Can you decide???

Read the two paragraphs below.

#1.   The sky is filled with leaves, autumn's snow, on the earth. The children have the leaves in piles and can smell them. Cookies bake in the kitchens as the wind goes around the house. The trees are sad as they let go of the leaves. The moon is behind a cloud and is high up above during this autumn night.

#2.   Leaves tumble out of the sky, autumn's snow, dusting the earth. The giddy children gather up the brittle leaves in piles and bury themselves in their earthy aroma. Chocolate chip cookies bake to gooey perfection in toasty kitchens as the wind dashes around the house. The sad trees shiver and sigh, losing their feeble grasp on the crimson leaves. The Harvest moon peeps out behind a cloud and governs the autumn night.

Which is better?

Why?

Learning Target – I can clarify and enhance my writing with precise, descriptive words.

Word choice is very important to writing. Good writers choose just the right word to clearly and vividly express what they want to say. Use a **thesaurus** to help you choose exactly the right word!

Think about the **nouns** that you use. Instead of *people*, can you be more precise and say *students*, *contestants*, or bystanders?

Think about the **verbs** that you use. For example, do not say *rain* if you mean *poured*, or *walk* when you mean *stroll*, or *said* when you mean *questioned*.

When you use **adjectives** and **adverbs**, choose words that describe vividly. Instead of *walk slowly*, how about *walk deliberately*, or instead of the *good ice cream*, say the *sweet, creamy, delicious chocolate* ice cream.

Practice.

A **verb** is a word that expresses action. Some verbs like *said, walked, went*, and *looked*, are vague; they don't help you see the action clearly. **Vivid verbs** help the reader understand more clearly what is happening and how.

In the following sentences, replace the underlined vague and boring verb with an exciting, vivid verb!

1. Jen **got** to the finish line and won the race. _____

2. Liz angrily **took** her diary from her brother. _____

3. "I love it!" **said** the happy child. _____

4. The tiny squirrel **went** up the tree. _____

5. The girls **looked** at the super-cute pop star. _____

An **adjective** is a word that describes a noun or pronoun. Adjectives help give readers the information they need to become involved in the story. Awesome adjectives can make your writing vivid, interesting, and lively.

An **adverb** is a word that describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb. Adverbs can help the reader better understand how, when, or where actions happen. Choosing a precise, descriptive adverbs make your writing more understandable.

In the following sentences, fill in the blanks with an exciting, awesome adjective or precise, descriptive adverb!

1. The _____ fans cheered _____ for the winning team.
              (adj.)   (adv.)

2. The _____ driver drove _____ down the freeway.
              (adj.)   (adv.)

3. The _____ girls danced _____ at the party.
              (adj.)   (adv.)

4. It was a_____, sunny day, and the breeze blew _____.
            (adj.)   (adv.)

5. The _____ dinner was _____ delicious.
             (adj.)   (adv.)

In the following paragraph, mark out any vague or boring words and write a more descriptive word above it. Also, use a carrot∧ to add any descriptive words you want to make the writing more interesting and lively.

Bob took Denise for a ride in his car. He went down the highway. Denise said,

"Look out!" A truck moved into their lane, right in front of them. Bob put his foot

on the brake. The car went first to the right and then to the left. "Don't use the

brake," Denise said. Bob took his foot off the brake and got control of the car.

"We're safe," Bob said to Denise.

Word Choice

Word choice is more than the correct use of words. A good writer selects words that are accurate in the context AND that communicate ideas elegantly and powerfully. Ask yourself if your words create images and emotions for your reader and make your ideas come alive.

"How do I know which word to use?"

Know the difference between connotation and denotation.

* Connotation is the *feeling* a word gives a reader. Ex. bony vs. slender.
* Denotation is the actual *dictionary* definition of the word.

Use figurative language to help you describe something or someone.

* Similes, metaphors, personification, and alliteration.

Choose words that are appropriate for your audience and type of writing (formal or informal).

* Avoid slang unless it is a character's voice.
* Use content specific vocabulary.
* Use persuasive language when appropriate.

Use varied and vivid word choice.

Suggestions to replace "said":

added	urged	requested	mumbled	grunted	commanded	wailed	taunted
decided	agreed	uttered	scolded	nagged	insisted	claimed	whispered
lectured	explained	babbled	vowed	shrieked	objected	instructed	
reassured	mentioned	estimated	boasted	warned	stammered	pleaded	

Avoid overused words:

a lot	said	big	run	fun	take	pretty	sit
very	good	got	cute	stuff	interesting	walk	
bad	little	cool	tell	great	things	sad	

Warning: When using a thesaurus, DO NOT OVERDO IT! Readers can tell if a word does not belong or if it does not match the voice of your writing. Use words that you "own" and understand.

"Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy."

Common Core Language Standard 7.3.a

Descriptive Word Charts

Sounds

bang	crash	harsh	loud	quiet	shrill	squeak	voiceless
booming	crying	hiss	melodic	raspy	silent	squeal	wail
buzz	deafening	hoarse	moan	resonant	snort	thud	whine
clatter	groan	hushed	mute	screaming	soft	thump	whispered
cooing	growl	husky	purring	screech	splash	thunderous	

Time

ancient	crawling	early	late	noonday	quick	sunrise	years
annual	dawn	eons	lengthy	old	rapid	sunset	yearly
brief	daybreak	evening	long	old-fashioned	short	swift	young
brisk	daylight	fast	modern	outdated	slowly	tardy	
centuries	decade	flash	moments	periodic	speedy	twilight	
continual	dusk	intermittent	noon	punctual	sporadic	whirlwind	

Touch

boiling	cool	dusty	frosty	loose	sharp	slushy	uneven
breezy	creepy	filthy	grubby	melted	silky	smooth	waxen
bumpy	crisp	fluffy	hard	plastic	slick	stinging	wet
chilly	dirty	flaky	hot	prickly	slimy	tender	wooden
cold	dry	fluttering	icy	shaggy	slippery	tight	yeilding

Sight/Appearance

adorable	chubby	dark	foggy	homely	round	skinny	unusual
alert	clean	deep	fuzzy	light	rotund	smoggy	weird
befuddled	cloudy	dim	glamorous	lithe	pale	sparkling	wide
blinding	colorful	distinct	gleaming	low	poised	spotless	willowy
bright	contoured	dull	glowing	misty	quaint	steep	wizened
brilliant	crinkled	elegant	graceful	motionless	shadowy	stormy	
broad	crooked	fancy	grotesque	muddy	shady	straight	
blonde	crowded	filthy	hazy	murky	sheer	strange	
bloody	crystalline	flat	high	nervous	shiny	ubiquitous	
blushing	curved	fluffy	hollow	obtuse	shallow	unsightly	