

Writing Techniques for Development

Consider Your Diction Choice Carefully.

Make sure it is:

- Meaningful
- Consistent

Diction

Definition: Level of language used in a story.

High Diction: More sophisticated language generally used to provide a more removed sense with the reader as an outsider. Language is prepared, precise, and very vivid.

Middle Diction: Average language and word choice. Think generally language used to communicate in the classroom.

Low Diction: Slang, idioms, and colloquialisms. Think hallway or social language.

Techniques for Adding Emphasis to Key Ideas

- Framing
- Parallelism

Framing

Definition: When you start and end with the same line, set of lines, or idea in a story.

Purpose: Helps to emphasize key concepts in a story.

The importance of the starting line is not fully understood until it is brought back at the end.

Helpful getting in and out of flashbacks like in

Zombie and *A Story I Will Tell You When You Are Big*.

Parallelism

Definition: Repetition of an exact phrase in the same relative place (e.g. beginning of a paragraph or sentence) or repetition of the same grammatical structure.

Purpose: To add emphasis to a particular idea important to the theme of the story.

1. In *Note to Self*, the phrases “To Remember” and “To Forget” were repeated at the beginning of paragraphs to emphasize the focus on memories.

2. In *Retaining Wall*, the two lines below keep the same structure to add emphasis to the idea that the two people parted ways nicely.

*“See you, one of us said.
Take care, said the other.”*

Techniques for Improving Flow of Writing by Reducing Unnecessary Words to Intensify Language

- Participle Phrases
- Appositives

Participle Phrases

Definition: Phrases starting with –ing or –ed verbs that tag on sentences to concisely add detail. Can occur at beginning, middle or end of a sentence.

Purpose:

1. To add depth to key elements in sentences which adds meaning to the story as a whole. All the phrases in the example below drill down to add detail to “the thing”.

Ex. “In an instant the thing has gone from trick to tragic, **determined to go out** in a **crystal clean and sparkling glory**, **spinning in the kitchen light**, **displaying** each of its **diamond facets...**”

2. To eliminate extra wording, improving flow and controlling pace in writing.

Ex. **She is feeling warmer now**, and she puts her hood down and unzips her fleece.

VS

“**Feeling warmer now**, she puts her hood down and unzips her fleece.”

Appositives

Definition: Word or phrase set off by commas that acts as an adjective giving additional information about a preceding noun.

Purpose:

1. To add depth to key nouns in sentences which add meaning to the story as a whole.

Ex. “Her bangs, **cut sharp and short**, accentuate her round face.”

Ex. “The witch Kantrina turned my wife, **Frieda**, into a pony.”

2. To eliminate extra wording, improving flow and controlling pace in writing.

Ex. Her bangs **are** cut sharp and short **and** accentuate her round face.

VS

“Her bangs, **cut sharp and short**, accentuate her round face.”

Techniques for Adding Description to Help Convey Message

- Allusions
- Juxtaposition
- Symbolism

Allusions

Definition: References to history, religion, popular icons or anything expected to be generally recognized by the reader without explanation.

Purpose:

1. To add depth in small space by taking advantage of the reader's prior knowledge and culture.

Ex. In *Retaining Wall*, "The College of Hard Knocks" reference used very few words to characterize the man she was reading about as someone proud of a hard upbringing and who probably liked to brag about it. Along with the other allusions, it also developed his personality as a loud-mouthed braggart.

2. To develop a connection with the reader through a sense of shared culture.

Ex. If you have seen the movie Jurassic Park and the raptor scene, it provides a visual of the character's situation at the time without having to explain it and the reader taps into that previous image, feeling like he/she understands the situation even without vivid detail.

Juxtaposition

Definition: putting contrasting ideas, words, or phrases together

Purpose: To highlight the differences between concepts and generate a novel (new/interesting) effect

Ex. From *A Story I Will Tell You When You Are Big*, is the sentence contrasting “good” and “bad” and “princess” and “Raggedy Ann”.

Symbolism

Definition: Using an object in a story to represent an idea/concept. Symbols are always linked to the theme.

Purpose: To help add depth to the story by reinforcing the theme.

Ex. Zombie, the theme of “Don’t let society keep you from your dreams” was reinforced by the zombies as a symbol of decaying/dying dreams.

Ex. In Goblet, the theme of “Relationships being unfixable once broken was reinforced by the goblet as a symbol of the fragility of relationships.