Creative Writing Lesson
Using Better Descriptive Words

Objective

Students will understand the following:

1. Concrete words and phrases convey narrative details more precisely.

Grade Level

Grades 3-7

Standards

Supports common core standards in Language Arts.

1. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. (CCS.ELA.Literacy.W.X.3 - Where “X” is the grade level.)


Materials

1. Fill in the Blank Stories
2. Grade Appropriate Adjectives List, Adverbs List, Verbs List

Vocabulary

Adjective – A word used to describe a noun. Examples include words that tell what something looks like, acts like, smells like, tastes like, sounds like, feels like.

Verb- A word that conveys action or state of being.

Adverb- A word used to describe a verb, adjective, or other adverb. Adverbs tell how, where, when, how much.
Procedures

Explain what STRONG describing words and action verbs are.
Adjectives, Adverbs and Verbs can all make a story more precise. Explain how choosing stronger descriptive words tells the reader more about the character or situation with fewer words.

A powerful action verb not only tells what someone is doing, the verb itself conveys how the action is being done. For example:

- To walk compared with to plod, to trudge, to scamper.
- To tell compared with to whisper, to blabber, to holler
- To make compared with to brew, to create, to liquefy

A strong adjective describes precisely how something looks, feels, tastes, sounds, acts. It can tell how or why something is the way it is being described. For example:

- “An ugly finger” compared with “a hideous, crooked, oozing finger”. (Note how “ugly” doesn’t make you feel much, but the longer description makes the listener physically cringe.)
- “A big room filled with dancers” compared with “A grand room sparkling with bejeweled dancers.”

A strong adverb describes more precisely how, when, where, in what manner something is done. For example.

- “The boy stood at the entrance” with “The boy nervously stood at the entrance” or “The boy cleverly stood at the entrance” or “The boy carelessly stood at the entrance”

✔ Class Activity
Using the powerful writing words lists, ask students to provide more concrete words for the following examples:

- To Eat: ____ (verb)
- She wore a _____ hat (adjective)
- He announced his plans ______ (adverb)

Show how choose strong describing words change the course of the story.
Use this story starter to demonstrate how different describing words set a completely different tone and plot for the same basic story:

A ____ fairy wants to go to the festival but she meets a ____ dragon on the way.

Choose an adjective for each blank and see how different the story can be.

A cheerful fairy wants to go to the festival but she meets a baby dragon on the way.
A combat boot-wearing Fairy wants to go to the festival but she meets a ferocious dragon on the way.
A gullible fairy wants to go to the festival but she meets a clever dragon on the way.

✔ Class Activity
Provide students with a fill in the blank story and grade appropriate powerful writing words lists.
1. Have each student complete a fill in the blank story with adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.
2. Choose a method to share the stories, and contrast the tone of the story and what plot they anticipate the story would have.
   a. Students form small groups in which all students have completed the same fill in the blank story. Each student reads his/her story to the group. Students discuss as a small group.
   b. The teacher chooses several students’ stories to share with the class and guides discussion.
   c. All students post their stories to a shared drive and classmates can choose several to read and comment.
3. For an extended activity, have students continue the story beyond the opening paragraph to create a complete story with beginning, middle and end.

More resources to extend the lesson

- Completed fill in the blank stories – check out these sample completed fill in the blank stories.
- Super Easy Creative Writing Formula - creative writing how to guide for kids
- Creative Writing Prompts for Kids – mix and match creative writing prompts to get a story started