

STANDARDS PLUS® – PRIORITY ENGLISH®

Topic: Writing Strategies

Level: High School

Focus: Using Precise Language

Lesson: #6

California Language Arts Content Standard and High School Exit Exam Standard: Writing Strategies, 1.2
Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.

Introduction:

Today's lesson focuses on the study of using precise language in writing.

Follow the introduction procedure from the Teacher Page Template.

Instruction:

Today's lesson focuses on proper use of precise language in writing. When using precise language in writing, the author accurately conveys one idea. In addition, precise writing is not vague. Always revise imprecise writing.

Rule #1 - The reader can misinterpret writing when diction, or word choice, is not precise; in these cases revise word choice to make the meaning more precise.

Example: Imprecise -The boat was cheap.

*The denotation, or dictionary definition, of the word **cheap** is: relatively low in cost. However, it has the negative connotation of being poorly made or of a lower quality.*

More Precise -The boat was inexpensive.

*While the dictionary definition of the word **inexpensive** is the same as the word **cheap**, it does not have the negative connotation that **cheap** does. It is therefore a more apt choice of wording in the above sentence.*

Closure: *Follow the closure procedure from the Teacher Page Template.*

Answers:

1. D
2. A
3. C
4. D

STANDARDS PLUS® – PRIORITY ENGLISH®**Topic:** Writing Strategies**Focus:** Using Precise Language**Lesson #6****PRACTICE**

When using precise language in writing, the author accurately conveys one idea. Precise writing is not vague. Always revise imprecise writing.

Rule #1 - The reader can misinterpret writing when diction, or word choice, is not precise; in these cases revise diction to make the meaning more precise.

Example: Imprecise -The boat was cheap.

*The denotation, or dictionary definition, of the word **cheap** is: relatively low in cost. However, it has the negative connotation of being poorly made or of a lower quality.*

More Precise -The boat was inexpensive.

*While the dictionary definition of the word **inexpensive** is the same as the word **cheap**, it does not have the negative connotation that **cheap** does. It is therefore a more apt choice of wording in the above sentence.*

Directions: The following sentences contain examples of imprecise writing. Replace each underlined word with a word that gives the most precise meaning to the sentence.

1. The opera singer was huge because of his striking voice.
 - A. great
 - B. notorious
 - C. famous
 - D. renowned
2. My child is remarkable; he is currently attending an Ivy League university.
 - A. son
 - B. offspring
 - C. kid
 - D. spawn
3. The apartment is so miniature a sofa cannot fit in it.
 - A. undersized
 - B. minute
 - C. small
 - D. diminutive
4. I felt advantaged to receive the award.
 - A. happy
 - B. fortunate
 - C. lucky
 - D. honored

STANDARDS PLUS® – PRIORITY ENGLISH®**Topic:** Writing Strategies**Level:** High School**Focus:** Using Precise Language**Lesson:** #7

California Language Arts Content Standard and High School Exit Exam Standard: Writing Strategies, 1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.

Introduction:

Today's lesson focuses on the study of using precise language in writing.

Follow the introduction procedure from the Teacher Page Template.

Instruction:

Today's lesson continues our focus on proper use of precise language in writing. When using precise language in writing, the author accurately conveys one idea. In addition, precise writing is not vague. Always revise imprecise writing.

Rule #1 - Writing is vague when diction, or word choice, is not precise; in these cases, revise word choice to make the meaning more precise.

Example: Imprecise -The play was *good*. I particularly enjoyed the singing and dancing.

More Precise -The play was *entertaining*. I particularly enjoyed the singing and dancing.*

In the first example, **good is a vague description; **entertaining**, on the other hand, more aptly describes the play.*

Closure: *Follow the closure procedure from the Teacher Page Template.*

Answers:

1. B
2. B
3. C
4. A

STANDARDS PLUS® – PRIORITY ENGLISH®**Topic:** Writing Strategies**Focus:** Using Precise Language**Lesson #7****PRACTICE**

When using precise language in writing, the author accurately conveys one idea. In addition, precise writing is not vague. Always revise imprecise writing.

