

CREATIVE WRITING

Ms Taoube

Why do we need to do it?

- ❑ Being able to tell a story is **how we make sense of the world** – we put things in narrative to show our understanding of human behaviour, relationships and even how identities are constructed
- ❑ We **learn through seeing pictures** and creating pictures through words.
- ❑ Sophisticated form of communication

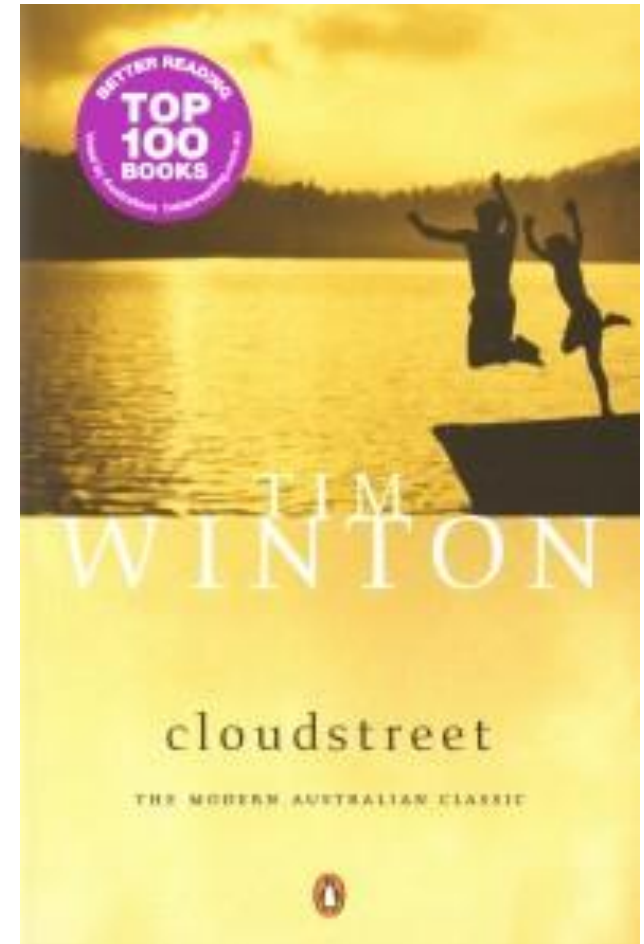
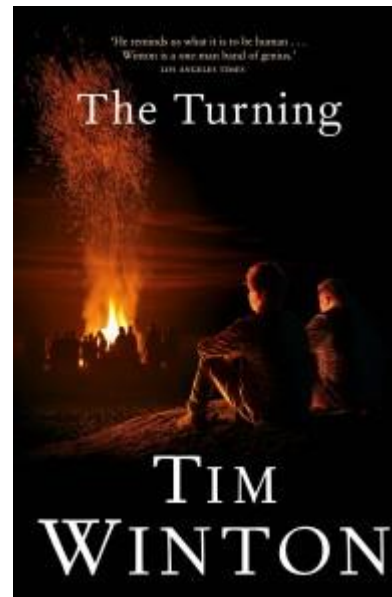
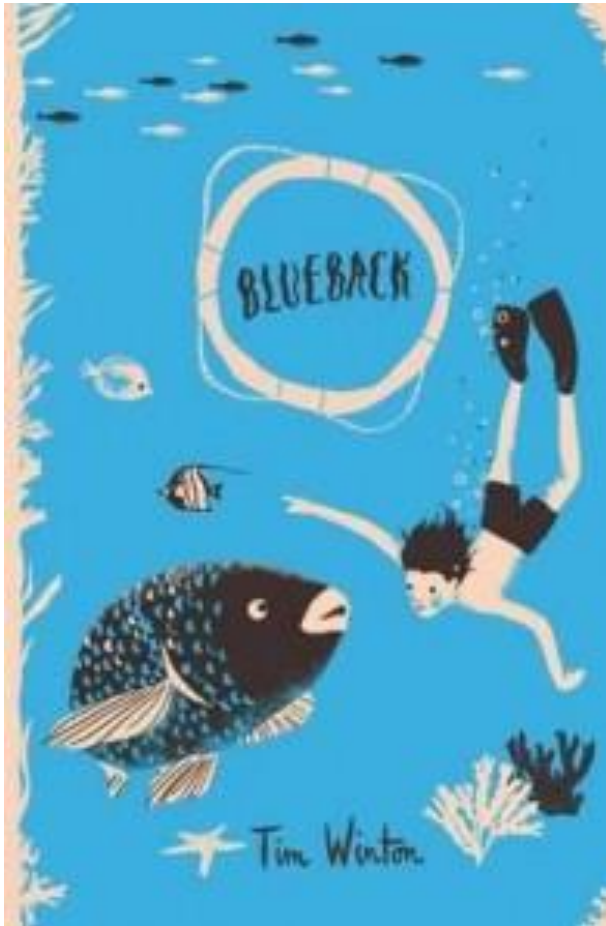
Same as essay?

