

# ART *to* ZOO

Ideas for Educators from the Smithsonian Institution, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Washington, D.C. April 1994

## The Stuff of Stories: *Using Museums to Inspire Student Writing*

Museums aren't just full of stuff. They're also full of stories—stories about culture, history, people and places, natural wonders; stories embodied in the dioramas, dinosaur bones, antiques, artwork, and other objects and exhibitions that museums house. ■ Sometimes these stories are obvious: The adventures of astronauts on the moon are written all over the moon rocks on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. At other times they're more obscure—like the fragments of an ancient sculpture that hint at the structure and function of the whole. But either way, museums are fertile ground for the imagination because they're chock full of the stuff that stories are made of.

This issue of *ART TO ZOO* is designed to help your students tap into the tales stored in museums. The focus of the issue is on writing—specifically, on how you can use museums and other community resources, such as nature centers, historic buildings, statues, and landmarks, as springboards for different types of writing. Visiting these sites with your students is an ideal way to take advantage of the lesson plan we've put together. But if that's not feasible, you can adapt much of the lesson plan for use right in the classroom. For example, instead of taking your class to an art museum and having the students write stories based on the paintings on display (see "Telling a Painting's Story," below), you can bring in prints or postcards of paintings for the students to build their stories around. You can also build on the suggestions that we've provided for modeling various activities in the classroom.

### Teacher Background

If you *can* get your students out to a museum or other community site, you'll find that a little planning will go a long way. Here are a few suggestions that will help you get the most out of your trip:

- ☐ Try to visit the site yourself a few weeks before you take your class so you can familiarize yourself with its layout. Locate restrooms, shops, cafeterias, and classrooms. Note which exhibitions are in which galleries and obtain a floor plan and background information to study. Also pick up copies of the floor plan for your students or reproduce your copy. Shortly before the trip, go over the floor plan with the group so they'll be somewhat familiar with how the site is laid out.
- ☐ Talk with outreach, education, or public programs staff well before your trip and have staff members notify guards about the students' visit. Ask if visitors are allowed to carry backpacks and bring pencils, pens, and clipboards into the galleries.
- ☐ Ask the staff if there's a relatively quiet area in the museum where students can write. Explain that a classroom is not necessary; you can have your group sit on the floor and write in a corner of a gallery as long as other groups don't also need the area.
- ☐ If volunteers will be helping to chaperone your visit, prepare them ahead of time. Let them know which parts of the site you plan to use, and familiarize them with the steps in the lesson and the kinds of questions the students might ask. Make sure they under-

stand the purpose of the visit.

- ☐ Modeling the activity in the classroom before going to the site can be helpful. If students are familiar with the process ahead of time, they may be better able to focus on the objects and exhibitions.
- ☐ Once you and your group are at the site, review its layout and features. You may also want to walk through the area with your students before starting the activity.
- ☐ Write with your students! By working on the writing assignments at the same time as your students, you can demonstrate not only that you value writing, but also that everyone must work to produce good results. You'll also get a feeling for the activities and the challenges each one presents.
- ☐ Last but not least: Make sure that the exhibition you want to visit will be open when you bring your class.

### Lesson Plan

#### Step 1: Telling a Painting's Story

##### Objectives:

- ☐ closely observe a work of art
- ☐ list concrete details in the work
- ☐ select the most important details to include in a descriptive paragraph
- ☐ distinguish between factual and judgmental language
- ☐ write a descriptive text using only facts
- ☐ write a story using both facts and judgmental language

