

40 Elaboration Activities

That Take Writing From Bland to Brilliant!

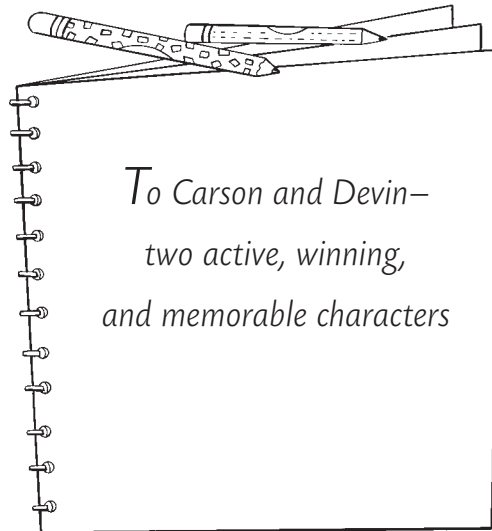
GRADES 5-8

by Martin Lee and Marcia Miller



 **SCHOLASTIC**

New York • Toronto • London • Auckland • Sydney
Mexico City • New Delhi • Hong Kong • Buenos Aires



Scholastic Inc. grants teachers permission to photocopy the designated reproducible pages from this book for classroom use. No other part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part, or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

Cover design by Vitomir Zarkovic
Cover illustrations by Luisa Vera
Interior design by Maria Lilja
Interior illustrations by Teresa Anderko

ISBN-13: 978-0-439-55434-3
ISBN-10: 0-439-55434-9

Copyright © 2007 by Martin Lee and Marcia Miller.
Published by Scholastic Inc. All rights reserved.
Printed in the U.S.A.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 40 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07

Contents

Introduction	5
Teacher Notes	8
Student Activity Pages	35
Precise Nouns 1	35
Precise Nouns 2.....	36
General and Specific Nouns.....	37
Abstract Nouns.....	38
Active Adjectives 1.....	39
Active Adjectives 2.....	40
Active Adjectives 3.....	41
Vivid Verbs 1	42
Vivid Verbs 2.....	43
Vivid Verbs 3.....	44
Adverbs Answer 1	45
Adverbs Answer 2	46
Add Adjectives <i>and</i> Adverbs.....	47
Synonym Stacks.....	48
Alternate With Antonyms	49
Short on Details.....	50
Active Advertising.....	51
Supporting Details 1	52
Supporting Details 2	53
Sensory Details Diagram.....	54
Facts and Statistics.....	55
Incidents and Anecdotes.....	56

Supporting Examples	57
Details Diagram.....	58
Character Planner.....	59
Figurative Language: Simile	60
Figurative Language: Metaphor.....	61
Figurative Language: Personification	62
Alliteration Headlines	63
Onomatopoeia	64
Idioms	65
Exaggerate to Elaborate.....	66
Dialogue Details	67
Select a Sentence	68
Vary Sentence Types	69
Vary Sentence Structures	70
Vary Sentence Beginnings	71
Unity in Paragraphs.....	72
Transitions.....	73
A Winning Beginning.....	74
Come to a Memorable Close	75
Elaboration Editor.....	76
Put It All Together	77
Reference Pages	78
Test Prep Tips.....	78
Editor's Marks	79
Self-Prompting Hints.....	80

Introduction

For many students, writing is a daunting task. Writing demands that many discrete elements—motor control, visual memory, spatial orientation, logic, organization, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, usage, mechanics, clarity, creativity—all come together in a unified and coherent way. Furthermore, we expect our students not only to learn to write but to improve their writing skills with each passing year.

Too much to ask? We don't think so. In our experience, these goals are indeed reachable, and students can have fun and experience the pride of success as they progress!

The complexity and interdependency of writing can make it daunting for writing teachers, too. But help is available. There are many fine educational resources you can use to enrich writing programs: Some are encyclopedic, others focus on specific skills or processes. *40 Elaboration Activities That Take Writing From Bland to Brilliant!* touches upon many aspects of the writing process but focuses on one essential, recurring element—elaboration.

Simply put, **elaboration** is the conscious attempt to choose the best possible words, phrases, and supporting details to express an idea clearly and fully. Elaboration is the purposeful construction of lucid and lively sentences. It's the heart and soul of engaging and coherent writing.

Elaboration is a technique writers use to evoke vivid images and convey distinct messages to readers. Thoughtful use of elaboration can make words leap off the page; it can turn the dullest, driest passage into something winning, clever, dramatic, soaring, mournful, convincing, or just plain easier to follow.

For student writers, elaboration involves using the following:

- Specific words or phrases to convey a desired meaning
- Precise nouns, vivid verbs, active adjectives, and adverbs that answer questions
- Memorable phrases, appealing sound devices, or other techniques that make readers take note
- Strong details to support and clarify main ideas

- Effective transitions and connections among ideas
- Powerful beginnings and endings
- Words or phrases that stimulate curiosity and make readers hungry for more.

For all writers, elaboration begins at the word level. Some students may not be ready to absorb nuances in paragraph structures, figures of speech, poetic devices, and the many conventions of writing standard English. But they can learn to choose better words with which to write better sentences. Over time, students begin to recognize better sentences, construct stronger paragraphs, and blossom into writers of greater clarity and ease.

Like any complicated skill, writing takes organization, effort, time, and support. We must help students identify, learn, and apply certain basic rules and techniques. But above all, we must encourage them to perceive and approach writing as a conscious, proactive skill, with choices and options they can learn to control and master at any level.

This book breaks down some aspects of writing into manageable chunks. The activities provide models, practice, and graphic organizers students can apply to many types of writing. They are intentionally open-ended to provide opportunities for students of all abilities and skills to experience success and progress. Many pages can be adapted or revised to fit your needs and can be revisited again and again as your students grow as writers.

Using This Book

40 Elaboration Activities That Take Writing From Bland to Brilliant! is a collection of activities to help students become better, more self-directed writers. You need not present every activity in the book, but know that they appear in a sequence of increasing sophistication. Each activity is supported by a **Writing Goal**, **Teaching Tips**, and **Follow-Up** ideas. Most activities require little more than a pencil.

Take a moment to scan the contents. In addition to teaching ideas and reproducible student activity pages, you'll find some handy reference pages you can copy and use at any time. For example, you might introduce the editor's marks (page 79) early on, or frequently use the self-prompting hints (page 80) and ideas for test-taking (page 78).

The backs of each student page you reproduce will be blank. To put them to use, each activity has an *OVER* feature, designed to apply or extend the ideas presented in it.

Each activity provides a *HINT* to help students self-prompt as they work.

We suggest that you keep these pointers in mind as you use the book:

- Move through the activities as you see fit, in any order that makes sense with your other lesson plans.
- You may find some activities too advanced for your class, while others may be too basic. Some may take more time than you have. Feel free to revise, shorten, or extend tasks to suit your class plans.
- Use these activities as full lessons, warm-ups, homework assignments, group projects, writing corner activities, or performance assessments.
- Determine the best groupings to suit your teaching style, as well as the learning styles and skill levels of your students.
- Make a thesaurus and dictionary available to students at all times. Spend time familiarizing students with how to use these essential writing tools—whether in book form or online.
- Encourage open and respectful sharing, discussing, analyzing, and summarizing of students' writing. Develop an atmosphere that promotes exploration and experimentation. Foster among students an appreciation of each individual as a thinker, writer, editor, and problem solver. As student writers develop confidence and master techniques, encourage them to write on their own.
- For whole-class activities, copy and enlarge the graphic organizers onto chart paper, or recast them as online, interactive forms.
- Jump on any elaboration opportunities that arise naturally. There's always room for improvement!
- Involve parents. Present some elaboration ideas at parent meetings or conferences to highlight the value of this component to your language arts program and as ongoing preparation for testing.
- Be a role model. Show that you, too, are a working writer who must think, plan, try, fix, and polish your work until you are satisfied that it is the best you can do.
- Model the various forms of self-prompting that we mention in the Teacher Notes. (See also the Self-Prompting Hints on page 80.) Students should learn to ask themselves useful questions that can propel their own writing without external guidance. Ideally, such techniques will lead students to become more independent writers whose sharpened skills can apply to all forms of writing they will do—in school and out, today and in the future.

Teacher Notes

Precise Nouns 1

WRITING GOAL *To familiarize students with using precise nouns as a method of elaboration*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review the meaning of *noun*. Focusing on names of persons, places, and things, brainstorm with students to list nouns in your classroom. Also brainstorm nouns that name ideas, such as *kindness* or *strength*, or particular categories of nouns, such as proper nouns (*Seattle, April*) and collective nouns (*senate, squad*).
- Be sure students understand that the noun to replace in each sentence has been underlined, and that answers may vary. Encourage students to choose specific, exact nouns.
- You may wish to do some examples with students before having them work on this page.
- Remind students to begin all sentences with a capital letter and to use a proper end mark.

FOLLOW-UP

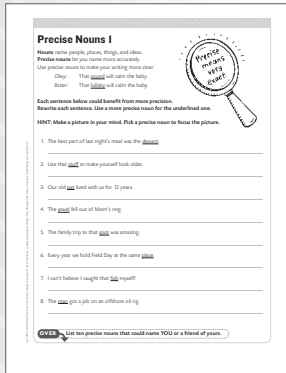
- Extend the activity by providing additional sentences with or without the nouns highlighted.
- Challenge students to use more precise nouns in daily conversation or when giving oral directions. Suggest that they substitute precise nouns in known song, book, or film titles.
- Introduce the thesaurus and model how to use it. For practice, have students select one of the underlined nouns and consult the thesaurus to find suitable synonyms.

Precise Nouns 2

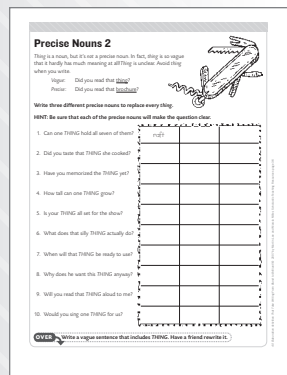
WRITING GOAL *To replace an overused and vague noun—thing—with precise alternatives*

TEACHING TIPS

- Explain that when people use the same words over and over, their writing (or speaking) is less effective and expressive than it could be. Overused words get “worn out” and should be replaced. *Thing* is such a word. Because *thing* is imprecise, its use in writing should be avoided. Point out, however, that *thing* is appropriate in some cases, such as when the exact



page 35



page 36

word is unknown. For example: *What do you call that little thing hanging down in the back of your throat?*

- Be sure students understand the task. You might have them work in pairs to share ideas. Invite students to list more than three precise nouns in each case.
- Model how to test each replacement noun to check that it fits the original sentence.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having students write original sentences that include the word *thing*. Have partners swap sentences, replacing *thing* with a sensible and more precise noun.
- Play "Thing Alert" during class discussions. If someone uses the word *thing* in ordinary conversation, students can signal a *thing alert*. They might ring a bell, stand at their seats, or hold up a sign. Challenge students to replace *thing* with a more precise noun.

General and Specific Nouns

WRITING GOAL *To extend the concept of precise nouns by differentiating between general and specific nouns*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review the advantages of using precise nouns rather than dull or plain ones.
- Discuss the idea of increased precision by analyzing the progression from general (broad) to specific (more focused) to still more explicit nouns. Point out that in some instances a general noun is acceptable, but for increased detail and exactness, a specific noun works best.
- As needed, guide students to verbalize what makes each given noun more specific than the one before it. Help them to ask leading questions: "Why is *constellation* more specific than *stars*? What makes *Orion* more specific than *constellation*?"
- You might have students work in pairs to discuss and complete this activity.

FOLLOW-UP

- Have students revisit a recent piece of writing. Ask them to identify general nouns in it, and replace some or all of them with more specific nouns.
- Extend by having students come up with as many specific nouns as they can to replace a single general noun. Collect the specific nouns on chart paper.

General and Specific Nouns

A general noun gives a broad or all-purpose name. A specific noun names a certain person, place, thing, or idea in a way that is more to the point. Specific nouns are more precise. Proper nouns can be the most precise.

Be Broad: My grandpa arrived in the U.S. today.
 More Specific: My grandpa arrived in the U.S. today.
 Even More Specific: My grandpa arrived in the U.S. today.

Complete the chart of nouns from general to specific to more specific.
HINT: Be sure you can explain how the sample row goes from general to specific.

GENERAL	SPECIFIC	MORE SPECIFIC
1. stars	constellation	Orion
2. genome	cod	Chow
3. fruit	apple	
4. instrument	drum	
5. vehicle	truck	
6. message	text about	
7. animal		catfish
8. island		empire peninsula
9. tool		single-pane window
10.	tennis	The Museum of CP
11.	beard	pink
12.	house	modern house

CHALLENGE: Pick three specific nouns from the chart. Use each one in a clear, meaningful sentence.

page 37

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by creating word webs based on adjectives students encounter in their reading.
- Challenge students to look for patterns or gaps in the adjectives they listed.

Active Adjectives 2

WRITING GOAL *To replace the overused adjectives fine and cute with more active alternatives*

TEACHING TIPS

- Display a "cute" prop, such as an adorable photo or a stuffed animal, and a "fine" prop, such as a piece of delicate lace or image of a famous work of art. Write on the board, "This is a *cute* [or *fine*] [noun]." Ask students whether your sentence describes a key or interesting feature of each object. Most will say no. Ask them to think of more descriptive words to substitute for *cute* or *fine*. Encourage a range of responses.
- Like some nouns, certain adjectives become meaningless from overuse. Remind students of the work they did in Precise Nouns 2 (page 36), when they replaced the noun *thing* with more precise nouns. Tell them that in this activity, they will replace the boring, overused adjectives *fine* and *cute* with more descriptive, specific, active adjectives.
- For students who have difficulty, model self-prompting questions such as: *What kind of roses? How do the roses smell? How do the rides look/sound/feel? Whom do they attract?* The more students learn to self-prompt, the more independent they can become as writers and editors.

FOLLOW-UP

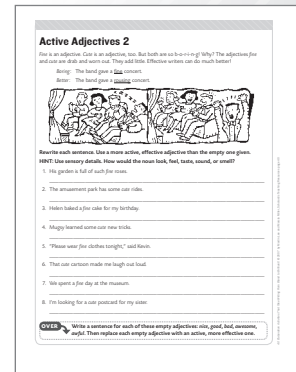
- Have students revisit recent writing to find uses of *fine* and *cute*. Suggest that they replace them with more active adjectives to create more expressive sentences.
- Have students add a sticky note to an interactive Active Adjectives bulletin board for every substitution they can think of to replace *fine* or *cute*.

Active Adjectives 3

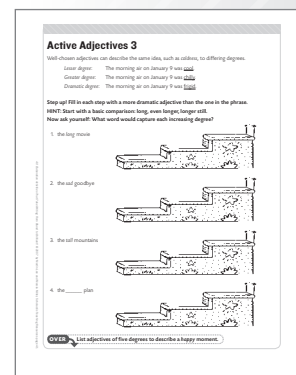
WRITING GOAL *To explore comparisons by using related adjectives of differing degree*

TEACHING TIPS

- Brainstorm with students to list different ways to describe a delicious piece of cake. List their ideas. Guide students to look for ways to categorize the adjectives, such as by size, taste, texture, richness, or flavor. Ask students to organize the adjectives in order of intensity. For example, *delicious* is a more intense modifier than *tasty*.



page 40



page 41

- Emphasize that vivid verbs express an action in a lively way. Draw attention to the example at the top of the page to discuss how a vivid verb can make a sentence more precise and clear.
- Be sure students understand that their task is to write two different, more exciting verbs for the plain verb underlined. There are numerous possible replacements for each verb.
- Encourage students to use their imaginations to help them think of more vivid verbs.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by making lists of the different vivid verbs with which students replaced each plain verb. Post the lists for students to consult during writing times. Or use them to begin a collaborative class thesaurus.
- Challenge students to write and illustrate a more detailed story of Marcus, elaborating it with vivid verbs, active adjectives, and precise nouns.

Vivid Verbs 3

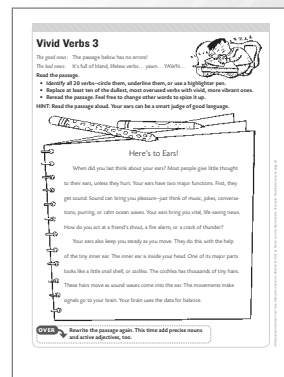
WRITING GOAL *To apply an understanding of vivid verbs to revise a passage that uses dull verbs*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review the purpose of revising in the overall writing process. Emphasize that revising is more than correcting errors in spelling or punctuation. Discuss that it is an integral part of the process that hopefully results in a polished work; it requires searching for the best options and then adjusting accordingly. In this task, students will enliven the verbs in a nonfiction essay.
- Ask a volunteer to read the passage aloud as students follow along. Then have students go back and identify the 20 verbs (in order: *think, give, hurt, have, get, bring, think, bring, act, keep, move, do, is, looks, has, move, come, make, go, uses*). Finally, have them select the ten verbs they will replace with more vivid ones.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having volunteers read aloud their revisions. Invite discussion of the substitutions. You might have students collaborate in groups to come up with the best revision they can.
- Challenge students to replace *all* the plain verbs in the passage.
- Assign students to write a nonfiction piece on another topic, using vivid verbs when possible.



