



plausible:
something that makes sense and may be true

Mars Rover Model Celebration – Lesson Plan

Introduction:

One of the new vocabulary words for this unit is “plausible”. Plausible means “something that makes sense and may be true”. We often use plausible when we talk about stories and explanations. If the events in a book could really happen, then the story is “plausible”. If someone is explaining why they were late and their explanation makes sense, the explanation is “plausible”.

Let’s look at a picture that will help us understand the meaning of the word “plausible”. Arnold is sitting in front of the principal’s office and is very sad. His teacher sent him to the office because he never brings his homework to school. He knows that the principal will ask him why he never brings his homework to class. If Arnold tells the principal that he never does his homework because he needs glasses and cannot read, this explanation would be plausible (or believable). The principal would probably send him to the nurse to have his vision checked (and make sure his story was true). If on the other hand, Arnold said that he never does his homework because the ogre in his closet eats it every day, this would not be plausible (and Arnold would probably be in even more trouble for lying).

Example:

Here is another example of the word plausible. Scientists who are studying Mars have learned a lot from the pictures sent back to Earth by the Mars Rovers. However, some pictures show things that scientists do not yet understand. When this happens, the scientists think about a plausible explanation for what they are seeing. When scientists come up with a reasonable (or plausible) explanation, they can then design an experiment to test their hypothesis.

Reflection:

I am going to read some sentences. If what I tell you sounds realistic and could be true, I want you to put your thumbs up and say “plausible”. If what I tell you is not realistic, put your thumbs down and say “NOT plausible”.

- A child stays home from school because he is ill. (plausible)
- Your friend tells you that he has seen a horse that talks. (NOT plausible)
- A scientist hypothesizes that there is chocolate in the soil on Mars (NOT plausible)
- A man is late for work because there were twenty alligators in his driveway and he had to wait for them to go away. (NOT plausible)

Make it personal:

Think about a time you were in trouble with your parents and had to give them an explanation. Tell your neighbor about what happened and whether or not you gave your parents a plausible explanation. Be sure to use the word “plausible” or “not plausible” as you talk to your neighbor. I will ask a few of you to share your discussions of plausible.