

Teaching notes

Project Activity 1 verb bank grid onto the whiteboard and invite students to suggest verbs which can be written into the relevant boxes.

Encourage students to use a dictionary and a thesaurus throughout these activities.

Whilst completing the matching exercises in Activities 2 and 3, it's useful for students to look up the meanings of words they're unsure of and note these down. It's worth reminding students that even words they think they know sometimes have quite precise meanings, e.g. to query, to retort.

A starter the following week could be to check students have remembered meanings as well as new words, e.g. by reusing Activity 2 but without the verb prompts to choose from, or by creating your own Cloze exercise designed to help students recall new verbs that were noted during the earlier lesson.

Once again, for Activity 4 project the grid on to a whiteboard and invite students to suggest adverbs for each emotion and to write an example of one of these in a sentence.

You could watch the Brian Patten poetry reading before starting this unit of work and discuss the effects of repetition of vocabulary. (NB There is a minor swear word in the poem). In the poem it works because it's intended to be comic, but students could discuss how sometimes repetition of 'I said/she said' etc. distracts the reader from the message. Then watch and discuss again before finishing Activity 5.

The conversation writing task in Activity 5 could be completed in pairs who then perform/read out their conversation, putting the meaning of reporting verbs and adverbs into their delivery. Listeners could try to guess what kind of verb and adverb choices the readers made when writing their piece.

The new GCSE English Language examination aims to encourage students to 'communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively' (assessment objective 5) in both the fiction and non-fiction writing sections of the examinations.

One way to do this is, where appropriate, to include dialogue in your writing. Making your characters speak can help make your work sound more realistic and authentic and can create a sense of immediacy, as if the conversation is happening right now in the story, even if the reporting verb is in the past tense. For example:

'Look out! Be careful!' he said.

'I am!' she said.

However, reporting the dialogue simply with 'he said' and 'she said' doesn't convey the sense of urgency suggested by such short, abrupt exclamations. Make your vocabulary choices work harder. For example use a different verb or add an adverb, or do both. These techniques will add detail and interest to the meaning and tone of your writing:

'Look out! Be careful!' he yelled.

'I am!' she replied.

'Just don't move!' he said slowly.

'Why not?' she asked softly.

Activity 1

Here are ten more interesting alternatives for the verb 'to say'. Find synonyms for each of these in your own work, your set texts, a Thesaurus and by exchanging ideas with a partner. Make a note of the verbs in this **verb bank**:

Reporting a statement, e.g. to tell:	Showing the dialogue is loud, e.g. to yell:
Showing the dialogue is an answer, e.g. to reply:	Showing it is said softly, e.g. to whisper:
Showing it's a question, e.g. to ask:	Showing it is said quickly, e.g. to babble:
Giving a command, e.g. to order:	Showing it is said slowly, e.g. to drawl:
Suggesting what's said is untrue, e.g. to lie:	Suggesting there is emotion, e.g. to sob:

Activity 2

Find a better word than 'said' or 'says' for the following sentences. Choose an appropriate verb from:

to grumble	to bellow	to warn	to query	to murmur	to insist
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1. 'Get off my property, or else,' the man **said**.
2. 'That's a good baby, you sleep now,' his mother **said** as she tiptoed out.
3. 'Fire! Fire!' we **said as loud as we could** as we ran along the street.
4. 'Better late than never!' I always **say firmly** when dad **says** that I'm home late.
5. 'Are you sure the train isn't late?' they **said doubtfully**.

Now choose a different verb for each answer, from your verb bank or a Thesaurus. Add any new verbs you've come across doing this activity to your verb bank.

Activity 3

Where would you fit the following verbs into your verb bank?

to retort	to plead	to declare	to demand	to whimper
to assert	to pretend	to accuse	to agree	to exclaim

Activity 4

An adverb adds more meaning to a verb and can make your writing more effective in saying what you want it to say, as well as making it more interesting and imaginative for the reader. Use adverbs to enhance the use of 'to say' (as in 'Just don't move!' he said slowly.) or verbs that you've chosen as more precise for your purpose, e.g.

'I told you not to touch that!' he shouted furiously.

'Thanks for a lovely meal!' she shouted cheerily as she drove away.

Find examples - again from your own work, set texts, a Thesaurus and with a partner - of adverbs that you could use to convey the following emotions.

In the right hand box create a sentence of dialogue + verb + adverb:

1. Anger e.g. furiously	Sentence:
2. Happiness e.g. cheerily	Sentence:
3. Sorrow e.g. sadly	Sentence:
4. Shyness e.g. coyly	Sentence:
5. Fear e.g. anxiously	Sentence:

Activity 5

Don't let your work become formulaic by always using an adverb. Sometimes less is better and sometimes 'said' is the appropriate verb to use:

- Watch Brian Patten read out his poem 'Hair today, no her tomorrow' (on YouTube) where the dialogue and delivery carry the meaning and the repetition of he said/she said adds humour to the poem.
- Now choose one of your sentences above and create a conversation where characters take at least five turns of speaking each, using reporting verbs and, where relevant, adverbs. Make a plan and then either individually or in pairs, write out the conversation.