

Read Amy's *Inventing a New Word* story, looking closely at her dialogue punctuation. Then, with a partner, complete the word choice ranking at the story's end.

## Moopers All Around

by Amy, eighth grade writer

It was a pleasant day in the green pastures. No clouds could be seen, and the grass was crisp and fresh with morning dew. Black, white, and brown figures were dotted all over the land, munching silently to themselves. The cows were carefree and happy, but over by the small mound of dirt, eight cows seemed to be acting differently than the others.

While the other cows were passing their time lazily, two girls around the age of 13 were walking around the perimeter of the pasture. Having a conversation related to the events of their strings class that day, they suddenly stopped near the entrance gate. One girl named Brianna looked over the low fence, squinted with her eyes, and shook her head sadly. The other girl named Andria eyed her curiously, and faced the direction where her friend was looking. Both were silent, still staring at what seemed to be empty spaces of air.

"Hey, look at those poor cows, so sad and lonely. Their heads are low to the ground, and they seem to be depressed," Andria said, her voice full of pity for the poor animals.

"Yeah, I know what you mean. I wonder what might have happened to make them this way. Hm, they must be..." Brianna paused, scratching her chin in thought.

"Must be what?" Andria prodded, her eyes growing wide. "You don't think they're going to die do you?"

"No, no, no. That's not what I'm getting at. They must be *moopers*, you know? I mean, come on, look at their faces. What normal happy cow looks like that brown one over there?"

"Moopers? Wait, first of all, I have a question. What is a mooper exactly?" Andria asked, cocking her head slightly to the right.

Brianna laughed, "A mooper is of course a sad, ill, or depressed cow. Don't you get it?"

Scrunching her eyebrows close together, Andria thought and thought about the new and mysterious word *mooper*. "You know? Mooper is a pretty darn good word. I like it! From now on, we'll call sick cows *moopers*!"

"Good idea, wait. Hey, it was my idea in the first place. Ha ha, oh well. Come on! Let's go and see some more of these moopers before dark."

So both Brianna and Andria made their way throughout the pasture full of cows and moopers, laughing at their newly created word. When it was close to 4:00 P.M., both were confronted by a boy around the age of 13 wearing overalls. His breath smelled like strawberries, while his hair smelled like onions. Together, the overall smell was so overpowering that both the girls pinched their noses together in disgust.



“What do you think you’re doing on my family’s farm land?” asked the boy in overalls, chewing on strawberry-flavored gum.

So that’s were the strawberry smell was coming from, thought Andria to herself, her eyes wet from the stench of onions.

“We didn’t know that your family was the owner of this place. Sorry about that. We were just looking at your moopers over there,” Brianna said innocently, stepping back from the boy, fear that he would transfer the onion odor onto her.

“Moopers? What is a mooper? We don’t have any moopers here. I’ve never even heard of a mooper before.”

“Yeah, you do. Those cows over there by that small mound of dirt. Don’t you see? They’re moopers, because they look so sad, ill, or depressed,” Brianna replied with a spark to her voice.

The boy looked at her curiously, then boomed out in laughter. “Silly girls, those aren’t moopers. They’re like that because we changed their diet yesterday from green grass to good quality expensive hay from the farm market. Moopers! Ha ha, nice word, but it doesn’t really work with those cows. The cows that you technically called moopers are going to be going to the fair soon, so we want them to look their best as soon as possible,” exclaimed the boy, still laughing from the word *mooper*.

“Oh...” Andria and Brianna stated, both turning red.

“Don’t worry about it. By the way, the name’s Truman. And this is place called the Cow Man Ranch. Would you like a tour of our,” Truman started then stopped, sputtering into laughs, “moopers, ha ha!”

“Uh, sure,” Andria and Brianna replied, both in unison.

So the three children hung out with each other for the rest of the afternoon, laughing and goofing off, sharing stories of all three of their lives. When it was dark, they parted and promised one another that they would be back the next day, and the next. They would keep coming back, and would all keep telling their neighborhood about the strange word *moopers*. Though it was not found in the dictionary, to these three people, it was to be found in any place of their world.

Pretend you’re Amy. How would she rank her own story’s Word Choice?

Rank from 1 (low) to 5 (high) these skills in this draft:

- \_\_\_\_\_ My adjectives are excellent and thoughtful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I use a good balance of action and linking verbs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My nouns are precise; I don't overuse pronouns.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is clear that I am not afraid to take risks with new words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I use a few color and texture words to describe.