Adverbs Answer 1

An **adverb** is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs answer questions like how, when, where, the often, how many, or how much. Most don't end in **-ly**, but some do.

Adverb should teachers allow calculators in math class? *accurately always*
often *usually*
Adverb should teachers ever allow calculators in math class? *daily* *often* *regularly* *often*
Adverb should teachers ever allow calculators in math class? *often* *regularly* *often*
Adverb should teachers ever allow calculators in math class? *often* *regularly* *often*

Use a complete sentence to fully answer each question as best you can. Include an adverb from the list to complete each answer.

NOTE: Answer honestly, then think of an adverb that fits your response.

- How often do you use a calculator?
- Where do people carry calculators?
- In what ways could calculators cause problems?
- When do teachers encourage you to use a calculator?
- How much does a basic calculator cost?
- Are other types of calculators used in a classroom?
- How many calculators should a classroom provide?
- What advantages do you see in using calculators?

OVER Use each **adverb** from the list to write a statement about math.

page 45

Adverbs Answer 1

WRITING GOAL To familiarize students with using adverbs as a method of elaboration

TEACHING TIPS

- Clarify that an *adverb* is another part of speech. An adverb always modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Convey to students that the use of adverbs can improve writing by answering such questions as *why*, *when*, *where*, *how often*, *how much*, or *to what extent*.
- Explain that the goal of this page is to use the adverbs in the calculator bin to answer the questions posed on the page. As students formulate each answer, they will recognize how adverbs can provide greater detail.
- Guide students to construct each answer as a complete sentence that includes the chosen adverb. Tell them to provide reasonable answers. Allow students to employ other adverbs if they wish, but not to use the same adverb more than once.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by brainstorming with students to list other adverbs that end in *-ly*.
- Challenge students to identify adverbs as they read. To draw attention to the adverbs and how they function to enhance writing, ask students what question the adverb answers in the sentence in which it appears.

Adverbs Answer 2

Adverbs can help describe how a person speaks or acts.

Chip: "It's my turn now," said Tracy.
 Adam: "It's my turn now," said Tracy loudly.

Paraphrase each sentence in a complete sentence. Use an adverb from the list to complete each sentence.

NOTE: Imagine causing the most believable performance out of each actor.

- Chip shouted "What did the doctor say?" asked Gary *seriously*.
- Chip smiled "How are you?" said Marco.
- Chip smiled "I dropped the cake," Jim admitted.
- Chip smiled "The eating on rocks and roots," complained Kate.
- Chip smiled "Whose bright idea was that?" thought Dan.
- Chip smiled "Keep that baking, King!" yelled Mary.
- Chip smiled "I need a bigger allowance," asked Larkspur.
- Chip smiled "Come inside right now!" called Dad.
- Chip smiled "What is my favorite song?" Amy said.
- Chip smiled "I have something important to say," announced Zane.
- Chip smiled "I can't keep this up forever!" called Lyndee.
- Chip smiled "Nobody wanted me about this," said Rita.

OVER Write six lines of dialogue. Use adverbs to stage directions.

page 46

Adverbs Answer 2

WRITING GOAL To insert adverbs into the "speaker tag" of a quotation to elaborate on how someone speaks

TEACHING TIPS

- Review the function of an adverb in a sentence.
- Be sure students understand that each sentence on this page consists of the words that different characters say in a variety of settings or situations. By simply adding a suitable adverb, students can better describe how the person should deliver those words.
- Invite volunteers to "act out" each quotation in different ways as classmates listen. Then have listeners suggest adverbs that match the tone or intent of the delivery.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by informing students of a type of wordplay known as "Tom Swifities." Edward Stratemeyer (1862–1930) created Tom Swift, a character who appeared in books that were popular with young American readers in the 1920s. (Stratemeyer also created the characters of Nancy Drew, the Bobbsey Twins, and the Hardy Boys, although others actually wrote the books.) Stratemeyer often used verbs and adverbs to make hidden

- Allow students to use a thesaurus for this activity.
- You may wish to draw a comparison between Synonym Stacks and the entries in a thesaurus. Like a Synonym Stack, each entry in a thesaurus presents synonyms for a particular word. Although students may list words in random order, a thesaurus may have a system for presenting synonyms—alphabetically, by closeness of synonym, and so on. Discuss this idea, and that not all synonyms for a word are synonymous with one another. For example, *nibble* and *gorge* are both synonyms for *eat*, but not for each other.

FOLLOW-UP

- Vary the activity by presenting new Synonym Stacks with different headings. As an alternative, provide a selection of words that go together in some way. Let students determine the unifying concept (or word) that can link all the synonyms into a sensible group.
- Create interactive Synonym Stacks on a bulletin board or chart paper. Invite students to add suitable synonyms whenever they think of them or come across them in their reading.

Alternate With Antonyms

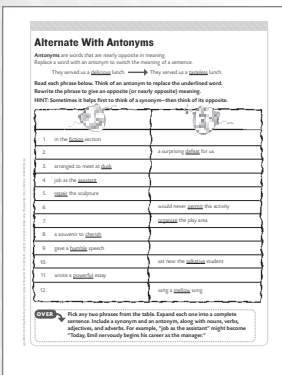
WRITING GOAL *To explore elaboration by using antonyms*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review the meaning of *antonyms* as words with opposite meanings. Tell students that using antonyms can help increase their vocabulary and make their spoken and written English more inventive. Tell them that the term *antonym* comes from the Greek words *anti-* (against, opposite) and *onyma* (name).
- Discuss the imagery of the comedy/tragedy masks as visual reminders of antonyms.
- Guide students to self-prompt by asking themselves: *What does the underlined word mean? What is its opposite meaning? What is the most accurate antonym I can think of?*

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having students write diamantes, which are seven-line poems based on two opposite ideas (antonyms) that meet in the middle. For an interactive Web site where students can create their own diamantes, go to <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/diamante/>.
- Have students use antonyms to explore humor and irony. For example, a tall boy might get the affectionate nickname “Shorty” by friends who like to tease him. Or one might say, “Mmm, what delicious soup!” but really mean “Yuck!” The sense of opposite meaning is enhanced by the speaker’s tone or voice or gestures used when making the statement. Challenge students to explore this idea as a way to focus on antonyms.



page 49

Short on Details

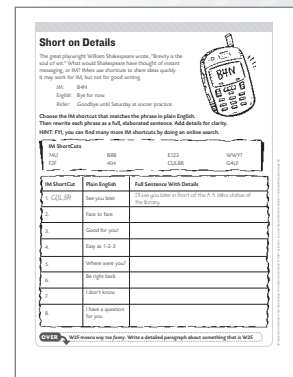
WRITING GOAL *To elaborate based on a current abbreviated method of communication*

TEACHING TIPS

- Discuss Shakespeare's words, which come from the play *Hamlet*. Ask students what they think the quotation means. Explain that this quotation is often used to encourage writers and speakers to state their point in a few, well-chosen words. In other words, "Less is more."
- Students may be familiar with some of the text-messaging shortcuts given here. If they are not, help them interpret the meanings. Point out that while such shortcuts can be convenient and clever, they do not meet the standards of conventional good writing. Encourage students to write full sentences with sufficient—but not excessive—details.

FOLLOW-UP

- Have students share other text-messaging shortcuts they know as prompts for further elaboration.
- Challenge students to research other IM shortcuts online. You might weave some shortcuts like these into your own written comments to students, such as ASAP (as soon as possible), THX (thanks), or N/A (not acceptable).



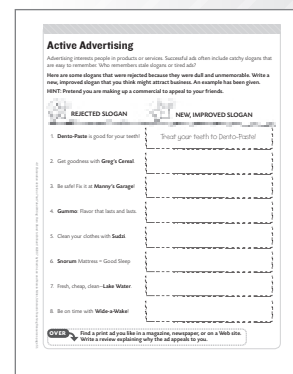
page 50

Active Advertising

WRITING GOAL *To use elaboration to improve advertising slogans*

TEACHING TIPS

- Ask students to share any memorable advertising slogans they have read or heard. Talk about the elements that make each one memorable, such as alliteration, humor, or rhyme.
- Display some print ads from newspapers, magazines, or mailings. Point out tag lines, slogans, or key phrases intended to interest people in a product or service.
- Invite students to comment on the example on the page. Ask leading questions, such as *Why do you think the given slogan was rejected? What is different/better about the improved slogan?*
- Remind students of the various methods of elaboration that can be helpful, such as using precise nouns, vivid verbs, active adjectives, and adverbs that answer questions. Highlight the goal of advertising—to get people to remember the product!
- *Alliteration* is a sound device commonly used in advertising. See "Alliteration Headlines" (page 63).



page 51

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having students write “ad copy” to support the improved slogan. It might be in the form of a paragraph or a radio or television script. Have students apply as many elaboration techniques as they can to make the copy appealing and fun to read.
- Challenge students to apply the idea of active advertising to the subject line of e-mail messages. Tell them that instead of simply writing “hi” or something ordinary, they might write a catchy slogan to make the recipient eager to open the e-mail message as soon as possible!

Supporting Details 1

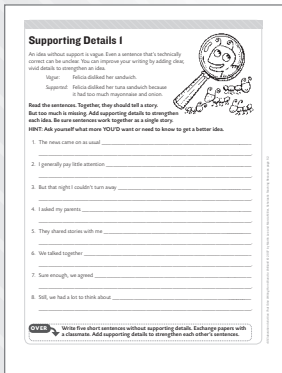
WRITING GOAL *To practice adding details that support and enrich a sentence*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review that a sentence contains a complete idea. Explain that any idea can—and should—be described fully by supporting details. To illustrate this, write on the board: “Every person needs a good night’s sleep.” Invite students to offer details that support this idea. Examples might include: *... because sleep lets the body rest and heal itself; ... because without enough sleep, you can’t think straight; ... because lack of sleep makes you feel grouchy and low.*
- Go over the introductory material with students. Ask them to tell what is vague in the sentence. Have them suggest other ways to support and clarify the idea.
- You may wish to work through one or more examples as a class, or in small groups, before having students complete the page on their own.
- Guide students to read all eight sentences before they begin to elaborate.

FOLLOW-UP

- Have students share their elaborated sentences in small groups. Encourage them to listen for the variety of details given to support each statement.
- Extend by having small groups work together on a collaborative story with supporting details. Each student writes an opening sentence on a sheet of paper. Then all students pass their papers to the left. Upon receiving the paper, the next student reads the sentence and then writes a new sentence with details that support the first one. Students continue to exchange papers until the paper comes back to the original writer. Groups can revise and rework the stories as necessary to improve them.



page 52

Supporting Details 2

WRITING GOAL *To use a graphic organizer to gather five kinds of details to elaborate on an idea*

TEACHING TIPS

- Discuss the table that presents the five kinds of supporting details. Ensure that students understand each kind of supporting detail by asking them to give an example of each. Alternately, find illustrations of each kind of supporting detail in age-appropriate written materials: books, magazines, advertisements, and so on.
- Supporting details are particularly important for people writing to present a point of view. Tell students that persuasive writing is most effective when it includes a variety of details that support the argument. Explain that in this activity, students will select an idea to persuade someone to accept. Students can use one of the suggested topics or think of a topic of their own. They will use the graphic organizer to gather details to support their argument.
- You may wish to have students work on an enlarged version of the idea web, which they can make on poster paper. Or they can develop their own graphic organizer that has space for supporting details of each kind.

FOLLOW-UP

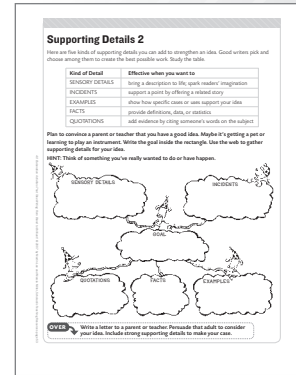
- Challenge students to identify each kind of supporting detail in upcoming reading assignments.
- Help students to sharpen their critical-thinking skills by asking them to identify supporting details in advertisements, letters of request, editorials, opinion pieces, speeches, and so on.

Sensory Details Diagram

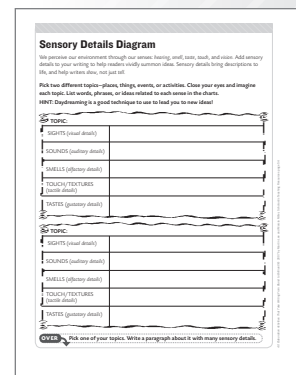
WRITING GOAL *To explore using the five senses to enhance elaboration*

TEACHING TIPS

- Remind students that all living creatures use their senses to take in information about the world around them. Even those who lack one or more senses find other ways to gather information.
- Have students name the five senses: *seeing (sight, vision), touching (feel), hearing (sound), tasting, and smelling (scent)*. Clarify that the term *sensory* is an adjective that means "related to the senses." Present the "official" adjectives for each sense: *visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, gustatory*.
- Tell students that writers often use sensory details to bring their writing to life. To stimulate students, you might display common foods, such as an apple, popcorn, raisins, an onion, or a can of juice. Suggest that students focus on one food to help them complete the first diagram. Then, for the second diagram, allow students to select any topic they wish.



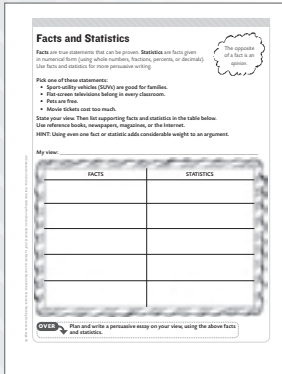
page 53



page 54

FOLLOW-UP

- Collaborate on sensory details charts that support other curriculum areas, such as science, health, music, or social studies.



page 55

Facts and Statistics

WRITING GOAL To elaborate by adding facts and statistical details that support an idea

TEACHING TIPS

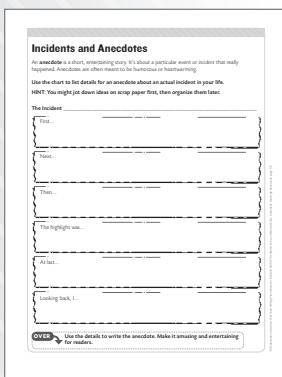
- Review the difference between *facts* and *opinions*. Elicit and discuss examples of both.
- Clarify that *statistics* are simply facts given in numerical form. Tell students that statistics are often presented in the form of graphs, tables, or other visual displays.
- Help students find facts and statistics from basic and readily available sources, such as newspapers, almanacs, and reliable Internet sites.
- You may wish to have students work in pairs to collect applicable facts and statistics to support a point of view about the statement they have chosen.

FOLLOW-UP

- Challenge students to write a nonfiction article about a sport they enjoy. Have them include pertinent facts and statistics to add credibility and substance to the article.
- Extend by having students propose statements for a class debate. Then form teams that can prepare for the debate by gathering supporting facts and statistics. Hold the debate according to customary rules of procedure. Remind students to listen respectfully to opposing views.

Incidents and Anecdotes

WRITING GOAL To use elaboration to enliven incidents and anecdotes



page 56

TEACHING TIPS

- Refer to your reading program for examples of anecdotes students have read. Explain that an *anecdote* is typically a brief story that sets a certain tone or mood. Anecdotes are usually retellings of incidents that the writer has experienced. They may be seen as related to the personal essay or biographical sketch.
- Draw students' attention to the prompts on the left side of the chart. Point out that each section has an organizing word or phrase to help students gather pertinent details in a sensible way. Such transitions may appear in the finished piece, if the writer so wishes.

- You may wish to set a time limit for collecting details, and then guide students to write the anecdote based on their notes.

FOLLOW-UP

- Invite volunteers to share their anecdotes in small groups. Encourage group members to offer constructive comments to the writer on ways to improve the anecdotes by further elaboration.
- Extend by creating an audio- or videotape of students reading their anecdotes aloud. Determine an interesting order for the anecdotes.

Supporting Examples

WRITING GOAL *To use supporting examples as an elaboration technique*

TEACHING TIPS

- Write the following statement on the board: *Having too much free time can bring problems.* Ask students to give examples that might support this statement. Talk about how each example supports the statement.
- Explain that to *refute* means to disprove an idea, or to give examples that support the opposite point of view. Revisit the same statement again, but now ask students for examples that refute this idea. Explain that it is important for writers to consider how someone might “poke holes” in an argument that lacks strong supporting examples.
- Have students work on this page independently. Then have them get together in small groups to share and discuss the examples they came up with.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having students choose one of their supporting examples and expand it into an essay.
- Good debaters keep in mind what the opposition’s arguments might be. Challenge students to come up with contrasting supporting examples on a single topic, as if they were preparing for a debate.

