

Secrets From Great Writers!

THIS MONTH'S SECRET: HOW TO WRITE ACTION SCENES

Paul Acampora's story "Science Fair Creatures Attack" is so action packed that it seems as if Peggy's dog will come leaping off the page. In this activity, you will learn Paul's secret so that you can bring your own stories to life.

Directions: Read the passage below, from "Science Fair Creatures Attack" and then rewrite the sentences below.

A bunch of rock salt crystals slide out of a funnel and plop, plop, plop into two liters of Diet Coke. Nothing happens at first, but then the soda bottle explodes into a massive cola volcano. In the chaos, a pink bubble solution jug spills onto the floor. My shoes hit the bubble puddle, and I'm like a rocket car on an ice patch. I skid past microscopes and test tubes, past science fair posters, and past most of my fifth-grade classmates. I slide by our stuffed squirrel, and whiz past a dozen glass jars filled with dead frogs that, I must say, all look pretty surprised.

If you read the passage above closely, you can see how much care Paul takes in writing descriptions. Notice how the salt crystals don't just fall into the Diet Coke. They go "plop, plop, plop." And Milo doesn't merely slip in the puddle. He slips and slides and whizzes "like a rocket car on an ice patch." Paul breaks his image apart like pieces of a puzzle and describes each separate segment to create a wonderfully vivid image for you. Use Paul's writing as an inspiration as you rewrite the sentences below.

- I was so scared I ran home. (Hint: how fast did you go? Can you compare yourself to a fast-moving object?)

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2. The snake slithered into the crowd. (**Hint:** How did the snake move? What did people in the crowd do?)

3. The storm was fierce. (**Hint:** what did the wind do? How did the rain sound? What happened to the trees?)

4. The first-baseman tagged the runner, so he was out. (**Hint:** describe each player and the ball and the sound of the umpire's voice.)

5. The little girl gobbled her cake. (**Hint:** did she use her hands? What happened to the icing and the crumbs? What sounds did she make?)
