

## 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

# Stone Soup Creative Writing Project

## kids inspiring kids

### PROJECT FOR WRITERS

#### EVOKING A SPECIAL PLACE: PAINTING WITH WORDS

##### MENTOR TEXT:

“Seasons of the Pond” by Julie Patten (age 12)  
*Spring at my pond is a joyful and new beginning. . . . Skunk cabbage, yellow buttercups, and pond grass sprout. Little treefrogs begin to sing and soon lily pads will float again. Horses come down to the fence, redwing blackbirds call and scold, and, sometimes in the morning, there are deer tracks in the mud.*

TURN THE PAGE to read THE FULL PIECE.

##### WRITING TIP:

Descriptive words, or adjectives and adverbs, are a writer’s friend when you want your readers to be able to imagine the place you describe. For this type of writing, use as many precise adjectives as you can so that readers can visualize what you are thinking. For example, Julie writes, “. . . frogs dig deep into the cold dark mud.” Dig deep. Cold dark mud. This should be fun to write. Pull out all the stops. Be expansive. Over-the-top descriptions are okay.

### ACTIVITY

#### DESCRIBE A PLACE THAT YOU VISIT OFTEN AND THEREFORE KNOW WELL

##### STEP ONE: COLLECT DETAILS

Choose a place that is meaningful to you. If possible, find a picture of your special place. If you can visit the place—even better! Look at your setting like an artist. Use words to sketch important details in the scene. Include both visual details and sensory details like smell, sound, and even taste, like the taste of a salty breeze at the ocean. What you write here are just sketches: you don’t need complete sentences. Write down colors, smells, touch—leaves brushing the face—sounds. . . the most vivid things that come to mind as you think about this place that is meaningful to you.

##### STEP TWO: DRAFT YOUR DESCRIPTION

For this writing piece, don’t worry about writing a story. Instead, write a focused, evocative description of a place. It does not need a beginning, middle, and end. Like Julie, you might choose to write about how that place changes

over time, such as when seasons pass or over the course of a day. What makes a place special is the way the sounds, the smells, the light, the colors make you feel while you are there. Your goal here is to do writing magic: make your reader visualize the scene you are imagining.

##### STEP THREE: REVISE YOUR DESCRIPTION

Once your draft is complete, read it over. This kind of writing generally calls for reading aloud. Read aloud to yourself or to a friend or classmate. As you listen to your own voice (or listen to someone reading to you) visualize the scene your words have painted. Notice where a tweak will make a description more vivid and then revise to make that change. You may find, upon hearing your piece, that there is something that has been left out that you now realize is important to your sense of the place. Add that in and then share your finished worked with a reader.

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MENTOR TEXT

### Seasons of the Pond

by Julie Patten (age 12)

Ponds change with the seasons, but they are different every time you look at them. I watch our pond from my bedroom window in the morning when I dress for school and at night getting ready for bed. Ponds take on the color of the day. The water is blue or gray or brown or black depending on the weather and the sky. In the moonlight the water can look yellow or white. The surface can be smooth or rippled with waves. My favorite times on the pond are spring when the ice goes and winter when it comes back.

Spring at my pond is a joyful and new beginning. The warm breeze pushes away cold air. The sun comes and heats the icy ground. The brook in the neighbors' woods starts to run again after a long sleep and pours out over the ice on the pond. In a few days the ice is gone and cold water tumbles over the dam, going south to the sea I guess. The green of the trees and the green of the fields comes back. Skunk cabbage, yellow buttercups, and pond grass sprout. Little treefrogs begin to sing and soon lily pads will float again. Horses come down to the fence, redwing blackbirds call and scold, and, sometimes in the morning, there are deer tracks in the mud. Green frogs glide out of their winter's sleep. At night, their croaking fills the darkness. Waterbugs hop around again and the

ducks are back to nest. The best thing about a spring pond is "barefootin'" at the water's edge.

Winter at the pond comes slowly. It sneaks up day by day. Cold breezes begin to come again. Leaves change colors and fall from the trees. The summer's greens become reds and yellows and browns—mostly brown. The woods and fields are brown and bare. The horses don't come to the fence any more. Cold, chilling rains put back the water in the pond that long hot summer days took away. Days get shorter and shorter and the smell of woodsmoke fills the air. White snowflakes swirl and chase themselves and fall into the pond's black surface. Summer birds are gone, frogs dig deep into the cold dark mud, and the water of the pond freezes. After Christmas, thick snows cover the ice. Now the pond is sound asleep. It's so cold, you wonder if spring will ever come back again.