Visualizing our Short Stories

By picturing the scene in their minds, understanding the text becomes less intimidating for students.

Curriculum/State Standard
New York State Standards for English/Language Arts:
Standard 1 = Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.
Standard 2 = Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.
Standard 3 = Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.
Standard 4 = Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

Overview
After reading the short stories, students choose pivotal and riveting scenes elicited by one sentence in a particular short story. Next, students depict those scenes using watercolors and write the accompanying sentence on that scene. Students walk through the exhibit and try to match the scenes with their knowledge of the stories.

Objectives
• The students will read short stories and visualize stimulating scenes.
• The students will recreate the written text of short stories into a visual representation.
• The students will display their visualizations in a gallery exhibit.
• The students will survey the different exhibits and analyze the scenes to determine the story from which they originated.

Materials
• 33 Prang Professional Oval – 8 watercolor sets
• 3 Bienfang Sketch Pads, 11” x 14”
• pencils
• masking tape

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“Visualizing our Short Stories” project continued . . .

**Strategies/Activities**
Eighth grade students read a variety of short stories: “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allen Poe; “Thank You, M’am” by Langston Hughes; “Tears of Autumn” by Yoshiko Uchida; “Christmas Day in the Morning” by Pearl S. Buck; “A Retrieved Reformation” by O. Henry; “Charles” by Shirley Jackson; and “Rain, Rain, Go Away” by Isaac Asimov. After reading the short stories and understanding the different genres, cultural backgrounds, and time periods, students choose pivotal and riveting scenes elicited by one sentence in a particular short story. Next, students depict those scenes using watercolors and write the accompanying sentence on that scene. The short story’s title is not written on the watercolor. The watercolors are displayed as a museum exhibit.

**Culminating Activity**
Once a gallery of art scenes is created, students walk through the exhibit and try to match the scenes with their knowledge of the stories. It is a hands-on activity that draws upon students’ visual, artistic, and deductive reasoning skills.

**Evaluation**
A completed gallery of watercolors is the mark of our successful end product. Students will view the watercolors to determine from which stories the scenes were taken. Evaluation is completely observation based. The watercolors will then be used for a bulletin board outside the classroom for a school wide display.