

Describing Art



What You Do

Materials: paper; pencils or crayons; ringed index cards with frequently used words and illustrations

1. After the children have completed an art project, such as a painting or collage, encourage them to examine their artwork and describe it. Ask questions about it.

“I see you used lots of red. Can you tell me about your painting? ”

“This collage has two feathers. How did you decide where to put them?”

“In your drawing, I see someone walking on the sidewalk. Where is that person going? What will he do when he gets there?”

2. Provide the children with paper and pencils or crayons to write about their artwork, or record their dictation. Accept any marks on the paper that represent letters.
3. Keep the written description with the artwork for the children to share with family members. At group time, invite the children to share their artwork with the class as you, or they, read the written descriptions.

Teaching Sequence

YELLOW	Invite the child to talk about her art; record the explanations. Read the words back. “Greta, you said, ‘The monkey can talk. He sings songs. He wears clothes.’”
GREEN	Write the child's description of his art. Read it back, and encourage the child to write his name. “Now that I wrote your words about this clay sculpture, you can write your name at the top.” Point to the words as you read them back so that the child can see how his words look on the page. “Michael, you said, ‘Here is where I stacked the clay to make it look like the anthill I saw at Grandma’s house.’”
GREEN	As the child talks about her art, help her identify letter sounds so she can write words or parts of words to represent ideas. “Naomi, you think that your painting looks like soup. What sounds do we hear in the word <i>soup</i> ? Listen as I say it slowly. Yes, it begins with an /s/ sound. If you want, you can write an <i>s</i> on your paper for <i>soup</i> .”
BLUE	
BLUE	Challenge the child to write his own description of the artwork. List frequently used words with illustrations on bound index cards for the child to review. “You would like to write, <i>My rainbow has four colors</i> . What letter sound do you hear when you say <i>colors</i> ?” “You went to our word wall to see how to spell <i>four</i> .”
PURPLE	
PURPLE	Encourage the child to write her own descriptions. Dictate the correct letters as needed. Encourage the child to practice writing lowercase letters. “Olivia, I can read on your paper that the house has a door and a window. Does anyone live in the house?”

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Art

Objective 19
Demonstrates emergent writing skills
Related Objectives: 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 33

Additional Ideas
See *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Volume 3: Literacy for a description of children's writing development.*

- Including All Children**
- Speak slowly, articulate clearly, and use gestures to emphasize important details of a child's art.
 - Have the child use a large computer keyboard to write descriptive words or his name. Print them out.
 - When English-language learners ask you to name an object in English, ask them to tell you its name in their home languages.**
 - If children are beginning to speak in sentences, give them plenty of opportunities to talk. Be sure to model the correct use of English but do not correct their grammar.**

- Questions to Guide Your Observations**
- Was the child able to write words to describe her art?
 - Was the child able to describe her artwork?
 - Was the child able to write the letters in his name?
 - Was the child able to grasp and manipulate the writing instrument to form letters?