

# PICTURE THIS...

## MINING MEMORY RESOURCES

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### 2 COMPLETE LESSONS

**01**

Turning Feelings Into Art, Writing, and Sound

**02**

Turning Memories Into Soundscapes



# Mining Memory: Turning Feelings Into Art, Writing, and Sound

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Below are a few additional titles to pair with these memory and SEL activities. I always recommend shopping at your local independent bookstore, but if that's not an option you can support this blog by using the affiliate links below:

- [\*\*A Blue Kind of Day\*\* by Rachel Tomlinson and illustrated by Tori-Jay Mordey](#) (2022) – Understanding moods and introversion
- [\*\*My Thoughts Have Wings\*\* by Maggie Smith and illustrated by Leanne Hatch](#) (2024) – Visualizing imagination and fears
- [\*\*The Leaf Detective\*\* by Heather Lang and illustrated by Jana Christy](#) (2021) – Connecting to the environment through emotion
- [\*\*Your Name Is a Song\*\* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow](#) (2020) – Cultural pride and identity (2021) – Exploring unspoken feelings and empathy

## **Title: Mining Your Memory - Picture Book Lesson Guide**

Featured Book: Joan Mitchell Paints a Symphony by Lisa Rogers

Primary Subject: Visual Art, Creative Writing, Music Integration

Grade Level Range: K–5 (with adaptations)

Estimated Time: 2–3 class periods (30–45 min each)

Materials Needed:

- Joan Mitchell Paints a Symphony (or similar emotional picture book)
- Student journals or blank paper
- Writing utensils
- Crayons, markers, watercolors or paint supplies
- Found objects for creating sound (rubber bands, cardboard, tissue boxes, jars, etc.)
- Optional: devices to record audio or create digital soundscapes

## SECTION 1: QUICK OVERVIEW

### What This Activity Does:

This multimodal arts activity invites students to mine their own emotional memories and translate them into creative expression. Students explore sensory details through journaling and bring their experiences to life using visual art, music, and poetry.

### Learning Objectives:

- Students will use sensory recall to describe emotional memories
- Students will express those memories through a chosen creative form
- Students will reflect on how emotions can be represented and shared

### Why It Works:

This lesson supports multiple modes of expression and taps into students' lived experiences. It builds empathy and encourages risk-taking in a safe, creative environment. Ideal for diverse learners, including those who communicate best through art or sound.

### At-a-Glance Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3 – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4 – Report on a topic with appropriate details
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3 – Describe characters and their emotional responses
- 21st Century Skills: Creativity, Communication, Emotional Literacy

## SECTION 2: STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

### Pre-Reading Preparation:

1. Set Up Your Space: Create cozy, quiet zones for journaling and open areas for art/music creation. Gather all art and sound materials at a central station.
2. Preview the Book: Introduce Joan Mitchell and the idea of painting emotion. Define vocabulary: abstract, memory, feeling, mood, symphony.
3. Gather Materials: Provide paper, writing and coloring tools, optional paint, and accessible sound-making items. If needed, ask students to bring small, safe objects from home.
4. Prepare Students: Ask students to recall a strong memory and what it felt like. Use sample prompts to get their thinking started.

### During Reading Activities:

1. Opening Hook: "What color was the air when you felt brave for the first time?"
2. Interactive Reading Strategies: Pause and ask, "What do you think the artist was feeling here?" or "What colors or shapes would you use to show joy?"
3. Student Participation Opportunities: Encourage quick sketches or word lists as they listen to emotional parts of the story.

4. Comprehension Checks: Use turn-and-talk or quick writes after major spreads:  
"What mood do you see here?"

#### Post-Reading Extension:

1. Core Activity:
  - a. Prompt students: "Think of a time you felt proud," "A moment you'll never forget," etc.
  - b. Guide them through sensory journaling: What did it sound, smell, or feel like?
  - c. Invite students to choose an expressive format:
    - Visual Art: Draw or paint the memory's feeling
    - Poetry/Spoken Word: Write a piece based on the emotion
    - Soundscape: Use classroom items to build an auditory version of the moment
2. Wrap-Up Discussion: Share in small groups or conduct a gallery walk with artist statements.
3. Assessment Opportunities: Review journals and artwork; use student sharing and reflection as informal assessment.