- **Persuasive** – we have to persuade readers to dislike and like people, feel sorry for them, share our point of view about topics.
- **Form of communication - an interpretation of the world**
- **The audience must be kept in mind** – does the character make sense to my reader? Is the setting plausible? Will they get the message of the story?
- **Using the same techniques** when discussing character, setting and structure but in creative writing we **put the techniques into practice** rather than comment on them

Different from essay?

- Does not necessarily follow a formulaic structure
- Can be more colloquial, use questions, direct speech, mix of simple and complex sentences
- Experimentation with sentences
- Truncated sentences
- More about **showing than telling – we breathe life into characters so the reader discovers as they read**

TIM WINTON - MY INSPIRATION

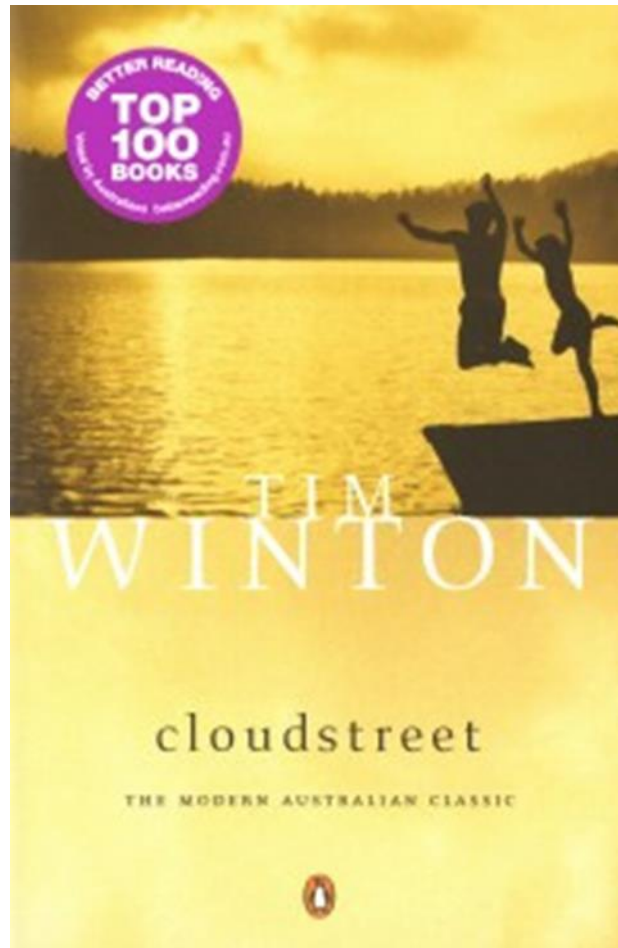


Tim Winton

And as an artist, as someone who writes stories and tries to make words into beautiful forms, it's vitally important to me, especially in a culture that's forgotten the value of beauty.

- ✓ **TIP: Find an author you like and read as many books by them. Imitate their style until you find your own.**

cloudstreet



Characterisation in essay - telling

Rose:

She is one of three children, but the only daughter of Dolly and Sam Pickles. She is seen as the most 'mature' of the bunch, being the one who bears most of the typical adult responsibility, even at a young age, by having to cook, look after the family and ultimately get a job to sustain the family, her father's gambling addiction and the alcohol needs of her mother.

