

Switch Diction: Created by Chris Forhan

This exercise can be performed with a large group, a small group, or with a student individually. First, have the students write down ten of their favorite slang words (Encourage them not to use curse words.). Take time to talk to the students about why these words are their favorites. Then, give them ten formal, Latinate words like: vociferate, cogitate, commence, interrogate, perspiration, phobia, illumination, conflagration, consume, verdant, epidermis, and masticate. If you know more, you can give them any you can think of off the top of your head, and you can also ask them if there are any words they like that are formal and from Latin roots. Again, have a conversation about the words the children are choosing; try to engage with them. Next, give them a list of ten Anglo-Saxon words like: wail, think, ask, begin, sweat, fear, fat, light, fire, eat, green, skin, and chew. Just like with the Latinate words, ask them if they have any Anglo-Saxon words they like, and try yourself to add some to the mix as well. Finally, have them write a poem which utilizes words from all three lists. I will bring longer lists of Latinate and Anglo-Saxon words for people to view if they get stuck or are confused. As always, this exercise will work best if you perform it with the students.