

The Writer's Toolkit

Imposition or *Preposition*

Prepositions are glorious little words! Use them to indicate a relationship between things and to add both detail and clarity to your writing. Prepositional phrases begin with a preposition and end with a noun. Sample prepositions: after, before, from, about, in, over, under, above, below.

The peaches in the basket are ready to be baked into a pie.

Not Santa, the Other *Clause*

Subordinate clauses bring a little something extra to a sentence by expanding your idea and adding specificity. A clause cannot stand alone because it is not a complete sentence. Clauses often begin with because, since, as, whenever, although, though, while, etc.

Liam ran for paper towels as the spilled milk was dripping over the edge of the table.

Positively *Appositive*

The **appositive** is an interjected phrase that gives more details about the next door noun. Remember to always punctuate your appositive phrase with commas.

Søren, the youngest member of the family, likes to crack jokes during dinner.

To Be or Not to Be, that is the *Infinitive*

An **infinitive** is simply a basic form of a verb and will almost always begin with "to." For example: to be, to sing, to love, to send, to sneeze

Sara was delighted to see her best friend after so many months away from her.

Zing-ing

Add "zing" and a sense of immediate action to sentences by opening with an "ing" word.

Seeing the race inspired Jack, who hoped to one day become a sprinter.

Ready, Set, *Active*

When writing in the **active voice** the subject is doing the action. Sentences are stronger, more direct, and very clear as to who is doing what.

My grandmother mailed me a care package on my birthday.

Active & Passive Voice (cont.)

For the exercises that follow, be sure to avoid using these passive "to be" verbs:

TENSE	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Present	<i>I am you are he/she is</i>	<i>we are you are they are</i>
Present perfect	<i>I have been you have been he/she has been</i>	<i>we have been you have been they have been</i>
Past	<i>I was you were he/she was</i>	<i>we were you were they were</i>
Past perfect	<i>I had been you had been he/she had been</i>	<i>we had been you had been they had been</i>
Future	<i>I will be you will be he/she will be</i>	<i>we will be you will be they will be</i>
Future perfect	<i>I will have been you will have been he/she will have been</i>	<i>we will have been you will have been they will have been</i>
Present progressive	<i>I am being you are being he/she is being</i>	<i>we are being you are being they are being</i>
Past progressive	<i>I was being you were being he/she was being</i>	<i>we were being you were being they were being</i>

Lesson 1: Getting Started (cont.)

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"Voice" Writing Exercise »

Write Through the Senses: SIGHT

As writers, we gather details that will spark the reader's senses. This week write a paragraph through the sense of sight, **avoiding all passive verbs**, incorporating instead strong, active verbs. Use as many of the voice techniques as possible. Remember, this is a voice exercise and, as such, may sound stilted. **The purpose is to experiment with language and gain confidence using the tools that will elevate your voice.**

Example of writing through the sense of sight:

Flashing red, green, orange, and blue billboards **compete** for my attention as I **saunter** dazedly down Times Square. Psychedelic lights **replace** the moon and stars in the Manhattan night sky. Scores of people **walk** determinedly past me like an army of robots outfitted in black winter coats. The New Yorkers do not **cast** a single glance at an overwhelmed tourist like myself. Shiny black skyscrapers **tower** above me from all sides. People **shuffle** in and out of stores that cater to every sized pocket book. I **walk** past various electronic shops *simultaneously displaying cameras, stereos, and TV's at deceptively low prices.* Neon white light **illuminates** the sidewalk in front of a Rolex Watch store. The nightly news anchor **looks** down at me placidly from giant TV screens suspended in the night. In the distance King Kong **clutches** an enormous Empire State Building made entirely out of LEGOs.

Begin your sight paragraph by brainstorming some topic ideas:

Trains, ^{shop}Universal Studios, My living room

Now, generate a list of descriptive sight words:

flashing, shiny, towering, illuminates, tall, clear, colorful, clutches, speedy

Finally, compile a list of active verbs you might use for this paragraph:

goes, zooms, stacks, lays, tries, climbs, falls, stumbles, moves, grapples, faces, departs, waits, turns, rumbles, enters, flies, clings

On the following two pages, write a rough draft and a final draft of your paragraph »

village

SIGHT Paragraph » Rough Draft

Begin drafting your sight paragraph. Use a highlighter to find your verbs and make sure you have used the passive voice. If you have, make revisions. Once you have completed writing, re-read your work a final time.

