



Smiley Face Tricks



1. Magic 3—Three items (or more) in a series, separated by commas that create a poetic rhythm or add support to a point, especially when the items have their own modifiers. These could include (subjects, verbs, predicates, direct objects, etc.)

“In those woods, I would spend hours **listening** to the wind rustle the leaves, **climbing** trees and spying on nesting birds, and **giving** the occasional wild growl to scare away any pink-flowered girls who might be riding their bikes too close to my secret entrance,” (Todd, college freshman).



2. Figurative Language—Nonliteral comparisons—such as *similes*, *metaphors*, and *personification*, or speech written to achieve a certain effect including *imagery*, *hyperbole*, *idiom*, *alliteration*, *assonance*, and *onomatopoeia*.

Smile **Simile** is a comparison between two unlike things using the words “like” or “as.” The simile can be explicit or implicit.

“When we first moved into the house on Orchid Street, I didn’t like it. My room was hot, cramped, and stuffy **as a train in the middle of the Sahara**. And the looming **skeleton-like gray and white frame** of the place scared me. I dared not **imagine** living there, but the backyard, oh, the backyard. It was a huge, long mass of plentifully growing trees and blackberries. Goodness, how I loved them,” (Teri, grade 7).

“He made careful stacks of nickels, dimes, and quarters on the counter, like someone playing chess,” (Ray Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 22).

Smile **Metaphor** is a comparison between two unlike things without using the words “like” or “as.” The metaphor can be explicit (using “be” verbs) or implicit (not using “be” verbs).

“The words were summer on the tongue,” (Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 13).

“...a great swelling symphony of lawn mowers...” (Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 48).

😊 **Personification is giving human qualities to something nonhuman.**

"dead cement" (Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 19).

"...for last year's pair (of tennis shoes) were dead inside" (Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 20).

😊 **Imagery is the use of sensory words (sight, sound, smell, taste, feel) to describe.**

"And he heard a thousand people in another sunlight, and the faint tinkling music of an organ grinder playing 'La Marimba' – oh, a lovely dancing tune," (Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 133).

😊 **Hyperbole is an exaggeration to make a point or for humor.**

"He hit the rug so hard all the dust of five thousand centuries jumped from the shocked texture," (Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 66).

😊 **Idiom is an expression if taken literally, doesn't make sense.**

"It's raining cats and dogs."

"We took the bull by the horns."

"I was in a pickle."

😊 **Alliteration is a figure of speech formed by repeating same initial sound such as a consonant.**

"Boys, behave," (Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 4)

😊 **Assonance is a figure of speech in which the same vowel sound is repeated in several words in succession. Not rhyme.**

"trunks of junks" (Bradbury *Dandelion Wine* 76)

😊 **Onomatopoeia is sounds from nature or the world put into words.**

"Culp's conversation is made-up like his Halloween Indian's face. It is simply streaked with zaps, wheeps, and other illustrative noises. I guess I shouldn't say "simply" or "streaked" either. That's not exact. His speech is not outlined or punctuated with clacks or thunks in any ordinary way. It is engulfed in them--washed with them as though they were spit--the way street sounds surround us--surround us, you remember? During that intense noontime tête-à-tête in a sidewalk café where I confessed my passion to an emptied cup and you lifted your chin to look coolly away; yet that comparison is not correct either, since Culp's incessant zits, yelps, zooms, and hip hips intervene; they serve as symbols themselves and carry on the action. If his pickup hasn't started, first we hear last night's icy wind, and the oil in the engine thicken. The truck's doors open with a groan--which he gives us. His trousers slither over the--ah!--cold seat and the key snicks entering its lock. The engine's frozen agonies are minutely replayed: the starter's grind, the muffled puff of a single cylinder firing. Then the smell of a flooded engine is delicately rendered by, as if from a distance, the bassoon. Finally: zrrBLOOM! GLOOM ROOM AROOM!"

(William H. Gass *from The Tunnel*)



3. Specific Detail for Effect—Instead of general, vague descriptions, specific sensory details (think 5 senses and specific brand names) help the reader to visualize the person (characters), place (settings), thing, or idea that you are describing. “...details are not wallpaper but walls,” (Lane 22).



Snapshot: Write in sharp physical detail. Sometimes writers start broad and zoom in with an imaginary lens.

