

SUPPLEMENTAL SKILLS INSTRUCTION

WR.3.A NARRATIVE

Working with Words

Lessons WR.3.A–F offer direct instruction on discrete skills and should be implemented between Lessons 10 and 11. Students may benefit from some or all of the instruction in these lessons; only those lessons or activities that address student needs should be implemented.

Introduction

This lesson is composed of three distinct but related activities that center on skills for implementing effective word choice to improve narrative writing. Each activity may last an entire class period.

Writing Instruction Options:

- Precise Words and Phrases
- Telling Details
- Sensory Language

In this lesson, the teacher provides direct instruction on using precise words and phrases, telling details, or sensory language to provide a vivid picture of experiences, events, settings, and characters as they develop their narrative writing. Students focus on revising their own narrative for word choice before transitioning to a peer discussion of revisions. Student learning is assessed via the completion of the WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words, on which each student records one example of a successful revision.

For homework, students choose three different passages from their narratives and revise each passage focusing on effectively incorporating word choice. Students also write a few sentences explaining whether or not they will keep the revisions they drafted and the impact this decision has on their narratives.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.3.d	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

	d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
W.9-10.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
SL.9-10.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Assessment

Assessment(s)	
<p>Student learning is assessed via completion of the WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words. Students record the original passage from their narratives as well as the revised passage. Students then explain why the revision is effective.</p> <p>Consider assessing these revisions using the Narrative Writing Checklist.</p>	
High Performance Response(s)	
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record the original passage (e.g., Coming in, the dust looked like a kind of fog, and it was hard to tell what was underneath.). Revise the original passage, focusing on using precise words and phrases, telling details, or sensory language (e.g., Coming in, the dust from the surface was blowing up in find clouds that looked like a kind of fog, and it was hard to tell what was underneath.). Explain why the revision is effective (e.g., The original sentence does not make the distinction about where the fog-like element comes from (and readers do not know if this is a condition that is unique to the moon). The revised sentence makes it clearer where the fog comes from or what is creating the effect.). <p>See the Model WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words for more examples.</p>	

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: W.9-10.3.d, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.6, SL.9-10.1 <p>Learning Sequence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Writing Instruction Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precise Words and Phrases Telling Details Sensory Language Narrative Writing Checklist Individual Revision Revision Discussion WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 0% 30% 5% 30% 20% 5% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the up-to-date Narrative Writing Checklist (refer to WR.3 Lesson 10 Model Narrative Writing Checklist)
- Copies of the WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: _____ for each student

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>

▶	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
📘	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda. In this lesson, students learn how to incorporate precise words and phrases, telling details, or sensory language into their writing to provide a vivid picture of experiences, events, setting and characters as they develop their narrative writing. Students revise their own drafts before participating in a peer discussion of their individual revisions.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

0%

- 📘 Students will be held accountable for homework during Activity 6: Revision Discussion.

Activity 3: Writing Instruction Options

30%

- 📘 Based on student need, select from the three options below:
 - Precise Words and Phrases (See Appendix 1)
 - Telling Details (See Appendix 2)
 - Sensory Language (See Appendix 3)

Activity 4: Narrative Writing Checklist

5%

- 📘 The following activity addresses the expectations of SL.9-10.1.

Instruct students to take out their copies of the Narrative Writing Checklist.

- 📘 Consider posting or projecting the Narrative Writing Checklist.

Instruct students to Think, Pair, Share about the following questions:

Based on this lesson’s writing instruction, what items should the class add to the Narrative Writing Checklist? In which categories do these items belong and why?

- 💬 Student responses will vary but should include points that address the following:

- Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to develop experiences, events, settings, and characters? This item belongs in the Coherence, Organization, and Style category, because precise language, telling details, and sensory language create vivid images, which are an aspect of a writer’s style.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Guide students to a consensus on what items the class will add to the Narrative Writing Checklist and in which category each item belongs. Instruct students to add the new items in the appropriate categories to their copies of the Narrative Writing Checklist.

