

☺ Smiley-Face Tricks ☺

1. **Magic 3 – Three examples in a series can create a poetic rhythm or at least add support for a point, especially when the three items have their own modifiers.**

“In those woods, I would spend hours **LISTENING** to the wind rustle the leaves, **CLIMBING** trees and spying on nesting birds, and **GIVING** the occasional wild growl to scare away any pink-flowered girls who might be riding their bikes too close to my secret entrance” (Todd, college freshman)

2. **Figurative Language - Non-literal comparisons – such as similes, metaphors, and personification – add “spice” to writing and can help paint a more vivid picture for the reader.**

“When we first moved into the house on Orchid Street, I didn’t like it. My room was hot, cramped, and **STUFFY AS A TRAIN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SHARA**. And the **LOOMING SKELETON-LIKE GRAY AND WHITE FRAME** of the place scared me. I dared not imagine living there, but the backyard, oh, the backyard. It was a huge, long mass of plentifully growing trees and blackberries. Goodness, how I loved them.” (Terri, grade 7)

3. **Specific Details for Effect – Instead of general, vague descriptions, specific sensory details help the reader visualize the person, place, thing, or idea.**

“It’s one of those experiences where you want to **CALL A RADIO STATION** and tell your problems to **SOME GUY WHO CALLS HIMSELF DR. MYKE**, but who isn’t more of a doctor than your pet hamster is, one of those experiences where you want to **READ A SAPPY HARLEQUIN NOVEL** and **LISTEN TO BARRY MANILOWE** with a **BOX OF BONBONS AS YOUR BEST FRIEND**, one of the experiences where you wouldn’t be surprised if someone came up to you and asked **EXACTLY WHAT TIME YESTERDAY YOU WERE BORN!** Yeah, one of those.” (Ileana, grade 7)

“Remember the time I worked all day Saturday on an English paper? Sunday, I accidentally left the only copy I had at your house. You politely handed it back to me the next day, first period, when it was due. But all over page one you’d drawn **ZOMBIES**; page two contained **DETAILED PICTURES OF YET-TO-BE-DISCOVERED WORMS**; page three was **VISITED BY VARIOUS SPACE ALIENS**; the fourth page **FEATURED SCENES FROM AUSTRALIA AND FLORIDA**; and the last page was **COVERED WITH ‘MR. JENKINS IS A DORK,’ ‘ENGLISH STINKS,’ AND ‘MR. JENKINS IS A FOUR-EYED GEEK.’** Maybe that’s why he gave me a D-.” (Liz, grade 8)

4. **Repetition for Effect – Writers often repeat specially chosen words or phrases to make a point, to stress certain ideas for the reader.**

“The veranda is your only shelter **AWAY FROM** the sister in bed asleep, **AWAY FROM** the brother that plays in the treehouse in the field, **AWAY FROM** your chores that await you.” (Leslie, grade 7)

5. **Expanded Moment – Instead of “speeding” past a moment, writers often emphasize it by “expanding” the actions.**

“But no, I had to go to school. And as I said before, I had to listen to my math teacher preach about numbers and letters and figures....I was tired of hearing her annoying voice lecture about “ $a=b$ divided by x .” I glared at the small black hands on the clock, silently threatening them to go faster. But they didn’t listen, and I caught myself wishing I were in a bathing suit again, walking carelessly on white sand and looking down at almost transparent pale-blue water with Josh at my side...

“I don’t belong in some dumb math class. I belong on the beach, where I can soak my feet in caressing water and let the wind wander its way through my chestnut-colored hair and sip Doctor Pepper all day long. I want to grip a straw all day, not a mechanical pencil that will try unsuccessfully to write the answers to unsolvable questions.” (Shelly, age 7)

6. Hyphenated Modifiers – Sometimes a new way of saying something can make all the difference; hyphenated adjectives often cause the reader to “sit up and take notice.”

“She’s got this blonde hair, with dark highlights, parted in the middle, down past her shoulders, and straight as a preacher. She’s got big green eyes that all guys admire and all girls envy, and this I’m-so-beautiful-and-I-know-it body, you now, like every other super model.” (Ileana, grade 7)

7. Humor – Professional writers know the value of laughter; even subtle humor can help turn a “boring” paper into one that can raise someone’s spirits.

“He laughed? I’m nothing. I’m the rear end of nothing, and the devil himself smiled at me.” (Andrew, grade 7)

“And you – yes, you, Justin – were the guilty party who, after I took off my shoes to enjoy the hot pavement in early spring, put a frog in them. Of course, I didn’t look at the shoes when I put them back on; it was the *squish* that gave your prank away.” (Liz, grade 8)

8. Full-Circle Ending – Sometimes students need a special ending, one that effectively “wraps up” the piece. One “trick” is to repeat a phrase from the beginning of the piece.

