

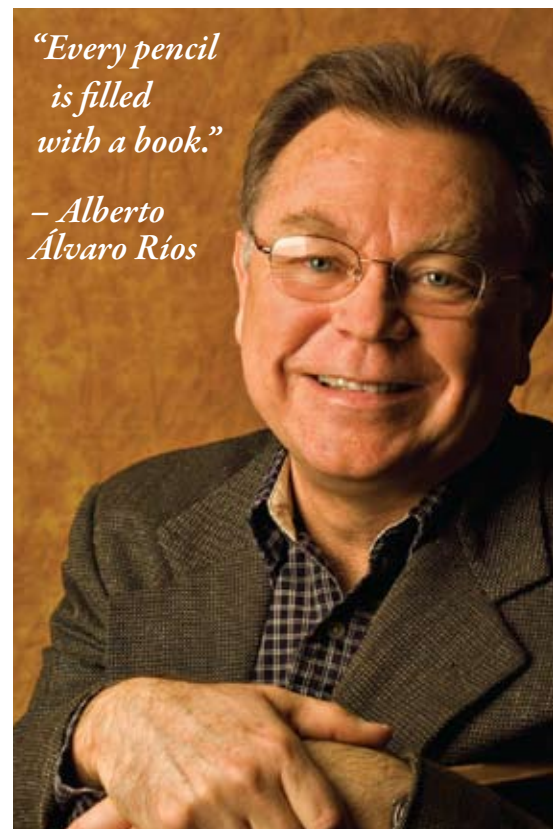
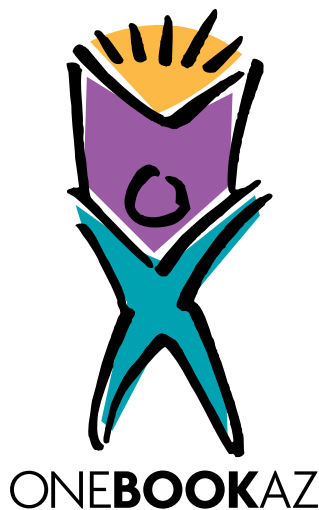
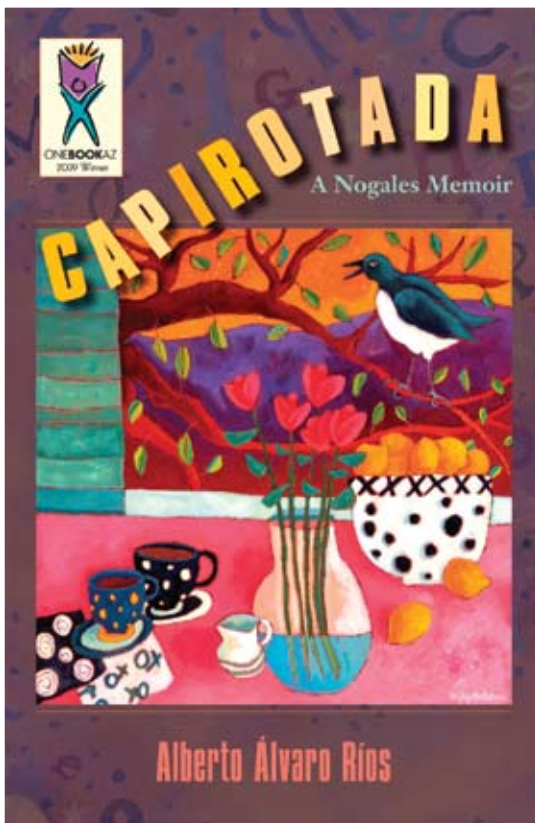
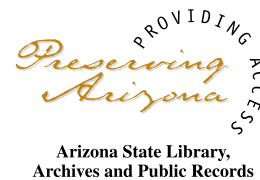
# ONEBOOKAZ 2009

## Capirotada: A Nogales Memoir

by Alberto Álvaro Ríos

# A CREATIVE WRITING CURRICULUM GUIDE

Created by Renee Simms, The Young Writers Program at ASU and  
The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing  
for the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records



# OVERVIEW

This curriculum guide consists of activities and lessons for each of the five parts of *Capirotada* by Alberto Álvaro Ríos. Each activity supports the Arizona Academic Standards. The curriculum is designed to be flexibly used by teachers in grades 4-12. Many of the activities can be customized, simplified or enhanced to support the differentiated needs of students, particularly English language learners.

