

Unit Contents: Quick Overview

Model Unit One: “The Power of Words”

The lessons and materials in this section of the grade 9 Google site may be used as a comprehensive nine-week unit, or teachers may use individual lessons to supplement an existing curriculum or to meet specific student needs. The lessons included here address the function of **diction** (both denotation and connotation), **imagery**, and **figurative language** in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. **Although individual lessons could be used at any time during the academic year, teachers might consider using some or all of these lessons early in the year to introduce the ways writers make conscious choices to achieve their desired purpose or effect.**

Lessons in this unit are not tied to an anchor text; they could be used with multiple texts and/or curricular units. Following are brief descriptions of the lessons included in “The Power of Words.” Additional notes and teaching suggestions can be found in the detailed Unit Outline posted on the Google site.

The Power of Words: Introduction

*This lesson is posted as a **PDF** and as a **Google doc**. It begins with a short **video** that illustrates the effect of using **specific language** and then asks students to respond to a quotation about words from Mark Twain.*

The Power of Words in an Autobiography

*This lesson is posted as a **PDF** and as a **Google doc**. Using an excerpt from the Autobiography of Malcolm X, students are encouraged to consider the importance of **vocabulary development** in their own lives. They complete a **Reader Response Journal** over the text and then respond to a quotation about the importance and power of words.*

The Best Word for the Job (LTF lesson)

*Posted as a **PDF**, this lesson focuses on **denotative and connotative meanings** of words and encourages students to consider the precise meanings of words with similar meanings.*

Also posted with this lesson:

- **LTF Teacher Overview** (with teaching suggestions and suggested answers)

The Power of Specific Words

*Using short excerpts from A Place in El Paso, a **memoir** by Gloria Lopez Stafford, and Sphere, a **novel** by Michael Crichton, students identify specific words that create **imagery** and **mood**, practice adding specific words to create **imagery** and **mood**, and compose an original paragraph that incorporates what they have learned about specific words. This lesson is posted as a **PDF** and as a **HyperDoc**.*

The Power of Ambiguous Words

*Students first complete a short activity on **ambiguity** in “garden path sentences.” Then they read and analyze the **poem** “Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll, noting the **nonsense words** and **portmanteau words** in the poem and how Carroll uses these words to create **tone**. See the **Unit Overview** for suggestions about small group work to examine individual stanzas of the poem.*

The Power of Words to Create Imagery

*Note: This lesson is posted as one **PDF**, and its three component parts are posted as individual **Google docs**.*

- In the first activity, students read an excerpt from *All the Light We Cannot See*, a **novel** by Anthony Doerr, and analyze the **images** that explain how the blind protagonist perceives and interacts with her environment. The activity culminates with an **analytical paragraph**.
- In the second activity, students read and analyze “Root Cellar,” a **poem** by Theodore Roethke, especially noting Roethke’s use of **connotative diction** and **figurative language** to create **imagery**. The **HyperDoc** version of this activity includes **visuals** and **informational text** to enhance students’ understanding of the poem; the lesson is also posted as a **PDF**. The activity culminates with an **analytical paragraph**.
- In the third activity, students read and analyze “It Sifts from Leadens Sieves,” a **poem** by Emily Dickinson, especially noting Dickinson’s use of **connotative diction** and **figurative language** to create **imagery**. The **HyperDoc** version of this activity includes **visuals** and **informational text** to enhance students’ understanding of the poem; the lesson is also posted as a **PDF**. The activity culminates with an **analytical paragraph**.
- This lesson can be extended by having students complete the **poetry group project**. For this activity, teachers may assign poems from their existing curriculum or poems listed in the **Unit One Outline** teaching suggestions posted on the Google site.

The Power of Words in a Short Story

*Note: This complete lesson is posted as a **PDF**, and its three component parts are posted as individual **Google docs** or **HyperDocs**.*

- In the first section of this lesson, students read and analyze the **short story** “A Day’s Wait” by Ernest Hemingway, noting how **miscommunication** occurs when people do not have a common understanding of the meanings of words. The **HyperDoc** version of the story includes additional information about Hemingway, including his **connection to Arkansas**.
- In the second section, students explore the **thematic idea** of **miscommunication**, finding **textual evidence** to support their **argument**.
- Finally, students write an **essay** analyzing how lack of communication and miscommunication affect the characters’ understanding of the situation presented in the short story. The lesson includes strategies for composing a **thesis statement** and an **introduction**, **organizing** the essay, and developing **evidence** and **commentary** in **body paragraphs**.
- Teaching suggestions in the **Unit 1 Outline** include links for **historical background** information on the **Spanish flu** as well as suggestions for connecting the story to the recent **COVID 19** pandemic.

