Revise Your Historical Fiction for Word Choice

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn to revise and strengthen a historical fiction story by using figurative language, including similes, personification, and idioms.
• Revise sections of their own writing and share their revisions with the class.
• Discuss how they can apply this skill to their own 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 (without revisions) and the practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. Leave enough space between lines to allow you to insert new text. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.

1. Focus

Explain Revising for Word Choice

Say: Once we finish a draft of a historical fiction story, it’s time to revise. When we revise a draft, we read it carefully and then make changes to improve it. One of the things I focus on when I revise a historical fiction story is word choice. I want to make sure I use language that brings my story to life for my readers. One way to do this is by using figurative language such as similes, personification, and idioms. Today I’m going to show you how to revise your historical fiction story by using figurative language.

Model Revising for Word Choice

Display the modeling text (without revisions) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read each sentence aloud and model revising for word choice.

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a simile. Remember a simile compares two things by using the words like or as. By adding “as warm as the stove back home,” I can show the reader that Wen and Chang are homesick and are looking forward to finishing. I’ll add these words to the end of my sentence. Model revising the text.

2. Rehearse

Practice Revising for Word Choice

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

1. Wen could not sit still.
2. The coyotes howled in the distance.
3. Chang thought Wen was hurt.
4. The mountain was bigger than anything they had ever seen.

Practice Text

Invite students to work with a partner to revise the sentences using figurative language. Each pair should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how figurative language 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 figurative language. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they revise their own historical fiction.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Provide beginning ELs with practice using descriptive vocabulary. Help them describe objects or people in the classroom. Expand on their single word descriptions. For example, if someone is described as tall, say: as tall as a mountain. If something is described as round, say: round like a ball. Encourage students to try expressing descriptive phrases using like or as.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner practice. Support oral language by providing simple sentence frames to help them practice writing similes:

The campfire was as hot as ______.
The coyotes howled like ______.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: descriptive/descriptivo(a); figurative/figurado(a); language/el lenguaje.