Building character - Rose

*Rose was a slender, brown girl, with dark straight hair, cut **hard** across her forehead. **She was a pretty kid, but not as pretty as her mother.** Well, that's what everyone told her. She wasn't vain, but it stuck in her guts, having someone telling you that every day of your life.*

Characterisation in text – Contrast

*Dolly stood in the room with her daughter. You had to watch this kid. **She was getting to be a clever little miss.** And she was Sam's through and through. She was hot in the face like she was holding something back. Dolly wondered what she knew. **She's a kid. I'm a woman.** The only thing we've got in common these days is a useless man. Dolly'd always gone for useless ones. But this was the living end.*

*The room smelt of new paint and phenyl. **Dolly tried to spot a mirror but there was none.***

***The woman and the daughter do not speak.** The crippled man does not stir. The breeze comes in the window and stops the scene from turning into a painting.*

Dolly: Mother's Back-Story

She liked to be liked...no one wants to be forgotten, have eyes glide past you without even seeing you there.

Some nights...she gets out of bed and walks down the track to the station where...she can watch people getting on and off trains...Dolly always gets back in bed cold and angry and more awake than she was before. They're poor, dammit, still shitpoor...she misses the idea of herself...Back in Geraldton people knew her. They all whispered behind their hands, all those tightarsed local bastards, behind their sniggering looks and their guts in their laps, but at least she was somebody, she meant something

Building character through relationships and context

Later the same day Rose and her brothers found the foot of a Jap soldier washed up in a two-toed rubber boot on the back beach. It was so horrible they laughed and ran home. When they told their father, he looked more gutshot than Rose.

*In the evening Rose went down to the library with the old man. It was the first time he'd been out since the hospital. He walked slowly beside her as she carried her books and, under the Norfolk pines in the moonlight, she saw him stop and look out over the water. **She took his wrist and held it gently.***

Doesn't matter, Dad. You're okay.

*He looked at her and she saw his teeth in the light of the moon. When he stood beside her at the library looking vague in the presence of all those books, she felt so sorry for him, **so ashamed, so maternal.***

Building character through relationships

On the way home a man came out of a pub as they passed and gave Rose four big crayfish.

Bastard, Sam said as they walked on.

He gave us a present, Dad.

I used to work for him. He's hoping I'll stay away and take the jinx with me.

Rose smelt the fresh cooked trays damp in her arms and felt tired and sunburnt. The welts from the stinger on her belly felt like a fresh tattoo. She thought she'd fall asleep walking.

Some people are lucky, she heard him say. Joel, he's lucky. Got a good business. His hayburners win. See, I got me ole man's blood. Dead unlucky.

Rose yawned. Until your luck changes.

Luck don't change, love. It moves.

'Blueback' – relationships to place and people ...for children

*Abel loved being underwater. He was ten years old and could never remember a time when he could not dive. His mother said he was a diver before he was born; **he floated and swam in the warm ocean inside her for nine months, so maybe it came naturally.** He liked to watch his mother cruise down into the deep in her patchy wetsuit. **She looked like a scarred old seal in that thing.** She was a beautiful swimmer, relaxed and strong. **Everything he knew on land or under the sea he learned from her.***

Meeting Groper – Action and Dialogue - 1

'Get in the boat!' he shouted when she surfaced. 'There's something down there!'

She grabbed him by the arm and squeezed. 'It's okay, love.'

'Mum, it nearly got me!'

'Close call eh?' she said with a smile. 'Look it took skin off my fingers!'

'Look down now.'

'Let's get to the boat. Please!'

'Just look down.' said his mother.

Meeting Groper – Action and Dialogue - 2

Reluctantly he *stuck* the snorkel back in his mouth and *put* his head under. Near the bottom, in the mist left from their abalone gathering, a huge blue shadow *twitched and quivered*. There it was, not a shark but the biggest fish he had ever seen. It was gigantic. It had fins like ping pong paddles.

Its tail was a blue-green rudder. It looked as big as a horse.

'Come down,' said his mother. 'Let's look at him.'

'I - I thought it was a shark:

'He sure took you by surprise,' she said, laughing.

'That's a blue groper. Biggest I've ever seen.'

Abel and his mother *slid down* into the deep again and saw the fish *hovering then turning, eyeing* them cautiously as they came. It *twitched* a little and *edged along* in front of them to keep its distance. The big gills *fanned*. All its armoured scales *rippled* in lines of green and black blending into the dizziest blue. The groper *moved without the slightest effort*. It was magnificent; the most beautiful thing Abel had ever seen.