- ▶ Students add new items in the appropriate categories to their copies of the Narrative Writing Checklist.

① Consider adding the new items in the appropriate categories to the displayed copy of the Narrative Writing Checklist.

Activity 5: Individual Revision

30%

Instruct students to independently revise their drafts focusing on whichever of the following writing skills they learned in this lesson:

- Precise Words and Phrases
- Telling Details
- Sensory Language

① For example, if students completed the writing instruction activity on Telling Details, then their revisions will focus on telling details rather than on precise words and phrases or sensory language.

Explain to students that they should revise at least three passages to ensure they have included precise words and phrases, telling details, or sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. Remind students to refer to the Narrative Writing Checklist as they revise their drafts.

Transition to individual revision.

- ▶ Students independently revise their narrative drafts to include precise words and phrases, telling details, or sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

🗨 For sample revisions, see the Model WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words.

Activity 6: Revision Discussion

20%

① The following activity addresses the expectations of SL.9-10.1.

Instruct students to form pairs or small groups to share at least one of the passages they revised during the previous activity and one passage they revised during the previous lesson's homework assignment. Explain to students that in addition to receiving feedback on their revisions, this discussion is also an opportunity to consider how they can use similar revisions or try similar techniques as their peers in their own papers. In this discussion, students provide brief constructive criticism to their peers. Remind students that constructive criticism helps them share advice with their peers in a positive and academic manner.

① Refer to Lesson 7 for a discussion of constructive criticism.

Instruct students to follow these steps to complete the revision discussion:

1. Show your peers the original passage and the revised passage.
2. Explain to your peers how the revision improves your draft.
3. Ask your peers to provide brief constructive criticism on your revisions.
 - ▶ Students share and discuss with peers at least two effective revisions they made to their drafts.

① In lessons that include the Revision Discussion, consider maintaining the same peer pairs or small groups for several lessons, so that students can benefit from a reviewer who is familiar with their drafts.

Activity 7: Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words

5%

Explain that for this lesson's assessment, students record and explain one example of a successful revision. Distribute blank copies of the WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: _____ to each student. Instruct students to fill in the title "Working with Words" on their exit slips. Instruct students to complete the exit slip independently. Inform students that their revisions will be assessed with the Narrative Writing Checklist.

- ☞ See the High Performance Response and Model WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words for sample student responses.

Activity 8: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to choose three different passages from their drafts. For each passage, students revise their drafts focusing on whichever of the following writing skills they learned in this lesson:

- Precise Words and Phrases
- Telling Details
- Sensory Language

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following questions for each revision:

Will you keep the revision you drafted? Why or why not?

Explain the impact of your decision on your narrative.

- ① If an online writing community has been established for the class, instruct students to post their revised drafts for sharing with peers and/or assessment. (Students' use of the online writing community addresses the expectations of W.9-10.6.)
 - ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Choose three different passages from your draft. For each passage, revise your draft focusing on whichever writing skill of the following you learned in this lesson:

- Precise Words and Phrases
- Telling Details
- Sensory Language

Respond briefly in writing to the following questions for each revision:

Will you keep the revision you drafted? Why or why not?

Explain the impact of your decision on your narrative.

Model Narrative Writing Checklist

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Use this template to record the checklist items that convey the components of an effective narrative established as a class.

Coherence, Organization, and Style	Drafting	Finalization
Does my response...	✓	✓
Develop real or imagined experiences or events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish a point of view?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include settings, characters, and plots that develop the experiences or events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, or multiple plot lines to develop the narrative?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use the passage of time to structure the narrative?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have an introduction that engages and orients the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have an introduction that establishes a narrator and/or characters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have an introduction that builds a smooth progression of experiences or events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop distinct character voices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the experiences and observations within the narrative?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use different structural techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to develop experiences, events, settings, and characters?*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Control of Conventions Does my response...	Drafting ✓	Finalization ✓
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Asterisks indicate new items added in this lesson.

WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: _____

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: In the first column, record the original passage from your narrative. In the second column, record the revised passage. In the third column, explain why the revision is effective.

Original Passage	Revised Passage	Explanation

Model WR.3 Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: In the first column, record the original passage from your narrative. In the second column, record the revised passage. In the third column, explain why the revision is effective.

Original Passage	Revised Passage	Explanation
I would not have even thought it was possible in my own life until I got the job and the other men and I began a lot of hard training in practice flights down South.	I would not have even thought it was possible in my own life until I got the assignment and my colleagues and I began our long and grueling training in flight simulators down in Virginia.	I removed or changed words like “job,” “the other men,” “a lot of,” “hard,” and “down South,” so that the final version includes more precise and specific language to better help readers understand details in the text.
I think it wasn’t until we landed that I had any time to feel any emotion at all. Up until then, the three of us—Buzz, Michael, and I—were performing all the necessary steps of the approach and landing process, which we had practiced many times during our hours in the simulators, before we ever went into space.	I think it wasn’t until we landed that I had any time to feel any emotion at all. Up until then, the three of us—Buzz, Michael, and I—were performing all the necessary steps of the approach and landing process, which we had practiced innumerable times during our five hundred hours in the simulators, before we ever went into space.	Changing the vague words to more precise words helps convey the grueling regimen that was part of training to go to the moon.
Coming in, the dust looked like a kind of fog, and it was hard to tell what was underneath.	Coming in, the dust from the surface was blowing up in fine clouds that looked like a kind of fog, and it was hard to tell what was underneath.	The original sentence does not make the distinction about where the fog-like element comes from (and readers do not know if this is a condition that is unique to the moon). The revised sentence makes it clearer where the fog comes from or what is creating the effect.

Appendix 1: Precise Words and Phrases

Post or project the following examples of a sentence that includes precise words and phrases and one that does not.

① Example 1 is taken from paragraph 14 of the Model Narrative (refer to Lesson 10)

- **Example 1:** It is just that somehow things felt different when I was looking out at a vast grey empty surface in front of a thick black velvet cloth of space and nothingness.
- **Example 2:** It is just that somehow things felt different when I was looking out into space.

Instruct students to Think, Pair, Share about the following questions:

What about the first example makes it more effective than the second example?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- The first example is more effective because it uses precise words and phrases to describe space, rather than just relying on a reader’s understanding of what space might look like. This is important because the story is told from a first person point of view of someone who was actually present for the moon landing.
- The words “vast” and “empty” in the phrase “vast grey empty surface” convey how expansive the moon is, as well as how lonely and uninhabited.

What is the effect of the use of the word “nothingness”?

- 🗨 The word “nothingness” plays upon the notion that most people still have of space being unknown, mysterious, and huge. It also merges the experience of the astronauts with the expectations of the reader. Most people can only think of space as a massive unknown. The first person account of being in space, about to land on the moon, confirms that even an astronaut about to make history can be overwhelmed by just how huge space is.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Then, explain to students that using precise words and phrases can help present a clear and detailed picture of the events or experiences in a narrative. Unclear writing with weak and unspecific words can make a narrative dull and difficult to follow. Precise and specific words and phrases help develop the narrative and engage the reader.

Post or project the following example sentence.

- I would not have even thought it was possible in my own life until I got the job and the other men and I began a lot of hard training in practice flights down South.

Instruct students to work in pairs or small groups to replace the imprecise or unspecific words and phrases with more precise and specific ones. Instruct students to also explain why replacing imprecise or unspecific words and phrases makes the sentence more effective.

🗨️ Student responses will vary but should demonstrate students' ability to replace the words and phrases "job," "the other men," "a lot of," and "hard" with more specific words and phrases. A possible student response:

- I would not have even thought it was possible in my own life until I got the assignment and my colleagues and I began our long and grueling training in flight simulators down in Virginia.
- The revised sentence is more effective, because the details are specific. The phrase "long and grueling" is more specific than the general description of "hard," which helps the reader understand why the training was difficult instead of simply conveying that the training was difficult. Also, "flight simulators" is more specific than "practice flights," which helps create a vivid picture of the experience.