## CONTENTS:

### **Prologue/Part I**

- “Sense-Scapes.” Students will write poetry that describes a landscape.

### **Part II**

- “I Remember.” Students will write about memorable events from their lives.

### **Part III**

- “Border Lines.” Students will describe geographical areas in new ways while incorporating non-English words into their work.

### **Part IV**

- “Cities Inside Us.” Students will describe their inner lives, including memories, friends, relatives, and events using the metaphor of a city.

### **Part V**

- Author Study

# PROLOGUE/PART I

## “SENSE-SCAPES” WRITING EXERCISE

Arizona Academic Standards Addressed

### **Language Arts**

Strand 2: Writing Elements

Concept 1: Ideas and Concepts

Writing is clear and focused, holding the reader’s attention throughout. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details. Purpose is accomplished.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

Concept 4: Word Choice

Word choice reflects the writer’s use of specific words and phrases to convey the intended message and employs a variety of words that are functional and appropriate to the audience and purpose.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/sstrand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

# PART II

## “I REMEMBER” WRITING EXERCISE

Arizona Academic Standards Addressed

### **Language Arts**

Strand 2: Writing Elements

Concept 1: Ideas and Concepts

Writing is clear and focused, holding the reader’s attention throughout. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details. Purpose is accomplished.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

Concept 2: Organization

Organization addresses the structure of the writing and integrates the central meaning and patterns that hold the piece together.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

Concept 4: Word Choice

Word choice reflects the writer’s use of specific words and phrases to convey the intended message and employs a variety of words that are functional and appropriate to the audience and purpose.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

# PART III

## “BORDER LINES” WRITING EXERCISE

Arizona Academic Standards Addressed

### Language Arts

Strand 2: Writing Elements

Concept 1: Ideas and Content

Writing is clear and focused, holding the reader’s attention throughout. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details. Purpose is accomplished.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

Concept 3: Voice

Voice will vary according to the type of writing, but should be appropriately formal or casual, distant or personal, depending on the audience and purpose.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

Concept 4: Word Choice

Word choice reflects the writer’s use of specific words and phrases to convey the intended message and employs a variety of words that are functional and appropriate to the audience and purpose.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

# PART IV

## “CITIES INSIDE US” WRITING EXERCISE

Arizona Academic Standards Addressed

### Language Arts

Concept 1: Ideas and Content

Writing is clear and focused, holding the reader’s attention throughout. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details. Purpose is accomplished.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

Concept 2: Organization

Organization addresses the structure of the writing and integrates the central meaning and patterns that hold the piece together.

See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

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See <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/writing/articulated/strand2.pdf> for P.O.’s by grade level.

Class Date:	Grade Level: 4th - 12th	Week of Residency:	Day of Residency:
School/Community Center:	YWP Instructor:	Classroom Teacher:	

## LESSON PLAN TITLE: SENSE-SCAPES

### A. Overview of Lesson

1. The purpose of this lesson is to:
  - Review Sensory Details
  - Write using Sensory Details
  - Use Ríos's work as a jumping-off point for thinking about and writing with the senses.
2. At the completion of this lesson, students will:
  - be able to describe, using imagination and all 5 senses, a landscape they've experienced through the sense of touch alone.
3. Writing trait(s) addressed by this lesson:
  - Ideas & Content       Organization       Voice
  - Word Choice       Sentence Fluency       Conventions

