

## WORD POWER

Your writing improvement focus in this workshop will be:

- Improving your vocabulary
- Choosing words which have maximum impact on the reader

One of the most important choices any writer makes is the choice of the individual words they use in their writing. This is particularly true for nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. These words will be the main way writers communicate the picture they have in their own mind to their readers.

### Taking about writing:

- Describe to a partner the picture which comes to your mind when you read this sentence. "The dog barked outside".

You will possibly have described the type of dog, its colour and where it is doing its barking, among other things. You will almost certainly have used extra words. Write out the original sentence, adding the extra words you used, to give a clearer picture of the details of *your* barking dog.

- In one of his songs, Bob Dylan described a dog barking:

*Way out in the wilderness, a wild coyote calls*

What sort of mood or emotion do you think he wanted people to feel when hearing that line? What are the most important words he used to conjure up that feeling? What could a song which included those lyrics be about?

### Writing: drafting

Write three more sentences about dogs barking. Each one must try to make your reader feel a different emotion. For example, you could try to convey loneliness, love for the animal, terror, annoyance.

When words conjure up a particular image in a reader's mind, we call this **connotation**. It is a very important idea for you to understand because it is crucial to the way your writing will make an impact on whoever is reading it.

### Taking about writing:

With a partner, look at the way the different colours have been given names on the paint chart. They're not just 'dark green' or 'creamy yellow'. Choose three or four of the names and discuss what *connotations* these words have for you. What

type of person do you think the designers of the paint chart had in mind when coming up with these names?



Also available in white

## Writing: drafting

You are in the marketing department of a paint manufacturer. Look at the paint colours on the chart below. Choose three of them, then make up a name for each colour to address the following different target audiences:

- Young men (aged 17-24) interested in sport
- Women aged 45-60 in professional jobs (doctor, teacher, and so on)
- Men or women aged 30-45 working in advertising or media



It isn't just words which have connotations. Visual images will often mean different things to different people. This is because certain things in the picture will trigger particular personal memories. For example, look at this image:



For someone who has just had a wonderful holiday, the connotations will be good ones, recalling sunny beaches and beautiful food for example. For someone returning from a bad holiday, with dirty, noisy accommodation and whose money had been stolen, the image will have very different connotations.

### **Paired writing**

Working with a partner, choose one of these images.

- Write two sentences which capture the mood or tone of the picture. One should be a short sentence. The other should be a more complex sentence. Think very carefully about the individual nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs you use in your sentences. Don't be content to go with the first ideas you have: look in a thesaurus for other words which might be more powerful.
- When you have finished drafting your work, swap with another pair who have written about the same image. Discuss the word choices each of you has made. Are there differences in the way you responded to the images? What words make this most obvious?