##### Materials:

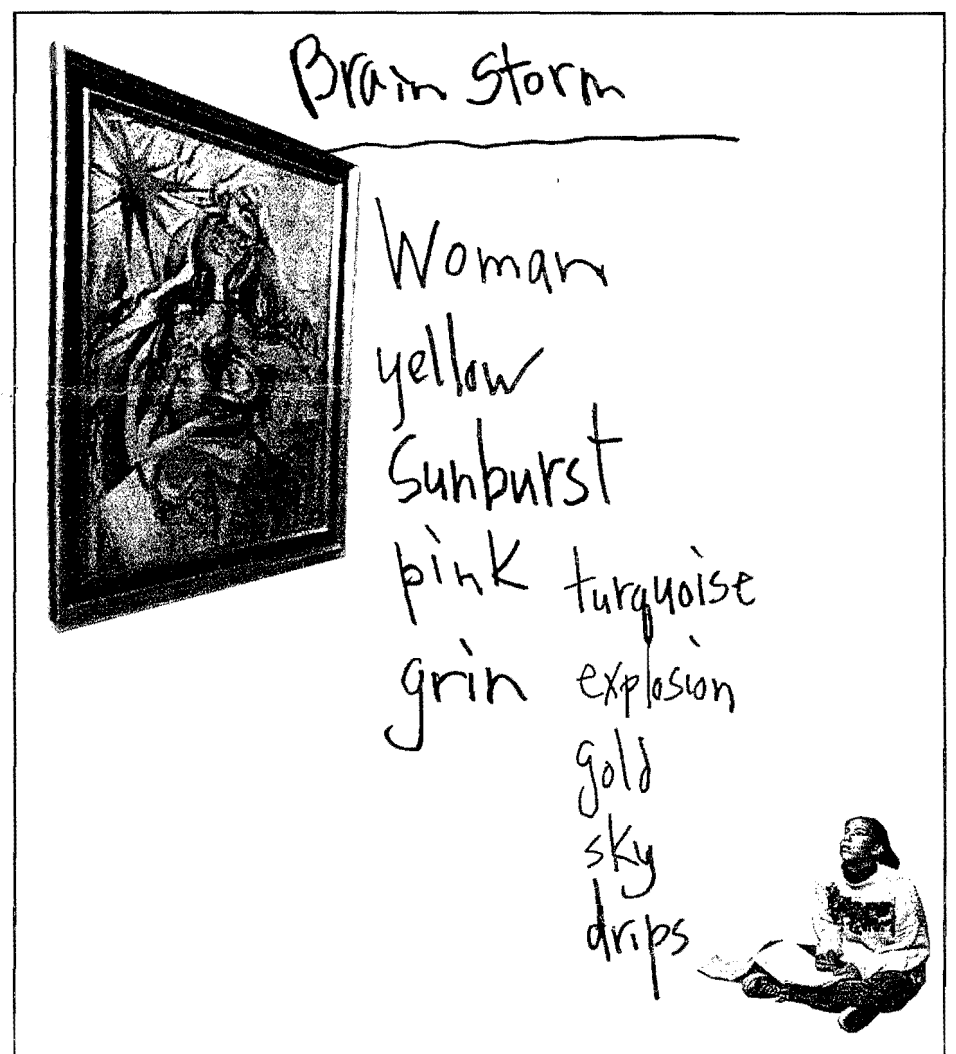
- ☐ paper and pens or pencils
- ☐ clipboards

##### Subjects:

- ☐ language arts, art

One of the greatest qualities of art is the way it "speaks" to each one of us: People may share opinions about a work of art, and even feel similar emotional responses—but ultimately, our reactions to art and our interpretations of it are as individual and unique as we are.

In this activity your students can express their unique responses to art by writing stories inspired by paintings in an art museum. But before they put their imaginations to work, each person will have a chance to get to know a painting by observing it closely, making a list of its



Photographed at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden at an exhibition of paintings by Willem de Kooning from the Hirshhorn Museum Collection.

details, and writing a description of it. Such an exercise will help them understand the value of careful observation as a precursor to descriptive and creative writing. It may also help them learn how to look at—and truly see—a work of art for the first time.

##### Preparation:

#### 1. Visit an art museum and become familiar with its paintings.

Take note of the locations of paintings that will lend themselves well to the activity—i.e., realistic works portraying at least one human figure. Such paintings will facilitate a student's sense of connection to the work and will provide plenty of visual stimulation to pique students' imaginations. If possible, try to choose an area where there are several such paintings near one another.

#### 2. Before going to the museum, model the activity in class.

One way to do this is to buy reproductions of paintings, in the form of slides or postcards, at the museum. Bring them into the classroom a day or two before your trip to the museum and have the students complete steps 2 through 5 under "At the Museum."

