



Module Five

Task: Concrete, specific prose

To avoid clichéd writing, and to create a direct relationship with your reader, prose should always be concrete and specific. If your character is eating a sandwich, name the sandwich. Rather than saying a boy lived by the beach, name the beach. If he finds a shell, name the type of shell. Avoid abstract words like ‘beautiful’ ‘delightful’ or ‘amazing’ as they don’t tell us anything. Be specific and concrete.

Exercise

Part A

Make these sentences more concrete and specific.

1. In general, I couldn’t believe how amazing school was.
2. The beautiful sound of the bell rang out.
3. Sara watched the river longingly, wishing with all her heart that things would be better.
4. It was a dark and stormy night.
5. Once upon a time, in a land far away, lived a prince.

Part B

Look at your manuscript. Circle all the nouns (objects) and underline all the verbs (doing words). Are you able to replace any of these to make them more specific and more concrete? E.g. ‘Car’ becomes ‘Mercedes’ and ‘walk’ becomes ‘slump’.

