

Autumn Scene



Describe a setting.

INTRODUCE

Introduce elaborative detail to the class, emphasizing sensory detail. Try tying this writing technique to a topic your students are currently studying. For example, if you're studying habitats, point out that students can use this skill to describe their chosen habitats in their science reports.

LITERATURE CONNECTION

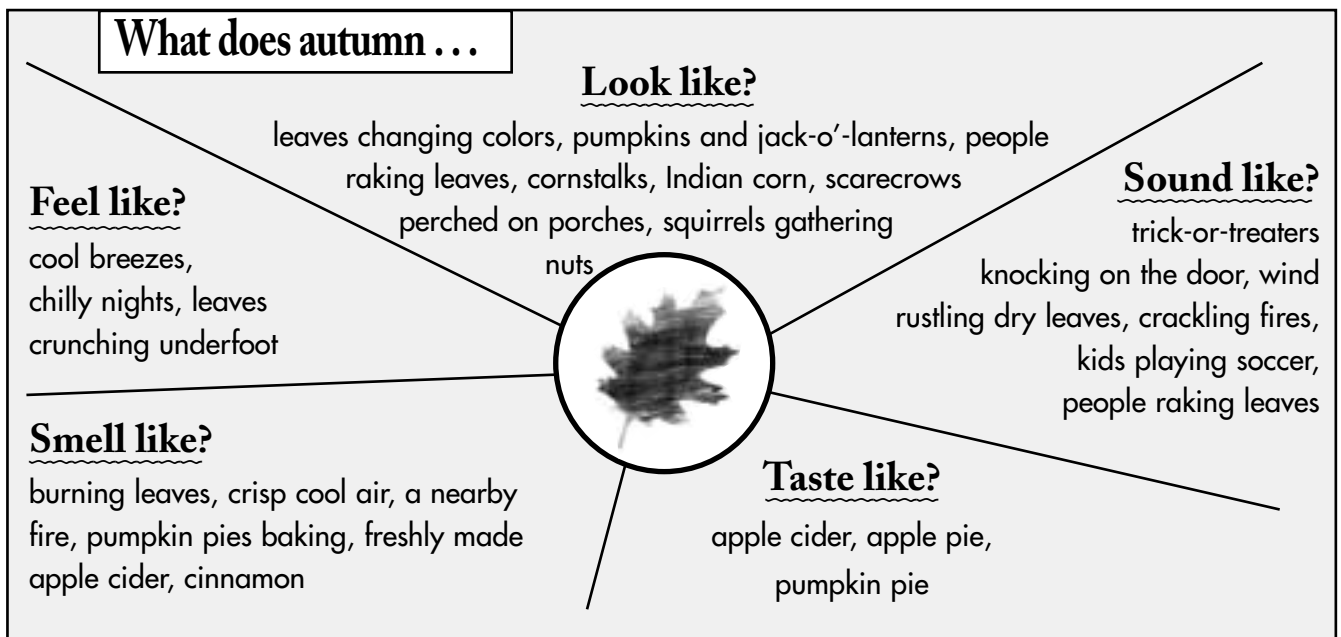
Autumn, an Alphabet Acrostic
by Steven Schnur

Autumn Leaves by Ken Robbins

How Do You Know It's Fall?
by Allan Fowler

MODEL

Model how you ask yourself questions about an outdoor scene in order to conjure the sensory details you need to write a description that captures the scene in writing, and encourage students to jump in and contribute ideas. Prepare a chart on which to record your and the class's responses; see the graphic organizer below for an example. Think aloud about your autumn scene, asking yourself what autumn looks like, smells like, feels like, tastes like, and sounds like. It's helpful to have a picture (or pictures!) of an autumn scene to help inspire you and your students; see the literature connections box above for ideas. Your chart might look something like this:



Once you have charted all the suggestions from the class, model writing a paragraph that incorporates a selection of details into a vividly drawn autumn scene. Use sentence starters from the *Autumn Scene* student page (p.19) and think aloud about your choices as you write.