“It’s one of those experiences where you want to **call a radio station** and tell your problems to **some guy who calls himself Dr. Myke**, but who isn’t more of a doctor than your pet hamster is, one of those experiences where you want to **read a sappy Harlequin novel and listen to Barry Manilow** with a box of bonbons as your best friend, one of those experiences where you wouldn’t be surprised if someone came up to you and asked **exactly what time yesterday you were born**. Yeah, one of those,” (Ileana).

“Remember the time I worked all day Saturday on an English paper? Sunday, I accidentally left the only copy I had at your house. You politely handed it back to me the next day, first period, when it was due. But all over page one you’d **drawn zombies**; page two contained **detailed pictures of yet-to-be-discovered worms**; three as **visited by various space aliens**, the fourth page **featured scenes from Australia and Florida**; and the last page was **covered with ‘Mr. Jenkins is from the Stone Age,’ ‘English stinks,’ and ‘Mr. Jenkins is a four-eyed geek.’ Maybe that’s why he gave me a D-**,” (Liz).

“Ma kissed them both and tucked the covers in around them. They lay there awhile, looking at Ma’s **smooth, parted hair** and her hands busy with sewing in the **lamplight**. Her **thread made little clicking sounds against her thimble** and then the **thread went softly, swish! through the pretty calico that Pa had traded furs for**,” (Laura Ingalls Wilder *Little House in the Big Woods*).

“Maniac had seen some amazing things in his lifetime, but nothing as amazing as that house. From the smell of it, he knew that this wasn’t the first time an animal had relieved itself on the rugless floor. In fact, in another corner, he spotted a form of relief that could not be soaked up by newspapers.

Cans and bottles lay all over, along with crusts, peelings, cores, scraps, rinds, wrappers—everything you would normally find in a garbage can. And everywhere there were raisins.

As he walked through the dining room, something—an old tennis ball—hit him on the top of the head and bounced away. He looked up—into the laughing faces of Russell and Piper. The whole in the ceiling was so big they both could have jumped through it at once. He ran a hand along one wall. The peeling paint came off like cornflakes.

Nothing could be worse than the living and dining rooms, yet the kitchen was. A jar of peanut butter had crashed to the floor; someone had gotten a running start, jumped into it, and skied a brown one-footed track to the stove. On the table were what appeared to be the remains of an autopsy performed on a large bird, possibly a crow. The refrigerator contained two food groups: mustard and beer. The raisins here were even more abundant. He spotted several of them moving. They weren’t raisins; they were roaches,” (Jerry Spinelli *Maniac Magee* 131-132).



Thoughtshot: “...in fiction, is simply a look at what a character is thinking or feeling...in a personal narrative, a thoughtshot is the reflections, thoughts, feelings, opinions, of the author.” Both are when the author steps back from the description or the waves and climbs the mountain to look for patterns or themes; usually it is the first sentence of a paragraph, (Lane 44).


“**Unpacking just the few things in her brown suitcase, always seemed a waste of time to Gilly. She never knew if she would be in a place long enough to make it worth the bother. And yet it was something to fill the time.** There were two little drawers at the top and four larger ones below. She put her underwear in one of the little ones, and her shirts and jeans in one of the big ones, and then picked up the photograph from the bottom of her suitcase,” (Katherine Patterson, *The Great Gilly Hopkins* 9).




Authors weave snapshots and thoughtshots together.

“Out of the pasteboard frame and through the plastic cover the brown eyes of the woman laughed up at her as she always did. The glossy black hair hung in gentle waves without a hair astray. She looked as though she was the star of some TV show, but she wasn’t.


See—right there in the corner she had written ‘For my beautiful Galadriel, I will always love you.’ She wrote that to me, Gilly told herself, as she did each time she looked at it, only to me. She turned the fame over,” (Katherine Patterson, *The Great Gilly Hopkins* 9).

