



Verbs

Teaching Guide

Goal: The students will use action verbs to provide clarification and description in writing.

Introducing the Skill

Preparation: Reproduce the Student Resource Sheet (page 14) for students and make a copy for yourself to use as a teaching reference.

Directions: Distribute the Student Resource Sheet to students. Tell students **WHAT** skill they will be learning. Explain **WHY** writers use this skill and **WHY** it will make your students' writing better. Show several examples of **WHEN** this skill is used. Teach students **HOW** to use this skill.

Practicing the Skill

Preparation: Reproduce the Student Practice Sheets (pages 15 and 16) for students.

Directions: Assign the practice sheets to students according to their needs and abilities. You may wish to have students work on these sheets in one or more of the following ways: as a whole-class activity, with a partner, in small groups, or independently. As an alternative, you may prefer to use one or both sheets as homework assignments. Provide feedback to students to ensure mastery of the skill.

Applying the Skill

Preparation: Write verbs on slips of paper. You will need enough slips for each student in the class to have one. Place the slips in a container, such as a hat, bag, or small box. The following verbs work well for this activity.

skip	sing	catch	fight	sit
jump	blow	fall	write	dance
sleep	eat	shake	jog	bite
drive	hide	swim	drink	drown
cry	walk	throw	draw	paint
sniff	hit	dive	fly	type

Directions: Tell students that they are going to play a version of charades. Choose a student to select a slip of paper from the container. Instruct that student to read the word on the slip of paper to him/herself. The student should then “act out” the word for the class. The rest of the class should try to guess what word is on the slip of paper based on the action being performed. Continue with the game until all students have had a chance to act out a word.

Student Resource Sheet

What: Good writers use strong, specific verbs to describe the actions of a character (a person, animal, or thing).

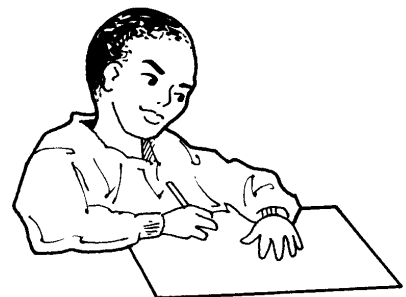
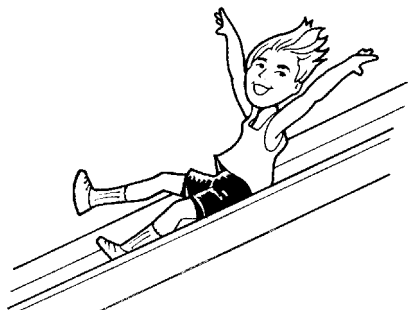
Why: Strong verbs paint a more vivid picture for the reader. They describe exactly what the character is doing. Sometimes strong verbs even give clues to a character's motivation or emotions.

When: Writers use strong verbs all the time. Anytime you write a sentence, try to use a verb that is as specific and as strong as possible.

How: Think about the subject (who or what) your sentence is about. Decide what the subject of your sentence is doing. Think about why the subject is doing this action. Then choose the most specific verb to describe the action being done by your subject. You may need to consult a thesaurus or dictionary to help you select the best verb. Some verbs describe an action that is happening in the present, or now. Other verbs describe an action that has already happened, which means it has taken place in the past.

Here are some examples of verbs.

run	sing	searched	rang	helping
sit	speak	began	blew	researching
swim	shine	broke	coloring	computing
sink	try	fought	painting	calculating
drive	sew	gave	organizing	feeding
catch	lost	took	thinking	fixing
throw	fell	talked	moving	winning
eat	looked	tore	sliding	



Note: Remember, verbs show action. They must tell something the subject of your sentence can do.

 Standards and Benchmarks: 3E

Student Practice Sheet One

Brainstorm a list of synonyms for the word *went* as it is used in the following sentence.

The person **went** down the road.

Example: *skipped*

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Select five of your synonyms from above. For each word, imagine what kind of character would move that way. Why might the character be moving in that way? Review the example shown below. Then list your five synonyms under the word *skipped*. For each synonym, include a brief explanation of who would move that way and why.

Synonym	Who would move that way?	Why?
Example: <i>skipped</i>	<i>a little girl</i>	<i>She's excited because it's her birthday.</i>



Standards and Benchmarks: 3E

Student Practice Sheet Two

Read the following pairs of sentences. Place an **X** beside the sentence that is more exciting or interesting to read.

1. _____ The prisoner walked back and forth in his cell.
_____ The prisoner paced back and forth in his cell.
2. _____ The basketball team bolted onto the court, ready to play the championship game.
_____ The basketball team walked onto the court, ready to play the championship game.
3. _____ The happy dog raced across the grass.
_____ The happy dog ran across the grass.
4. _____ The man gobbled his food as if he hadn't eaten in days.
_____ The man ate his food as if he hadn't eaten in days.

Read the following sentences. Replace each verb in parentheses with a stronger, more specific action verb.

5. The children _____ into the swimming pool. (went)
6. The monkey _____ on the tree branch and _____ its banana. (sat; ate)
7. The tired man _____ to bed. (went)
8. Anthony _____ from the slide and _____ in the mud puddle at the bottom. (fell; landed)
9. The pitcher _____ the ball toward the batter. (threw)
10. The pilot _____ the airplane through the thick fog and landed it safely. (flew)
11. The cheetah _____ for food. (looked)
12. Jake's car _____ around the corner, _____ on the wet pavement, and _____ on the curb. (went; slipped; landed)
13. The chef _____ a five-course dinner, fit for a king. (made)
14. The lazy dog _____ in the warm sunshine. (slept)
15. Suddenly, the door _____ open. (came)