Revise Your Personal Narrative for Word Choice

1. Focus

Explain Revising for Word Choice

Say: We’ve written our drafts and now we’re ready to revise them. When we revise, we read our writing carefully and look for ways we can improve it. One thing we can look for is word choice. When we write a personal narrative, we want to use words that show, instead of tell, our readers what is happening. We need to use strong descriptive words to help our readers visualize the events in our personal narratives and connect to the text. Today I’m going to show you how to revise a personal narrative by making stronger word choices.

Model Revising for Word Choice

Display the modeling text (without revisions) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the passage aloud and ask students to listen for places where they might be able to make better word choices.

Modeling Text

Say: These sentences seem pretty boring, and they don’t tell us much. I think we can choose more accurate and descriptive words to make these sentences more interesting.

Read sentence 1. Say: Does this first sentence really show how the narrator is feeling about going to the orthodontist? He’s really afraid and this sentence doesn’t show this. The words horror stories are much stronger words than the words bad things, and they really help the reader understand how he feels. Model making the revisions.

Read sentence 2. Say: This sentence tells us the braces hurt, but it doesn’t really show me how much. Adding the words like crazy does give me an idea of how much it hurts. Model making the revisions.

Read sentence 3. Say: This sentence tells us that the narrator can’t eat good things. But what does he think are good things? I can add words to show how strongly the writer feels about not being able to eat good things. I’ll cross out eating good things and add candy, no candy bars, and no gooey, chewy goodies. I can just feel those goodies getting stuck in braces. Now the reader...
Knowing how much the narrator is going to miss by having to wear braces. Model making the revisions.

2. Rehearse

Practice Revising for Word Choice

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have to get braces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Braces hurt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I won’t be able to eat anything.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask students to work with a partner to revise the sentences for word choice. Student pairs should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how their word choices improved each sentence.

Share Practice Revisions

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their revised sentences and explain how they changed the text to include stronger word choices. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they revise their own personal narratives.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned how to revise our personal narratives by choosing stronger words. A good personal narrative will help the reader imagine what it is like to have the narrator’s experience. You can make your personal narrative more interesting to the reader by using descriptive and sensory words that show instead of tell.

Encourage students to focus on word choice when they revise their own personal narratives during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferencing flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite students to read aloud a section of their personal narratives that they revised for word choice.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs may have difficulty with this writing process skill. While other students collaborate on the small-group activity or write independently, meet one on one with students to support developmentally appropriate writing skills based on their independent writing and language levels. Since this lesson focuses on word choice, you might consider presenting students with a familiar object and having them list all the descriptive words they can about that object. Support oral language by providing simple sentence frames to help students describe a familiar object. For example:

The blocks are ______.
The book is ______.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner practice.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: descriptive/descriptivo(a); sensory/sensorial.