



ELA Virtual Learning

English I

April 15th, 2020



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Lesson: April 15th, 2020

Objective/Learning Target:

Understand and explain how word choice impacts meaning
and tone in a poem

Do Now:

Read the following two sentences:

Caleb quickly walked past Ruth on his way to Algebra class.

Caleb carelessly brushed past Ruth on his way to Algebra class.

How do the underlined words change the meaning of the sentence?

Example answer:

In the first sentence, it sounds as though Caleb's walking past Ruth on the way to Algebra class was incidental. It was just something that happened. The point of the sentence seems to be Caleb arriving in Algebra class.

In the second sentence, it sounds like Caleb is intentionally snubbing Ruth on his way to class. He doesn't want to see her or talk to her. The point of the sentence seems to be avoiding Ruth.

Consider:

Are there two different words we could add to the sentence to make Caleb's reaction to Ruth even more extreme? What might they be?

Example: Caleb intentionally avoided Ruth on his way to Algebra class.

Lesson: Diction

Diction is an English-teacher word that means word choice.

Speaking and writing are our attempt to communicate sometimes abstract ideas through language. It seems obvious, but the basic unit of meaning in language is a word. Thus, the words we choose to use when communicating matter. We can see in the example above that writers can use specific diction to produce an effect in their writing.

But what effects might a writer try to produce?

The two most common things a writer will try to use diction to reveal are theme and tone.

Theme--an underlying message or big idea that the author is trying to cause the reader to consider.

Tone--the attitude of the speaker/author, based on language.

Activity: Read/watch poem, complete chart

- Follow this link to watch the spoken word poem [Carbon Copy](#) by Joshua Bennett.
 - Here is the [text of the poem](#). Use this as a reference.
- After reading the poem, use [this handout](#) to help you explore how the author uses diction in this poem.
 - In order to edit the document, you'll need to go File Make a Copy. Replace the part that says *Copy of* in the title with your name.
 - Try your best! Don't worry about *right* answers. With poetry, as long as you can logically explain you're thinking, you're good to go.

Writing extension:

Try to write your own sentence like the one in the example, where leaving out or changing a couple of words changes the undertones of meaning within the sentence.

Ex. Caleb _____ when he saw Mark's arm around Ruth's waist.

Writing extension: Possible Answers

Caleb's jaw dropped when he saw Mark's arm around Ruth's waist.

Caleb lowered his eyes when he saw Mark's arm around Ruth's waist.

Caleb smirked coldly when he saw Mark's arm around Ruth's waist.

Each sentence communicates something different about Caleb's reaction to seeing Mark and Ruth together.