

## The Lost Suitcase

### Creating a Purpose for Descriptive Writing

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#### Preparation:

1. Locate a suitcase
2. Choose items that are easy and interesting to describe (patterned, worn-out); one for each pair of students
3. Pack items into the suitcase

#### Implementation:

1. Place the closed suitcase in view of all of the students
2. Explain that this suitcase has been “lost”, and the class needs to get it back to the owner by making a “found” notice
  - a. Facilitate a discussion about how to describe the suitcase so that the owner will recognize it
    - For example, “What if I just said that this is a lost bag filled with stuff? Would you know it was yours?”
3. Have the class work together to describe the suitcase
  - a. Encourage and model precise and descriptive language
  - b. Discuss the different features the students could describe, for example: color, size, function, analogy
4. Open the suitcase and show students one item from the suitcase at a time
5. Put students into pairs and give each pair one of the items
6. Ask each pair to describe their item using as much detail as they can
7. If desired, have partners illustrate their written description with a labeled picture
8. Invite each pair to present their item, description, and picture to the class
9. Have a follow-up discussion on the benefits of descriptive language in writing



Adapted from: <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliteracydiet/Recipe/00050/>