

Descriptive Writing

ENGLISH Age 10-11



Tamara Letter



Hanover County
Public Schools,
Mechanicsville, Virginia

Learning Aims:

- Students will use a ClassVR Virtual Reality experience to enhance their background knowledge about sharks.
- Students will create descriptive writing reflections focused on their senses.
- Students will collaborate with a partner to review, edit, and revise their digital writing.

CONTEXT

Prior to this lesson, students were familiar with using Google Classroom and Google Docs for digital writing. They also had several lessons throughout the school year about how to create a descriptive writing paragraphs. This was the first experience students had using the ClassVR Virtual Reality headsets and their task was to write a detailed paragraph about the day they went swimming with sharks. We reviewed the five senses and how to include three of these senses in their writing. They struggled a bit to write accurately and completely as none had ever been in the ocean with sharks before. We acknowledged their struggles to include details in their writing, then revealed that today they would get an opportunity to virtually swim with sharks!

PRACTICAL SESSION



Underwater Playlist

Teaching staff created three senses charts to display on the wall for students to add their insights: "What did I see, What did I hear, What did I feel?". Students then viewed the Shark Experience through their headsets. We focused on exploring their immediate senses and being fully immersed within the moment to ensure they had lots of ideas to use after the VR experience. Following the Shark Experience, students shared their insights as they added descriptive words and phrases to our three senses charts on the wall. Then, students used these insights to add more details to their digital writing stories. In their next lesson, students worked with a partner to read, revise, and edit their digital writing before submitting to the teacher for review and feedback.

IMPACT ON LEARNING

Can students write a descriptive paragraph about swimming with sharks if they have no prior experience of swimming in an ocean or viewing sharks? Possibly, but it would be a struggle, as shown by students in the first part of our lesson. Providing students the opportunity to engage in a virtual learning experience they might never have in their real life, builds in background knowledge in a way that is innovative, powerful and relative. After viewing the Shark Experience, students' curiosity about sharks was piqued. They wanted to not only share their reflections about the experience, but to learn more about sharks living in the ocean, what they ate, and how they lived. By collaborating with others to hone in on specific senses engaged during the experiences, students were able to dramatically enhance their descriptive writing paragraphs.