NOTE: *The following related activity appears as an enrichment activity in **Unit 2**:*

*This **creative writing** activity is posted as both a **PDF** and a **Google doc**. In this activity, students rewrite “A Day’s Wait” from the **perspective** of an adult Schatz looking back on an event from his childhood. This activity could be used either as a follow-up to an analysis of the short story or as an enrichment activity in the “Point of View and Perspective” unit.*

The Power of Words to Reveal Character

*Note: This complete lesson is posted as a **PDF**, and two of the three component parts are posted as individual **Google docs**.*

- As an introduction to methods of **characterization**, students read the **fable** “The Peacock and the Crane” and determine adjectives that can be used to describe different **characters**.
- Next, students analyze excerpts from *Tuesdays with Morrie*, a **memoir** by Mitch Albom, and *A Gathering of Old Men*, a **novel** by Ernest Gaines, noting how **diction** and **details** in the texts reveal **character**.
- The extended final activity in this lesson is included only in the **PDF** version: Students read and analyze an excerpt from *Hard Times*, a **novel** by Charles Dickens. This activity is more challenging than the first ones and might be better suited for use with students in Honors or Pre-AP classes. In this lesson, students consider how Dickens uses **diction**, **imagery**,

figurative language, structural elements, and specific types of **phrases and clauses** to characterize Mr. Gradgrind. Finally, students write an essay analyzing how these elements create a vivid **characterization** of Mr. Gradgrind. The lesson includes strategies for composing a **thesis statement** and an **introduction**, for **organizing** the essay, and for developing **evidence** and **commentary** in body paragraphs.

Also posted with this lesson:

- **LTF Student Resource: Marker Verbs for Essays of Literary Analysis**

The Power of Words to Encourage Reflection

In this lesson, students read and analyze “Amid the Beauty of Fall, a Brush with Mortality,” a newspaper article by author and former newspaper columnist John Grogan.

- The **PDF** version of the lesson includes multiple guided readings of the article, focusing on **diction** and **imagery, figurative language, syntax, and author’s purpose**.
- The **HyperDoc** version of the lesson includes guided readings that focus on **diction** and **imagery, figurative language, and author’s purpose**. This version of the lesson also includes a link for more information about the author and **embedded visuals** related to the setting described in the text.

Also posted with this lesson:

- **LTF Teacher Resource: Tone and Mood**
- **LTF Student Resource: Phrase Toolbox**
- **LTF Student Resource: Clause Toolbox**
- **LTF Student Resource: Transition Toolbox**
- **LTF Student Resource: A Sampling of Tone Words**
- **LTF Student Resource: Annotation Tips**

Annotation Practice: “Amid the Beauty”

*This lesson serves as a follow-up to the lesson above. It guides students through the process of annotating a text for specific **literary elements and devices**. Posted only as a **PDF**, this lesson includes guidelines for **deconstructing a writing prompt** and example **annotations** of the Grogan article; students follow the examples to complete the annotation. Teachers may use this lesson to teach **annotation strategies**, or they may have students annotate the text and then respond to the **writing prompt** with an appropriate essay.*

Also posted with this lesson:

- **LTF Teacher Resource: Annotation Tips**
- **LTF Student Resource: Annotation Tips**

Style Analysis Essay (LTF Assessment)

*Included at the end of this unit is a released **LTF assessment** that asks students to analyze how an author uses **diction, imagery, and details** to create **mood**. This essay prompt would be a logical extension of the lesson and annotation practice on the Grogan article above. Included with this assessment is a **Pre-Writing** worksheet to help students plan their essay.*

Also posted with this assessment:

- **LTF Teacher Resource: Scoring Guidelines**
- **LTF Teacher Resource: Rangefinder Essays**
- **LTF Teacher Resource: Scoring Commentary**
- **LTF Student Resource: Revision Guide**