

Spicy Verbs

Objectives

- Students will identify verbs and evaluate them according to their “spice” value.
- Students will write stories utilizing verbs that show action and reveal character traits.

Before the Lesson

(**Note:** This is a two-part lesson.)

Part One is an activity where students insert spicy verbs into sentences. You will need to make a copy of “Spice It Up” (page 18) for each student.

Part Two is the writing assignment. You will need to make an overhead transparency of “Spicy Verbs” (page 19).

The Lesson

Part One

Read the following to the class:

I’m going to read a few sentences from a story titled “George Goes Somewhere.” Listen carefully, because I want to know what you think about them. Here they are:

George went to his aunt’s car. He got in and said, “Bye, Mom.”

(Discuss with the students.)

Was that exciting? No? Not even a little bit exciting? What did you learn about George? Not much? Hmmmm. I wonder why.

Stop and think: What are the verbs in that story? (went, got, said) What do you think about those verbs? Right, they are BORING, BORING, BORING.

Now let me show you what a difference verb selection can make. Here is the same story with different verbs:

George plodded to his aunt’s car. He flopped in and moaned, “Bye, Mom.”

(Discuss with the students.)

Was that more interesting? What did you learn about George? Did you learn that he was tired, maybe even grouchy? How did you know he was tired and grouchy? Right again! You knew because the verbs told you.

Here are a few more versions.

George raced to his aunt’s car. He dove in and screamed, “BYE, MOM!”

(Discuss with the students.)

What did you learn about George this time? Sounds like he’s in a hurry.

What do think about this one?

George stomped to his aunt’s car. He slammed his way in and growled, “Bye.”

I think I’d be staying away from George for a while. What about you?

Spicy Verbs *(cont.)*

The Lesson *(cont.)*

One more.

George's mom dragged him to his aunt's car. She shoved him in as he whined, "No, Mom. Please, please, please. I don't neeeeeed a tetanus shot."

I think you get the picture. Here's the point I've been trying to make:

1. Verbs such as "went," "got," "said," etc., are **BORING VERBS**.
2. Verbs such as "plodded," "flopped," "moaned," "raced," "dove," "screamed," "stomped," "slammed," "growled," "dragged," "shoved," and "whined" are **SPICY VERBS** because . . .
 - A. They make your story more interesting and fun—just like spices make your food more flavorful.
 - B. They show extra things, like the mood of a character.
3. It's okay to use the word "said." But, if another word helps describe the character's situation, then use the spicier word. For example, "whispered," "shrieked," or "mumbled" may be more interesting.

Give each student a copy of "Spice It Up." Ask the students to underline the verbs in the first paragraph. Go over the verbs with them (**Answers:** stopped, got, walked, went, said). Then have them create their own versions of the same paragraph by filling in the blanks with spicy verbs. Let the students share their more creative versions.

After the students share their paragraphs, brainstorm a list of spicy verbs and write them on the board or a piece of butcher paper. Leave the list up so students can refer to it during Part Two of this lesson.

Part Two

Display "Spicy Verbs" on the overhead projector and introduce the writing assignment to the students.



Name: _____

Spice It Up

Directions: Read the following paragraph and underline the verbs.

Tim stopped his alarm clock. He got out of bed, walked to the hall, and went down the steps to the kitchen. He said, "Hi, Mom."

Now spice up the paragraph by filling in the blanks with spicy verbs.

Tim _____ his alarm clock. He _____ out of bed,
_____ to the hall, and _____ down the steps to the
kitchen. He _____, "Hi, Mom."

Hey, that was better than the first paragraph. Try it again, but this time make Tim and his day different and even SPICIER! Remember to show Tim's mood!



Tim _____ his alarm clock. He _____ out of bed,
_____ to the hall, and _____ down the steps to the
kitchen. He _____, "Hi, Mom."

Spicy Verbs

Your assignment is to . . .

Write a story using spicy verbs to give the reader information about your character or characters. If you're feeling extra creative, include a spicy verb in your title.

This assignment is due _____.



Here are some ideas for titles to get your creative juices flowing. Feel free to use one of these ideas or one of your own.

- The Kid Who Could Read Minds
- The Cowboy Who Was Afraid of Cows
- Gum in My Hair
- The Attack of the Alien Peanut Butter Man
- My Life as a Chocolate-Covered Raisin
- The Adventures of a Flea at a Dog Show
- The Kid Who Never Told the Truth
- The Mystery of the Missing Treasure
- The Big Escape
- Stranded on an Island with Singing Ducks



Okay. Are you ready to start? Be creative, have fun, and don't forget to use those spicy verbs! Wait! I mean, **PACK** in those spicy verbs, **STUFF** in those spicy verbs, **CRAM** in those spicy verbs—you get the picture.