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Engl 382-50

Specific Nouns

It is all too easy to forget about the types of grammar we use day to day. However, we know these concepts so well that we have mastered them. This allows us to form coherent, specific sentences, and convey complex thoughts and ideas with one another. Even though we are all masters of grammar, it is important to dive deeper into concepts we are familiar and comfortable with. This grammatical concepts course has allowed me to do just that. I now know why authors and speakers construct their sentences in certain ways, and I have become a better writer and reader because of this.

While all of the grammatical concepts I have learned are important, I think specific nouns are crucial to good writing. In order to understand specific nouns, it is necessary to know what general nouns are. General nouns are nouns that describe nonspecific people, places, or things. They are often umbrella terms for other things or generalizations. Specific nouns are the opposite of this; they describe specific people, places, or things. They are used to add more detail to sentences and help them be clearer. Some examples of general nouns and their specific counterparts include: movie vs. “Moana,” sports vs. hockey, and dog vs. Shih Tzu.

By using specific nouns instead of general ones, an author is able to more accurately portray what they are writing, and how they want the reader to envision it. This is incredibly important to good writing: by using a lot of general nouns, readers will get bored. Specific nouns add uniqueness, and allow for authors to make things more interesting by adding detail. For example, the sentence “He walked down the street to the store” is a proper sentence, but does not

offer much detail to the reader. If the general nouns were changed to specific ones, it is now a much stronger sentence: “Ben walked down 4th street to the Target.”

The best part about specific nouns is that they can be used in any form of writing. If you are writing a research paper, you would want to include many specific details. This can be achieved by using specific nouns. If you were to write something on the opposite end of the spectrum, a fiction novel, it would be important to include them to accurately depict characters, locations, or objects. This is why specific nouns are vital to good writing, which makes this a crucial concept to teach to students.

If I were to teach this to my future students, I would start the lesson off by giving them a sentence with all general nouns: “She won an award in the sport she plays.” After reading this sentence to them, I would ask what they notice. This is because I always want to make sure I am receiving feedback from my students, keeping them engaged. I can do this by asking for their input on the sentence, and listening to what they have to say. Hopefully, they will notice that the sentence is not very clear or interesting, because it does not have a lot of specific details. This will allow me to transition into general and specific nouns.

First, I will briefly explain the concept of general nouns. Even though my students may already possess prior knowledge of this, it is important to make sure we are all on the same page. This is because, as mentioned earlier, students can not understand specific nouns without understanding general ones. So, I will define general nouns as words that describe nonspecific people, places, or things. After explaining this, I will instruct them to identify the general nouns in the sentence I provided (“she,” “award,” and “sport”) ensuring that they have an understanding of the concept.

After completing this, I will move on to specific nouns. First, I will explain to my students that specific nouns are the opposite of general nouns, and that they describe specific people, places, or things. I will go on to illustrate that authors use them to add detail to their sentences. I believe it is important to explain both the definition and purpose of specific nouns so my students understand why we are learning about them, and how they can be used to enrich their own writing. After explaining this, I will create a table, one side being general nouns, and the other specific. I will have my students give me examples of each, allowing them to recognize the difference between the two concepts, and how they coincide with each other. It will also allow me to continue assessing their understanding of the material.

Once we have completed going over general and specific nouns, I will have my students split off into pairs. They will be tasked with replacing the general nouns in the sentence I provided them, "She won an award in the sport she plays," with their specific counterparts. By having my students work in pairs, they will be able to work on their communication skills with their peers. Another benefit of having them work together is that they can answer questions they have about the material among themselves. This will hopefully help to get rid of the competitive aspect of school by ensuring them that we are all here to learn together and to help each other along the way, while also teaching them to be proactive in their learning by using the many resources available to them. After allowing them some time to work on this, I will have each group share their edited sentence with the class, which will continue to allow them to work on their communication and presentation skills.

As a final activity, I will instruct my students to create a sentence independently with general nouns, then replace them with specific ones. As they work on this assignment, I will go around the room and individually assess them. I can do this by asking them to explain their

reasoning to me. If I notice any of my students struggling, I can offer them one on one guidance during this time. After they finish writing their two sentences, I will have all of my students share them with the class, which will allow us to turn this independent activity into a collaborative one, for we can offer feedback on the sentences shared. This will conclude the lesson, and should cement these two concepts in their brains. If I notice that they are still struggling with the content, I will have a small homework assignment ready. This homework assignment will include sentences with only general nouns, and vice versa. I will instruct them to replace these nouns with their counterparts. For example, if a sentence on the worksheet is “Maria enjoys pizza,” one of the many correct answers they could write includes “She enjoys food.”

After completing this lesson plan, the importance of specific nouns has been further established in my mind. Without them, our sentences would be dull and boring. They wouldn't include the details vital to making them clear and concise, causing listeners or readers to not fully understand the author/speaker's intent. This is why this concept is critical to good writing, and is why students need to have an adequate understanding of it. As a future teacher, I will be able to use the lesson plan above, along with the homework assignment, to educate them on this material, and encourage them to be thoughtful writers.

As mentioned earlier, we are all masters of grammar, even if we don't realize it. This is because of what we learned in elementary school, and the success our teachers had in educating us on grammatical concepts. As someone studying to be an elementary school teacher, it is important for me to strive to have this impact on my students. I will be creating a strong grammatical foundation for them, which will allow them to succeed academically, and gain more control over the english language.