

The Write Stuff

GALLERY/GALLERIES OF YOUR CHOICE

Grades 6–8

Let works of art inspire you.

Creative writing is like painting with words—imaginative, descriptive, and original.

Writing forms a story or picture in your mind. Look at works of art and respond with similes, sensory inventories, and haikus. This teacher-directed gallery activity is designed to inspire your students to unleash their creativity by responding to works of art in writing.



Get Ready!

Please make sure you visit the VMFA Teacher-Directed Activities page for directions on using these guides and booking your visit.

Get Set!

Produce complete copies of this packet for all teachers and chaperones. Students only need copies of pages 3–6. Here are directions:

- These writing activities may be done in the VMFA permanent galleries of your choice. Using the Gallery Map, find the galleries your group will visit first.
- Once in your chosen gallery, break the students into pairs or groups of 3–4 to work together on the activities. When breaking into smaller groups, please consider the time as each pair/group will want to present out loud.
- Lead the students through each of the writing activities in different galleries, or ask them to choose different works for each of the activities. An introduction is provided for either the teacher or student to read at the beginning of the activity.
- Consider sharing your student's writings with us! Submit writings to our tumblr page <http://vmfaeducation.tumblr.com/> Also, feel free to continue on the writing journey by encouraging students to write more poems, short stories, etc.

Go!

We hope you enjoy your experience at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts!

The Write Stuff

Writing Packet



Name

Grades 6–8

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

Simile

A simile is a descriptive phrase that compares two things using **like** or **as**. A simile is one way to create an immediate visual image of what you are describing. For instance, you could compare a detail in a work of art, such as *fur*, to another noun, *silk*:

This *fur* is **like** *silk*.

Or you can compare a noun (*dog*) using an adjective (*white*) with another noun (*snow*):

This *dog* is **as** *white* as *snow*.

Choose a work of art you are drawn to. Using the entire work or a detail, compare the object you've chosen with another noun. Remember, your simile must make a comparison of two things.

Object (*noun*): _____

This (*noun*) _____ is like (*noun*) _____.

Next, think of an adjective that comes to mind when you look at your chosen work. Try writing a simile below comparing your object to something else using the adjective you've chosen.

Adjective _____

This (*noun*) _____ is as (*adjective*) _____ as (*noun*) _____.

Another possibility for creating a simile is to compare an action, or verb, (*moved*) with a phrase (*ice melting during the spring thaw*) using an adverb (*slowly*):
It *moved* as *slowly* as *ice melting during the spring thaw*.

Can you write a simile using an adverb?

It (*verb*) _____ as (*adverb*) _____ as _____.

Sensory Inventory

Simply describing what a work of art looks like tells only part of the story. Try incorporating **all** of your senses. Put yourself into the work; think about what you might see, feel, hear, taste, or smell.

Explore the gallery and choose a work of art.

Title _____

Artist _____

Date _____

Use the format below to describe the work of art using your senses.

I can almost...

taste the _____ and

feel the _____ ; it's as if I

hear the sound of _____ , and I am

reminded of the smell of _____ .

Strangely enough I think of _____

when I see _____ .

Haiku

The three-line verse form known as haiku became popular in 17th-century Japan and continues to be popular throughout the world today. Haikus were originally written in Japanese, but they can be in any language.

A haiku relies on the rhythmic beats of language. There is a beat for every *syllable*. The first line has five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the third line has five syllables.

Here's an example:

**An old silent pond . . .
A frog jumps into the pond,
splash! Silence again.**
—Basho (1644–1694)

Explore the gallery and choose a work of art.

Title _____

Artist _____

Date _____

Now try writing a haiku about it.

Five syllables

Seven syllables

Five syllables



VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

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