Hello, students and families!

This packet includes a booklet of creative writing activities and printed artworks that feature heroic figures and folktales. All activities work with all artworks — there’s no wrong way to use this packet.

Stories of courage and heroism are all around us, especially today. We hope that these activities will give students a way to get creative, imagine something new, and keep their beautiful brains busy. Families are encouraged to look at the artworks together with their elementary students. How might they widen their worlds with writing and illustrating? Might your student author read their work to a friend or family member over the phone? We hope so!

With our best,
Elizabeth and Christine, Teachers at SAAM
Wild Words (Part 1)

Don’t look at the next page! Seriously, only look here. Skim the Glossary below to remember the parts of speech. Are you ready? OK!

**STEP 1:** Fill in **List 1 (Silly)** with silly nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

**STEP 2:** Turn the page and look closely at the artwork. Really closely; notice details.

### Glossary

- **noun** - A person, place, thing, or idea (ex: dog)
- **verb** - Action words or words that describe a state of being (ex: runs)
- **adjective** - Words that describe nouns (ex: spotted)
- **adverb** - Words that describe verbs, ending in -ly (ex: quickly)

When you put it all together, you get: *The spotted dog runs quickly.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 1 (Silly)</th>
<th>List 2 (Serious)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. verb ending in -ing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. verb ending in -ing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. adjective</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. adjective</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. noun ending in -s</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. verb</td>
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<td>9. adverb</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. verb</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. adverb</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. adjective</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Continue to Page 3...*
Wild Words (Part 2)

**STEP 3:** Below are some Close Looking Questions. Use them as you look. Then fill in List 2 (Serious) with ideas from the artwork:

a. What people or things do you see (nouns)?
b. What colors or textures do you see (adjectives)?
c. What do the people or things seem to be doing (verbs)?
d. How are they performing those actions (adverbs)?

**STEP 4:** Fill in the blanks below with the words from List 1 to make it silly. Share it with someone!

**STEP 5:** Now, fill in the blanks with the “serious” words from List 2. Which version do you like better?

In this painting, we can see a _______________ ________________. Next to them is _______________.

1. noun  
2. verb ending in -ing

a _______________ that is ________________. The sky above is _______________ and _______________.

3. noun  
4. verb ending in -ing  
5. adjective

____________________________. In the distance we can see ________________. The child _______________

6. adjective  
7. noun ending in -s  
8. verb

___________ but the adult is ________________ ________________. It is a _______________ painting.

9. adverb  
10. verb ending in -ing  
11. adverb  
12. adjective
What’s the Story? (Part 1)

Think about your favorite story. How does it begin? Where does it take place? Who or what is the story about? While every story is different, they all have a beginning, middle, and an end.

ELEMENTS OF A STORY: Writers build stories with important elements, or pieces, that help readers understand and enjoy the story. The basic elements of a story include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Who or what the story is about (often people or animals)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Example: my aunt Hazel</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Where and when the story takes place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Example: our neighborhood park in Washington, D.C. one Saturday last July</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
<td>The events or things that happen in a story; plot often begins with a problem (conflict) and ends when the problem is worked out or resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>A challenge or problem; it is the reason why the plot events are happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Example: my aunt Hazel wants to help an injured squirrel</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>The message or idea the writer is trying to get across through the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Example: Helping others can help us find happiness</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMAGINE THE STORY

1. Choose an artwork from the packet that grabs your attention. Look at every part of the artwork.

2. What might be happening in this artwork? Jot your thoughts in the space provided. (Pssst! There’s no ‘right’ answer; it’s up to your imagination!)

   - At what point in the story are we? Does it feel like the beginning, middle, or end?

   - Who might be the main *character*? How do you know?

   - What is the *setting* of this story?

   - Is there a *conflict* or problem? What happened before this moment? What might happen next?
What’s the Story? (Part 2)
CREATE THE STORY

1. Look again at the artwork you chose. How will the story end?

2. Show what happens next using the story boxes below. Add pictures, dialogue (what characters say), or captions (describes what’s happening in a box).

3. Look back to your ideas about character, setting, and conflict on Page 4 to help you decide what should happen next. Start wherever you’d like!
**Step into the Scene**

**CHARACTER CREATION**

Writers create characters as unique as our friends and family. How do they make them feel so real, as if they could walk off the page?