'Breath' – I became a surfer...without surfing ADULT book

Breath does for extreme surfing something like what the Velvet Underground did for hard drugs: *gives outsiders with no inclination to try it a sense of the experience.*

Winton is far too good a writer to suggest any easy answers to such questions. What he does, armed with the empathy that has made him a past master at portraying people driven for their own reasons beyond the bounds of conventional society, is dramatize the conflict and leave the reader to ponder the implications.

<http://www.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/books/story.html?id=78aa6363-5c2c-4bc8-b51b-a7fa8836a460&p=2>

'Breath': perspective of parents

Generational difference - conflict

*Somewhere along the way I became aware that my parents were old people with codgers' interests. They **pottered about** with their vegetables and poultry. They smoked their own fish and **mended and embroidered**. Of an evening they listened to the radio, or the **wireless, as they called it.***

'Breath' – sublime experience

That day I went back across to the bombora and rode two waves. Together those rides wouldn't add up to more than half a minute of experience, of which I can only recall a fraction: flickering moments, odd details. Like the staccato chat of water against the board. A momentary illusion of being at the same level as the distant cliffs. The angelic relief of gliding out onto the shoulder of the wave in a mist of spray and adrenaline. Surviving is the strongest memory I have; the sense of having walked on water.

Meeting Monster Wave- Action

Flow of sentences- sibilance/alliteration

*The sight of the thing pitching out across the
bommie drove a blade of fear right through me.
Just the **sound of spray hissing** back off the
crest inspired terror; it was the sound of **sheet
metal shearing itself to pieces**. The wave drove
onto the shoal and the report cannoned across
the water and **slapped against my chest**.*

Setting: creating believable worlds means painting pictures through words - it was hot 😊

*Summer came whirling out of the night and stuck fast. One morning late in November everybody got up at Cloudstreet and saw the **white heat washing in through the windows**. The wild oats and buffalo grass were brown and crisp. **The sky was the color of kerosene**. The air was **thin and volatile**. Smoke rolled along the tracks as men began to burn off on the embankment. **Birds cut singing down to a few necessary phrases**, and beneath them in the streets, the **tar began to bubble**. The city was full of Yank soldiers; the trams were crammed to standing with them. **The river sucked up the sky and went flat and glittery** right down the middle of the place and people went to it in boats and britches and barebacked. Where the river met the sea, the beaches ran north and south, white and broad as highways in a dream, and men and babies stood in the surf **while gulls hung in the haze above**, casting shadows on the immodest backs of the **oil-slicked** women.*

From 'Island Home' – Winton's Memoir

Now and then, of course, I just bolt. I pile a few chattels into the Land Cruiser and hit the road. I drive until sunset and then pull over in a different state of mind, or even another state of the Federation altogether. There's often no purpose to these trips beyond the joy of being in the open, unrolling a swag in a creek-bed or in a hollow between dunes, sitting by a fire and watching the stars come out like gooseflesh in the heavens. These headlong excursions begin as flights from enclosure and I know they sound like escapes, but to me they're more like calls answered. Within moments of leaving, once I've achieved some momentum, it's as if I'm subject to a homing impulse I barely understand. Lying under the night sky I feel a curious sense of return and restoration, not unlike the way I felt as a kid coming in the back door to the sudsy smell of the laundry and the parental mutter of the tub filling down the hall.

Description of Impact of Place

*Still, going home is not always a cosy business. It can be harsh and bewildering. The places dearest to me can be really hard to reach. **They're austere, savage, unpredictable. And like taciturn cousins and leery in-laws they don't always come out and say what they mean.** They give you the stink-eye at breakfast and do what they can to make your stay uncomfortable. You arrive moody and distracted, unprepared for the complexity of the family dynamics, wrong-footed from the get-go. Not much of our country is lush or instantly congenial. The regions I know best are particularly challenging and my home range in the west can be hard work – it's spiky, dry, irritating, even humiliating, and after some visits I often feel as spent and dismayed as any guest at a Christmas lunch, wondering why the hell I bothered. **But homecomings are partly about submitting to the uncomfortably familiar, aren't they?** Like a hapless adult child, you go back for more, despite yourself, eternally trying to figure out the family puzzle. Even so you get sustenance, just from trying, by remaining open to the mystery, suspecting that if you give up on it you'll be left with nothing.*

This country leans in on you. It weighs down hard. Like family. To my way of thinking, it is family.

