

GRADE 4 English Language Arts Writing Lesson 3

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in boldface type inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should not be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (\Rightarrow) by them.

Purpose of Lesson 3:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- practice using descriptive words,
- practice using sensory words, and
- practice revising for more specific language.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheets Writing Lesson 3 – 1
- Pencils

LESSON 3: Writing

Following your introductory remarks to students, say:

Today we are going to work on several skills that a writer uses. It seems that writers always know exactly what word to use! However, the truth is that writers sometimes struggle to find exactly the right word!

When you are describing something or someone, you must use very specific or exact words. Writers know the importance of using the exactly right words! Today we are going to work on using specific and exact words.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 3 – 1.
Be sure every student has a pencil.

Look at this first passage, “Emergency.” Follow along as I read it aloud.

To make the point that the word *said* can be very boring, read this passage with little or no expression in your voice.

I was in my room playing last night. Suddenly I heard my mom say, “Adam! Adam! Come quick and help me. Hurry to the kitchen.”
“What do you want?” I said, starting downstairs.
“Come on, hurry up!” said Mom. “I need your help, now!”
“Mom, there’s water coming out of the bottom of the washer!” I said. “It’s a such a mess!”
“Yes, son, that’s why I need your help,” said Mom. “Get the mop and start mopping.”
“Yes, m’am!” I said.

Did the writer of that story use specific words? (Response: no)
Did the writer seem to use only one verb – said? (Response: yes)

It did seem that there were way too many *said*s in that story. Let’s see whether we can revise or change the sentences. Let’s substitute a more exact word than *said* in some of these sentences.

Don't you think that, if there were water gushing out of the washer, Mom might just be a little upset! I know I would!
Let's do some revising. We are going to replace *said* with more exact words that fit the mood of this story.

I was in my room playing. Suddenly I heard my mom say, "Adam, Adam! Come quick and help me. Hurry to the kitchen." What word might be used to replace *say*?

(Responses might include yell, holler, call, shout)

Draw a line through *say* and replace it with a more exact word.

Students do not have to all use the same word. Hopefully, they will share numerous possible replacements.

"What do you want?" I said, starting downstairs. What word might be used to replace *said*? (Possible responses: asked; inquired)

Draw a line through *said* and replace it with a more exact word.

"Come on, hurry up!" said Mom. "I need your help now!"

What word might be used to replace *said*?

(Possible responses: called, answered, shouted, replied)

Draw a line through *said* and replace it with a more exact word.

"Mom, there's water coming out of the bottom of the washer!" I said. "It's such a mess."

What word might be used to replace *said*?

(Possible responses: yelled, hollered, cried)

Draw a line through *said* and replace it with a more exact word.

"Yes, son, that's why I need your help," said Mom. "Get the mop and start mopping."

What word might be used to replace *said*?

(Possible responses: answered, replied)

Some students might think *said* is the best word for this one; that choice is fine.

Draw a line through *said* and replace it with a more exact word.

"Yes, m'am," I said.

What word might replace *said* in this sentence?

(Responses: answered, replied, responded)

Draw a line through *said* and replace it with a more exact word.

Say:

Now, will one of you share the new and improved version of this story?

Allow for sharing.

Using more specific words really helped that story! It was pretty plain with just the word *said*. Actually, the story was boring!

Now in this next section, we have some sentences that don't really say anything! Without details, without exact language, these end up being boring, *plain vanilla sentences*.

Let's work on them to improve them.

Now say:

Number one. "This book is good." Well, that sentence is about as plain as you can get! How could you improve this sentence?

(Possible responses that focus on *good*: interesting; exciting; great)

Yes, those exact words will help the sentence some. However, wouldn't it be even better if we put in the title of a book?

Allow time for students to name several titles. It is not necessary for everyone to use the same title.

Remind students to underline the title of the book.

Call on a volunteer to share the new and improved sentence.

Number two needs some help also. "That shirt is nice." How can we improve this sentence? Pause. Let's find a more exact word for *nice*.

(Possible responses: expensive; silk; attractive; pretty)

Could you possibly tell the reader more about that shirt? What color is it? What style is it? Where is it? Please rewrite the sentence using the very specific language.

Allow time for students to complete the task.

Have students read their new and improved sentences aloud.

Good! A writer revises or improves his sentences so that the reader has very clear and exact details.

When you write a description, you use details. Those details are often sensory words. What are your five senses?

(Response: sight; sound; smell; touch; taste)

Let's practice developing some sensory images.

Look at number three. Write three words that tell how something might sound. What are some sound words?

(Possible responses: shout; whisper; sizzle; whine; cry)

Now, write three sounds on your paper.

Allow time to complete the task.

Give hints, if necessary: what sound does the microwave make?

Go on to number four. Write three words that tell how something might taste. (Possible responses: salty; spicy; hot; cold; sour; sweet)

Now, you write three words on your paper.

Allow time to complete the task.

The next one wants you to think of three words that tell how something might smell.

(Possible responses: greasy; sweet; spicy; flowery; musty; rotten)

You select three smells and write them on your paper.

Allow time to complete the task.

Number six asks you to write three words that tell how something feels. (Possible responses: rough; smooth; cold; hot; wet; dry)

Write three words that tell how something might feel.

Allow time to complete the task.

Number seven asks you to write three words that tell how something might look.

(Possible responses: dark; bright; dim; dusty; messy; colorful)

On your paper, write three words that tell how something might look. Allow time to complete the task.

You did a good job of collecting some very specific words to use in a descriptive composition. Make sure you use specific words along with sensory details!

Say:

We will now practice writing some descriptive sentences. On your paper, write a sentence to describe the playground. Remember you are to use very specific words and sensory details. Tell me what the playground looks like or how it sounds.

Allow time for students to complete the task.

(Possible responses: The playground is crowded with screaming children. The children raced across the playground to the swings.)

Have students share their sentences.

This time let's describe your classroom. Be sure to use exact or specific words. You need to write so that someone who has never seen this classroom will be able to visualize it or get a picture of it in his or her brain.

Allow time to complete the task.

Call on a volunteer to share his or her descriptive sentence.

Last one. Write a sentence to describe your favorite dessert. Use exact words and sensory details.

Allow time to complete the task.

Call on a volunteer to share his or her descriptive sentence.

Don't forget to use very specific, exact words! Make us really hungry for that dessert!

NAME _____

EMERGENCY

I was in my room playing last night. Suddenly I heard my mom say,
“Adam! Adam! Come quick and help me. Hurry to the kitchen.”

“What do you want?” I said, starting downstairs.

“Come on, hurry up!” said Mom. “I need your help, now!”

“Mom, there’s water coming out of the bottom of the washer!” I said.
“It’s such a mess!”

“Yes, son, that’s why I need your help,” said Mom. “Get the mop and
start mopping.”

“Yes, m’am!” I said.

1. This book is good.

2. That shirt is nice.

3. Write three words that tell how something might sound.

4. Write three words that tell how something might taste.

5. Write three words that tell how something might smell.

6. Write three words that tell how something might feel.

7. Write three words that tell how something might look.

1. the playground

2. the classroom

3. your favorite dessert
