

Lesson Skill: Identifying synonyms

Strands Oral Language, Reading

SOL 2.2, 2.7

Materials

- Hand puppets (can make them out of paper lunch bags or socks)
- Sentence strips (or pieces of paper cut into strips)
- Chart paper, whiteboard, or interactive whiteboard
- Markers

Lesson

1. Bring in several hand puppets with various facial expressions, such as smiles, frowns, or angry eyebrows. Present them to students, and have them identify what emotion they see: happy, sad, angry. Then ask them if they can think of other words to describe the same emotions: glad, joyful; down, gloomy; upset, mad.
2. Ask students if they think it is fun to be able to have different words for the same meaning, and express that the English language can be exciting in this way. Tell them these words are called *synonyms*.
3. Prompt students to think of other pairs of words that mean the same thing. Write these synonyms on sentence strips, and cut them apart so that you have one word for each student in the class. If students are having difficulty thinking of synonyms, give them one of these words and prompt them to think of a synonym: big/huge, tiny/small, scared/afraid, cute/pretty, rock/stone, loud/noisy, sofa/couch, dinner/supper, store/market, lady/woman, rug/carpet, yell/scream, finish/end, start/begin, quick/fast.
4. Shuffle the words. Explain to students that they will be going on a synonym hunt and that each of them will receive a card with a word on it that they must not look at until they are told. The object of the game is for each student to move around the room and find his/her partner, who has a word that means the same thing. When students find their partners, they should sit down. The game is over when each student has found a partner. To begin, fold each word in half so that the word cannot be seen and give one word to each student. When each student has a card say, "Let the hunt begin!"
5. When all students have found their partners, review each pair to make sure that the words are synonyms. If time permits, shuffle the cards and play again.
6. As a fun follow-up activity or one to incorporate into the lesson, have students make their own puppets with various facial expressions. They can create puppet skits with partners or groups and think of synonyms.

Assessment

- Assess students' abilities to identify synonyms by observing them as they find their partners during the synonym hunt.

Attachments, Links, or Resources

- Online thesaurus: <http://thesaurus.com/>

Strategies for Differentiation

- Prepare sentences with words underlined, and have students select a synonym from a word box for the underlined word in each sentence. For example, have students choose from among the words *huge*, *fast*, *couch*, *small*, and *large* to select synonyms for the following:
 - The big elephant walked out of the forest.
 - We sat on the sofa to watch our favorite TV program.
 - I took a quick bath.
 - The tiny ant carried a big stick.
- To help struggling readers read their cards, provide pictures of the words.
- Using titles of familiar books, ask students to replace the book titles with synonyms.