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1st QUARTER WRITING GOALS

When writing down your goal, be sure it is SMART:

I will ....

This goal represents a challenging and appropriate next step for me because

Reflection: *(Completed at the end of the quarter.)* Did you meet your goal? Provide examples that illustrate how you met your goal. If you did not meet your goal, explain why. What will you do differently in your writing next quarter?
2nd QUARTER WRITING GOALS
When writing down your goal, be sure it is SMART:

I will ....

This goal represents a challenging and appropriate next step for me because

**Reflection:** *(Completed at the end of the quarter.)* Did you meet your goal? Provide examples that illustrate how you met your goal. If you did not meet your goal, explain why. What will you do differently in your writing next quarter?
3rd QUARTER WRITING GOALS

When writing down your goal, be sure it is SMART:

I will ....

This goal represents a challenging and appropriate next step for me because

Reflection: *(Completed at the end of the quarter.)* Did you meet your goal? Provide examples that illustrate how you met your goal. If you did not meet your goal, explain why. What will you do differently in your writing next quarter?

** 4th Quarter Goals will relate to the publishing of the year long portfolio.**
8TH GRADE AUTOBIOGRAPHY PROJECT

Each quarter, students must complete:

- Required quarterly assignments - TBD
- Two free-choice items from column two below (these writings must be taken to, at least, the first draft)

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<thead>
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<th>REQUIRED: Assignment/Date</th>
<th>FREE CHOICE OPTIONS</th>
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<td>___________ Wordleography</td>
<td>___________ Favorite Simpson Memory*</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
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<td>___________ Superstitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
<td>___________ If ...</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
<td>___________ Role Reversal</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
<td>___________ And the Winner is...</td>
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<tr>
<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
<td>___________ Future</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
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<td>___________ Portrait Poem</td>
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</table>
Wordleography - See separate page for directions.

Portrait Poem - See separate page for directions.

**Favorite Simpson Memory** – Write about your favorite memory from Simpson Middle School. Relive the moment using 1st person point of view, including vivid vocabulary and details. In a concluding paragraph, explain WHY this memory is special to you.

**Exploded Moment** – Write about ONE ACTIVITY in your typical day! EXPLODE THE MOMENT with imagery using specific details that SHOW, not just tell! You may choose a very simple activity, like brushing your teeth or opening your locker, but you must EXPLODE the MOMENT!

**Famous Firsts** – Describe one of your “firsts”*: First party, First day of school, First Christmas, First haircut, First bicycle ride, First night away from home, First birthday, First ____________!

**After School** – Write a description of your favorite after-school activity and explain why you enjoy it.

**When I was Little** – Describe an aspect of your life when you were “little”, before you started school. Consider your friends, your favorite games, toys, restaurants, outings, or people.

**Wanted Posters** – Design a wanted poster for an IDEAL: teacher, school, pet, parent, friend, meal, vacation, room, neighborhood, ____________!

**Superstitions** – Superstitions are beliefs and/or practices resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, or magic. Write about a superstition and its effect on you.

**My IF Life** – Imagine your life IF you could: live anywhere you want, be anything you want, or do anything you want! Describe your “IF life” using 1st person point of view, including vivid vocabulary and details. In a concluding paragraph, explain the PROS and CONS of your “IF life”.

**Role Reversal** – Imagine changing places with someone, either through magic or mistaken identity. In Mary Rodgers’ *Freaky Friday*, a mother and daughter magically switch bodies. In *The Whipping Boy*, the prince and his whipping boy are mistaken for each other. Imagine the events if you became or were mistaken for your: teacher, parent, pet, best friend, or ____________!

**And the Winner Is...** You have just won $50,000 on a game show. The $50,000 must be spent within a twenty-four hour period. It cannot be saved or invested. Describe in detail how you would spend the money.

