Author’s Craft: Word Choice (Overused Words)

Objectives

Concepts About Print
• Use appropriate uppercase letters and end punctuation.
• Put spaces between words.

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

Purposeful Phonics Connections
• Apply phonics knowledge to encode unknown words.
• Write high-frequency words.

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

Writing
• Write a personal narrative.
• Demonstrate writer’s voice.

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

1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Display the modeling text you prepared before the lesson on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources and read it aloud. Say: Listen to me read aloud this personal narrative. What word does this writer overuse? (Allow responses.) This writer uses the word said in almost every sentence. Let’s make a list of words writers can use in place of the word said. Think of words that are more descriptive than the word said.

My friend Evan came over. He said he wanted to play catch. I said explained that my mitt was missing! Evan said told me he would help me look for it. We found it under the bed. I said exclaimed that I was ready to play!

Words to Use in Place of Said

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<th>called</th>
<th>shouted</th>
<th>replied</th>
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<td>yelled</td>
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<td>declared</td>
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Sample Word List

Say: Now we will look at our word list to see if we can revise the personal narrative.

Sentences 1 and 2. Say: I’m not going to change these sentences. I haven’t repeated any words yet.

Sentence 3. Say: Uh-oh. I started my last sentence with “He said,” and now I’m starting this sentence with “I said.” I think I’ll look for a word to use other than said. Which word from our list could I use? Allow responses. Agree on a substitution. See the modeling text for a suggestion.


Sentence 5. Say: This sentence sounds fine to me. I am going to leave this sentence as it is.
Sentence 6. Say: I don’t think the word *said* really shows my excitement about finding my mitt. I want to substitute the word *said* with a word that shows more emotion. What word could I use? Agree on a revision and model making the change to your text.

Reread the revised text aloud and discuss how the changes have improved it.

**Say:** Today you will reread your own personal narrative and look for examples of overused words. It might be the word *went* or the word *said,* or it might be another word. You will change some of the words so they are more accurate and descriptive. Your partner will help you, and so will I!

**2. Rehearse** (5 MINUTES)

Distribute students’ writing folders. Ask each student to work with a partner. **Say:** Decide whose draft you will revise first. Read the draft together and see if you have overused the word *went* or *said* or any other word. If you have, brainstorm other words you could use. Then do the same thing with the other draft. Move among the pairs of students to monitor and support their efforts.

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

**Say:** Now make the changes you discussed with your partner. Remember that you don’t need to revise every sentence. Just work on the ones with overused words. If any students have difficulty figuring out what to revise, ask questions to guide them. You can also 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 the words you changed make your writing more accurate and descriptive.

**4. Share** (5 MINUTES)

Invite two pairs of students to share their revised drafts. Point out and celebrate examples where students varied their word choice to write interesting, effective sentences.

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

**Goal Oriented**
- I will look for overused words.
- I use words such as ______ to show how I feel.
- I might describe ______ with the word ______.

**Directive and Corrective Feedback**
- Try ______. Would that work?
- How many times do you use the word _____? What other words could you use instead?
- How could you describe that? What words could you use?

**Self-Monitoring and Reflection**
- What did you ask yourself here to help you choose different words?
- How could you write that using a different word?
- How could you make that sentence even better by varying your word choice?

**Validating and Confirming**
- You looked for words that you used several times and thought of different words to use. Good work!
- You thought about several different words and chose ______. That will help express your personality.
- You fixed the ______! Good thinking!

**Teacher Tip**
Model using a primary-level student thesaurus to look up synonyms for overused words in your personal narratives.