



TERM 5

Feature Article

LET'S DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF WORDS

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During class, I often prevent my students from using the words "sad" and "happy". Using the word "sad" is not wrong, but if there is a better word that can do the job of expressing that particular situation a hundredfold more aptly, then it would be a wiser choice. We should strive to amass as many words as possible so that we may fluently articulate our thoughts. Exploring the meaning behind words will definitely open the eyes of students and allow them to aptly use words in their stories.

Looking at the history of the word "sad", or what we call the etymology of the word, it is rooted in the Proto-Germanic word *sathaz* meaning "sated" and also from the Latin word *satis* meaning "enough, sufficient". After, it seems that the word went through a phase where it was attributed to a sense of "heaviness" even to be "weary, tired of". How this word evolved from a balanced notion of "enough, sufficient" to one that was tipped in favour of the negative in meaning "heaviness" and "weary, tired of" perhaps came from the heavy complacency that comes with contentment, or what we deem as having enough of something. The word was pushed further and only emerged to mean "unhappy" perhaps from that sense of heaviness circa 1300. This then leads us to the word "happy" which is from the word "hap" meaning "chance, fortune" – "happy" should be used to describe someone who is lucky.

In our current context, we have watered these words down to merely point to emotions. We use these words lightly, use them generally – alas, they are more specific than we think.

Eg: Surely, someone who is happy (lucky) would feel happy. Such a sentence, in its repeated usage of the word "happy", would at best be comical and at worst undermine

(more on next page)

¹A "hypothetical prehistoric ancestor of all Germanic languages, including English"

Testimonials

"Sheng Yan has learnt a lot from The Writer's Place. I am pleased with the work he produces. Keep it up!"

Parent of Liew Sheng Yan

"The worksheets are easy to understand. I noticed that my child is writing more creatively and more importantly, confidently."

Parent of Siew Hui En

"I should have sent my son to The Writer's Place earlier!"

Parent of Jeremy Yeo

Announcements!

- **Creative Writing Term 5:** Be sure to continue with Term 5 as we will be preparing for SA2 composition exam. Weekly composition practices power-packed with impressive phrases to help students score!
- **SA2 (Paper 2) Exam Preparation course:** Covered-grammar, comprehension, cloze passage and oral component. Details will be out soon.
- ALL children will be required to bring a Dictionary & Thesaurus to class each week. The Writer's Place recommends **The Little Oxford English Dictionary & Thesaurus**. For your convenience, it's available for sale at the centre.
- For the safety of your children, there will be temperature screening before lessons.
- **2013 Registration.** Priority will be given to current students. Full details will be made known to you in October 2012.
- Good luck P6s! We'll be cheering you on all the way!

Feature Article (Con't)

the authority of the writer.

Eg: When someone dies, we feel sad. However, with the knowledge that it has its roots in the word "sated" – a whole new meaning could be read in that sentence. (Of course this is not wholly applicable to today's context as the word "sad" is more pointing to a general sense of heaviness one feels after the loss of someone dear, which points to how using "sad" is not wrong – it is just not specific.)

To be more specific, we should use the word "mournful" for this comes from the Old English word murnan that is "to pine away" from the Proto-Indo-European root mer- "to remember". To shed more light on this, mer- also has a root in Old Norse meaning "to die, wither". That is why instead we should say we mourn for the dead because it is in the remembrance of something that has been lost, that affects us emotionally.

Writers have a responsibility towards their readers for they are in power. Words may influence the minds of the masses. When one uses words perfunctorily, he or she is abusing that power. In order to properly and responsibly wield this power, one has to investigate the origins (and not only the definitions) of words and language.



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Celeste Lim	Primary 4	Woodgrove Primary School	18/20
Jorryn Chong	Primary 4	Raffles Girls' Primary School	17.5/20
Patricia Tung	Primary 5	Admiralty Primary School	38/40
Andre Chua	Primary 5	Qihua Primary School	36.5/40
Chng Jia Yan	Primary 5	Greenwood Primary School	35/40
Ang Yan Ning	Primary 5	Qihua Primary School	34/40
Lim Win Sheng	Primary 5	Woodlands Primary School	34/40
Vinny Ang	Primary 6	Fuchun Primary School	35.5/40
Nurul Afaf	Primary 6	Fuchun Primary School	35/40

Story written by Patricia Fung,
(Primary 5 - Admiralty Primary School)



Off to a great start!
Using newspaper
headlines to get
readers' attention.

