

NARRATIVE WRITING: SENSORY LANGUAGE



GRADE 6

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Classroom Procedure:

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students to provide a list of words describing a desert. Write the words on the board. Ask students to make sentences with some of the common words (hot, dry, sandy, etc.). Call on students to read the sentence. Write the student sentence on the board and use a Thesaurus to find words to substitute for the students' words. Explain to students these words are called sensory words, and using more powerful sensory words helps readers to place themselves in stories.
2. Distribute *Sensory Words and Phrases* content pages. Read and review the information with the students. Assist students in answering the questions. Use the additional resources to enhance understanding.
3. Distribute the Activity page. Organizes students in groups of two or three students. Distribute thesauruses or have students access electronic thesauruses online on computers. Read and review the instructions.
4. Distribute chart paper to students. Have the students create anchor charts of words and post exemplary charts on the classroom walls for students to review. Or have students present their table to the whole class.
5. Distribute the Practice page. This is an independent exercise but can be completed in groups. Check and review the students' responses.
6. Distribute the Homework page. The next day, check and review the students' responses.
7. In closing, ask students: What did they learn about thesauruses? How can sensory words be used to attract a reader's attention and make the reader feel as if they are part of the story? How do sensory words help readers create vivid images?

Approximate Grade Level: 6

Objectives: Students will know sensory words and details are words that enhance a writer's story and engage readers. Students will understand the importance of using sensory language in narrative writing. Students will gain an understanding of the purpose of a thesaurus.

State Educational Standards*

LB.ELA.LITERACY.W.6.3.D

LB.ELA.LITERACY.W.6.3

LB.ELA.LITERACY.W.6.3.C

LB.ELA.LITERACY.L.6.4.C

Class Sessions (45 minutes):

At least 2 class sessions.

Teaching Materials/Worksheets:

Sensory Details and Phrases content pages (2), Activity pages (2), Practice page, Homework page

Student Supplies:

Handouts, thesaurus, large chart paper (for anchor charts), pencils, pens, or highlighters

Prepare Ahead of Time:

Copy handouts.

Options for Lesson: Students may work alone or in groups for the Activity. Some students may not know precisely how to use a thesaurus to find words to replace more common words. A good introduction to the lesson is to show the video..

Fun Comic Introducing How to Use a Thesaurus to Look Up Synonyms and Antonyms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6E3TiZbTXQY>

*Lessons are aligned to meet the education objectives and goals of most states. For more information on your state objectives, contact your local Board of Education or Department of Education in your state.

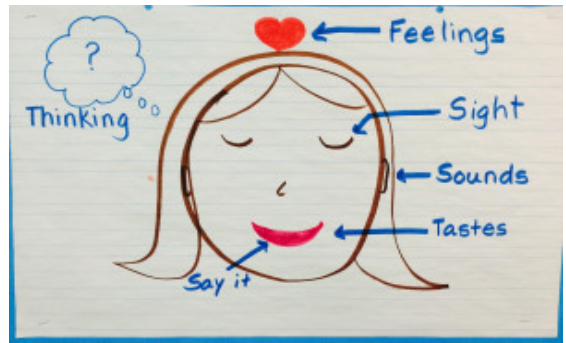


Teacher Notes

The lesson introduces the concept of using precise descriptive words and phrases or sensory language to convey ideas in narrative writing. Students tend to use the same common words (hot, cold, etc.) when writing. The lesson teaches students to power up student writing by selecting sensory details and compelling language in narrative essays. Students will learn to replace common words with strong sensory words found in a thesaurus.

Sensory Words and Phrases

Ms. Herndon was Carol's favorite teacher. Ms. Herndon taught writing, and unlike Carol's other Language Arts teachers, Ms. Herndon made writing enjoyable. Today, Ms. Herndon posted this chart on the wall. Ms. Herndon explained, "If you want your writing to be more interesting, you need to include sensory details. Sensory details are words and phrases expressing feelings or emotions. Sensory details are words that readers can relate to."



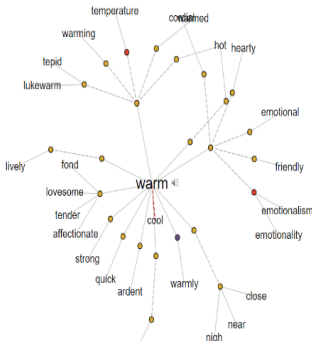
Sensory details include sight, smell, sounds, tastes, emotions or feelings, and touch. Ms. Herndon wrote these words on the board. "What type of sensory word are these?" asked Ms. Herndon. Fill in the missing information on the board.

Sensory Detail Word	Sense	Use it in a sentence....
bleary solemn balmy bland acid dazzling glossy creak gritty howl bitter rancid peppery giddy lumpy squeal angry tarnished gloomy	sight	He was bleary eyed from reading the small print.

Ms. Herndon said, "In place of using ordinary words like 'hot' or 'cold,' can you think of two sensory words that are more interesting?" 1. _____ 2. _____

Think of synonyms or use a Thesaurus if you are having trouble. A thesaurus is a book that lists words in groups of synonyms. Most dictionaries list synonyms you might consider using in place of ordinary words as well, but a thesaurus is specifically designed to help you find alternative words or phrases.