### B. Materials/Resources Needed

Paper and pencil. You will also need approximately 6 cardboard boxes or paper bags filled with stuff (1 box or bag per table of 5 students). Each box or bag should contain something different, and ideally, the stuff inside should not be easily identifiable through sense of touch alone. This exercise has been done filling boxes with:

- 1) gravel glued to all inside surfaces
- 2) polar fleece w/ crinkly plastic bags behind
- 3) tangled up saran wrap
- 4) bark, pine cones, eucalyptus seed pods
- 5) metal things (frozen orange juice lids & bread pan) and palm fronds
- 6) egg cartons

### C. Target Vocabulary

*"In this lesson students will need to be familiar with the following terms and concepts..."*

Sensory Details

### D. Interdisciplinary Links (if any)

*"This lesson may reinforce or foster learning in the following subjects or genres..."*

Writing, communication, literature, humanities, science (the five senses).

# TOTAL CLASS TIME: (50 MINUTES)

## 1. Review/Introduction (10 minutes)

Read one or two of the selections listed below. Have students pick out the sensory details in the work. Also have students notice how Ríos uses the senses (are they mixed up?)

In Alberto Ríos's poems and stories, people often speak with their shoulders, think with their stomachs, and listen with their eyes. The typical functions of the body and its senses are entirely mixed up.

Examples:

- Lazaro Luna thinks with his stomach. ("Pig Cookies," p. 17; Pig Cookies)
- Jose and Lazaro speak with their shoulders. ("Saturnino El Magnifico," p. 5; Pig Cookies)
- Don Gustavo listens with his eyes, and touches with his ears. ("Don Gustavo, Who Had a Hand for an Ear," p. 69 & title; The Curtain of Trees).
- Belita feels with her eyes. ("Belita," p. 9; Whispering to Fool the Wind)

## 2. Discussion/Model (5 minutes)

For this assignment, you will let your fingers do the work of not only your fingers, but the work of your nose and your eyes and your ears and your tongue, as well. See, feel, smell, taste, and listen with your fingers.

## 3. Writing Activity (15 minutes)

Step One: Explore

- a. Feel around inside the box (or bag) at your desk.
- b. Let your fingers discover this new place that you can't see with your eyes. "See" with your sense of touch.
- c. Where are you?

Step Two: Write

Once you have figured out where you are through your sense of touch, imagine yourself into this place. Look around. What do you see? What do you hear in this new place? What do you feel? Taste? Smell? Describe this landscape using all 5 of your senses.

## 4. Sharing/Comments (15 minutes)

Ask students to "star" a favorite sensory detail to share.

Share

Provide positive reinforcement

## 5. Close of Lesson/Review (5 minutes)

Review: sensory details, mixed-up senses ("see" with your fingers, etc.)

# DAILY LESSON PLAN

Class Date:	Grade Level: 4th - 12th	Week of Residency:	Day of Residency:
School/Community Center:	YWP Instructor:	Classroom Teacher:	

## LESSON PLAN TITLE: I REMEMBER

### A. Overview of Lesson

1. The purpose of this lesson is to:
  - Encourage students to reflect on memorable events from their lives
  - Write using Sensory Details
  - Write using Figurative Language
2. At the completion of this lesson, students will:
  - be able to describe memorable events from their lives using descriptive detail, imagery and figurative language.
  - be able to organize the memories into a coherent poem.
3. Writing trait(s) addressed by this lesson:
  - Ideas & Content       Organization       Voice
  - Word Choice       Sentence Fluency       Conventions

### B. Materials/Resources Needed

Paper and pencil.

### C. Target Vocabulary

*"In this lesson students will need to be familiar with the following terms and concepts..."*  
Sensory Details, Metaphor, Simile

### D. Interdisciplinary Links (if any)

*"This lesson may reinforce or foster learning in the following subjects or genres..."*  
Writing, communication, literature, humanities, science (the five senses).

