Author’s Craft: Word Choice (Overused Words)

Objectives

Oral Language and Grammar
• Share a personal experience in a unique way.
• Use complete sentences.
• Use appropriate nouns, verbs, adjectives, and personal pronouns.
• Generate synonyms.

Reflecting Reading in Writing
• Ask questions.
• Share a beginning, a middle, and an end.
• Analyze characters, setting, problem, and resolution.

Writing
• Revise personal narratives to vary word choice.

Materials
• Modeling text prepared prior to lesson (see Focus)
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

1. Focus (15 minutes)

Display the modeling text (without corrections) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources and read it aloud.

Modeling Text

I went to the library. I went rushed to get a book. It wasn’t there! I went hurried to a new shelf. I found another book. I went stepped over to the table to read it. Then I went strolled back to my classroom. We went out to recess!

Say: Sometimes writers overuse certain words. When a writer uses the same word over and over again, how do you think readers feel? (Allow responses.) That’s right. They get a little bored. They start to lose interest. That’s why strong writers vary the words they use. Look at the personal narrative we just read together. Which word does this writer overuse? (Allow responses.) Yes! This writer uses the word went in almost every sentence! Let’s begin making a list of words writers can use in place of the word went. Think of words that are more descriptive than the word went. Each word can tell how you went.

As a group, brainstorm a list of words that tell about movement, such as moved, stepped, and hurried. Invite students to act out each word. Then reread the personal narrative with students and work together to choose different words for went. Reread the revised text and discuss how it is stronger than the original text.

Words to Use in Place of Went

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>moved</th>
<th>rushed</th>
<th>walked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stepped</td>
<td>wandered</td>
<td>crawled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hurried</td>
<td>strolled</td>
<td>trudged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Word List

Say: We will talk more about overused words tomorrow. Today you will continue to think about adding your writer’s voice to your writing.
2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Distribute students’ writing folders and ask students to choose one of their drafts to work on today. Invite them to work in pairs to talk about how they could add voice to their drafts. Say: Decide whose draft you will revise first. Read the draft together and look for examples of writer’s voice. Then ask each other questions about it. Ask whether the draft shows the writer’s personality. Ask whether the draft lets readers know how the writer feels. Use the answers to your questions to figure out how to better show the writer’s feelings and personality. When you are finished, do the same thing with the other draft. Move among pairs of students to monitor and support their efforts.

If your class includes English learners, you may wish to model using the following oral sentence frames to support their partner talk:

- One time I ______.
- I felt ______.
- My problem was ______.
- My problem was solved by ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 MINUTES)

Say: Now make the changes you and your partner talked about. Use a caret if you need to add a word. Remember that you don’t need to revise every sentence. It’s fine to just try one or two new ideas.

If any students have difficulty figuring out what to revise, ask questions to guide them. In addition use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support to individual students based on your observations. As students finish, say: Now reread your personal narrative to your partner and explain how you used your writer’s voice.

Use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support to individual students based on your observations. As students finish, ask them to check to make sure they have included all the parts of a personal narrative. Say: Point to the characters in your narrative. Point to the setting. Point to the problem. Point to the resolution.

4. Share (5 MINUTES)

Invite two or three students to share their completed narratives. Point out and celebrate examples of characters, settings, problems, and resolutions.

Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

Goal Oriented

- I need to watch that I don’t overuse words when I write.
- I will think of another word I could use to say this to make my writing more interesting to read.

Directive and Corrective Feedback

- You wrote the word ______ many times! Tell me some other words you could use instead that mean almost the same thing.
- How could you write this in a different way?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection

- Check your message to see if you have overused some words. What words could you use instead?
- What questions did you ask to help you find different words to use?
- Tell me what you looked for when you went back and reread your message.

Validating and Confirming

- I like the way you used different words to tell how ______. This makes your writing interesting to read.
- I noticed that you chose your words carefully to make sure you didn’t overuse words. Good work!

Teacher Tip

Reinforce the concept of overused words by finding examples in emergent texts and brainstorming other words the writers could have used.