



Style and Voice Workshop

Foundation Lesson

Activity One

1. Write a sentence consisting of an article, a noun, and a verb.
Example: The girl laughed.
2. Add a detail about sound, taste, touch, smell, or seeing.
*Example: The girl **with the shiny blond hair** laughed.*
3. Add another detail about sound, taste, touch, smell, or seeing.
*Example: The girl with the shiny blond hair laughed **with a sound like a tinkling bell**.*
4. Add another detail about sound, taste, touch, smell, or seeing.
*Example: The **tall, lanky** girl with the **fragrant, shiny blond hair** laughed with a sound like a tinkling bell.*

This sentence had the Subject-Verb pattern. Practice writing imagery sentences with clauses that have other patterns.

5. Subject-Verb-Direct Object
6. Subject-Verb-Indirect Object-Direct Object
7. Subject-Linking Verb-Predicate Nominative
8. Subject-Linking Verb-Predicate Adjective

Activity Two

Write a paragraph like the one that follows that is strictly a summary of action, the bare bones of an idea, or a plot outline for a story.

The bank was directly across the street from the bus stop. Two robbers drove up in a car and went into the bank. People waiting at the bus stop heard the sounds of gunfire. Then the two robbers came out of the bank and got into their waiting vehicle. As they drove away, two women came out of the bank, yelling and shaking their fists at the car. They followed the car for a little while but then gave up. They went back to the doorway of the bank, crying, and called for help on their cell phones. The bus came, and the people at the bus stop got on.



Add **sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch images** to your paragraph, as in the following example.

The **tall, imposing, marble bank** loomed directly across the street from the bus stop, and the **wet, bedraggled people in drab raincoats** waiting for the bus were **shivering in the brisk, chilly autumn wind** like leaves trembling on a wintery Aspen tree. **Freezing water sprayed into their tired faces** as a **shiny yellow Volkswagon bug sporting a cheerful daisy on its side** screeched up to the curb in front of them. **The exhaust from the little car's muffler puffed out in a cloud of murky, pungent smoke.** One of the waiting women, an elderly crone with a **prune face** and **hands like claws**, reached into her ancient pocketbook for a **stale mint, biting down on it sharply to dispel the gasoline stink.** Its **menthol fragrance** reminded the man next to her of the smell of mothballs in an old cedar chest. The old woman **peered owlishly** at the two **shabby men in ski masks** who lumbered out of the tiny car. "They're up to no good," she muttered peevishly. As the two menacing figures crossed the street and entered the doorway of the bank, the people at the bus stop heard the **staccato, deafening reports of gunfire.** The two men in black backed out of the building slowly and then made a dash for their waiting car. The **shrill shrieks of bank clerks** and frightened customers poured out of the building, and two women, their **hair disheveled** like birds' nests, their **faces contorted** with fear, their **arms waving frantically** in the air, scrambled out of the doorway of the bank, yelling like banshees and shaking their fists wildly at the departing robbers. They chased the car as long as they could, shouting curses at the men who had stolen their treasured diamond wedding rings and the keys to their expensive cars. As they realized the futility of their quest, they slowly trudged back to the gawking crowd at the bus stop. The tears on their faces mirrored the bleak grey drops falling from the sky. The old woman shook her head and smiled a little as she watched each woman pull out her cell phone and chatter frantically into it. "Some people don't know what's important," she whispered to herself as she clambered into the doorway of the waiting bus.

Add **figurative language** such as **metaphor, simile, and personification.**

The tall, imposing, marble bank loomed directly across the street from the bus stop, and the wet, bedraggled people in drab raincoats waiting for the bus were shivering in the brisk, chilly autumn wind **like leaves trembling on a wintery Aspen tree.** Freezing water sprayed into their tired faces as a shiny yellow Volkswagon bug sporting a cheerful daisy on its side screeched up to the curb in front of them. The exhaust from the little car's muffler puffed out in a cloud of murky, pungent smoke. One of the waiting women, an elderly crone with **a prune face** and **hands like claws**, reached into her ancient pocketbook for a stale mint, biting down on it sharply to dispel the gasoline stink. Its **menthol fragrance reminded the man next to her of the smell of mothballs in an old cedar chest.** The old woman peered owlishly at the two shabby men in ski masks who lumbered out of the tiny car. "They're up to no good," she muttered peevishly. As the two menacing figures crossed the street and entered the doorway of the bank, the people at the bus stop heard the staccato, deafening reports of gunfire. The two men in black backed out of the building slowly and then made a dash for their waiting car. The shrill shrieks

of bank clerks and frightened customers poured out of the building, and two women, **their hair disheveled like birds' nests**, their faces contorted with fear, their arms waving frantically in the air, scrambled out of the doorway of the bank, **yelling like banshees** and shaking their fists wildly at the departing robbers. They chased the car as long as they could, shouting curses at the men who had stolen their treasured diamond wedding rings and the keys to their expensive cars. As they realized the futility of their quest, they slowly trudged back to the gawking crowd at the bus stop. **The tears on their faces mirrored the bleak grey drops falling from the sky.** The old woman shook her head and smiled a little as she watched each woman pull out her cell phone and chatter frantically into it. "Some people don't know what's important," she whispered to herself as she clambered into the doorway of the waiting bus.

