

# Lesson Skill: Developing and recognizing the features of written expression/composition

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## Strand Writing

**SOL** 6.7  
7.7  
8.7

## Materials

- Composing/Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests
- Copies of the attached Gross Food prewriting sheet
- Available technology
- Chart paper
- Markers

## Lesson

1. Ask students to brainstorm for five minutes to list foods they dislike. As they write their lists, write your own. Allow students to talk about the “gross and disgusting” foods they put on their lists, and tell them about foods you particularly dislike.
2. Select one food item from your list, preferably one the students did not mention. List on the board the characteristics of that food: what it looks like, what it smells like, what it feels like, what it tastes like. Use vivid vocabulary and very specific information. Then, write what the offensive food does to you—what your physical reaction was when you ate it—and share with the students a time you were faced with this food.
3. Display a copy of the Composing/Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests, and review use of specific details, vivid vocabulary, and figurative language. Tell students that combining those features effectively will let their own voice be heard in their writing.
4. Inform students that there will be a contest to see who can describe an experience with a hated food most effectively. Distribute copies of the attached Gross Food prewriting sheet, and give students time to complete the prewriting information in the chart.
5. Have students write their description of an experience with the disliked food, using the information they wrote on the chart.
6. When students are finished, place them in groups of four. Have students in each group share their writings and select the one that is best. Have each group write their selected best writing on chart paper to be posted for all to read.
7. Have a student in each group read his/her group’s posted writing, and have the other students identify the specific details, vivid vocabulary, and figurative language in it.
8. Have students vote to select the best writing according to the grade 8 composing/written expression rubric.

Note: If this activity works well and proves beneficial, you might wish to repeat it with *favorite* foods.

**Gross Food**

Name of the food: \_\_\_\_\_

How it looks	How it smells	How it feels	How it tastes	What I do in reaction to it!

In the space below, write about *one* of the following times:

- The time I realized I disliked this food
- A time I was faced with this food