

# Methods of Elaboration

## 1. **Action Verbs** – words that depict action in the physical world.

Pottery, that's all it was / **Pastelled** with green, pink; / **blotted** with sunset and clear October mornings / I had never seen such beauty / A young woman / hair **nested** in a bun / **clutching** tight to her daughter (*Lindsey Daugherty*)

**giggled, buzzed, watching, bubbles, circles, yawn, flailed, writhes, peeks, wag**

## 2. **Adjectives/Adverbs** – describing words.

You were **bone skinny**, legs the size of a supermodel's arms, had **dark tree-bark** skin, **two shades darker** than mine. Your **long, black** hair was ... Your pants were a pair of **hundred-year-old-need-to-be-thrown-out-or-burned** jeans. Your **skinny** feet were devoured by **oversized working** boots. (*Sarah Mitchell*)

Walking through the wheat fields that looked **solemnly** down on me, I would lose myself in the beauty of the day. The thin wheat stalks swaying beneath the sky whispered **gloriously** in unison. (*Amy Kirch*)

## 3. **Allusions** – brief or slight mention of someone or something to emphasize your point. In *Jewel's* Song "Stand," she uses allusion several times to refer to people in history.

**Marvin Gaye**, there's no **brother, brother**  
**Woody Guthrie's land** can't feed Mother  
While in the corner, **King's dream** dies

## 4. **Analogies** – A comparison between two things used to make a point or idea memorable: comparing **lips to a rose** or **school to prison**. They are often used in extended form in arguments. An argument based on analogy, for example, is as follows: **advertising cigarettes is like manslaughter**. Arguments by analogy are easily refuted since analogies can only hold so far.

## 5. **Anecdotes** - A short narrative account of an amusing, unusual, revealing, or interesting event.

**I remember those days** when I would just sit down on the bed and watch Daddy let black socks engulf his feet, squeeze his size-twelve feet into size-ten shoes, and I would be elated when he asked me to button his sleeves. When we walked out the door, he would always remind me, "Remember, we're not poor, so don't let anyone say that to you. We just have financial problems." (*Jerrod Morgan*)

## 6. **Definitions** – provide a definition of a term for explanation, for further description, to show the essential nature, to define boundaries, or to entertain.

The doctor gasped as he pulled some scary-looking object -- almost a perfect oval --and placed it on the table. He studied the "thing" as if he were **a carrion-eating bird, a vulture** swooping down on a freshly killed **waterbuck, an antelope** with a reddish-brown coat. The only apparent difference was that his coat was white. (*Victoria Siegelman*)

According to Webster's Dictionary, **a government is the authority that serves the people and acts on their behalf**. How can the government know what the people want if the people do not vote? If we do not vote, the government may act on its own behalf instead of on the behalf of the people.

7. **Descriptions** – provide MORE information about your topic (usually with adjectives and/or adverbs)

He was an **83-year old, my-way-or-the-highway, beer-drinking, cigar-smoking, cowboy-hat-wearing** man that just so happened to be my grandfather. (*Jose Campos*)

8. **Dialogue** – using quotations. It can be dialogue between people, internal dialogue, or even an example of what someone might say.

We have all had “fake” friendships, people who have talked about us or done something behind our backs or simply made fun of us. Lots of people gossip about others just to make themselves look good or to be the center of attention, but people don’t like liars. These “fake” friends might lie and say something like **“Did you hear that Bob likes Barbara so Barbara broke up with Nick because she said she never really liked him in the first place?”** Or **“I hear she’s anorexic. That’s how she dropped all that weight.”** OR **“Did you know that Allison cheated on her science test? I saw her myself. You know she couldn’t get those ‘A’s’ without cheating!”** Rumors spread and rumors hurt. (*Camille Malone*)

9. **Examples/Explanations/Illustrations**

Out of all my friends in the seven continents of the world, beyond a shadow of a doubt, **he was my best friend.** We were like Batman and Robin, the dynamic duo. **He helped me to be brave when I made a “69” on my report card, and I was afraid my mom would rip me into shreds like paper in a shredder.** (*Brian Fontenot*)

10. **Facts and Figures** - Give specific facts and details to support your writing.

Statistics are often tossed around as if they could speak for themselves. For example, advertisers claim "Ivory soap is 99% pure." (Pure what?) Or a researcher may claim that "the average American today watches 5.3 hours of TV per day." (What does "average" mean?) – These need MORE information!

We were going on a class trip to Moody Gardens, and I was bored with the subject. I mean, who cared about tropical fish or exotic butterflies, like the **Morphinae or Dryuus butterfly**? Definitely not me! (*Merrit Drewery*)

11. **Figurative Language** –

**simile**--a comparison between two distinctly different things using "like" or "as" (**My love's like a red, red rose**)

**metaphor**--a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are implicitly compared without the use of "like" or "as." (**Her eyes are jewels**)

**hyperbole**--a very strong exaggeration. (**Her smile is as wide as the ocean!**)

**personification**--giving an inhuman thing human quality. (**The diamonds are jealous of your beauty!**)

12. **Quotations** – usually from a famous person in literature or history.

There I was perched precariously on a boulder, watching wildlife as it was meant to be. It was then I remembered Grandpa reading to me: **“Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the.../good of earth and sun.../there are millions of suns left.”** He said that some guy named Walt Whitman wrote it, but I never understood it until right now (*Greg Poston*).

Someone said – I think it was Shakespeare—**that friendship comes and friendship goes, but love lasts forever.** Whoever said this couldn't have been more wrong. This is a true story of lasting friendship (*Scott Smith*).

13. **Reasons** – back up what you say with evidence or reasons.

One of the **main reasons that girls are different than boys is their appearance.** Girls are very picky about their apparel and how they look. **It's a commonly known fact that girls carry the contents of a survival kit and everything including the kitchen sink in their purses** (*Kyle Christian*).

14. **Sensory Images** – descriptions that appeal to the senses. Imagery includes the "mental pictures" that readers experience with a passage of literature. Imagery is not limited to visual imagery; it also includes auditory (sound), tactile (touch), thermal (heat and cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), and kinesthetic sensation (movement).

Visual - **a ginger cat, very tall and thin  
streaked glass, flashing with sunlight**

Auditory - **strong melodious songs  
crackling splinters of glass and dried putty**

Tactile - **soft shapes . . . inside the hard bodies**