Use Emotionally Charged Words

1. Focus

Explain Using Emotionally Charged Words

Say: When I write a persuasive letter, I want to convince my readers to believe or do something. To do this, I use facts to make a case. I can also use powerful words to help change readers’ minds. Words that tend to stir up our emotions, or feelings, are called emotionally charged. For example, say I want to persuade people about the problems polar bears face. I could write, “Polar bears live in the Arctic and eat seals.” But if I write, “Polar bears have a desperate problem and are losing their source of food,” I would have a better chance of influencing readers’ opinions. Why? Words such as desperate tend to create more feelings in readers, helping to change their minds. Today I’m going to show you how to choose emotionally charged words to use in your persuasive letters.

Model How Writers Use Emotionally Charged Words

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

What I see is a disappointment to any kid who loves to swing, climb, or slide.

Modeling Text

Ask students to listen for emotionally charged words as you read the sentence aloud.

Say: The writer has used two emotionally charged words. When she uses the word disappointment, I can sense her frustration and her feeling that the kids at school really have been let down. Then in the same sentence, she uses a very different emotion word, loves, to write about what kids usually do at the playground—swing, climb, and slide—things they can’t do because the equipment is so run down. Putting these words, which have such different meanings, close together, makes each word a little stronger. Thinking about how much kids love to play makes me feel the disappointment that they can’t play even more sharply.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Identify emotionally charged words writers use to influence readers.
• Generate a list of emotionally charged words.
• 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 the Emotionally Charged Words anchor chart onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson and gather magazines that show pictures of people with different emotions.
Create a Class Emotionally Charged Words Anchor Chart

On chart paper, work with students to brainstorm emotionally charged words they might use to influence readers. Begin with words you found in the modeling text. Post this anchor chart for students to refer to throughout the unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotionally Charged Words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disappointment</td>
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<tr>
<td>excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous</td>
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<tr>
<td>honest</td>
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<td>terrible</td>
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<td>selfish</td>
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<td>awesome</td>
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<td>unfair</td>
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<tr>
<td>healthy</td>
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<tr>
<td>loves</td>
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<td>clean</td>
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</tbody>
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Sample Emotionally Charged Words Anchor Chart

2. Rehearse

Practice Using Emotionally Charged Words in Writing

Invite students to work with a partner. Ask them to write a persuasive sentence about their school or playground using emotionally charged words. Students should be prepared to read their sentences to the class and explain the word choices they made to influence readers’ feelings. Remind students that they can use the words on the anchor chart.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read their sentences aloud and explain the word choices they made. Have pairs identify their personal feelings. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they revise their own persuasive letters.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that emotionally charged words can help influence a reader’s opinion. Remember that choosing strong words is an important part of writing persuasive letters. As you write your persuasive letter, remember to use powerful words that help the reader understand your point of view.

Encourage students to apply the strategy of using emotionally charged words in persuasive letters during independent writing time, as appropriate. 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 the emotionally charged words they used in their persuasive letters.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Display visual prompts using the interactive whiteboard resources (or use photos from magazines) and encourage students to name the emotions reflected in each photograph. Model the emotions as needed. You may wish to label each photo.

Intermediate and Advanced

Use the visual prompts, as in the Beginning activity, but help students add to their vocabulary of emotionally charged words. For example, instead of labeling a photograph with the word sad, introduce the words disappointed and frustrated. Encourage students to discuss the meanings of these new words.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: emotion/la emoción.