

Vocabulary List: Tools for Writers and Historians

I. The Writer's Basic Tools

Imagine the chaos of a construction site where no one knows the names of the tools and materials: "Would you hand me that heavy thing that hits the skinny thing with a pointy end that holds together two pieces of that tan-colored stuff that comes from trees?" Below is a list of the names of important tools used by writers and historians. Please learn the name, definition, and function of each tool below, so that we can work together on building better sentences.

1. Words About the Thing: **Nouns, Adjectives, Pronouns and Antecedents**
2. Words About the Thing's Action: **Verbs, Adverbs**
3. Words That Make the Action into a Thing (*Writing* is fun): **Gerunds**
4. Words About the Location: **Prepositions**
5. Words About Time: **Past, Present and Future Tense**

II. The Writer's Danger Zones:

a. Dependent (aka Subordinate) Clauses: *Not a complete sentence*, a dependent clause always requires a subject and verb to turn it into a real sentence.

b. Passive Voice vs. Active Voice

My picture was taken vs. *I am taking pictures.*
(person received the action) vs. (person did the action)

c. Syntax (aka Yoda-speak) *The words right in the order are?*

d. Parallel Structure (an aspect of syntax) "He's *making* a list, *checking* it twice, *going* to find out who's naughty and nice."

e. Subject-Verb Agreement: Not a complete sentence, *a dependent clause* always *requires* [not require] a noun and verb to turn it into a real sentence.

f. Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement: The **U.N.** made a decision that **it** later regretted, but the *delegates* from the U.S. did not regret the choices *they* made.

g. Common Misspellings, Malapropisms, Colloquialisms, and Idioms

When writing research papers, *its* important to *euthanize* the *write* word and *just take it easy* with the *stuff* you *don't get*.

Study Idea: Practice with these tools by writing sentences in the Writer's Danger Zone, then correcting them. Try to make your sentences humorous.

***Extra Credit (and Your Name in Lights):** If you find an error (grammar, syntax, spelling, etc.) in any current publication (not including Lab School publications), bring it to class; we'll post it on the bulletin board and give you extra credit.

III. The Historian's Basic Tools

The following terms, and the concepts they represent, are essential tools in the historian's toolkit. Learn the *historian's* definition of each term below, and start using these terms in our classroom discussions, and in your writing.

Primary Source, Secondary Source
Research Question and Thesis Answer
Argument
Tautology
Straw Man
Argument from Silence
Inference
Repristination
Cause and Effect/ Continuity and Change
Chronology/Anachronism/Contemporaneous
Evidence, Counterevidence
Objectivity, Subjectivity
Prescriptive, Descriptive
Redundant, Non Sequitur
Implicit, Explicit
Bias, Presupposition
According to the Author (ATTA)
Background Check
Point of View (POV)
Antiquarian
Historiography
Citation (footnote, endnote, in the text)
Documentation ("What's your evidence for that?")
Quotation and Block Quotation
Common Knowledge
URL (Uniform Resource Locator)
Bibliography, Annotated Bibliography
Paraphrase
Plagiarism
Periodical

Study Ideas:

1. Using a red pen, and one of your history papers from a previous class, note in the margin of the paper where you employed any of the concepts mentioned on the historian's vocab list.
2. Write an "implicit definition sentence" for each term, making sure that the meaning is self-evident to the reader.