Details Diagram

WRITING GOAL *To familiarize students with various kinds of details to use when elaborating*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review **details** as bits of information or facts that support an idea. Explain that since there are so many kinds of details, there is always something that can be added to improve a piece of writing.
- Discuss the six categories on the Details Diagram. Point out to students that the categories are very broad. For example, Details About Time,

Supporting Examples

One way to add detail is to give examples that support a main idea. Supporting examples can describe or describe an idea. Good examples help readers to make connections.

Support or refute each statement with an example. One has been done for you.

HINT: Examples may be specific. Pick one that lends the most weight to your point.

1. Our trip to Washington, D.C. made learning enjoyable for me.	My trip to Washington, D.C. was amazing. The school and seeing the actual spot where President Lincoln was shot brought the dates of history alive for me.
2. Having a pet can help children develop responsibility.	
3. Rules in our school are not applied fairly to all students.	
4. Many people do not get enough exercise to stay healthy.	
5. Childhood is a carefree time of life.	
6. People should behave quietly in public places.	

OVER: Give three supporting examples you might include in a written report about why hobbies or pastimes are important.

page 57

Details Diagram

You know that adding details often improves your writing. But what kinds of details should you add? There are many options!

Pick a topic for a story or essay.

List words, phrases, or ideas for your topic in the diagram.

HINT: Try brainstorming for a few moments to help you collect details.

The diagram is a circle divided into six sections by three intersecting lines. The sections are labeled: 'DETAILS ABOUT TIME', 'DETAILS ABOUT PLACE', 'DETAILS ABOUT PEOPLE', 'DETAILS ABOUT THINGS', 'DETAILS ABOUT FEELINGS', and 'DETAILS ABOUT ACTIONS'. The outer border of the circle is filled with small icons representing various details.

OVER: List additional details for your story or essay.

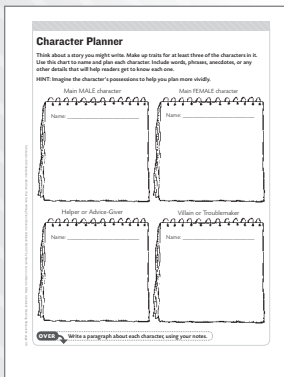
page 58

Place & Setting may address past/present/future, climate, or furniture. Details About Characters may include information about both major and minor characters or “back story”—what happened before.

- As needed, guide students to pick a suitable topic. You might suggest that they link the topic to another curriculum area, such as social studies or science.
- Students who need more room to write may use a separate piece of paper.

FOLLOW-UP

- Have students use the Details Diagram as a foundation for writing the story or essay. Point out that even if some details go unused, the process of thinking about them is an important prewriting step.
- Provide additional copies of this graphic organizer, which could be used whenever students work on a particular writing project.



page 59

Character Planner

WRITING GOAL *To practice elaboration by planning fictional characters and listing their traits*

TEACHING TIPS

- Define *character* as someone who plays a part in a story or play. Ask students to name some of their favorite characters from books, television, or films. Discuss what makes these characters likable (or detestable!), recognizable, or memorable.
- Explain that character traits are the specific details that make each character unique. Tell students that experienced writers often plan the key traits of characters in rich detail before they begin to write. They may develop personalities for the characters and imagine other aspects or traits, such as behavior, hobbies, friends, expressions they use, what they like/dislike, and so on. Emphasize that planning characters ahead of time is an effective prewriting strategy.
- Have students complete the Character Planner to flesh out fictional characters for a story. Invite students to replace one or two given categories with alternatives.

FOLLOW-UP

- Challenge students to write a short story that brings together the planned characters. Have them refer to the planner as a guide. Point out that students should feel free to adjust or revise traits to make the characters work in the story.
- Make additional copies of this graphic organizer available to students for any future writing assignments.

Figurative Language: Simile

WRITING GOAL *To explore using similes as a figurative device for elaboration*

TEACHING TIPS

- Clarify that a *simile* is a figure of speech that makes a comparison. Point out that creative writers and poets often use similes to enliven their writing: good writers avoid clichés (overused expressions), even if they function as similes.
- Write this sentence on the board: *Peggy works like a husky*. Discuss what the sentence means. (Peggy works long and hard at her assignments, keeping on even when it's late and she's tired.) Continue with a few other examples of similes that use *like*, such as *They argue like liberals and conservatives* or *It works like a charm*. Extend to similes that use the phrase *as _____ as*, such as *He's as angry as a wet cat* or *I'm as hungry as a bear in spring*.
- Go over the examples with the class. Then have students work independently or in pairs to complete the page. Encourage them to be as imaginative as possible. Model self-prompting questions, such as: *What can I compare in this sentence? What are some interesting ways to make that comparison? Does the simile help readers get a an image?*

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by brainstorming to create a list of other similes. (But watch for clichés!) Post the list, and add to it whenever you come across similes using *like* or *as* in reading, in conversation, or in titles.

Figurative Language: Metaphor

WRITING GOAL *To explore using metaphors as a figurative device for elaboration*

TEACHING TIPS

- Write the first line of the poem "A Modern Dragon" by Rowena Bastin Bennett on the board: "A train is a dragon that roars through the dark." Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Then ask students what the poet compares to the train (a dragon). Use this as an example of *metaphor*. Present other poetic metaphors students can discuss, such as "The sea is a wilderness of waves" from "Long Trip" by Langston Hughes, or "Mama is a sunrise that promises tomorrow..." from a poem by Eveyln Tooley Hunt.
- Discuss the presentation box with students. Help them identify in the given statement the objects being compared and the meaning that this comparison intends to convey. Be sure students understand that the tasks in Part A are first to identify the comparison, then to explain it. Part B asks students to elaborate upon the idea of each sentence by rewriting it as a metaphor.

Figurative Language: Simile

A simile is a form of figurative language used to compare two things that are not alike in an obvious way. Similes usually use the words *like* or *as* to make the comparison.

Definition: A simile is a comparison between two things that are not alike in an obvious way.

Example: The sunset looked like a giant fireball for hours.

Simile with _____: The sunset was as bright as a million fireballs.

Review each statement by adding a simile. First try this. Then try to _____.

HINT: Visualize the ideas to help you find ways to make better comparisons.

1. Gracie walks slowly. _____
2. We peeped at the double window. _____
3. The old lady is warm. _____
4. The foam flip went. _____
5. The work had every day. _____
6. It was dusty at the building site. _____

CHALLENGE: Choose a famous person you admire. Write three similes about this person.

page 60

Figurative Language: Metaphor

A metaphor compares two things that are not alike. A metaphor gives readers a new way to understand an experience. One idea is written as another to make an interesting claim.

Example: Zach is a fish all summer long.

Objects compared: Zach = fish

Always compare: Zach spends a lot of time swimming.

HINT: There are no right or wrong to writing metaphors—be creative!

A. Read each metaphor. Identify what is being compared by completing the equation. Then explain the meaning of the metaphor in your own words.

1. The speaker is a dinosaur. _____
2. My brother is a total couch potato. _____
3. The meal was a rock in my stomach. _____

B. Read each "given" sentence below. Improve it by rewriting it with a metaphor.

4. These days all day long. _____
5. The cables stretched in the holiday heat. _____
6. Her silly boss told us she had the letter. _____
7. The hungry dog devoured his food. _____
8. The stars lit up the midnight sky. _____

CHALLENGE: Write a poem about a memorable moment. Include metaphors and similes.

page 61

- You may wish to provide and discuss other metaphors with students before having them work on their own.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend the activity by challenging students to identify metaphors in their reading.
- Challenge students to write metaphorical statements about themselves, friends, family members, or famous people. Post these metaphors on a bulletin board or in a brief publication students can share.

Figurative Language: Personification

WRITING GOAL *To explore using personification as a figurative device for elaboration*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review the meaning of metaphor. Help students analyze the term *personification* by presenting its related verb, *personify*, and breaking it apart: *person* + *-ify*. Point out that *-ify* means to make or cause to happen. Ask students what it means to *beautify* or *falsify* something (to make it beautiful/false). Guide them to understand that personification is the attempt to extend the qualities of a person to something that is not human.
- Distribute the activity page. Encourage students who may have difficulty with the concept of personification to visualize the subject in each sentence, perhaps as a character in an animation. This technique may help them to better understand the meaning of the figurative language.
- For Part B, allow students to create examples of personification using other inanimate objects and/or people.

FOLLOW-UP

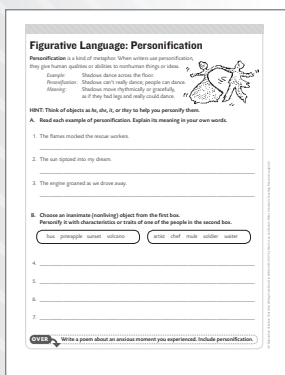
- Extend by challenging students to identify personification in their reading. Invite them to share examples.
- Create similar lessons or mini-lessons to provide further practice with elaborating upon main ideas.

Alliteration Headlines

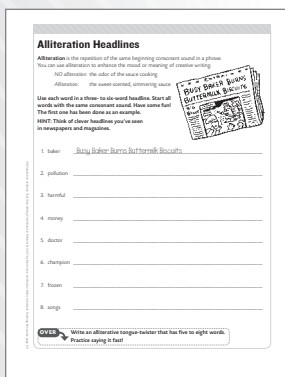
WRITING GOAL *To use the sound device of alliteration as a method of elaboration*

TEACHING TIPS

- Display some actual headlines that have appeared in newspapers or magazines. Point out that a headline is short but tries to get readers to want to read more. Invite students to comment on the headlines on display. Ask leading questions such as: *Which ones draw you in? Which are hard to understand? Which ones are meant to surprise you?*



page 62



page 63

- Clarify that *alliteration* applies to the repetition of initial sounds. Point out, however, that alliterative words need not begin with the same letter. Examples include *fifty faithful friends from Phoenix* and *Sarah Sylvia Cynthia Stout...*
- Guide students to apply other elaboration techniques when writing the headlines. They can use precise nouns, vivid verbs, active adjectives, and adverbs that answer questions.
- You may wish to do other examples with students before having them work on their own.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having students create alliterative tongue-twisters. They can make up tongue-twisters that are just silly and fun to say, or they can try to create alliterative book, song, or film titles.
- Challenge students to look for the use of alliterative headlines or titles in their reading. Collect and display examples that students have discovered.

Onomatopoeia

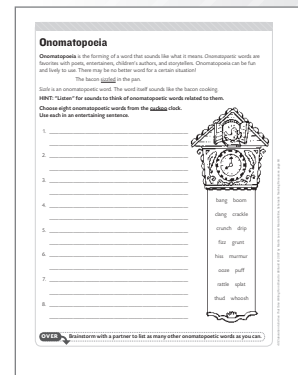
WRITING GOAL *To use onomatopoeia as a method of elaboration*

TEACHING TIPS

- Help students correctly pronounce *onomatopoeia*, as well as its adjectival form, *onomatopoeic*. Review some words children use for animal sounds—*oink*, *woof*, *meow*, *tweet*, *quack*—which are common examples of onomatopoeia.
- Display some comic books that use onomatopoeic words as “visual sound effects.” Common examples include *pow*, *splat*, *boing*, and *thwack*.
- Have students work on this activity independently. Encourage them to further elaborate their sentences by including precise nouns, vivid verbs, active adjectives, alliteration, supporting details, and similes.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having students identify and enjoy onomatopoeia in the poetry of Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky, Bruce Lansky, Walter de la Mare, Mother Goose, Edward Lear, and Lewis Carroll.
- Challenge students to compile and publish a collaborative dictionary of onomatopoeia. They can brainstorm in groups, as well as research onomatopoeia in books and on the Internet. Display the book in your classroom, or donate it to your school library.



page 64

Idioms

An idiom is an expression whose meaning doesn't match the literal meaning of its words. For example, "it rained cats and dogs" means it rained very hard. The idiom "it rained cats and dogs" means that a person can't make a decision about something.

HINT: Idioms can confuse readers who speak other languages than you do. Use with care! Write the meaning of each idiom in your own words.

1. see eye to eye _____
2. spill the beans _____
3. walk on thin ice _____
4. feel blue _____
5. hit the ball out of the park _____
6. backhand driver _____
7. burn the midnight oil _____
8. out corners _____
9. in hot water _____
10. show in the hand _____

CHALLENGE: Choose five idioms from the list. Use each one in a descriptive sentence.

page 65

Idioms

WRITING GOAL To explore the use of idioms as an elaboration technique

TEACHING TIPS

- Tell students that most idioms are specific to a given language, do not translate very well into other languages, and are not meant to be taken literally. For example, if Sam “bends over backward” to do a good job, it doesn’t mean that he literally does a backbend. For this reason, it is important to use idioms sparingly for effect and avoid them in formal writing. Still, spicing up some kinds of writing with idioms can be an effective form of elaboration.
- Students for whom English is a second language may have difficulty with this activity. You may invite native English speakers to collaborate with English language learners to share ideas.
- Encourage students to talk about each idiom they don’t know to try to figure it out. Prompt them with hints as needed. For example, to explain “burn the midnight oil,” ask students to think about the days when people used oil lamps to light their homes. Ask: *So what would it mean to burn midnight oil?* (stay up late)

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by inviting students to add well-placed idioms to works-in-progress.
- Sports language—both written and spoken—is full of idiomatic expressions that may be unfathomable to the uninitiated. Invite class sports fans to collect and share colorful sports idioms (such as *hat trick*, *right off the bat*, *slam-dunk*, *did an end run*).

Exaggerate to Elaborate

WRITING GOAL To employ exaggeration as a method of elaboration

TEACHING TIPS

- Define *exaggeration* as intentional overstatement. Help students recognize that exaggeration is not the same as lying, although it does “play loose with the truth.”
- Read students an example of exaggeration, such as Shel Silverstein’s “The Dirtiest Man in the World” from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, or an excerpt from any American tall tale. Ask students which parts of the excerpt could be true, and which are clear exaggerations. Discuss the effect of the exaggeration.
- Distribute the activity page. Read the presentation example together. Discuss how the plain statement was stretched and how to tell that this is a clear case of exaggeration.

Exaggerate to Elaborate

When you exaggerate, you stretch the truth. Exaggeration makes things seem much bigger or smaller than they really are. Exaggerate to add humor, ring, and emphasis to your writing.

Plain: Maria was very hungry.

Exaggerated: Maria wanted to eat her money for dog and six submarines.

HINT: Think of how tall tales, folk songs, and jokes use exaggeration. Make each sentence better by adding some exaggeration. Try to be funny!

1. The coat was too long _____
2. She parked far from the store _____
3. Our dog smells loudly _____
4. Maria was thirsty _____
5. We waited for a moment _____
6. The movie was long _____
7. I hummed our dinner _____
8. Why do people like to eat? _____
9. The ride made him sick _____
10. The students were today today _____

CHALLENGE: Single with one of your exaggerated statements. Turn it into a funny story.

page 66

Select a Sentence

Use the table to help you create original sentences. Pick a word or phrase from each column. Add details to weave them together into an interesting sentence. Use the example below. **NOTE:** Arrange the sentence parts in any order that makes sense.

Who?	Who/What?	Did What?	Where?	How?
1. after lunch	the horses	galloped	in the corner	slowly
2. before dawn	a message	came forward	behind the house	hastily
3. during an	my neighbor	exploded	below the surface	happily
4. earlier	a message	came	on a hill	in silence
5. last night	a team	skipped	over the hill	lovingly
6. on Tuesday	the class	snuck	through the gate	secretly
7. yesterday	the dog	waited	under the porch	with humor

1. On Tuesday, the two horses fearfully raced through the gate to reach safety.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Check: Pick one sentence you wrote. Typed it into a diary.

page 68

Select a Sentence

WRITING GOAL *To put together components to form complete, sensible sentences*

TEACHING TIPS

- Go over the required parts of any sentence—the *subject* (who/what the sentence is about) and the *predicate* (verb of action/being; what the subject does/is). Use short sample sentences to explore this structure.
- Help students recognize that each column of the chart contains words and/or phrases among which they will select to form sentences. Clarify that they need not use all words or phrases in the activity. Encourage students to add connecting words or elaborative details to wind up with a strong, clear sentence.
- You may wish to do one or more additional examples before having students work independently.
- Vary the activity by allowing students to select the components in any order they wish, as long as the resulting sentence makes sense. Remind students to begin all sentences with a capital letter and close with a proper end mark. Encourage students to elaborate upon any sentence to improve it.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend the activity by adding words/phrases to the columns. Or create new columns with entries that reflect themes or topics that fit your curriculum.
- Use a pocket chart and cards with sentence parts so students can mix and match to build sentences.

