Choose the Best Adjectives

1. Focus

Explain Choosing the Best Adjectives

Say: A writer of a persuasive text such as a book review describes and evaluates the characters and plot of a story. To do this, a writer must use strong adjectives, or describing words, to point out the book’s strengths and weaknesses. For example, the adjective *inspiring* tells readers much more about the reviewer’s response than the adjective *good*. Today I’m going to show you how to include the best adjectives in your persuasive text.

Model How Writers Choose the Best Adjectives

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

Modeling Text

1. “The Princess and the Pea” is not your typical fairy tale. This one breaks the rules. In fact, you could even say it’s goofy.

2. The plot of “The Princess and the Pea” is downright preposterous.

**After example 1.** Say: I see that the writer uses two adjectives in this example. One tells what the fairy tale is not: It’s not typical or normal. Then the writer describes the fairy tale as “goofy.” The word *goofy* is a funny, expressive word that means “silly.” The sentence still would have made sense if the writer had used the word *silly*. However, the word *silly* is overused and not as fun as the word *goofy*. So, I think the writer has chosen the best adjective here. It tells me precisely what this writer thinks of the fairy tale and it makes me want to read more of the review to find out why it’s so goofy.

**After example 2.** Say: Here, the writer describes the plot. She uses the adjective *preposterous* to describe it. This word could again be replaced by the word *silly* and the sentence would still make sense. Yet the choice of the long adjective *preposterous* makes the writer’s statement more dramatic. It tells me that the writer thinks the plot is totally outrageous—and as I read on I realize she means this in a good way: that it’s entertaining because it’s preposterous. The writer’s word choice here has given me a good sense of the strength of her response to the plot. This is crucial in a book review. I think the writer has chosen the best adjective for this part of the review.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Learn to use the best adjectives in a persuasive text.
- Practice choosing the best adjectives to use in persuasive text.
- Discuss how to 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. If necessary, write the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper to support ELs.
2. Rehearse

Practice Choosing the Best Adjectives

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Explain that this is a sentence from a review of a fairy tale and that it only uses the vague adjective nice.

The prince is a nice character.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to rewrite this sentence with strong adjectives. Students may add sentences to further describe the prince. Pairs of students should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class. They should be ready to explain how they used strong adjectives.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain the word choices they made. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they revise their own book reviews and persuasive texts.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that using the best adjectives allows the writer to better describe the characters and the plot of a book in persuasive text. It also allows writers to share their response to the book in a strong way. A good persuasive review analyzes and evaluates the plot and characters. Strong adjectives help you do this. Remember to use the best adjectives you can find when you write your persuasive book review.

Ask students to identify a section of their book reviews where they can revise to choose the best adjectives to use. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to read aloud a section of their book reviews in which they used the best adjectives.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Use illustrations or photographs to introduce the idea of using adjectives for description. For example, point to a dog. Say: This is a dog. The dog is brown. It is a brown dog. Work one on one with beginning ELs to practice using simple adjectives using sentence frames such as:

It is a ______ cat. The cat is ______.
The flower is ______. It is a ______ flower.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Supply the following sentence frames to help them rewrite and add to the practice sentence using strong adjectives:

The prince is ______.
He is a ______ prince.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: adjectives/los adjetivos; persuade/persuadir.