

Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner, illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal

A Mentor Text Lesson Plan by Marcie Flinchum Atkins



Writing Skills Focus: Word choice, vivid verbs

Target Audience: 3rd, 4th, 5th Grade

Objectives:

Utilize a picture book as a mentor text for interesting and specific word choices, with a focus on vivid verbs.

Recognize and categorize vivid verbs in a variety of texts.

Describe how vivid verbs contribute to the tone of the book and create an image for the reader.

Use drawing as a pre-writing technique for brainstorming actions and vivid verbs for a character in a story.

Standards:**Virginia Standards of Learning:**

Standards are listed here for referencing by number in your lesson plans. For link to complete standards, go to:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2010/stds_all_english.pdf

English**3rd Grade Standards**

3.4 b, e

3.9 b, e, f, g

3.10 d

4th Grade Standards

4.4 a, b, d

4.5 a, b, g

4.7 c, d, i

4.8 a

5th Grade Standards

5.4 a, c, f

5.5 e

5.7 b, f, h, i

Common Core:

Standards are listed here for referencing by number in your lesson plans. For link to complete standards, go to: http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf

3rd Grade Standards

CSSS.ELA.W 3.3, 3.4, 3.5

CSSS.ELA.L 3.1 a, d, e, f, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6

4th Grade Standards

CSSS.ELA.W 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.9

CSSS.ELA.L 4.1b, 4.3 a, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

5th Grade Standards

CSSS.ELA.W 5.3, 5.4, 5.5

CSSS.ELA.L 5.1 b, c, d, 5.3 a, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

Text(s):**Main Text:**

OVER AND UNDER THE SNOW by Kate Messner, illustrations by Christopher Silas Neal
ISBN: 978-0-8118-6784-9

Scavenger Hunt Possible Texts:

BEETLE BOP by Denise Fleming
GREAT FUZZ FRENZY by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel
HEAT WAVE by Eileen Spinelli, illustrated by Betsy Lewin
MERMAID QUEEN by Shana Corey, illustrated by Edward Fotheringham
MOSTLY MONSTERLY by Tammi Sauer, illustrated by Scott Magoon
MR. DUCK MEANS BUSINESS by Tammi Sauer, illustrated by Jeff Mack
TIPPY-TIPPY-TIPPY, HIDE! by Candace Fleming, illustrated by G. Brian Karas

Other Materials Needed:

Chart paper and different colored markers
Sticky notes
Plain paper
Action Worksheet (see attached)

Lesson:**Setting the purpose:**

Introduce or review vivid verbs. An emphasis should be placed on the fact that vivid verbs help create a picture for the reader. A really good verb shows a lot. Instead of needing numerous flowery adjectives to describe something, sometimes a vivid verb will do the trick.

Discuss reading like a writer. Students will be using OVER AND UNDER THE SNOW as a mentor text. It is a delightful story to read just for pleasure, but Kate Messner creates a whole world with her words. She is specific and diverse in her use of words. This text is a great way to show students that there are many ways to indicate "sleep" or "go."

Utilizing the Mentor Text

1. Read the text OVER AND UNDER THE SNOW. Encourage the students to play close attention to the verbs Messner uses. Record them on chart paper, or students can record them individually. (see the chart below as an example)
2. After reading, discuss how Messner never uses the word "sleep," but finds other ways to say "sleep" or something similar to or indicative of "sleep." Examples on the chart are circled in green.

