

# Is it Going to Rain?

Rachel Mindell

Objectives: Students will explore what happens just before it rains in the desert using their five senses.

Education Level: Elementary

Genre: Poetry

Format: Lesson Plan

Time Frame: 50-60 minutes

Materials: Paper, pencils, print out of literary model or overhead projection

Literary Model: "[It is Going to Rain](#)" by Ophelia Zepeda

## Introduction (5 minutes):

Introduce the topic for today's lesson: the special and unique experience of the time just before rain in the desert. Introduce the poet [Ophelia Zepeda](#) to students and display or pass out a copy of her poem "It is Going to Rain."

## Activity (5-10 minutes):

Have students participate in reading the poem twice aloud—one fun approach is to have them respond "I think it is not so" as a chorus each time those words are spoken. You could also pair students and have them read alternating lines aloud.

List the five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste) on the board or display them on the slide. Ask the students to look back at the poem and see if they can identify places the poet is talking about each sense. The repetition of "felt" makes touch predominant but lines also invoke sight, sound, and smell (note: taste can be linked to smell in the second to last line).

Ask students what they have experienced just before rain that Zepeda doesn't include. These ideas can be listed on the board next to each sense or included on your slide.

## Idea Building (5-10 minutes):

Ask students to do some freewriting in response to one or more of the following questions:

What are your favorite memories about rain?  
Why is rain important for you and your family?  
Do you think humans have the power to make it rain? How?

Based on the age and skill level, these can also be discussion questions for the group or questions they talk through in smaller groups or pairs.

### Lesson Prep (5 minutes):

Tell students they will be creating a poem that predicts whether or not it will rain using the five senses. They can decide that yes, it is going to rain in their poem or no, they do not think it is going to rain. They can draw from a real experience they've had and build on a memory or invent a scene using their imagination.

Display and talk through instructions:

- Use your five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste) to decide if it will rain, yes or no
- Write about a memory or use your imagination
- When you get stuck, add a question in your poem, like "Is it going to rain?"
- At the end of your poem, does it rain?
- Optional: practice repetition (using the same word or phrase multiple times)

### Writing (10-20 minutes):

Encourage students to write actively and write past the first time they think they might be "done."

Other questions to propose if students are stumped:

- How do you know if it's going to rain?
- Do animals and plants know it's going to rain? How can you tell?
- Do you always know when it is going to rain or are you sometimes surprised?
- How far in advance do you know it will rain? Hours, minutes, seconds?

### Sharing (10-20 minutes):

Have students share what they've written (voluntarily) with one another and/or the class.

### Extensions:

- Show [this video](#) and discuss Tohono O'odham dances related to rain

- Incorporate [other poetry](#) about rain or integrate portions of [another lesson about rain](#)
- For classrooms with Spanish speakers, share [this recording](#)
- Build in science instruction related to what happens just before rain
- Create a group poem with a line or two from all students
- Have students work with a partner or small group to create their rain poems