Vary Sentence Types

WRITING GOAL *To elaborate by using the four sentence types: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory*

TEACHING TIPS

- Discuss the presentation box. Help students remember and distinguish among three of the sentence types by replacing the adjectival modifier with its related verb. For example, a declarative sentence *declares*; an interrogative sentence *interrogates*; an exclamatory sentence *exclaims*. To help students remember the intent of an imperative sentence, tell them that the word *emperor* comes from the same word root. Emperors command, as do imperative sentences.
- You might work through Part A as a whole class. Ask students to explain their choices in each case. Then have students complete the rest of the page independently.

Vary Sentence Types

There are four types of sentences. Good writers use all four kinds.

1. declarative statements or facts. It ends with a period.	2. interrogative questions. It ends with a question mark.	3. exclamatory statements or facts. It ends with an exclamation point.	4. imperative requests or commands. It ends with a period.
---	--	--	--

A. Identify each sentence by its type.

1. Make Tlaltec use a proper American dinner. _____
2. How tall are you? _____
3. How famous are you in the world? _____
4. Look her up in an encyclopedia. _____
5. Did you know she was born in Oklahoma? _____
6. Troughs ideas today! _____
7. Read this biography of Tlaltec! _____

B. Write.

1. an interrogative sentence about Oklahoma. _____
2. an exclamatory sentence about dinner. _____
3. an imperative sentence about a celebrity. _____
4. a declarative sentence about proper behavior at a concert. _____

C. Write one of each type of sentence for a topic of your choice: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, imperative.

Check: What five questions might you ask a professional doctor? Write them on the back.

page 69

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having students identify examples of each of the four types of sentences within any current readings they are doing, or in samples of their own writing.
- Challenge students to revisit previous writing to vary sentence types, as appropriate.

Vary Sentence Structures

WRITING GOAL *To elaborate by applying different sentence structures: simple, compound, complex*

TEACHING TIPS

- To help students successfully complete this activity, review some key concepts of sentence structure. Focus on the distinction between a main (independent) clause and a subordinate (dependent) clause. Explain that although a subordinate clause cannot stand on its own, it can play a major part in clarifying an idea within a complex sentence.
- Demonstrate how students can recognize a compound sentence by finding the presence of a coordinating conjunction, such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *for*, or *nor*. A compound sentence can usually be separated into two shorter sentences on either side of that connecting word, and each shorter sentence will have a subject and a verb.
- Explain to students that although they may not be called upon to formally define a sentence by its structure, they do need to perceive the differences among them. Encourage students to vary sentence structures whenever they write.

FOLLOW-UP

- Have students rewrite the ideas given in each sentence of Part A using the two other sentence structures.
- Challenge students to be on the lookout for examples of each kind of sentence structure in their reading and writing.

Vary Sentence Beginnings

WRITING GOAL *To elaborate by starting sentences in different ways*

TEACHING TIPS

- Ask students to create one appealing and well-written sentence about a timely topic that matters to them. Invite volunteers to share their sentences as classmates listen for the many variations. Point out simple, compound, and complex sentences, as well as various precise, lively, and fresh words, and effective supporting details.
- Tell students that the goal of this lesson is to focus on varied ways to begin a sentence. Go over the introductory material together. As necessary,

Vary Sentence Structures

Here are three kinds of sentence structures. Good writers alternate sentence structures for variety.

A simple sentence has one main clause, with one subject and one verb. Example: The dog barked.	A compound sentence has two or more main clauses, usually linked with <i>and</i> , <i>or</i> , or <i>but</i> . Example: The dog barked, but the cat didn't.	A complex sentence has one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. Example: After the storm, the school was closed today, when she had a day of vacation.
--	---	--

HINT: Vary sentence structures to create paragraphs that are interesting to read.

A. Identify each sentence by its structure.

1. The paragraph is a simple text. _____
2. Although it is white in winter, it changes color in spring. _____
3. Color can be good camouflage, but it won't always protect an animal. _____
4. Sick means to look like branches, which helps them to get food. _____

B. Write a sentence of each type on the given topic.

5. Write a simple sentence about insects. _____
6. Write a compound sentence about winter. _____
7. Write a complex sentence about a road. _____

C. Pick a topic. Write three sentences about it.

8. Simple: _____
9. Compound: _____
10. Complex: _____

OVER ✓ **Score:** A interesting. **Review** and expand this statement in three ways—one for each sentence structure.

page 70

Vary Sentence Beginnings

Writing the way a sentence starts can add interest to your writing.

Study the four sentences on this sentence. **Key:** *did he have better routine.*

You might start the sentence with:

- a prepositional phrase: With great, they did he have better routine.
- a participial phrase: Being in the center, they did he have better routine.
- an adverb: Usually, they did he have better routine.
- a subordinate clause: Despite being serious, they did he have better routine.

HINT: A sentence beginning can help readers better visualize your idea.

A. Give the following sentence about pigeons four different beginnings.

1. _____	(prepositional phrase)	_____	pigeons can be in urban habitats.
2. _____	(participial phrase)	_____	pigeons can be in urban habitats.
3. _____	(adverb)	_____	pigeons can be in urban habitats.
4. _____	(subordinate clause)	_____	pigeons can be in urban habitats.

B. Write four different beginnings for the following sentence about computers.

5. _____ computers have changed the way people write.
6. _____ computers have changed the way people write.
7. _____ computers have changed the way people write.
8. _____ computers have changed the way people write.

C. Pick a topic. Write a four-sentence paragraph about it. Vary sentence beginnings.

OVER ✓ **Score:** A well-focused character to write three sentences about. **Start** each a different way.

page 71

review the meanings of *preposition* and *participle*, as well as *subordinate clauses*. Provide and discuss examples of each.

- Clarify distinctions among the four kinds of sentence beginnings presented. Point out that each creates a different image of Kenji doing his routine. Discuss how each start slightly adjusts the meaning of the main clause.
- You might spend two days on this activity to offer students more time and practice differentiating among the types of sentence beginnings.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by having students revisit recent writings or works-in-progress to vary sentence beginnings.
- Challenge students to apply this elaboration technique to write an essay on any current-events topic.

Unity in Paragraphs

WRITING GOAL *To rework given paragraphs to achieve unity*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review the fundamental principle of main idea and supporting details. Ask students to explain what a topic sentence is (*a sentence that states the main idea of a paragraph*).
- Clarify that a topic sentence may appear anywhere in a paragraph. All the other sentences in a paragraph should support its main idea. When all the sentences in a paragraph pertain to its main idea, the paragraph has *unity*. Creating unified paragraphs is a key writing goal.
- Explain that in some cases, a paragraph's topic sentence may be implied—not directly stated. In such cases, paragraph unity is even more important.
- Go over the directions together. Point out that each paragraph has an explicit topic sentence and one sentence that does not belong. Alert students that the misplaced sentence may be related to the main idea but does not directly support it or work in harmony with the other sentences in the paragraph.

FOLLOW-UP

- Extend by providing additional examples of paragraphs that lack unity. Have students work as editing partners to identify the topic sentence and misplaced sentence.
- Challenge students to look for unity in paragraphs in all their writing. Remind them to consider this whenever they work to revise or edit a piece of writing.

Unity in Paragraphs

A paragraph has only when all its sentences refer to its main idea. Even a sentence that may be interesting and well-written can distract a reader if it fails to support the main idea.

HOW? Imagine a paragraph as a team with one goal. Take out any ideas that are off topic.

Read each paragraph. Each has a sentence that states its main idea. Underline it. Hook, circle, and the sentence that does not belong. Then explain your decision.

1. Transhumance pulled Egger for his first year's writing in about 1324 B.C. He roamed in the southwest desert of the New Kingdom, although historians don't know how far west he was. An influential monarch in his day, a son of a king, he made him a celebrity. The son, when an archeologist Howard Carter discovered the hidden tomb of the so-called King Carter, died in 1929 at home in England. His findings were so spectacular that the whole world soon learned about King Tut and eagerly sought information about the treasure of his tomb.

2. Ancient Egypt was a land of many perils. Scorching heat was a fact of life. Deadly animals, such as lions, crocodiles, snakes, and scorpions, prowled regularly. The Nile River provided water, transportation and fertility. There were floods, and storms, and earthquakes. Little was known about the invisible causes of most diseases. So Egyptian healers gathered as much knowledge as they could about healing herbs and stones. They mixed science with religion and religion to come up with effective treatments for the body.

3. Havers, a type of salt, was a primary ingredient in the process of mummification. It normally took six to three months to bury a pharaoh after he died. The delay was due to the many steps of the embalming process, which began with removal of the internal organs. Then the body was coated for up to ten weeks in a drying solution. After that, the dried body was wrapped in a layer of linen bandages. Any final type, articles were set in specific places to protect against rot. Then the body was wrapped in a second layer of white bandages. These bandages were sealed in resin and aromatic oils.

Circle Write a unified paragraph about a topic you enjoy. Then insert a sentence that does not belong. Ask a classmate to state your main idea and find the misplaced sentence.

page 72

Come to a Memorable Close

A good piece of writing should come to a logical conclusion. It shouldn't just stop! Follow these steps for coming to a memorable close.

- Read the main idea in another way.
- Present a decision or state a point of action.
- End with a bang—on a question, on a question, give an opinion.

WRITING TIP *Imagine remember the last thing they read or made a comment!*

Read these work closing sentences for ways on the given topic. Think about how to make each one better. Remember to suggest a memorable closing for the story.

1. (Stop or impossible) Never put off doing your part for your community.
2. (Random about what) That's my story about what.
3. (Repeat or don't) I don't think I'll ever look at clouds the same way again.
4. (Give away) Here of every science fiction will love this film.
5. (Start again) They drove off at dawn, never to return to this again.
6. (Playfully) How you know why I believe for so much.
7. (Come) So that's all the news I can think of for now.
8. (Give away) Remember, always read the instructions before you start.
9. (Random item) Please write back to the with an answer to my question.
10. (Direct) Thank you for listening to my ideas.

WRITING TIP Write a memorable closing to a letter to your kindergarten teacher.

page 75

Come to a Memorable Close

WRITING GOAL *To strengthen writing by creating impressive ending sentences*

TEACHING TIPS

- Review the importance of starting off any written piece with a strong opening. Explain that the same logic applies to endings. Any piece of writing should end in a way that sticks in the reader's mind, hammers home main ideas, or leaves the reader thinking.
- Build motivation by reading aloud one or two of the closing sentences presented in this activity. Point out that each ending has been associated with a different kind of writing. Discuss what makes the closings dull and what might be done to improve them.

FOLLOW-UP

- Have students revisit recent writing or works-in-progress to improve the endings.
- Challenge students to be aware of the different ways that fiction and nonfiction writing can end. Students can model their own writing on strong examples that appeal to them.
- Invite students to expand the "Winning Beginnings" bulletin board display to include memorable closings, as well.

Elaboration Editor

You have learned many techniques for elaboration. Now is your chance to put these ideas to use. Edit and revise this draft of a movie review. Write the improved review on separate paper. **WRITING TIP** *Get down ideas on the draft. Make any changes that will improve the piece.*

1. The movie was supposed to be a comedy, but it wasn't as funny as I thought it would be. The previews were okay. They made me think it would be a laugh riot, and I was looking forward to seeing it with my friends on opening day. But it was just awful. The only funny scene was the one I saw in the trailers. The rest of the movie starts even the opening one off.

2. The main character is a shy and nervous man who wants to be a standup comic. He isn't very good with people, but he thinks he is. Every time he gets up on stage he gets nervous. The jokes are atrocious. The friends are mostly into artificial topics. The movie looks about how to tell.

3. I like and watch the whole of comedy to get ideas. But he always gets it wrong. It is worth to get for the about topics. The jokes are atrocious. And not funny. The movie is about with the career of a comedy club in... I wish it was more... I think you should have your own... The star is very funny. The movie is about the movie to be good. It also has a soundtrack by many popular musicians. The title was by my friend to be... I think you should have your own... great movie. It was a great lead singer and he had some great songs that... or any great album.

4. Anyway, even great music isn't what a standup comic. The film was just too much. I don't like the main character. I don't care what happened to him. And his sense of humor is so terrible.

WRITING TIP Write a review of a movie or television show you did not like. Tell why it was a disappointment and what would have made it better.

page 76

Elaboration Editor

WRITING GOAL *To apply writing, revising, and editing skills to elaborate on a given story*

TEACHING TIPS

- Discuss what an editor can do to improve writing. Explain that even professional writers repeatedly go over their work, making it a little better each time. Also point out that a fresh look can often bring to light something that the writer missed or that a previous editor didn't notice.
- You may wish to work through this activity with the whole class or with small groups to model effective techniques. Clarify that this nonfiction work contains no mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Rather, it needs to be more exciting, more precise, and more engaging to read. It needs details to support the reviewer's opinions. Guide students to give constructive comments and to work together to create a better essay.
- Alternatively, present the essay on the overhead projector for the whole class. Invite students to collaborate on improvements. Model how to record the changes and revisions. Review elaboration techniques as needed. You might distribute a copy of common editorial markings (page 79).

FOLLOW-UP

- Create new short stories for students to improve. You might first present merely a single paragraph. Then you can present longer pieces. Expect students at first to take a light hand to revise a piece. Help them gain confidence by embracing all improvements and changes that result in a stronger, livelier piece of writing.

Put It All Together

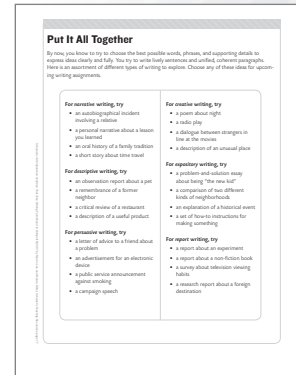
WRITING GOAL *To apply elaboration techniques to a variety of writing tasks*

TEACHING TIPS

- This page presents 24 different writing assignments students can try. The topics are organized into six broad writing types: *narrative*, *descriptive*, *persuasive*, *creative*, *expository*, and *report* writing. Of course, there is significant overlap among these categories, so precise definitions are less important than offering students a range of writing options.
- You may wish to have students alternate their writing styles by selecting from a different grouping each week. Feel free to revise the prompts to suit your students' interests and skills.
- Alternatively, post these ideas in a writing corner where students can see them easily. When you set aside time for freewriting, students can select from among these suggestions to get started. Review elaboration techniques as needed.

FOLLOW-UP

- Create additional writing prompts within each grouping.
- Present a different writing prompt each week to give students broad practice in all sorts of writing.
- Encourage students to generate a writer's portfolio of best works, or help them create a collaborative class anthology.



page 77

Reference Pages

Here are some ideas for how to use the references pages found at the end of this book.

Test Prep Tips

Some standardized tests may require students to write a story, an anecdote, a letter, or other kind of narrative piece. They also may be required to complete this writing within a specified time limit. By applying the elaboration techniques they have learned, students should experience greater success in such formal assessment situations. This page contains some tried-and-true test-taking techniques you may wish to discuss before handing it out.

Editor's Marks

This page contains some common proofreading symbols. Be sure to go over how to use these symbols before handing out the page to students. Remind students that they should correct errors and pay attention to the content and structure of the writing—making sure that all ideas are expressed clearly and succinctly. Encourage students to use this page to proofread papers that they have written for other subjects, such as social studies or science. You may also wish to have students trade writing samples and proofread each other's work.

Self-Prompting Hints

Point out to students that one of the best ways to check their own work is to read their writing out loud. This presents opportunities for them to actually *hear* mistakes. For example, students may find they naturally pause while speaking and add a comma that may be missing. Or, they may notice that some of the dialogue doesn't sound the way people normally speak.

Precise Nouns I

Nouns name people, places, things, and ideas.

Precise nouns let you name more accurately.

Use precise nouns to make your writing more clear.

Okay: That sound will calm the baby.

Better: That lullaby will calm the baby.



Each sentence below could benefit from more precision.

Rewrite each sentence. Use a more precise noun for the underlined one.

HINT: Make a picture in your mind. Pick a precise noun to focus the picture.

1. The best part of last night's meal was the dessert.

2. Use that stuff to make yourself look older.

3. Our old pet lived with us for 12 years.

4. The jewel fell out of Mom's ring.

5. The family trip to that spot was amazing.

6. Every year we hold Field Day at the same place.

7. I can't believe I caught that fish myself!

8. The man got a job on an offshore oil rig.

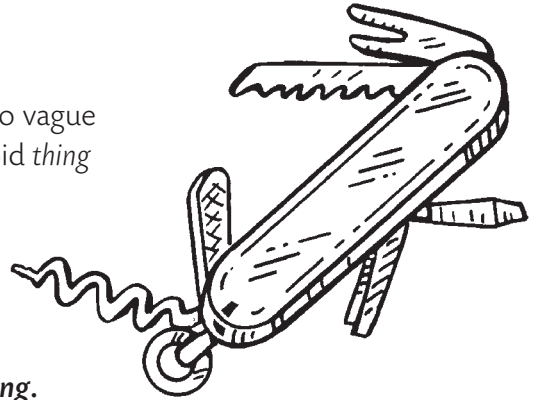
OVER List ten precise nouns that could name YOU or a friend of yours.