### SECTION 3: COMMON CORE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

#### Reading:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3 – Describe characters and explain their emotions

#### Writing:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3 – Write narratives using sensory details

#### Speaking & Listening:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1 – Engage in collaborative conversations
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4 – Report on a topic with descriptive details

#### Language:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5 – Demonstrate understanding of figurative and emotional language

#### Cross-Curricular:

- National Core Arts Standards (Visual Arts): Anchor Standard #2 – Organize and develop artistic ideas
- Music: Anchor Standard #3 – Refine and complete artistic work

### SECTION 4: DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

#### For English Language Learners:

- Provide visuals for feelings and sensory words
- Use sentence frames: "I remember the air smelled like \_\_\_\_."
- Allow sharing in home language before translating to English

#### For Students with Special Needs:

- Offer sensory tools (textured paper, quiet spaces)
- Allow oral storytelling instead of written journal
- Use checklists and visual prompts for sequencing tasks

#### For Advanced Learners:

- Encourage mixed-media collages or layered metaphor in poems
- Offer recording software to create digital soundscapes
- Invite peer leaders to facilitate gallery walk discussions

#### For Struggling Readers:

- Provide sentence stems and word banks for journaling
- Offer audio versions of picture book if needed
- Allow drawing as a primary form of response with optional captions

### SECTION 5: LEVELING GUIDE

#### Scaling DOWN for Younger Students (K–2):

- Focus on single senses (What did it sound like?)
- Use drawing with dictated captions instead of full journaling
- Offer pre-cut shapes or finger painting for expression
- Focus on naming emotions and matching colors

#### Scaling UP for Older Students (3–5):

- Ask for multi-sensory journaling with figurative language
- Allow multimedia projects or digital sound collages
- Include peer feedback and revision rounds
- Integrate art critique language for the gallery walk

### SECTION 6: EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

#### Same-Day Extensions:

- Quick-write: "Color of the Day" emotion journal
- Group poem using collective sensory memories
- Create emotion masks or abstract collage

#### Week-Long Extensions:

- Emotional memory anthology book

- Family interview: Ask a grown-up to share a strong memory and create something from it
- Create a class mural based on shared memories

#### Cross-Curricular:

- Math: Graph how many students chose each emotion
- Science: Explore how the brain stores sensory memory
- Social Studies: Interview family members about memories tied to important events
- Music: Build full-class sound symphonies

## SECTION 7: PARENT INVOLVEMENT & HOME SUPPORT

#### Take-Home Information:

This week, we're exploring our feelings and memories through storytelling, color, and sound! Ask your child about the moment they chose to remember and how they expressed it.

#### Home Extension Activities:

- Family memory night: everyone shares a powerful memory
- Create a joint drawing, poem, or sound project
- Visit a local art exhibit and discuss how artists show emotions

#### Communication Tools:

- Newsletter Blurb: "Ask your child what memory they turned into art this week! They may even have a sound performance to share."
- Student Reflection Sheet: "Today I remembered \_\_\_\_\_. I showed it by \_\_\_\_\_. I felt \_\_\_\_\_."

