

Lesson: Focus revision on a specific element such as: word choice

Fourth Grade Objective: 4.08 remediation

Lesson

1. Choosing just the right words adds style to your writing. Using precise words instead of over-used words will help the reader better visualize the characters and events in your stories. One way to revise for word choice is to replace the word *said* used in dialogue with synonyms for *said* that represent the speaker's emotion.

2. Let's look at the following examples:
 - Original sentence: "Do you think someone's hiding in there?" said Mary.
 - Revised sentence: "Do you think someone's hiding in there?" whispered Mary.

 - Original sentence: "That was hilarious!" said Pete.
 - Revised sentence: "That was hilarious!" giggled Pete.

 - Original sentence: "Don't tackle your brother," said Dad.
 - Revised sentence: "Don't tackle your brother," warned Dad.

 - Original sentence: "I guess I have to go home now," said Rose.
 - Revised sentence: "I guess I have to go home now," sighed Rose.

3. In each of the above examples, the word *said* was replaced with a more precise word to show the speaker's emotion. In the first example, the word *whispered* shows that Mary may be feeling scared. In the second example, the word *giggled* shows that Pete really enjoyed whatever was happening. *Warned*, in the third example, shows that Dad is using a stern voice. Finally, using *sighed* shows that Rose is reluctant to go home.

4. When replacing the word *said*, make sure that the word you use is appropriate. The following sentences illustrate inappropriate examples:
 - "Did you break this plate?" giggled Mom.
 - "That was not funny!" wondered Dad.
 - "Did you eat lunch, yet?" Henry stated.

Try these on your own!

Replace the word *said* in each of the following sentences with a more precise word to show the speaker's emotion.

1. "I can't believe you did that!" said Mom.

Revised sentence: _____

2. "I can't wait for track out!" Greg said.

Revised sentence: _____

3. "I don't want to do my homework," said Lisa.

Revised sentence: _____

4. "Oh, no! They're going to fall!" said Luke.

Revised sentence: _____

Check your answers

There are many possible words that can be used in the sentences above to replace *said*. Here are some that would make sense. Remember, the words you selected may be different. That is okay. You just want to make sure that the words are used appropriately and show the speaker's emotion.

1. "I can't believe you did that!" *screamed* Mom.
2. "I can't wait for track out!" Greg *yelled*.
3. "I don't want to do my homework," *complained* Lisa.
4. "Oh, no! They're going to fall!" *gasp* Luke.

More Practice

1. Search for precise words used in place of *said* in books that you read.
2. Revise one of your stories for word choice by replacing the word *said* used in dialogue with more precise words that show the speaker's emotion.