##### At the Museum:

#### 1. Have students choose paintings.

Take the students on a brief tour of the museum, pointing out several works of art that you find appropriate for the activity. During the tour, tell the students to note the names and locations of works that interest them. Explain that each person will be writing about one of the paintings. Then have each person choose a painting for the assignment.

## 2. Have students make lists of the details in their paintings.

Give the students about ten minutes to get to know their paintings. To do this, they should observe the work they've chosen and make a list of as many details as possible describing its appearance. Explain that they should limit their lists to physical aspects of the painting itself. For example, they might list "orange flowers near fence" or "silver earring shaped like a teardrop." But they should avoid listing any emotions the painting evokes, or any judgments or assumptions they might have about the work. For example, they could write something like "hands folded, eyes closed" but should avoid such descriptions as "lost in prayer" or "sad and downhearted." Making judgments about the relationships between people in the pictures—e.g., "mother and son"—is also inappropriate.

Items that students can count ("three trees on left" or "four waves to left of boat," for example) are good candidates for listing. So are physical aspects of the painting that aren't visible (e.g., "left hand behind back").

## 3. Have students write descriptions of their paintings.

Give students several minutes to write descriptions of their paintings, using the list of details they created in step 2 and their memory of the work as a whole. Explain that they should describe their paintings in such a way that a person reading their description could easily find the work in the museum. Students should not try to include all of the details that they listed earlier; instead, they must decide which details would be most important to include in a description. Also tell students that they should avoid using language that makes assumptions about what's happening in the painting (e.g., "sadly looking for lost love") or that expresses their own opinions in any way (e.g., "ugly red barn"). For now, the point is simply to focus on what physically appears in the painting.

## 4. Ask volunteers to read their descriptions aloud.

After each reading, ask the listeners to name whatever details they remember. If two or more students wrote about the same painting, discuss the similarities and differences in the two descriptions. Also discuss any judgmental language that may have slipped into the descriptions. Ask students how judgmental language can portray more than just facts. (It conveys the viewer's interpretation of the painting and possibly his or her own feelings about it.)

## 5. Assign students into pairs and have them create drawings based on their partners' descriptions.

Make sure that the members of each pair did not work with the same painting. Have the students in each pair read each other's descriptions. Then, using the descriptions as a guide, they should try to sketch what they think the described painting looks like.

## 6. Give students time to find the paintings.

Give the students in each pair ten minutes or so to try to find the paintings their partners described. (Partners can accompany those searching for the paintings, but they mustn't give them any hints.) Allow students to take the descriptions, as well as their drawings, with them as they search.

## 7. Have students evaluate their descriptions.

After the students have had time to try to find the paintings their partners described, gather everyone together. Ask the students how many of them found the paintings their partners described. Have volunteers discuss the aspects of the descriptions that helped them find the correct painting.

Then ask several of the students to re-read the descriptions they wrote. Have their partners share the sketches they created. Based on the sketches and the ease or difficulty the sketchers had in finding the correct paintings, do the students who wrote these particular descriptions think the descriptions "work"?



*Creating conversations with objects can help students practice writing dialogue. Courtesy of Martha Tabor, Working Images Photographs.*

How might they be improved? (Remind students that not everyone is an artist, so they can't necessarily expect that their descriptions would result in highly detailed drawings. But a good description might lead the person doing the drawing to include some of the highlights of the real painting.)

## 8. Give students time to write stories about their paintings.

To help the students combine the visible aspects of art with the feelings and ideas art inspires, give them thirty minutes or more to write stories about their paintings. Explain that they should use their descriptions of the paintings as a basis for creating their stories, but allow them to revisit the paintings if they want to. Tell the students that, unlike their descriptions, the stories don't have to stick to physical facts. Any emotions or judgments the students wish to incorporate into their stories—and any way they wish to interpret what's happening in the paintings—is fine.

One way students might want to approach their stories is to focus on what's currently happening in the painting. Explain that, if they take this approach, it might be helpful to treat the painting as if it were a frozen frame in a movie. To set the painting into motion, they can mentally "unfreeze" the frame.

