Narrative Writing: Vivid Descriptions

Third Grade  Writing  60 minutes  Standards: W.3.3.B

by Emily Wakabi  June 27, 2015

Challenge your students to make their personal narratives come to life with strong action words, feelings, and thoughts. This lesson will help young learners develop their creativity and writing skills.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to add description to their personal narratives.

Materials and Preparation

- Writing journals
- Chart paper
- Highlighter
- *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds

Key Terms:

- action words

Lesson

Introduction *5 minutes*

- Share with the class, “Today, we will be learning about how to include description in personal narratives. We will focus on using strong action words, feelings, and thoughts. We are going to read *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds in order to get a good idea of how an author uses description when writing.”
- Ask, “Why would it be important to include strong action verbs, feelings, and thoughts when writing?”

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Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling (10 minutes)

- Say, “Let’s make a list of some strong action words and feelings before we began reading this story so we can know what we are listening for in this story. Strong action words are more descriptive. For example, instead of using 'walked,' maybe you could use 'crept,' 'tip-toed,' or 'sauntered.'”
- Make a T-chart on the board and ask students to give you examples of strong action words and a list of feelings to include in your chart.
- Begin reading The Dot to the class.
- Pause after page 4. Ask, “Have you heard any strong action verbs or has the author included how Vashti is feeling yet?”
- Record the students’ answers on the T-chart.
- Keep reading and pause every couple of pages to ask similar questions.
- Your aim here is to give students real examples of how authors use description in their writing to make their audience more engaged and allow the audience to have a deeper understanding of what the author is trying to convey.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling (10 minutes)

- Explain, “As a class, we are going to start to practice taking some sentences and adding descriptive verbs, adjectives, feelings, and thoughts to them. You may even need to add another sentence to include some more description. We will do the first two together, and then you can do the rest with a partner.”
- Have some examples ready on the board:
  
  The little girl walked through the grassy field.
  The boy was sad when he lost his homework on the way to school.
  A rabbit was crossing the road when a car almost hit him.
  My teacher said that the house next to our school just caught on fire.
  The baby cried when his mother sat him down.

Independent Working Time (20 minutes)

- Tell students that during Independent Working Time, they will have 20 minutes to either write their first draft of their personal narrative (being sure to include a lot of descriptive language along the way) or read through what you might have written already and add description.
- Before students begin to work, ask, “What are ways we can add description to our writing? Why is it so important that we add descriptive words when writing narratives?”

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Extend

Differentiation

- **Enrichment:** Students who finish early may be given a highlighter to go back and highlight each time they included a strong action word, a thought, or a feeling. Then they can give themselves a quick self-assessment score of 3, 2, or 1.

  3: I included strong action verbs, feelings, and thoughts at least 5 times throughout my story.
  2: I included strong action verbs, feelings, and thoughts at least 2 times throughout my story.
  1: I forgot to include strong action verbs, feelings, and thoughts throughout my story.

  (If 1 is the case, then the student go back and see where changes could be made.)

- **Support:** Students can use the T-chart from the board to include in their personal narrative. Students may need these guiding questions listed on the board to keep them on track when writing: *How am I adding strong action words to my narrative? How am I adding feelings to my story? How am I adding what I was thinking during this event within my story?*
Review

Assessment *(10 minutes)*

- For a quick check of understanding at the end of the lesson, students must add description to two sentences on the board.
- Some examples are: *My kitty walked up near the mouse and sat still. I was sad when my fish died.*

Review and Closing *(5 minutes)*

- Ask, “Was it easy to include description in your personal narrative? Can anyone share with the class one example of how they added a feeling, action word, or thought into their story?”
- Share, “It is important to add these kinds of detail into our stories to make them more interesting for our readers and to paint a more vivid picture of what happened to our readers.”