Expand Sentences by Adding Detail

1. Focus

Explain Expanding Sentences by Adding Detail

Say: In a realistic fiction story, I write sentences that give readers information about the characters and the setting. I want to make my characters and settings seem real to my readers. To do this, I need to add details that show the characters’ thoughts and feelings. When we add details to sentences, we make them longer, or “expand” them. For example, instead of writing, “She looked sad,” I would add details: “She looked sad—tears poured down her face.” Now the reader gets a better picture of the character. Today I’m going to show you how to expand sentences by adding detail.

Model Expanding Sentences by Adding Detail

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for details in the sentences as you read the text aloud.

“Today is a very special day,” my mother told Jake. “Maria and I are spending the morning together on the beach . . . just the two of us.”

Say: At the very end of the passage, the author adds a nice bit of detail: “just the two of us,” the mother says. Instead of ending the sentence after “spending the morning together on the beach,” the author expands the sentence with a detail that shows us how much the mother is looking forward to this outing. I’m going to underline this phrase and label it “expanding with detail.” Underline and label the identified phrase.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn about expanding sentences by adding detail.
• Practice expanding sentences by adding detail.
• Discuss how they can apply this strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

**Practice Expanding Sentences by Adding Detail**

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Maria burst into the room. She looked happy.

**Practice Text**

Ask students to work with a partner to expand the sentence by adding detail. Encourage students to use phrases that show instead of tell. Pairs should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and to explain how they used detail to expand the sentences.

**Share Practice Sentences**

Bring students together and invite them to read their sentences aloud and explain the changes they made. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they draft or revise their realistic stories.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We learned that we can expand sentences by adding detail. This gives readers a more complete picture of our characters and settings. As you draft and revise your realistic fiction stories, look for ways to expand sentences by adding detail to them.

Encourage students to add detail to expand sentences in their realistic fiction stories. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share examples of sentences they expanded by adding detail.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

While other students work with partners, or during independent writing time, work with beginning ELs to help them use adjectives to describe people or objects. Hold up an object such as a stuffed animal and name it for students. Then model using an adjective to describe the object. **Say:** The stuffed animal is blue. Then invite students to think of other adjectives or use gestures to describe other qualities of the object, such as: The stuffed animal is small. Write the sentences on chart paper.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: detail/el detalle.