Use Words That Describe Emotions

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn about using words that describe emotions.
• Practice using words that describe emotions.
• 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. If necessary, write the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper to support ELs.

1. Focus

Explain Using Words That Describe Emotions

Say: When I write a memoir, I want to tell my thoughts and feelings about events and explain why they are important to me. Some words are especially good for expressing happiness, anger, fear, and other emotions. They are often adjectives, though they can be other types of descriptive words as well. They can be vivid, striking words that help readers remember times they have felt similar emotions themselves. Or they can be simple, well-placed words that describe a person’s feelings precisely. Sometimes called emotion words, memoir writers use these words to describe their responses to events in their lives. Today I’m going to show you how to use emotion words in your memoirs.

Model How Writers Use Words That Describe Emotions

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

Modeling Text

Read example 1. Say: In this example, the writer uses the words white-faced and trembling to describe the emotions of the children after they’d been frightened by scary stories. The writer could have just written, “After we were frightened,” but these emotion words more clearly describe what he felt. They provide visual images of the fear the children felt—as a reader, I can actually picture someone who is white-faced or trembling from fear. The words remind me of times when I’ve been scared, too. I see that this memoir writer has used emotion words very effectively to describe feelings he had at this moment in his life.

Read example 2. Say: In this example, I see the simple emotion word happy set up as a contrast to the strong emotion word petrified. The writer could have just used the word afraid here, but petrified has a stronger effect. Through his word choice, the writer has placed less emphasis on the happiness he felt and more emphasis on his fear. The writer has again helped me understand the emotions he was feeling at a time in his life through his use of descriptive language.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Words That Describe Emotions

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

The day of my birthday party arrived.

Ask students to work with a partner to rewrite the sentence using emotion words. Encourage one student from each pair to describe a memorable recent birthday as in a memoir. Invite students to create sentences around this experience using richly descriptive words to explain their emotions. Students should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class. They should be ready to explain how they used emotion words in their sentences.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read their sentences aloud and explain how they used emotion words to create the sentences. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write or revise their own memoirs.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Today we learned about using words to describe feelings and emotions. Remember, a good memoir describes the thoughts and feelings you had about events in your life. You can use emotion words in a memoir to reveal your thoughts and feelings to your readers.

Encourage students to keep this mini-lesson in mind as they plan and draft their memoirs. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of descriptive language and other craft elements using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to share their ideas about the thoughts and emotions they will include in their memoirs.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Invite beginning ELs to draw pictures of things that make them feel happy, sad, excited, and so on. Help them label key vocabulary with self-stick notes or write short sentences to accompany each picture using the following sentence frames:

_____ makes me happy.
_____ makes me sad.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Supply the following sentence frames to help them add descriptions of emotions to the practice text:

It was the day of my birthday party. I was ______.
On the day of my party, I felt ______.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: adjective/el adjetivo; describe/describir.