

Word Work Lesson Plan and Activities

Instructional Focus Based on the Words in the Book

Word Work
By: Cynthia Rylant
Grade Level: 4 / Guided Reading Level: R

Scarecrow
By: Cynthia Rylant
Grade Level: 4 / Guided Reading Level: R

Instructional Focus:
Synonyms

Background:
Synonyms are words that have similar meanings. Identifying synonyms will expand the reader's vocabulary and comprehension.

Examples:

borrowed	living
quickly	knows
ignore	open
lovely	thinking
gentleness	slow

Materials and Preparation:

- A Copy of Scarecrow
- Chart paper for Anchor Chart
- Index cards
- Synonym Practice Page
- Prepared Synonym Match
- Optional - Word Detective

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Step 1: Introduce the Focus of Word Work

Introduce Synonyms

- Explain to students that synonyms are words that have similar meanings. Good readers expand their vocabulary as they learn new synonyms. A dictionary or a thesaurus is a good resource for finding synonyms. Synonyms also enhance our writing abilities.
- Begin an anchor chart of synonyms. After the heading, make a T chart. On the left, write the word happy. Ask students to volunteer synonyms for happy. Record reasonable answers on the right hand side of the T chart.
- Continue adding to the anchor chart using the following words on the left side: boy, walking, roomy, write, sadly, and friend. Record student responses on the right of the T chart as each word is added.
- Note to students that we can find synonyms for nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

Sample Anchor Chart

SYNONYMS	
happy	delighted, pleased, joyful
boy	lad, fellow, man
walking	strolling, ambling, sauntering
roomy	spacious, airy, wide
write	compose, scribble
sadly	gloomily, miserably
friend	pal, buddy, comrade

Step 2: Connect Word Work to Reading

Synonyms in the Text

- Tell students that there are many words in Scarecrow that we can use for practice finding synonyms.
- Display words from the book that are listed below.
- Ask students to start thinking of possible synonyms for each word.
- Read Scarecrow.

Examples of Synonyms Found in the Text

• borrowed	• living	• quickly	• thinking
• evening	• lovely	• person	• ignore
• knows	• watched	• making	• smile
• rained	• rained	• lovely	• see
• gentleness	• slow	• thoughts	

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Step by Step Lesson Plan

List of words in the book that match the instructional focus

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Step 3: Guided Word Work Practice

Interactive Exploration

- Tell students that using synonyms will make them better readers and writers.
- Provide each student with a Synonym Word Work page. Pair students.
- Direct students to complete the Synonym Word Work page with their partner. Read directions and example with students. Circulate to help students.
- Share out once most pairs have finished. Challenge early finishers to create their own pairs of synonyms with one student thinking of a word, and the partner giving a synonym.

Step 4: Independent Word Work Practice

Practice Page

- Tell students that their writing will be much more inviting to read when they use synonyms for overused, tired words. Give the example of the word nice. Say, "It is a nice day. I had a nice lunch. My friend is nice. That was a nice book." Point out to students that "nice" is tired and overused. Elicit suggestions for synonyms for each sentence.
- Provide each student with the Synonym Writing Practice Page.
- Read the directions and example together. Complete independently.

Step 5: Reconnect and Reflect on Word Work

Group Discussion

- Bring the students back together.
- Ask students to explain what they learned about words based on the work they completed.
- Invite students to turn and talk with a partner about their word work.
- Invite 2-3 students to share what they learned with the group.

Step 6: Extend Word Work (optional)

Extension Activity

- Ask students to be on the lookout for **synonyms** in their own reading. Tell them to write their words on a sticky note and add them to the anchor chart (review the added sticky notes with the class later in the day or before moving on to the next word work lesson).
- Alternatively, students can keep track of the words using the Word Detective worksheet.

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Interactive Activities

Independent Practice Page

Extension Activity

Synonym Partner Word Work

Directions:
With your partner, come up with one or two synonyms for each word. Take turns speaking. If you finish early, challenge your partner with thinking of a synonym for a word you provide.

Example: tired: exhausted

- pretty _____
- run _____
- fast _____
- ate _____
- badly _____
- beautiful _____
- sat _____
- delicious _____
- gladly _____

Name: _____

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Word Detective: Synonyms
Extension Activity

Directions:
Be a word detective!
Be on the lookout for **synonyms** while you read. Write the word that you find along with the title of the book where you found the word, the page, and the sentence with the word or phrase.

Word	Book Title	Page	Sentence

Name: _____

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Synonyms
Word Work Practice Page

Directions:
In the paragraph below, there are many tired, overused words. These words are written in bold. Rewrite the paragraph by replacing the tired words with fresh, vibrant synonyms. A dictionary or thesaurus may be used, if available.

Paragraph:
It was a nice spring Saturday, so Emil decided to take a **nice walk**. First, he put on his **old sweatshirt** and then his **new sneakers**. Emil **thought** he would **walk** to the **pretty park** on the corner. He **called** his friend Donnie, who agreed to **meet** there to **play**. Donnie **said** he would **bring** a **ball**. Once the **boys** arrived, they **saw** their **friends** Sarah and Jess. Together, the **four friends** kicked the **ball** around and then **played** on the **jungle gym**. They **had** a **good** afternoon.

Name: _____

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