Other approaches to telling the painting's story include writing about what has just happened, or about what is going to happen. But explain to the students that, whatever they write, they must not contradict any factual information about the painting.

## 9. Have students share their stories.

If possible, have students read their stories to the group in front of the paintings they wrote about.

## Back in the Classroom:

### 1. Display students' stories.

Create a bulletin-board display of the students' stories. You might want to include the descriptions, along with the students' sketches, in the display. If possible, also include any postcard prints (or other prints) of the paintings the students wrote about.

## Step 2: Conversing with an Object

### Objectives:

- ☐ formulate questions or statements about unfamiliar objects
- ☐ write a dialogue
- ☐ discuss two or more facts about a museum object

### Materials:

- ☐ common objects (see activity for suggestions)
- ☐ paper and pens or pencils
- ☐ clipboards
- ☐ samples of magazine interviews (optional)

### Subject:

- ☐ language arts

If an ancient Japanese ceramic vessel could speak, what would it say? How about an African mask—or the monstrous skeleton of a prehistoric giant sloth? And what might these things say to one another? By "talking" with objects and creating conversations between different objects, your students can bring artifacts, artworks, fossils, and other items to life. It's an effective way for students to not only practice writing dialogue, but also to connect with museum objects that might otherwise seem strange or intimidating.

### Preparation:

#### 1. Decide which area or exhibit within the museum will lend itself best to the activity.

This activity can work particularly well when tied in with a specific curriculum area or theme. For example, if your students have been studying insects, you could take them to a natural history museum's insect display. They could use what they've been learning, plus any information in the display, to create dialogues between different insect specimens or between themselves and a specimen. Similarly, if your class has been learning about a period in art history, they could write dialogues between the "characters" in an art museum's paintings.

#### 2. If possible, arrange to have a curator, museum educator, or docent work with your group when you get to the museum.

Such a person can help answer questions students may have about the objects they've chosen to work with.

#### 3. Gather together and display at least a dozen common objects.

You'll be using these objects in steps 2, 3, and 4 of the "In the Classroom" portion of the activity, which models the museum portion. Just about any familiar objects will do, especially those with a clear function, such as kitchen utensils, household tools, and office supplies. Other possibilities include objects that students have an affinity for (CDs, radios, jewelry, rollerblades, soda cans), and objects that were once part of a living thing (seashells, feathers, leaves, bones).

### In the Classroom:

#### 1. Review the conventions for writing dialogue.

Discuss the concept of *dialogue* with the students, pointing out that written dialogue is a conversation on paper. Go over the use of quotation marks and rules for indentation. (You may want to give students the option of writing their dialogues in interview style. If so, bring in samples of magazine interviews and go over this style as well.)

#### 2. Have students choose objects to write about.

Explain that each student will be writing a dialogue between two of the objects on display. Give them a few minutes to think about which objects might have an interesting conversation if they could speak to one another. Tell students that the objects they choose can be related in some way (such as a bottle of soda and a glass), but they don't necessarily have to be.

#### 3. Give students twenty or thirty minutes to write their dialogues.

To help them get started, suggest some topics that their objects might talk about. For example, objects could compare their functions, discuss where they live (in the pantry, in the refrigerator, in a student's desk, etc.) and describe what a typical day in their lives is like. You might also want to suggest to students that they give their objects personalities or certain characteristics. For example, a cactus could have a "prickly" personality; a dictionary could have an excellent vocabulary.

#### 4. Have students read or perform several of the dialogues.

Collect the students' work. If possible, select several pieces that give clues to the objects' identities without giving them away. (If you can't find any, select some that the writers could modify slightly to achieve "anonymity.") Have the writer of each piece, along with one other student, read or perform the conversation. Ask the group if they can say which objects are having the discussion.

### At the Museum:

#### 1. Have each student choose one or more objects to write about.

Explain to the students that they'll once again be writing dialogues using objects—only this time they can choose to either create a conversation between two different objects or between themselves and an object. Then lead the students through the museum and tell them to be thinking about which object or objects they'd like to focus on. To



help them decide, suggest that they choose objects that might have something interesting to say if they could talk.

