



The Marquis de Mores – Dakota Entrepreneur

Observation Activity – Teacher Notes

Length: 50-75 minutes

Materials:

Copies of the Observation Exercise Worksheet

http://www.history.nd.gov/historicsites/chateauLesson/pdf/lp1_7_observation_activity.pdf

Color images of the rooms in the Chateau de Mores

<http://www.history.nd.gov/historicsites/chateauLesson/chateaulimages.html>

Notebook paper

Objectives:

- Observe details and present findings in oral form
- Become familiar with rooms in the Chateau de Mores
- Write a descriptive essay that incorporates the 5 senses

North Dakota English Language Arts Standards:

- 4.3.2 Demonstrate planning ideas to organize thoughts before writing
- 4.3.4 Organize and develop ideas by writing at least three paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting details.
- 4.3.5 Use indentation, capitalization, and punctuation to write paragraphs
- 4.3.6 Incorporate vocabulary in writing.
- 4.3.12 Share final copy with peers.
- 8.3.1 Compose informative writing, e.g. research, biographies, autobiographies, news articles, interviews
- 8.3.5 Use language and format appropriate for intended audience and purpose
- 8.3.7 Incorporate grade-level appropriate vocabulary in writing
- 8.3.11 Edit for grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling

Procedure:

1. Introduce the idea of a travel writer who uses detailed descriptions to “draw” pictures of places for readers. Explain that students will be using their oral and writing skills to describe a room at the Chateau de Mores to their classmates.
2. Explain the process of being a travel writer - observing details, taking notes, comparing something to something else (what it is similar to or reminds you of), using adjectives and adverbs to draw a picture for the reader.
3. Practice: Divide the class into groups. Assign each group an object in the room to describe without telling the rest of the class what it is. Have each group write a description of the object and then read their description to the class. Have the class guess which object they are describing. Use the Exercise Practice Master to make charts for the students or have them use notebook paper to write their descriptions.



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Observation Exercise Practice

Each group will choose one object in the room without telling the others what it is. Decide what words you will use to describe your object when asked questions by the rest of the class. Use words that paint a picture in the mind. Instead of saying something is “blue” ... say “as blue as a summer sky.”

Example:

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Question: What color is the object? | Question: What do you think the object feels like? | Question: Where is it in the room (what is it near?) | Question: Does it remind you of anything - this object looks like a _____ | Question: What sounds or smells does it make you think of? |
| Answer: | Answer: | Answer: | Answer: | Answer: |

What is it? _____

4. The Chateau de Mores: Hand out copies of the Observation Worksheet and give each group a color picture of a Chateau room. Have each group work together to fill out the worksheet.

5. Oral presentations: Have the members of each group stand before the class with their worksheets. Have one student hold up their room picture. Ask the group to give their answers to questions 1-3 from the worksheet. Then have each student read a description of an object in the room. (Since the objects are listed as *A-E* on the worksheet, you can ask a student to read across row *A*, for example. You can also have students write 1-2 sentences describing the object before they stand to give their oral presentation.)

6. Discuss student’s descriptions with the class. Can the other students get a picture of these objects in their minds? Do they get a feel for the room? Pass the picture of the room around to the other students.

7. Conclusion: Review the importance of observing details in order to give vivid descriptions. Remind students that they will be seeing these rooms on their field trip to the Chateau de Mores. Have students be prepared to view the Chateau as travel writers by observing the details while on their tour. Also have them think about how they would describe their observations in writing.



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Follow up or Homework Assignment:

Depending upon how much class time you want to dedicate to this exercise, students can use the answers from their worksheet to write a descriptive essay of the room they examined.

Here is a sample outline you may want to offer students to help them write their essays:

Beginning - introduce the room & how it was used (create sentences from the answers to questions 1-3 on the worksheet)

Middle - describe the objects in the room by using the descriptive words from the worksheet (have two sentences for each object; one using the descriptive words and one creating a metaphor or simile for the object)

End - give an opinion about the room and explain what is most interesting (I like/dislike this room because _____ or I think this room is _____)

Have students proofread their first drafts, circling all the descriptive words they have used. Have them add more descriptive words where needed.

Additional activities: Encourage students to use the steps learned to write about other places or things done on the field trip to make a class newspaper or travel guide.