

Warm-Up

Overcoming Obstacles: Word Choice in *Heart of a Samurai*



Lesson Question



Lesson Goals

Read from the novel *Heart of a Samurai* by Margi Preus.

Examine how strong words help you a time and place.

Discover how word choice and make a story exciting.

Recognize how an author uses to keep readers guessing about the plot.



Words to Know

Fill in this table as you work through the lesson. You may also use the glossary to help you.

effective	producing the desired <input type="text"/>
precise	stated in a way that is exact and <input type="text"/>
cliff-hanger	a suspenseful <input type="text"/> that leaves readers guessing
pacing	the <input type="text"/> at which a story moves
suspense	the excitement and anxious <input type="text"/> of wondering what's going to happen next



The Legendary Samurai

Samurai are traditional warriors.

- Were powerful in Japan hundreds of years ago
- Fought with *katana*, or long
- Were skilled in the arts
- Followed a traditional of honor called *bushido*

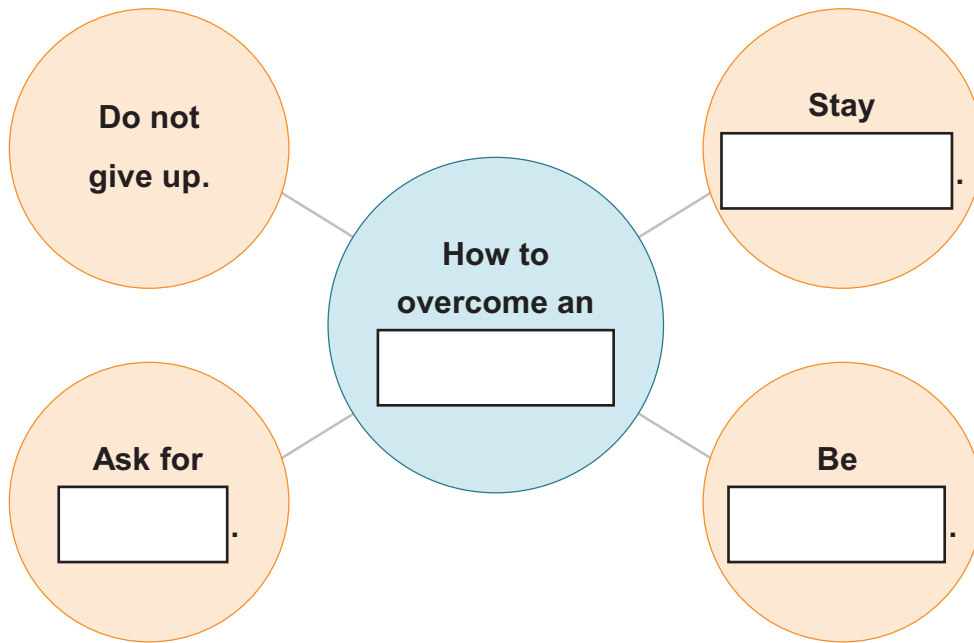
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Heroism and Overcoming Obstacles



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Precise Word Choice

Precise word choices help readers create [] in their minds.

[] words:	[] words:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look • Cold • Rock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squint, gaze, stare, peek • Freezing, icy • Pebble, boulder

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Analyzing an Author's Word Choice

word choice helps an author create a clear picture of characters, , and events.

Vague word choice	Precise word choice
<p>Manjiro looked across the water at the line of clouds forming on the horizon.</p>	<p>Manjiro squinted across the expanse of glittering sea at the line of dark clouds forming on the horizon.</p> <p>–Heart of a Samurai, Margi Preus</p>

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Word Choice in Dialogue

Word choice in dialogue can reflect the context of the story.

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<p>“Sir Albert, thou doeth thy sword dishonor,” the knight said. “Visit Hamford, the blacksmith. He shall repair it.”</p>	<p>“Hey, dude, what’s up with your sword?” Caleb asked. “It’s all bent and stuff. You better get that fixed.”</p>

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Japanese Culture in 1841

- The Japanese people lived under a called a *shogunate*.
- People were often with new technology.
- The strict structure meant that children often followed in their parents' footsteps.
- Children and young people were expected to be to their elders.

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Pacing

Pacing is the at which the events in a story's plot move.

- Events can move or slowly.
- An author can the pace for effect.
- action words can affect the pace.

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Analyzing Pace

Underline the action words in the last paragraph of the passage.

As Jusuke steered the boat toward home, the fishermen fell silent. In three days they had not caught a single fish. Their families would go hungry. Manjiro swallowed hard when he thought of the empty rice bin at home.

He took one last glance behind them and noticed something strange. Dark streaks ran like ribbons through the water.

“Excuse me please,” he said. “What is that in the water?”

Goemon, a boy not much older than Manjiro, said, “Fish!”

“Mackerel!” the others cried. Denzo quickly steered the boat into waters black with fish as the others baited their hooks.

The fishermen hurried to cast their lines into the water, then pulled them in, each time hauling in a fat mackerel. It was Manjiro’s job to pluck the fish off the hooks. His hands bled, but he smiled to see the bottom of the boat swimming with plump, flopping mackerel! Wasn’t it lucky he had looked back one more time?

–*Heart of a Samurai*,
Margi Preus

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Margi Preus

- Lives in Duluth, Minnesota
- Has written hundreds of for both adults and young people
- Has received many honors for *Heart of a Samurai*, her first
- Visits schools to speak with students about

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Suspense and Cliff-hangers

Suspense is a feeling of or anticipation that is created by a plot event.

A **cliff-hanger** is a suspenseful to a story or part of a story.

Analyzing Suspense

Underline the sentence in the passage where the pace starts to move faster.

It was not his mother calling. The sound was made by a large seabird wheeling high overhead.

A bird! He sat up and shook his friend. “Goemon-chan!” he said. “A bird!”

Goemon opened one eye. “It’s a bird, that is true.” Goemon closed his eyes again. “Ahodori – fool bird . . .”

“But, Goemon-chan!” Manjiro shook him again. “Doesn’t a bird mean there could be land nearby?”

“Yes,” Goemon sighed. Suddenly his head popped up. “Did you say land?”

The two boys shook the others, and they all stared over the side of the boat at a small, dark line on the horizon. As the boat drifted toward it, the dark line grew into a tall, looming shape: an island.

Their hearts beat a little faster. An island could mean freshwater. It might mean food, maybe shelter.

–*Heart of a Samurai*,
Margi Preus

Readers don’t find out that the looming shape refers to an island until the end of the paragraph. The author makes readers if the island could provide food, water, and shelter.



Summary

Overcoming Obstacles: Word Choice in *Heart of a Samurai*



Lesson Question

How do language and pacing draw you into a story?



Answer

Use this space to write any questions or thoughts about this lesson.