

4 Descriptive Writing— A Sensory Moment in Time

It is important for students to develop historic empathy for both ordinary and extraordinary characters. Understanding how characters felt in the context of the time in which they lived is a challenging but necessary skill to understand history. For example, President Andrew Jackson may have cared about the well being of Native Americans but he knew that he would have to use military force against Americans in order to prevent them from moving on to Indian Land. This would have been impossible in the context of his day and he would have been frustrated with the result of the Trail of Tears.

Instructions:

1. Students must first read and investigate the topic in-depth. For instance, students must have an in-depth understanding of the details related to the Trail of Tears.
2. Ask students to create a list of ordinary and extraordinary characters from the period of study. For example, President Jackson, a Georgia farmer, a young Cherokee boy, or a Cherokee Chief.
3. Students research the information on one of the characters.
4. They then place the character in an event or moment in time. For example, a student could choose a young Cherokee woman during the Trail of Tears.
5. Students brainstorm ideas to complete the visual chart using the senses—sound, sight, taste, feel, and smell.
6. Students complete the chart template (see student sample).

Definition:

Illustration:

If I were there, I would have experienced...

Sounds	Sight	Taste	Feel	Smell
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