

LESSON PLAN

Sensory Details and Sandra Cisneros's "Abuelito Who"

By Alba Hernandez

In this lesson, T&W teaching artist [Alba Hernandez](#) focuses on teaching students to use vivid details to create a linguistic picture of a special person or pet. Alba reminds students that the five senses can be used in any type of writing, including persuasive writing, and that in order to persuade someone, students need to write in a way that is captivating and original.



Grade: 3

Genre: Poetry

Common Core State Standards ([Refer to the ELA Standards > Writing > Grade 3](#)):

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Perform a close reading of Sandra Cisneros's poem "Abuelito Who" and share observations with the class.
- Write a poem using the five senses and vivid details to describe a person or pet in their life.
- Practice speaking and listening skills.

Guiding Questions:

- What is sensory language?
- How can sensory language create a vivid image with words?
- What is a metaphor?

LESSON

Warm-up (5 Minutes):

Rationale: Pre-writing is a wonderful way to create a different space for students to have freedom to explore their free associations with a particular topic or theme. Free writing is also a great way for students to develop

writing stamina.

- Write the word “volcano” on the board and invite students to write in response to this prompt. Invite students to explore language association, memory, sensory language, or even to keep writing the word “volcano” multiple times. There’s only one rule: You can’t stop writing.

Mentor Text and Discussion (10 Minutes):

- Ask students to name the five senses.
- Read Sandra Cisneros’s “Abuelito Who” twice. The teaching artist can read the poem first and then invite students to read.
- Ask students the following questions:
 - ✓ What does Cisneros mean when she writes that her grandfather is dough? Is the grandfather really dough that you can put in the oven to cook? What does dough feel like? Help students move beyond their initial response. For instance, if students respond by saying “soft,” develop their response by asking: “If dough is soft and squishy, what is she saying about her grandfather?”
 - ✓ Which of the five senses is Cisneros using?
 - ✓ Do you think Cisneros likes her grandfather? Do you think her grandfather loves her? Can you offer me an example from the text that supports your claim? *Possible answer: “He tells her that she is his diamond. That’s a loving thing to say.”* Which of the senses is she using in this line of text?

Writing (10 minutes)

- Close your eyes and think of someone in your life you want to write about. It can be a pet or even yourself.
- Close your eyes for a moment and imagine this person or animal. Where are they? Inside or outside? Are they alone? What color is their hair? What’s the texture of their hair or skin? Are they talking? What are they saying? Do they have a frown or smile? Are they holding anything in their hand? What do they smell like? Are they eating anything?
- Invite students to open their eyes and write a poem about that person or pet. They can use the template or they can write in another form. Remind students to use all of the five senses.

Sharing (5 Minutes):

- Students share their work. Encourage students to be generous with sharing their voice so that they are heard.
- Students who are listening have a very important role: They will be listening for when the writer uses one of the five senses, and sharing when they heard that after each student reads.

Materials: “Abuelito Who,” poem template

Multi-Modal Approaches Used: Verbal-Linguistic, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Visual, Auditory