Precise Nouns 2

Thing is a noun, but it's *not* a precise noun. In fact, *thing* is so vague that it hardly has much meaning at all! *Thing* is unclear. Avoid *thing* when you write.

Vague: Did you read that thing?

Precise: Did you read that brochure?



Write three different precise nouns to replace every *thing*.

HINT: Be sure that each of the precise nouns will make the question clear.

1. Can one *THING* hold all seven of them?
2. Did you taste that *THING* she cooked?
3. Have you memorized the *THING* yet?
4. How tall can one *THING* grow?
5. Is your *THING* all set for the show?
6. What does that silly *THING* actually do?
7. When will that *THING* be ready to use?
8. Why does he want this *THING* anyway?
9. Will you read that *THING* aloud to me?
10. Would you sing one *THING* for us?

raft		

OVER Write a vague sentence that includes *THING*. Have a friend rewrite it.

General and Specific Nouns

A **general noun** gives a broad or all-purpose name. A **specific noun** names a *certain* person, place, thing, or idea in a way that is easier to imagine. Specific nouns are more precise. Proper nouns can be the most precise.

Too Broad: My relative served in the U. S. Navy.

More Specific: My aunt served in the U. S. Navy.

Even More Specific: My Aunt Janet served in the U. S. Navy.

Complete the chart of nouns from general to specific to more specific.

HINT: Be sure you can explain how the sample row goes from general to specific.

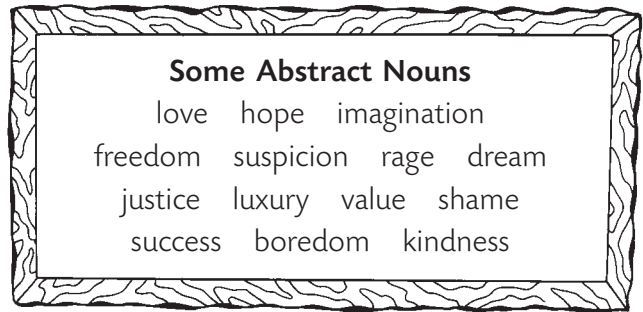
GENERAL	SPECIFIC	MORE SPECIFIC
1. stars	constellation	Orion
2. garment	coat	
3. fruit	apple	
4. instrument	drum	
5. vehicle	truck	
6. beverage	milk shake	
7. mammal		stallion
8. seabird		emperor penguin
9. tool		sledgehammer
10.	fantasy	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i>
11.	bread	pita
12.	turtle	leatherback

OVER

Pick three specific nouns from the chart. Use each one in a clear, meaningful sentence.

Abstract Nouns

An **abstract noun** names an idea, a quality, a value, or a characteristic. You can't hear, see, smell, taste, or touch abstract nouns. Still, they help you add power to your writing.



A. Each of the sentences below is incomplete. Add any abstract noun that makes sense.

HINT: Pretend you're an actor. What feeling would fit each scene?

1. Polly overcame her feelings of _____ to give a thrilling speech.
2. Some have worked for generations to solve the problem of _____.
3. After the furious storm, town residents expressed their deep _____.
4. Because of his _____, Jacob seems to have the makings of a fine leader.
5. It's always hard for children to control their _____ as the holidays draw near.
6. The artist tried to capture the remarkable _____ of the region in her landscapes.
7. How do people find the _____ they need to take risks for their beliefs?
8. "I'm glad I had my camera. I captured that look of total _____ on her face!"
9. Standing beside Niagara Falls reminds us of the breathtaking _____ of nature.
10. "It was your _____ that allowed the dog to get out of the yard and run away!"

B. Pick one of the abstract nouns from the box at the top of the page. Give its meaning in your own words. Then give an example or relate an anecdote that reinforces its meaning.

OVER

List five abstract nouns you might use in an essay about life in America.

Active Adjectives I

Adjectives are words that describe, or *modify*, nouns or pronouns. Adjectives add details that create an impact. They spark the imagination. Use **active adjectives** to make your writing more lively and expressive.

Okay: She sang a song.

Better: She sang a mournful song.



Pick one of these nouns:

ASTRONAUT

DANCER

DOCTOR

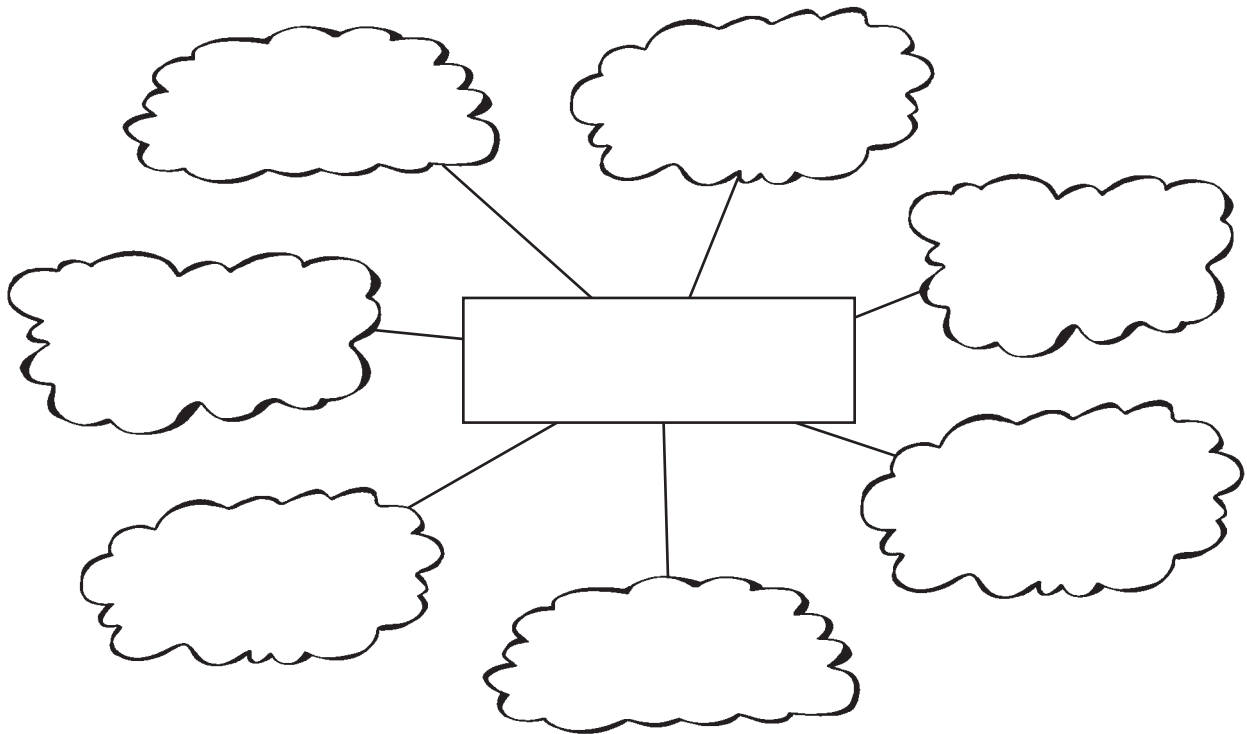
ATHLETE

SCIENTIST

CHEATER

Write it in the center of the word web. Fill the web with adjectives to describe the noun.

HINT: Adjectives easily answer questions like *Which one? What kind? How many?*



OVER

Draw a new word web. Fill it with adjectives that modify a noun of your choice.

Active Adjectives 2

Fine is an adjective. *Cute* is an adjective, too. But both are so b-o-r-i-n-g! Why? The adjectives *fine* and *cute* are drab and worn out. They add little. Effective writers can do much better!

Boring: The band gave a fine concert.

Better: The band gave a rousing concert.



Rewrite each sentence. Use a more active, effective adjective than the empty one given.

HINT: Use sensory details. How would the noun look, feel, taste, sound, or smell?

1. His garden is full of such *fine* roses.

2. The amusement park has some *cute* rides.

3. Helen baked a *fine* cake for my birthday.

4. Mugsy learned some *cute* new tricks.

5. "Please wear *fine* clothes tonight," said Kevin.

6. That *cute* cartoon made me laugh out loud.

7. We spent a *fine* day at the museum.

8. I'm looking for a *cute* postcard for my sister.

OVER



Write a sentence for each of these empty adjectives: *nice*, *good*, *bad*, *awesome*, *awful*. Then replace each empty adjective with an active, more effective one.

Active Adjectives 3

Well-chosen adjectives can describe the same idea, such as *coldness*, to differing degrees.

Lesser degree: The morning air on January 9 was cool.

Greater degree: The morning air on January 9 was chilly.

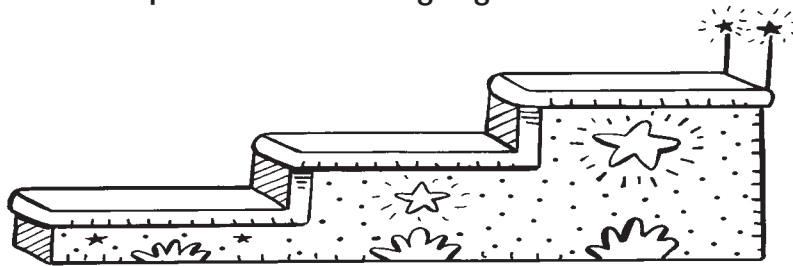
Dramatic degree: The morning air on January 9 was frigid.

Step up! Fill in each step with a more dramatic adjective than the one in the phrase.

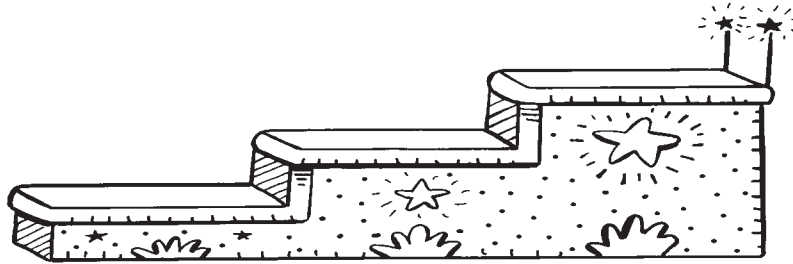
HINT: Start with a basic comparison: long, even longer, longer still.

Now ask yourself: What word would capture each increasing degree?

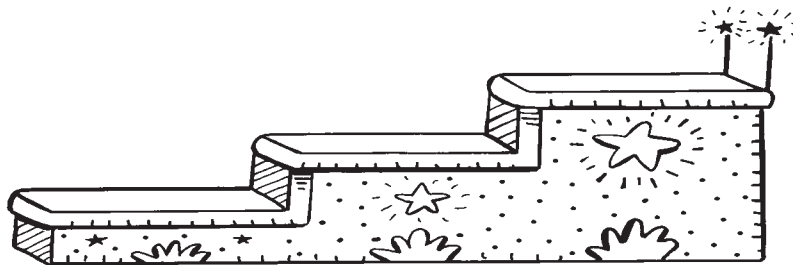
1. the *long* movie



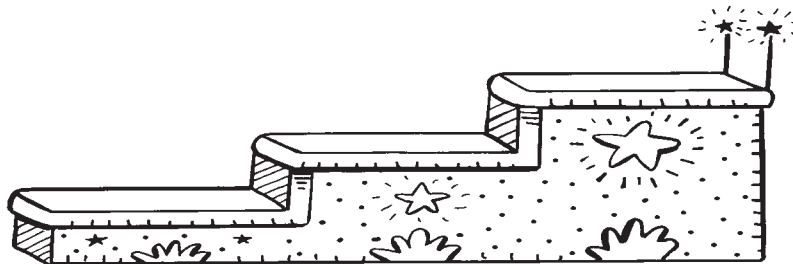
2. the *sad* goodbye



3. the *tall* mountains



4. the _____ plan



OVER

List adjectives of five degrees to describe a *happy* moment.

Vivid Verbs 2

Vague, dull verbs bog down writing—and bore readers. Vivid verbs add vim, vigor, vitality, and verve!

Okay: The fans talk about their champion.

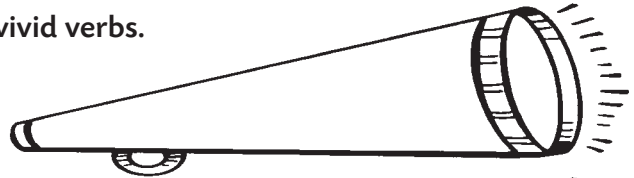
Better: The fans boast about their champion.



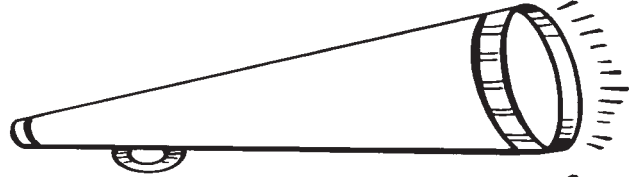
Each sentence uses a plain verb. Write two more vivid verbs in the megaphone.

HINT: Picture each situation to visualize more vivid verbs.

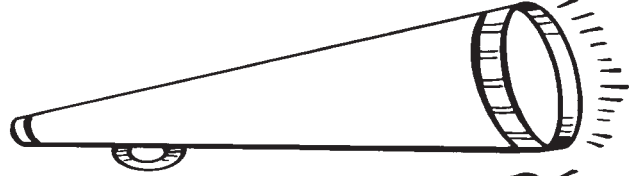
1. The runners run to the finish line.



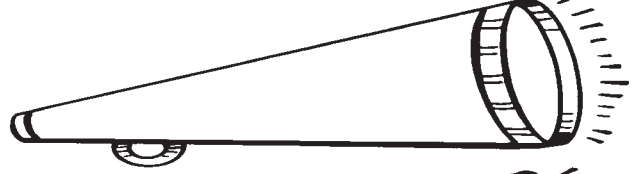
2. Marcus looks at the scoreboard.



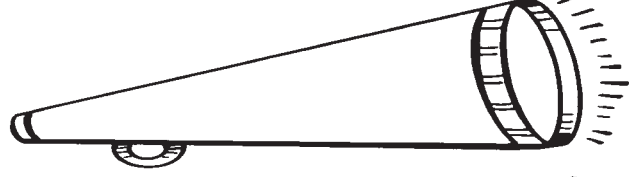
3. He thinks about what his coach said.



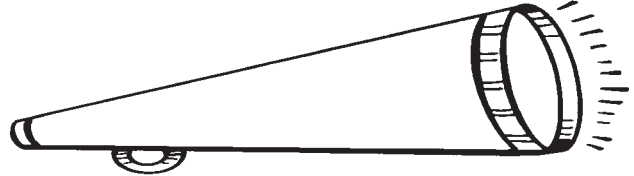
4. He feels his heart go inside his chest.



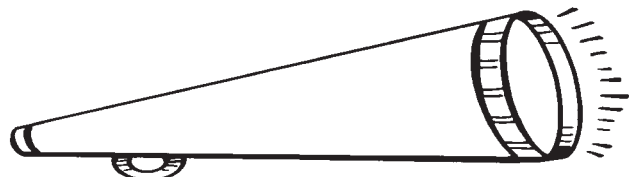
5. At last, the starting horn sounds.



6. Marcus moves as fast as he can.



7. Sports reporters take notes for their stories.



OVER

Write two sentences about Marcus and the end of the race. Use vivid verbs.

Vivid Verbs 3

The good news: The passage below has no errors!

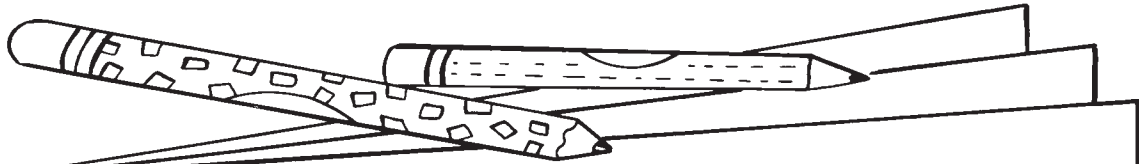
The bad news: It's full of bland, lifeless verbs... yawn... YAWN...



Read the passage.

- Identify all 20 verbs—circle them, underline them, or use a highlighter pen.
- Replace at least ten of the duller, most overused verbs with vivid, more vibrant ones.
- Reread the passage. Feel free to change other words to spice it up.

HINT: Read the passage aloud. Your ears can be a smart judge of good language.



Here's to Ears!

When did you last think about your ears? Most people give little thought to their ears, unless they hurt. Your ears have two major functions. First, they get sound. Sound can bring you pleasure—just think of music, jokes, conversations, purring, or calm ocean waves. Your ears bring you vital, life-saving news. How do you act at a friend's shout, a fire alarm, or a crack of thunder?