**Favorite Simpson Class or Teacher** – Write about your favorite Simpson class or teacher.

**Favorite Elementary School Memory or Teacher** – Describe your most favorite memory from elementary school OR describe your favorite elementary school teacher.
Family – A family is composed of people living together and/or functioning as a unit. Write about one member of your family who has a great impact on WHO YOU ARE.

Friends – Define true friendship. Describe two examples of true friendship: one when YOU were a good friend to someone else AND one when SOMEONE ELSE was a good friend to you.

Future – Imagine your future. Choose a time-frame (5, 10, 20, 30 years from now) and yourself at this stage of life. Consider your educational, professional, and personal accomplishments, your family situation, environment, and your quality of life.

On the Day I was Born – Research the day you were born. Describe YOUR DAY including: local weather, prices of everyday necessities, popular entertainment, political figures, etc. Be sure to research local, national, and world news.

Rules for Living – Imagine living the rest of your life according to three rules you establish today. List your rules, explain WHY you chose each rule and what they say about you, and consider if your rules would work for others.

Additional Topics:

- Hobbies and Interests
- Sports and games
- The most embarrassing time of my life
- The funniest time of my life
- The saddest time of my life
- The happiest time of my life
- An incident that changed my life
- The best day of my life
- The worst day of my life
- The hardest decision I ever made and how it affected my life
- Fears and phobias and how they limit my life
- A trip I’ll never forget
- My favorite pet
- Favorite TV show
- Favorite food
- Favorite book
- Favorite author
- What I collect
WORDLEOGRAPHY

Today you will create a word cloud using Wordle. Your Wordle will demonstrate your understanding of the basic parts of speech as you describe yourself.

1. **Create a Word Document using your Wordle Planner**
2. **Type your words into a WORD document and spell check:**
   - First & Last name (4 times)
   - Nouns (3 times)
   - Adjectives (2 times)
   - Verbs (once)
   - Save as Wordle
3. **Open Internet Explorer**
   - Go to the 8th Grade Webpage / Resources/Wordle
4. **Click “Create your Own”**
   - Copy (Ctrl C) from your word document AND Paste (Ctrl V) into the Wordle Template
   - Click Go
   - Choose font, layout and color (NO black backgrounds)
5. **To Print**
   - Click “Open in Window”/ Select “Print Screen” (on keyboard)
   - Open a NEW Word Document
     - Orientation – Landscape
     - Ctrl – V (This will paste the Wordle image.)
     - Format – Crop Picture and adjust to fill whole page.
     - Print to Color Printer

**WORDLE EXAMPLE: Katniss**
PORTRIAT POEM

Poetry deals with the emotions, just as music. An autobiographical poem is personal—it reveals something about the person writing the poem. It does not have to rhyme. Below is a simple plan for writing your own autobiographical poem. Just follow the steps and—before you know it—it’s done.

FIRST STANZA
I am (two special characteristics you have)
I wonder (something you are actually curious about)
I hear (an imaginary sound)
I see (an imaginary sight)
I want (an actual desire)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

SECOND STANZA
I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
I touch (an imaginary touch)
I worry (something that really bothers you)
I cry (something that makes you very sad)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THIRD STANZA
I understand (something you know is true)
I say (something you believe in)
I dream (something you actually dream about)
I try (something you really make an effort about)
I hope (something you actually hope for)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)
PORTRIAT POEM - EXAMPLE

Written by Art Belliveau

I AM

I am a hard working teacher who loves to laugh
I wonder how my students will do this year
I hear their brains clicking
I see the light in their eyes
I want them to want to succeed
I am a hard working teacher who loves to laugh

I pretend I am always in control
I feel like I’m swimming in quicksand sometimes
I touch the hearts and minds of others
I worry that I am not good enough
I cry when one of my family is in pain
I am a hard working teacher who loves to laugh

I understand I cannot save everyone from ignorance and apathy
I say I still need to try
I dream of being the best teacher I can be
I try to make my classes interesting
I hope I never stop caring
I am a hard working teacher who loves to laugh
Line 1: **NOUN** – whatever the poem is going to be about

Line 2: **3 ADJECTIVES** separated with commas that describes line 1.

