

Descriptive Writing Techniques

PERSONIFICATION

Give an inanimate object the capability of a human.

Example: *The wind whispers in my ear.*

INNER DIALOG

Write your inner thoughts. Inner dialogue is either underlined or *italicized*.

Example: *I wish I had a plateful of these cookies, I think to myself.*

METAPHOR

Compare one thing to another without the use of the words *like* or *as*.

Example: *Her voice is sandpaper that rubs my mind raw.*

SIMILE

Compare two different things by using one thing to represent another. Similes use either the word *like* or the word *as*.

Example: *Moist air is as thick as pea soup.*

SHOW TECHNIQUE

Show how the character feels by describing his actions.

Example:

Tell: *I am hungry.*

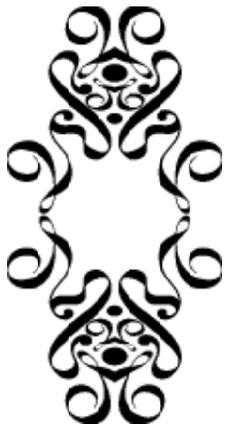
Show: *My mouth waters, and my stomach growls.*

Show and Tell: *My eyes widen with shock.*

SENSORY DETAIL

Use the five senses to describe something: taste, touch, smell, sound, or sight.

Example: *My fingers tingle as they grow numb. (Touch)*

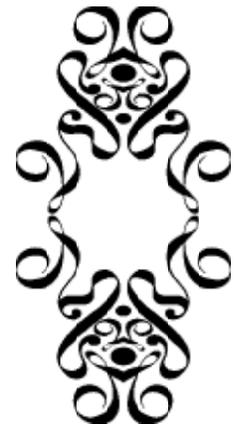


AN IMAGINING

(This is a Beyond Academics technique.)

Reveal how one feels by what is imagined. An imagining is something that would not truly happen.

Example: *I imagine the people in the audience plugging their ears while they “boo” me.*

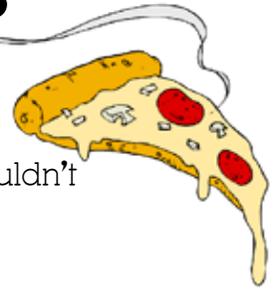


TYPES OF SENTENCES

I. Compound Sentence

A. Combine two sentences with a semicolon.

Example: The cheese pizza filled my mouth with bliss; I couldn't resist a second slice.



B. Combine two sentences with a comma and a conjunction.

Conjunctions: and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so

Example: My brother is tall, but I am short.



2. Complex Sentence

A complex sentence has a dependent clause and an independent clause. One part of the sentence forms a fragment; the other part is a complete thought.

Example: When I write complex sentences, I improve my paragraph.

The part of the sentence that is a fragment begins with a subordinating conjunction.

Subordinating conjunctions: when, while as, whenever, if, since, because, although, whereas, even though, until

3. Sentence with a Participial Phrase

A participial phrase is a verb used as an adjective. One type of participle ends with an *-ing*.

Example: The laughing children love their teacher.

One type of a participial phrase is a fragment that begins with an *-ing* participle.

A. Sometimes, you can add a participial phrase to the end of a sentence.

Example: The aroma of brownies fills the air, causing our mouths to water.

B. Sometimes, you can add a participial phrase to the beginning of the sentence. This is trickier to do. The participial phrase modifies the first noun in the independent clause.

Incorrect: Rushing to open the door, the vase crashed to the floor.
Here, the word *vase* is the first noun that follows the participial phrase; therefore the vase is rushing to open the door.

Correct: Rushing to open the door, I knocked over the vase.
Here, the word *I* is the first noun that follows the participial phrase; therefore, I am rushing to the door.

4. Sentence that Begins with an Infinitive Verb Phrase

When a verb has the word *to* written before it, it is an infinitive verb. The infinitive verb is never the main verb within a sentence, and a suffix is never added to the verb.

When a sentence begins with an infinitive verb phrase, we must scrutinize the first noun that follows the infinitive verb phrase. The first noun must be the noun performing the action within the infinitive verb phrase.

Correct: To prepare for the party, I removed eleven cobwebs.

Here, the first noun, "I," is preparing for the party.

Incorrect: To prepare for the party, cobwebs were removed.

Here, the first noun within the independent clause, "cobwebs," is preparing for the party.