Good writers leave us contemplating the human experience- 'Breath'

- *People are fools, not monsters-* from book
- *And though I've lived to be an old man with my own share of happiness for all the mess I made, I still judge every joyous moment, every victory and revelation against those few seconds of living.*
- *'It does you good to be tenants. It reminds you of your own true position in the world...A house should be a home, a privilege, not a possession' – Cloudstreet*
- **Winton:** *I was interested in the limits of things ... that strange male thing in adolescence ...to test yourself and frighten yourself ...*

Tips for Effective Writing -1

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/few/684>

- ✓ **Good writers are concise and precise**, weeding out unnecessary words and choosing the exact word to convey meaning. Precise words — active verbs, concrete nouns, specific adjectives — help the reader visualize the sentence. Good writers use adjectives sparingly and adverbs rarely, letting their nouns and verbs do the work.
- ✓ **Good writers also choose words that contribute to the flow of a sentence.** Polysyllabic words, alliteration, and consonance can be used to create sentences that roll off the tongue. Onomatopoeia and short, staccato words can be used to break up the rhythm of a sentence.

Tips for Effective Writing- 2

- ✓ **Sentence fluency is the flow and rhythm of phrases and sentences.** Good writers use a variety of sentences with different lengths and rhythms to achieve different effects. They use parallel structures within sentences and paragraphs to reflect parallel ideas, but also know how to avoid monotony by varying their sentence structures.

Tips for Effective Writing- 3

- ✓ **Voice is an essential element of style** that reveals the writer's personality. A writer's voice can be impersonal or chatty, authoritative or reflective, objective or passionate, serious or funny.