Line 3: (3x) **ADVERB VERB** ending in “–ing” combinations

   Ex: running quickly, jumping fluidly, racing urgently

Line 4: **3 PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES** – separated with commas

Line 5: **INTERJECTION** written with an exclamation point (!)

Line 6: Free line with at least one **PRONOUN** in it (personification)

Line 7: Free line with at least one **CONJUNCTION** in it

Line 8: **NOUN** write another noun that is either a synonym (word that means the same thing) or is closely related to the noun in line 1.

Ocean

Vast, Beautiful, Blue

Pulsing rhythmically, Rolling quietly, Rushing urgently

Onto the beach, Over the sand, Under the sun

What an awesome sight!

Her heartbeat is felt through her waves.

Providing peace and tranquility

Waves
**THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE - SWAP**

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<td>Towards</td>
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**PREPOSITION POEM**

1. Choose a topic.
2. Using your list of prepositions, write a prepositional poem.
   - Each line should start with a preposition.
   - Each line should contain one prepositional phrase (not a complete sentence).
   - Your poem should be at least 12 lines long.
   - Use a variety of prepositions to build meaning and create a “picture” for your readers.

**Reading**

During the summer
  On the beach
  In the car
Beside the pool
Among the trees
At the amusement park
Behind the closed door
After midnight
Before the sun rises
Throughout the day
For hours
Until every book is read!
Guidelines for writing your own Exploded Moment:

- Choose your moment and write a simple sentence below.

- Focus on all of the details "hiding" in your blurry, simple sentence. Use the questions below to brainstorm some ideas.

  - **SEE:** Who is in the scene? What do they look like? What are they wearing? What are they doing? What actions do you notice? What do your surroundings look like?

  - **HEAR:** What are people saying? What sounds fill your ears?

  - **TOUCH:** What does the air feel like? What do your surroundings feel like? What textures and sensations do you notice? What physical sensations do you experience?

  - **SMELL:** What scents are in the air around you?

  - **TASTE:** What tastes do you experience?

- Using the details above, write your Exploded Moment in paragraph form. Your original simple sentence should not be part of your exploded moment! When writing this paragraph, your challenge is to use details and vivid verbs to explode that moment into one, powerful, slow-motion event.

Adapted from document found @ learn.shorelineschools.org/einstein/jkuhn/.../exploded_moment.do
Don’t write about a general topic; focus on something more specific, such as a specific person, place, occasion, time, object, animal, or experience. Use strong adjective noun combinations and vivid verbs to bring the details to life.

Don’t write about winter. Write about the first snowfall.

Don’t write about sunsets. Write about the amazing sunset you saw last night.

Don’t write about friendship. Write about your friend.

Don’t write about love. Write about someone or something you love.

Don’t write about sailing. Write about a time you went sailing.

Don’t write about reading. Write about your experience reading one book.

Don’t write about pumpkins. Write about the pumpkin you carved last Halloween or the pumpkin you never got to carve because it was smashed in the road.

*Adapted from Nancie Atwell, Lessons that Change Writers, Lesson 11 2002.*

Here is an example of a descriptive paragraph written about the first snowfall. Notice the use of adjective noun combinations and vivid verbs.

*While the chill of winter sends shivers down my spine, there is nothing like a fresh snowfall to warm my soul. As I awaken from the comfort of a deep slumber, I notice the world around me has suddenly lost its beautiful color. However, as I step out into the brisk air, the freshness of the outdoors fills my lungs and I see the splendor of this picturesque new world. The snow has blanketed the earth in a quilt of shimmering diamonds. The sunshine gleams upon the glistening ground as though it is preparing a dance floor for angels. My feet float swiftly across the earth as the excitement of this crunchy fluffiness carries me along. The sounds of peace and joy resonate within me as I am now ready to begin my day invigorated with life.*

*Adapted from Nancie Atwell, Lessons that Change Writers, Lesson 11 2002.*
A great writing trick is to use setting to reinforce your characters. For example, if you are writing about a mysterious person, you might place him or her in a dark mansion on a hill outside of town. Or, if one of your characters is feeling trapped in his or her life, they might live in a small town in the middle of nowhere.

