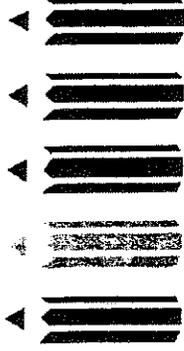


# Six Trait Writing Warm-Ups



## Trait #4: Word Choice

### Preparation

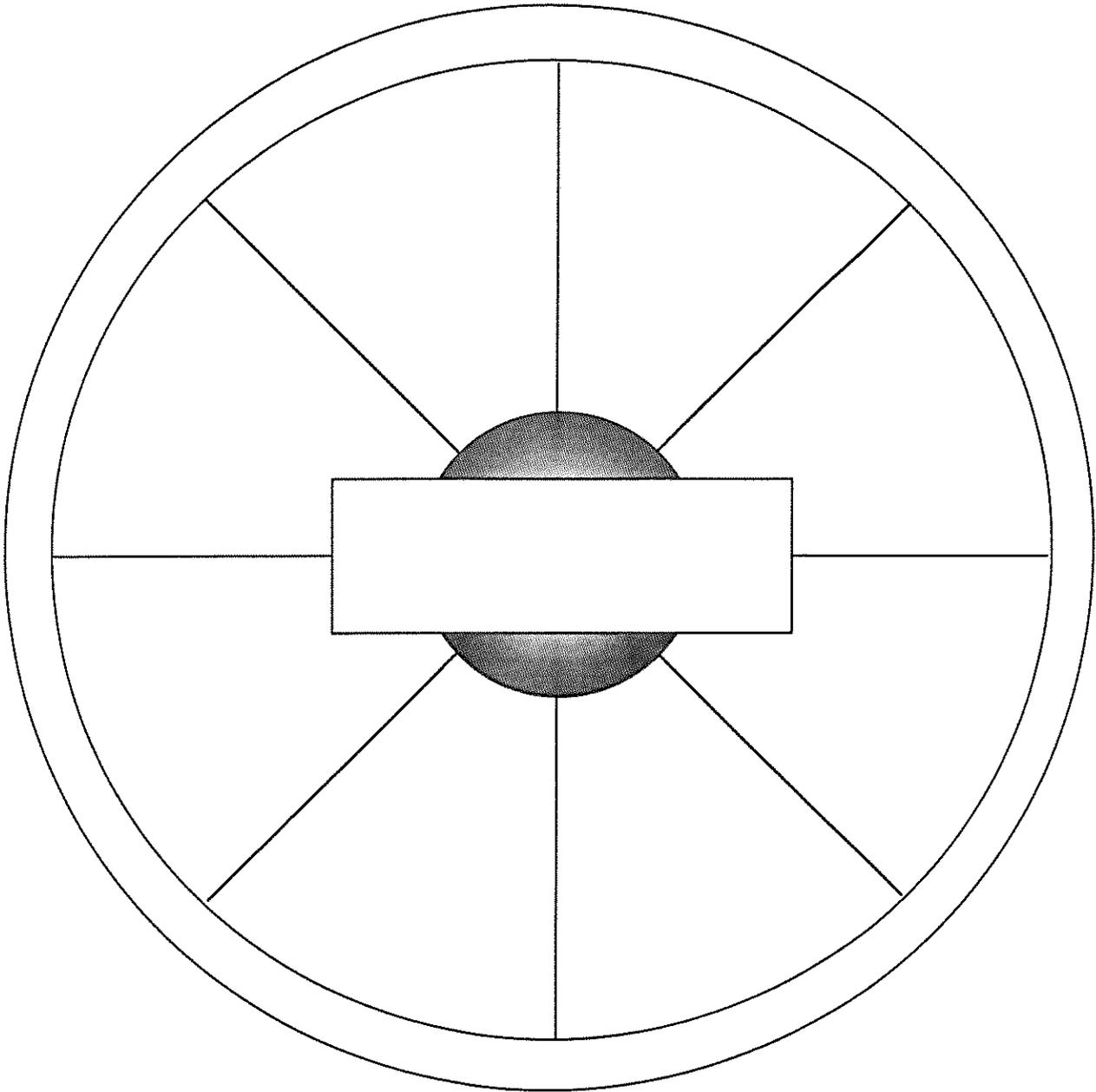
### Exercise

### Follow-up

1.	Write "loud words - i.e. KABOOM! CRASH! ROARING, THUNDERING, EARSPLITTING	Ask students for other "loud" words to add. Have students write down the five "quietest" or "softest" words they can think of. Have them share these words and list them on the board.	Talk about how words can convey the sound of things.
2.	Write descriptive words for how a pillow feels - i.e. fluffy, puffy, billowy, cushiony, etc.	Ask students for other words to add. Then have them write down 5 words that describe the feeling of mud. Have them share words and list on board.	Talk about how words can convey the feel of things.
3.	Write words that evoke smells - i.e. popcorn, brownies, roses	Have students list other words that describe pleasant smells. Then have them list words that describe unpleasant smells (sour milk, garbage, burned toast, etc.) See how many they can come up with.	Talk about how words can describe specific smells
4.	Write words that describe tastes - i.e. chocolatey, salty, tangy	Have students add other words that describe pleasant tastes. Then have them list words that describe unpleasant tastes (sour, burnt, HOT, etc.)	Talk about how words can describe specific tastes.
5.	Display pictures of two very different scenes - i.e. one city & one country, or one mountain & one seashore.	Have students list other objects they see in the first picture and words that describe them. Then have them list words that describe what's in the other scene. Compare similarities and differences.	Talk about how words can describe what you see.

6.	Write the word "walking"	Ask students to help you make a list of all the ways someone or something could be walking (marching, scuffling, stomping, dawdling, etc.) Now add adjectives (hurriedly, leisurely, angrily, etc.) Compare these verb/adverb combinations with the simple word "walking". Is there a difference in what you "see"?	Talk about how specific words can give you a clearer picture of what's happening.
7.	Display a few pictures with captions (from books or magazines) Display another picture without a caption.	Have students make up descriptive captions for the picture. Share captions. Discuss which make the picture seem more interesting and why.	Talk about how words can affect how you see things.
8.	Have several different kinds of catalogs. (i.e. - J.C. Penney, J. Peterman, L. L. Bean	Read the descriptions of similar articles. Ask students which they would be more likely to buy.	Talk about the importance of word choice in advertising messages.
9.	Write on the board: "Tired Words"	List a few overused words that "need a rest" i.e. - nice, fun, big, really, etc. Have children suggest alternate words that could be used instead of these. List them next to the tired words.	Point out how much more expressive the new words can be.
