

ENGLISH -- Improving descriptive sentences

**Adding details and specifics [Just do not over do it! Excessive use of description makes your prose purple]**

1. There was all sorts of stuff going on.
2. The *car* spun around sideswiping *every other car*.
3. There were toys all over the place.
4. The small car was hit from behind.
5. Everyone panicked and ran about.

**Adding modifiers - adding adverbs (words that end in "ly" is particularly effective.**

1. Ants crawled across the fur coat.
2. All the people jumped off the ship.
3. He walked down the street.
4. His friend scooped water out with a bucket.
5. He knocked over the lamp on the table.

**Avoid using "There was"**

*Verbs are already in the sentence*

1. There was the sound of glass shattering.
2. There was underwear hanging from the lamp.
3. There was something green wading towards us.
4. There were many butterflies fluttering around the field.
5. There was only the sound of machines beeping.

*Verbs need to be found*

- !. There are dead fish in a small dirty black fish tank
2. There was a big cloud of smoke from the tires.
3. There were giant spider webs around the chandelier.
4. There was a bird nest on the light
5. There were mountains of Lego crashing through the window.

**Look for strong, specific verbs. Do not rely on typical or vague language.**

1. The robbers drove away from the bank .
2. The driver's head went through the windshield.
3. The spiders were making their webs in the comer.
4. The water was coming in fast. Water went through the hole.
5. They were putting the lifeboats into the water.

**Avoid ambiguity. Use words that convey a definite idea.**

1. The sock looked like it was growing some kind of mold on it.
2. It seemed like every breath was like being stabbed in the heart.
3. Its claws were like razor blades and they cut him easily.

**For strength use ACTIVE not Passive Voice. [Reverse the order of the sentence and make the doer of the action the subject.]**

1. The closet was filled with torn books and crumpled papers.
2. The doorknob was covered with crawling ants.
3. The sock looked like it was growing some kind of mold on it
4. The room was covered in sudden darkness
5. It had red eyes that were menacing to look at.

**Most of the time, it is inappropriate to try and draw the reader into the description.**

1. You can see mice coming up through the vent in the floor.
2. You could feel her evil penetrate your soul.
3. Loud, pounding steps could be heard receding down the alleyway.
4. The crack can be heard above the thunder.

**Sometimes the use of helping verbs is unnecessary and weakens the power of the description.**

1. Bits and pieces went soaring through the air.
2. The seagulls in the sky started swooping down.
3. The ship began to take in gallons of water by the minute.