Author’s Craft: Word Choice (Overused Words)

1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Say: Yesterday we learned that writers sometimes overuse certain words in their writing. We talked about other words writers could use that are more accurate or descriptive. Let’s add this idea to our Personal Narratives anchor chart.

Refer to the anchor chart posted in your classroom. Review with students what you’ve written so far. Then add a new bullet about varying word choice.

Writing My Personal Narrative

• I write about a real event in my life.
• I write about characters, or people.
• I tell the setting, or where the event happens.
• I tell a problem that happens.
• I tell the resolution, or how someone solves the problem.
• I tell a beginning, a middle, and an end.
• I add describing words.
• I use my writer’s voice.
• I vary the words I use.

Personal Narratives Anchor Chart

Say: Today we’ll work together to revise another personal narrative. Display the modeling text (without corrections) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read it aloud.

Yesterday I lost my backpack at school. I looked hunted everywhere for it. I looked in my classroom. I looked checked in the library. Then I looked peeked in the lunch room. Finally I looked searched in the gym. I found it there!

Modeling Text

Say: The writer has used the word looked five times! But I know there are many other words we could use. Let’s brainstorm other words for looked.

Brainstorm a list of words with your students and record the words on chart paper.

Words to Use in Place of Looked

searched  hunted  checked
examined  peeked  glanced

Sample Word List
Say: Now let’s work together to revise our word choice. We will change the word *looked* in some of the sentences to make the writing more interesting.

Work with students using the list of words you brainstormed. Reread the personal narrative together and discuss how varying the word choice improved the writing. Add a bullet about using overused words to the Editing Checklist posted in your classroom.

### Things to Look For in My Writing
- Uppercase letter for the word *I* and at the beginning of sentences and people’s names
- End punctuation
- Complete thought (“who” or what the sentence is about and the action)
- Correct spelling of simple sight words
- Descriptive words and a variety of word choice

### Editing Checklist

#### 2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Distribute students’ writing folders. Say: **Tell your partner what you will work on during independent writing time.** Move among the pairs of students to monitor and support their efforts.

#### 3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 MINUTES)

Support students where they are in their writing. Say: **Remember that as you write or revise, look for words that you may be using too many times. Think of different words you could use instead.** Use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support to individual students based on your observations. Invite students to color-code their drafts by underlining the characters in blue, the setting in red, and the problem in green.

#### 4. Share (5 MINUTES)

Invite students who varied their word choice effectively in their writing to read aloud examples from their drafts. Point out the variety in the words they use. Alternatively you could invite a student who needs help varying word choice to read aloud his or her text and invite other students to suggest words that will make the text more engaging.

### Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

#### Goal Oriented
- I will look for words that I use too many times. I know that using different words will make my writing more interesting to read.
- One way I can show my writer’s voice is to write about how I feel.

#### Directive and Corrective Feedback
- You used the word ______ many times. How could you change this to make it more interesting for me to read?
- Tell me some words that mean almost the same thing as ______. Could you add any of these words to your sentences?

#### Self-Monitoring and Reflection
- Read aloud your sentences. Where could you use pronouns so that you don’t need to repeat _____?
- Show me an example of strong writing in your message. Tell me why you think this part is strong.
- How did you decide what word to use here in place of ______?

#### Validating and Confirming
- You chose some interesting words to use. This made me enjoy reading your sentences.
- I like the way you used synonyms for the word ______. This made your writing sound interesting.
- I like the way you looked for overused words and replaced them with other words.

### Teacher Tip

Keep the Personal Narratives anchor chart on display in the classroom and encourage students to refer to it both as a writing tool and as a checklist for editing and revising their writing.