Your ears also keep you steady as you move. They do this with the help of the tiny inner ear. The inner ear is inside your head. One of its major parts looks like a little snail shell, or *cochlea*. The cochlea has thousands of tiny hairs. These hairs move as sound waves come into the ear. The movements make signals go to your brain. Your brain uses the data for balance.

OVER

Rewrite the passage again. This time add precise nouns and active adjectives, too.

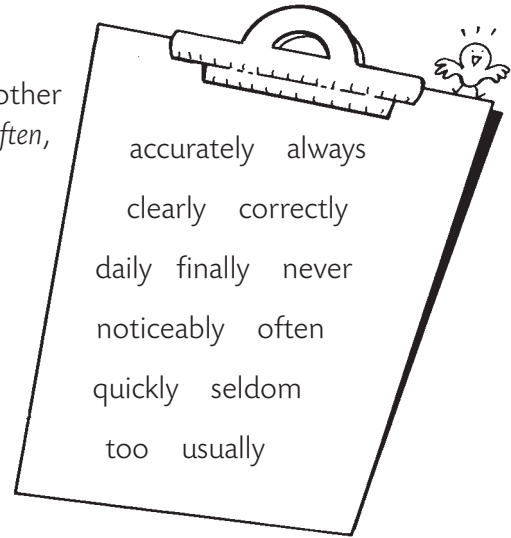
Adverbs Answer 1

An **adverb** is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs answer questions like *how*, *when*, *where*, *how often*, *how many*, or *how much*. Most (but not all) adverbs end in *-ly*.

Vague: Should teachers allow calculators in math class?

Better: Should teachers **ever** allow calculators in math class? [*how often*]

Should teachers **eventually** allow calculators in math class? [*when*]



Use a complete sentence to fully answer each question as best you can. Include an adverb from the clipboard in each answer.

HINT: Answer honestly; then think of an adverb that fits your response.

1. How often do you use a calculator?

2. Where do people carry calculators?

3. In what ways could calculators cause problems?

4. When do teachers encourage you to use a calculator?

5. How much does a basic calculator cost?

6. At what type of store would you shop for a calculator?

7. How many calculators should a classroom provide?

8. What advantages do you see in using calculators?

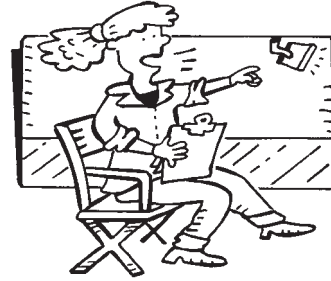
OVER Use each leftover adverb from the bin to write a statement about math.

Adverbs Answer 2

Adverbs can help describe *how* a person speaks or acts.

Okay: "It's my turn now," said Travis.

Better: "It's my turn now," said Travis boastfully.



Pretend you are a movie director. Tell each actor how to say his or her line by writing an adverb after the verb.

HINT: Imagine coaxing the most believable performance out of each actor!

1. [At a hospital] "What did the doctor say?" asked Gina anxiously.
2. [In a traffic jam] "How close are we?" said Haroun _____.
3. [On a raft] "I dropped the oars," Jim admitted _____.
4. [In a tent] "I'm sitting on rocks and roots," complained Kate _____.
5. [While skydiving] "Whose bright idea was this?" thought Dan _____.
6. [In bed] "Stop that barking, King!" yelled Marcy _____.
7. [At a mall] "I need a bigger allowance," stated LaNiqua _____.
8. [In a blizzard] "Come inside right now!" called Dad _____.
9. [While dancing] "Whoa! This is my favorite song!" Amy said _____.
10. [At dinner] "I have something important to say," announced Zane _____.
11. [Exercising] "I can't keep this up forever!" called Lyndee _____.
12. [Weeping] "Nobody warned me about this," said Eliza _____.

OVER

Write six lines of dialogue. Use adverbs as stage directions.

Add Adjectives *and* Adverbs

Adjectives usually go *before* the word they modify.

Adverbs can go *before* or *after* the word they modify.

You can add both kinds of words to improve a sentence.

Okay: Perry took his time getting ready.

Better: Perry always took his *sweet* time getting ready. [*before*]

Perry took his sweet time *defiantly* getting ready. [*after*]

Better yet: Perry defiantly took his sweet time getting ready.



Rewrite each sentence about Perry. Add an adjective wherever it makes sense.

Add an adverb *before* or *after* the word it modifies. Revise the sentence as needed.

HINT: Think of a useful detail. Then weave it in with an adverb.

1. Perry's hobby is drawing landscapes.

2. He finds ideas near his house.

3. He observes in silence.

4. Perry blends colors in new ways.

5. "Trees don't have to be green or brown," he insists.

6. Perry dreams of becoming an artist.

7. He'll build a studio for his work.

8. He will show his drawings at galleries.

OVER

Study a piece of artwork. Write an elaborated paragraph about it.

Synonym Stacks

Synonyms are words whose meanings are the same, or nearly the same. There are synonyms for almost every kind of word: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so on. Good writers select sparkling synonyms to express an idea in a more appealing or unexpected way.

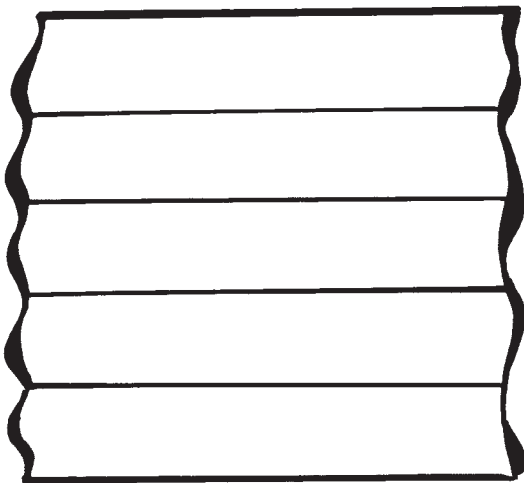
Okay: This news may worry the senator's loyal people.

Better: This rumor may jolt the senator's loyal followers.

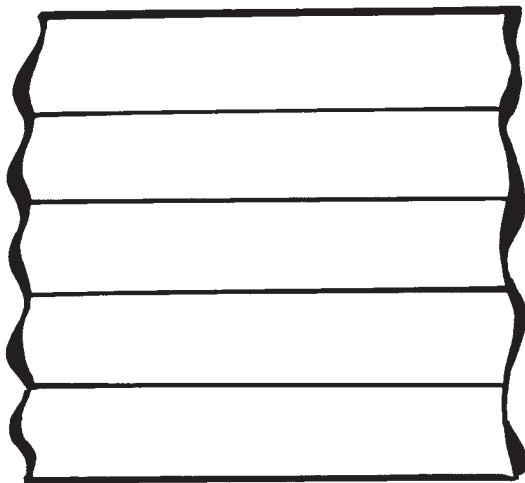
Read the word at the top of each stack. List all the synonyms for it that you can.

HINT: Act out each word in different ways to help you think of synonyms.

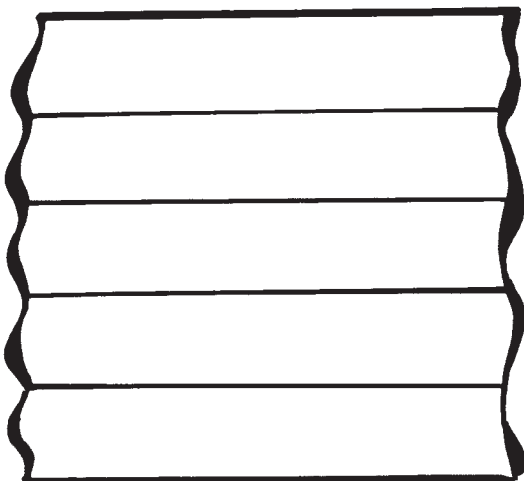
eat (verb)



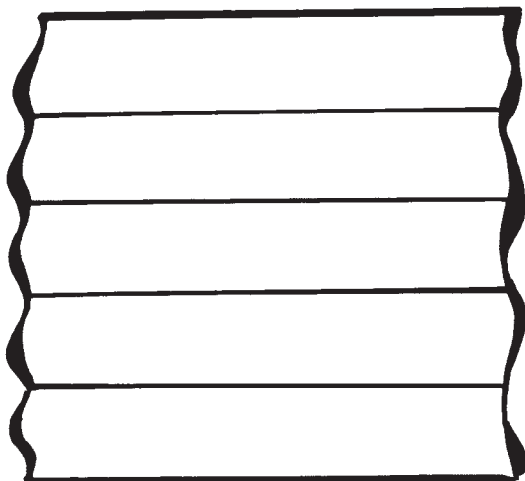
suddenly (adverb)



mistake (noun)



fancy (adjective)



OVER

Pick your favorite synonym for each key word. Use them in two strong sentences.



Alternate With Antonyms

Antonyms are words that are nearly opposite in meaning. Replace a word with an antonym to switch the meaning of a sentence.

They served us a delicious lunch. → They served us a tasteless lunch.

Read each phrase below. Think of an antonym to replace the underlined word. Rewrite the phrase to give an opposite (or nearly opposite) meaning.

HINT: Sometimes it helps first to think of a synonym—then think of its opposite.

	
1. in the <u>fiction</u> section	
2.	a surprising <u>defeat</u> for us
3. arranged to meet at <u>dusk</u>	
4. job as the <u>assistant</u>	
5. <u>repair</u> the sculpture	
6.	would never <u>permit</u> this activity
7.	<u>organize</u> the play area
8. a souvenir to <u>cherish</u>	
9. gave a <u>humble</u> speech	
10.	sat near the <u>talkative</u> student
11. wrote a <u>powerful</u> essay	
12.	sang a <u>mellow</u> song

OVER

Pick any two phrases from the table. Expand each one into a complete sentence. Include a synonym and an antonym, along with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. For example, "job as the assistant" might become "Today, Emil nervously begins his career as the manager."

Short on Details

The great playwright William Shakespeare wrote, "Brevity is the soul of wit." What would Shakespeare have thought of instant messaging, or IM? IMers use shortcuts to share ideas quickly. It may work for IM, but not for good writing.

IM: B4N

English: Bye for now.

Richer: Goodbye until Saturday at soccer practice.



Choose the IM shortcut that matches the phrase in plain English. Then rewrite each phrase as a full, elaborated sentence. Add details for clarity.

HINT: FYI, you can find many more IM shortcuts by doing an online search.

IM ShortCuts

?4U

BRB

E123

WWY?

F2F

404

CUL8R

G4U!

IM ShortCut	Plain English	Full Sentence With Details
1. CUL8R	See you later	I'll see you later in front of the A. A. Milne statue at the library.
2.	Face to face	
3.	Good for you!	
4.	Easy as 1-2-3	
5.	Where were you?	
6.	Be right back	
7.	I don't know	
8.	I have a question for you	

OVER

W2F means *way too funny*. Write a detailed paragraph about something that is W2F.

Active Advertising

Advertising interests people in products or services. Successful ads often include catchy slogans that are easy to remember. Who remembers stale slogans or tired ads?

Here are some slogans that were rejected because they were dull and unmemorable. Write a new, improved slogan that you think might attract business. An example has been given.

HINT: Pretend you are making up a commercial to appeal to your friends.



REJECTED SLOGAN



NEW, IMPROVED SLOGAN

1. **Dento-Paste** is good for your teeth!

Treat your teeth to Dento-Paste!

2. Get goodness with **Greg's Cereal**.

3. Be safe! Fix it at **Manny's Garage!**

4. **Gummo**: Flavor that lasts and lasts.

5. Clean your clothes with **Sudzi**.

6. **Snorum** Mattress = Good Sleep

7. Fresh, cheap, clean—**Lake Water**.

8. Be on time with **Wide-a-Wake!**

OVER



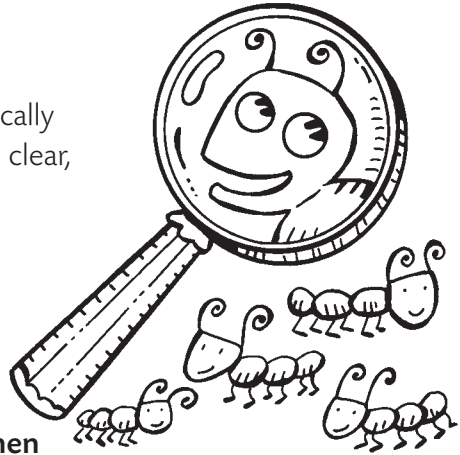
Find a print ad you like in a magazine, newspaper, or on a Web site.
Write a review explaining why the ad appeals to you.

Supporting Details I

An idea without support is vague. Even a sentence that's technically correct can be unclear. You can improve your writing by adding clear, vivid details to strengthen an idea.

Vague: Felicia disliked her sandwich.

Supported: Felicia disliked her tuna sandwich because it had too much mayonnaise and onion.



Read the sentences. Together, they should tell a story. But too much is missing. Add supporting details to strengthen each idea. Be sure sentences work together as a single story.

HINT: Ask yourself what more YOU'D want or need to know to get a better idea.

1. The news came on as usual _____
_____.
2. I generally pay little attention _____
_____.
3. But that night I couldn't turn away _____
_____.
4. I asked my parents _____
_____.
5. They shared stories with me _____
_____.
6. We talked together _____
_____.
7. Sure enough, we agreed _____
_____.
8. Still, we had a lot to think about _____
_____.

OVER

Write five short sentences without supporting details. Exchange papers with a classmate. Add supporting details to strengthen each other's sentences.

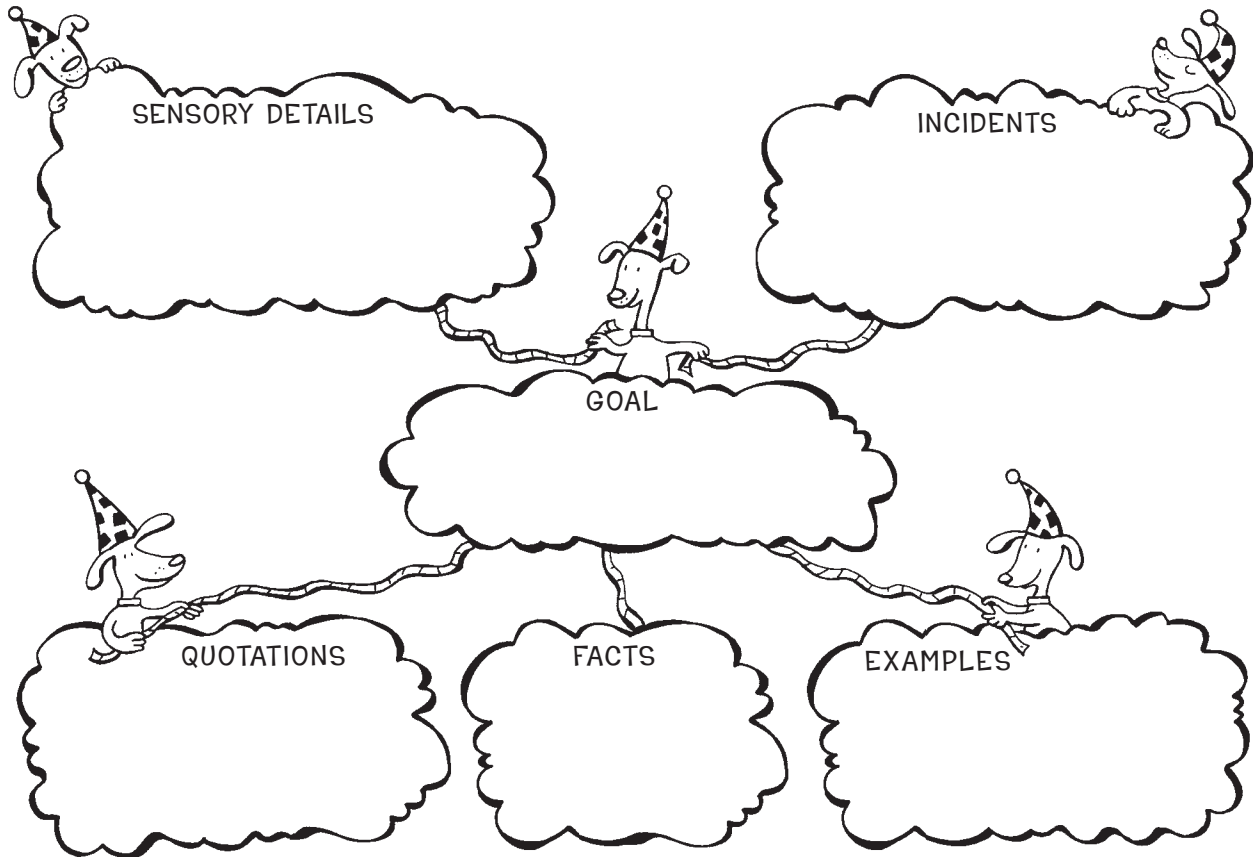
Supporting Details 2

Here are five kinds of supporting details you can add to strengthen an idea. Good writers pick and choose among them to create the best possible work. Study the table.

