Use Specific and Accurate Description Words

1. Focus

Explain Using Specific and Accurate Description Words

Say: Informational report writers provide information, or facts, about a subject. They must describe the subject specifically and accurately. For example, let’s say you want to find out about how and why butterflies migrate, but when you find an article, the only information it tells is that some butterflies migrate south and some do not. This general description is not helpful. You need a more specific and accurate description that includes answers to questions about types of butterflies, where they fly, and why they migrate. A good informational report includes precise words—scientific or historical terms and exact facts. Today I’m going to show you how to include specific and accurate description words in your informational texts.

Model How Writers Use Specific and Accurate Description Words

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

Scientists at the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources have learned that the monarchs that travel the farthest have the largest and most narrow wings. These scientists believe that the wing size helps the butterflies carry fat deposits to fuel the journey. Studies conducted by Dr. Zoey Katz, an insect expert in New York City, support the Warnell study.

Modeling Text

Ask students to listen as you read the text aloud and to listen for specific and accurate description words.

Say: The author of this passage could say, “Some monarchs have large, narrow wings. This helps them make their journey.” But that wouldn’t tell me why the large wings are important, why this helps them on the journey, and who found this out. Instead, the author provides specific and accurate information using descriptive words. First of all, the author uses descriptive details in the first sentence that tell me the information comes from scientists at the Warnell School. This is important because it lets me know that the facts to follow are based on a scientific study, not just made up. The words that travel the farthest tell me which specific butterflies the study is referring to. I learn more about these particular butterflies and that they have the largest and most narrow wings. The word these in the next sentence specifically tells me that it is the scientists at Warnell who believe wing size is important. The text goes on to explain why wing size is important—for carrying fat deposits. Then the author
Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning and Intermediate

Work one on one with beginning ELs to practice listing specific, simple facts about an object in the classroom. Help students describe the color, shape, size, purpose, etc. Write the descriptive words on index cards and place them next to the object. Use the following sentence frame to help students talk about the object:

The ______ is ______.

Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete the above partner activity.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: description/la descripción; precise/preciso(a).