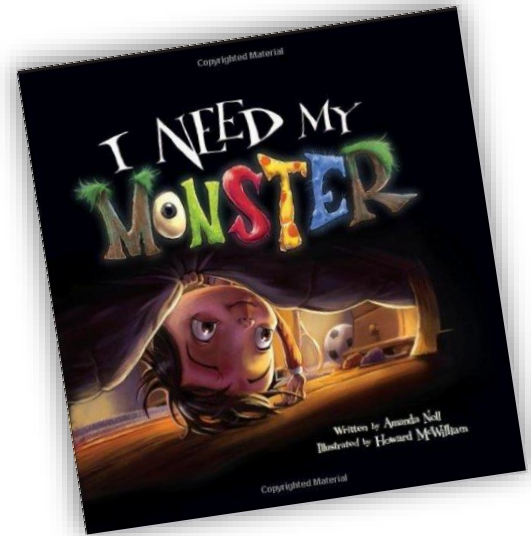
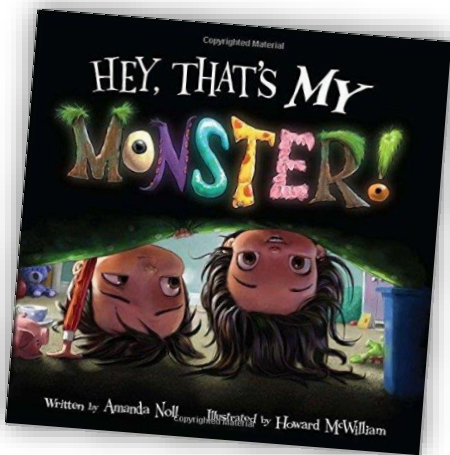


MONSTERS! INK!

LESSON SIX

BORING OR ROOAAAR-ING?

USING VIVID VERBIAGE!



LITERATURE LINKS: The books *I Need My Monster* & *Hey, That's My Monster!* by Amanda Noll may be helpful in illustrating the following concepts and providing students inspiration with the perfect balance of giggles and shivers. – Besides its sheer entertainment value, it includes so many characteristics of powerful narrative writing. Vivid elaborative detail, a sense of suspense, powerful descriptive words...everything we hope our young writers will emulate. Nothing is more satisfying than using a good picture book as a vehicle for capturing the imagination of

your young students while teaching some of the important pre-writing concepts which serve as the foundation for narrative writing!

Discuss the first line of the story. Does it grab your attention? Why or why not? What kinds of questions does it make you ask? (Ex. Do most

people need a monster? Why does the narrator have a monster?) As you read it out loud pause before showing the pictures to students.

Discuss whether

or not they can see what's going on in the story in their minds. Why or why not? What



TEACHER TIP:

Most picture books fall into the character/problem/solution genre in which a main character struggles with and solves a problem and grows and changes in the process. By summarizing these stories in terms of this character/problem/solution framework, students begin to see the underlying organizational structure of the genre. This understanding will later serve as the foundation on which they will create entertaining narratives of their own. This reading/writing connection is a powerful tool in scaffolding learning!

words help them see what's happening? (ex. Words like ooze, puddle, quivered, and phrases like rumbled with hunger?)

Suspense! Suspense is portrayed throughout this story using the technique of questioning. What is great about this story is that the suspense starts on the third page (Would a new monster appear? What would he be like? Would his snorting be as cheerful as Gabe's?) Remember, if the character is wondering or worrying, so is the reader.

Discuss: Is suspense something you want in a story? How does it help you want to keep reading?

