Narrative Writing: Transition Words

Third Grade  Writing  55 minutes  Standards: W.3.3.C

by Emily Wakabi  June 27, 2015

First, get your students ready to learn. This lesson will keep students engaged as they learn about using the correct transition words when writing personal narratives.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to use transition words and phrases to indicate sequential events in a personal narrative.

Materials and Preparation

- Notecards with transition words (e.g. first of all, before long, or afterwards) written on them, one per student
- Chart paper
- Writing journals

Key Terms:

- transition words
Lesson

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Ask the class to put their thumbs up if they have ever baked cookies or a cake.
- Ask, "When you start reading the directions, does it ever say, 'Last, add the sugar. Next, crack the eggs. First, pour in the flour'"
- Ask students why these directions are not correct.
- Have a volunteer put the directions in the correct order.
- Ask the volunteer, "How do you know this is the correct order?"

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling (5 minutes)

- Let students know that using the correct transition words make a big difference. Transition words are the words that signal the order of events. They let you know what is happening first, second, third, and so on. There are many different transition words you could use to let your audience know the events in your narrative. You could use first, next, then, and last. You could use first, second, third, and finally. You could start with first of all, afterwards, soon after that, and later. There are many different options that show the transition from one thought to the next.
- Remind them that they always need to add a comma after using a transition word.
- Write the transition words out on chart paper while you give them as examples.
- Ask, “What are examples of transition words? Why is it important to use transition words in personal narratives?”

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling (10 minutes)

- Prepare a fill-in-the-blank story (with blanked transition words) on the board prior to the beginning of the lesson. For example:

  A year ago, I was just a little girl. I lived with my parents, sister, and brother. One day we were out for a walk and we found a snake. ______, my sister screamed! She hates snakes. ______, my brother started looking for a stick so he could kill the snake. ______, my dad shouted, “Stay away from that snake!” ______, we turned around and ran as fast as we could all the way home!

- Explain to the class, “During Guided Practice, you will each have a notecard with a transition word. I am going to read the story written on the board and you will hold up your notecard if you think your transition word could fit in at that point in the story. There may be more than one correct answer per blank We may stop and pause sometimes to see if the whole class agrees with the transition words that were chosen for each blank.”

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Independent Working Time *(20 minutes)*

- Give students 20 minutes to either write their first draft of their personal narratives (including transition words) or read through what you might have already written and add transition words.
- Ask, “Why is it so important that we add transition words when writing narratives?”
- Have students work on the assignment independently.

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**Extend**

**Differentiation**

- **Enrichment:** If you have students who finish early and need an extra challenge, have them exchange stories with other students and have them give two comments of feedback to each other.
- **Support:** Students struggling with writing a longer personal narrative may need to draw pictures of each event. The students could then choose one transition word to add per picture. Make sure they also have access to a list of transition words so they can choose the best ones.
Review

Assessment *(10 minutes)*

- Walk around the classroom and conduct mini conferences with students while they work. See if they understand how to incorporate transition words successfully into their work.
- Also, for a quick check at the end, you can have three sentences written on the board and have students fill in the blank with an appropriate transition word. For example:

  One day I made lunch all by myself. _____ I got out the bread. _____ I spread peanut butter over the bread. _____ I added the jelly. _____ I ate it all up!

- Make sure students add the correct punctuation as well.

Review and Closing *(5 minutes)*

- Ask, "Why is it so important to add transition words in narratives? Can anyone give the class an example of how to use transition words in a few sentences?"

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