

Window Activity

This strategy is great for all content areas from kinder to college. It combines visual and empathy (affective) to make strong connections to the content area. The strategy focuses on descriptive writing and sensory details. Students write for 3-10 minutes during each step.

Step One: Introduction

Imagine that you are in an empty room. The only light comes from through the closed blinds of the only window in the room.

Window Activity Making Connections through Writing



Window Activity

Step Two: Brainstorming

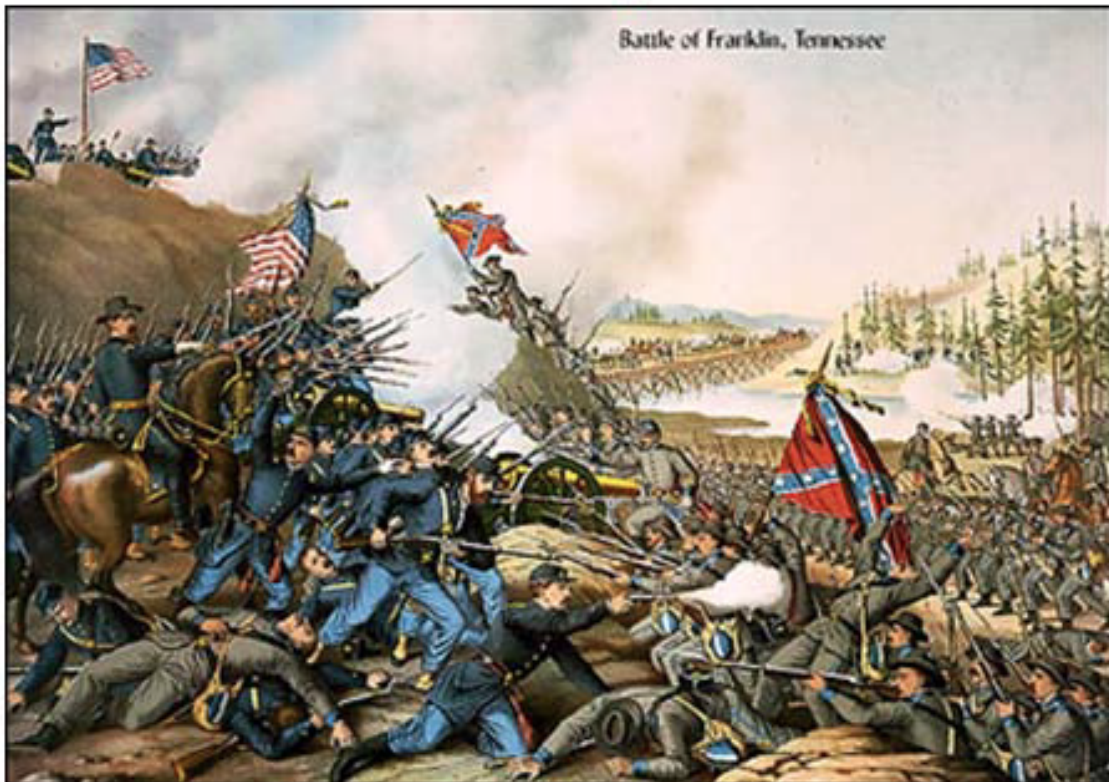
The blinds rise as you step to the closed window. Pressing your face to the thick glass you witness what's happening in the scene.

Describe what you see using many details.

Have students do a Fastwrite.

Pen/pencil to paper, students write with NO stopping. Write whatever comes to mind. Brainstorm. May write in any format of student's choosing, such as list of words or narrative writing. If stuck for words, the participant writes a Trigger phrase until more ideas come. Trigger phrases are related to the picture and concept, e.g. Sacrifice, Family conflict.

Window Blinds Open Describe what you see



Window Activity

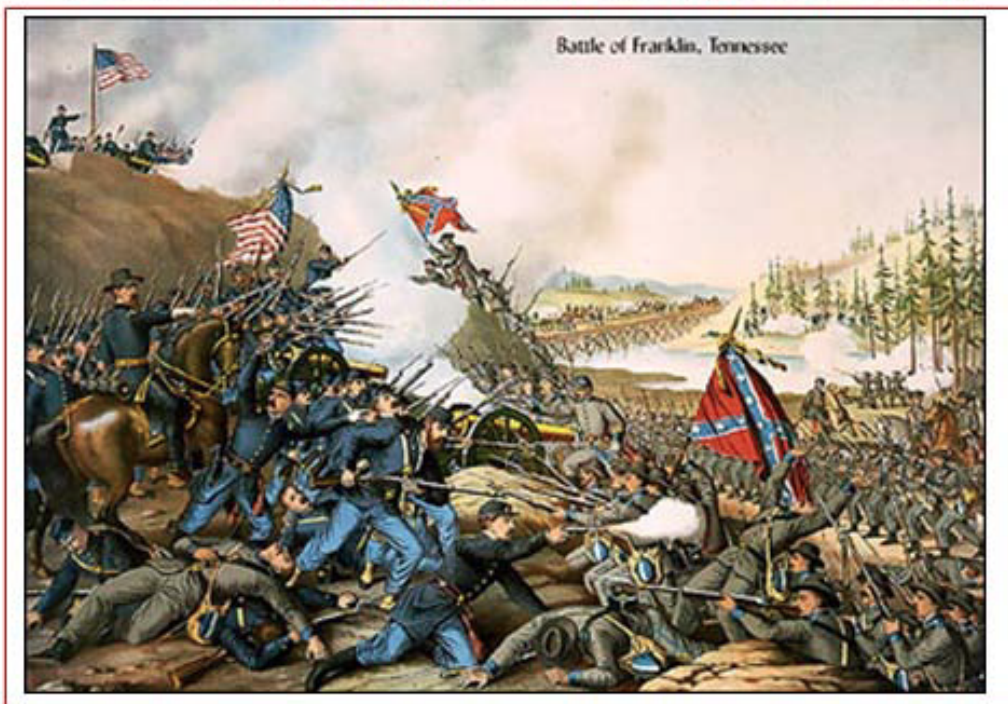
Step Three: Communicating through the senses

