

## Choosing Effective Details

When you're ready to revise a draft of your writing, ask yourself whether you've expressed yourself in the best possible way. How can adding information and revising your word choice make your writing more powerful, convincing, and interesting to read? If you're not sure how to tackle a revision, the following ideas can give you a place to start.

- If you're writing a **description**, use evocative adjectives and sensory details.

*Delicate violets and fire-orange tiger lilies carpeted the lush ravine.*

- If you're writing a **narrative**, use vivid verbs and adverbs that show how the action unfolds.

*I was sleeping peacefully when my little brother marched into my room and slammed the door behind him.*

- If you're writing **exposition**, use carefully selected examples, facts, and reasons to support your ideas.

*Some species of gecko can run across ceilings just as easily as they can run across floors. How do these lizards do it? Rows of tiny hairs with thousands of split ends are arranged in a leaflike pattern on the bottoms of their toe pads. The attraction between these hairs and even the smoothest surface enables the gecko to grab and hold on.*

- If you're doing **persuasive writing**, use effective evidence and specific words to convince others to support your viewpoint.

*Visit St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest city in the United States. It's a wonderful vacation destination for families because there is something for everyone: sandy beaches, historical sites, interesting shops, and music festivals.*

**EXERCISE A** Incorporate the details listed in parentheses at the end of each sentence, adding or replacing words as needed. Your revision should be more colorful, convincing, and compelling than the original.

**Sample** As the bottle began to go out to sea, a wave came and brought it back to the shore. (crashed, drift, enormous, pushed)

**Revision** *As the bottle began to drift out to sea, an enormous wave crashed and pushed it back to the shore.*

1. Throughout the day in the desert, a gecko stayed out of the heat, resting in the shade of a rock. (gravelly, jutting, sweltering)

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2. The gecko waited for the sun to set and the air to cool before it went out for food. (foraged, patiently)

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**Revising with Style**

**LESSON** **1**  
Continued

3. When night fell, the gecko came out from under the rock. (darted, hungry)

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4. A grasshopper was the gecko's first meal: the gecko saw the grasshopper near a plant, caught it, and then ate it whole. (cactus, snatched, swallowed, unsuspecting)

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5. The gecko didn't stay to enjoy the bug; it sensed snakes and ran away. (nearby, savor, scurried)

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**EXERCISE B** Revise the following paragraphs and rewrite them on the lines provided, adding details and descriptions from your own imagination to make the paragraphs more effective and interesting to read. Feel free to combine sentences and revise the word choice as needed.

The day was too nice to do nothing at all. Janine and Hilary set out to hear a concert in the park. They had made a picnic dinner. They had prepared several different kinds of food. Then they packed everything up and left for the park.

Though they had a lot of things to carry and the trip to the park was long, it was worth it. They knew that their favorite musician would be playing. They arrived with time to spare. They found a good place to sit and waited for the concert.

They were talking and eating when the concert began. The two friends became quiet and listened. They were having so much fun that they could hardly believe the sun was already going down when the concert was over. They would remember this day, the two agreed, and they returned home.

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