

# 18

## Suggestions for improving style II: writing and summarizing in a precise, clear and exciting manner

### Goal

Students should also have the opportunity to develop a broad stylistic repertoire in their first language. This includes partial or sub-skills, such as “ability to describe exactly”, “ability to tell clearly, ability to tell in an exciting way” etc. However, without appropriate clarification and practice, the terms “exactly, clearly, in an interesting manner” etc. remain abstract concepts and words that are of no help to the students. The aim of the following suggestions is to render these terms real and usable, and to provide appropriate exercises and writing opportunities for practicing them.

### 1. Exact descriptions: Variants

2<sup>nd</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> grade

20 minutes



Materials:

Sales slip, other items, depending on the variant (see right).

- Each student brings a store receipt (Aldi, Costco, Walmart, Publix, etc.) to class and pastes it in the middle of an A3 size paper. Around the receipt, students write as accurately as possible what can be done with the items on the receipt. The items on the receipt and the explanation/description are then connected with an arrow. (Idea from “Language Window”, Topic: writing, page 29).

Flour	1.80	Free-range eggs: can be used in many dishes. They can be eaten hard boiled, or as 3-minute soft-boiled eggs. They are also very good fried or scrambled. My favorite egg dish is omelette with mushrooms. Eggs are also used for baking cakes or biscuits.
Handkerchiefs	5.20	
Eggs (free-range)	3.60	
Toast bread	2.80	
Rubber gloves	3.80	
Potato peeler	5.60	
Deodorant stick	3.85	
Sponge (3-pack)	2.45	
Grated cheese	3.60	
Total	53.95	
cash	60.-	The vegetable peeler is used to peel all sorts of vegetables, like potatoes or carrots, so that not too much is wasted.
change	6.05	
Thank you for shopping with us		

Flour: my mother uses flour to bake a birthday cake for my brother. With the rest of the flour she will make pizza dough, and the children who are at the party can then put their favorite toppings on it.

- The teacher provides each student with an object (i. e. a cloth or a small tin can). The students then describe their objects in writing in as much detail as possible, without, however, naming the object (!), referring to it as “my XY”. The objects are then placed on the left side of the classroom, and the written descriptions on the right. The texts are numbered, the objects labelled with letters. The students then try to correctly match the descriptions to the objects (e. g. 3 = F). See also #7.2b above.
- Variants: describing pictures (postcards, etc.) of different animals (stuffed toys, pictures or the story behind “for sale” or “lost and found” advertisements).
- The instructor or a student repeats 2–3 times a small gesture or action (e. g. taking a book out of a closet). The students try to describe the action in as much detail as possible. Their descriptions are then compared and discussed. Variant (more difficult): two students enact a small scene (i. e. a greeting); the other students describe it in as much detail as possible.
- Let’s imagine that we have to explain to our great grandmother how to use a cell phone or how to use a computer and log on to the internet. In pairs, the students then try to test how useful the descriptions are.