

# Lesson 5: Dynamic Writing



## Lesson 5: Dynamic Writing

**WARM-UP:** With your partner, mind-map the word *dynamic*.  
What does it entail and how would dynamic writing look?

**CONSIDER** the following sentence:

The alien was killed.

- Passive sentence and not very dynamic.

→ **Jake killed the alien.**

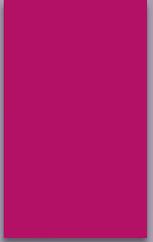
- Active sentence with a bit more energy. However, it's still a bit bland.

Let's consider choosing some more dynamic words.

Jake **slew** the aliens. - aggressive; violent; vicious

Jake **culled** the evil alien menace. - justified necessity; insinuates that the aliens had to be exterminated like pests.

Jake **relieved** the alien of its head. - dramatic; brutal; concentrates on how the alien was killed.



## Exercise 1 - Dynamic Sentences

Write your own passive sentence like the example on the previous slide, and change the verb and descriptive elements to make more active and dynamic sentences. Notice how different verbs change the possibilities of what is happening. Share your sentences with your partner.

## Slow but Active

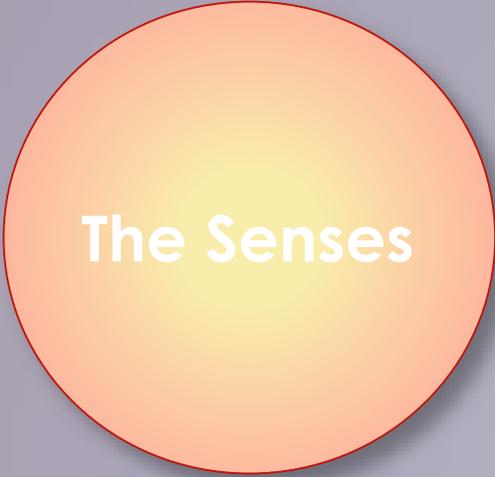
A word's **DYNAMISM** relates to the amount of communicated energy or emotion it contains. Read the following passage from C.S. Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*. What do you notice about the language used?

*The Lion was pacing to and fro about that empty land and singing his new song. It was softer and more lilting than the song by which he had called up the stars and the sun; a gentle, rippling music. And as he walked and sang, the valley grew green with grass. It spread out from the Lion like a pool. It ran up the sides of the little hills like a wave. In a few minutes it was creeping up the lower slopes of the distant mountains, making that young world every moment softer. The light wind could now be heard ruffling the grass.*

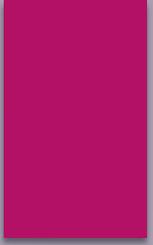
## Exercise 2 - Slow and Active

Activate this sentence's language while still keeping the tranquility of the image.

*The night was cool and clear, so the man sat on the hill and looked at the stars.*



The Senses



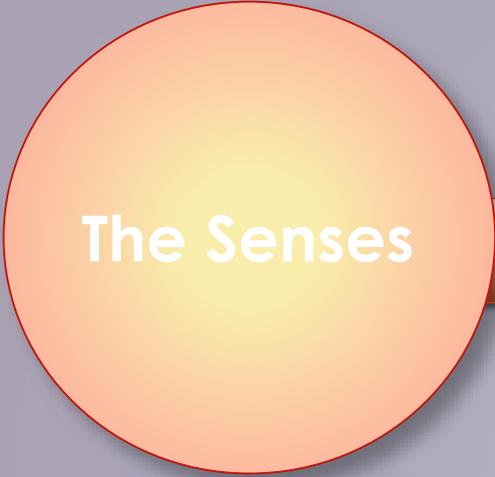
**SIGHT**  
**HEARING**  
**SMELL**  
**TOUCH**  
**TASTE**

## The Senses

### Exercise 3

Look at the following passage from 'Blood Wolf' by S.M. Stirling. What senses are evoked? How has the writer achieved it?

*His back hit the rough brickwork of the wall, and he scrabbled upright, lashing out left and right with his fists. Another man's fist thudded into the tough muscle of his belly, and he felt the night's drinking and the long-ago meal leave in a rush of sour bile. That saved him; Arktorax stepped back with an exclamation of disgust, and Kreuha turned and turned again along the wall, as if he were rolling down a slope. His hand found the latch and he fell forward with a splash into a muddy street under a thin cold rain that shook him back to the edge of consciousness. He rose, plastered with a thin layer of earth and horse dung churned to gray slime, and turned to meet the rush from the tavern, trying to scream out the war-howl of his clan.*



# The Senses



## Exercise 4

Look at the story you have written so far and concentrate on how you describe things. How are you presenting the action? Is it dynamic? What senses are dominant in your story? How can you layer them to have more meaning? Rework part of your story to experiment with as many senses as possible. Share and compare your work with your partner.



## Show, Don't Tell

Don't tell the reader what has happened; rather, show them what and how it happened through action and dialogue. Take this paragraph for example:

**(Telling)** *Ellen felt like she was going to lose control at any moment. She tried her hardest to hide it from the unwelcome guest who had dropped in for a cup of tea and a chat. Ellen wished she would just go away.*

*Steadying her hand as she reached for the steaming kettle, Ellen resisted the urge to toss boiling water over her nosy, unwelcome guest.*



## Show, Don't Tell

Don't tell the reader what has happened; rather, show them what and how it happened through action and dialogue. Take this paragraph for example:

**(Showing)** *“Hope you don’t mind me popping by.” The woman from next door plopped down in Ellen’s favorite chair. “But I couldn’t help but notice the package outside your door.”*

*Teeth clenched, Ellen said, “Not at all,” her hand shaking as she reached for the kettle.*



Show,  
Don't Tell



Don't tell the reader what has happened; rather, show them what and how it happened through action and dialogue. Take this paragraph for example:

Here the key is that we want to **show** that Ellen is annoyed through her actions, **not say** that she is annoyed at her unwelcome guest.



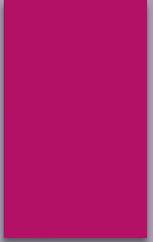
## Show, Don't Tell



### Exercise 5

Rewrite the following paragraph so that it shows rather than tells.

*Percy was bored. He was sleepy and couldn't wait until the school bell rang. He struggled to hide a yawn from his teacher but couldn't. He laid his head down to sleep.*



## Show, Don't Tell

### Exercise 6

Now find a passage in your story that “tells but doesn’t show” and rewrite it to show the action.