

# Menu Magic!

It's common knowledge—the way to any adolescent's heart is through his or her stomach! “Menu Magic!” provides this route while helping eighth graders review the power of adjectives. Students eat up this project that promises to deliver the opportunity to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate while giving students the chance to work in cooperative groups. All in all, it's an appetizing way to get kids focused on descriptive writing.

The “Menu Magic” project begins with a review of adjectives. Students copy rules that we've reviewed into their language notebooks. Next, we discuss the descriptive role adjectives play in language as we attempt to explain to a friend what we thought of a recent class, sports game, movie, or book without using any adjectives. Then, we talk about all the places we see adjectives in everyday writing, ending up with a look at restaurant menus. After this brief review of adjectives, I then present the directions for the “Menu Magic!” project on a detailed assignment sheet (see Figure 1) and show the students the evaluation rubric (see Figure 2). An easy extension of this project would be to let students bring to class one of their menu creations as we create a classroom smorgasbord of menus and food.

To actually see how well students enjoyed the project, I asked one student, Bethany, to write a reflection of the activity. In part, she wrote:

*Everyone honestly seemed happy to be doing this project. Our team planned and then assigned each other the homework, which was for us to each create a part of the menu*

*and think about possible designs. Ultimately, we decided our theme would be “surfing,” and the menu we created would be for the “Surfer Shack” restaurant. [See menu below.] The next day we were all surprised to realize that everyone had actually done their part of the work, which was rare. All suggestions for the menu were considered, and our group's cooperation was amazing! On the third day, once again, everyone had completed his or her share of the self-assigned homework, and we were ready to color and design the menu. We all worked together as a team, and our menu really began to shape up. That night the homework was simply to bring in agreed upon supplies for the next day. The amount of homework was really small for each of us because we had been working, really working, in class the past few days. On the fourth day, we completed all the finishing touches, and, compared to some of the sloppy, careless work that is often found on less interesting homework and class work assignments, our menu, as*



Bethany's team attracts the surfing crowd.

**MENU MAGIC!**  
**Starring ADJECTIVES!**

Your mission (which you must choose to accept) is to create with your cooperative group members the most interesting, delicious, scrumptious, mouth-watering, tantalizing, colorful, tasteful, tempting restaurant menu you can imagine!

You must complete each of the following items to receive full credit:

1. Design a colorful, interesting cover.
2. Include a game or puzzle for the back cover of your menu to entertain children.
3. Write an interesting story detailing how your restaurant began. You may include photos/drawings of the original owners!
4. Include at least 20 adjectives that appeal to your sense of taste to describe menu items. Use at least 10 additional adjectives for the remainder of the menu.
5. Include the following items:
  - a. appetizers
  - b. soup(s) of the day
  - c. salads and/or salad bar
  - d. entrees/main dishes
  - e. side orders (which may include breads)
  - f. beverages (non-alcoholic, please!)
  - g. desserts
6. Earn bonus points by including the following:
  - a. Chef's Specials
  - b. Special(s) of the Day
  - c. Early Bird Specials
  - d. Dieter's/Lo-Cal Specials
  - e. Vegetarian Specials
7. Consider creating a menu targeted at one of the following specific groups:
  - a. bankers
  - b. doctors
  - c. firefighters
  - d. hula dancers
  - e. parents
  - f. plumbers
  - g. skateboarders
  - h. surfers
  - i. teachers
  - j. teens
8. Try creating a menu for a specific type of restaurant. Ideas to consider include:
  - a. Sandwich Shoppe
  - b. Waffle House
  - c. Ice Cream Saloon
  - d. Crepe Shop
  - e. Sausage Hut
  - f. Avocado Pit
  - g. Pizza Palace
  - h. Hamburger Haven
  - i. Seafood Shanty
  - j. Yogurt Bar
  - k. Onion House
  - l. Steak Stop
9. You must include realistic prices for all items on your menu.

