

Are Snakes The Only Things That Slither? Expanding The Use of A Verb (For younger students)

This experience is a good introduction to creative uses of a word for very young students. It explores the multiple layers of possible meanings of a single verb, “slither,” by using it as the action for several different subjects in sentences. In the process, the exercise requires students to develop variety and specificity in subject/noun choices.

- 1) Gather children together in a comfortable listening place.
- 2) Tell them you are going to say a word and that they will respond aloud, at the same time, with the first thing the word makes them think about. Say the word, “slither.” Most of them will probably think of snakes or worms.
- 3) Ask them to join you in making the slithering motion of their hands and arms as you weave yours from side to side.
- 4) To accompany the action, make up a sentence about snakes, such as, “Rattlesnakes slither under rocks in the sandy desert.”
- 5) Ask them to name a kind of weather that moves in a slithering way. You might call out the names of different kinds of weather. Focus on wind, perhaps. Lead them in making up a sentence like “Wind slithers around trees on its way through the woods.” For another kind of weather, say something like “Rain slithers down the kitchen window.”
- 6) Think of different categories from which they can choose a subject, categories like vehicles, food, and clothing. Ask them how a car can look like it’s slithering and create a sentence: “The car slithers as my mom drives it around a curvy road.” Ask them to describe how spaghetti seems to slither. From the clothing category, you might have a scarf to show them for a creative sentence. Direct them in creating a sentence for each category and record the sentences.
- 7) For this age group it would be good to end the session by having the students act out one of the sentences. For the wind sentence, a few children could stand in place like trees, and one child could be the wind slithering around them. The remaining children could make the soft sound of wind as the “wind student” is moving around the “tree students.”

For extension of this verb concept on following days, you could use words like “chase,” “climb,” or “follow,” using similar and/or different categories from which to choose subjects.

Sample Poems

My hair slithers on my shoulders as I run in the park on a windy day.

Gravy slithers on hot mashed potatoes on the plate.

Water slithers down the drain after I take a bath.

Waves slither around the ferry on its way to the island.

The tail on the kite slithers back and forth when I fly it on the beach.

The sun slithers on the tall grass waving in the field.

Hot water slithers out of the kettle when my mom makes her tea.

-Kindergarten Collaboration