Kind of Detail	Effective when you want to
SENSORY DETAILS	bring a description to life; spark readers' imagination
INCIDENTS	support a point by offering a related story
EXAMPLES	show how specific cases or uses support your idea
FACTS	provide definitions, data, or statistics
QUOTATIONS	add evidence by citing someone's words on the subject

Plan to convince a parent or teacher that you have a good idea. Maybe it's getting a pet or learning to play an instrument. Write the goal inside the rectangle. Use the web to gather supporting details for your idea.

HINT: Think of something you've really wanted to do or have happen.



OVER

Write a letter to a parent or teacher. Persuade that adult to consider your idea. Include strong supporting details to make your case.

Sensory Details Diagram

We perceive our environment through our senses: *hearing, smell, taste, touch, and vision*. Add sensory details to your writing to help readers vividly summon ideas. Sensory details bring descriptions to life, and help writers *show*, not just *tell*.

Pick two different topics—places, things, events, or activities. Close your eyes and imagine each topic. List words, phrases, or ideas related to each sense in the charts.

HINT: Daydreaming is a good technique to use to lead you to new ideas!

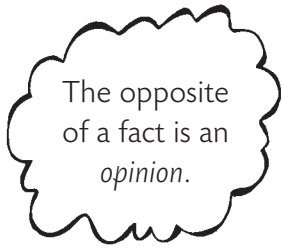
TOPIC:	
SIGHTS (<i>visual details</i>)	
SOUNDS (<i>auditory details</i>)	
SMELLS (<i>olfactory details</i>)	
TOUCH/TEXTURES (<i>tactile details</i>)	
TASTES (<i>gustatory details</i>)	

TOPIC:	
SIGHTS (<i>visual details</i>)	
SOUNDS (<i>auditory details</i>)	
SMELLS (<i>olfactory details</i>)	
TOUCH/TEXTURES (<i>tactile details</i>)	
TASTES (<i>gustatory details</i>)	

OVER Pick one of your topics. Write a paragraph about it with many sensory details.

Facts and Statistics

Facts are true statements that can be proven. **Statistics** are facts given in numerical form (using whole numbers, fractions, percents, or decimals). Use facts and statistics for more persuasive writing.



Pick one of these statements:

- Sport-utility vehicles (SUVs) are good for families.
- Flat-screen televisions belong in every classroom.
- Pets are free.
- Movie tickets cost too much.

State your view. Then list supporting facts and statistics in the table below. Use reference books, newspapers, magazines, or the Internet.

HINT: Using even one fact or statistic adds considerable weight to an argument.

My view: _____

FACTS	STATISTICS

OVER → Plan and write a persuasive essay on your view, using the above facts and statistics.

Incidents and Anecdotes

An **anecdote** is a short, entertaining story. It's about a particular event or *incident* that really happened. Anecdotes are often meant to be humorous or heartwarming.

Use the chart to list details for an anecdote about an actual incident in your life.

HINT: You might jot down ideas on scrap paper first, then organize them later.

The Incident _____

First...

Next...

Then...

The highlight was...

At last...

Looking back, I...

OVER Use the details to write the anecdote. Make it amusing and entertaining for readers.

Supporting Examples

One way to add detail is to give examples that support a main idea. Supporting examples can also *refute*, or disprove, an idea. Good examples help readers to make connections.

Supporting examples often appear in nonfiction, such as essays, articles, business letters, ads, research papers, and reviews.

Support or refute each statement with an example. One has been done for you.

HINT: Examples vary in quality. Pick one that lends the most weight to your point.

1. Our trip to Washington, D.C., made a lasting impression on me.	Visiting Ford's Theater, and seeing the actual seat where President Lincoln was shot, brought the drama of history alive to me for the first time.
2. Having a pet can help children develop responsibility.	
3. Rules in our school are not applied fairly to all students.	
4. Many people do not get enough exercise to stay healthy.	
5. Childhood is a carefree time of life.	
6. People should behave quietly in public places.	

OVER

Give three supporting examples you might include in a written report about why hobbies or pastimes are important.

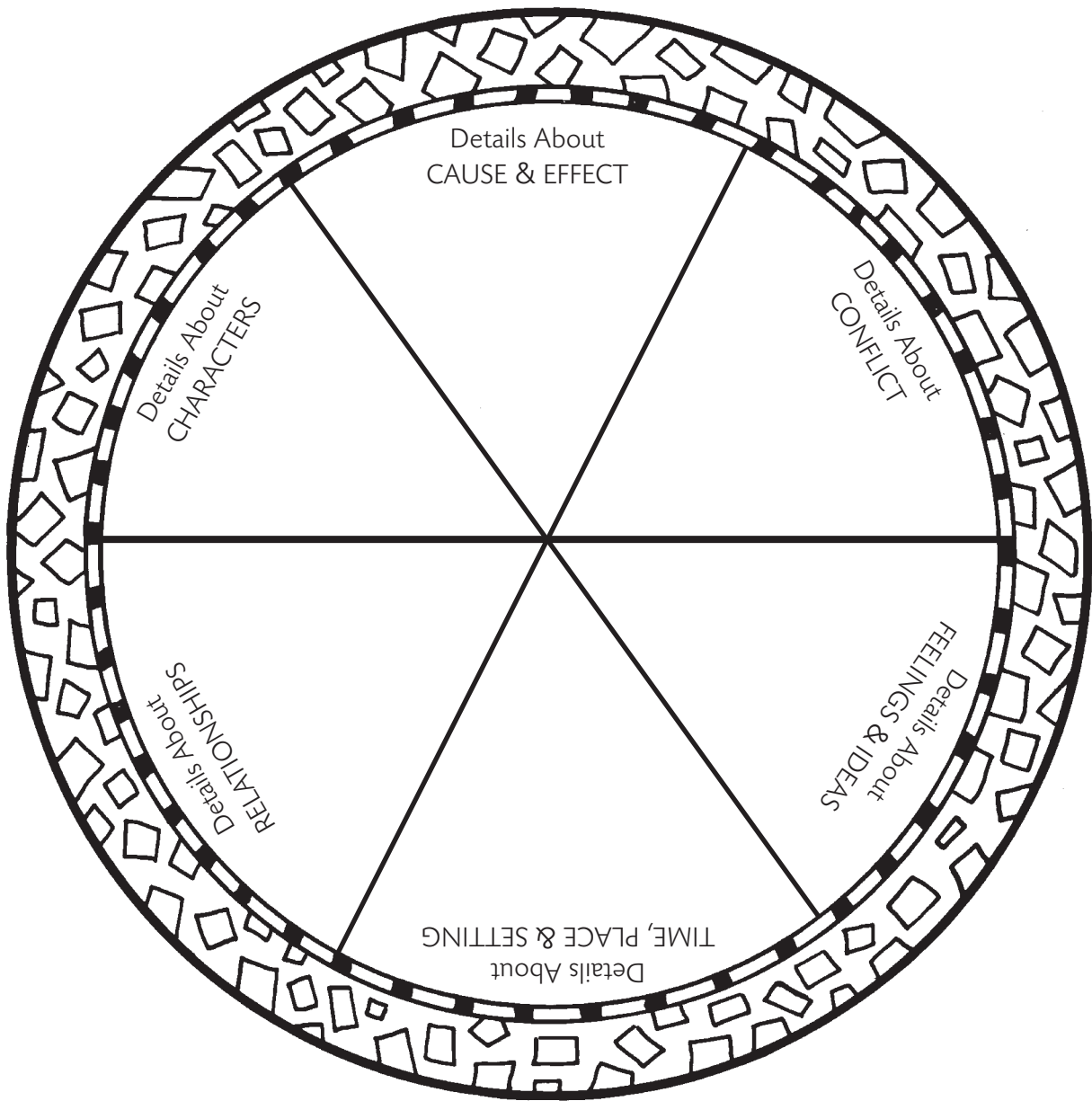
Details Diagram

You know that adding details often improves your writing.
But what kinds of details should you add? There are many options!

Pick a topic for a story or essay: _____

List words, phrases, or ideas for your topic in the diagram.

HINT: Try freewriting for a few moments to help you collect details.



OVER

List additional details for your story or essay.

Character Planner

Think about a story you might write. Make up traits for at least three of the characters in it. Use this chart to name and plan each character. Include words, phrases, anecdotes, or any other details that will help readers get to know each one.

HINT: Imagine the character's possessions to help you plan more vividly.

Main MALE character

Name: _____

A spiral-bound notebook with a lined page and a decorative border. The page is mostly blank, with a line for the character's name.

Main FEMALE character

Name: _____

A spiral-bound notebook with a lined page and a decorative border. The page is mostly blank, with a line for the character's name.

Helper or Advice-Giver

Name: _____

A spiral-bound notebook with a lined page and a decorative border. The page is mostly blank, with a line for the character's name.

Villain or Troublemaker

Name: _____

A spiral-bound notebook with a lined page and a decorative border. The page is mostly blank, with a line for the character's name.

OVER

Write a paragraph about each character, using your notes.

Figurative Language: Simile

A **simile** is a form of figurative language used to compare two things. Use similes to link things in fresh, imaginative ways. Similes usually use the word *like*, or the phrase *as ____ as*.

Ordinary statement: The scientist focused for hours.

Simile with like: The scientist focused *like a laser beam* for hours.

Simile with as: The scientist was *as focused as a microscope* for hours.



Revise each statement by adding a simile. First try *like*. Then try *as ____ as*.

HINT: Visualize the idea to help you find ways to make better comparisons.

1. Grandpa walks slowly. _____

2. We gaped at the double rainbow. _____

3. That old sofa is worn. _____

4. The foxes slip away. _____

5. She works hard every day. _____

6. It was dusty at the building site. _____

OVER Choose a famous person you admire. Write three similes about this person.

Figurative Language: Metaphor

A **metaphor** compares two things that seem unrelated. A metaphor gets readers to understand or experience one idea in terms of another in fresh or interesting ways.

Metaphor: Zach is a fish all summer long.

Objects compared: Zach = fish

Meaning conveyed: Zach spends a lot of time swimming.



HINT: There are no rights and wrongs to writing metaphors—be creative!

A. Read each metaphor. Identify what is being compared by completing the equation. Then explain the meaning of the metaphor in your own words.

1. That typewriter is a dinosaur. _____ = _____

2. My brother is a total couch potato. _____ = _____

3. The meal was a rock in my stomach. _____ = _____

B. Read each “plain” sentence below. Improve it by reworking it with a metaphor.

4. Trixie sleeps all day long. _____

5. The cadets marched in the midday heat. _____

6. Her salty tears fell as she read the letter. _____

7. The hungry dog devoured his food. _____

8. The stars lit up the midnight sky. _____

OVER Write a poem about a memorable moment. Include metaphors and similes.

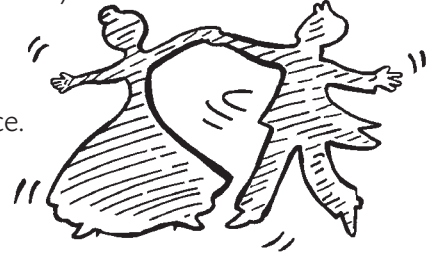
Figurative Language: Personification

Personification is a kind of metaphor. When writers use personification, they give human qualities or abilities to nonhuman things or ideas.

Example: Shadows dance across the floor.

Personification: Shadows can't really dance; people can dance.

Meaning: Shadows move rhythmically or gracefully, as if they had legs and really could dance.



HINT: Think of objects as *he, she, it, or they* to help you personify them.

A. Read each example of personification. Explain its meaning in your own words.

1. The flames mocked the rescue workers.

2. The sun tiptoed into my dream.

3. The engine groaned as we drove away.

B. Choose an inanimate (nonliving) object from the first box.

Personify it with characteristics or traits of one of the people in the second box.

bus pineapple sunset volcano

artist chef mule soldier waiter

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

OVER Write a poem about an anxious moment you experienced. Include personification.

Alliteration Headlines

Alliteration is the repetition of the same beginning consonant sound in a phrase. You can use alliteration to enhance the mood or meaning of creative writing.

NO alliteration: the odor of the sauce cooking

Alliteration: the sweet-scented, simmering sauce

Use each word in a three- to six-word headline. Start all words with the same consonant sound. Have some fun! The first one has been done as an example.

HINT: Think of clever headlines you've seen in newspapers and magazines.



1. baker Busy Baker Burns Buttermilk Biscuits
2. pollution _____
3. harmful _____
4. money _____
5. doctor _____
6. champion _____
7. frozen _____
8. songs _____

OVER

Write an alliterative tongue-twister that has five to eight words.
Practice saying it fast!

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is the forming of a word that sounds like what it means. *Onomatopoeic* words are favorites with poets, entertainers, children’s authors, and storytellers. Onomatopoeia can be fun and lively to use. There may be no better word for a certain situation!

The bacon sizzled in the pan.

Sizzle is an onomatopoeic word. The word itself sounds like the bacon cooking.

HINT: “Listen” for sounds to think of onomatopoeic words related to them.

Choose eight onomatopoeic words from the cuckoo clock.

Use each in an entertaining sentence.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

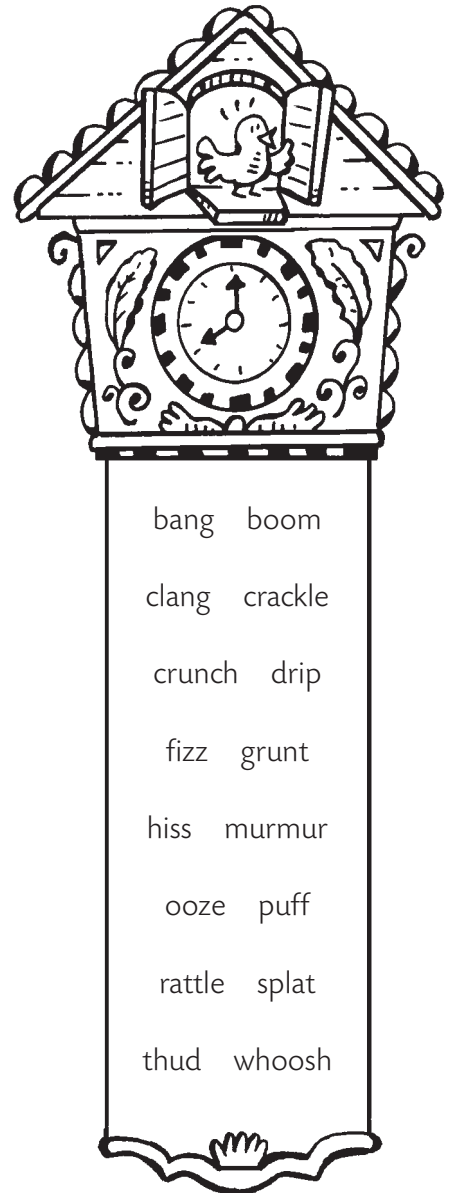
4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

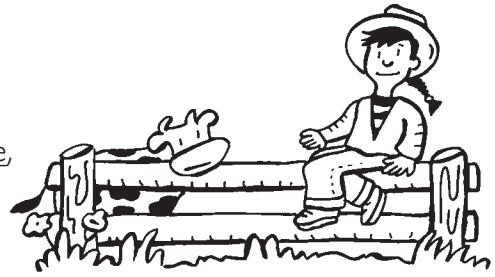
8. _____



OVER Brainstorm with a partner to list as many other onomatopoeic words as you can.

Idioms

An **idiom** is an expression whose meaning doesn't match the literal meaning of its words. If someone is sitting on the fence, the person doesn't really sit on top of the fence. The idiom means that a person can't make a decision about something.



HINT: Idioms can confuse readers who speak other languages than you do. Use with care!

Write the meaning of each idiom in your own words.

1. see eye to eye _____
2. spill the beans _____
3. walk on thin ice _____
4. feel blue _____
5. no bed of roses _____
6. backseat driver _____
7. burn the midnight oil _____
8. cut corners _____
9. in hot water _____
10. throw in the towel _____

OVER Chose five idioms from the list. Use each one in a descriptive sentence.

Exaggerate to Elaborate

When you **exaggerate**, you s-t-r-e-t-c-h the truth. Exaggeration makes things seem much bigger or smaller than they really are. Exaggerate to add humor, zing, and emphasis to your writing.

Plain: Kevin was very hungry.

Exaggerated: Kevin wanted to order ninety hot dogs and ten watermelons.

HINT: Think of how tall tales, folk songs, and jokes use exaggeration.

Make each sentence better by adding some exaggeration. It's fine to be funny!

1. The coat was too long.

2. She parked far from the store.

3. Our dog snores loudly.

4. Maria was thirsty.

5. We waited for a moment.

6. The movie was long.

7. I burned our dinner.

8. Why do people like to fish?

9. The ride made him sick.

10. The students were noisy today.

OVER

Begin with one of your exaggerated statements. Turn it into a funny story.

