



**Unique
Word
Choice!**

Vocabulary is about precision.

Authors use words that are...

- **Specific:** *Choose cherry pie instead of dessert.*
- **Accurate:** *Does your word fit its use?*
- **Fresh:** *How unexpected is your word? Does your word take your reader by surprise?*
- **Evocative:** *Does your word appeal to a sense or paint a picture?*

“The Chase”

by
*Annie
Dillard*

Circle or list the unexpected, precise, or strong words you notice. Also note any new or unknown words.

14
Mikey and I had nowhere to go, in our own neighborhood or out of it, but away from this man who was chasing us. He impelled us forward; we compelled him to follow our route. The air was cold; every breath tore my throat. We kept running, block after block; we kept improvising, backyard after backyard, running a frantic course and choosing it simultaneously, failing always to find small places or hard places to slow him down, and discovering always, exhilarated, dismayed, that only bare speed could save us—for he would never give up, this man—and we were losing speed.

15
He chased us through the backyard labyrinths of ten blocks before he caught us by our jackets. He caught us and we all stopped.

16
We three stood staggering, half blinded, coughing, in an obscure hilltop backyard: a man in his twenties, a boy, a girl. He had released our jackets, our pursuer, our captor, our hero: He knew we weren't going anywhere. We all played by the rules. Mikey and I unzipped our jackets. I pulled off my sopping mittens. Our tracks multiplied in the backyard's new snow. We had been breaking new snow all morning. We didn't look at each other. I was cherishing my excitement. The man's lower pants legs were wet; his cuffs were full of snow, and there was a prow of snow beneath them on his shoes and socks. Some trees bordered the little flat backyard, some messy winter trees. There was no one around: a clearing in a grove, and we the only players.

“Turtle”

by
**Peter
Filkins**

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Circle or list
the unexpected,
precise, or
strong words you
notice. Also note
any new or
unknown words.

Shy panzer of the swamp, atavistic
in your haughty calm, you blink at us
encapsulated in our swanky Prius,
crossing the road from the prehistoric

world you're going to or coming from
to lay your eggs in the sandy bed
of tomorrow, knowing like the dead
that, however slow, it indeed will come.

And does, even if absent of you—
sanguine, curmudgeonly, immemorial
as mud, or the memory of mud

propelling you on as you cling to
your path through fan-tailed ferns that flood
our eyes with green heraldry, fresh and real.



Find your voice with unique word choice!

Find the specific, accurate, fresh,
and evocative word.

Search a Thesaurus - Think - Read - Ask a Friend!

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