Description of Larry:

Larry was having a hard time. He felt sad and trapped. He was once a famous author, but he hadn’t written a word for years.

Describing Larry through his apartment (setting):

Larry’s apartment was less of a living space than a glorified closet. The bathroom was just big enough to sit on the toilet without having his knees touch the sink, and the window was more like a ship’s porthole. The bed was so small his feet hung over the edge, and there was really not much to do but watch static on the television. The place did not have a kitchen, so he bought a camping hotplate to make his single-serving meals. He ate the same thing every night, but like a house cat, he did not seem to mind the monotony of his repeated dinner of rice, wilted spinach, and baked beans. Nothing hung on the walls of Larry’s place, but old framed photos of family members he no longer spoke to cluttered his small desk. An old dusty typewriter and a stack of blank paper took up the rest of the space there. He hadn’t written a word in years.

Larry doesn’t even have to speak for himself; his apartment speaks for him! Highlight the words in the paragraph above that were used to show:

Larry is having a hard time. (yellow)
Larry felt sad and trapped. (blue)
Larry once was is a famous author, but hadn’t written a word for years. (green)

Choose one of the following character descriptions, come up with a setting that will reflect or reinforce what you imagine about them. As you write, be as detailed as possible. Don’t forget colors, sounds, and even smells.

The shy new girl in town:

A criminal on the run:

A threatened cobra:

Adapted from http://ywp.nanowrimo.org/files/ywp/ywp_10_ms_setting_character.pdf
Create and Describe Mr. Potato Head

1. Use the Potato Head pieces provided to create YOUR Potato Head.

2. Identify three personality traits from the character trait list for Your Potato Head (list below).

3. Write a character description for Your Potato Head. Be sure to use descriptive details that will help the reader understand Your Potato Head’s LOOKS and ACTIONS. Include both direct and indirect characterization.

4. You will share your description with the class. Students will try to reconstruct the Potato Head and identify the three character traits based on your description.
CHARACTER SKETCH - SWAP

The goal of a character sketch is to provide the reader with a strong mental image of the person. Character sketches only give snapshots of people; therefore, you should not try to write a history of the person.

Ordinary – An excerpt from Wonder by R.J. Palacio

I know I’m not an ordinary ten-year-old kid. I mean, sure, I do ordinary things. I eat ice cream. I ride my bike. I play ball. I have an Xbox. Stuff like that makes me ordinary. I guess. And I feel ordinary. Inside. But I know ordinary kids don’t make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. I know ordinary kids don’t get stared at wherever they go.

If I found a magic lamp and I could have one wish, I would wish that I had a normal face that no one ever noticed at all. I would wish that I could walk down the street without people seeing me and then doing that look-away thing. Here’s what I think: the only reason I’m not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way… My name is August, by the way. I won’t describe what I look like. Whatever you’re thinking, it’s probably worse.

Colorful Me, a college acceptance essay – by Sarah Sheridan

If people are colors, then I’m wisteria, the color found in the very back of the box of 120 Crayola crayons. Wisteria is a light, slightly purplish color that appears to be a mix of pink and blue, colors found on opposite ends of the spectrum. This makes wisteria a combination of opposites, ranging from one extreme to the other.