 **Authors use snapshots and thoughtshots along with dialogue to build scenes between characters. They work to tell what the characters are thinking and doing during dialogue.**


For a long moment they looked at each other in silence, the boy with his arm still raised to his mouth. Neither of them moved. At last his arm fell to his side. “You may as well come out,” he said with a frown.
Winnie stood up, embarrassed, and because of that, resentful. “I didn’t mean to watch you,” she protested as she stepped into the clearing. “I didn’t know anyone would be hear.”
The boy eyed her sternly. “What *you* doing here?” he asked her sternly.
“It’s my wood,” said Winnie, surprised by the question. “I can come here whenever I want to. At least, I was never here before, but I *could* have come any time.”
“Oh, said the boy,” relaxing a little. “You’re one of the Fosters, then.”
“I’m Winnie,” she said. “Who are you?”
“I’m Jesse Tuck,” he answered. “How do.” And he put out a hand.
Winnie took his hand, staring at him. He was even more beautiful up close. “Do you live nearby?” she managed at last, letting go of his hand reluctantly. “I never saw you before. Do you come here a lot? No one is supposed to. It’s our wood.” Then she added quickly, “It’s alright if *you* come here. I mean, it’s alright with *me*.”
(Natalie Babbitt *Tuck Everlasting* 26-27)

 **4. Hyphenated Modifier—Sometimes a new way of saying something can make all of the difference; hyphenated adjectives often cause the reader to “sit up and take notice.”**

“She’s got this blond hair with dark highlights, parted in the middle, down past her shoulders, and straight as a preacher. She’s got big green eyes that all guys admire and all girls envy, and this **I’m-so-beautiful-and-I-know-it** body, you know, like every other super model,” (Ileana).

 **5. Repetition for Effect—Writers often repeat specifically chosen words or phrases to make a point, to stress certain ideas for the reader.**

“The veranda is your only shelter **away from** the sister in bed asleep, **away from** the brother that plays in the tree house in the field, **away from** your chores that await you,” (Leslie).

 **6. Humor—Professional writers know the value of humor; even subtle humor can help turn a “boring” paper into one that can raise someone’s spirits.**

“He laughed? I’m nothing. I’m the rearend of nothing, and the devil himself smiled at me,” (Andrew).

“And you—yes, you Justin!—were the guilty party who, after I took off my shoes to enjoy the hot pavement in early spring, put a frog in them. Of course I didn’t look at the shoes when I put them back on; it was the **squish** that gave your prank away,” (Liz).



7. Expanded (Exploded) Moment or Shrink a Century—Instead of “speeding” past a moment, writers often emphasize it by “expanding” the actions. To find places to explode or expand the moment, authors should ask themselves, “What is “the” or “a” significant moment in the story?” (Lane 66). Sometimes when the action is not important, students need to shrink time.



Expanded or exploded moment

“But no, I had to go to school. And as I said before, I had to listen to my math teacher preach about numbers and letters and figures...I was so tired of hearing her annoying voice lecture about ‘ $a=b$ divided by x .’ I glared at the small black hands on the clock, silently threatening them to go faster. But they didn’t listen, and I caught myself wishing I were on white sand and looking down at almost transparent pale-blue water with Josh at my side...I don’t belong in some dumb math class. I belong at the beach, where I can soak my feet in caressing water and let the wind wander its way through my chestnut-colored hair and sip Doctor Pepper all day long. I want to grip a straw all day, not a mechanical pencil that will try unsuccessfully to write the answers to unsolvable questions,” (Shelley).



Shrinking time

“The early summer days on the farm are the happiest are the happiest and fairest days of the year. Lilacs bloom and make the air sweet, and then fade. Apple blossoms come with the lilacs, and the bees visit around among the trees. The days grow warm and soft. School ends, and the children have time to play and fish for trout in the brook. Avery often brought a trout home in his pocket, warm and stiff and ready to be fried for supper.

Now that school was over, Fern visited the barn, almost every day, to sit quietly on her stool. The animals treated her as an equal. The sheep lay calmly at her feet,” (E.B. White *Charlotte’s Webb* 42).



8. Full-Circle Ending—Sometimes students need a special ending, one that effectively “wraps up” the piece. One “trick” is to repeat a phrase or idea from the beginning of the piece.

Beginning:

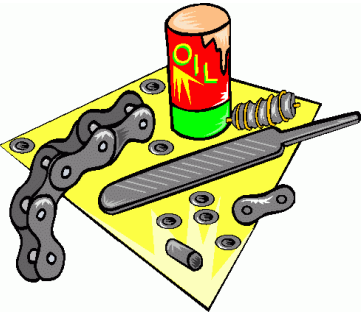
“Hey, you, with the green and neon-orange striped shoelaces, you who always pulled my old frazzled white ones in math. Hey, you, who always added your versions of ‘art’ to my math problems for Mrs. Caton’s class so that $9 \times 7 = 64$ turned out to be a train with puffs of smoke and two boxcars and made me get an 83 instead of a 93 since Mrs. C. doesn’t count locomotives as correct answers.”

