

36. ORAL STYLE

GOAL:

To demonstrate that the spoken word differs from the written word.

METHOD:

- Select one or two paragraphs from a book or magazine.
- Ask students to rewrite the passage for a speech, incorporating elements of oral style.
- Students should be instructed to:
 - Use the active voice
 - Use familiar and concrete rather than formal and abstract language
 - Use personal pronouns
 - Use sentences with few clauses and modifying phrases
 - Use more repetition
 - Compare the written and spoken versions and discuss what is easier to read and what is easier to listen to

37. SUBVERSIVE REWRITING

GOAL:

To help students understand the importance of language in determining the overall tone and effectiveness of communication.

METHOD:

- Find a short passage of text that is either positive or neutral toward a particular subject.
- Ask students to rewrite the passage by changing the word choices but maintaining the overall direction of the message. Their goal is to make the message unclear, or to make the message seem to support the opposite side, simply by replacing selected words.
- For example, consider the following passage:

"Turkey lovers far and wide insist upon the freshest possible bird."

This could be subversively rewritten to read:

"Those scattered people who enjoy ingesting the dead flesh of a Turkey want to consume that carcass as soon after it is killed as possible."

The general statement is the same, but the word choice makes it a different message altogether.