2. Give students time to write their dialogues.

After walking through the museum, have the students locate the objects they want to work with and give them twenty minutes or more to write their dialogues. Encourage them to use their imaginations in their conversations, but tell them they must also include some factual information about the objects themselves. Suggest that their dialogues address two or more of the following bits of information:

- ☐ what the object is
- ☐ how the object is (or was) used, if appropriate
- ☐ the object's age
- ☐ who made the object, if appropriate
- ☐ where the object originated
- ☐ a description and explanation of at least one of the object's features

Students can use the information provided in the display as a source of facts about their objects, or they can ask a museum docent or other staff person that you've lined up to be on hand for the lesson.

If students seem to be having a hard time getting started, you might want to suggest some questions they could ask in their dialogues, such as:

- ☐ How do the objects feel about living in a museum and being in the public eye day after day?
- ☐ Who are some of the people or things in the objects' existence (i.e., previous owners, other objects that the object has spent time with, other items nearby)?
- ☐ Do the objects have a secret existence that people don't know about? For example, do they carry on conversations with one another when all the people lock up the museum and go home?

Back in the Classroom:

1. Have the students read or perform several of the dialogues.

Follow the directions for step 4 of the "In the Classroom" section.

Extension:

As a follow-up activity, have the students try their hands at writing a conversation between two or more people. Here are some possible scenarios around which they could build their conversations:

- ☐ two characters in a book arguing for a different ending
- ☐ someone trying to explain a modern event, situation, or object to a person from the past



Museum exhibits often include re-creations of places from the past. This working post office in the National Museum of American History was reconstructed after being brought to the museum from West Virginia. Courtesy of Office of Public Affairs, Smithsonian.

- ☐ a conversation between two or more people "on the scene" at a historic event, such as the signing of the Declaration of Independence or the arrival of Europeans in the Americas
- ☐ a conversation between two or more people "on the scene" at a future significant event, such as the arrival of aliens on Earth

Step 3: Telling Your Story

Objectives:

- ☐ identify a particular time period and describe several of its characteristics
- ☐ describe what daily life was like during this time period
- ☐ write a story about someone who lived during this time period

Materials:

- ☐ paper and pens or pencils
- ☐ clipboards
- ☐ copies of "What Was It Like?" and "Who Am I?" (on Pull-Out Page)

Subjects:

- ☐ language arts, history

In this activity your students can "experience" the past by writing a story from the point of view of someone who lived during another time. For factual information and

inspiration, they'll study a historical exhibition focusing on a particular era or event.

Preparation:

1. Locate a museum exhibition or display that focuses on a past event or era in human history.

Look for a museum exhibition that includes dioramas of people and places, as well as plenty of primary source objects and information from the period being portrayed. (Other possible locations for this activity include historic houses, re-enactment villages, and exhibits that concentrate on a particular culture.)

2. Make copies of "What Was It Like?" and "Who Am I?" (on Pull-Out Page)—one for each student.

Modify these handouts as necessary, based on the exhibition your students will be visiting. You'll be distributing the handouts once you get to the field-trip site.

In the Classroom:

1. Explain to the students that they will be writing historical stories.

Ask for examples of any such stories the students may have read or of historical

movies and TV programs they've seen. Brainstorm a list of things authors and filmmakers can do to convey a sense of what life was like in the time period being portrayed.

2. Discuss the importance of accurate information in creating a good historical story.

Ask students how authors and filmmakers can gather information when they are writing novels or scripts set in the past. Point out that one crucial element of a good historical story is accurate information. Many authors of historical stories spend a great deal of time researching the era they're writing about. They talk with experts, study historical documents, look at pictures, read diaries and newspapers, and do whatever else is necessary to obtain information. Research not only helps authors get their facts straight—it also gives them a feeling for the period they're writing about and for the daily lives of the people who lived during that time. Explain to the students that they will be using a museum exhibition as a source of factual information for their stories.

