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Narrative Writing

Draft Revision Tricks

EXPLODING A Moment

Directions: When writing memoirs, authors choose their words carefully. Writers keep in mind that the audience was not present at the event and details are necessary. We pointed out all the specific details in all of the examples that we read. A writer’s eye needs to be able to focus on words that captivate the attention of their intended audience. You want to EXPLODE the moment.

Consider this example:

He grasped the cold doorknob and turned it slowly to the right.  He pushed the door inward.  The hinges squeaked and cold air rushed past the opening door.  The room was dark.  He darted his eyes to the right.  Nothing.  He pushed the door open a little farther, and slowly moved his right foot into the room.  His shoe creaked a bit as it hit the polished hardwood floor.

Note the specific details that are used the help EXPLODE the moment:

EXPLODING a moment can be as simple as taking one sentence to slow that moment way down by giving a frame-by-frame picture of the action, including thoughts.

Take a look at this paragraph:

I woke up late this morning--as usual. I had no clean clothes and the fridge was next to bare. Traffic was heavy as I sped to work. Some jerk cut me off and I almost had a wreck. At work I went to my desk and there was a note to go and see the boss. I waited outside her office for a while before she called me in. I couldn’t figure out why she wanted to see me. I went inside and sat down. My boss handed me an envelope. She told me that my services were no longer needed and that I was free to go. I got my belongings from my desk and left. The drive home was quick. I am now unemployed.

I’m going to take this one sentence: Some jerk cut me off and I almost had a wreck and EXPLODE it.

Revision:

Some jerk cut me off and I almost had a wreck. I hate people who can’t drive. I decided to teach him a little lesson by playing near bumper cars with his bright red 300 ZX. He kept hitting his brakes, and eventually even shook a fist of rage at me. I giggled gleefully--kind of like that lady in Fried Green Tomatoes who got immense pleasure from repeatedly rear-ending the car of the person who had stolen her parking space. Space is crucial, and that jerk will probably think twice before he cuts into mine again.

**Independent Practice**

Take a sentence from the paragraph and EXPLODE just that one moment in the lines below.

1. I woke up late this morning--as usual.
2. I had no clean clothes and the fridge was next to bare.
3. Traffic was heavy as I sped to work. Some jerk cut me off and I almost had a wreck.
4. At work I went to my desk and there was a note to go and see the boss.
5. I waited outside her office for a while before she called me in. I couldn’t figure out why she wanted to see me.
6. I went inside and sat down. My boss handed me an envelope. She told me that my services were no longer needed and that I was free to go.
7. I got my belongings from my desk and left. The drive home was quick. I am now unemployed.

My Revision:

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**Remember to try to EXPLODE a moment in your own memoir.**