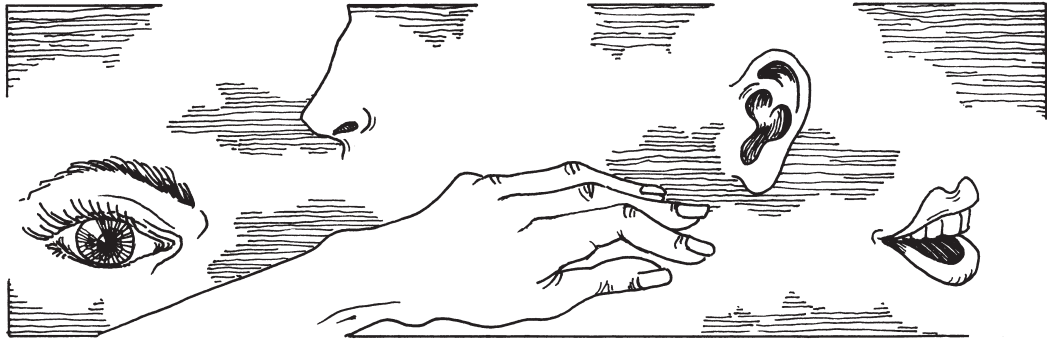


## Language Arts Chapter Teacher Sheet



### Activity #2: Writing About Estuaries

*Adapted from "Writing with Estuaries," The Estuary Guide,  
Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.*

#### Objectives:

To have the opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings, observations, and research about some aspect of the Tijuana Estuary.

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#### Time:

This activity can be started in class, and completed as a long-term project.

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#### Background:

Many students frequently find it easier to express their thoughts and feelings in written form, either prose or poetry. This activity will give the students the opportunity to express the things they may have been thinking or feeling during their study of the Tijuana Estuary. It will also give students an opportunity to write a paper about a topic they have researched. You might want to have students keep a journal while studying this unit, and use their journal writings as the basis for this activity. Or, if you are going on a field trip to the estuary, you might ask students to record their observations and feelings about the environment, and then complete this activity upon their return. If possible, students might also wish to visit the estuary on their own time, keep a journal of their visits, and use that journal as a basis for this activity.

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#### Materials:

Provide students with standard writing materials - pencils, paper, pens, etc. - and also standard art materials for any illustrations the students might want to include with their writing.

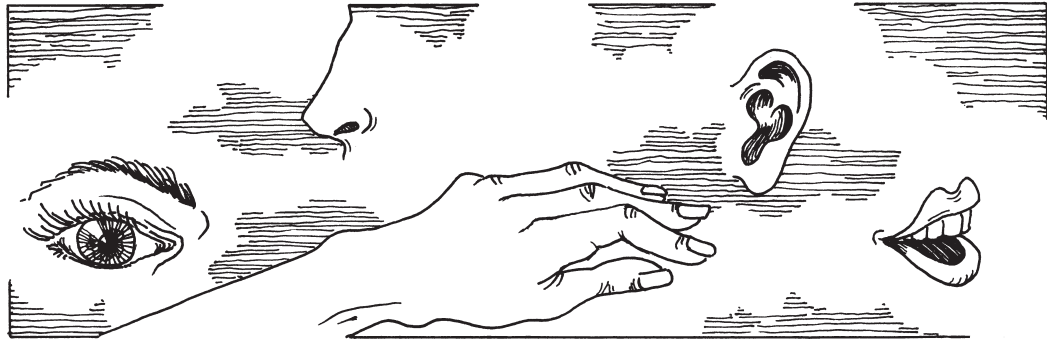
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**Procedure:**

There are several ways you can proceed with this activity. You could allow the students to select one of the three writing assignments of their choice, you could assign just one of the assignments, or you could have students complete each of the three assignments at different times during your study of the Tijuana Estuary.

Whichever way you choose, be sure to approve the students topics before they begin, and set a reasonable deadline for both the rough draft and final draft of the paper.