Now the window opens allowing sounds to filter in. A breeze carries smells, and perhaps taste and texture (touch) to you.

Have students do a freewrite

Students pause, reflect, and then write. They can stop to think as often as needed. Results may be a narrative or list. Emphasize use of sensory details OTHER than sight descriptions. Advanced writers might try to include several taste or touch details.

Window Opens: Describe the scene using senses other than sight (sound, smell, taste, touch)



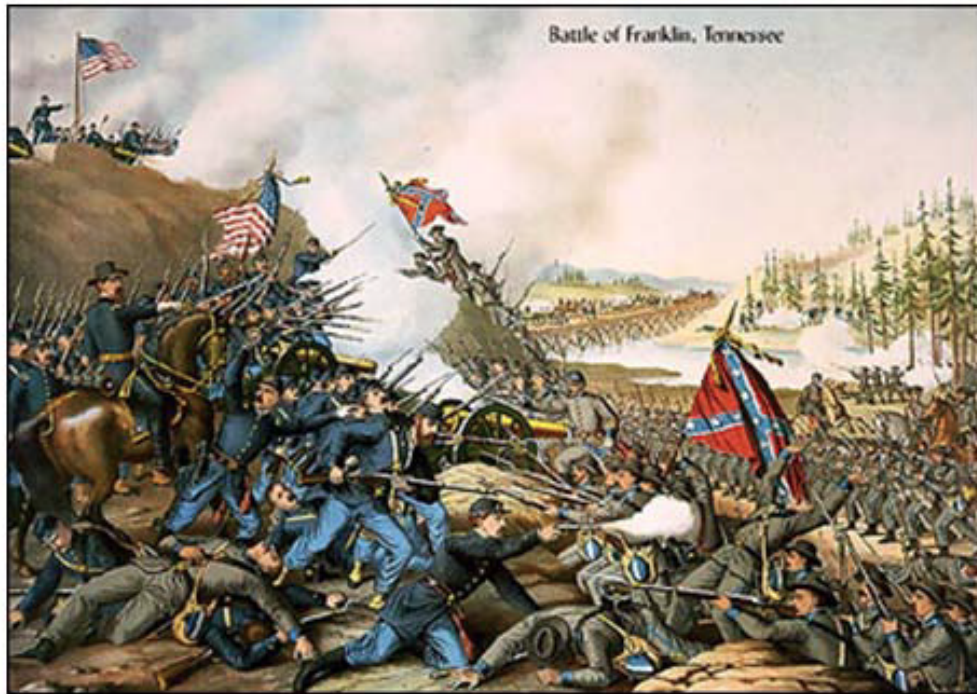
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Step Four: Becoming part of the scene

Suddenly, you found yourself moving through the window and into the scene itself. Choose a role and describe the emotions or feelings of the event. **Must write in narrative format.**

You enter through the window

Describe the experience with you as a participant.



Most students will discover their best writing occurs here. Allow them to share in pairs, and have volunteers share to the class.

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Additional Thoughts and Ideas

The Window activity is great as a differentiated instructional tool for writing skills. When students write at different skills levels, coaching supports help all students perform to expectations. Project-Based Learning (PBL) can use the activity to kick off the unit (Entry Event), builds interest in the topic (Need to Know), and leads students to compiling questions that they will seek answers (Deep Inquiry).

PBL Vocabulary

- Entry Events start a PBL unit by setting context, purpose, and generated questions. Some might call this an anticipatory set (Madeline Hunter) or an engaging opening. Ultimately, a good *entry event* develops in students a high interest in an issue or challenge.
- Deep Inquiry is where students generate questions, which leads to answers that raise more in-depth questions. This cycle of inquiry continues for as far, and as long, as needed.
- Need to Know links the Entry Event and the various stages of the project-- including Deep Inquiry. Students make personal connections to the project focus during the PBL journey as details and data unpack their understanding that needed to complete the authentic outcome of the project.



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