TEACHING WORD CHOICE



WHAT YOU'RE GOING FOR

- * Awareness of language
- * Awareness that there are different ways to say things
- Love of favorite words

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

COLLECT FAVORITE WORDS

Make lists. Decorate them on colored paper and post them or hang them from the ceilings. Make mobiles. Make word collages. Encourage labeling—but be creative. Put adjectives with the nouns: e.g., not just "wall," but "drab green wall" perhaps.

2. RETIRE TIRED WORDS

Put the words you're tired of in a shoe box and bury them.

3. BRAINSTORM ALTERNATIVES

to the tired words in item #2. Put them on word wheels: these are shaped like daisies, with the tired word at the center and creative options on petals rotating out from the center. Mount word wheels on walls or ceilings.

4. LISTEN

As you share literature (or any writing), ask students to listen for a favorite word or two. Share with a partner or the whole class. Or write them in a journal (for writer – readers). Or, <u>you</u> write three or four or more on the board. Guess how to spell as you go for younger reader - writers.

5. BRAINSTORM ALTERNATIVES

Suppose you are writing a note to a friend. It might begin like this: "I had a good time at your house." Tell your students, "I'm tired of the word good. Help me out. What else could I say? What are some other ways to say this?" Do this often, so that looking for alternatives begins to feel natural.

6. GUESSING IS THINKING

Sometimes you can make a good guess about the meaning of a word using topic or context as clues (also, pictures in picture books). Help students find thoughtful, imaginative ways to guess at meanings of words that are new. Brainstorm several alternatives before giving them the answer. Encourage guessing. Encourage thinking.

7. GET A WORD - A - DAY CALENDAR

for kids, and let them guess what today's word might mean. Alternative: Play the word meaning game. Give the real definition to one child. Two other volunteers make up their own definitions for the new word. All three share their definitions orally with the class; students try to guess which one is accurate. This only takes about five minutes per word, so you can play two or three rounds. Great for vocabulary and imagination. (Yes, they DO remember the correct definition!)