Model train shops ^{can help} have the best miniature remote control trains, and they have model train dioramas. The train dioramas ^{can be} are so cool, there's flashing lights and best of all trains! Boxes surround the diorama from floor to ceiling. The diorama looks like a little mini ^{village} town. The train zooms past the houses and clutches to the track. It ^{cautiously rushes} goes through the tunnel and illuminates the darkness. The railroad crossing sign flashes as the train rumbles over the road. It speeds through the turns and climbs over the bridge. It ^{goes okay} takes its chances, and ^{goes okay} goes up the hill. It goes down the hill at full speed entering the tunnel. It flies through the tunnel it and comes out clinging to the track, slamming on its brakes. It waits at the station ^{patiently} while the owner lays down new track. The train ^{Eventually} tires of shining in the sun and ^{flies} off. It goes around and in the track again. It illuminates the dark tunnels ^{again} again, rumbles through the turn. It clutches the track, going through the turns, goes up the hill, and into the tunnel. It flies through the tunnel and goes past the colorful station and goes on the fresh tracks to unexplored territory.

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→ Boxes surround the diorama from floor to ceiling. The diorama looks like a little mini village. The train zooms past the houses and clutches ~~to~~ the track. It cautiously rushes through the tunnel and illuminates the darkness, with its little head lights. The railroad crossing sign flashes as the train rumbles over the road. It speeds through the turns and climbs over the bridge. It takes its chances and tries going up the hill. It goes down the hill at full speed entering the tunnel. It flies through the tunnel and ~~it~~ comes out clinging to the tracks, slamming on its brakes. It waits at the station patiently while the owner lays down new track. Eventually the train tires of shining in the sun and flies off. It goes around and around the track again. It illuminates the dark tunnels again, rumbles through the turns again. It clutches ~~to~~ the track, going through the turns, going up the hill and into the tunnel again. It flies through the tunnel and goes past the colorful station. It goes on and on ^{over} the fresh tracks to unexplored territory.

SIGHT Paragraph » Final Draft

After you have made revisions to your rough draft, copy your work neatly on this page.

Boxes surround the diorama from floor to ceiling. The diorama looks like a little mini village. The train zooms past the houses and clutches the track. It cautiously rushes through the tunnel and illuminates the darkness, with its little headlights. The railroad crossing sign flashes as the train rumbles over the road. It speeds through the turns and climbs over the bridge. It takes its chances and tries going up the hill. It goes down the hill at full speed entering the tunnel. It flies through the tunnel comes out clinging to the track, slapping on its breaks. It waits at the station patiently while the Owner lays down new track. Eventually the train tires of shining in the sun and flies off. It goes around and around the track again. It illuminates the dark tunnels again, rumbles through the turns again. It clutches the track, going through the turns, going through the tunnel and goes past the colorful station. It goes on and on over the fresh tracks to unexplored territory.

I went to the park with a smile
on my face because I skipped with
my best friend Kylie. When we ~~saw~~ ^{see} the ~~park~~ ^{right} we ran. I jumped ^{up} on the swing. I ~~went~~ ^{go} so high I had a fear of falling ~~off~~ ^{away}. Then I leapt off and ~~went to play~~ ^{go} lava tag. ~~The person who is on it~~ ^{I see the person who is on it} starts ~~walking up~~ ^{slowly walk up the stairs}. Their eyes ~~are~~ ^{are} closed so ~~they're~~ ^{they're} very clumsy. My friend walked down the stairs and sat there hoping ~~the person~~ ^{she wouldn't be tagged} who's on it won't tag them. I ran away and ~~slip~~ ^{green} down the slide and ~~stuck~~ ^{huddled in the shadows}. After ~~we~~ ^{we} get tired and sit ~~down~~ ^{on a blue bench} to take a rest. I ~~need~~ ^{we} water so I went to the ~~water fountain~~ ^{from the}. The water ~~tell~~ ^{The spray looks like the Gateway Arch} cold against my lips. We decided to ~~play tennis~~ ^{grab}. We run to the ~~balls and rackets~~ ^{silver mini van}. People ~~fill~~ ^{fill} in the courts so for five minutes we just stand there before we get in and play ball. I leave the park with a bigger ~~criss-cross~~ ^{criss-cross} smile then I ~~like animals~~ ^{like animals} had started with in a zoo, ~~trip over the steps speckled with holes and shoe marks~~ ^{trip over the steps speckled with holes and shoe marks}.

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SIGHT Paragraph » Final Draft

After you have made revisions to your rough draft, copy your work neatly on this page.

I went to the park with a smile on my face because I skipped with my best friend Kylie. When we see the bendy slides just around the corner we run. I jumped right on the swing. I go so high I can only see the sky. Then I leapt off and go to play catch tag. I see the person who is "it" slowly walk up the stairs. Their eyes are closed so they're very clumsy. My friend walked down the stairs and sat there hoping she wouldn't be tagged. I run away and slip down the green slide and stay huddled in the shadows. After we get tired we sit on a blue bench take a rest. I sip clear water from the water fountain. The spray looks like the Gateway Arch. We decided to go play tennis. We run to the silver mini van to grab the green fuzzy balls and cross rackets. People fill the courts like animals in a zoo, so for five minutes we just stand there before we get in and play ball. I leave the park with a bigger smile than I started with.