

Writing about Water & Wetlands, Strategy #1

Notebook in hand, record what you see, hear, smell, and taste in a wetlands area or near a body of water.

1st, walk around for a while and find a comfortable place to sit down & observe what is happening around you. Fill in the grid below:



What I can see	What I can hear	What I can smell	What I can taste

Add 1 more category: What I am feeling inside my body & mind

Then, below & on the back of this page, respond to the following questions: how does being around water, being in the wetlands, shape or change your language? What kind of poem can you write here that you can't write anywhere else?

Finally, on the back of this page, try to channel that experience of transformation and possibility in a brief poem that draws upon the language of your notebook. Don't force it, just see what words come. . . . And maybe there are some questions that float into your mind, too.

Writing about Water & Wetlands, Strategy #2

Draw what you see/Put it in words/Find fancy language:

Look carefully at a particular section of Tollgate (or another wetlands) for a while. The scene can be small or large. Perhaps you can frame it in your mind as a photograph you would like to take. Quickly sketch the scene below.



Now, describe that same scene in words. 1st, describe the object or creature that is most interesting to you. Make that the center of focus in your scene, and describe it as clearly as you can. Then describe some things in the background. Then, some things in the foreground. Note and describe anything that sparks your curiosity or imagination. Try to write a paragraph.

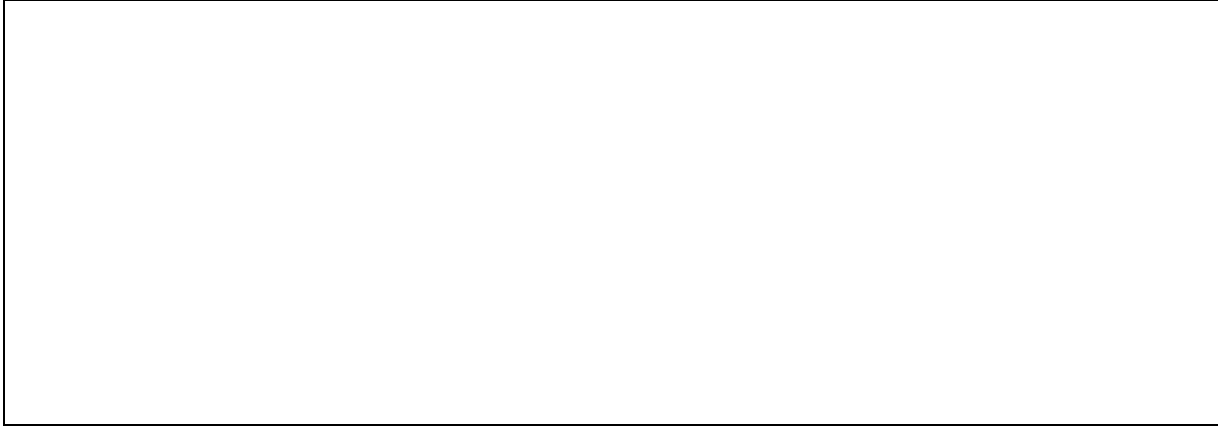
Now, circle or underline what is most interesting to you in your paragraph(s) above. On the back of this page, see if you can find a metaphor or fancy language to describe what intrigues you. How could you describe what you see in magical or poetic language?

Writing about Animals/Plants in a Wetlands, Strategy #4

Make Connections with what you are observing

1st, walk around for a while and find a comfortable place to sit down.

Observe what you see, hear, smell/feel around you. Then, choose something—perhaps an animal(s) or bird(s) or perhaps a tree or plant or even a river or pond. Sketch below what you have selected & don't worry about the quality of your drawing. Just try to record what you can.

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a sketch of what they observed in a wetland.

Now, put words on what you are observing. Write as much as you can.

(See more activities on the next page)

Now, on another sheet of paper, you have choices about how you want to write about what you are observing. Include water somewhere in your writing, either as a 1) center of focus, OR 2) simply as an element in the background or periphery.

1. You can “paint a picture in words” of the creature or plant you are observing and show how it is part of the larger environment.
2. You can write about the similarities between yourself and the creature/plant you are observing. You might start with the phrase: *I am kin to X*. Then, list the similarities you can think of between you and X. Or you might compare both differences & similarities. Ex. *Though I am not feathered, my coat is warm.*
3. If you are writing about a creature, can you imagine the environment as it experiences it? What attracts the creature to Tollgate? What nourishes it? What can you learn from this creature?

Finally, try to channel that experience of transformation and possibility in a brief poem that draws upon the language of your notebook. Don’t force it, just see what words come. . . . And maybe there are some questions that float into your mind, too.

Writing about Wetlands, Strategy #5

Tardigrades!

If you have a cellphone, you can learn about how tardigrades work to remove pollution from the water in the ponds at Tollgate. Visit these links & listen to at least 2 of these short videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zF9BII0dL5I&t=40s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9L6ZDboJLo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dH9tA9u6euk>



Now, draw an image of the tardigrade & write down phrases to describe it:

Describe how the tardigrade helps remove pollution from water:

Now, on the back of this page, draft a poem about a tardigrade and how it removes pollution from the ponds at Tollgate. Have fun with it. Be as playful as you like.

Writing about Water, Strategy #6

Choose one of the following prompts & see how far it will take you.

What does water nourish? What does it make possible? Who benefits? Talk about a specific water source, ex. the Grand River, the rain, a favorite pond.



Write a poem in which you compare your life to the water cycle. What parts of your life resemble this cycle? How does thinking about water help you see yourself and your journey more clearly?

What is special about this place? What can you do/experience here that you don't experience elsewhere?

What does water know? What does it remember?

If a river/stream/pond/lake could speak, what would it tell us?

Or follow your own path and let the water take you where it will.

Write as much as you can both below & on the back of this page. Be fearless!