Ending:

“Now Justin still sits behind me in math with his neon-green and orange striped shoelaces and pulls on my old white frazzled ones. He still draws zombies on my homework, but he hasn’t dumped another pitcher of Kool-Aid on my—not yet at least. Oh, and by the way, in case you’re wondering, his first words when he opened his eyes were, ‘It was James Kenton who hid your clothes and made you walk around in a chicken suit...I’m not that mean,’” (Liz).

From English Workshop Activities for Grades 6-12 by Mary Ellen Ledbetter

After the End: Teaching and Learning Creative Revision by Barry Lane



Rev Up Your Sentences



Methods of sentence combining to “soop up your sentences” and vary them so readers will finish the race.

❖ Independent Clause (Sentence)

A sentence having a subject, verb, and complete thought.

“My knees were shaking. I walked to the principal’s office.”

❖ Compound Sentence

Two independent clauses separated by a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but, yet, for, so) or a semi-colon.

“My knees were shaking, **and** I walked into the principal’s office.”

“My knees were shaking, **but** I refused to be helped into the principal’s office.”

“My knees were shaking, **yet** I refused to be helped into the principal’s office.”

“My knees were shaking, **so** I needed help into principal’s office.”

❖ Adjective Clause

A dependent clause (one that cannot stand alone) that modifies a noun or pronoun in an independent clause (sentence). Adjective clauses come directly after a noun and begin with words such as “who,” “whom,” “which,” “that.”

“My knees, **that had felt like rubber**, suddenly stopped shaking when I entered the principal’s office.

“The girl **who accused me of lying** waited in the office as I walked through the door, knees shaking.

“RR had a brother, a fact **that may or may not be pertinent in regard to the problem of the monster**,” (Elisabeth Sheffield *Fort Da: A Report*).

❖ Adverb Clause

A dependent clause (one that cannot stand alone)that modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb in an independent clause; adverb clauses begin with the following subordinating conjunctions:

after although as as if as long as as much as as soon as as though because	before than even if even though how if inasmuch in order that lest now that provided (that)	Since so that though till (or 'til) unless until when whenever where wherever while	<p>“When I walked into the principal’s office, my knees started to shake.”</p> <p>“Since my knees were shaking, I sat down right after I walked into his office.”</p>
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❖ Participial Phrase

A verb phrase (the verb part of another sentence) used as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun. Participial phrases can be present (using an “ing”) or past (using an “ed”).

“**Shaking in the knees**, I walked into the principal’s office.

❖ Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase (a preposition and its object) at the beginning of the sentence telling when, where, or how an action happened.

“**In front of the principal’s office**, my knees shook.”

“ **After being caught for cheating**, my knees shook as I waited to go into the principal’s office.”

❖ Noun Absolute

A noun that has no grammatical function in the sentence (not the subject, direct or indirect object, predicate noun, or object of a preposition) and can be followed by a present or past participial phrase.

“**My knees shaking**, I walked into the principal’s office.”

“**Cheater echoing in my brain**, I walked into the principal’s office with shaking knees.”

❖ Opening Adjective

An adjective or first word in an adjective phrase that has no grammatical function in the sentence, but creates a mood.

“**Petrified**, I walked stiff legged, trying to stop my knees from quaking, into the principal’s office.

❖ Opening Adverb

An adverb at the beginning of the sentence that tells more about the verb set off by a comma.

“**Reluctantly**, I walked in to the principal’s office, knees shaking.

“**Soon**, the cat would be out of the bag, and I would be singing like a canary in the principal’s office. For now, I sat, knees shaking.

❖ Appositive

A word or words that follow a noun and rename it; these are usually set off with commas.

“I walked into the principal’s office, **Richter’s torture chamber**, with shaking knees.”

“RR had a brother, **a fact** that may or may not be pertinent in regard to the problem of the monster,”
(Elisabeth Sheffield *Fort Da: A Report*)

❖ Interjection

A word used to show emotion that is not necessary to the sentence, set off with an exclamation point or a comma.

“**Yikes!** I was in trouble as I walked into the principal’s office, knees shaking.

From *English Workshop Activities for Grades 6-12* by Mary Ellen Ledbetter

From *Grammar for Middle School: A Sentence Composing Approach* by Don and Jenny Killgallon