

Teaching Notes

Activities

1. Read students a series of sentences that demonstrate problems related to word choice. For each sentence, ask students to choose one of the following ways to solve the problem:
 - Add specific details (who, what, where, when, why, how).
 - Use a stronger verb.
 - Add sensory details (smell, taste, sight, sound, touch).

Once students have selected the correct solution for a sentence, brainstorm a revised version of the sentence as part of a class discussion.

2. Ask students to work with a partner. Assign each pair a list of sentences that lack details or use dull words. Direct each student to rewrite the sentences using stronger words and more details. Once they are finished, have students exchange sentences with their partners. Encourage them to discuss the changes they made and to work together to improve any sentences that still contain weak words.

Writing Prompts

1. Assign students a grade-appropriate excerpt containing a conversation from a short story or novel. Place all of the dialogue tags (*said, asked, etc.*) in parentheses and provide students a word bank containing stronger alternative verbs (*added, answered, begged, commented, stated, whispered, screamed, explained, declared, demanded, etc.*). Have students choose a verb to replace each word in parentheses. Encourage them to choose the right word based on the context of each sentence.
2. Provide students with a paragraph containing multiple examples of weak word choices, such as *a lot, very, went, stuff, and go*. Direct students to rewrite the paragraph using stronger words. Then ask them to write a few sentences explaining two or more of their choices.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching L.4.3.a. They provide teachers with sample questions and exercises that could be used to test students on how to choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely:

- <http://www.themailbox.com/magazines/editorial/get-specific>
- <http://www.englishworksheetsland.com/grade4/12conveying.html>
- http://search.theeducationcenter.com/search/Curriculum-Language_Arts--Grade-4--Common_Core_Label-L.4.3a--keywords-worksheets