**Detail**

Details are the *facts* used to develop a subject; they are notable not only for what is *included*, but what is also *purposefully omitted*.

**Examine the details in the following excerpts:**

1. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have him near a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke out on his forehead.

-- Thomas Babington Macaulay, “Samuel Johnson”

Task: Write a sentence describing someone with disgusting eating habits. It must be one, correct sentence; and it must contain at least three vivid details.

2. An old man, Don Tomasito, the baker, played the tuba. When he blew into the huge mouthpiece, his face would turn purple and his thousand wrinkles would disappear as his skin filled out.

--Alberto Alvaro Rios, “The Iguana Killer”

Task: Describe someone jumping over a puddle. Your first sentence should be general, starting the action simply. Your second sentence should clarify and intensify the action through detail.

3. He went on till he came to the first milestone, which stood in the bank, half-way up a steep hill. He rested his basket on the top of the stone, placed his elbows on it, and gave way to a convulsive twitch, which was worse than sob, because it was so hard and dry.

--Thomas Hardy, *The May or of Casterbridge*

Task: Sketch the image that comes to mind as you read the above passage.

4. Until I returned to Cuba, I never realized how many blues exist. The aquamarines near the shoreline, the azures of deeper waters, the eggshell blues beneath my grandmother’s eyes, the fragile indigos tracking her hands. There’s a blue, too, in the curves of the palms, and the edges of the words we speak, a blue tinge to the sand and the seashells and the plump gulls on the beach. The mole by Abuela’s mouth is also blue, a vanishing blue.

--Cristina Garcia, *Dreaming in Cuban*

Task: Choose a colour and describe a scene using at least three varieties of that colour. Try to mix details of landscape and people.