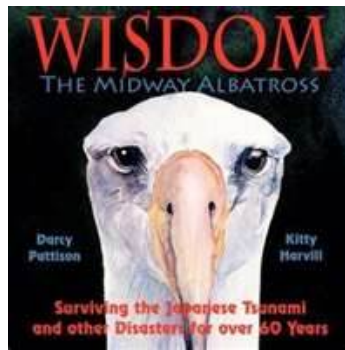


# WISDOM: THE MIDWAY ALBATROSS by Darcy Pattison, illustrated by Kitty Harvill

A Mentor Text Lesson Plan by Marcie Flinchum Atkins



**Writing Skills Focus:** Word choice, vivid verbs

**Target Audience:** 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade

## **Objectives:**

Utilize a non-fiction text as a mentor text for interesting and specific word choices, with a focus on vivid verbs.

Revise a draft for word choice.

Understand when to use Tier 3 or domain-specific words or phrases in writing (Common Core).

## **Standards:**

### **Virginia Standards of Learning:**

Standards are listed here for referencing by number in your lesson plans. For link to complete standards, go to:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards\\_docs/english/2010/stds\\_all\\_english.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2010/stds_all_english.pdf)

### **English**

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Standards:**

3.4 b, e, g

3.9 g

3.10 d

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade Standards:**

4.4 b, c, d

4.7 l, j

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Standards**

5.4 c, e, f, g

5.5 e

5.7 f, h

**Common Core:**

Standards are listed here for referencing by number in your lesson plans. For link to complete standards, go to: [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI\\_ELA%20Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Standards**

CSSS.ELA.W. 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.10  
 CSSS.ELA.L. 3.1 a, 3.1c, 3.1 d, 3.3, 3.6  
 CSSS.ELA.SP 3.1b, 3.1c  
 CSSS.ELA.RI 3.1, 3.2, 3.4  
 CSSS.ELA.L.3.5.c

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade Standards**

CSSS.ELA.W.4.5  
 CSSS.ELA.L. 4.3a, 4.4.c, 4.5c, 4.6  
 CSSS.ELA.SP 3.1b, 3.1c  
 CSSS.ELA.RI 4.1, 4.2, 4.4

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Standards**

CSSS.ELA.W.5.3.b, 5.3d, 5.5  
 CSSS.ELA.L.5.1c, 5.4 c, 5.5 c, 5.6  
 CSSS.ELA.SP 5.1 b, 5.1 c  
 CSSS.ELA.RI 5.1, 5.2, 5.4

**Text(s):**

WISDOM: THE MIDWAYALBATROSS by Darcy Pattison, Illustrated by Kitty Harvill, Mims House, 2012

*EPub*: ISBN 9780979862182

*Paperback*: ISBN 9780979862175

*RL*: 840L or 3-5th grade reading level/

**Other Materials Needed:**

- Vivid Verbs List for Writer's Notebooks (see some samples from other sites at: <http://pinterest.com/marcieaf/mentor-texts/>)
- Thesauruses
- Chart paper, if desired
- Highlighters
- Ink pens
- Draft in progress or completed draft for each student

**Lesson:****Setting the purpose**

Introduce or review vivid verbs. What are verbs? Verbs that are action-oriented are the kind of verbs that help make a picture in the reader's head. Refer to the list of vivid verbs here (<http://pinterest.com/marcieaf/mentor-texts/>) to add to their Writer's Notebooks.

Vivid verbs are more specific words (Tier 2 words). They make writing more interesting to read and more specific in the reader's mind. Additionally, there are some words that are content-specific and would only pertain to the topic at hand (Tier 3 words). If you wish, you can break down the verbs used in WISDOM into these categories.

Show the Book Trailer for WISDOM (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYxvOOoymTA>) and have students discuss verbs (or even review adjectives) that tell what's happening in the photographs in the trailer.

We often use fiction books to show students how to write well, but an often overlooked genre is the nonfiction text. To make a factual subject interesting to students, it requires telling the story in a way that readers will be pulled into a real world situation, just like they get pulled into a fictional world. As you read this book to your students, discuss how you might know this text is nonfiction (title, specific dates and factual information, events, back matter).

**Utilizing the Mentor Text**

1. Read WISDOM. Tell students you are having them "read like writers." They are looking for how Darcy Pattison utilizes word choice in this book to create a movie in our heads. Even though this book has pictures, the words are very action oriented. They help the reader imagine this as a movie.
2. As you read, or after the full read, begin making a list of vivid verbs that Pattison uses. Point out how specific her words choices are.
3. Examples of vivid verbs used in WISDOM. Students may come up with more. You can make two lists as you read, or just make one list and then have students highlight the bird-specific words used in the text.

