

**Image Grammar Lesson Plan: Chapter 2**  
Word Combinations  
*Ellen Waisanen*

By using unexpected word combinations, students can create powerful images in their writing. This activity helps them put together words that generally would not be paired together in their minds, as well as pushing them to generate more active or vivid verbs to enhance their images. This not only improves their writing, but encourages them to come up with more creative ways to get their message across.

Lesson Plan:

1. After pairing off students, have them list ten completely random nouns on the left side of a sheet of paper.
2. Give each pair of students the name of a career/profession, have them come up with fifteen to twenty “vivid” verbs that are associated with that career, and have them list the verbs on the right side of the same sheet of paper. It is a good idea to provide them with a sample list of both the nouns and the verbs.
3. Students spend several minutes coming up with unusual word combinations. Give them examples from the sample noun/verb lists you provided.
4. Students select their best examples to be shared with the class.

Adaptations:

Allow students to choose their profession, or have all pairs use the same one.

Make it into an individual homework assignment or a group (more than two people) assignment instead of pair work.

Make a handout or bulletin board in the classroom of student work.

Have students write their combination sentences to fit a picture, person, etc.

**Image Grammar Lesson Plan: Chapter 2**  
Using Word Combinations  
*Marc Van Soest*

Originally formatted as an extension to the Word Combination lesson, this activity expands on the idea of powerful word images to improve writing. This activity further pushes students to expand their vocabulary choice beyond the familiar, more comfortable, word selections. By providing a context for previously randomly created word pairs, students are forced to use words in ways which previously seemed impossible.

Lesson Plan:

1. Pass out randomly selected posters, photos, or images to the groups of 4 - 6 students.
2. While the group looks at the poster, students share their word pairs (Word Combination Lesson) with the entire group.
3. Using a minimum of one word pair from each student (or student pair), groups compose a short (5 - 7 sentence) paragraph about the scene portrayed in the poster.
4. Groups share their compositions with the class.

Adaptations:

Place several posters around them room. Allow students to take a “Gallery Walk” applying their word pairs to several different posters or settings.

Show a specific image about which an author or poet has already written a piece, ask students to produce word pairs. Then, show what the “professional” author produced. Discuss words the author chose and evaluate their choice of words.

Ask students to place themselves into the picture as one of its subjects. They complete the assignment using ONLY dialogue. (ex. if the picture is of a fish bowl, they need to write from the fish’s viewpoint.)

**Image Grammar Lesson Plan: Chapter 2**  
"Mood" Writing  
*Jan Miller*

Specific details create powerful images for readers. Teaching students to add specific sensory details to their writing allows them to, as Harry R. Noden says in Image Grammar, "...explode detailed images like fireworks instead of puffing sketchy images like fog."

The following activity encourages students to generate words that convey specific sensory images. The activity also helps students explore the connotations of specific words - either positive or negative. By creating their own word lists, students feel empowered in the use of language. They are also able to select words that are meaningful in their own language/vernacular.

Lesson Plan:

1. Arrange students in groups of four or five.
2. Give each group a list of categories and have them develop a list of positive words for each category.
3. Repeat Step 2, but have the groups develop lists of negative words.
4. Distribute a paragraph written with words missing. The group fills in the blanks to create either a positive or negative mood. (This can be assigned by the teacher in order to have a variety of positive and negative pieces.)
5. Have groups with the same paragraphs, but opposite moods, read their creations aloud.

Adaptations:

Fill in the blanks using the format of "Mad Libs." Words are blindly placed in the blanks to create a humorous story.

Have some groups use only negative words for each passage while the remaining groups use positive words for the same passages.

Discuss the connotations of words in society. What is the politically correct term for someone who suffers from obesity? How do we politely say that something is ugly? This could be a lesson in diplomacy.

\*\*\* *The next page contains a list of mood words compiled by our ENGL 574 class during this activity. This list may be reproduced and used at the discretion of any teacher wishing to do so.*