**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 following excerpts:**

1. I almost cried at what I saw. His coat was dirty and mud-caked. His skin was stretched drum-tight over his bony frame. The knotty joints of his hips and shoulders stood out a good three inches from his body.

--Wilson Rawls, "Where the Red Fern Grows"

a) Think of one word to describe the dog in the passage. Which details in the passage support your choice of words?

b) The details of this passage describe the dog from the outside (his coat) in – through his skin to his bones. How do these details affect the reader’s attitude toward the dog?

**Now you try it:**

Rewrite the passage eliminating all of the specific detail. Discuss the change in impact and meaning.

2. She’s this wrinkled old bat with bad breath, so kids avoid her. I tried to sit downwind of her breath, but it was right after lunch and she kept burpin’ little bursts of garlic.

–Sharon M. Draper, "Tears of a Tiger"

a) Look at the following rewrite of Draper’s sentences:

*She’s an old woman with bad breath, so kids avoid her. I tried to sit downwind of her breath, but I couldn’t get away from her.*

Which one is more alive and engrossing? Which one brings you into the scene? Why?

b) Sketch a little picture of the scene. What details are in your sketch? Why are they memorable?

**Now you try it:**

Write two sentences about someone you want to sit next to. Use Draper’s sentences as a model, *substituting positive details for the negative ones*.