



Language

Using Word Relationships

Grades 6-8

Rationale

- ✚ Although words may share basic denotations, strong writers understand that words have different connotations. Therefore, it is crucial for students to understand the relationships between these words so that they may select the best possible words in their writing. When students begin internalizing these distinctions between words, the precision in their writing can see immediate improvement.

Goal

- ✚ To analyze the relationships between words

Standards

- ✚ **L.7.5b** Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.
- ✚ **L.8.5b** Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

Objectives

- ✚ Students will improve their understanding of words by considering their relationship to other terms.
- ✚ Students will revise their writing by replacing weak verbs with vivid ones.

Materials

- ✚ Chart paper
- ✚ Markers
- ✚ Copies of *Word Relationships* sheet

Procedures

- ✚ Explain to students that today they will study the relationships between words. **Many words have the same denotation, or dictionary definition, but those words all have different connotations. Because of that, some words are stronger and more precise than others. To strengthen your writing, you want to choose the most powerful and accurate words. Today, we are going to look at some weak verbs that I have seen in many of your writing assignments. We are going to look at relationships these words have with others. We will find synonyms, antonyms, analogies, examples, and we**

will even make a drawing or visual representation to help us remember these word relationships.




- ✚ Post on chart paper an example of how to complete a word relationship graphic organizer. Have students read each section to ensure they understand the different components.
- ✚ Then post a list of weak verb that are commonly found in student writing. Ask students to choose six of the verbs that they want to work with. Encourage students to select weak verbs that they know they overuse in their writing.
- ✚ Distribute copies of graphic organizers. Have students record their weakest verbs onto the graphic organizers. Then explain that they have the next twenty minutes to work out the relationship between the weak verbs they started with and the vivid, powerful verbs they will finish with.
- ✚ Closing: Have student volunteers share their most impressive analogies with the class.

Teacher Tips

- ✚ Consider adapting this assignment based on whichever parts of speech you want to focus on. For example, adjectives would work for this assignment as well.
- ✚ As an alternative to the traditional graphic organizer, consider having students get more creative and have more fun with their projects. Have students put the word for study in the center and draw several flower petals from the center for synonyms, antonyms, analogies, examples, and visuals.
- ✚ Post “word bouquets” around the room and reference them in subsequent lessons; the reinforcement will help students remember not only the process but the new words and word relationships they learned.
- ✚ Some possible weak verbs for your list might include the following: seems, was, is, looks, feels, sounds, has, goes, etc. Remind students that helping verbs are fine; however, when verbs like “was” are the main verb, there is usually a much stronger alternative available.
- ✚ Here is a sample word relationship chart to post as an example:

<u>WEAK VERB:</u> has/have	<u>STRONGER VERB:</u> possess	
<u>Synonyms:</u> Own, control, dominate, retain	<u>Antonyms:</u> Lack, lose, need	<u>Examples:</u> John possesses vast intelligence.
<u>Analogies</u> has: possess :: know: fathom	<u>Visual:</u>	

Extension Activities

-  Have students return to a previous writing assignment and highlight all of their verbs. Have students choose six or seven of the weakest verbs from the paper and replace them with stronger verbs. Have them create graphic organizers to illustrate the process.
-  Give students three words with similar denotations (e.g. refuse, choose, elect). Have them explain the relationships among these words. Then ask students to write sample passages in which these words would be used. Remind students to consider the context.
-  Divide students into groups and charge them with the responsibility for creating a new bulletin board. Point out that the team with the strongest design will receive a reward (that their project will be posted as a bulletin board in the classroom!). Provide students with a checklist or rubric to guide them through your expectations. Have students present their bulletin board projects to the class. Narrow down the top three and consider having students vote on which one was the best according to the expectations of the assignment.

Word Relationships

In each set of boxes, list the weak verb you want to replace. Then complete the rest of the chart by adding synonyms, antonyms, examples, analogies, and a visual representation.

<u>WEAK VERB:</u>	<u>STRONGER VERB:</u>	
<u>Synonyms:</u>	<u>Antonyms:</u>	<u>Examples:</u>
<u>Analogies</u>	<u>Visual:</u>	

<u>WEAK VERB:</u>	<u>STRONGER VERB:</u>	
<u>Synonyms:</u>	<u>Antonyms:</u>	<u>Examples:</u>
<u>Analogies</u>	<u>Visual:</u>	

<u>WEAK VERB:</u>	<u>STRONGER VERB:</u>	
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