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## The Senses in Color

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Special instructions: Gather a selection of paint chips from a paint store.

The teacher's interactions with the students' ideas are critical here. The teacher moves the contributions from generic to specific by asking questions such as these: When do you see that? Where would that be? When is that the most intense feeling?

### **Why teach this anchor lesson?**

- To show students how to use their senses to engage with the topic and use language vividly
- To help students create powerful imagery with specific examples

### **How to do it**

#### **Session 1: From the generic to the specific**

1. Explain to students that poets use their senses to help us see and experience things in a new way.
2. Choose a red paint chip from the collection and engage the class in a discussion about the color. For example:

TEACHER: What does red look like?

STUDENT: Red looks like a cherry.

TEACHER: Where do you see this cherry?

STUDENT: Red as a cherry on an ice-cream sundae.

TEACHER: What does red taste like?

STUDENT: Red tastes like hot sauce.

TEACHER: Tell me more about that hot sauce.

STUDENT: The Tabasco sauce on my dad's hot dog smells red, red, red.

TEACHER: What else might red look like?

STUDENT: Red looks like fire.

TEACHER: When is fire the reddest?

STUDENT: Red is the flames from a dragon.

3. Record students' ideas on the board and help students to stretch their thinking.
4. Continue in this way, refining and extending student contributions to create specific and powerful images. Below is a poem created by one class that went through this process.

*What is red?*

*Red is a cherry on an ice cream sundae*

*Red is Tabasco sauce on a hot dog —*

*No thanks!*

*The flames from a dragon are red,*

*So is a strawberry and*

*a nose bleed.*

*My heart beats red at the end of a race*

*"I hate you!" is the sound of red*

*Strength, anger and intensity*

*That's the feeling of red.*

### Session 2: From paint chips to strong images

1. Put the class poem from the previous day on an overhead or a chart.
2. Ask students: Which ideas are most powerful? Why do you think so?
3. Ask students to choose a paint chip from the collection to write about. They meet in talking pairs to develop preliminary ideas. You can lead the discussion by asking partners to respond to the following prompts:
  - When is your color the strongest, the clearest, the most delicate?
  - If your color was an emotion, what feeling would it be? When would you experience it?
  - If your color was something you could touch, what would it feel like?
  - If your color was a taste, what would it be? When would you taste it best?
4. Individually, students use a thinking page (see Blackline Master 4.1) to begin a list of possibilities that represent their chosen paint chip color. (A thinking page can also be seen as a worksheet or rough working paper.)
5. Students select their most powerful images and draft them into a poem.
6. Once they have done so, they can meet informally to share poems with each other.

While students are writing, circulate and prompt students with questioning to add detail and description. Stop the class and ask students to share aloud their writing gems. Do this with caution, however, to avoid a class set of identical poems and to avoid disrupting students' thinking too often.

Remember the writing anchors: Use your five senses. Make it your own!

### Student Reflection

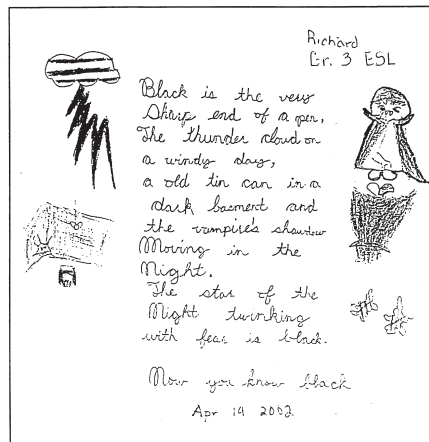
- What are your favorite images? Read them aloud to a partner.
- What did you learn in this lesson that you can use in Writing Workshop?

### Evaluation

To what extent was the student able to

- use the senses to create original images?
- move beyond generic writing to capture vivid, specific images?

Richard's poem creates an impact on the reader and his words are chosen for effect: "old tin can in a dark basement."



## Senses in Color Thinking Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



*(your color)*

Sights \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sounds \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tastes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Touches \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Smells \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Emotions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Seasonal and weather ideas \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Family members of the color (e.g., Red is a big sister to pink) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_