



LESSON: The Sound of Words --Onomatopoeia

Grades: 1-3

Subject Area: Language Arts

Estimated Time: 60 minutes

I. Summary: Some of the villains on WordGirl use words that sound like what they mean. For example, in the episode, "Yes Sir, That's My Butcher," The Butcher calls out, "Salami Slam! Pork Chop Chop! Chicken Pot Pow!" This technique, called onomatopoeia, is often used by poets because it creates lively language. Onomatopoeia is the focus of this lesson. Students will be asked to create short skits that use onomatopoeia, and in the process they will expand their vocabularies.

II. Objectives:

- Students will experience language through sound
- Students will become familiar with the term, onomatopoeia
- Students will practice using onomatopoeia in short skits they create
- Students will cooperatively work together

III. Materials:

- Handout of Onomatopoeia words
- A sample poem that uses onomatopoeia
- Paper
- Pen or pencil
- 2 play phones
- Dictionary

IV. Procedure:

1. Read a sample onomatopoeia poem (see Eve Merriam for many examples) to students and invite them to recall any sounds they heard in the poem. Explain that writers often use words whose sounds suggest their meanings. This technique is called onomatopoeia. Invite the students to briefly discuss how and why onomatopoeia reinforces the mood in a piece of writing.
2. Invite students to offer examples of onomatopoeia and write these on the board.
3. Divide students into groups of three, then explain that each group



must create a dialogue using as many onomatopoeia words as possible. One student will be the narrator, while the other two students will have an imaginary phone conversation. The narrator will record the words the group chooses to use, set the scene by introducing the two actors, and at the end of the skit, will repeat which onomatopoeia words were used. Students may choose from onomatopoeia words on the board or from a handout of suggested words.

4. Distribute the handout of suggested onomatopoeia words, and review the list. For any unfamiliar words, use some example sentences and see if the students can figure out the word's meaning through context.

ONOMATOPOEIA WORDS:

Bong Beep Boom Buzz

Chirp Clang Crash Crackle

Gobble Goop Growl Gush

Hiccup Hiss Honk Hoot

Peep Plop Pop Purr

Rattle Ring Roar Rumble

Sizzle Snap Splash Squeak

Whack Wheeze Whine Whisper

Zap Zip Zoom

5. Invite students to perform their skits in front of the class. Afterwards, engage students in discussion about their experience using onomatopoeia and the value they find in this literary technique.

V. Assessment: Students should understand and know how to use the literary technique of onomatopoeia. Students should successfully collaborate on and perform a skit that uses onomatopoeia.



VI. Extensions in Learning:

- Create a class bulletin board of onomatopoeia words, and invite students to continue collecting examples. Encourage students to search for examples of onomatopoeia in newspaper and magazine cartoon strips. Add these words to the collection.
- Distribute a variety of poetry anthologies and ask students to find poems that rely upon onomatopoeia. Students may share favorite example poems with the class. Invite students to write their own onomatopoeia poems.
- Invite students to create their own "Mad-Libs" using onomatopoeia words in the blanks.

Related National Standards (These are established by McREL at URL: <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>.)

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