Dialogue Details

A **dialogue** is a conversation between people.
In writing, dialogue refers to the words people say.
You read dialogue in stories, articles, scripts, and plays.



Use this form to write a dialogue about a disagreement between yourself and another character. Write the other person's name on each blank line. Then write what each person says.

HINT: Read your dialogue aloud. Does it sound like actual speech? If not, revise it.

YOU:	
_____:	
YOU:	
_____:	
YOU:	
_____:	
YOU:	
_____:	
YOU:	
_____:	

OVER Add stage directions to indicate how each person acts or moves while speaking.

Select a Sentence

Use this table to help you create original sentences. Pick a word or phrase from each column. Add details to weave them together into an interesting sentence. See the example below.

HINT: Arrange the sentence parts in any order that makes sense.

When?	Who/What?	Did What?	Where?	How?
after lunch	two horses	appeared	in the tunnel	easily
before dawn	a message	came forward	behind the house	fearlessly
during art	my neighbor	exploded	below the surface	foolishly
earlier	a package	raced	on a bus	in silence
last night	a siren	shrieked	over the hill	lovingly
on Tuesday	her sister	snuck	through the gate	modestly
yesterday	that stranger	warned	under the porch	with humor

1. On Tuesday, the two horses fearlessly raced through the gate to reach shelter.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

OVER Pick one sentence you wrote. Expand it into a story.

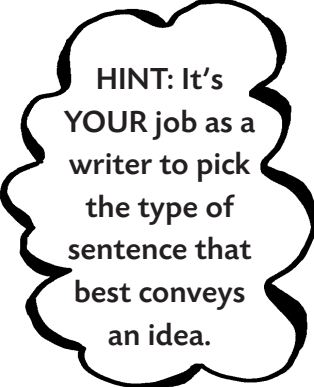
Vary Sentence Types

There are four types of sentences. Good writers use all four kinds.

<p>A declarative sentence <i>declares</i> or states. It ends with . It is the most common kind of sentence.</p>	<p>An interrogative sentence <i>asks</i>. It ends with ?</p>	<p>An exclamatory sentence <i>exclaims</i> or <i>cries out</i>. It conveys feelings. It ends with !</p>	<p>An imperative sentence <i>commands</i> or <i>requests</i>. It ends with . The subject is <i>You</i>, even if unwritten.</p>
--	---	--	---

A. Identify each sentence by its type.

1. Maria Tallchief was a Native American dancer. _____
2. Have you ever heard of her? _____
3. How famous she was in her time! _____
4. Look her up in an encyclopedia. _____
5. Did you know she was born in Oklahoma? _____
6. I totally adore ballet! _____
7. Read this biography of Tallchief. _____



HINT: It's YOUR job as a writer to pick the type of sentence that best conveys an idea.

B. Write...

8. an *interrogative* sentence about Oklahoma.

9. a *declarative* sentence about dance.

10. an *exclamatory* sentence about a celebrity.

11. an *imperative* sentence about proper behavior at a concert.

C. Write one of each type of sentence for a topic of your choice: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, imperative.

OVER → What five questions might you ask a professional dancer? Write them on the back.

Vary Sentence Structures

Here are three kinds of sentence structures. Good writers alternate sentence structures for variety.

<p>A simple sentence has one main clause, with one subject and one verb.</p> <p><i>Nola plays the harp.</i></p>	<p>A compound sentence has two or more main clauses, usually linked with <i>and</i>, <i>or</i>, or <i>but</i>.</p> <p><i>Nola plays the harp, but she wants to learn the trombone.</i></p>	<p>A complex sentence has one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.</p> <p><i>After her lesson, Nola walked home, where she had a slice of cold pizza.</i></p>
--	---	--

HINT: Vary sentence structures to create paragraphs that are interesting to read.

A. Identify each sentence by its structure.

1. The ptarmigan is a unique bird. _____
2. Although it is white in winter, it changes color in spring. _____
3. Color can be good camouflage, but it won't always protect an animal. _____
4. Stick insects look like branches, which helps them to get food. _____

B. Write a sentence of each type on the given topic.

5. Write a *simple* sentence about insects.

6. Write a *compound* sentence about winter.

7. Write a *complex* sentence about a meal.

C. Pick a topic. Write three sentences about it.

8. *Simple*: _____

9. *Compound*: _____

10. *Complex*: _____

OVER  **Science is interesting. Rework and expand this statement in three ways—one for each sentence structure.**

Vary Sentence Beginnings

Varying the way a sentence starts can add interest to your writing.

Study the four variations on this sentence: **Kenji did his best karate routine.**

You might start the sentence with

- a prepositional phrase *With pride*, Kenji did his best karate routine.
- a participial phrase *Bowing to the teacher*, Kenji did his best karate routine.
- an adverb *Modestly*, Kenji did his best karate routine.
- a subordinate clause *Despite being nervous*, Kenji did his best karate routine.

HINT: A winning beginning can help readers better visualize your idea.

A. Give the following sentence about pigeons four different beginnings.

- _____, pigeons can be an urban nuisance.
[prepositional phrase]
- _____, pigeons can be an urban nuisance.
[participial phrase]
- _____, pigeons can be an urban nuisance.
[adverb]
- _____, pigeons can be an urban nuisance.
[subordinate clause]

B. Write four different beginnings for the following sentence about computers.

- _____, computers have changed the way people write.
- _____, computers have changed the way people write.
- _____, computers have changed the way people write.
- _____, computers have changed the way people write.

C. Pick a topic. Write a four-sentence paragraph about it. Vary sentence beginnings.

OVER



Pick a well-known character to write three sentences about.
Start each a different way.

Unity in Paragraphs

A paragraph has *unity* when all its sentences relate to its main idea. Even a sentence that may be interesting and well-written just doesn't belong if it fails to support the main idea.

HINT: Imagine a paragraph as a team with one goal. Take out any ideas that are off-topic.

Read each paragraph. Each has a sentence that states its main idea. Underline it. Next, cross out the sentence that does not belong. Then explain your decision.

1. Tutankhamun ruled Egypt for less than ten years starting in about 1334 B.C. He reigned in the eighteenth dynasty of the New Kingdom. Although historians don't think that King Tut was an influential monarch in his day, a rare find in 1922 made him a celebrity. That was when archaeologist Howard Carter discovered the hidden tomb of the so-called Boy King. Carter died in 1939 at home in England. His findings were so spectacular that the whole world soon learned about King Tut and eagerly sought information about the treasures of his tomb.

2. Ancient Egypt was a land of many perils. Scorching heat was a fact of life. Deadly animals, such as lions, crocodiles, snakes, and scorpions, prowled regularly. The Nile River provided water, transportation and fertile soil. There were floods, dust storms, and earthquakes. Little was known about the invisible causes of most diseases. So Egyptian healers gathered as much knowledge as they could about treating injury and disease. They mixed science with mythology and religion to come up with effective treatments for the body.

3. Natron, a type of salt, was a primary ingredient in the process of mummification. It normally took up to three months to bury a pharaoh after his death. The delay was due to the many steps of the embalming process, which began with removal of the internal organs. Then the body was soaked for up to ten weeks in a drying solution. After that, the dried body was wrapped in a layer of linen bandages. Atop that layer, amulets were set in specific places to protect against evil. Then the body was wrapped in a second layer of wider bandages. These bandages were soaked in resin and aromatic oils.

OVER



Write a unified paragraph about a topic you enjoy. Then insert a sentence that does not belong. Ask a classmate to state your main idea and find the misplaced sentence.

Transitions

Transitions link ideas to make them easier to follow and relationships more clear. Here are four types of transitions with “signal words” for each:

- Cause/Effect** *as a result, because, due to, since, so that, then, therefore, thus, without*
- Chronology** *after, before, during, finally, meanwhile, next, once, previously, suddenly*
- Contrast** *although, but, however, on the other hand, rather, similarly, still, yet*
- Conclusion** *at last, finally, for that reason, in conclusion, in summary, since, so, therefore*

HINT: Think of transitions as signposts in the form of word clues.

A. Complete the rest of the sentence after the transition so that the ideas go together sensibly.

1. Fierce winds battered the town for several hours. As a result, _____

2. Dad prepared the 18-pound turkey for oyster stuffing. Meanwhile, I _____

3. I enjoy listening to most kinds of music; however, _____

B. Consider the meaning of each transition. Then write a sentence that could come before it.

4. _____
Therefore, we had no choice but to postpone the picnic.
5. _____
Previously, such items could be made only by hand.
6. _____
Without it, I believe that the class would be painfully dull.

C. Write a pair of sentences. Connect each pair with a different kind of transition.

7. [Cause/Effect] _____

8. [Chronology] _____

9. [Contrast] _____

10. [Conclusion] _____

OVER Transitions such as *behind, opposite, near, within, and outside* suggest spatial order. Write three different sentences that include spatial transitions.

A Winning Beginning

A good opening sentence for a paragraph or essay can grab readers' attention and make them eager for more. Follow these three tips for starting out with a bang:

- Open with a strong sentence that uses bold, precise language.
- Present a challenge, ask a question, or offer a quotation to stir things up.
- Hint at what is to come.

HINT: Avoid routine, ordinary openings, such as *There are* and *It is*.

Read these potential opening sentences. Each one could be improved. Think about how to make each one better and rewrite it for a winning beginning. Read the example given.

1. There are many good reasons for eligible citizens to vote in the upcoming election.

If eligible citizens fail to vote in Tuesday's election, they have only themselves to blame for an unwanted outcome.

2. The guided tours at the United States Mint are fascinating.

3. It takes training, ambition, and courage to be an astronaut.

4. I've always wondered how our ancestors ever got the idea to make bread.

5. Singing in public can be very frightening for many people—even stars.

6. We never realized how exciting it can be to attend a track meet.

7. The personal computer has changed the way people interact.

8. Collecting coins can be a fascinating and rewarding hobby.

OVER Write a winning beginning sentence for your autobiography.

Come to a Memorable Close

A good piece of writing should come to a logical conclusion. It shouldn't just stop! Follow these three tips for coming to a memorable close:

- Revisit the main idea in another way.
- Present a decision or state a plan of action.
- End with a bang—ask a question, cite a quotation, give an opinion.

HINT: People remember the last thing they read—so make it count!

Read these weak closing sentences for essays on the given topic. Think about how to make each one better. Rewrite it to suggest a memorable closing for the essay.

1. [*Essay on responsibility*] Never put off doing your part for your community. _____

2. [*Anecdote about whales*] That's my story about whales. _____

3. [*Report on clouds*] I don't think I'll ever look at clouds the same way again. _____

4. [*Movie review*] Fans of scary science fiction will love this film. _____

5. [*Short story*] They drove off at dawn, never to return to Texas again. _____

6. [*Biography*] Now you know why I admire her so much. _____

7. [*Letter*] So that's all the news I can think of for now. _____

8. [*How-to essay*] Remember, always read the instructions before you start. _____

9. [*Business letter*] Please write back to me with an answer to my question. _____

10. [*Speech*] Thank you for listening to my ideas. _____

OVER

Write a memorable closing to a letter to your kindergarten teacher.

Elaboration Editor

You have learned many techniques for elaboration. Now is your chance to put these ideas to use. Edit and revise this draft of a movie review. Write the improved review on separate paper.

HINT: Jot down ideas on the draft. Make any changes that will improve the piece.

The movie was supposed to be a comedy. But it wasn't as funny as I thought it would be. The previews were okay. They made me think it would be a laugh riot, and I was looking forward to seeing it with my friends on opening day. But it was just stupid. The only funny scene was the one I saw in the previews. The rest of the movie stank. Even the opening was dull.

The main character is a shy and nervous man who wants to be a standup comic. He isn't very good with people, but he thinks he is funny. He thinks he will get popular if he can be a famous comedian. His friends are mostly into serious topics. He reads books about how to tell jokes and watches videos of comics to get ideas. But he always gets it wrong. He is weird. He yells for no good reason. His jokes are obnoxious. And not funny. He makes a deal with the owner of a comedy club to...

I won't say what happens. I think you should form your own opinion. The star is very famous. You might expect his movies to be good. It also has a soundtrack by many popular musicians. The title song is by my favorite band, Second to None. Second to None writes great songs, has a great lead singer, and has at least four (maybe five or six) great albums.

Anyway, even great music can't save a stupid movie. This film was just too mean. I didn't like the main character. I didn't care what happened to him. And his sense of humor is so terrible.

OVER



Write a review of a movie or television show you did not like. Tell why it was a disappointment and what would have made it better.

Put It All Together

By now, you know to try to choose the best possible words, phrases, and supporting details to express ideas clearly and fully. You try to write lively sentences and unified, coherent paragraphs. Here is an assortment of different types of writing to explore. Choose any of these ideas for upcoming writing assignments.

For narrative writing, try

- * an autobiographical incident involving a relative
- * a personal narrative about a lesson you learned
- * an oral history of a family tradition
- * a short story about time travel

For descriptive writing, try

- * an observation report about a pet
- * a remembrance of a former neighbor
- * a critical review of a restaurant
- * a description of a useful product

For persuasive writing, try

- * a letter of advice to a friend about a problem
- * an advertisement for an electronic device
- * a public service announcement against smoking
- * a campaign speech

For creative writing, try

- * a poem about night
- * a radio play
- * a dialogue between strangers in line at the movies
- * a description of an unusual place

For expository writing, try

- * a problem-and-solution essay about being “the new kid”
- * a comparison of two different kinds of neighborhoods
- * an explanation of a historical event
- * a set of how-to instructions for making something

For report writing, try

- * a report about an experiment
- * a report about a nonfiction book
- * a survey about television viewing habits
- * a research report about a foreign destination

Test Prep Tips

Some standardized tests ask you to write a story, an anecdote, a letter, or other kind of narrative piece. In addition, they may require you to complete the piece of writing within a time limit and without teacher assistance or reference materials. By applying the elaboration techniques you have learned, you should experience greater success in such formal assessment situations.



Here are some tried and true test-taking techniques.

Before you write

- * Read all directions carefully and completely.
- * Give yourself a few moments to think and plan.
- * Narrow your focus.
- * Think about your audience.
- * Make notes, or use graphic organizers to get started.
- * Group ideas that go together. Cross out ideas you don't need.
- * Make an organizational plan of how to present your ideas.

Looking back, ask yourself

- * Did I make my point clearly and effectively?
- * Did I stick to my topic?
- * Did I support main ideas with adequate details?
- * Do my paragraphs have unity?
- * Did I write a winning beginning and a memorable ending?
- * Is there anything else I ought to add or delete?
- * Did I fix errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation?
- * Is my handwriting legible?

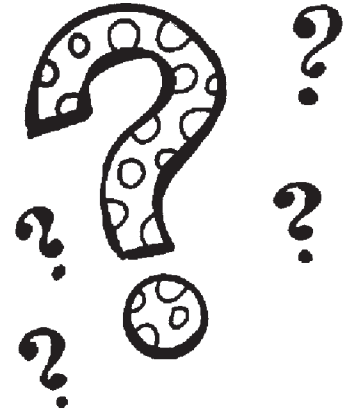
Editor's Marks

✂	Delete (Take it away forever!)	a tiny kitten
— ^	Delete and change to something else	sleep all day night
¶	Begin a new paragraph	¶ It was a dark and stormy night.
lc	Lowercase that capital letter	A H orse's mane
cap ≡	Capitalize that lowercase letter	in Santa Fe, New m exico
↕	Insert comma	Cheyenne, Wyoming
“ ”	Insert quotation marks	Carlos asked, "How are you?"
○ ^	Insert period	An ant ambled about.
? ^	Insert question mark	Where is Copenhagen?
~	Transpose (or trade positions)	A cat slipped on the floor waxed.
sp	Check the spelling	sp wether

Self-Prompting Hints

Read your writing out loud. Listen to yourself.

- Does it sound right?
- Where could I use a better word?
- Did I leave out a word or idea?
- Did I overuse any words?
- Do I need more supporting details or examples?
- Could I write an idea more completely?
- Do my sentences flow smoothly?
- Does my writing sound interesting?
- Does every sentence in a paragraph support the main idea?
- Is there anything that doesn't belong?



Notice the rise and fall of your voice.

- If I **stop**, is there a period?
- If I **pause**, is there a comma?
- If my voice **rises**, is there a question mark?
- Do any of my sentences need an exclamation point for **emphasis**?

Read your whole piece.

- Will it grab and hold a reader's attention?
- Does the piece paint a picture?
- Will readers be able to tell the characters apart?
- Did I vary sentence lengths and types?
- Did I vary sentence structures and beginnings?
- Are there parts I can improve by adding figurative language?
- Is my point of view or opinion clear?
- Does the dialogue sound like words people really say?
- Does it have a memorable ending?