BEGINNING:

“Hey, you, with the green and neon-orange striped shoelaces, you who always pulled on my old frazzled white ones in math. Hey, you, Justin, who always added your versions of ‘art’ to my math problems for Mrs. Caton’s class, so that $9 \times 7 = 63$ turned out to be a train with puffs of smoke and two boxcars and made me get an 83 instead of a 93 since Mrs. C. doesn’t count locomotives as correct answers.”

ENDING:

“Now Justin still sits behind me in math with his neon-green and orange striped shoelaces and pulls on my old white frazzled ones. He still draws zombies on my homework, but he hasn’t dumped another pitcher of Kool-Aid on me-not yet at least. Oh, and by the way, in case you’re wondering, his first words when he opened his eyes were, “It was James Kenton who hid your clothes and made you walk around in a chicken suit....I’m not that mean.” (Liz, grade 8)

LEADS

Many experts agree that the most important aspect of any story is the intro, or the lead. The lead is what sets the tone, the pace, the feeling in the story. Now that you have a first draft of your piece and have revised it

some, what is your next step? How will you draw your reader in? How will you make you someone want to read your piece?

Authors use numerous techniques to begin to their writing. I've listed on this worksheet, a variety of tried-and-true methods to help you revise your lead.

Here is my original lead:

The day started out like any other day at the cottage. I grabbed my new ten-speed bike and started peddling down the street to my friend Amy's cottage.

There's nothing particularly wrong with these two sentences, except that they certainly do not capture the reader's imagination or attention. Pay close attention to how I use some of the tried-and-true methods to radically revise my lead.

Question

What could possibly be sweeter than watching the orange sun rise over Lake Daily, its citrus rays permeating my light cotton t-shirt and giving my ten-year-old legs energy to peddle as quickly as possible up the dusty road to Amy's cottage? Little did I know that this sweet, perfect, every-day-sort-of morning would be a morning I would never forget.

Dialogue

"I'm leaving, Mom!" I shouted lightheartedly through the wooden screen door, right before it banged shut behind me.

My mom responded with her standard Mom Response. "Be careful, Honey! Watch for cars and be home in time for lunch!" Her words became tangled in the spokes of my ten-speed bicycle, as I sped off down the sun-soaked dirt road on my way to Amy's cottage.

Action

Speeding down the sun-soaked dirt road, my legs peddled faster than the ripples on the surface of Lake Daily. Dust coated my handlebars. Sand gathered in the corners of my eyes, causing salty tears to form and dry before they could do their job of rinsing away the granules of sand.

Snapshot (taking a picture and describing the detail)

The orange sun rises over the soft rippling water of Lake Daily, casting a warm citrus glow over everything in range. My new red ten-speed bike, propped up effortlessly by its sturdy kickstand, looks shinier than usual against the warm horizon. The black foam-covered, curled handlebars are glistening with flecks of remaining dew. It is a morning I'll never forget...for many reasons.

Thoughtshot (describe what you, the character, is thinking)

"All is right with the world," I think to myself as I watch the sweet orange sun rise slowly over the rippled surface of Lake Daily. "It usually takes ten minutes to bike to Amy's cottage, but I bet with my new ten-speed, I can make it in five." I hopped effortlessly aboard my new wheels and began peddling with great fervor.

Fragment for Effect

Sun rising slowly. A warm glow cast on everything. A new red ten-speed calling me to go faster and faster. It was a morning I would never forget.

Important Reminders:

- Your attention getter begins your introduction.
- Your thesis is the last sentence in your introduction.

- Each of the body paragraphs should have a topic sentence.
- The novel and films are major works. Either underline the titles or *italicize* them, but keep your punctuation choice consistent.
- Follow MLA format!!
- Incorporate your quote into a sentence you have created. Example: George demonstrates his frustration with Lennie's childish ways when he, "stood up and threw the mouse as far as could into the darkening bush" (Steinbeck, 9).
- When using in-text citation, use the author's name followed by a comma then the page number. This information goes inside parenthesis and is followed by a period.
- Only place parenthetical information at the END of a sentence. Never in the middle.
- Your quotes should not go longer than three lines of text on your typed page. If this happens, see me regarding format of block quotes.
- Do not use any personal pronouns. (I, me, my, we, us, myself, etc.) Unless you are directly quoting the literature. Personal pronouns are strictly prohibited.
- DO NOT ADDRESS THE READER. (DO NOT USE "YOU!" "US," WE," etc.)
- Do not start sentences with "**There** + are, is, was, were, may be, might be, could be, should be, will be, etc."
- Avoid dead words. (a lot, very, get, stuff, thing, have to, well, etc.) (The words 'this, that, these, those, and it' should be used sparingly.)
- Use the present tense, not the past tense, when discussing literature and film.
- Choose active verbs over the "to be" verb. Use vivid adjectives and adverbs to lend voice and character to your essay.

Possible Attention Getters:

1. relevant quote from an outside source
2. relevant quote from the story
3. startling fact or creative description of event
4. shocking or amusing generalization