

Painting a Picture With Verbs

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Verbs like is, be, have, has, had, was and were do not fuel the imagination. They are weak. Look at the following sentences. Can you see from the examples that using more active/stronger verbs made the sentences more interesting to read?

Original: Allison is happy.

Revised: Allison smiled, giggled and danced a jig.

Original: His fur is scraggily.

Revised: His scraggily fur clumped together in tangled bunches.

Original: Theo's car is a red convertible Mustang.

Revised: Theo owned a red convertible Mustang.

Every opportunity a writer has they should attempt to use imaginative verbs. Look at the sentences below.

Original: Violet moved across the creaky and dusty porch.

Revised: Violet sauntered

Violet traipsed

Violet tiptoed

Violet slunk

Violet marched

Original: Eddie said, "Stop it!"

Revised:

Eddie screeched

Eddie boomed

Eddie's high pitched cry shook the windows in their panes.

"Stop it."

How do these verbs and descriptive verb phrases change the way you see Violet move and Eddie speak?

Try to revise the following sentences.

Original: Becky is stubborn.

Show her stubbornness through her actions.

Original: Lyle was depressed.

Demonstrate his depression through his actions and demeanor.

Original: Diane spoke to Sally.

Write a paragraph using verbs that create an image.

Original: Ralph is a hypocrite.
Show his hypocrisy through his actions.

Original: Edward was sarcastic.
Demonstrate his sarcasm through his actions and demeanor.

Original: Freda worked with Lydia.
Write a paragraph using verbs that create an image.
