

## Diction

### Read and think:

How well I recollect the kind of day it was! I smell the fog that hung about the place; I see the hoar frost, ghostly, through it; I feel my rimy hair fall clammy on my cheek; I look along the dim perspective of the schoolroom, with a **sputtering** candle here and there to light up the foggy morning, and the breath of the boys wreathing and smoking in the raw cold as they blow upon their fingers, and tap their feet upon the floor.

Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*

### Talk about it:

1. What words help you understand that the room was cold and dark?

Words that tell you the room is cold	Words that tell you the room is dark

2. What is a *sputtering candle*? How does describing the candle help you understand the feeling of the whole room?

### Now you try it:

Describe a room that is unbearably hot. In your description, use words that are clear, concrete, and exact, as Dickens does. Use a vivid adjective to describe an object in the room (like *sputtering candle*). The adjective and object should help your readers understand the feeling of the room. Remember, don't simply state that it's hot. Instead, create a picture for the reader, capturing how the heat affects the surroundings.

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## Detail

### Read and think:

Arithmetic is where numbers fly like pigeons in and out of your head.

Arithmetic tells you how many you lose or win if you know how many you had before you lost or won.

Arithmetic is seven eleven all good children go to heaven—or five six bundle of sticks.

Arithmetic is numbers you squeeze from your head to your hand to your pencil to your paper till you get the answer.

Carl Sandburg, "Arithmetic," *The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg*

### Talk about it:

1. What is the purpose of these lines of poetry? Who is the audience? What do these questions have to do with detail?
  
2. Look at the last line. (*Arithmetic is numbers you squeeze from your head to your hand to your pencil to your paper till you get the answer.*) How does this sequence of details add to the meaning of the lines?

### Now you try it:

Write a four-line poem that tells what reading is. Use Sandburg's poetry as a model, and start each line the same way he does:

Reading is

Reading tells you

Reading is

Reading is

## Imagery

### Read and think:

Something warm was running across the backs of her hands. She saw with mounting horror that it was mixed slime and blood running from the dog's mouth.

Stephen King, *Cujo*

### Talk about it:

1. What kind of imagery is used in this passage? Is the imagery also figurative?
2. How does the imagery in this passage help create the horror of the situation?

### Now you try it:

Pretend that your best friend just threw up. You are helping your friend and you accidentally touch the vomit. Think about what it feels like. Using King's sentences as a model, write at least two sentences describing the experience.

# Syntax

## Read and think:

He was a year older than I, skinny, brown as a chocolate bar, his hair orange, his hazel eyes full of mischief and laughter.

Esmeralda Santiago, *When I Was Puerto Rican*

## Talk about it:

1. Look carefully at the way this sentence is written. All of the words that follow the word *I* are used to describe the *he* of the sentence. They are adjectives and adjective phrases. This is not the way words are usually ordered in English. (In English, adjectives are usually right before the nouns they modify, or at least right next to them.) What effect does this word order have on the meaning of the sentence?
2. Placing all of the adjectives and adjective phrases one after the other is called **layering**. What effect does this layering have on the impact of the sentence?

## Now you try it:

Fill in the blanks to create a sentence similar to Santiago's sentence.

He was a year older than I, skinny, brown as a chocolate bar, his hair orange,

comparative of an adjective      adjective      simile that describes the subject      adjective

his hazel eyes full of mischief and laughter.

adjective phrase

He (She) was \_\_\_\_\_ than I, \_\_\_\_\_,

comparative of an adjective      adjective

\_\_\_\_\_

simile that describes the subject

his/her hair \_\_\_\_\_, his/her eyes \_\_\_\_\_

adjective      adjective phrase

Jan. 20 DO NOW

Free Write with Tone in mind.

When we read it, your voice should be clear.