

Lesson Skill: Adding descriptive detail

Strand Writing

SOL 1.13

2.12

Materials

- Short writing piece that lacks descriptive details (6–8 sentences)
- 4 to 6 samples of fiction that portray strong descriptive details
- Chart paper and markers
- Copies of students' writing
- Available technology

Lesson

1. Display the short writing piece that lacks descriptive detail. Read it aloud, and ask students if the writing creates a clear image in their minds. Ask if they have any thoughts on why it does not, then discuss that when writers use descriptive details, the reader has a clearer image of what is being presented.
2. Collect a variety of fiction samples (4 to 6 selections), ranging in reading level, that contain strong, descriptive details. Tell students that they are going to identify descriptive details that authors use in their writing. Read the excerpts from each aloud to the class. As each excerpt is read, have students identify the strong, descriptive words. Model using the first excerpt.
3. As students identify strong, descriptive words, ask if that specific word/phrase helps form a clearer image in their minds. If yes, then write the word on the chart. When students finish identifying the strong descriptive details in each excerpt, have them take turns reading the words, and tell them they will be writing their own descriptions that will create images in the reader's mind.
4. Display the same writing from the beginning of the lesson. Explain that descriptive details will be added to the piece to create a clearer image in the mind of the readers. Model how to read each sentence and use words from the chart to add details. Model how to insert words into a sentence without erasing the entire writing piece. Periodically reread the story to ensure that a clear image of the writing is being created in the mind of the reader.
5. Allow students to choose one of their own previously written pieces that lacks strong, descriptive details. Using the chart, have students add words to their writing that will create a clearer image in the mind of their readers. Provide the opportunity for students to share their creative writing; then, ask them to summarize, in their own words, why good writers use descriptive details.

Strategies for Differentiation

- Provide a simple sentence, and ask students to draw a picture of what they visualize. Compare pictures. Add more descriptive words to the sentences, and have students draw another picture of what they visualize. Then, add even more descriptive words, and compare the differences in the pictures.
 - Picture 1: The cat sat on the fence.
 - Picture 2: The fat, orange cat sat the fence.
 - Picture 3: The fat, orange cat sat on the broken, wooden fence.
- Prepare sentences on sentence strips with a blank with missing adjectives for students to complete. Distribute pictures that correlate to the sentences.
- Show a model of a paragraph with details. Have students identify the details by highlighting them.