## SECTION 8: ASSESSMENT & DOCUMENTATION

#### Formative Assessment Ideas:

- Check journal prompts for sensory detail
- Observe participation in group discussions
- Look for emotional vocabulary during share-outs

#### Summative Assessment Options:

- Evaluate final artwork or poem using a rubric
- Reflective writing: How did your piece show your emotion?
- Peer feedback forms for gallery walk

#### Documentation Tools:

- Take photos of student work for portfolios
- Record soundscapes with class tablets
- Create a class book or digital slideshow of shared pieces

## SECTION 9: TROUBLESHOOTING & TIPS

#### Common Challenges:

- Students may struggle to identify memories or feelings: offer modeled examples and guided sentence starters
- Some students may be uncomfortable sharing personal stories: allow private work or fictionalized memories

#### Adam's Pro Tips:

- Share one of your own sensory memories to model the process
- Offer all three modes (art, writing, sound) so students can choose what fits them best
- Let the gallery walk be optional or anonymous to reduce performance anxiety

#### Resource Alternatives:

- If sound-making is difficult, use digital soundboards or apps
- Replace painting with collage if mess is a concern
- Use wordless books if students need an alternative mentor text

## **Title: Turning Memories Into Soundscapes - Picture Book Lesson Guide**

Featured Book: Beautiful Noise: The Music of John Cage by Lisa Rogers

Primary Subject: Music, SEL, Creative Expression

Grade Level Range: K–5 (with adaptations)

Estimated Time: 1–2 class periods (30–45 min each)

Materials Needed:

- Beautiful Noise: The Music of John Cage
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Classroom objects for sound-making (pencils, folders, paper, rulers, chairs, etc.)
- Optional: audio recorders, tablets, or apps for digital sound composition
- Student reflection sheets or journals

### **SECTION 1: QUICK OVERVIEW**

What This Activity Does:

This auditory storytelling lesson helps students turn emotional memories into expressive soundscapes using everyday items. Inspired by John Cage’s experimental approach, it invites creativity, collaboration, and emotional awareness through sound.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will explore the emotional qualities of sound
- Students will compose a short sound-based piece inspired by a memory
- Students will reflect on how sound can communicate feeling and experience

Why It Works:

No musical background needed! Students get to explore sound as expression using materials right in the classroom. The lesson builds self-awareness and empathy while tapping into creativity and performance skills.

At-a-Glance Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.5 – Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4 – Report on a topic with appropriate facts and relevant details
- National Core Arts Standards (Music): Anchor Standard #1 – Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas
- 21st Century Skills: Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, Emotional Intelligence

### **SECTION 2: STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION**

**Pre-Reading Preparation:**

1. Set Up Your Space: Clear desks for movement and small group work. Create a sound station with accessible items.
2. Preview the Book: Introduce John Cage as a composer who believed everyday sounds could be music. Discuss "What is music?"



3. Gather Materials: Assemble a variety of objects (paper, rulers, boxes, etc.) and optional digital sound apps or recorders.
4. Prepare Students: Ask, "Can a door slam be part of music?" Let students brainstorm emotional sounds they hear every day.

#### During Reading Activities:

1. Opening Hook: "If your happiest memory was a song, what would it sound like?"
2. Interactive Reading Strategies: Pause to ask: "Would you call that music? Why or why not?"
3. Student Participation Opportunities: Clap, tap, or echo patterns from the book as they listen
4. Comprehension Checks: "How did John Cage make people listen differently?"

#### Post-Reading Extension:

1. Core Activity:
  - a. Prompt students: "Think of a memory. What did it sound like?"
  - b. Brainstorm a list of classroom-safe sound makers
  - c. In small groups, create a soundscape to represent that memory (e.g., fear = whisper + desk thump + slow clap)
  - d. Rehearse and perform or record each group's piece
  - e. Discuss what emotions they tried to show
2. Wrap-Up Discussion: "What surprised you about someone else's sound memory?" "Did your memory change as you made the sound?"
3. Assessment Opportunities: Review student journals, observe group collaboration and performance, use checklists or peer feedback forms

### SECTION 3: COMMON CORE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

#### Speaking & Listening:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.5 – Use audio/visual aids to support presentations
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4 – Present ideas with relevant details and clarity

#### Writing (Optional Extension):

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3 – Write narratives using sensory details