**Figure 1.** Assignment sheet for Menu Magic! project

*well as the menus of all of our classmates, was phenomenal! We had become great at describing things! The menu work brought cooperation, fun, hard work, and happiness to the classroom. It still amazes me how a one-week project could be so uplifting in our classroom! And, besides learning loads about adjectives, we learned how to work together as a team.*

As you can see, "Menu Magic!" helps students think about adjectives. They will probably never peruse a restaurant menu in the same way again after they've created their own menus. More important, they've learned about cooperation, planning, and descriptive writing. Not bad for a week's worth of schoolwork!

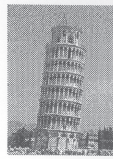
**EVALUATION**

Item	Points
Successful completion of all required items	____/20
Adjective usage (underline or highlight adjectives)	____/20
Neatness	____/20
Creativity	____/20
Spelling, grammar, and punctuation	____/20
Total	____/100

**Figure 2.** "Menu Magic" evaluation rubric



## Menu



### Appetizers:

Mozzarella Sticks: \$2.50

Our cheesy, warm mozzarella sticks are irresistible!

Bruschetta (Original Italian Recipe!): \$4.00

Made with crispy Italian bread and only the  freshest tomatoes.

Bowl of Minestrone Soup: \$6.00

Hot and scrumptious, our minestrone soup is to die for!

Antipasto: \$8.00

Another classic Italian food, a tantalizing start to any meal.

### \*Soup of the Day\*

Boston's Amazing & Delectable Clam Chowder!

\$6.00

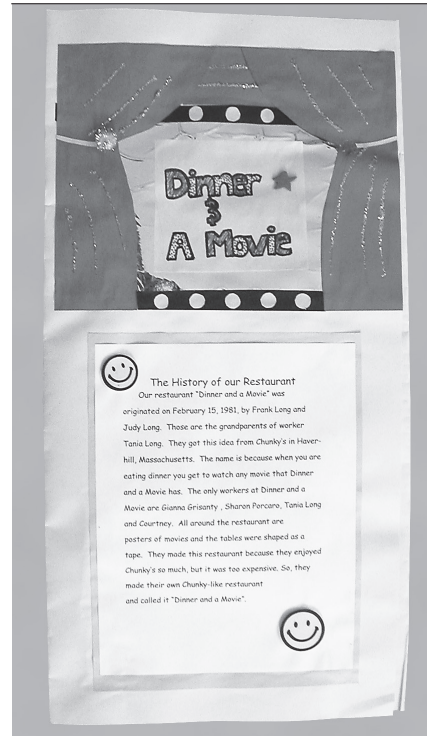
Caesar Salad: \$2.00

Crunchy croutons, savory dressing, what could be better?

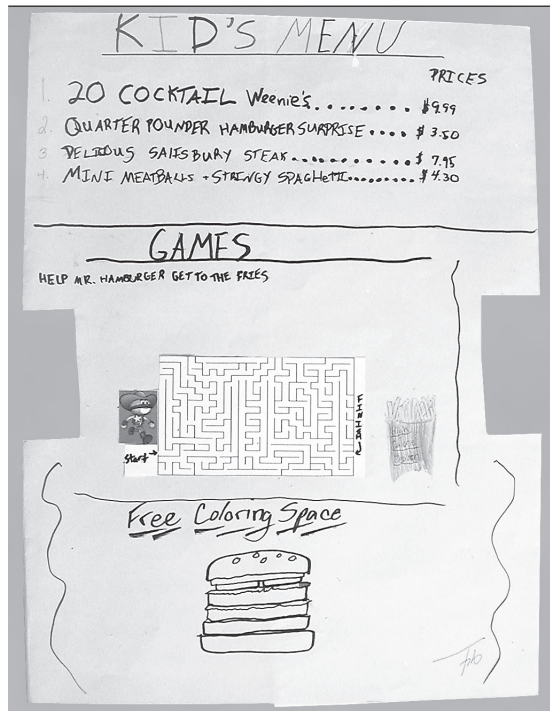
Chicken Salad: \$2.50

Grilled chicken with an amazing flavorful taste!

This descriptive menu used lots of tantalizing adjectives.



This team incorporated the restaurant's theme and history into their cover.



This team knew what kids like to eat *and* what they like to do while waiting for it.

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