



# Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

## Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



### Painting a Picture

by Rey Hinojosa

DURATION: 1.5 hours

GRADE LEVEL: Middle School

WRITING LEVEL: Developing writers

FOCUS: imagery

KEY TERMS: imagery, fabulism, alliteration

EXAMPLE POEM

[Controlled Burn](#) by Alysia Harris

Check in | 15 minutes

**Where is the first place you will go once the quarantine is lifted?**

Resource Building | 15 minutes

#### DEFINITIONS

- **IMAGERY** is descriptive language used to add depth to writing by appealing to the reader's human senses.
- **FABULISM** is a form of magic realism in which fantastical elements are placed into an everyday setting; the fantastic coupled with the real.
- **ALLITERATION** is the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

**Write about an emotion.** Let's give it a shape, dimension. Be extreme and as specific as possible!

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What does it look like?
- What does it smell like? Taste like?
- What does it weigh?
- What does it do when you hold it? Touch it? Breathe on it? Look at it?
- Where does it go when you don't acknowledge it?
- What does it cost to contain it?

Close Reading | 20 minutes

READ | **"Thin Cities 5"** by Italo Calvino from the book *Invisible Cities*

This belongs to a larger book that is part of the Fabulist genre.

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can we use our writing to create more imaginative landscapes and imagery?



# Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

## Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



- What does the imagery evoke within you emotionally?
- How can we convey certain emotions without being explicit, instead utilizing imagery or symbolism to speak for us?

WATCH | [Controlled Burn](#) by Alysia Harris, Button Poetry

This poet utilizes a lot of alliteration for rhythmic effect. But she also utilizes imagery to paint a picture of an emotion.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What emotion is she identifying? How does she show this image?
- Listen to how she emphasizes certain parts, slows down and speeds up. How does she accomplish this with language?
- Alliteration is one tool she uses, and she manages to incorporate imagery as well to express a deep emotional torrent. What is required for alliteration to be effective?

### Writing Prompt | 20 minutes

**Paint a picture of a single emotion.** You can use the writing exercise we did before, either as a continuation or as a jumping off point. The key to imagery is utilizing as much sensory detail as possible.

OR

**Write your own city.** Like our unnamed traveler coming upon Octavia, the spider-web city, you are a traveler and have come to a city that defies logic. Describe it to us in as much detail as possible. You don't have to explain how or why the city is the way it is, but if you decide to, use imagery to speak for you. Utilize alliteration to create a rhythmic flow in your work.

### Share Out | 15 minutes



# Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

## Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



---

### Thin Cities 5

by Italo Calvino (from the book *Invisible Cities*)

---

If you choose to believe me, good. Now I will tell how Octavia, the spider-web city, is made. There is a precipice between two steep mountains: the city is over the void, bound to the two crests with ropes and chains and catwalks. You walk on the little wooden ties, careful not to set your foot in the open spaces, or you cling to the hempen strands. Below there is nothing for hundreds and hundreds of feet: a few clouds glide past; farther down you can glimpse the chasm's bed. This is the foundation of the city: a net which serves as passage and as support. All the rest, instead of rising up, is hung below: rope ladders, hammocks, houses made like sacks, clothes hangers, terraces like gondolas, skins of water, gas jets, spits, baskets on strings, dumb-waiters, showers, trapezes and rings for children's games, cable cars, chandeliers, pots with trailing plants. Suspended over the abyss, the life of Octavia's inhabitants is less uncertain than in other cities. They know the net will last only so long.