#### Language:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5 – Understand figurative and emotional language

#### Cross-Curricular:

- Music (National Core Arts Standards):
  - #1 – Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas
  - #2 – Organize and develop artistic work
  - #3 – Refine and complete artistic work

## SECTION 4: DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

### For English Language Learners:

- Pair with a buddy to brainstorm and rehearse
- Use labeled visuals of sound types and emotions
- Provide sentence frames for reflection: "Our memory sounded like \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_"

### For Students with Special Needs:

- Use clear roles: conductor, sound maker, recorder
- Provide noise-reducing headphones for sensitive students
- Allow alternative expressions like visual diagrams or tapping apps

### For Advanced Learners:

- Layer multiple emotions or memories in a single piece
- Compose and notate symbolic 'scores' for their soundscapes
- Lead other groups through rehearsal or sharing

### For Struggling Readers:

- Focus on performance and listening over written reflection
- Provide sentence stems and visual cues
- Use voice recordings for reflection instead of writing

## SECTION 5: LEVELING GUIDE

### Scaling DOWN for Younger Students (K–2):

- Focus on a single emotion or memory
- Use limited sound choices (e.g., clap, tap, hum)
- Create a whole-class sound story together before group work

### Scaling UP for Older Students (3–5):

- Ask for layered or sequenced compositions
- Encourage written scores or maps of their performance
- Incorporate discussion of silence and pacing

## SECTION 6: EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

### Same-Day Extensions:

- Sound scavenger hunt around the classroom
- "What does happy sound like?" class brainstorm wall
- Listen to everyday ambient sounds and describe their mood

### Week-Long Extensions:

- Build a "Soundtrack of My Life" memory album with 3–5 pieces
- Interview family members about meaningful sounds
- Use digital apps to record, remix, or layer sounds

### Cross-Curricular:

- Language Arts: Write a story to match your soundscape
- Science: Explore sound vibrations and materials
- Social Studies: Document cultural sound traditions at home
- Art: Design album covers or sound maps for each piece

## SECTION 7: PARENT INVOLVEMENT & HOME SUPPORT

### Take-Home Information:

This week we explored how sound tells stories! Ask your child to perform their memory piece or explain what emotion they were representing.

### Home Extension Activities:

- Make a family sound memory at home
- Create a short audio story using kitchen or yard sounds
- Visit a quiet space (library, nature trail) and discuss the sounds you notice

### Communication Tools:

- Newsletter Blurb: "We're composing emotional soundtracks in class! Ask your student what their memory sounds like."
- Student Reflection Sheet: "Today I used \_\_\_\_ to make the sound of \_\_\_\_\_. It made me feel \_\_\_\_\_."

## SECTION 8: ASSESSMENT & DOCUMENTATION

### Formative Assessment Ideas:

- Observe sound creation choices for emotional intent

- Use quick checklists during rehearsal
- Collect peer feedback on clarity and creativity

#### **Summative Assessment Options:**

- Use a rubric for performance: clarity, collaboration, emotion, creativity
- Student self-assessment of emotion conveyed
- Written or recorded reflection on process

#### **Documentation Tools:**

- Record performances with audio or video
- Capture photos of rehearsal process
- Collect journal pages or student-created sound maps

### **SECTION 9: TROUBLESHOOTING & TIPS**

#### **Common Challenges:**

- Noise levels: structure rehearsal with clear group times
- Off-task behavior: assign rotating group roles
- Student self-consciousness: allow anonymous or small group share-outs

#### **Adam's Pro Tips:**

- Demonstrate your own short sound memory first to get buy-in
- Let students name their pieces like song titles (e.g., "Crash of Joy")
- Emphasize there's no "wrong" way to express a feeling with sound

#### **Resource Alternatives:**

- If classroom items are limited, use vocal-only soundscapes
- Substitute apps like GarageBand or Chrome Music Lab for layering
- Collaborate with the music or drama teacher for extended support