

## Try this with your class!

### Improving Word Choice with Verbs

Have you noticed that your students seem to use the same boring words over and over? Give them some new strategies for this type of revision and watch their word choice improve!

#### Directions:

1. Have students underline an overused or dull word in a story they have written. This exercise can be used for descriptive words, verbs, and transition words.
2. Help students find several alternative words that could be used in place of the ones underlined. Encourage students to use the thesaurus, clustering, adjective word lists, word banks, and/or dictionaries.
3. Ask each student to choose the word that best replaces each of the underlined words in the story.

#### Student sample:

##### THE BOY WHO FOUND A FRIEND

Once there was a boy named Jimmy. He was a poor boy who lived in Paris in a small cabin away from town. His mother and father had died, and he was all alone. He did not have one friend, so the only thing he wanted was somebody to play with and look after.

One morning he awoke with such a good feeling in his heart and walked outside of the old cabin in the fresh morning breeze. He had decided he would go out and look for a friend. So he started walking toward the big city.

After he got there he was awfully tired and sat on a step in front of an old gray building to rest.

After awhile he heard a barking noise, not very close, though. Jimmy looked around and there, in an old alley was a very small puppy. "I found a friend," Jimmy cried.

Jimmy got up and went over to the puppy to pet him, but the puppy started barking and whimpering. Jimmy picked the puppy up and felt so happy! He had really found a friend! The little puppy acted so sweet and so intelligent. Jimmy felt so caring. Jimmy knew he had found a good friend.

Jimmy put an old rope around the puppy's neck and tied it very loose and carefully and took him back to where Jimmy was sitting. They both sat down and looked and looked around the big city, and then Jimmy walked home with his little puppy and went fast asleep.

Jimmy really knew he had a good friend.

**Student sample:**

## THE BOY WHO FOUND A FRIEND (Revised)

Once there lived a boy named Jimmy. He was a poor boy who lived in Paris in a small cabin away from town. His mother and father had died, and he stayed all alone. He did not have one friend, so the only thing he needed was somebody to play with and look after.

One morning he awoke with such a good feeling in his heart and ran outside of the old cabin in the fresh morning breeze. He had decided he would go out and search for a friend. So he began strolling toward the big city.

After he arrived there he felt awfully tired and squatted on a step in front of an old gray building to rest.

After awhile he heard a barking noise, not very close, though. Jimmy turned behind him and there, in an old alley sat a very small puppy. "I found a friend," Jimmy cried.

Jimmy got up and walked over to the puppy to pet him, but the puppy started barking and whimpering. Jimmy picked the puppy up and felt so happy! He had really found a friend! The little puppy acted so sweet and so intelligent. Jimmy felt so caring. Jimmy realized he had found a good friend.

Jimmy wrapped an old rope around the puppy's neck and tied it very loose and carefully and took him back to where Jimmy was sitting. They both collapsed and peered and peered around the big city, and then Jimmy skipped home with his little puppy and went fast asleep.

Jimmy really knew he had a good friend.

--Chris W., 5<sup>th</sup> grade