

Original Passage from “The Tell-Tale Heart”

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire.

Original Passage

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Passion there was none.

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He had never given me insult.

For his gold I had no desire.

Conventional Construction

It is impossible to say how the idea first entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night.

There was no object.

There was no passion.

I loved the old man.

He had never wronged me.

He had never insulted me.

I had no desire for his gold.

- Count the number of words in each sentence. How many are long? Short? Read the passage aloud.
- Is there a predictable rhythm or pattern? Can you hear the rhythm of the language?
- Look at the first words or phrases of the sentences. Are they the same? Different?
- Look at the construction of each sentence. Compare the original passage to the more conventional construction. How are they different?

Original Passage from “Raymond’s Run”

I put Raymond in the little swings, which is a tight squeeze this year and will be impossible next year. Then I look around for Mr. Pearson, who pins the numbers on. I’m really looking for Gretchen if you want to know the truth, but she’s not around. The park is jam-packed. Parents in hats and corsages and breast-pocket handkerchiefs peeking up. Kids in white dresses and light-blue suits. The parkees unfolding chairs and chasing the rowdy kids from Lenox as if they had no right to be there. The big guys with their caps on backwards, leaning against the fence swirling the basketballs on the tips of their fingers, waiting for all these crazy people to clear out the park so they can play. Most of the kids in my class are carrying bass drums and glockenspiels and flutes. You’d think they’d put in a few bongos or something for real like that.

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- Count the number of words in each sentence. How many are long? Short?
- Read the passage aloud. Is there a predictable rhythm or pattern? Can you hear the rhythm?
- Look at the first words or phrases of the sentences. Are they the same? Different?
- Look at the construction of each sentence. What do you notice about the way the sentences are written? What verb tense is being used? How does it affect the story?

Original Passage from “There Will Come Soft Rains”

In the nursery the jungle burned. Blue lions roared, purple giraffes bounded off. The panthers ran in circles, changing color, and ten million animals, running before the fire, vanished off toward a distant steaming river

Ten more voices died. In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, oblivious, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in, the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other, a scene of maniac confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, a few last cleaning mice darting bravely out to carry the horrid ashes away!

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- Read the passage aloud. Is there a predictable rhythm or pattern? Can you hear the rhythm?
- Look at the first words or phrases of the sentences. Are they the same? Different?
- Look at the construction of each sentence. What do you notice about the way the sentences are written?

Original Passage from “In Trouble”

Cold can be very strange. Not the cold felt running from the house to the bus or the car to the store, not the chill in the air on a fall morning, but deep cold.

Serious cold.

Forty, fifty, even sixty below zero — actual temperature, not windchill — seems to change everything. Steel becomes brittle and breaks, shatters; breath taken straight into the throat will freeze the lining and burst blood vessels; eyes exposed too long will freeze; fingers and toes freeze, turn black, and break off. These are all known, normal parts of intense cold.

But it brings beauty as well. Things are steeped in a new clarity, a clear focus. Sound seems to ring and the very air seems to be filled with diamonds when ice crystals form.

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- Count the number of words in each sentence. How many are long? Short? Read the passage aloud.
- Can you hear the rhythm of the language? Is there a predictable rhythm or pattern?
- Look at the first words or phrases of the sentences. Are they the same? Different?
- Look at the construction of each sentence. What do you notice about the way the sentences are written?