Good to see that even
banal subjects can be
made to sound lyrical!
Alliteration.



Excellent! This part
made me laugh!

The headlines screamed: Girl stands up against arsonists. Staring at the torn and tattered newspaper that had turned yellow over the years, I recalled the incident which had been etched **indelibly** in my mind.

My classmates had labeled me as a busybody but I would rather think of myself as the curious sort. From the hottest action to the most boring gossip, I would put myself in the loop.

One mundane day, I was trudging home after a dreadful day of **lethargic lessons, boring books** and **terrifying tests** in school. My body was slumped and my heavy-lidded eyes were telling of my **soporific** state.

Just as I was passing by a HDB block a stone's throw away from the school, I caught sight of a group of boys entering the cleaner's storeroom, which is found at the void deck of every HDB block. As I approached, I could see that the room was filled with a lot of discarded newspapers and belongings. They were looking from east to west apprehensively with a box of matchsticks in their hands. The word 'arson' **reverberated** through my mind. **My heart palpitated in my ribs. Should I ignore them and head home? Should I find out more and stop them? Will I die if I do? Wild thoughts swarmed in my mind and fear banged on the door of my heart.** Curiosity got the better of me.

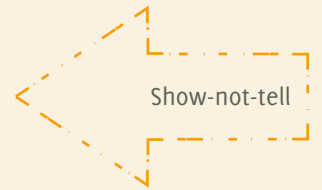
I recognized immediately that they were the infamous and malevolent school bullies. They were notorious for getting into fights, extorting money and breaking rules. I was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. I had two choices: I either went up to them or just ignored them to continue my journey home. My thoughts were still in insane disarray. Knitting my eyebrows earnestly, I came to a final decision: **Be the hero and stop them! I mustered my courage and went up to them.** My heart froze when I saw them lighting up the matchsticks.

I have to stop them but how? I searched my brains anxiously for a solution. Suddenly, a thought twinkled in my mind. **I let out a deafening roar that was such a terrible cacophony** that even deaf Beethoven would hear, "HELP!

(more on next page)



Impressive
words aptly
used.



Showing internal
landscape of the
narrator. Great use of
rhetorical questions.

A realistic portrayal of
a believable idealistic
character.

Story (Con't)

Someone! Look! Arsonists!”

The bullies immediately turned around and dashed towards me. They lifted me up like a sack of flour, rammed punches into my stomach and threw me into the air. Excruciating pain shot through my veins. I flailed through the air like a helpless ragdoll. Before I had time to react, I had landed on the hard and cold ground. I folded like an accordion as the sapphire sky and silvery clouds melted into pure darkness.

When I woke up, I felt parched. Huge orange flames were like a cankerous **monster** showing **no mercy to me at all.** **No mercy at all!** Thoughts of myself, burnt like a charred chicken appeared in my mind. I felt as if I had been baked in an oven as the monster licked its way stealthily towards me, swallowing every combustible material blocking its path. Clouds of filthy and **queasy** smoke billowed. Intense heat from the raging fire sank into my skin. Smoke charged into my nostrils, **depriving** me of every ounce of oxygen. I was at my wits end! **Doom** was awaiting me! Fear **gripped** the pits of my stomach! My mind raced like an athlete. Would help arrive in the nick of time?

It was the sound of wailing sirens echoing in the atmosphere that renewed all my hopes of survival! Jets of water sprayed like a paralyzing dart at the hazardous and rampant inferno as it was extinguished. The battle lasted for fifty minutes. I was safe and unscathed!

The next day, the boys were immediately transferred to another school and were given the shelling of their life. I was also known as the hero!


Drifting back from my sweet memories and jolting back to reality, I kept the newspaper cutting away. A huge grin split on my face and I smiled like a Cheshire cat lapping a bowl of milk as I continued doing my homework.


(669 words)

Figure of speech!
Well done.

Climax of the story
very much described
with apt vocabulary
and powerful short
dramatic sentences!


Inverted sentence
adds colour to your
story!


Contrast of light and
dark here emphasizes
the conflict between
good and bad.


Repetition for effect