10.	Write on the board: "My favorite Words"	List some of your favorite (expressive) words. Have each student begin their own list. Share words.	Keep lists in writing folders to refer to and add to.

# WORD WHEEL



## Word Choice Activities

### Word Wheels

In a hub of a cardboard wheel, write a word which is over-used in children's writing (pretty, said, ate, went, etc.) Ask kids to fill the spokes of the wheel with alternate ways of saying the word. THEN...keep the wheels in sight as helpers for writers in need of ideas. Post them on a wall or tack them flat on the ceiling and you'll have a permanent thesaurus-at-a-glance all year long.

Marjorie Frank, *If You're Trying to Teach Kids to Write, You've Gotta Have This Book*

### Forbidden Words

Together with students, brainstorm a list of "forbidden" words. Resolve not to use these words in writing or speaking. You may wish to write an obituary, list the words and actually "bury" them in a shoebox or with some other ceremony, banish them from your literary lives. Establish a review committee of students who could grant a special exemption to a student who needs to use one of the forbidden words with a clearly written or presented justification.

### Appeal to the Senses

Choose a word

Brainstorm words about it using the five senses: taste, smell, touch, sight, hearing

### Mouthwatering Menus

*Juicy* chicken drumettes

*Spicy* pepper sauce

*Thick and juicy* this *T-bone cut* pork chop is *grilled and glazed* with *smoked* apple butter

*Freshest Canadian Atlantic* salmon, it's *pan seared and sauced* with a *classic* lemon dill *buerre blanc*

Look through the menus for more examples of powerful and descriptive word choices.

Then create your own menu for a romantic Valentine's dinner.

Be sure to think about appealing to all five senses with your word choice.

**Tooth and Nail: A Novel Approach to the New SAT** by Charles Harrington Elster and Joseph Elliot

A mystery novel, SAT-style exercises and glossary.

**Coldwater Creek and other catalogs**

Provide examples of interesting and amusing word choice from various catalogs

**Essay or Story Using Only One-Syllable Words**

Write a paragraph, story or essay using only words of one syllable.

Did you know...The 50 most common words in written English are each made of a single syllable.

**Make friends with verbs.** Is your paper stuffed with weak “to be” verbs: is, are was, were? These are good, useful words if they’re not overused, but they cannot carry big ideas. You can’t support an elephant (BIG idea) on a step-ladder (tiny verb).

**Paint a picture.** Ask yourself if you can paint a picture with the words that you have chosen. If the answer is no, you need to edit. Substitute fresh and original words for over-used words to create a clearer picture.