## TOTAL CLASS TIME: (60 MINUTES)

### 1. Review/Introduction (10 minutes)

Ask students whether memories are important to writing. Guide the discussion into an understanding that almost all writing is about memory or reflection—events that happened in the past that help us now understand life a little better.

Ask students to think of important memories. Ask them, What is your happiest memory? Saddest? What is the earliest thing you remember? Have students write down five memories. Ask for volunteers to share one memory that they've written. With each volunteer, ask them to provide sensory details of the memory. For example, if the student remembers the first time that they went fishing with their dad, ask them to describe the body of water where they fished, the smell of the fish, how it felt when a fish bit the line, how it felt to touch the fish, what clothes their father wore. Guide the discussion into the five senses and how we need to describe events in writing so the reader can relate to the experience.

### 2. Discussion/Model (15 minutes)

Discuss Part II of *Capirotada*. What are some of the accidents and injuries that Ríos suffered as a child? How are they described? What is his memory of being an altar boy? How does he describe the magician and his trick? What is his memory of tarantulas and scorpions? Discuss favorite lines, imagery, and metaphors from Part II.

Write the first line of a poem on the board like “I remember my first day of high school.” Have students contribute lines to develop the poem. Stress details and figurative language. Read the collaborative poem that you've written on the board.

### 3. Writing Activity (15 minutes)

Each student writes an “I Remember” poem. They can write a list of different memories or choose one memory to develop throughout the poem.

### 4. Sharing/Comments (15 minutes)

Have each student share his or her poem by reading it aloud. To increase anticipation and engagement, the instructor can choose the first reader and have each student choose the next reader once they've read.

### 5. Close of Lesson/Review (5 minutes)

Review the importance of memory and sensory detail to writing.

# DAILY LESSON PLAN

Class Date:	Grade Level: 4th - 12th	Week of Residency:	Day of Residency:
School/Community Center:	YWP Instructor:		Classroom Teacher:

## LESSON PLAN TITLE: BORDER LINES

### A. Overview of Lesson

- The purpose of this lesson is to:
  - Encourage students to use strange ideas
  - Emphasize diction and word choice
  - Encourage connections between unlike things
- At the completion of this lesson, students will:
  - Be able to think of place and geography in new ways
  - Think more critically about word choice
- Writing trait(s) addressed by this lesson:
  - Ideas & Content       Organization       Voice
  - Word Choice       Sentence Fluency       Conventions

### B. Materials/Resources Needed

Paper and pencil.

### C. Target Vocabulary

*"In this lesson students will need to be familiar with the following terms and concepts..."*  
Diction, simile, metaphor

### D. Interdisciplinary Links (if any)

*"This lesson may reinforce or foster learning in the following subjects or genres..."*  
Writing, communication, literature, humanities, geography.

## TOTAL CLASS TIME: (60 MINUTES)

### 1. Review/Introduction (10 minutes)

Discuss the different ways that we can see one object. Explain that we've played this game before when we've looked at clouds and said what the shape of each cloud reminds us of. Have students look at objects in the room and say what the object resembles. Explain that this is what we do when we create metaphors and similes: we compare two unlike objects.

If you want a visual that shows how to see an object in two ways, type in "Picasso" and "bread" in Google images. You should pull up a photo of the painter Pablo Picasso with loaves of bread that could double for large hands.

### 2. Discussion/Model (15 minutes)

Read the poem "Border Lines/Lneas Fronterizas" by Ríos (it's on Ríos's website at <http://www.public.asu.edu/~aarios/fox/page2.html>). What does a world map resemble according to Ríos? Ask students which image do they most see, the cow or the jigsaw puzzle? What other images do they see in a world map? Write examples on the board. Take one example and write a collaborative poem based on that image. For example, a first line of the poem could be, "South America is the shark tooth/my dad wears around his neck on a string"

Ask students which version of the poem they liked better--the English language or Spanish language version? What is the difference between the two? Which words sound better in Spanish? Why? Which words sound better in English? Discuss the connection between music and poetry. Explain that sometimes we choose words in poetry because of the way they sound or the emotion it conveys.

