

It has long been a tenet of creative writing that a writer should write about what she knows. However, we often don't pay enough attention to what we think we "know." This lesson is about taking a fresh and more intent look at something the students know.

Objective: Students will demonstrate their ability to observe by looking at and talking about artworks that feature mountains and valleys. Students will use their senses to observe real mountains and valleys, and will create a "mountain and Valleys" book with a poem written on the book.

Materials:

- Make a small poster, or several copies of the postcard of *Mountain Solitude*, by Paul Salisbury
- Make postcard-size copies of at least two other images of artworks featuring Utah mountains.

Use artworks such as *Farmington Peak* and *Edge of Village in Winter*, David Howell Rosenbaum; *Springville Pasture*, John Hafen; *Mt. Nebo Early Spring*, and *West*, John Heber Stansfield; *Point of the Mountain*, Gary Smith; *Farmington in Winter*, LeConte Stewart; *American Fork Canyon*, Edwin Evans. All these artworks are available at sma.nebo.edu. If you go to the **Artwork by Title** index, you can often tell just by the title that the artwork is probably suitable. If you live in another area of the state, you may want to choose other artworks that are more like the mountains and valleys where you live, or, choose a variety.

If possible, make enough postcards for each group of 4-6 students to have postcards of 2-3 different paintings. Pass out the postcards to the groups and have the students talk with each other about the artworks. Ask them to share their ideas and feelings with each other by answering the following questions:

What time of year is it?

What time or kind of day?

How do the artworks make you feel?

How do you think the artist felt about the scene?

Then have students look at how the artist created the scene

What are the most common lines? Colors? Shapes?

What draws your eye the most?

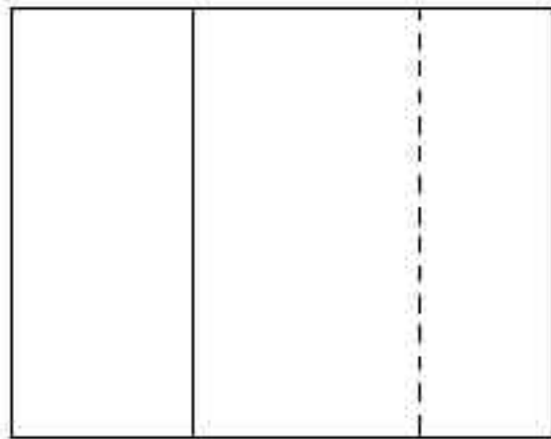
What words describe the scene in the paintings?

Then take the class outside and have them look around at the mountains and what they can see of the valley. You may want them to take notes and make sketches. Have them think about words that describe what they see, and what kinds of shapes, colors, etc. they see.

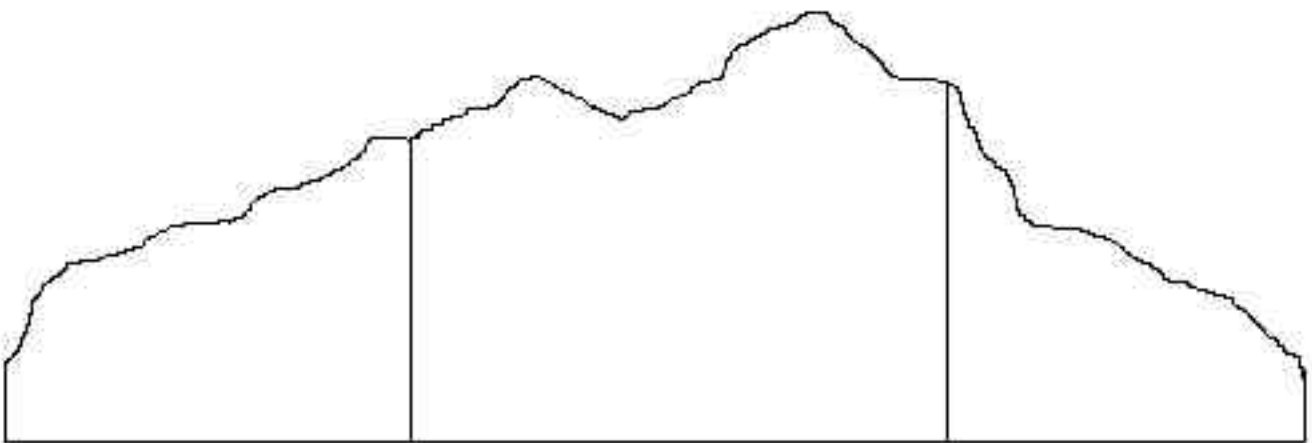
Back in the classroom, teach them to make the mountain books, as shown on the following pages.



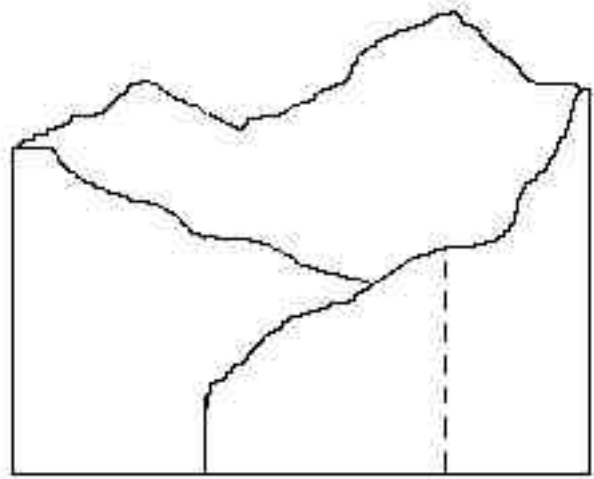
Students need a piece of paper that is long and skinny—the size can vary. Students will fold the paper as shown above, so the ends of the sheet overlap each other. (shown right) Students can decide how much they want theirs to overlap.



After sketching ideas on scratch paper, students should lightly draw the silhouette of mountains and/or a valley on their paper. Remind students that they can cut more off if they need to, but they can't put any cut paper back on.



After cutting out the silhouette, they can check the shapes and make any adjustments they want to.



The next step is to write their mountain and valleys poem and decide where the words will go in their book. Students may want to write their poem on the book next. This depends on whether they will be able to write on top of what they are using to color the book with.

