Creative Writing

KS3 English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Transform the telling sentence 'The beach was beautiful.' into showing.

Step 1 · Spot the telling word

'Beautiful' is the narrator's opinion. It tells the reader what to think but gives them nothing to see.

Step 2 · Ask: what made it beautiful? Choose specific details

The colour of the water, the light on the sand, the sound of the waves, the empty shoreline.

Step 3 · Pick precise verbs and nouns

Waves 'unrolled' rather than 'came in'; 'shingle' rather than 'stones'; gulls 'hung' in the air.

Step 4 · Add a second sense and vary the sentence length

'Waves unrolled across the sand, slow and glassy, and pulled back over the shingle with a long hiss. Above them, three gulls hung motionless. Nobody else was there.'

Answer: The word 'beautiful' has disappeared, yet the reader now feels the calm, beauty and solitude for themselves

Check: Sight, sound and a short final sentence for emphasis — no adjective doing all the work ✓

2. Now try one with the steps

Write an opening using 'in medias res' for a story called 'The Storm'.

Step 1 · Start at the moment of most movement

Step 2 · Use a precise verb and a short sentence

Step 3 · Add a sensory detail and a question

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. What does 'show don't tell' mean? Give a brief example. [2]

2. Give an example of a strong story opening and explain why it engages the reader. [2]

3. How many sentences are in this extract? 'He read the company name on the door for the fourth time. Then straightened his tie. Then read the name again.' Write the number. [1]

4. Name one of the six story-opening techniques in the Learn tab. [1]

5. Which word in 'She was very angry' is the 'telling' word? [1]

6. Rewrite 'The old man walked slowly' to show more characterisation. [2]

7. Why is using specific, precise nouns and verbs important in creative writing? [2]

8. Rewrite 'It was a cold morning.' using a sense other than sight. [2]

9. Why is 'and then I woke up, it was all a dream' a weak ending? [1]

10. Explain how varying sentence length creates effects in creative writing. [3]

11. Explain how a writer can use sensory imagery in descriptive writing. Give examples. [3]

12. Write an opening sentence that raises a question in the reader's mind. [2]

13. Replace the stacked adjectives in 'the cold, dark, scary, gloomy forest' with one precise image. [2]

14. Explain why a first-person narrator can create suspense. [2]

4. Before you hand it in

'Suddenly, out of nowhere, a scary man appeared and it was really terrifying.'
Show the fear through the character's body and the detail of the man: 'A shape peeled away from the wall. She stopped breathing.'

Stacking adjectives: 'the dark, gloomy, creepy, spooky old house'
Choose one precise image instead: 'the house with its windows boarded like closed eyes'.

Starting with the alarm clock and breakfast, then getting to the story
Begin at the moment something changes. You can fill in background later, once the reader is hooked.

Switching between 'I' and 'she', or past and present tense, by accident.
Choose your narrator and tense at the planning stage and check them when you proofread.