

Image Grammar
Chapter 4
Paint from a Family Photo
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Students can use an artist's structural palette to add drama to their writing. This activity can move students from the imitation stage of writing to the creating stage of writing using different grammatical techniques. An artist's structural palette can include whichever grammatical technique that you would like to emphasize. For example, you can use the five basic brush strokes that include adding absolutes, appositives, participles, adjectives shifted out of order, or action verbs.

Procedure

1. Have students bring in a meaningful photo that evokes a vivid memory.
2. Have the students write independently about the image or experience in the photo.
3. The students will then choose one or more structural pallets to spice up the original writing. You can give them a specific structure to practice with if you choose.
4. Students will then take turns sharing their passage before using the structural pallet and after. Discuss the difference between the two.

Adaptations

- You can make the lesson more specific if you choose by having them bring in, for example, a photo of a distant relative. In this instance, they would have to create their own image because they did not actually experience it.
- If you would like to focus on one type of writing, such as poetry or informative, you can adjust the lesson to focus on that type.
- Have students find a magazine photo that reminds them of an experience and write about that image.
- For an art project, pair the students and have them read their revised passages using the structural pallet to their partner. The partner should not see the picture they are describing. The partner would then have to illustrate the image they visualized by listening/reading their partner's passage. Then have the students compare the photo with the illustration. Discuss what a piece of writing can include that an image in a photo cannot.