Rule #1 - Writing is vague when diction, or word choice, is not precise; in these cases, revise word choice to make the meaning more precise.

Example: Imprecise -The play was *good*. I particularly enjoyed the singing and dancing.

More Precise -The play was *entertaining*. I particularly enjoyed the singing and dancing.*

In the first example, **good is a vague description; **entertaining**, on the other hand, more aptly describes the play.*

Directions: The following sentences contain examples of imprecise writing. Replace each underlined word with a word that gives the **most precise** meaning to the sentence.

1. I ate the good steak quickly because I was famished, having not eaten since the day before.
 - A. delicious
 - B. savory
 - C. nice
 - D. great
2. I am willing to work hard so I can get into a good college.
 - A. decent
 - B. reputable
 - C. fine
 - D. nice
3. The room is big. Two sofas and an entertainment center fit comfortably in it.
 - A. large
 - B. vast
 - C. spacious
 - D. substantial
4. When the small boy's dog died, he was sad.
 - A. inconsolable
 - B. unhappy
 - C. discontented
 - D. gloomy

STANDARDS PLUS® – PRIORITY ENGLISH®**Topic:** Writing Strategies**Level:** High School**Focus:** Using Precise Language**Lesson:** #8

California Language Arts Content Standard and High School Exit Exam Standard: Writing Strategies, 1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.

Introduction:

Today's lesson focuses on the action verbs in writing.

Follow the introduction procedure from the Teacher Page Template.

Instruction:

Today's lesson focuses on proper use of action verbs in writing. When writing descriptively, always use action verbs, rather than linking or passive verbs.

Rule #1 - Action verbs, also known as transitive verbs, always take a direct object. A direct object is a word that receives the action of the verb. For example, *ball* is the direct object in the following sentence: I kicked the ball.

Example: Linking -The dog *is* digging in the backyard.

Action -The dog *digs* in the backyard.

Example: Linking -The sun *went* behind the mountain.

Action -The sun *fell* behind the mountain.

OR

The sun *drifted* behind the mountain.*

*When revising a sentence, be sure to include the same content in the new sentence as the original; i.e. *The sun fell* vs. *The sun fell behind the mountain*.

Closure: *Follow the closure procedure from the Teacher Page Template.*

Answers:

1. A
2. D
3. C
4. B

STANDARDS PLUS® – PRIORITY ENGLISH®**Topic:** Writing Strategies**Focus:** Using Precise Language**Lesson #8****PRACTICE**

When writing descriptively, always use action verbs, rather than linking or passive verbs.

Rule #1 - Action verbs, also known as transitive verbs, always take a direct object. A direct object is a word that receives the action of the verb. For example, *ball* is the direct object in the following sentence: I kicked the ball.

Example: Linking -The dog *is* digging in the backyard.
 Action -The dog *digs* in the backyard.

Example: Linking -The sun *went* behind the mountain.
 Action -The sun *fell* behind the mountain.

OR

The sun *drifted* behind the mountain.

*When revising a sentence, be sure to include the same content in the new sentence as the original; i.e. *The sun fell* vs. *The sun fell behind the mountain*.

Directions: Determine the **best** way to state the action in the following sentences. If the sentence is best written as it is, select "D. Correct as is."

1. The sand crabs were digging into the sand.
 - A. The sand crabs dug into the sand.
 - B. The sand was dug into by the sand crabs.
 - C. Digging in the sand were the sand crabs.
 - D. Correct as is

2. The ocean waves roared onto the beach in a steady rhythm.
 - A. The ocean waves had roared onto the beach in a steady rhythm.
 - B. In a steady rhythm, the ocean waves went onto the beach.
 - C. The ocean waves went onto the beach in a steady rhythm.
 - D. Correct as is

3. The morning light is piercing through the solemn branches of the pines.
 - A. The morning light is through the solemn branches of the pines.
 - B. The solemn branches of the pines are pierced through by the morning light.
 - C. The morning light pierces through the solemn branches of the pines.
 - D. Correct as is

4. The fishes' scales were beautiful.
 - A. The fishes' scales were extraordinary.
 - B. The fishes' scales glistened beautifully.
 - C. Beautiful were the fishes' scales.
 - D. Correct as is

STANDARDS PLUS® – PRIORITY ENGLISH®**Topic:** Writing Strategies**Focus:** Using Precise Language**Lesson #9****PRACTICE**

In order to pull the reader into a text, authors use sensory details.