Character creation happens when writers put together personality traits or qualities: What does the character **look** like? What might they **say**? What do they **think** and **feel**? How do they **act**? What might **others say** or **feel** about them?

1. Choose an artwork that feels incomplete. Look at every part of the artwork.

2. Create a new character to ADD to this artwork. Think about:
   - Who or what is needed in this particular artwork?
   - What brought them here today?
   - Are they a hero in disguise? Is their identity a secret?

3. Brainstorm about your character using the prompts. Then, draw the character as you imagine them in the space on the right. Where are they in the artwork?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do they <strong>look</strong> like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do they <strong>say</strong>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do they <strong>act</strong>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do they <strong>think</strong> and <strong>feel</strong>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do <strong>others say</strong> about them?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Next Step:** Share your sketch with a family member. Then, show them the artwork you chose. Can they guess why you added this figure? What new character might they add?
Notes on a New World

SCENE SKETCH

Have you ever wished you could step into an artwork? Spend a minute (or a day!) experiencing another moment in time or a new world? You may not be able to leap into an artwork scene, but your newly invented character can!

1. Choose a new artwork that looks like a time or place you’d like to explore.

2. Send your new character on an adventure to visit this world. They should pay close attention to what they see, hear, smell, touch, and taste and report back to you with their findings.

3. Then, use your character’s observations to write a description for the rest of us!

Tell what it was like for your character to visit this world:

- What did they first notice?
- How would they describe this world?
- What sound stood out louder than the rest?
- Who did they meet during their visit?
- Did they bring any souvenirs back with them?
- What surprised them the most about their visit?
Actor and Director

**STEP 1:** Choose an artwork from the packet. Then, choose one person in that artwork.

**STEP 2:** Look closely at that person. Notice:
- How are they standing? Are their arms bent or straight?
- Which way are they looking? What is the expression on their face?
- What do their clothes remind you of? How would you describe their clothes?
- What might this person’s voice sound like if they could speak? What words would they say?
- How would this person walk if they could move? Slowly or quickly?

**STEP 3:** Write directions for someone else. How can they be like the person in the artwork?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To be like that person, what clothes should someone wear?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To be like that person, how should someone stand?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To be like that person, how should someone talk? What should they say?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To be like that person, how should someone walk?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STEP 4:** Test your directions! Find a person in your house to be the actor. Don’t let them see the artwork you chose. Give your actor your directions and see what happens.
- What matches the artwork?
- What's different?
- How can you change your directions to match your imagination?

**STEP 5:** Show your actor all five artworks from the packet. Ask them to find the person they were acting out.
Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze
Born: Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany 1816, Died: Washington, District of Columbia 1868

*Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (mural study, U.S. Capitol), 1861
Oil on canvas
33 1/4 x 43 3/8 in. (84.5 x 110.1 cm.)
Bequest of Sara Carr Upton
1931.6.1
Thomas Hart Benton
Born: Neosho, Missouri 1889, Died: Kansas City, Missouri 1975
*Achelous and Hercules*, 1947
Tempera and oil on canvas mounted on plywood
62 7/8 x 264 1/8 in. (159.6 x 671.0 cm.)
Gift of Allied Stores Corporation, and museum purchase through the Smithsonian Institution Collections Acquisition Program 1985.2
William H. Johnson
Born: Florence, SC 1901, Died: Central Islip, NY 1970

Harriet Tubman, ca. 1945
28 7/8 x 23 3/8 in. (73.5 x 59.3 cm.)
Oil on paperboard
Gift of the Harmon Foundation
1967.59.1146
William Gropper
Born: New York City 1897, Died: Manhasset, NY 1977
John Henry, from the series American Folk Heroes, n.d.
17 1/2 x 22 1/2 in. (44.4 x 57.1 cm.)
Lithograph on paper
Gift of David Schiffer
1992.113.5B
© 1953, William Gropper
Amado M. Peña, Jr.
Born: Laredo, TX 1943
El Veinte de Mayo, 1975
18 x 12 in. (45.7 x 30.5 cm.)
Screenprint
Gift of Amado M. Peña, Sr. and Maria Peña
1996.47.3
© 1975, Amado M. Peña, Jr.