

# Choosing Vivid Verbs

**Purpose:** To help the students learn to make their writing more exact and interesting through the use of vivid verbs

**Definition:** Words that name the action in a sentence are called **verbs**. Vivid verbs describe an action in an exact and interesting way to create a clear word picture for the reader.

**Instruction:** Read aloud the first page of a selection from an exciting adventure story the students have read, asking them to list action words they hear. Put the words they name on the chalkboard and ask what kind of words these are. After someone identifies them as verbs, **invite volunteers to tell which verbs listed paint a clear, exciting picture of the action.** Explain that these are vivid verbs. Writers try to choose vivid verbs because they help to paint a clear word picture of an action. Then **write the following sentences on the chalkboard**, omitting the verbs in parentheses.

Mark laughed at the clown. (giggled, snorted, guffawed)

The dolphin moved through the water. (dived, slid, leaped)

The baby birds cried. (cheeped, whistled, twittered)

Ask the students to identify each verb. **Then invite volunteers to replace each verb with one they think is more vivid.** The words in parentheses are possible replacements. How does each choice change the meaning of the sentence? How does it make the word picture more vivid and interesting?

## Link to Writing

Ask the students to read through their own work and replace ordinary, everyday verbs with some that are more colorful and exact. The students may complete **Reproducible Master T00** as appropriate.

Have the students share their examples of sentences with vivid verbs and make revisions to the page, if necessary. Then have the students insert the page in the Author's Style section of their Writer's Notebook.

- **Reproducible Master T00**

## Common Problems in Writing

Once the students become familiar with a thesaurus, they may be overwhelmed by the number of words there are to choose from.

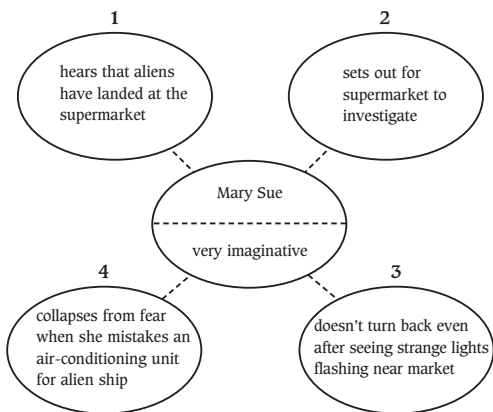
**Suggestion:** Use the following example to demonstrate to the students how to narrow their word choices. Have them imagine they are writing about someone *climbing* a mountain and want to use a verb to replace climbing. The thesaurus gives a number of choices, but, as writers, they have to decide what the climber is doing. If she is walking slowly up a steep slope, she may be *trudging*. If she is climbing up quickly and clumsily, perhaps she is *scrambling* up. If she is inching her way up a steep rock, she may be *scaling* it. You might list other words given in a thesaurus under *climb* to verify that most other choices would not work as well in these situations.

## Common Problems for LEP Students

Students learning a second language are often very literal. It is difficult for them to use a variety of words of similar meaning.

**Suggestion:** Encourage LEP students to act out situations in order to find new and vivid words. For example, partners might dramatize a scene from a story that one of them is working on. Those who watch should think of action verbs that describe what they see and hear. For example, if the actors speak loudly, their audience might say *shouted* or

<b>CHARACTER</b> The main story character	<b>GOAL</b> What the character wants to do	<b>TRY</b> What the character does to reach the goal	<b>BLOCK(S)</b> The problem that keeps the character from reaching the goal	<b>OUTCOME</b> What happens in the end
			<b>REACTION</b> What the character thinks or feels about the block(s)	



### Character Study Chart

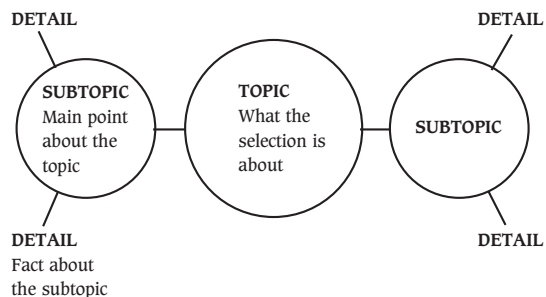
Character study charts are helpful during or after reading as you discuss and analyze characters in a particular selection or across selections.

<b>A. What Henrietta is like</b>	<b>How can you tell?</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

<b>B. What Henrietta feels</b> At the beginning of the story:	<b>How can you tell?</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
While she is trying to figure out what to do:	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
At the end of the story:	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

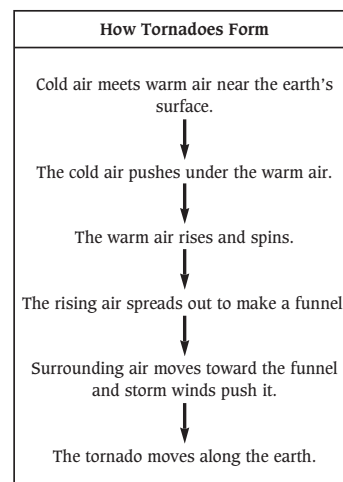
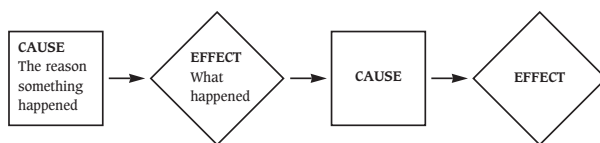
### Information Web

Information webs can be used to organize or present information during research or for a research presentation. They can also be used to organize thoughts while reading or after reading nonfiction or informational text.



### Cause-and-Effect Chain

Graphic organizers such as these can be used during or after reading as you discuss and analyze the events and situations in a fiction selection. They can also be helpful as you and the students discuss and process informational text.



### Venn Diagram

Venn diagrams are most useful as a comparison and contrast tool. They can be used during or after reading when analyzing and discussing characters or events. They can be used to compare and contrast selections. They can even be used to compare and contrast ideas or concepts during research.