At the Museum:

1. Walk students through the exhibition.

Allow fifteen minutes or more for walking through the exhibition with students so they can get a feeling for its scope and for the

Beyond the Museum

Think of your community as a big museum. Now think of all the objects and exhibitions in this museum: old buildings, artifacts, statues, monuments—resources that, like the objects and exhibitions in real museums, offer primary-source information about history and culture. By using these and other "hidden" community resources as a foundation for new activities, you can help your community come alive for your students.

But you needn't limit yourself to motivating students with community treasures that are steeped in the distant past or that represent culture at its most refined. The present, and the popular culture that "speaks" to students, may be the most effective motivators of all.

Here are some suggestions for ways you can make the most out of what your community has to offer—specifically, as a means of inspiring

student writing. No doubt you'll think of other ideas too; ideas that take advantage of the unique attributes of your neighborhood, school, and other resources. Good luck—and please feel free to share your ideas with us. We'd love to hear from you.

■ Have students survey old homes in the community. Groups of students could find out about the history of a particular home, then write a real estate ad that incorporates some of the historical information they discovered.

■ Find out about the concerts, festivals, and other entertainment events that will be occurring in your area. Have students create a calendar of events, complete with descriptions of each event.

■ Have students write about the history of your school. They could also research and write about the first schools in the area.

■ Are there artists or scientists in your community whose work focuses on past life in the area? If so, have students interview them. They could also interview antique dealers to find out what kinds of old objects the dealers get from the community. Have students publish their interviews in the school newspaper.

■ Have students write and illustrate books for younger students focusing on notable people in your community or school.

■ Divide students into groups and have each group focus on a different aspect of, or area within, the community. Each group can contribute photos and other items to a community scrapbook. Have the groups write captions for their contributions.

■ If there is a controversy in your neighborhood over historic preservation, encourage the students to write

editorials about the issue.

■ Have the students start a column in the school newspaper featuring "day-in-the-life" pieces that focus on life in the past. They could also write short blurbs for an "On This Day in History..." column.

■ Have students collect information about popular fashions in the school. They could use their findings to write news features about fashion trends.

■ Have students write pieces about collections they have at home. Encourage them to try unconventional ways of presenting the information—e.g., through poetry, plays, dialogue, and so on.

■ Have students write and illustrate comic strips or comic books about life in the past in your community.

kind of information they can include in their stories.

**2. Give students time to collect data.**  
Distribute copies of “What Was It Like?”. Explain that the sheet is a research tool, and that the more data the students jot down on their sheets, the more information they’ll be able to draw on later when writing their stories. Then give the students at least thirty minutes to return to the exhibition and fill in as much of their sheets as possible. Afterward, you may want to have the students gather to share the details they noted and to ask questions.

**3. Have each student choose an identity.**  
The identities students choose will be the main characters in their stories. Students may either invent their identities—for example, someone might imagine himself or herself a fifteen-year-old migrant farm worker—or they may adopt the identity of a real person portrayed or discussed in the exhibit. Distribute copies of “Who Am I?” and give the students a few minutes to fill in the first three questions on the handout.

**4. Give students time to collect additional data.**  
Have the students return to the exhibit once again to fill in as much of the rest of the “Who Am I?” handouts as they can. Explain that the additional information they gather will come in handy when they sit down to write their stories. Tell them to be on the lookout for any information that could help them develop their characters. For example, if the exhibit reveals that few children of farm laborers attended school, a student who has chosen the identity of a farm laborer can assume that his or her character has little formal education.

*Back in the Classroom:*

**1. Conduct a brief review to help students get ready to write their stories.**  
First, review the typical elements of a story—specifically, characters, plot, and setting. Lead a discussion in which students describe the most appealing features of stories they have read or seen on film, and write their ideas on an overhead or on the chalkboard. Suggest to students that they might want to keep these features in mind as they write their own stories.

Next, review with students what they saw in the exhibition, as well as characteristics of the time period it portrayed. Compare the time period to the present time.

**2. If possible, choose an audience for the students’ stories.**  
A real audience can help writers focus. They must decide, for example, what they want their readers to know about a subject, and how best to describe things to people who might not be familiar with the subject. Try to determine a specific audience that the students’ stories can target. If another class is studying the time period your students will be writing about, consider having your group share their finished stories with them. They could read their stories to the group, perform them as plays, or publish and distribute them.