It was a beautiful autumn day. As I looked around, I noticed that leaves were beginning to change into the fiery reds and oranges of the season. I could see the animals scurrying about gathering nuts, preparing for the cold winter days that loomed ahead. The cool breeze scattered the leaves in all directions and sent a chill down my spine. I took a deep breath and was warmed instantly by the smell of a nearby fire. My mouth began to water as I thought about the taste of a freshly baked hot apple pie.

ART CONNECTION

MATERIALS

- oaktag
- scissors
- scrap paper for covering desks
- watercolor paints in autumn colors (orange, yellow, red, brown)
- small containers of water for diluting color
- large watercolor brushes

PREPARATION

Prepare leaves by cutting them out of oaktag; you'll need one for each student. Alternatively, you can have students draw and cut out their own leaves, either from a template or freehand.



PROCEDURE

1. Distribute an oaktag leaf to each student (or have them cut their own) along with scrap paper to cover the desks.
2. Hand out the watercolors, brushes, and clean water. Discuss the colors of autumn and let students choose colors they feel are appropriate for autumn leaves. Give students time to practice watering down colors on scrap paper.
3. Once they are used to using the watercolors and diluting colors, invite them to paint their leaves in a blended combination of autumn colors.
4. Set the leaves aside to dry. Then have students arrange them around the class tree on a bulletin board. Finally, add their descriptions of the autumn scene.

STUDENT SAMPLE

To me, autumn looks like brown, red, and yellow leaves falling to the forest floor. I heard the sound of fire in the fireplace . . . crackle, crackle, crackle. When I breathed in, I noticed the smell of spicy apple cider.

I can just imagine the salty taste of crispy pumpkin seeds. When I touched the big, plump pumpkin, it felt bumpy on its skin.

There were bright orange pumpkins growing in a patch. I noticed geese flying in the air making noise. Honk, honk, honk went the wild geese. "Mmmm." I smelled Halloween candy—Snickers and Kit cats! The leaves felt crunchy and dry beneath my feet. My mouth waters when I think of juicy apple pie!

I watched squirrels gathering nuts and noticed chipmunks running here and there. To me, autumn sounds like people raking leaves of all colors. Ch, ch, ch went the rake. When I went outside, I smelled candy apples and cotton candy at the autumn fair. I can just imagine the sweet taste of candy on Halloween. I love the feeling of autumn wind in my hair.

GUIDED PRACTICE

Leaving all the practice charts posted, distribute the Autumn Scene student page and invite students to write their own description of an autumn day. Encourage them to use their own ideas and remind them to use sentence variety.



Autum Scene Student Page

Name _____ Date _____

IMAGINE THAT . . .

You are outside on a beautiful autumn day. You look around and take a deep breath. Describe the autumn day using all your senses.

Writer's Technique

Describing a setting.

Artful Connection

Create an autumn tree for the classroom.

Get Ready to Write!

This activity asks you to use *all* your senses. Think about what autumn

looks like • feels like • tastes like • smells like • sounds like

On another piece of paper, brainstorm your ideas, trying for at least two details for each sense. Then choose at least one detail for each sense, and write about it in a complete sentence. The sentence starters below can help you get going.

Sight

As I looked around, I noticed . . .

I could see . . .

Glancing around me, I saw . . .

I gazed at . . .

Sound

Standing quietly, I noticed . . .

As I listened . . .

In the distance, I could hear . . .

I strained to hear . . .

Smell

I took a deep breath and . . .

I noticed the smell of . . .

In the far-off distance, I could smell . . .

Touch

I could feel . . .

When I ran my hand along it, it . . .

As I touched it, I realized . . .

. . . felt like

Taste

I could taste . . .

My mouth watered as I thought . . .

Remembering the taste of . . .

I licked my lips just thinking about . . .