

Power Lessons - Year 4

Imagery

Objective: To help students focus on imagery when reading.

Materials: Any book you have recently read to students, such as *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White (4.4).

- Lesson:**
1. Have students pretend that you are a person who has never visited the school library before. Tell them you want to know everything there is to know about their library. Ask them to describe the setting using details that help you understand what the library looks, sounds, feels and smells like.
 2. Chose words from their descriptions that are specific and vivid. Record the words on the board. Help students recognise that a phrase like “stinks likes floor polish mixed with pencil shavings” gives you a much clearer picture of the library than just the word ‘smells’.
 3. Tell students that authors carefully choose details that appeal to the five senses to help readers imagine a setting or what is happening in the story. The use of words is called *imagery*. Choose a passage from the book that you are reading aloud that demonstrates the use of *imagery*. For example, you might read this passage from *Charlotte's Web*, when Wilbur gets a buttermilk bath:

Wilbur stood still and closed his eyes. He could feel buttermilk trickling down his sides. He opened his mouth and some buttermilk ran into it. It was delicious. He felt radiant and happy. When Mrs Zuckerman got through and rubbed him dry, he was the cleanest, prettiest pig you ever saw.

4. Point out that authors choose words not only to give readers a picture of what is happening, but also to create a feeling. Ask, “Is having a buttermilk bath a pleasant or unpleasant experience?” (pleasant). “What words does the author use to make you think that?” (*delicious, radiant, cleanest, prettiest*).
5. Read another passage with contrasting imagery and ask, “How do you feel when you hear this passage?” In the following description, E.B. White still talks of food, but uses different imagery:

In the hard-packed dirt of the midway, after the glaring lights are out and the people have gone to bed, you will find a veritable treasure of popcorn fragments, frozen custard dribblings, candied apples abandoned by tired children, sugar fluff crystals, salted almonds, popsicles, partially gnawed ice cream cones and wooden sticks of lollipops.

Ask, “What kind of feeling has the author created in this passage?” (Used, disgusting, sticky, messy). “What words make you think of that?” (*dribblings, partially gnawed, abandoned*).

6. Go back to the description of the library that the students provided. Ask, “Does your description create a feeling as well as a picture of the library?”

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Have you used specific words that appeal to the five senses?" Point out their effective uses of imagery.

Status of the Class

Follow up: As you take the Status of the Class, ask:

- Can you find an example of imagery in the book you are reading?
- How does the description make you feel?
- What words does the author use to create that feeling?
- Which of the five senses does the author call upon you to use?

Added Practice: Create a chart on the board with these five headings: *taste, see, hear, smell, touch*. Have the students generate a list of words to go under each heading. For instance, under *taste* might be the words *sour, sweet, spicy, off*. Under *hear* might be the words *yelling, buzzing, hushed, whistling*. As students read independently, have them add words to the classroom chart.

For a week or two, invite students to find wonderful examples of imagery in the books they are reading and take turns reading them to the class.

Ask students to write short, vivid descriptions of a favourite setting (the beach, a cubby house, grandma's house) without mentioning what the setting is. Invite the class to guess the location the piece describes.