Tier 2 words: (specific verbs)

damaging	crashed	sped	destroying
threatened	struck	survived	sailed
caught	destroying	struck	

Tier 3 words: (specific to birds)

hatched	migrate	soared	swooped
mated	squawk	banded	regurgitate
overrun			

4. Write these two sentences down for students to view.

*"When she was hungry, she flew to find something to eat."* (This uses Tier 1 General vocabulary)

*"When she was hungry, she swooped down to land on the waves to eat."* (This uses Tier 2 general academic words. This is the actual sentence from WISDOM)

Which of these two sentences creates the best picture for the reader? Which one is more specific? The second one is the one that Darcy Pattison wrote. The first one is a more bland version. The first one is less specific with less vivid verb choice. Have students brainstorm other bird-specific words that they could use. Discuss how each word might slightly change the sentence.

Examples of other bird-specific words:

plummeted	dipped	descended	tumbled
dove			

### **Transferring the Skill to Student Writing**

1. Pick a common bland verb like RUN. Have students brainstorm all of the different ways they could write run. Encourage them to think specifically. For example, if their story is about their little brother running, they might replace the word RUN with TODDLE.
2. Incorporate the thesaurus during this activity (or look it up on thesaurus.com). However, a good rule of thumb is, if it seems like a really weird word and you've never heard of it before, don't use it. Nothing sticks out like a word that doesn't sound like the writer (a good place to talk about voice).
3. Some sample synonyms for RUN:
 

sprint	speed	race	toddle	hobble
scamper	dart	dash	scurry	jog

Remember, the key is to pick the RIGHT word for the context.

BORING: The mouse ran across the rickety boards.

VIVID VERB: The mouse scurried across the rickety boards.

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THE WRONG WORD: The mouse jogged across the rickety boards. (Why? I've never seen a mouse jog, have you? His legs are just too short. Jog is a great word, just not the right one for this context.)

If you'd like to emphasize general academic words and domain-specific words, have them brainstorming what running words you could come up with various animals. For example, the way a pig might run would look different than the way a cheetah might run. Students could brainstorm different verbs for different subjects.

4. Brainstorm a list of boring verbs that students might find in their writing. These aren't bad words, and sometimes these are necessary. However, sometimes, they are overused and other words could work better in their places. Take a look at past student writing samples. This is a great place to see what verbs your current group of students overuse. Some examples might include:

went          run          fly          walk          eat          look

5. Have a student choose a piece of writing they are currently working on in writing workshop. They are looking for ONE or TWO boring verbs. Highlight the one or two words they want to fix. Have a student say all of their verbs are great and none of them need changing? Pair them up with a student that has a good eye. Maybe they can find one overused verb.

\*\* Remember, you are not asking kids to change every verb. One or two will give them practice and help them not to feel so overwhelmed with the job of revising.

6. Have students brainstorm replacement words by using their brain, a thesaurus, or a revision partner. They can write the word in pen above the word they are replacing. Students can utilize the editing mark, a carat, for "insert" (^), if they are familiar with it.
7. If your students have been trained to work in partners or groups to revise their work, feel free to use the attached worksheet on revising Vivid Verbs.

### **Extension Activities/Spin-Off Lessons:**

The book GOONEY BIRD GREENE by Lois Lowry begins with the protagonist, Gooney Bird, telling her classmates how she got her name. The connection to the real Gooney Bird or Layson Albatross might interest students.

In the beginning of the school year, I read the chapter in GOONEY BIRD GREENE where Gooney Bird explains how she got her name. Then I have students interview their parents about how they got their names. They take notes and use their interview to help them write an interesting story about how they got their name. We use Lowry's text to show how

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Gooney Bird doesn't just tell us in one or two sentences how she got her name. She elaborates, uses dialogue, and provides interesting details.

**Other Resources:**

WISDOM information on Darcy Pattison's Website

(<http://www.darcypattison.com/dpbooks/wisdom-the-midway-albatross/>)

Rob Sanders' Picture This Blog, Vivid Verbs Lesson Ideas

(<http://robsanderswrites.blogspot.com.au/2011/01/vivid-verbs.html>)

Vivid Verb Revision  
Recording Sheet

Writer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Critique Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of the writing: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions that the critique partner has about the writing:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Boring verbs:

\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

VIVID VERBS the writer might use instead:

\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*Diamonds

How does the writing sparkle? Give the writer at least one compliment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***Return this sheet to the READER so he/she can make changes to the writing.***