Building sentences

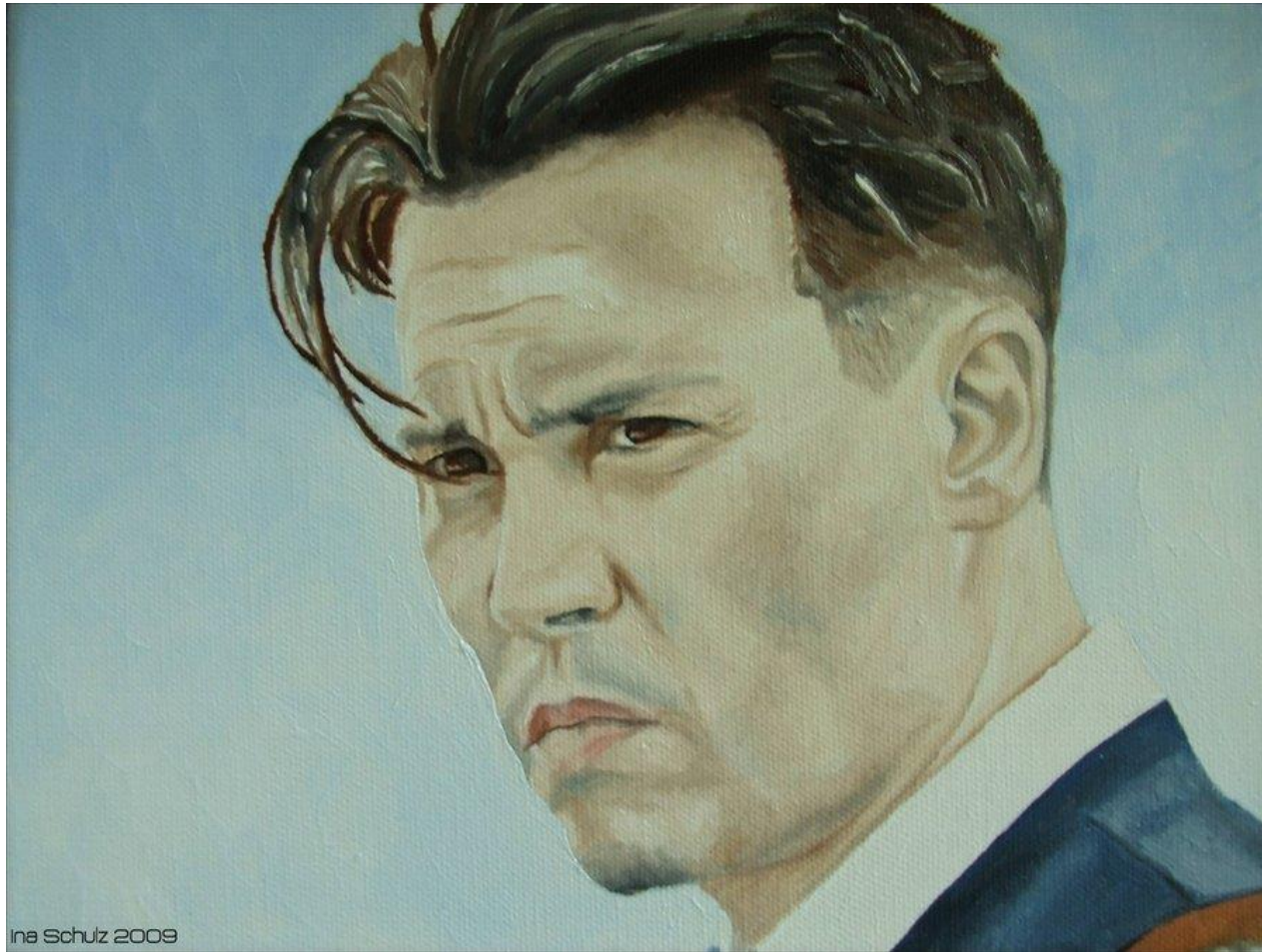
The boy walked with a stick by his side

Whilst the boy carried the stick behind him, he whistled a melancholy tune.

The boy strolled along the narrow street with a long stick by his side; it was his only companion these days.

Indifferent to those around him, the lanky boy scraped the make-shift cane alongside the pock-marked pavement, irritating the father who had just fallen asleep after returning home from the graveyard shift.

Characters – who could he be? What is his conflict?



Taoube @ Tempe High School

Characters – build

Arrived at work that day and was made redundant

At first he is angry; company has not been loyal. He has a disabled mother to support.



Quirk: he whistles a particular tune as he paints – somewhere over the rainbow

Although he works in business, he is a great artist. Father never supported his art.

No work means he has more time to paint. He decides to paint a portrait of his mother. She dies as he is painting her. He captures the moment between life and death.

Use Winton's style to describe



What happened here?



What happened before this picture?



**Who is in the car behind the car?
Where are they going?**



Using Poems as Inspiration-Ulysses

Parallel Structure

An old man is sitting on the porch – he used to be an adrenaline junkie. As he lays back, he reminisces about the time he climbed a mountain. Meanwhile, boy on other side of fence observes him and imagines him to be bookish, dull, a man of inaction.

Using Poems as Inspiration-

The Runner

An old woman watches the greyhound on the other side of the fence. He used to race competitively but now he sits in the corner of the yard as food is tossed to him. In reflecting on his state, she laments the way the beauty and predatory nature of the greyhound has been overlooked. Ironically, her daughter comes over and feeds her food that afternoon. Comparison between old woman and non-functional greyhound.

Using Poems as Inspiration-

The Boat Song

The story is told from a child's perspective as he is being lowered in a life-boat from a deck on the Titanic. The last image he sees is that of the violinists playing calmly and with a resigned acceptance of their fate. The child has a renewed sense of appreciation for the definition of 'hero' as he is exposed to his first understanding of sacrifice.

Using Poems as Inspiration- Europe on \$5 a Day

Woman arrives in France with the belief that the romance of the city will give her a renewed vigour for life and less drama. She decides to sit down in a café and plan her day in France. News reveals terrorist attack in city; she crumples her plan and throws it away. She realises she must embrace the randomness of life because there is no such thing as control.

Using Poems as Inspiration- Consolation

A boy is promised a trip for Christmas; however, the parents renege on their decision until a few weeks later. The boy fantasises about the trip but when he eventually goes on the trip he finds that the imaginative journey was more exciting than the real experience.