If it’s feasible for your students to write for a specific audience, explain that, like all authors, they must try to decide what information and qualities such an audience will appreciate. For example, younger students may not be able to follow an explanation of Civil War politics and battle strategies—but a general explanation of why the war occurred might suffice, as long as it remains true to the facts.

**3. Have students write drafts of their stories.**  
Encourage the students to remain as true as possible to the circumstances of life in the past, and to be especially careful to avoid using contemporary colloquialisms and attitudes in their stories. Suggest that they visit the library to do additional research, if necessary.

**4. Have students work in groups to revise their stories.**  
Students can act as editors of each others’ work. Explain that their jobs as editors involve more than just finding spelling and grammar mistakes. They can also point out where a story catches their interest, where it starts to bog down, where it becomes unrealistic, and so on.

*Resources*

**Books:**  
*Active Voice; A Writing Program Across the Curriculum*, 2d ed., by James Moffett. Boynton/Cook, 1992. (The first edition of *Active Voice* helped establish the process approach to teaching writing. This edition, with student writing samples, continues to offer useful suggestions.)

*Beat Not the Poor Desk: Writing—What to Teach, How to Teach It, and Why*, by Rosemary Deen and Marie Ponsot. Boynton/Cook, 1982. (Offers an inductive approach to teaching writing. Students develop an understanding of rhetorical structures inductively and apply them to new writing situations, especially the essay.)

*Coming to Know: Writing to Learn in the Intermediate Grades*, edited by Nancy Atwell. Boynton/Cook, 1989. (A set of articles written by teachers about approaches to writing. Chapter titles include “Letters to a Math Teacher,” “A Puffin Is a Bird, I Think.”)

*The Community as Classroom: Integrating School and Community Through Language Arts*, by Candida Gillis. Boynton/Cook, 1991. (An activity book that suggests ways students can develop language skills through community-based learning experiences.)

*The I-Search Paper* (revised edition of *Searching Writing*), by Ken Macrorie. Boynton/Cook, 1988. (Shows students and teachers how to do an I-Search research project—a primary-source research method reported in a narrative style.)

*Other Sources of Information:*

*The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing*, 3d ed, edited by Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg. St. Martin’s Press, 1991. (An extensive bibliography of materials that the editors describe as “helpful to practicing writing teachers.” Also includes a catalog of Bedford books. Write to St. Martin’s Press, Dept. GS, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010, or call 1-800-446-8923.)

*ERIC (the Educational Resources Information Center)* is a database of educational materials collected by the U.S. Department of Education from 1966 to the present. It consists of two subfiles: Resources in Education (RIE), which offers access to current research findings, unpublished manuscripts, books, and technical reports, and Current Index to Journals in Education (CJIE), which covers 750 journals and serial publications.

*The National Writing Project* is a nationwide program designed to improve student writing and the teaching of writing. It offers workshops, seminars, research programs, and other opportunities. For more information contact The National Writing Project, 5627 Tolman Hall, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. Telephone: (510) 642-0963

The lesson plan we’ve presented in this issue of *ART TO ZOO* is based on several of the activities included in a new Smithsonian booklet called *Collecting Their Thoughts: Using Museums as Resources for Student Writing*. Fifteen years’ worth of writing workshops for teachers formed the foundation for *Collecting Their Thoughts*. Designed for use with students in grades seven through twelve, the hands-on activities in this 64-page booklet use primary source materials as a stimulus for observing, writing, and composing. Introductory materials and an extensive resource list are included.

To obtain a copy of *Collecting Their Thoughts*, write to the following address: Smithsonian Institution  
OESE/A & I—1163, MRC 402  
Washington, D.C. 20560  
(First copy is free. Additional copies are \$5.00 each. Checks or money orders MUST be made payable to OESE, Smithsonian Institution.)