Add **sound devices** such as **assonance**, **consonance**, **onomatopoeia**, and **alliteration**.

The tall, imposing, marble bank loomed directly across the street from the bus stop, and the wet, bedraggled people in drab raincoats waiting for the bus were shivering in the brisk, chilly autumn wind like leaves trembling on a wintery Aspen tree. Freezing water sprayed into their tired faces as a shiny yellow Volkswagon bug sporting a cheerful daisy on its side **screached** up to the curb in front of them. The exhaust from the little car's **muffler puffed** out in a cloud of murky, pungent smoke. One of the waiting women, an elderly crone with a prune face and hands like claws, reached into her ancient pocketbook for a stale mint, biting down on it sharply to dispel the gasoline stink. Its menthol fragrance reminded the man next to her of the smell of mothballs in an old cedar chest. The old woman peered owlshly at the two shabby men in ski masks who lumbered out of the tiny car. "They're up to no good," she muttered peevishly. As the two menacing figures crossed the street and entered the doorway of the bank, the people at the bus stop heard the staccato, deafening reports of gunfire. The two men in **black backed out of the building** slowly and then made a dash for their waiting car. The **shrill shrieks** of bank clerks and frightened customers poured out of the building, and two women, their hair disheveled like birds' nests, their **faces contorted with fear**, their arms waving frantically in the air, scrambled out of the doorway of the bank, yelling like banshees and shaking their fists wildly at the departing robbers. They chased the car as long as they could, shouting curses at the men who had stolen their treasured diamond wedding rings and the keys to their expensive cars. As they realized the futility of their quest, they slowly trudged back to the gawking crowd at the bus stop. The tears on their faces mirrored the bleak grey drops falling from the sky. The old woman **shook her head and smiled** a little as she watched each woman pull out her cell phone and **chatter** frantically into it. "Some people don't know what's important," she **whispered** to herself as she clambered into the doorway of the waiting bus.



Change vague verbs and verb forms to specific **action verbs**.

The tall, imposing, marble bank **loomed** directly across the street from the bus stop, and the wet, bedraggled people in drab raincoats waiting for the bus were **shivering** in the brisk, chilly autumn wind like leaves **trembling** on a wintery Aspen tree. Freezing water **sprayed** into their tired faces as a shiny yellow Volkswagon bug **sporting** a cheerful daisy on its side **screached** up to the curb in front of them. The exhaust from the little car's muffler **puffed** out in a cloud of murky, pungent smoke. One of the waiting women, an elderly crone with a prune face and hands like claws, reached into her ancient pocketbook for a stale mint, biting down on it sharply to **dispel** the gasoline stink. Its menthol fragrance reminded the man next to her of the smell of mothballs in an old cedar chest. The old woman **peered** owlishly at the two shabby men in ski masks who **lumbered** out of the tiny car. "They're up to no good," she **muttered** peevishly. As the two menacing figures crossed the street and entered the doorway of the bank, the people at the bus stop heard the staccato, deafening reports of gunfire. The two men in black backed out of the building slowly and then made a dash for their waiting car. The shrill shrieks of bank clerks and frightened customers poured out of the building, and two women, their hair disheveled like birds' nests, their faces **contorted** with fear, their arms waving frantically in the air, scrambled out of the doorway of the bank, yelling like banshees and shaking their fists wildly at the departing robbers. They chased the car as long as they could, shouting curses at the men who had stolen their treasured diamond wedding rings and the keys to their expensive cars. As they realized the futility of their quest, they slowly **trudged** back to the gawking crowd at the bus stop. The tears on their faces **mirrored** the bleak grey drops falling from the sky. The old woman shook her head and smiled a little as she watched each woman pull out her cell phone and **chatter** frantically into it. "Some people don't know what's important," she whispered to herself as she **clambered** into the doorway of the waiting bus.

Activity Three

Try using these writing techniques to revise an early draft of a paragraph, essay, poem, or story you have written.