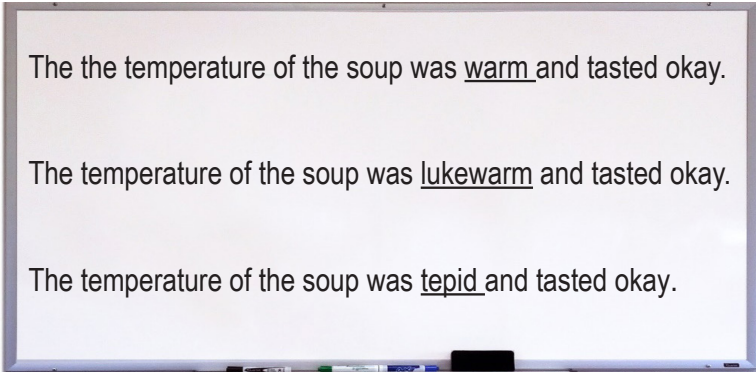
Sensory Words and Phrases



Trey raised his hand and asked, “Are there really that many words that mean the same thing, and what’s wrong with using simple words like warm? Using a thesaurus seems like a lot more work to me.” Ms. Herndon smiled and then pulled up on the computer one of her favorite sites, Thinkmap Visual Thesaurus. She typed the word ‘warm’ in the box, and this screen popped up. The entire class was surprised by how many words or related words popped up just for the word, warm. Ms. Herndon explained, “There is nothing wrong with the word, warm. If you want a reader to share how warm feels, there may be a better sensory word or phrase.”

Ms. Herndon continued with this example; she wrote on the board. “Notice how substituting a new word from the thesaurus for the word, ‘warm’ intensifies the experience of the reader.”

How is the word tepid and lukewarm different from warm? _____



Does the word tepid and lukewarm improve the description of the soup’s temperature?

Let’s make an additional change to the sentence. Subsitute the word ‘flavorless’ for okay. How does the word flavorless change the sensory description of the soup? _____

Rewrite the sentence by substituting the words bland, flat, and savorless for the word flavorless.

bland: _____

flat: _____

savorless: _____



How do the words change the sensory description of the soup?





Activity

Name _____ Date _____



Instructions: With a partner, in the table, write as many words in each sensory category as you can think of. Go to the next page and follow the directions to complete the Activity.

Sight	Sound	Touch	Taste	Smell	Emotion/ Feeling



Instructions: Choose two words from each sensory category on the previous page. Use a thesaurus, and write as many words as you can that substitute for the original word.

Sight	Sound	Touch	Taste	Smell	Emotion/Feeling
Word:	Word:	Word:	Word:	Word:	Word:
Word:	Word:	Word:	Word:	Word:	Word:
Thesaurus	Thesaurus	Thesaurus	Thesaurus	Thesaurus	Thesaurus



Practice

Name _____ Date _____



Instructions: From the Activity page, choose one sensory word from each sensory category. Write a sentence using the word. Then write a sentence using a word from the thesaurus that makes the sentence more interesting. An example is done for you.

Sense	Sensory Word	Thesaurus Word	Sentences
Sound	scream	shriek	She screamed in fear when she saw the snake. She shrieked in fear when she saw the snake
Sense	Sensory Word	Thesaurus Word	Sentences
Sight			
Sound			
Touch			
Taste			
Smell			
Feeling / Emotion			



Homework

Name _____ Date _____



Instructions: Write next to each word the sensory category (Sight, Sound, Touch, Taste, Smell, or Feelings / Emotions). The first one is done for you.

Word	Sensory Category	Word	Sensory Category
Cold	Touch	Demure	
Twinkling		Dingy	
Yelp		Blare	
Velvety		Creamy	
Zesty		Musty	
Whiff		distant	
Livid		Misty	
Streaked		Shrill	
Squawk		Prickly	
Slimy		Peppery	
Tangy		Pungent	
Scented		Timid	
Aloof		Gleaming	
Gloomy		Limp	
Rumble		Savory	
Gritty		Acrid	
Ripe		Stimulated	
Moldy		Waft	



Instructions: From the Activity page, choose one sensory word from each sensory category. Write a sentence using the word. Then write a sentence using a word from the thesaurus that makes the sentence more interesting. An example is done for you.

Sense	Sensory Word	Thesaurus Word	Sentences
Sound	scream	shriek	She screamed in fear when she saw the snake. She shrieked in fear when she saw the snake
Sense	Sensory Word	Thesaurus Word	Sentences
Sight	Answers will vary	Answers will vary	Answers will vary. Check to see if the student used the word from the thesaurus correctly.
Sound			
Touch			
Taste			
Smell			
Feeling / Emotion			



Instructions: Write next to each word the sensory category (Sight, Sound, Touch, Taste, Smell, or Feelings / Emotions). The first one is done for you.

Word	Sensory Category	Word	Sensory Category
Cold	Touch	Demure	Feelings / Emotions
Twinkling	Sight	Dingy	Sight
Yelp	Sound	Blare	Sound
Velvety	Touch	Creamy	Touch, Taste
Zesty	Taste	Musty	Smell
Whiff	Smell	Distant	Feelings / Emotions
Livid	Feelings / Emotions	Misty	Sight
Streaked	Sight	Shrill	Sound
Squawk	Sound	Prickly	Touch
Slimy	Touch	Peppery	Taste
Tangy	Taste	Pungent	Smell, Taste
Scented	Smell	Timid	Feelings / Emotions
Aloof	Feelings / Emotions	Gleaming	Sight
Gloomy	Feelings / Emotions	Limp	Touch
Rumble	Sound	Savory	Taste
Gritty	Touch	Acrid	Smell
Ripe	Sight, Smell, Touch	Stimulated	Feelings / Emotions
Moldy	Smell	Waft	Smell

Some words may be used in more than one sensory category, depending on the context. For example, a cactus feels prickly to the touch, and an irritable person can be called prickly. When reviewing, ask students to use the word in a sentence for context.