[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hi, everyone. I'm Mackenzie. And today we're learning about word choice, experimentation, and style. Are there some words that you typically don't use in everyday conversation? In this tutorial, we'll learn about word choice and style, we'll discuss experimentation and style, we'll learn about variety and avoiding redundancy, and we'll discuss denotation and connotation.

The words we choose to include in a piece of writing have a profound impact on the writing because word choice is part of style, the way a piece of writing sounds. Whether we're using short or long words, common or uncommon words, or even simple or poetic words, it's all part of the style, and it impacts the ways in which the reader interprets what we have written.

Word choice and style is especially important when we're using synonyms, which are words that have the same or very similar meanings to one another. Some examples of synonyms may be stable-solid-secure, smart-bright-sharp, or funny-humorous-comical. Using each one of these words has just a little bit of a different type of style. Here are some examples of word choice and style.

Each of these paragraphs is describing the same topic persuading the reader to adopt a vegan lifestyle. However, the word choice in the first paragraph is causing the style to be much more negative. The author is using words such as "murdering innocent animals," "bloodthirsty meat eaters," "reconsider your filthy murderous ways," and "killing animals," and killing yourself. Those are some very extreme word choices, and they influence the way that the writing sounds. They also influence the tone of the writing.

The second paragraph is communicating the same ideas, but doing so with less extreme, less polarizing language. Instead of saying, "eating meat is the same as murdering innocent animals," we now say, "eating meat is not the best food choice to make." We took out the words blood-thirsty. And instead of saying "killing animals and killing yourself," we now say "harming animals." We're still expressing the idea that we want to persuade the audience to adopt a vegan lifestyle. But we're doing so with the word choice that influences the style in a more positive way so that the reader is more likely to agree with us.

To help us to develop our own personal writing style, we should experiment with different types of writing styles. Regardless of the genre being used, there's always room for experimentation. Just like a jazz musician puts his own spin on a piece of music, we can put our own spin on a genre of a piece of writing. We should feel free to experiment because it helps us to build our own voice.

We know that we can go back later and revise, cut, or change things if the experimentation doesn't work. However, experimenting with style is a little risky. We do have to approach it with a purpose in mind. We have to make sure that we're still fulfilling the purpose of the writing, we're still addressing the intended audience, and we're still meeting any assignment requirements as well.

When discussing a subject in a piece of writing, it's easy for us to fall into the routine of using the same words over and over to describe the topic. This is a common problem in writing. And it's a problem because it's distracting and boring to the reader. That's why it's important for us to use word choice variety in the style of our writing.

To do this, we can use a thesaurus to look up synonyms for the word we want to replace. And then we need to use a dictionary to make sure that the synonym or the other word we've selected is similar enough to the word we're replacing. We have to make sure that we know the meaning of the word that we are including in the paper so that we don't accidentally change the meaning of the paper.

We're thinking about the denotation, the dictionary definition, and the connotation, the meaning associated with the word itself. You also have to be careful not to change too many words in your writing because that can have the same effect as repetitive words. It can be distracting to the reader or confusing to the reader. We have to keep in mind that our word choice, in terms of how often we use the words and which words we use, influences how the reader perceives our writing.

I just mentioned that when we avoid word choice redundancy by replacing common words with less common words in our writing, we need to consider the denotation and the connotation, the different meanings of the words. This is especially important when we think about the style and the purpose of our writing. When I say denotation, I'm talking about the literal meaning of a word, sort of like a dictionary definition. Connotation, on the other hand, is the suggestive meaning, or the emotional reaction, or some sort of cultural implication related to a word.

Here are some examples of denotation versus connotation. Let's start with the word snake. The denotation could be a reptile with no legs. But the connotation is something evil or someone who cannot be trusted. A common evil villain in children's books is a stake because of this connotation. Another example is the word babe. The denotation is a baby or a child. But the connotation could be a term of endearment or an attractive woman. If you say you took your babe to dinner, most people don't think that you mean your infant child.

Yet another example is the word home. The denotation is the place of residence, but the connotation is that this is a safe, warm, welcoming, inviting place. When a college student says that he's going home for the weekend, he doesn't mean back to his dorm room or his apartment, he means, perhaps, to his parents' house. And lastly, skinny, this means slender, as its denotation. But the connotation could be something negative. We could say he's looking very skinny, meaning, that he's looking sickly or wimpy.

These help to show us the difference between the denotation and the connotation. And it helps us to understand how our word choice influences our style, especially, when it comes to the differences in meanings. Considering denotation and connotation helps us to create word choice that is interesting and dynamic for our writing and for our Style.

In this tutorial, we learned about word choice and style, we discussed experimentation and style, we learned about variety and avoiding redundancy, and we discussed denotation and connotation. Words have meanings. I'm Mackenzie. Thanks for listening.