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**brother**

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Thomas Lowderbaugh (Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Smithsonian Institution), whose popular writing workshops formed the basis for *Collecting Their Thoughts*, the publication on which the lesson plan in this issue is based

Leslie O’Flahavan, who was a contributing writer to *Collecting Their Thoughts*

*Smithsonian Services at Your Fingertips*

Need up-to-the-minute information about Smithsonian exhibition openings or special programs for educators? How about images of everything from famous American paintings to ancient artifacts to airplanes? A computer, modem, and telephone are all you need to gain access to these and other Smithsonian services—any day, any time. Just hook into any of the following networks:

- Internet (anonymous ftp)**  
*EDUCATE.SI.EDU*  
Visitor information; materials for teachers; announcements of programs, publications, special events.
- PHOTO1.SI.EDU*  
Photographic images for downloading and viewing.
- SIMSC.SI.EDU*  
Information about the Smithsonian and its museums.

- The Smithsonian Institution**
- Anacostia Neighborhood Museum
  - Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
  - Arts and Industries Building (Experimental Gallery)
  - Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design
  - Freer Gallery of Art
  - Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
  - National Museum of African Art
  - National Museum of the American Indian
  - National Air and Space Museum
  - National Museum of American Art and Renwick Gallery
  - National Museum of American History
  - National Museum of Natural History
  - National Portrait Gallery
  - National Postal Museum
  - National Zoological Park
  - Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
  - Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute

*ART TO ZOO* brings information from the Smithsonian Institution to teachers of grades three through eight. The purpose is to help you use museums, parks, libraries, zoos, and many other resources within your community to open up learning opportunities for your students.

Our reason for producing a publication dedicated to promoting the use of community resources among students and teachers nationally stems from a fundamental belief, shared by all of us here at the Smithsonian, in the power of objects. Working as we do with a vast collection of national treasures that literally contain the spectrum from “art” to “zoo,” we believe that objects (be they works of art, natural history specimens, historical artifacts, or live animals) have a tremendous power to educate. We maintain that it is equally important for students to learn to use objects as research tools as it is for them to learn to use words and numbers—and you can find objects close at hand, by drawing on the resources of your own community.

Our idea, then, in producing *ART TO ZOO* is to share with you—and you with us—methods of working with students and objects that Smithsonian staff members have found successful.

- America Online**  
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**SMITHSONIAN**  
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P U L L - O U T P A G E

What Was It Like?

What was it like to live in the past? On the lines below, write down as many details as you can about life during the time you are studying. You can also add any subjects that are not included here.

Clothing:

Transportation:

Homes:

Religion:

Food:

Music and other arts:

Health:

Science:

Work:

Famous people:

Play:

Who Am I?

Answer the following questions about the person you've chosen to be:

1. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you look like? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe what you are wearing. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Describe the place where you live. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Who are the members of your family? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you have a job? If so, describe what you do and what

conditions are like on the job. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Which machines, if any, do you use every day (both on the job

and off)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What kind of foods do you eat? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What do you do for fun? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What hardships do you face? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What are your beliefs (religious, political, personal, and so on)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

P U L L - O U T P A G E

¿Cómo era?

¿Cómo era vivir en el pasado?. En las líneas siguientes indica los detalles que puedas de tu vida durante el tiempo que estás estudiando.  
Puedes agregar cualquier tema que no esté incluido aquí.

Ropa:

Casas:

Alimento:

Salud:

Trabajo:

Juegos:

Transporte:

Religión:

Música y otras artes:

Ciencia:

Gente famosa:

¿Quién soy?

Responde a las siguientes preguntas respecto a la persona que has elegido ser:

1. ¿Cuál es tu nombre?

2. ¿Qué edad tienes?

3. ¿Cuáles son tus características físicas?

4. Describe la ropa que llevas

5. Describe el lugar donde vives

6. ¿Cuáles son los miembros de tu familia?

7. ¿Tienes empleo? Si es así, describe lo que haces y cómo son las condiciones en el trabajo

8. ¿Qué máquinas usas todos los días? (tanto en el trabajo como fuera de él)

9. ¿Qué tipo de alimentos consumes?

10. ¿En qué te diviertes?

11. ¿Cuáles son los problemas que enfrentas?

12. ¿Cuáles son tus creencias? (religiosas, políticas, personales, etc...)