① The possible student response above is taken from paragraph 12 of the Model Narrative (refer to Lesson 10).

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider identifying the words and phrases "job," "the other men," "a lot of," and "hard" for students to practice replacing.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Explain to students that "precise" does not necessarily mean more words or longer sentences. Explain that sometimes writers can inadvertently weaken their writing by adding imprecise or nonspecific descriptive words.

Post or project the following paragraph and instruct students to Think, Pair, Share about the question below.

① This example has been modified from paragraph 11 of the Model Narrative (refer to Lesson 10).

- Almost every time someone asks me about what it felt like to walk on the moon, it's like I'm transported back to that moment that so many people watched, but I was super lucky enough to live. I have given a lot of different answers to the question depending on the situation, but this time, I really only said one word to the cashier.

What words or phrases seem weak or vague in this passage?

🗨️ Student responses should include:

- “almost”
- “it’s like”
- “super”
- “a lot of”
- “really”

How do these words and phrases weaken the paragraph?

- These words and phrases are not specific or precise. The words suggest that the ideas are not fully developed or that the narrator is unsure of his recollection or opinion.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Explain to students that words that increase emphasis (e.g., “a lot of”) or decrease emphasis (e.g., “almost”) can be avoided by using more specific nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Explain to students that in order to make appropriate word choices in their writing, they must have an understanding of connotation, as well as the explicit or primary meaning of the word. Explain to students that *connotation* refers to the feelings associated with a word. Provide students with the following example: The words “cheap” and “inexpensive” both describe something that does not cost a lot of money. The connotation of “inexpensive” suggests this same meaning, but the connotation of “cheap” implies that the object is also of low quality.

- ▶ Students write the definition of *connotation* in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.

Post or project the following examples and ask students to Think, Pair, Share about the questions below:

① Example 2 is taken from paragraph 18 of the Model Narrative (refer Lesson 10). Example 1 has been modified from the original.

- **Example 1:** The lunar lander had only sunk a few inches into the ground, so I knew that it would hold me, too, but some part of me still had a fear that I would be stalled on the new surface.
- **Example 2:** The lunar lander had only sunk a few inches into the ground, so I was confident that it would hold me, too, but some part of me still harbored a fear that I would be stuck on the strange surface.

How are the examples similar and different?

- Student responses may include:
 - Both sentences are about the fear of taking the first step onto the moon.

- The sentences use different words to describe the same situation. The first sentence includes the words “knew,” “had,” “stalled,” and “new” versus the second example, which includes the words “confident,” “harbored,” “stranded,” and “strange.”

Which example is more effective? How does connotation contribute to the effectiveness of this example?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- The second sentence includes words with stronger, more precise connotations, so it better conveys how the astronaut felt moments before stepping onto the moon.
- While both “knew” and “be confident” have similar meanings, “be confident” implies a hope that the lunar lander will hold him, and “knew” conveys an assurance that the lunar lander will hold him.
- While both “had” and “harbored” have similar meanings, “harbored” works better in this context because its connotation is more secretive: people who harbor an emotion do not necessarily want to share it with anyone. The narrator did not want the world to know he was afraid.
- While both “stalled” and “stuck” have similar meanings, “stuck” has a more serious connotation that conveys the fear of not being able to move. The stronger connotation of “stuck” makes the astronaut’s situation seem more serious.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Appendix 2: Telling Details

Inform students that it is important to provide telling details, or details that are not only descriptive, but also reveal insight into the character or event in order to engage the reader and create a vivid picture of experiences, events, setting, and characters. Post or project the following example.

① The following example is taken from paragraph 19 of the Model Narrative (refer to Lesson 10).

- Once I jumped off, I managed to speak the line I’d rehearsed in my head all those times: “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.” Maybe you wonder why there’s a pause during my delivery. That was me realizing that the ground would hold me, and we had finally made it. That pause was relief.