Option: Add to the fun by watching (and doing a compare/contrast) the [animated film version](#) of *I Need My Monster* from CU Denver Digital Animation Cent

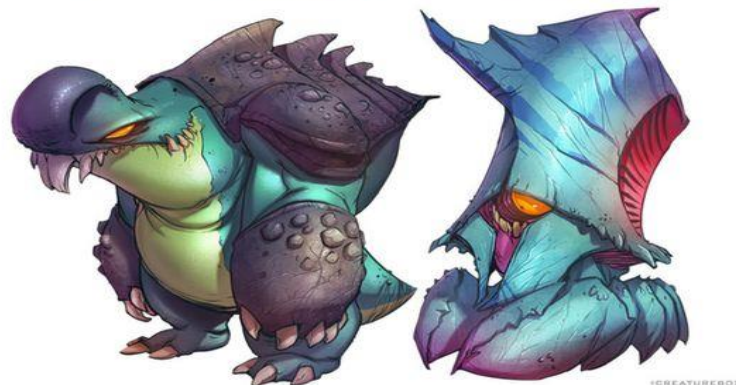
SHIVERY SENSATIONS

Descriptive writing has a unique power and appeal, as it evokes sights, smells, sounds, textures, and tastes. What descriptive words did students notice in the story/stories? Using description in your writing brings the world within your text to your reader.

Read a (very vague) sentence about a character and have everyone draw it. Ex. *The person went by.*

Does anyone's drawing look the same? Why or why not? What do we know about the person? Do we know how they moved? Do we know what they looked like? What mental image of them did students have? What else do we need?

Now, let's add descriptors and words to the sentence and have students draw a picture from this description. Ex. *The old troll was stooped and bent, his back making the shape of a C and his head bent so far forward that his beard would nearly have touched his knobby knees had he been just a bit taller.*



Does everyone’s picture look a bit more similar? Why or why not? What mental image did you have?

It would be wise to go through the pictures from *I Need My Monster* and talk about the description of each pictured monster.

The sensory details you select in your writing and in your character descriptions should create for your reader the same picture you have in your mind. In the book do the illustrations match what you had in your mind?

After reading the story have the children identify description of the monsters from the story. Reread to the children, chart their responses. Some ideas from the story to chart:

- ragged breathing • nose-whistling •
- scrabbling of his uncut claws • low
- breathy voice • high, silky voice •
- jagged and dark and razor sharp •
- sleekly brushed fur with smooth, shiny
- claws • familiar scary noises and spooky
- green ooze



“Loch Ness Monster Girl” by the [Gorgonist](#). “This is Nessa, she has a rubber ducky to play with in the mysterious loch where she lives.”

Instead of using vague, general words, your sensory language should be concrete and sensory-packed. This makes the difference between vivid and vague language. Take a look at the following comparison between vague and vivid sentences.

Vague	Vivid
The food was unappetizing.	The pale turkey slices floated limply in a pool of murky fat.
The sprinkler was refreshing.	The cool water from the sprinkler sprayed our hot faces.
The traffic was heavy.	Our old car puffed as Main Street became clogged with a line of clamoring motorists.

ORDINARY? NO, EXTRAORDINARY!

Now that we’ve explored some examples, on the included “Ordinary, No Extraordinary!” sheet, individually and/or as a group have students write down a list in each column of nouns, adjectives,

adverbs and verbs they might ordinarily use (or have already used) to describe their characters they built (tall, strong, short, fast, hair, ran, jumped...) or the settings they've constructed (pretty, spring, dark, night, . Then, in the next columns, have students look in a thesaurus for vivid synonyms to those words that could be used instead, to spice up their stories and their descriptions.

Let students know that they will use as a resource in the following fun and competitive game(s).

THEY WILL BE USING THE WORD BANKS THEY CREATE THROUGH THIS PROCESS TO HELP WRITE THEIR STORIES AND CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS..



Ordinary? No, Extraordinary!

Noun	Vivid Synonym(s)	Verb	Vivid Synonym(s)	Adjective or adverb	Vivid Synonym(s)

VIVID VOCABULARY GAME!



1. Divide students into two teams. Each team should choose a team leader. The team leader will record answers on a white board.

2. Call out a word.

3. Each team should write as many synonyms as possible for the given word. Note: the synonym must be a **more vivid word or phrase**. Teams should work quietly so they don't reveal words for the opposing team. Note: Depending on your students' skill level and ability decide whether or not reference sources may be used.

