

Writing Mini-Lesson: 5th Grade (Revision)

Intention (Skill): Using details to bring out the heart of the story

Teaching Point (Strategy): Writers make decisions about which details to include in their story by asking themselves "What is this story really about?", then looking at the details and asking, "Does this match what my story is really about?"

Connection: Boys and girls, I got a chance to read through your quick writes, and I was so excited about some of the smart things you were doing as writers! I noticed that you are the kinds of writers that know a thing or two about details! Details describe the setting, actions, or people in the story. For example, Blake wrote about a challenge he took at the Hot Sauce Festival, and he included dialogue so that I would feel like I was right there with him. Trevon had this great line where he said, "We stepped off the bus, breathing deeply, our hearts pounding." He gave lots of action details so that I could really picture it. That's a really powerful gift we give to our readers - we give them details so that they feel like they are right there in the moment with us! Sometimes, though, too many details can make our story confusing. So we have to make decisions about which details belong in our story.

Today, I want to teach you that writers make decisions about which details to include in their story by first asking themselves "What is this story really about?", then looking at the details and asking, "Does this match what my story is really about?" If it matches, then leave it in. If not, cross it out!

Teach: Let me show you what I mean. I have this story called *Halfway Race Disaster* about a time I was racing with my sister in my house. In the story, I was running without shoes on, and I slid down the hall and right through a window! Here's how my first draft starts. (Read from notebook.) I have a ton of details, and I don't know if all of them belong there, so I'm going to try this new strategy. First, I'm going to ask myself, "What is this story really about?" I think this story is really about how my sister helped me when I got hurt. It was really nice of her. But here, I've written a whole page, and I haven't even gotten to the race yet! Right here, I have some details about how my house looks. (Read from notebook.) Now I'm going to ask myself, "Does this match what my story is really about?" I don't think it does! I like that part, but I'm going to be really brave and take it out. Did you see how I asked myself those two questions? (Repeat questions.) I'm going to add that to our chart.