Instruct students to Think, Pair, Share about the following questions:

How do details enhance the description in this example?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- The detail of “I’d rehearsed in my head all those times” helps convey the narrator’s awareness of his role in such a significant event; it reveals the character’s awareness of how important and historic his words would be.
- The detail of the “pause [that] was relief” conveys how anxious the narrator must have been as he took his first steps. His pause was not satisfaction in his accomplishment, but rather relief that, for that moment, he was going to be okay.
- The detail of “the ground [that] would hold me” conveys the narrator’s unique situation, a situation in which he was in completely unfamiliar territory and was unsure of his footing.

What effect does this detailed description have on the reader’s understanding of the character?

- 🗨 This description helps the reader understand that although the narrator had a job to do and was aware of the significance of his actions, he was, at the time, primarily concerned about being careful and taking one step at a time. The description also helps the reader relate to the narrator, an astronaut on one of the greatest missions in history. While the narrator was able to be part of an extraordinary experience by walking on the moon, he also had real human emotions during the experience.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Post or project the following example.

- Up until then, the three of us were doing all the important parts of the process, which we had done many times during our hours in the simulators, before we ever went into space.

Instruct students to work in pairs or small groups to replace the imprecise or unspecific words and phrases with more telling details. Instruct students to explain why replacing imprecise or unspecific words makes the sentence more effective.

- Student responses will vary but should demonstrate students' ability to add telling details in order to make the text more engaging and to make the descriptions more vivid. Possible student responses include:
 - Add the names of the astronauts after “the three of us” to make the story feel more like a story of brotherly friendship.
 - Change the word “doing” to “performing” so that all of the practice the men have done seem more like rehearsals for the event, which the entire world was watching.
 - Be more specific with “all the important parts of the process” by changing it to “all the necessary steps of the approach and landing process.” This helps to establish that these two processes were only part of a larger scale operation and that the astronauts needed to adhere to some kind of checklist.
 - Change “many times” and “our hours” to something that better conveys how much training went in to the mission. “Many times” can be changed to “innumerable” and “our hours” can be changed to “our five hundred hours.” This helps create a sense of the intense training necessary to go the moon.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Then post or project the students' suggested versions of the same sentence and instruct students to compare the original sentence with their suggested revisions.

- Possible student response:
 - Up until then, the three of us—Buzz, Michael, and I—were performing all the necessary steps of the approach and landing process, which we had practiced innumerable times during our five hundred hours in the simulators, before we ever went into space.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Explain to students that telling details are crucial to an engaging narrative. Effective use of telling details gives readers a more vivid picture of experiences, events, setting and/or characters.

Appendix 3: Sensory Language

Explain to students that sensory language is the use of details from the five senses to add color and depth to writing. Explain to students that sensory language engages the reader and creates vivid images of characters, events, and settings.

- ① Consider reminding students of the work they did with sensory language in their Quick Writes from Lessons 4 and 5.

Post or project the following example:

- ① The following example is taken from paragraph 14 of the Model Narrative (refer to Lesson 10).
 - It is just that somehow things felt different when I was looking out at a vast grey empty surface in front of a thick black velvet cloth of space and nothingness. Even my moment to consider this landscape was brief, because as we got closer to approach I realized we were far out in front of where we planned to land, and were headed straight toward a huge crater with rocks the size of cars.

Instruct students to Think, Pair, Share about the following questions:

What is an example of sensory language in this quote?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - “vast grey empty surface”
 - “thick black velvet cloth of space and nothingness”
 - “huge crater with rocks the size of cars”

What is the effect of this sensory language on the development of the experience?

- 💬 This language helps to develop the experience because it conveys a vivid picture to the reader of what the narrator saw as the spacecraft headed toward the moon. With sensory language like “thick black velvet cloth,” the reader can understand how dark space looked and how the narrator experienced that sight.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Explain to that students that sensory language is crucial to an engaging narrative. Effective use of sensory language allows readers to have a more vivid picture of experiences, events, settings, and characters.