

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 shape their work. By sharing ways

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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 growing 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 paintings 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.

Conventions Trait

The conventions trait is creating a polished piece of work. In writing, this means that the reader can read a piece with comfort and ease. By developing an awareness of the reader, the growing writer realizes the importance of using conventions (spelling and grammar, capitalization, punctuation, etc.) for communicating clearly. Two ways to teach this trait through art include:



Students record their ideas in pictures prior to writing.

- Use checklists to self-, peer-, and teacher-evaluate artwork based on creativity, composition, and artistry.
- providing time for students to make changes to their work after critiques.

Presenting and Publishing

Finding ways to exhibit work that engages audiences can be a creative process in itself. This stage of the process raises students' awareness of the purpose of finalizing and polishing a product. Two ways to present and publish both written work and artwork include:

- Take a school walk to evaluate class displays based on criteria that includes use of space and effective use of art techniques.
- Develop an exhibit together as a class, allowing students to decide on location, placement, etc.

For more information and detailed lesson plans, see the Resource below. 

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RESOURCE

Using Art to Teach: usingarttoteach.com