

Mentor Texts:

How good writing qualities can be modeled through literature

Crow Call: by Lois Lowry: This text can be used to model the importance of setting in a piece of writing.

- Writers can begin their stories by describing the setting. “*It’s morning, barely light, cold for November.*” The author has created a mood through the imagery in this description.
- Setting can mirror a character’s inner feelings. In *Crow Call*, Lowry writes, “*Grass, frozen after its summer softness, crunches under our feet; the air is sharp and supremely clear, free from the floating pollens of summer, and our words seem etched and breakable in the brittle stillness.*” This line matches the coldness and fragility of the relationship between the narrator and her father.

Skippyjon Jones: by Judy Schachner: This text can be used to focus on components of word choice as students draft and revise their writing.

- Choosing precise words can help create a piece that is powerful and engaging. For example, *Skippyjon Jones* exclaims, “*Holy Guacamole!*” and “*Holy Frijoles!*”.
- Adding sound words such as “Pop”, “Clap-Clap”, “Crashito”, and “Bangito” spice up the story and make it fun.

Nouns and Verbs Have a Field Day: by Robin Pulver: This is a great text to use to energize writing with strong verbs.

- Writers add energy by avoiding all forms of the verb *to be* and replace common action words, such as *ate, said, or walked*, with more descriptive ones, such as *chewed, stated, and strolled*.

How can we bring content vocabulary into our writing?

- Reading mentor texts helps build vocabulary in general.
- Read non-fiction mentor texts that match content in science or social studies and encourage students to incorporate those words into their writing.
- Writing often will give students practice with incorporating new words into their writing.