Georgia Performance Standards Framework for ELA Unit 6-8th Grade

Grade: 8
Topic: A Picture’s Worth a Thousand Words
Instructional unit: Response to Literature
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The task:
Just as anecdotal memoir poems capture a moment in time, photographs do as well. This activity asks students to examine historical photographs and to discuss initially what the photograph reveals and how photographs can lead to powerful writing.

The teacher should have stations placed around the room (groups of desks placed together or tables with chairs) with one photograph of the era at each station. Once students have rotated and seen all photos, they should choose 2-3 that they found to be particularly striking to them. With those photos in mind, the teacher should model on the overhead how to compose a paragraph detailing what the photos reveal and being able to go beyond what is simply seen. For example, some ideas on which the students could focus is: (1) What is the mood of the photograph? (2) What do the people (if any) seem to be thinking? (3) What tone does this photograph set for the viewer?

The students will now choose one photograph and develop their own paragraph. The teacher will then model how they should take the paragraph and then begin transforming it into the poem by first eliminating all unnecessary words. The teacher should make it a challenge to convey the same message with as fewer words as possible.

Once the condensed version is complete, the teacher should place it on paper or on the overhead, with white space in between the condensed ideas, so that it mimics the organizational structure of a poem. For example, the teacher could include centering the poem and using line breaks.

Once students have condensed their own paragraphs into a poetic form, they now have a rough draft that is ready for revision.

Differentiation:
- Provide the questions as the students view the photographs.
  (1) What is the mood of the photograph?
  (2) What do the people (if any) seem to be thinking?
  (3) What tone does this photograph set for the viewer?
- Have students view one photograph
- Complete a sentence for each question
- After completing the sentences, provide assistance for forming paragraphs
Focus Standard:
**ELA8LSV2** The student listens to and views various forms of text and media in order to gather and share information, persuade others, and express and understand ideas. The student will select and critically analyze messages using rubrics as assessment tools.
When responding to visual and oral texts and media (e.g., television, radio, film productions, and electronic media), the student:

a. Interprets and evaluates the various ways in which visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, illustrators, news photographers) communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.

Circumstances of the assignment/Notes to the Teachers:
A good follow up lesson to this activity is revising the rough draft to end lines with strong words or the use of repetitive phrases.

Suggestions for obtaining photographs and poems:
- **Something Permanent** by Cynthia Rylant (Depression era photos and poetry)
- **I Never Saw Another Butterfly** (Holocaust artwork and poems)
- Social Studies Textbooks
- **Time** Magazine
- **National Geographic** Magazine
- **Cobblestone** Magazine
- The opening to the movie version of **The Wizard of Oz**