

Using mentor texts with students to help improve their writing, focusing on adding detail.

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Subject:

Language Arts

Grades:

6, 7, 8

Lesson Plan Title: Prewriting Strategy to Add Detail in Writing

Concept / Topic To Teach: Detail in writing

1. 3B G3: Begin to establish a personal voice and style. Students who meet the standard can compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
2. 3C G4: Use appropriate language, details, and format for a specified audience (e.g., gender, age, prior knowledge, interest). Students who meet the standard can communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

General Goal(s): Students will be able give an appropriate amount of detail during independent writing practice.

Specific Objectives: Students will be able to identify examples of using appropriate details in mentor texts. Students will generate questions about their peer's topics. Students will be able to add appropriate detail into their writing.

Required Materials: *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, student independent reading novels, pencils and paper

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In): Start class by reading an excerpt from *The Hunger Games*. On page 148, Katniss describes the scene where the games are about to begin. She is standing there waiting for the gong to ring out to begin fighting the other tributes to the death. The scene describes one minute lapsing. After reading, ask students, "What types of details did Katniss give us about her first impressions of the arena?" (Answers may be: setting, background knowledge, thoughts, feelings, 5 senses)

Step-By-Step Procedures:

1. After looking at the excerpt from *The Hunger Games*, have a class discussion on the importance of adding details into writing. Ask students what details do for the story (Answers may be: keep reader interest, create an image, add voice, make unique, set a tone or mood, etc).
2. Discuss with students how good writers always use a lot of detail. Have them use their independent reading novels as mentor texts, by looking through them and picking out two or so paragraphs that show great detail.
3. Have students turn and share with a neighbor the excerpt from their own independent book. Take a few volunteers to share as whole class.

4. Introduce pre-writing activity for the work time. The writing topic is: "Choose a 1-5 second moment to write about using good detail. The moment could be something extraordinary or an everyday occurrence."
5. Have students write their topic on the top of a piece of paper and number 1-10 down the side.
6. Explain that having another person ask questions about your topic will help ensure you give enough detail about the topic and will help generate ideas for your writing.
7. Have each student pass their papers to 10 different people (working clockwise around the room); with each person coming up with a new question they would want to know about the topic listed at the top of the paper.
8. Pass the papers back to the original owner.

Plan For Independent Practice: Students will read questions and begin to write their first drafts of their "Moment In Time" stories. They should focus in on one moment in time. The moment described should be shorter than ten seconds. Go around checking in with students topics to ensure they have followed the guidelines.

- Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set): Looking back at the description Katniss gave in the excerpt from *The Hunger Games*, have students come up with other questions they would like to know about the scene. The questions could be turned into detail about the scene.

- Assessment Based On Objectives: In order to assess the students' ability to identify details in writing, the teacher should walk around and listen in on their sharing with their peers. In order to assess student questioning skills, they will write their names by their questions on their peers' papers. In order to assess their use of detail, the teacher should collect the writing assignment after it has been drafted, with the possibility to reteach at that point.

- Adaptations (For Students with Learning Disabilities): Students will be able to use their own independent reading novels to find mentor texts. Students with reading deficits will be able to use lower level reading texts during the activity. During the independent practice, students can be given a specific amount of details to add.

- Extensions (For Gifted Students): Students will be able to use their own independent reading novels to find mentor texts. Students with advanced reading abilities will be able to use higher level reading texts during the activity.

- Possible Connections to Other Subjects: When writing for other content areas, students will be able to be sure to give enough detail to answer questions. They can start writing by asking what types of questions the reader would want to know.

Teacher Example of Questioning Activity:

The Moment I...crossed the finish line of my first half marathon:

1. How did that make you feel?
2. What were you thinking when you crossed?
3. Did you know what place you got?
4. How long was the race?
5. How long was the training for the race?
6. How long did it take you?

7. Did you reach your goal?
8. Were people cheering for you?
9. Why did you want to run a marathon?
10. What was the weather like that day?
11. What were you wearing?
12. Were you with a friend?