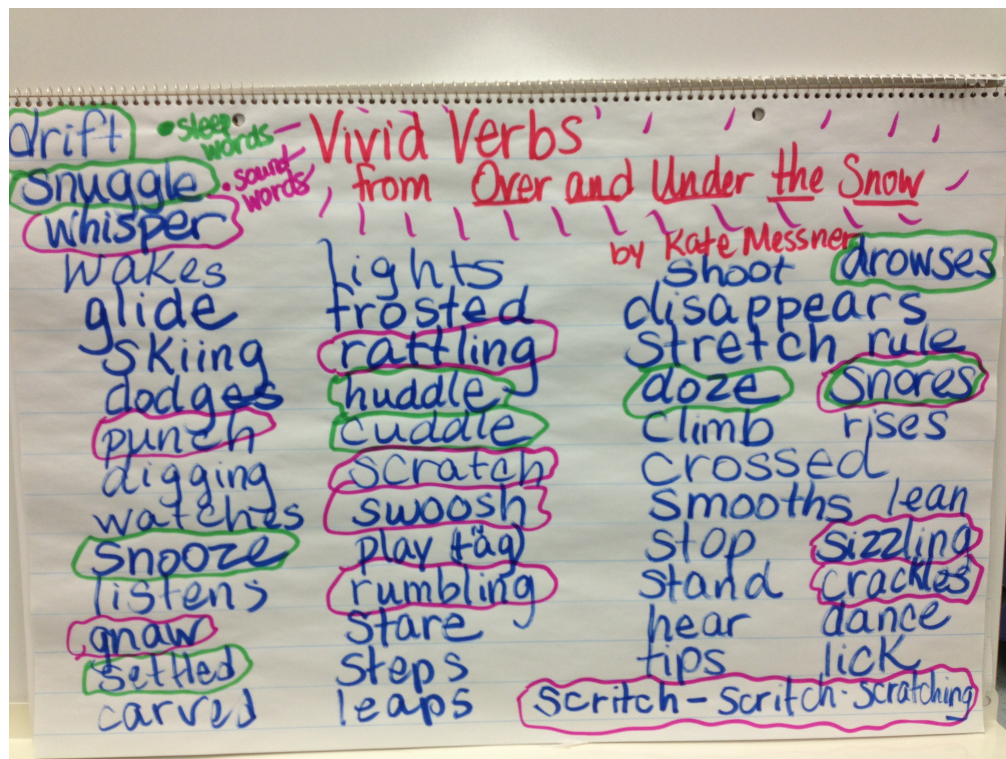
Some sample words for sleep:

drift drowzes snores snooze snuggle

3. After reading, discuss how some of the verbs Messner uses create a sound in the reader's mind. She utilizes sensory words to help the reader hear the story, not just see it. Examples on the chart are circled in pink.

Some sample sensory words that focus on sound:

whisper gnaw scratch sizzling cracks rumbling



You can view this vivid verb chart and others at: <http://pinterest.com/marcieaf/mentor-texts/>

4. Throughout the text, the main character and her father are skiing through the snowy woods. Messner varies the way she talks about the character's movement. Have students note the different words she uses to show the action of the character.

Some examples include:

skiing glide climb digging slide
swoosh stand stare stop stand

5. Also note how Messner's word choice creates a mood or tone for the book. Students can share how the text makes them feel as a reader.
6. In *OVER AND UNDER THE SNOW*, Messner is such a visual writer. She paints pictures with her words. Choose your favorite part of the book. Read it without showing students the picture on that spread. (Note: don't show them the illustrations of this particular spread as you read it through the first time either). Allow students to listen to you read that page and draw what they see in their mind's eye. Discuss how her use of verbs helps you know what to draw and what to picture in your mind.
7. After hunting for vivid verbs together as a class, arrange students in small groups. Give each small group a picture book with vivid verbs in it (see possible picture books list to use, or use other books that have vivid verbs). Have them go on their own vivid verb scavenger hunt. Each group can get 3-5 sticky notes. They should write one vivid verb on each sticky note that they found in the picture book text.

Allow students to share their sticky notes and place them on a piece of blank chart paper. If students mistakenly wrote down other parts of speech, then you can correct at this point. When you have the chart filled with sticky notes, students can create a vivid verbs page in their writer's notebooks with some of their favorite words used by these authors.

Transferring the Skill to Student Writing:

As a pre-writing activity, students can brainstorm a character for an upcoming story they will write. Complete the ACTION worksheet to help them with brainstorming ideas for what their characters will do in the story.

Extension Activities/Spin-Off Lesson:

Bird Verb Poems

http://writingfix.com/classroom_tools/Art_Writing/Feather_Art1.htm

Other Resources:

Kate Messner's website:

<http://www.katemessner.com>

Christopher Silas Neal's website:

<http://redsilas.com/process.php>

Marcie Flinchum Atkins

E-mail: marcie@marcieatkins.com

<http://www.marcieatkins.com>

Please seek permission before posting on another website.

ACTION!

Create a character for your story. Draw three actions your character could do in your story in the boxes below. Underneath the box, brainstorm all of the verbs that might show what the character is doing.



Verbs

Verbs

Verbs

Meet with a buddy. Tell your buddy your story, briefly. What's going to happen? Discuss which verbs best show what action your character is doing. Which verbs are the most specific? Which verbs are the most interesting? Circle your best verbs.

Use these drawings to help guide you in telling your story in words. Write a draft of your story. Try to use your best verbs as you write. Don't worry, you can also work on making your verbs better when you revise.