4. Allow three minutes for brainstorming, then say "Stop."

5. Each group leader calls out the words from their group one at a time. If the other team does not think the word is a good synonym, or if they don't think the word is a more vivid word, they may call out, "Challenge!"

6. If a challenge is called, a group vote determines the outcome. Vote by counting one...two...three...thumbs up or down. The group in question does not vote. The teacher has the final decision.

7. Keep a tally on the front board of total words accepted.

8. Try several rounds.

Determine which team has the most points.

A few ideas for Words students use all the time in writing:

a lot	fun	little	cold
good	said	black	sick
nice	mad	walk	red
fast	slow	old	young
big	happy	mean	pretty

TIPS: What to Avoid When Using Sensory Detail

- Too many adjectives—retain only the most powerful words in your writing, deleting any unnecessary words.
- Too many adverbs—verbs are stronger than adverbs

She strolled into the room is more powerful than She walked casually into the room.

Clichéd figures of speech—overused language, such as green with envy, signals a lack of imagination.

Use fresh, descriptive words that go against rote thinking.

VARIATION FOR VERBS!

Students are divided into four groups. Each group will have a group of similar words and will generate a list of as many vivid verbs as they can. They are allowed to use a thesaurus and/or dictionary. The groups of words are as follows:

Team 1 – say/said/tell

Team 2 – like/love/want

Team 3 – movement (walk, run, play, jump, etc.)

Team 4 – feelings (laugh, cry, mad, etc.)

You can add more teams using another grouping of your choice, e.g. eat/drink. Or add in adjectives and/or adverbs.

After the teams have their lists ready, the challenge commences. One team will start the activity by giving a vivid verb. For example, if Team 1 gives a word, it may be informed, articulated, expressed, divulged, remarked.

The other teams have a minute (more or less depending upon the difficulty of the word) to come up with a sentence using that vivid verb. The groups then orally give their sentences (or they could write one on a dry erase board). The team that gave the word will vote on the best sentences. The teacher also gets a vote, so for every challenge, there are two votes.

TEACHER TIP



Whiteboards

Use plastic plates as economical white boards! Just make sure they are large and smooth.

Option: To add to the game play some music (similar to a game show music) while the students are creating their sentences.

For the final round, the students are allowed to use their more difficult words to stump the other teams. If no one gets a correct sentence, then the point(s) for that round are awarded to the team that gives the word.

PENNING YOUR CREATURES IN!



As authors describe a critical character or object, they first ask questions. Create a class list of questions that the students can use to help them describe their monsters.

EXAMPLES:

- What kind/color of eyes?
- What kind/color of fur?
- What were its claws like? vvvv
- What size/shape/color of nose?

After you have a complete list of open-ended questions that will help describe a monster, have your students give **descriptive phrases** in response to each question. As the children are giving you descriptive phrases of the monsters from the pictures of the story, from their characters they've built, or from their own imaginations, chart their responses.



EXAMPLE: *(to help build vocabulary, you will want to write down as many responses as you can for each question)*

WHAT KIND OF EYES?

- Three sets of bulging yellow eyes

- Ping-pong ball-like eyes

WHAT KIND OF FUR/SCALES?

- Purple shaggy fur
- Green dragon-like scales running down its back and tail

WHAT ARE ITS CLAWS LIKE?

- Long, dagger-like fingernails
- Manicured fingernails polished in shimmering hot pink

WHAT KIND OF EARS OR HORNS?

- Long horns that reminded me of a bull
- Curly horns that twisted like a tornado

WHAT KIND OF MUSTACHE OR BEARD DID IT HAVE?

- A fine, black handlebar mustache
- A long, white beard that comes to a point at the end

WHAT KIND OF LIPS DOES IT HAVE?

