

Word Choice

Good writers choose their **words** carefully. They use specific words to make their meaning clear. They also use vivid words to add excitement to their writing. Look below to see how the writer's word choice makes the sentence lively.

- Nat threw the ball to the batter. (dull)
- Nat grunted as he hurled a curve ball to the batter. (lively)

Strategies for Improving Word Choice

- Use exact nouns. (*hotel* instead of *place*, *oil painting* instead of *picture*)
- Use strong verbs. (*flinch* instead of *move*, *barked* instead of *said*)
- Use vivid adjectives. (*tattered* instead of *old*, *drenched* instead of *wet*)
- Avoid vague words such as *great*, *nice*, *thing*, and *stuff*. (“I smell roses” instead of “I smell things”)
- Create strong images to make your readers use their senses. (“Gillian’s face turned red as a tomato” instead of “Gillian was embarrassed”)
- Decide if some sentences that have linking verbs would be stronger with action verbs. (“My heart thumped” instead of “I was excited”)
- Avoid wordiness. (“I think we will win the game because we have better players” instead of “In my opinion, I think we will win the game due to the fact that we have better players”)

SYNONYMS

Synonyms are words that have similar meanings. Use a thesaurus to help you find vivid words to replace ordinary words.



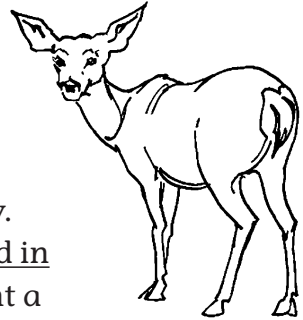
A Write the more vivid or exact word to complete each sentence.

1. Charlotte (jogged, went) along the winding path.
2. The breeze drifted through the (forest, place).
3. She (mumbled, spoke) to herself.
4. Then she noticed a (funny, squiggly) line in her path.
5. She stooped and realized that it was just a (thing, worm).

B Write the letter of the word-choice strategy for each underlined word or words.

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
| A Exact noun | C Strong verb |
| B Vivid adjective | D Sense image |

6. Charlotte saw a beautiful doe at the edge of the woods.
7. Suddenly, the deer bounded away.
8. When it ran into the woods, its white tail flashed in the sunlight.
9. Charlotte was glad she had caught a glimpse of this graceful animal.



C Replace the underlined word or phrase in each sentence with a more exact or vivid word. Write each word you choose.

10. Charlotte was on the path.
11. She heard animals move in the woods.
12. Suddenly, a huge gust of wind went through the forest.
13. Then Charlotte felt the raindrops on her face.
14. The clouds looked bad.
15. Lightning flashed, followed by a loud noise.
16. She put on her raincoat and went home.