I can swim ten miles a week without hesitation, but the idea of running over a mile makes me want to curl up into a ball and cry. At 17 years of age, I still cannot remember my social security number, but I memorize song lyrics almost immediately after hearing the song. My life is a constant battle between wanting to sleep for hours or drinking more caffeine. I’m either absolutely exhausted or buzzing with energy. I’m completely addicted to a variety of series shown on Netflix. I find myself thinking about the characters throughout my day, desperate to know how each of their lives unfold. Yet, I haven’t allowed myself to watch the final episodes of any of these series because I don’t want to experience the end of their stories. When it comes to Twitter, I either avoid posting for weeks at a time or post five things in under an hour. My Twitter page consists of nothing but my attempts at being humorous, some failed and some successful. Many of my tweets are retweeted by a relatively large number of people, but there have been a number of times that I’m the only one who seemed to understand the joke.

What does this say about me? If we really are greater than the sum of our parts, who am I? I consider myself to be a unique and colorful combination of extremes.

Respond to the following questions and keep the answers in mind as you write your sketch. Your word choice, tone, and specific details are vital to this sketch.

Consider your character… on which aspect(s) will you focus?

What emotional reaction do you want from the reader?
PERSONIFICATION – SWAP

Write an Instant Personification Poem

Method:

Title:
Tell what it does
Tell how it does it
Tell where it is
Tell how it leaves

Samples:

Wind
The wind dances in on
Trotting horses’ feet
It stops in a golden
Valley looking about through
Fiery eyes, and then rages past
At a mighty gallop.
by J. Kurnath

Fog
The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

by Carl Sandburg
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>happy, sunny mood</td>
<td>No specific Mood</td>
<td>Frightening, threatening mood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose the words from one of the columns above and write a paragraph describing the image.
Theme: Power

Example #1: Power can be used to help others.

Characters: Mayor, people of the city

Setting(s): Urban, Big City

Plot outline:

1. (Exposition) A city has a newly elected mayor.
2. (Conflict) A natural disaster strikes one part of the city and leaves many people homeless.
3. (Resolution) The mayor creates a program to help feed the people and rebuild their homes.

Theme: Friendship

Example #2: Friendship is important.

Characters: Two middle school girls

Setting(s): Home, wilderness

Plot outline:

1. (Exposition) Two girls are fairly good friends.
2. (Conflict) They get lost together on a field trip and have to rely on each other in order to survive.
3. (Resolution) They become stronger friends afterwards.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power, in the wrong hands, can lead to disaster.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendship can happen despite differences.</td>
<td>Two middle school girls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The moral power of one individual can create worldwide changes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>True friendship is worth fighting for.</td>
<td>Two middle school girls.</td>
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VOICE is a powerful tool for every kind of writing—including the SOL. Your job when responding to boring SOL prompts is to make the essay far more interesting than it really should be, and voice is the key to making that happen!

Write a paragraph responding to the following prompt, but have your focus be your voice. Remember these tips:

- Choose specific nouns and vivid verbs
- Use humor when appropriate
- Vary sentence length – some short sentences, some long
- Vary your sentence structure
  - All I want after a big game is a hot bath.
  - After a big game, all I want is a hot bath.

**Prompt:** Pictures of presidents and other famous Americans appear on U. S. coins. Think about someone you feel deserves this honor. Write about this person and tell why he/she deserves to be pictured on a coin.
FLASHBACK - SWAP

Flashbacks and flash-forwards are common devices used in literature and films.

Patricia Maclachlan uses flashback at the beginning of her novel *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. The story starts with the scene of Caleb talking to his sister Anna about the day he was born, which was also the day his mother died. Anna is kneading dough while Caleb is sitting in front of the fire. MacLachlan uses Anna’s daydreaming to flashback to the scene of her mother’s funeral.

“I looked at the long dirt road that crawled across the plains, remembering the morning that Mama died, cruel and sunny. They had come for her in a wagon and taken her away.” (p.5)

This flashback takes us back to a significant moment in Anna’s past. Knowing about this past event allows us to experience more fully Anna’s present situation.