Active vs Passive Voice

- ✓ Active voice is also better than passive because active voice tends to use fewer words to say the same thing. Compare the following sentences:
 - *Lulu was failed by the teacher because the grammar book was torn up by Lulu before it was ever opened. (20 words)*
 - ✓ *The teacher failed Lulu because Lulu tore up the grammar book before opening it. (14 words)*

Verbs – muscles of writing

- <http://dragonwritingprompts.blogspot.com.au/2009/02/1000-verbs-to-write-by.html>

Strong verbs not only enliven writing but can bring out character. Think about the difference between a character who **slinks** from the room and one who **tramps**.

Verbs - walked

- lumbered
- plodded
- scurried
- sidled
- slinked/slunk
- proceeded
- wended
- scuttled
- went on his way
- shuffled
- scuffed
- scuffled
- stumbled
- shambled
- waddled
- wobbled
- Scooted
- stalked
- stomped
- strutted
- swished
- swaggered
- stamped
- tramped
- trudged
- traipsed
- slouched
- scrambled
- scampered
- minced
- trotted
- strolled
- sauntered
- ambled
- marched
- stepped
- paced
- roamed
- roved
- meandered
- shadowed
- pursued
- trekked
- continued on
- drifted past/along
- strayed

Verbs - jumped

- vaulted
- leapt/leaped
- pounced
- startled
- flinched
- sprang
- lunged
- launched
- jerked
- jolted
- erupted
- exploded
- shot from

Verbs – took

- drew
- withdrew
- pulled out a
- picked
- selected
- chose
- plucked
- removed
- snatched out
- scooped up
- rooted out
- snatched
- trapped
- hoisted
- set upright
- elevated
- seized
- prized open
- wrenched
- wrested
- produced
- extracted
- extricated
- accepted
- fetched
- grabbed
- snitched
- took hold of
- jimmied

Verbs – put

- stashed
- placed
- posed
- posited
- plunked down
- mounted
- positioned
- stationed
- set before
- dropped
- crammed
- stuffed
- stuck
- lodged
- plopped
- plunked
- stationed
- planted
- perched
- inserted
- lay
- set
- set upright
- stood on end
- upended
- deposited
- consigned
- relegated
- strapped
- tossed
- threw
- flung
- lobbed

Verbs – looked/saw

- glared
- glanced off
- regarded
- made out
- descried
- remarked
- had in sight
- glowered
- squinted
- shot him a look
- fixed her with a stare
- sighted
- ogled
- cast a glance
- his eyes begged
- gazed
- gaped
- Spotted
- stared
- leered
- scowled
- scanned
- peered
- squinted
- gaped
- noticed
- observed
- considered
- watched
- viewed

Verbs – thought/remembered

- wondered
- asked herself
- pondered
- noticed
- reflected
- struck her as
- entertained the notion
- It occurred to her
- It came to her
- she reasoned
- understood
- considered
- went over
- reviewed
- pictured
- featured
- imagined
- pretended
- hoped
- feared
- envisioned
- deliberated
- envisaged

Verbs – turned

- wheeled around
- twisted to one side
- whirled about
- rotated
- spun on her heels
- pivoted
- revolved
- swiveled
- reeled
- trundled
- circled
- eddied
- swirled
- sheered
- veered
- shifted
- divagated
- angled off
- shunted

Verbs

Entered

- stepped inside
- went in
- came in
- sailed in
- burst in
- set foot in/on
- broke in
- forced her way in
- intruded
- penetrated
- passed into

Left/exited

- ran off
- walked off
- went out
- departed
- retreated
- decamped
- deserted
- repaired
- retired
- withdrew
- quit
- took off
- fled
- sallied forth

Verbs – tasted

- savored
- relished
- nibbled at
- tried
- sipped
- gulped
- took a deep swallow
- chewed
- ingested
- ruminated
- sampled
- sank his teeth into
- bit into
- crunched
- melted
- licked
- slurped
- chomped
- ground
- munched
- gnawed
- render
- quaffed
- imbibed
- tiddled
- nipped
- supped
- drained
- washed down
- swilled down
- guzzled down
- lapped up
- soused
- quenched

Websites

- <http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/creative1/short-story/>
- <http://www.dailywritingtips.com/active-voice/>
- Short Story Tips: 10 Ways to Improve Your Creative Writing
- Using the Active Voice to Strengthen Your Writing