## Language Arts Chapter Student Sheet



### Activity #2: Writing About Estuaries

#### **PURPOSE:**

During this activity, you will create your impression of the Tijuana Estuary in written form.

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#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The following writing activities were chosen as a way for you to begin to individually explore and express your thoughts and feelings about the estuary. You could just as easily use the exercises to paint, sculpt, compose, or otherwise create your impression of the Tijuana Estuary, but we will concentrate on writing about the estuary during this activity.

Expressing yourself through introspection (contemplation of yourself) and observation (contemplation of things outside of yourself) is the foundation for the following activities.

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#### **MATERIALS:**

Any writing materials you prefer, or as assigned by your teacher. You might also want to illustrate your writings with drawings or other art work.

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#### **PROCEDURE:**

##### ***Journaling:***

1. Writing in a journal is an example of introspection. To write in a journal means to write in a purely personal dialogue. This is where many writers do more than record

daily activities. They let their feelings as well as their thoughts interact on the paper without restricting their flow. Your teacher may have asked you to keep a journal as you were studying this unit about the Tijuana Estuary, or you may have gone on a field trip to the estuary and kept a journal of your thoughts and observations. You might also decide to visit the estuary on your own. If so, try to visit the estuary at different times of the day, such as during different tides. You might decide to visit the same location several times, or visit several locations one or more times. Whichever you decide, when you write in your journal, write freely without worrying about spelling or punctuation. Consider these two questions while you write:

- A. How does the location you have chosen make you feel? Start with a feeling, then expand on it. Maybe you feel relaxed from sitting in the sun by the water. At the sight of a surf fisher person, you may feel sorry for the fish or worried about the estuary's future. Use all of your senses to observe your surroundings - sight, smell, touch, hearing. Different people will have different reactions to the same experience. Find your experience and write about it in your journal.
  - B. Why does this location make you feel way the way you do? You can't always justify feelings, but you can explore them. Maybe your feelings relate to something else that's going on in your life.
2. After you've searched your feelings, read what you've written. You need to be able to remember how and why you wrote what you did when its time to write your report.
  3. Write a rough draft report of your journal entries. You don't need to write things in sequence; you can pick just one idea and use it as a theme for your paper, or you can write about one thought or observation that changed with time or location.
  4. Ask someone to read your rough draft and edit it for punctuation, spelling, and clarity.
  5. Write the final draft of your paper.

### **Poetry:**

1. The second step of self-expression is observation. The object poem, or the "thing" poem, is a great way to practice your observation skills at the estuary. Complete the following steps:
  - A. Pick an object. Ideally, this would be an object you found, or would be likely to find, at the estuary.
  - B. Observe the object closely. Notice its shape, size, and texture.

Think about how the structure of the object is related to its function. Why was it in the estuary? Are there any organisms that might be likely to use this object? What would it be like to be this object?

- C. Write a poem about the object.
2. An object poem should not become overwhelmed by your thoughts and feelings. When you write a true object poem, you should try to "become" that object. We observe things everyday, but we have so many things we are thinking about, we often become numb to our senses. Try opening your senses and focusing on just one thing - your object.

### ***Research Paper:***

1. You can combine introspection and observation by writing a research paper. In a research paper, you select an item of interest, or a question you might have about something, and use information sources such as libraries and the Internet, as well as interviews with experts on the subject, to find out as much information as possible about your subject, or to answer your question. For instance, you might want to study the migratory birds that visit the estuary, find out what happens to periwinkle crabs during high tide, talk to estuary staff about working at the estuary or about volunteer opportunities at the estuary, or interview estuary artists or historians about the estuary. You can select your own topic to research.
2. Once you have gathered as much information as you can, write about your topic. Tie the information you've gathered together using your own thoughts, feelings, and the notes you've taken during your research.
3. If you use copyrighted sources, such as books, articles, and other published works, be sure to cite your sources in the body of your paper and include a bibliography at the end of your paper.
4. Ask someone to read your rough draft and edit it for punctuation, spelling, and clarity.
5. Write the final draft of your paper. Check with your teacher to determine how long your finished paper should be.