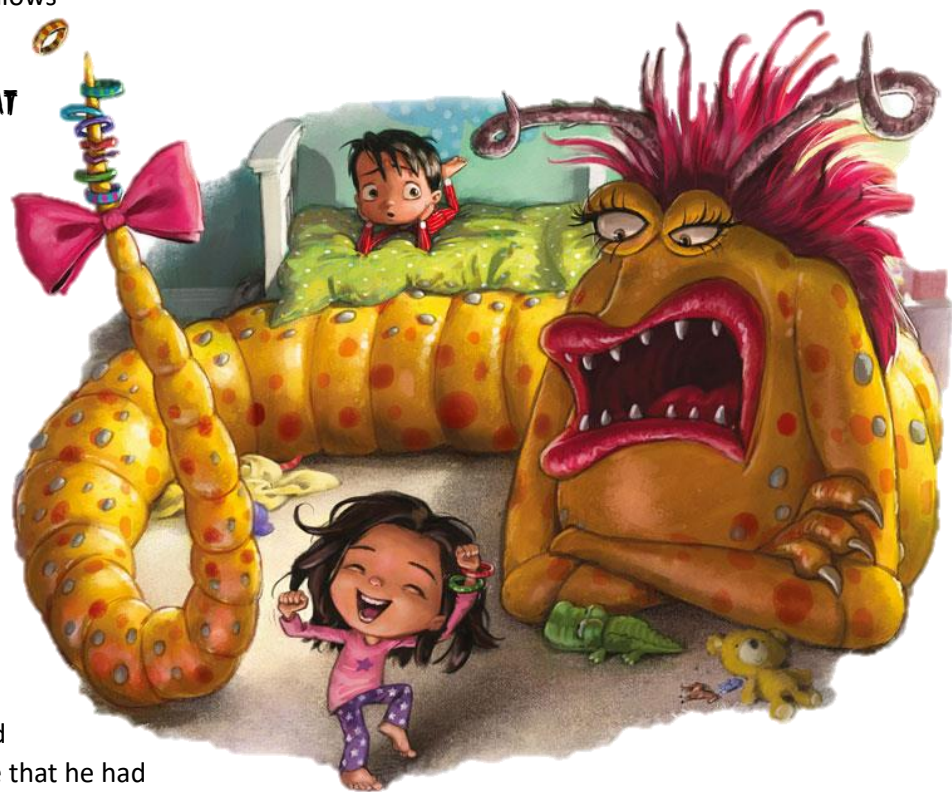
- Pink worm-like lips that slithered and flopped
- Puffy red lips like king-sized pillows

WHAT IS ITS TONGUE LIKE?, WHAT KIND OF TEETH DOES IT HAVE, WHAT KIND OF TAIL DOES IT HAVE?...ETC.

FROM PHRASES TO FICTION

Now MODEL an elaborative segment for the children using the responses that you charted to create a paragraph describing an imaginative monster.

EXAMPLE: Under my bed was an unusual monster. His large body was covered with purple shaggy fur, dotted with light blue spots. I couldn't believe that he had two sets of ping-pong ball-like eyes bulging out of his face. Two large horns that reminded me of a bull protruded out from the sides of his enormous round head. My



heart raced as I saw his razor-sharp dagger claws. His long scaly tail thumped on the ground as his long tongue licked his pink worm-like lips.

HAVE THE CHILDREN TRY CRAFTING A SHORT TALE OF THEIR OWN USING THE PHRASES YOU'VE GATHERED ON THE BOARD.

SAMPLE SUPPLY LIST LESSON SIX

MATERIALS

- *I Need My Monster & Hey, That's My Monster!* by Amanda Noll
- Optional: video version of *I Need My Monster*
- Printouts
- Pencils
- Thesauruses
- Completed settings
- Completed characters
- Story ideas from the dice sessions

PACING GUIDE:

THIS LESSON HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO TAKE ONE TO TWO 75-MINUTE SESSIONS TO COMPLETE. IT MAY TAKE MORE OR LESS DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF YOUR CLASSROOM AND THE ABILITIES OF YOUR STUDENTS.