### 3. Writing Activity (15 minutes)

Students will write a poem that compares the world map or a portion of a world map to another object. They should feel free to use words from another language as they choose.

### 4. Sharing/Comments (15 minutes)

Students read their work.

### 5. Close of Lesson/Review (5 minutes)

Review of concepts: strange ideas, diction, word choice.

Class Date:	Grade Level: 4th - 12th	Week of Residency:	Day of Residency:
School/Community Center:	YWP Instructor:		Classroom Teacher:

## LESSON PLAN TITLE: CITIES INSIDE US

### A. Overview of Lesson

1. The purpose of this lesson is to:  
Reinforce details lesson, simile and metaphor, working with strange ideas
2. At the completion of this lesson, students will:  
Be able to write a poem about memories of people, places, and things from the past that includes simile and metaphor and open their imaginations to strange ideas made from two seemingly unrelated memories put together.
3. Writing trait(s) addressed by this lesson:  
 Ideas & Content       Organization       Voice  
 Word Choice       Sentence Fluency       Conventions

### B. Materials/Resources Needed

Paper and pencil.

### C. Target Vocabulary

*“In this lesson students will need to be familiar with the following terms and concepts...”*  
Cliché. Review simile, metaphor and details.

### D. Interdisciplinary Links (if any)

*“This lesson may reinforce or foster learning in the following subjects or genres...”*  
Writing, communication, literature, humanities, psychology (study of our memories).

## TOTAL CLASS TIME: (60 MINUTES)

### 1. Review/Introduction (10 minutes)

Review details/five senses lesson by having volunteers share poems from last time and letting students point out details they heard.

### 2. Discussion/Model (15 minutes)

Read “The Cities Inside Us” by Alberto Ríos (it’s on [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org) website). Discuss poem and simultaneously brainstorm for writing activity by asking students what kind of cities they have inside of them (What is in there?). When they say something like, my dad’s old red car, stop and say, “Red as a what?” thus encouraging the concept of simile. Keep going with this technique, possibly creating a collaborative poem on the board. Also emphasize that the objects and people whirling around in our memory can be randomly put together in a poem in strange new ways.

### 3. Writing Activity (15 minutes)

Prompt students to write 10-12 lines about the cities inside them. Remind them to use their five senses also while including simile and metaphor in each line. Tell them to include people, animals, buildings, household objects, etc. and blend all together. For a group of students that is ready for the challenge, try getting them to make the poem centered around one color or sound theme.

### 4. Sharing/Comments (15 minutes)

Students share their poems and point out similes/metaphors they hear.

### 5. Close of Lesson/Review (5 minutes)

Review simile and metaphor (can be combined with sharing).

# PART V

## AUTHOR STUDY OF ALBERTO ALVARO RIOS

### Resources:

Alberto Alvaro Rios home page: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~aarios/>

Wikipedia page on Alberto Álvaro Ríos: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto\\_Rios](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto_Rios)

**Further Readings:** *The Lime Orchard Woman*, *Whispering to Fool the Wind*, *Teodoro Luna's Two Kisses*, *The Curtain of Trees*, *Pig Cookies*, *The Iguana Killer*, *The Smallest Muscle in the Human Body*

### Questions:

1. According to Ríos, how are daydreaming and writing related? Do you agree?
2. When did Ríos know that he would be an author? How long has he been writing?
3. What is the first book that he published?
4. How has speaking English and Spanish influenced him as a writer?
5. What are some memorable images from Ríos's work? What do you like about the image?  
How is the description unique?
6. Are there recurrent themes in his stories and poems? What are themes that he explores in his writing?