

Techniques for Writing Detailed Images

Technique	Definition/Description	Example(s)	Effect(s)
Participle/ Participial Phrase	Add <i>ing</i> or <i>ed</i> or <i>en</i> verb(s) or phrase(s) to the beginning or end of the sentence.	<i>Shifting the line and kneeling carefully</i> , he washed his hand.	Paints a more detailed picture. A single participle has the effect of rapid movement, and a participial phrase has a slower, but still intense, pace.
Absolute/ Absolute Phrase	Add noun + an <i>ing</i> or <i>ed</i> verb or phrase to a sentence.	<i>Claws digging, feet kicking</i> , the cat climbed the tree.	One or two create a dynamic image, infusing action into a word picture. Zooms in on the image.
Appositive/ Appositive Phrase	Put an extra noun or noun phrase into a sentence, adding a second image to a preceding noun.	The raccoon, <i>a scavenger</i> , eats turtle eggs. The raccoon, <i>a midnight scavenger who roams lake shorelines in search of food</i> , eats turtle eggs.	Adds authenticity. In fiction, adds the illusion of reality by expanding sensory details in the reader's imagination. In nonfiction, it implies research, enriches the image, and adds clarity like another photograph.

The preceding three additions to sentences should be set off with commas.

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Techniques for Writing Detailed Images (continued)

Technique	Definition/Description	Example(s)	Effect(s)
Adjectives shifted out of order	Rather than piling up more than one adjective before a noun, move them (all or all but one of them) behind the noun or to the end of the sentence.	The large bull moose, <i>red-eyed and angry</i> , charged the intruder.	Amplifies details of an image, and intensifies it by creating a spotlight. Adds rhythm.
Action verbs	Eliminate passive voice and reduce <i>being</i> verbs (unless you want a passive mood).	not The grocery store was robbed by two men. but The two men robbed the grocery store.	Adds movement to still pictures and sharpens visual images.
Dependent clauses with subordinate conjunctions	Add a dependent clause using a subordinate conjunction. See Section 746 of <i>Writers INC</i> for a list of subordinating conjunctions.	The hawk hit only a few feet from <i>where I was standing</i> .	Adds details.
Clauses with relative pronouns	Add a clause using a relative pronoun. See Sections 718 and 722 of <i>Writers INC</i> for a description of relative pronouns.	The man, <i>who waited on tables for a living</i> , politely requested a meeting.	Enriches an image with extra information.
Prepositional phrases	Add a prepositional phrase to provide additional sensory details. See Sections 743 to 745 of <i>Writers INC</i> for a description	The <i>raccoon with its inquisitive nose</i> sniffed out the cherry pie in the garbage.	Links additional noun images, adding details of colour, sound, movement, and so on.

Techniques for Adding Rhythm

Technique	Definition/Description	Example(s)	Effect(s)
Literal Repetition	Repeat the exact words or phrases to create an echo or trancelike refrain.	I talked more quickly—more vehemently; <i>but the noise steadily increased</i> . I arise and argued about trifles, in a high key with gesticulations, <i>but the noise steadily increased</i> . (Edgar Allan Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart.")	Provides dramatic effect and often indicates emotional stress.
Grammatical Repetition	Repeat identical grammatical structures such as participles, participial phrases, parallel clauses, prepositional phrases, infinitives, etc.	I came; I saw; I conquered. (Julius Caesar)	Beats a rhythm that can build to a crescendo.
of structures connected with coordinating and correlative conjunctions	Balance two identical grammatical structures with the words <i>and</i> , <i>or</i> , <i>for</i> , <i>or</i> , and <i>but</i> (coordinating conjunctions) or <i>both/and</i> , <i>neither/nor</i> , <i>not only/but also</i> , <i>either/or</i> , <i>not.but</i> , and <i>whether/or not</i> (correlative conjunctions).	The king's power was <i>shifting and shrinking</i> . <i>Neither rain nor sleet will stop the letter carrier.</i>	Establishes a gentle or dramatic rhythm (depending on how long the structure is) and can create a drumbeat.
without conjunctions	Repeat phrase structures (infinitive, participle, gerund, prepositional). See Sections 737, 753, and 754 of <i>Writers INC</i> for descriptions.	They continue <i>to work, to sleep, to eat</i> without thinking.	As above.

