Lesson Plan: Sensory Poetry with Joni Mitchell

The Lyrical Life of Joni Mitchell
By Selina Alko

- Resources and Preparation:
  - Materials
    - Joni: The Lyrical Life of Joni Mitchell by Selina Alko
    - Printed worksheets
    - Pencils and coloring utensils
  - Technology
    - Optional: Smartboard for showing powerpoint and videos listed in additional resources.
- Instructional Plan:
  - State Objectives (from the Oklahoma Academic Standards for Social Studies, 2nd grade)
    - 2.7.R Students will explore and compare ideas in a multimodal context.
    - 2.7.W Students will use a combination of writing, sound, visual content, and/or movement to communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
  - Student Objectives
    - 1. Notice the ways Joni's song lyrics described her world.
    - 2. Write a sensory poem describing students' world.
  - Lesson
    - 1. Read as a class, "The Lyrical Life of Joni Mitchell" by Selina Alko.
    - 2. Locate song lyrics in the illustrations. Discuss how Joni used words to describe her world.
    - 3. Introduce the sensory poem - poetry that describes how a poet perceives something using the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, feel) and does not have to rhyme.
    - 4. Discuss places the students know well - school, home, the playground, a donut shop, grandma's kitchen, the school bus, the bathroom.
    - 5. Each student selects a place and fills in the blanks about that place using the sentence starters on the white worksheet.
    - Students rewrite their poems without the starters on the colorful worksheets and draw a picture of their chosen place.
    - Students volunteer to read their poems aloud. Their peers try to guess the place being described in the poem.
    - Optional extension: Listen to Joni's "Blue Album," now celebrating its 50th anniversary. Use the music to inspire free coloring or writing.
- Additional Resources
  - Selina Alko reading the book https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3aVR3lyati
  - Poetry Lesson Plan - includes a powerpoint "What is Poetry?" https://betterlesson.com/lesson/593824/poetry-what-is-it
  - Songs by Joni Mitchell:
    - Big Yellow Taxi https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2595abcvh2M
    - The Circle Game https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9VoLCO-d6U
    - Chelsea Morning https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWDyA4S-geg
"Joni Mitchell painted with words.

Sitting at her piano or strumming the guitar, she turned the words into songs.

The songs were like brushstrokes on a canvas, saying things that were not only happy or sad but true."
I see __________
I taste __________
I smell __________
I feel __________
I hear __________