**Imagery**

Imagery is the use of language to descriptively represent things, actions, or abstract things. It suggests visual pictures by appealing to our ***senses*.** It includes appeals to *visual (sight)*, *auditory (hearing)*, *tactile (touch)*, *thermal (heat or cold*), *olfactory (smell)*, *gustatory (taste)*, and *kinesthetic (movement)* senses.

**Questions to Consider:**

-What sensory information do I find in the language: colour, scents, sounds, tastes, textures?

-What is the author trying to convey or achieve by using imagery?

-Are these images part of a larger pattern or structure within the text? (ie. Does it connect to one of the major themes?)

-What figures of speech -- metaphor, simile, personification -- does the writer use?

**Examine the imagery used in the following excerpts:**

1. The many men, so beautiful!

And they all dead did lie:

And a thousand thousand slimy things

Lived on: and so did I.

Within the shadow of the ship

I watched their rich attire:

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,

They coiled and swam; and every track

Was a flash of golden fire.

--Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

Task: Think of a cat or a dog you can describe easily. First, write a description which reveals a positive attitude toward the animal. Then think of the same animal and write a description which reveals a negative attitude. Remember that the animal’s looks *do not change*; only your attitude changes. Use imagery rather than explanation to create your descriptions.

2. But when the old man left, he was suddenly aware of the old Hogan: the red sand floor had been swept unevenly; the boxes were spilling out rags; the trunks were full of the junk and trash an old man saves – notebooks and whisker hairs.

--Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Task: Draw a sketch of your room. In your sketch, select images that reveal your character. Trade sketches with a partner. Interpret each other’s sketches based on the images and discuss each other’s interpretations.

3. As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair

In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud

Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.

One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,

Stood stupefied, however he came there;

Thrust out past service from the devil’s stud!

--Robert Browning, “Child Roland to the Dark Tower Came”

Task: Write a description of an old, sick person. Convey an attitude of horror through the imagery of your description. *Do not* explain the sense of horror; *do not use figurative language*. Instead, use specific imagery to convey the meaning of your description.

4. A woman drew her long black hair out tight

And fiddled whisper music on those strings

And bats with baby faces in the violent light

Whistled, and beat their wings

And crawled head downward down a blackened wall

And upside down in air were towers

Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours

And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

T.S. Eliot, “The Waste Land”

Task: Write four or five lines of poetry which create – through imagery alone – a mood of absolute triumph. Do not state the nature of the triumph; *do not explain or analyze*. Instead, let the images create the feeling of triumph. Use both auditory and visual images.