English Language Arts 10-2

Unit 4: Create and refine texts

Replace vague verbs with exact ones

Precise verbs

- “Get” hides the action. Nine students miss the 3:40.
- “Go” hides the action. They wait on the bench.
- “Do” hides who pays. The school should fund one Thursday loop.
- Save “eats” for a poem, as in the office clock eats the hour. The proposal needs “fund”.
- Stephen Leacock, in My Financial Career (Literary Lapses, 1910, public domain), starts “When I go into a bank I get rattled.” The place leads. “I think we need a bus” leads with a hedge.

The draft

We get home late.

We go to the office.

We do the bus.

Plain verbs in a proposal

- A precise verb survives if you can point to the action it names.
- A sentence pattern is a choice. Short for a fact. Longer when the cause has to travel with the fact.
- Say the effect of a device in ordinary words. Repeating Thursday emphasizes the limit.
- Personal voice includes habits you can hear, such as starting on I think, and habits you can change after you see another pattern.

Key terms

precise verb

A verb that names the action exactly, such as miss, wait, or fund.

sentence pattern

The shape of a sentence, such as a short fact or a longer sentence that carries the cause.

Facts first

- “Miss” names the bus that left. “Wait” names the bench. “Fund” names the payment. The verbs get, go, and do could cover almost any errand.
- Nine students waited. Stop there. The cause gets its own, longer sentence so the clocks stay readable.
- Thursday repeated at the opening, in the table, and in the ask emphasizes one day. The other weekdays stay outside this request.
- Rewrite I think we need a bus as Nine students miss the 3:40. The hedge leaves. The situation arrives.

Three swaps and one reshaped opening

- We get home late hides the real miss: nine students miss the 3:40. We go to the office hides the wait on the bench. We do the bus hides the ask, which is that the school should fund one Thursday loop.
- Short: Nine students waited. Longer: Because practicum ends at 4:10, they miss the 3:40.
- Effect of repeating Thursday: the limit stays audible. It is emphasis.
- Leacock's sentence starts in the bank. The revised opening starts with the nine. "I think" moves off the front. His line is about a bank.

Precise verbs in a note

- A lunch draft says: I think it is bad. Kids go from the line with no tray, so we should do a bell thing. Replace the verbs so a vice principal can see the action. Use one short sentence.
- Leave Leacock’s sentence in the bank lesson. This slip is about trays.

The lunch draft

Kids go from the lunch line and we do a bell thing. I think it is bad.

Review

- Cover the bus verbs and the lunch rewrite. Use only the kiln line in front of you.
- The log says the cool was still going at 1:10. Rewrite with a precise verb and say whether the sentence should be short or longer, and why.

The kiln draft

The class did the kiln and went around and I think it was annoying.