

Here's what you'll do:

1.) Wait for a beautiful day and ask the class if they'd like to go outdoors for a little daydreaming (or Maydreaming). Explain that you'll take a walk around the school grounds, and then sit, picnic style, in order to take in the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings that you might only experience in May. If your school is in a setting that might not afford you access to the natural signs of springtime (trees, lawns, flowers, birds, insects, etc.) you can use online images to spur the imagination. Before you set out, have children take their journals and label four pages with the following headings, one page for each sense:

SEE HEAR FEEL SMELL

Then have them bring their journals and a pencil along for their "Maydreaming."

2.) As you walk and then settle into a comfortable spot, ask the children to make a list of things they see, hear, feel, and smell, taking bulleted notes on the respective pages of their journals. Be sure to spend some time with eyes closed, thus making it a little easier to hone the other senses. Think about things you can see and hear – for example, birds singing or bees buzzing.

3.) Upon returning to the classroom, make a master list of each observation, with a different piece of chart paper devoted to each category of sensory information.

4.) Then, write the following caption (or some variation) on the board: May caresses the world and enlivens the senses...

5.) MODEL how to translate their observations into descriptive sentences, providing sentence starters where necessary to avoid redundant sentence structure. (See examples, below.)

6.) Distribute sentence strips or slips of lined paper and have students write at least one descriptive sentence for each of the senses. Have them share these aloud, affirming astute observations beautifully expressed.

Ex. Birds soar overhead on outstretched wings.

Buzzing bees hum and hover around the blossoms.

Green blades of grass prickle and tickle.

The sound of a distant mower hums.

The fresh green scent of cut grass tickles my nose.

(Note the use of present tense and how it brings a sense of immediacy to the writing.)

Sentence Starters:

It's lovely to gaze at_____. I glimpse the _____. My eyes follow_____.

I spy_____. The sight of _____. I can't help but notice_____.

Inhale and take in the scent of _____. I catch a whiff of _____.

Breathe in and appreciate _____. I notice the scent of _____.

Listen to _____. I cup my ear to hear _____. Standing quietly I detect _____.

Can you pick out the sound of ___? My ears perk up at _____. I strain to hear _____.

I can feel _____. I touch the _____. Running my hand over _____, I note _____.

I'm amazed at the way _____. The texture of _____ is _____.

7.) Display "Maydreaming" sensory sentences on a bulletin board surrounding the caption. Add images or illustrations to highlight the writing.