**Lesson 1: Paint Vivid Word Pictures:** Writers paint word pictures in the mind of the reader. This exercise should help you to use a whole pallet of colorful words. Think of your reader’s mind as a blank canvas, just waiting for some paint.

Part I: In the first part of this exercise, I will show you three pictures. For each picture I want you to write down what you know or what you can predict from the drawing.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Drawing 1:  |  |
| Drawing 2:  |  |
| Drawing 3:  |  |

Obviously, as details were added to the drawings, you were able to predict more information. Your writing should be just like painting a picture. The more information you give, the more complete and vivid picture you create for your reader.

Part II: Below re-write each non-example painting a vivid word picture. An example has been done for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Non-example:  | Alice was reading in her room. |
| Example:  | Sunlight streamed through the bedroom window as Alice curled up on her flowered bedspread with her favorite book.  |
| Non-example: | We live in a nice house.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | Our kitchen is a cozy place.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | The empty house looked scary.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | He’s a poor old man.  |
| Example: |  |

**Lesson 2: Show, Don’t Tell:** beginning writers tell their readers. They don’t recognize that the same information can be given more interestingly by showing the reader what they want rather than simply stating a fact. Below re-write each non-example “showing” rather than “telling.” An example has been done for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Non-example:  | It’s a rainy day.  |
| Example:  | Rain dashed against the window. OR Rain drops splashed in puddles on the street.  |
| Non-example: | The principal is angry. |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | Lucy is a happy girl. |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | It was a pleasant day at the beach.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | Cheetahs are pretty and fast.  |
| Example: |  |

**Lesson 3: Put Muscles in Your Verbs:** For students still in the process of developing their vocabularies, verb choice is often limited to common use verbs, such as go, went, ran, said, and like. Verbs are the workers in the workers in a sentence, and they have to be strong enough for the task. This exercise will show you how to become more aware of specific verb choice. This will not only make your writing more lively and exact, but will also broaden your vocabulary. Below re-write each non-example with a “muscle” verb. An example has been done for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Non-example:  | Danny ***ate*** his lunch. |
| Example:  | Danny ***gobbled*** his lunch. OR Danny ***nibbled*** his lunch.  |
| Non-example: | Susan ***smiled*** at Pete’s joke.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | Alex ***put*** his books on the table. |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | Lions ***hunt*** their prey.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | Mockingbirds ***sing*** like other birds.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | “Go away,” Josh ***said*** angrily.  |
| Example: |  |

**Lesson 4: Lights! Camera! Action!** Novice writers not only tell information rather than show, they are also more apt to name an action than to describe it. Telling the reader what is happening is not nearly as much fun as showing the action. Below re-write each non-example describing the action rather than naming it. An example has been done for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Non-example:  | Tommy acted mad.  |
| Example:  | Tommy kicked the chair angrily and stomped out of the room, slamming the door behind him.  |
| Non-example: | Sally feels sad.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | The teacher is irritable.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | The class was in an uproar.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | King snakes suffocate their prey.  |
| Example: |  |

**Lesson 5: Set the Scene:** The setting of a story may be contemporary, long ago, or even in the future. It may be real-world or fantasy, geographical, or historical. The very atmosphere of the story becomes part of the setting. You want to give your own stories a time and place to happen. The setting has a direct impact on what can or cannot happen in a story. The setting will help you to “set the scene.” Below re-write each non-example to “set the scene.” An example has been done for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Non-example:  | One day my friend Joey said, “Look what I found.” |
| Example:  | The October sun warmed our backs as we dug in the playground sand. Suddenly, Joey said, “Look what I found.” |
| Non-example: | I walked in the sand. |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | I put my tray down and sat next to Natalie.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | We sat next to a window.  |
| Example: |  |
| Non-example: | I couldn’t believe I was seeing all that snow.  |
| Example: |  |

**Lesson 6: Exciting Leads:** It is important to start your writing with a good lead, a beginning that will bring the reader right into the story. In narrative writing, a strong lead will include setting, characters, and some indication of what the story is going to be about. We often call the leads “hooks” because of the way the writer catches the reader’s attention and lets the reader know what the piece is going to be about. The writer often poses a question or makes a startling statement to draw the reader into the piece. Below re-write each non-example to be a more exciting lead. An example has been done for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Non-example: | Once there was a Greek boy who wanted to come to America. |
| Example: | The setting sun spread a golden glow over the deserted market place. Twelve-year-old Tasso snatched his red flannel cap from his head as he darted down the cobblestone street. His legs, like pumping pistons, set the tassels of his loose knee-length trousers dancing. Suddenly Tasso stopped short. Loud excited voices inside the coffeehouse drew him as a flame draws a moth. –Tasso of Tarpon Streams, Maity Schrecengost. |
| Non-example: | This is a scary story about two kids who go into a scary house on Halloween.  |
| Example: |  |

**Lesson 7: Satisfying Endings:** Just as you have to learn how to write strong leads, you also need to learn to write solid, satisfying endings. Writing “The End” at the bottom of the last page does not end a piece of writing. In fact, if you have to TELL a reader they are at the end of the story, you surely haven’t ended the story well at all. In narrative writing, a satisfying ending leaves the reader with a sense of completeness, a feeling that there is nothing more to say. The story has been told. In expository writing, the ending should tie all the information together. Commonly used endings include a summary statement, a challenge posed, an invitation offered, or encouragement of further exploration of the topic. Higher scores on assessment tests require a strong beginning, middle, and end. If any of the three is missing a lower score will result. The ending needs to have a sense of completeness. Below re-write each non-example to be a more complete and exciting ending. An example has been done for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Non-example: | That’s the end of my story. Bye now.  |
| Example: | As Dad put the last of the gear into the van, I stood quietly gazing at the majestic mountains. I wanted to memorize every detail. Our Rocky Mountain adventure was over. We were going home.  |
| Non-example: | And that’s the end.  |
| Example: |  |

**Lesson 8: Build Bridges**: Novice writers often move from one idea to another without giving clues to the reader that time has passed or that a new idea is being introduced. Transitional words and phrases serve as bridges to help the reader make connections. For this exercise, view the attached page entitled “Build Bridges” and identify the transition that was added into each example.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Example # | Transitional Phrase |
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |

**Lesson 9: Using Figurative Language:** We have spent a fair amount of time discussing figurative language and studying how expert writers use figurative language in their writing. I now expect you to be able to use figurative language in your own writing. Below are examples of figurative language. I want you to think about your topic and write an example of each type of figurative language that you could use in your writing.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Figurative Language | My Example | Your Example |
| Simile | The road curved like a brown ribbon. |  |
| Metaphor | The river is a watery snake slithering through the canyon. |  |
| Onomatopoeia | The TICK TOCK, TICK TOCK of the clock drove me nuts!  |  |
| Alliteration | The sled flies down the slippery slope.  |  |
| Allusions | We’re not in Kansas anymore, Toto!  |  |

9th Grade Topic: Think of a vivid childhood memory. A special trip, an important moment, a milestone, etc. Essentially a time or memory that stands out in your mind above all others. Narrate the events of this memory.

10th Grade Topic: Think of a time when you worked toward a personal goal. Perhaps it was to make a sport’s team or maybe it was to learn how to change a tire. Whatever the goal, explain to your readers how you set this goal, how you went about achieving it, and perhaps even how it felt the moment you met it (assuming you DID meet the goal.)