

Secrets From Great Writers!

THIS MONTH'S SECRET: HOW TO WRITE DESCRIPTIVE DETAILS

A good author like Pam Muñoz Ryan uses descriptive words to offer important details and to paint a clearer, more colorful picture of her characters and their actions. This activity will tell you one of Pam Muñoz Ryan's description-writing secrets so you can create your own vivid writing.

Directions: Read the passage below, from "Freddie in the Shade" by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Then rewrite the sentences below.

A red-headed man, wearing a blue apron, emerged through a swinging door and handed a large pink box to a young mother. A toddler clutched at her skirt. As the mother approached the door, trying to manage the cake and the skirt-tugger, Freddie jumped to open it for her.

If you read the passage above closely, you can see how Pam Muñoz Ryan uses descriptive words to write a clear and vivid story. And she doesn't just use adjectives to add detail. Notice all the colors she describes in this scene. Look at how she writes about the young mother's child. First, he is a "toddler," so we can picture his age and size. Then, she calls him "the skirt-tugger," so we can imagine a cute little guy hiding in the folds of his mom's dress. Pam takes each piece of a story and adds a little detail or a clever description to help us learn more about her wonderful and vivid story. Use Pam's tricks as you rewrite the sentences below.

1. He ate some soup. (Hint: What kind of soup? What did the bowl look like? Did he sip? slurp? devour?)

2. The car drove off. (Hint: What kind of car? Who was in it? Was the street smooth, bumpy, dark?)

Continued

Secrets From Great Writers! page 2

3. She read a book.

4. The hamburger was tasty.

5. The boy woke up.

6. The rabbit was cute.
