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Canada : A Literary Tour

Educational Resources

Activity 3

Pictures of a Personal Landscape

Introduction

Pictures are a static image of a person's personal landscape. This static image offers insight and reveals information about the environment in which the picture was taken. Students can use pictures as a starting point to write about their own personal landscape, and to consider other points of view and the people who share the same environment. This also introduces students to the idea of conducting research on people and places they might use in their own writing. The teacher may read a poem or passage of prose that relates to the topic of landscape, or another subject. For ideas and texts, see the virtual exhibition [Canada: A Literary Tour](http://www.collectioncanada.gc.ca/literary-tour/index-e.html) (www.collectioncanada.gc.ca/literary-tour/index-e.html) or the [Activity Resources](http://www.collectioncanada.gc.ca/literary-tour/027020-5002-e.html) (www.collectioncanada.gc.ca/literary-tour/027020-5002-e.html) section.

Materials

- Personal cameras to take photographs
- Illustrations from different regions in Canada as featured on [Canada: A Literary Tour](http://www.collectioncanada.gc.ca/literary-tour/index-e.html) (www.collectioncanada.gc.ca/literary-tour/index-e.html)

Performance and Assessment

The teacher may create an assessment tool or rubric to measure the following:

- Does the student explain clearly what is being conveyed in the photograph?
- Did the student create his or her character's environment to accurately reflect that of the photograph?

Instructions

1. Students will take photographs of their own environment. If access to cameras is not available, the teacher can provide a pre-selected assortment of images for the students or encourage them to select images from magazines, the local newspaper, etc. These pictures can be of any place students occupy or use, including their home, school, locker, neighbourhood, etc. Students should neither appear in the pictures, nor have any of their personal information displayed (e.g., name, address, etc.).
2. The teacher will collect all photographs from the students and ask them to form groups of 5 or 6.
3. The teacher will redistribute the photographs randomly amongst the groups so that each student has a photograph that was taken by another student.
4. Each member of each group will write a detailed description of the photograph he or she has been given. The student may discuss with his or her fellow group members for feedback. In their detailed description, students should consider the human senses and how they relate to the environment and objects in the picture.
5. When finished, the student will write a second description of the person he or she thinks lives in this environment. What is the person who lives there like? What are his or her hobbies? What does the environment reveal about his or her personality? What aspects of his or her personality could be hidden by his or her environment?
6. Using the photograph they were given and the two descriptions they prepared, students will write a creative piece about the person they have created based on the environment in the picture.

Extensions

Ideas for pictures of a personal landscape may extend to other cities or places in Canada, such as those featured in the [Literary Landscapes](http://www.collectioncanada.gc.ca/literary-tour/027020-1000-e.html) (www.collectioncanada.gc.ca/literary-tour/027020-1000-e.html) section of the Canada: A Literary Tour website. Students can research the lifestyle, traditions, hobbies or demographics of a given location, then select a point of view from which to write. Students can focus on taking photographs of different neighbourhoods and developing characters that may live there.