprises me  
I get back in line.

ω

Using the pre-writing sheets you created in the exercise “Describing the Senses in Writing,” write a haiku verse about Idlewild:

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# PARK POETRY

If you enjoyed writing haiku verse, you may enjoy writing one of the following forms of poetry:

## CINQUAIN:

### LINE SYLLABLES

1 two  
2 three  
3 six  
4 eight  
5 two

Friendship  
So at ease  
Laughing at anything  
Telling our secrets without fear  
Caring



## LIMERICK:

A limerick is a five-line poem that is usually humorous. lines 1, 2, and 5 always rhyme; lines 3 and 4 may or may not rhyme.

There once was a teacher, Miss Snyder,  
Who said she would ride on The Spider,  
But chickening out,  
She scurried about  
And asked an employee to hide her!



## FREE VERSE:

A free verse poem is without a regular beat or formula, although it makes use of the natural rhyme of language. Free verse usually does not rhyme, but there can be exceptions. Here are a few lines from a free verse poem:

*No one is ever too old for Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.  
Old friends with familiar voices set our memories in motion  
As we see ourselves mirrored in the faces of little ones  
aboard the trolley car.*

# Marking a Moment



Authors often approach writing by starting with a particular moment, using the senses to draw the reader into the experience. Read the passage below from *My Antonia* by Willa Cather.

I sat down in the middle of the garden, where snakes could scarcely approach unseen, and leaned back against a warm yellow pumpkin. There were some ground-cherry bushes growing along the furrows, full of fruit. I turned back to the papery triangular sheaths that protected the berries and ate a few. All about me giant grasshoppers, twice big as any I had ever seen, were doing acrobatic feats among the dried vines. The gophers scurried up and down the ploughed ground. There in the sheltered draw-bottom the wind did not blow very hard, but I could hear it singing its humming tune up on the level, and I could see the tall grasses wave. The earth was warm under me, and warm as I crumbled it through my fingers. Queer little red bugs came out and moved in slow squadrons around me. Their backs were polished vermilion, with black spots. I kept as still as I could. Nothing happened. I did not expect anything to happen. I was something that lay under the sun and felt it, like the pumpkins, and I did not want to be anything more. I was entirely happy.

\* \* \* \* \*



Think of a moment from your day at Idlewild when you felt or thought something you wish to write about, whether that be contentment, excitement, uncertainty, belonging, or any emotion at all. Recreate the moment by using the senses, and write the first draft. After you have written the passage, “play” with your word choices, using a thesaurus and a dictionary.

When you are finished, don’t forget to have the quality control people – your peers and family—review your work and give you feedback on the strengths of the writing and make suggestions for improvement.

# WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

## REVISION SHEET – CONTENT

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Author's name \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked *best* about this piece:

Other things about this writing:

What I found confusing:



What the author could add:

What the author could take out:

What the author could improve upon:

My other comments:

# WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

## EDITING SHEET – CORRECTNESS

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Author's name \_\_\_\_\_

Sit with the author and proofread his or her paper for correctness. Using the following checklist, mark any items that you think the author should check before publishing this work. Write your findings on this sheet so that the author remembers what you discussed.

- ✓ SPELLING –
- ✓ CAPITALIZATION –
- ✓ PUNCTUATION (END MARKS) –
- ✓ PUNCTUATION (INTERNAL) –
- ✓ RUN-ON SENTENCES AND/OR FRAGMENTS –
- ✓ PARAGRAPHS –



# SCORING GUIDE FOR A LANGUAGE ARTS PROJECT

## SCORE

## CRITERIA

6

- Follows the directions given
- Insightfully addresses the task
- Sophisticated ideas are well developed
- Content is substantial, specific, and illustrative
- Demonstrates effective use of vocabulary
- Project is presented in a neat and attractive manner
- Contains few minor grammatical/spelling errors

5

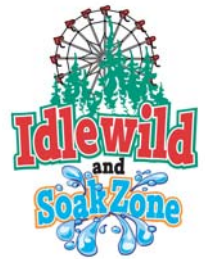
- Follows the directions given
- Effectively addresses the task
- Sophisticated ideas are well developed
- Content is specific and illustrative
- Demonstrates effective use of vocabulary
- Project is presented in a neat and attractive manner

4

- Follows most of the directions given
- Addresses the task
- Ideas are mostly developed
- Content is sufficient
- Demonstrated effective use of vocabulary
- Needs improvement in neatness/packaging/artwork
- Mechanical, usage, or spelling errors are not severe enough to interfere with the writer's purpose

3

- Follows some of the directions given
- Marginally addresses the task
- Somewhat inappropriate or insufficient details to support ideas
- Content limited to listing, repetition, or sequence
- Demonstrates adequate use of vocabulary
- Needs improvement in neatness/packaging/artwork
- repeated weaknesses in mechanics, usage, or spelling



2

- Follows few of the directions given
- Strays noticeably from the task
- Ideas supported only by few or inappropriate details
- Superficial or weak content
- Vocabulary is below classroom expectations
- Hastily completed—neatness/packaging/artwork lacking
- Mechanical, usage, or spelling errors severe enough to interfere with the writer's purpose

1

- Does not follow the directions given
- Does not address the task
- Ideas are not developed or supported by details
- Absence of relevant content
- Poor vocabulary
- Quality of presentation (packaging/artwork) is unacceptable
- Mechanical, usage, or spelling errors so severe that the writer's ideas are difficult to understand