Additional examples of flashback transition statements:

“Her mind traveled. *Images from long ago slipped slow-motion through her head.*” (p. 38) *Yolanda’s Genius* (Carol Fenner)

“Palmer tried to hold the moment there, but it would not stay. It *tunneled back through time* and burst up into this same field three years before, the first Saturday in August, when the grass was streaked with red and guns were booming and birds were falling.” (p. 17) *Wringer* (Jerry Spinelli)

Create a short narrative that contains a flashback. Your scene should begin in the present and then transition into a past event. An event from the present should trigger a memory, which will lead you to the flashback. Refer to the examples above to help with your transition.
Below are two examples of the same event told from first person and third person point of view. Read the examples and then write your own event from two different perspectives. Indicate the specific point of view and circle the pronouns that signal this point of view.

**Example of first person point of view:**

As I sat in the classroom, I could feel my heart racing and the sweat trickling down my neck. I hoped that no one could hear my heart beating louder and louder. I purposely avoided conversation in an effort to hide my anxiety and tried to casually wipe the moisture dripping from my head. Searching frantically for the study guide, I began to review the notes from the last few classes.

When the bell rang, the room became strangely quiet. I looked up and noticed Mr. Wright glaring at the class. He seemed to be staring directly at me as if he knew that I was not prepared for the Quiz. Suddenly there was a deafening sound, as the fire alarm pierced through the silent classroom. The last image I remember is the slight grin on his face as he instructed us to leave the classroom in an orderly fashion. I sensed he knew that now my opportunity for review was stolen and I would most certainly fail this Quiz.

**Example of third person omniscient point of view:**

The students filed into the classroom, one after another. There was a din from the variety of voices, the excited conversations, and the scraping of chairs against the floor as they took their seats. They were talking, shouting, giggling, laughing, and carrying on as if they didn’t have a care in the world.

When the bell rang, the room became strangely quiet. The students knew a Quiz was imminent. John nervously flipped through his papers, searching frantically for his study guide. Little did he know that the Quiz simply didn’t exist. Mr. Wright was depleted of time and energy; there was too much to be done when he got home that night, so he had decided to delay the Quiz. John focused his gaze directly on Mr. Wright, who stared back at him. Suddenly, the fire alarm went off! Mr. Wright was relieved that he didn’t have to confess to being unprepared, and grinned as he left the room.
To reach the delicious crystals, the ants traverse what to them is a mysterious land full of menacing obstacles. To us, it's an ordinary kitchen, but Van Allsburg doesn't tell us that directly: he describes the setting without telling us it's a kitchen.

For example, instead of saying "the ants walked through the grass," Van Allsburg writes:

*Dew formed on the leaves above. Without warning, huge cold drops fell on the marching ants. A firefly passed overhead that, for an instant, lit up the woods with a blinding flash of blue-green light.*

Instead of saying "the ants were in the toaster," he writes:

*When the ants climbed out of the holes they were surrounded by a strange red glow. It seemed to them that every second the temperature was rising. It soon became so unbearably hot that they thought they would soon be cooked.*

These excerpts and many others in *Two Bad Ants* demonstrate descriptive writing that shows rather than tells.

Now choose an item/place in your house that was not included in the book. Write a short description from the ant’s perspective (point of view). Be sure to SHOW not TELL.

DIALOGUE – SWAP

1. Choose a picture from the Dialogue Pictures File
   - Global/Collaborate/8th Grade English/Dialogue Pictures

2. Copy (Ctrl C) and Paste (Ctrl V) the picture into a Word Document.

3. Format the picture to approximate size below.

4. Create a dialogue between the characters in your picture.
   - 16 lines minimum
   - Include an example of each of the 7 dialogue rules
   - Vary the tag (Use words in addition to “said”)
     - Suzie replied OR Suzie explained
   - Vary the placement of the tag
     - Use a tag at the beginning, middle, and end of the sentences
   - Color Code the dialogue by speaker
   - Be sure to proof your work to verify the dialogue is punctuated correctly.
     - Don’t forget to indent each time a new character speaks.
   - Save and print final in color.