

12.1.3

Lesson 5 – Word Choice and Voice

The use of precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters is important. Review the following samples for voice, awareness of audience, and use of language to accommodate a variety of cultural contexts.

1. Which of the following examples uses more precise words and phrases? What is the impact of these precise words and phrases on the reader’s perception of the writer?
 - I made some savvy investments, but I was also conned in an ill-advised Craigslist deal with an unscrupulous buyer.
 - I bought some good shoes, but also one time I made a mistake and got kind of ripped off on Craigslist.
2. What is the impact of these precise words and phrases on the reader’s perception of the writer?

In addition to being precise, it is important to provide “telling details,” or details that are descriptive or revealing, in order to engage the reader.

3. Which of the following examples uses telling details?
 - I looked at the meticulously stacked shoeboxes towering over the rest of my room and made some quick calculations.
 - I looked at all my shoes, and realized how much money I spent.
4. What is the effect of these details on the reader’s perception of the writer?

“Sensory language” helps engage the reader even further. Sensory language is language that appeals to the senses. Review the following example:

- So I spent my summer poolside, not lounging around with a tall glass of lemonade, but standing over a deep fryer slinging fries and onion rings at my community pool's snack bar.

5. What effect do the sensory details in this example have on the narrative?

In addition to paying attention to precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language, you should also pay attention to your audience.

6. What are three examples of how a writer might revise his/her essay to accommodate a variety of cultural contexts?