Sensory details are words that correspond to the five senses: taste, touch, smell, sight, and sound.

Rule #1 - Types of writing that are particularly conducive to sensory details are narrative and descriptive writing.

Example: Non-Sensory -The birds were noisy.

Sensory -The birds squawked and ruffled their feathers.
sound *sight*

*Make sure not to confuse sensory detail with figurative language (i.e. simile or metaphor).

The following sentences do not contain sensory details, but they should.

Directions: Determine which sentence is the **best** example of writing with sensory detail. If the sentence is best written as it is, select "D. Correct as is."

1. The dog was ugly.
 - A. The dog had short legs and was fat.
 - B. The dog had knobby knees and a big belly.
 - C. The dog's belly stretched its skin, and it wobbled on its stubby legs.
 - D. Correct as is

2. The ocean smelled salty, and the waves were loud.
 - A. The smell of the salty ocean wafted towards me as I sat and listened to the crashing waves.
 - B. As I sat and listened to the waves, I smelled the salty water.
 - C. The ocean was salty, and the wave crashed loudly.
 - D. Correct as is

3. The sun was hot and bright.
 - A. I looked away from the blinding light of the sun as its blistering heat pierced my skin.
 - B. The sun was blistering hot and bright as a light bulb.
 - C. The blistering sun pierced my skin and was very bright.
 - D. Correct as is

4. I was excited to be on the red carpet at the awards show and see all the cameras.
 - A. It was very exciting to see the lights and be on the red carpet at the awards show.
 - B. My stomach fluttered as I stared at the rhythm of flashing camera lights on the red carpet of the awards show.
 - C. The excitement filled the air on the red carpet at the awards show.
 - D. Correct as is

STANDARDS PLUS[®] – PRIORITY ENGLISH[®]**Topic:** Writing Strategies**Level:** High School**Focus:** Assessment**Lesson:** #10

California Language Arts Content Standard and High School Exit Exam Standard: Writing Strategies, 1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.

Introduction:

Today's lesson is an assessment of the students' knowledge and understanding of use of precise language, action verbs, and sensory details. Because today is an assessment day, students are to work independently. It is the responsibility of the teacher to monitor the class to ensure that students are doing their own work. At the conclusion of the assessment, the teacher should record the student scores on the assessment.

Answers:

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. D

STANDARDS PLUS® – PRIORITY ENGLISH®**Topic:** Writing Strategies**Focus:** Assessment**Assessment - Lesson #10**

Directions: In the following sentences, select the correct revision to the original sentence. There may be more than one answer that could be correct: you should always choose the **best** answer. If there is no mistake in the original sentence, select “D. Correct as is.”

1. Because he had hit a homerun at virtually every game during his career, the baseball star was big.
 - A. Because he had hit a homerun at virtually every game during his career, the baseball star was great.
 - B. Because he had hit a homerun at virtually every game during his career, the baseball star was recognized.
 - C. Because he had hit a homerun at virtually every game during his career, the baseball star was legendary.
 - D. Correct as is

2. I was happy when I won the lottery of twenty million dollars.
 - A. pleased
 - B. elated
 - C. excited
 - D. Correct as is

3. Her teeth were white when she smiled.
 - A. Her white teeth sparkled when she smiled.
 - B. When she smiled, her teeth were bright white.
 - C. When she smiled brightly, her teeth were white.
 - D. Correct as is

4. The chattering squirrel clambered up the tree.
 - A. The squirrel was chatty and climbed up the tree.
 - B. The squirrel chattered while going up the tree.
 - C. While going up the tree, the squirrel was chattering.
 - D. Correct as is