Techniques for Adding Rhythm (continued)

Technique	Definition/Description	Example(s)	Effect(s)
Grammatical Repetition of structures without conjunctions	Repeat clause structures (dependent, independent, or relative)	They rose <i>when it was light</i> , went to bed <i>when they were tired</i> , ate <i>when they were hungry</i> and seldom looked at the clock. (James Herriot, <i>All Creatures Great and Small</i>)	Creates a beat, sets up a pattern that can be broken for effect of finality.
Periodic Sentences	Save the subject of a sentence until the end of the sentence.	Rising at him from the darkling blue—slowly, smoothly—came <i>the shark</i> . (Peter Benchley, <i>Jaws</i>)	Creates a dramatic drumbeat at the end, like an exclamation point. Also adds suspense.
Periodic Paragraph	Delay the conclusion with details and/or intervening repeating parallel structures.	Then I heard a very sharp sound and it was close to my left ear. Click! Opening my eyes, I felt the steely hardness on my neck, right below my ear. Then I realized what the click was. A gun hammer.	Heightens the climax of a passage.

Other Techniques for Special Effects

Technique	Definition/Description	Example(s)	Effect(s)
Sentence Fragments	An abrupt, unanticipated pause, caused by an end stop before a sentence is completely formed.	I am very beat. Lipstick. Hair combed. Bandage on my leg from raincoat lining. Typewriter in lap. Starting up at the spot where the little thin line of light is growing, like hope. (Anne Beaumont, <i>Another Time, Another Love</i>)	Dramatizes key images, giving them greater significance than they would have had if buried in the flow of a normal sentence.
Run-on Sentences	Endless flow of ideas with a lack of anticipated pauses.	To take off in an F-100 at dawn and cut in the afterburner and hurtle twenty-five thousand feet up into the sky so suddenly that you felt not like a bird but like a trajectory, yet with full control, full control of five tons of thrust, all of which flowed from your will and through your fingertips, with the huge engine right beneath you, so close that it was as if you were riding it bareback, until you leveled out and went supersonic, an event registered on earth by a tremendous crackling boom that shook windows, . . . (Tom Wolfe, <i>Right Stuff</i>)	Captures a feeling of acceleration, embellishing meaning.

Other Techniques for Special Effects (continued)

Technique	Definition/Description	Example(s)	Effect(s)
<p>Mood Filtering</p>	<p>Review the emotional tone implied by words and phrases to see if they are appropriate.</p> <p>Part of the revision process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the passage. 2. Decide on the dominant mood. 3. Filter out any words and phrases that are inconsistent with the dominant mood. 4. Add new images to enhance the mood. 	<p>First Draft: I'm sitting at my desk in the living room of a suburban townhouse. The walls and doors are painted white; the carpet is tan.</p> <p>Second Draft: The light bulb flickered, sending stark shadows up and sown the walls. The carpet under my feet was brown, earthlike, the color of a freshly turned grave. (Kevin Anderson)</p>	<p>Controls the mood and emotionally moves the reader.</p>
<p>Greek Rhetorical Devices:</p>			
<p><i>Zeugma</i></p>	<p>Combine unlikely images (such as concrete and abstract ones) in a parallel structure.</p>	<p>She reached for Jerry's letter and her future.</p>	<p>Intrigues reader.</p>
<p><i>Antithesis</i></p>	<p>A juxtaposition of two contrasting ideas using identical sentence structures</p>	<p>Leroy was easy to like, but hard to live with.</p>	<p>Contrast.</p>

Other Techniques for Special Effects (continued)

Technique	Definition/Description	Example(s)	Effect(s)
Greek Rhetorical Devices:			
<i>Chiasmus</i>	A reversible pattern of sentence structure.	Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.	Catches attention of reader.
<i>Epanalepis</i>	A sentence ends with the same word that started it.	Kindness comes to those who show kindness.	Gives an hourglass feel.
<i>Metaphor</i>	A comparison in which a word which literally means one thing is applied to another in the form of an identity.	Life is a highway.	Adds levels of meaning to an image.
<i>Simile</i>	A comparison between two different things using the word <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> .	Love is like a red, red rose.	Adds a surprising and/or deeper meaning to an image.
<i>Metonymy</i>	A type of metaphor where the word for one thing is applied to another with which it is closely associated.	The "crown" can stand for a king or queen, as in "She appealed to the crown for help."	Offers a more concrete image.
<i>Synechdoche</i>	A type of metaphor where a part of something can stand for the whole or the whole can stand for a part.	They hired five extra <i>hands</i> on the ranch that year. (Hands stands for workers.)	Offers a more concrete image.
<i>Hyperbole</i>	An exaggerated image.	Sergeant Bolger's stare could crack granite.	Emphasizes a point.

