

Smiley Face

Tricks for

Writing

(Use these in your writing assignments to help improve sentence fluency and word choice. Check requirements in writing assignments for required number of Smiley Face tricks.)

1. Magic 3 (Examples)

- I love **playing** hide-and-seek with my friends in our woods, **jumping** rope on the school playground, and **swinging** on the old tire at Grandma's. (3 verbs in a sequence with description.)
- Jeff and Sue **skipped** to the candy store, **selected** Reese's and M & M's to munch on, and **raced** to the corner park to play with their friends. (3 verbs in a sequence with description.)
- The teacher **assigned** a writing project for the semester, **presented** all the details to her class, and **gave** the students thirty minutes to get started on their project. (3 verbs in a sequence with description.)

2. Figurative Language (Examples)

- His **hair is like peach fuzz.** (simile)
- Her **smile is the sun** in his day. (metaphor)
- In the morning when the **sun gets up,** where does the **night hide?** (Carlstrom 1 & 2) (personification)

- **Crash, bang, boom**, the thunder boomed in the night sky.
(onomatopoeia)

3. Hyphenated Modifier (Examples)

- Her mother gave her the famous **you-better-get-to-your-room-now-and-make-it-shine-before-I-get-to-your-behind** look.
- “I’m not asking you. I’m telling you!” Mom shouted in her **remember-I’m-your-boss** voice.
- You know those girls with the **I-have-to-keep-this-smile-painted-on-my-face-or-I-won’t-win-the-election** faces.
- The town was scared. Old women hired boy scouts for bodyguards, banks locked each and every dollar in its own separate, **bulletproof-waterproof-fireproof-and-every-other-proof** safe, and old man Hutcherson was sitting in his rocking chair chained to his door.

4. Repetition for Effect (Examples)

- His dentist always asks the same questions: **how** old are “we” now, **how** are “we” doing in school, and **how** have “we” been treating our little friends. Of course, by now he knows that the dentist means “our” teeth.
- “Laura **didn’t have to** seal the envelope, she **didn’t have to** receive the congratulations letter, she **didn’t have to** gaze happily at her mother’s astonished yet proud face, to know that she was a winner.” (Stadd 24)
- “Filled with new inspiration and soaring spirits, Laura picked up her pencil and a clean stack of paper, **and wrote. And wrote. And wrote.**” (Stadd 24)

5. Specific Details for Effect (Examples)

- Her boyfriend sits in the **second row from the left, third seat, in front of Claudia and behind Milton.**
- He had a bad day. He **made a grade on his spelling test that would make his Mama’s face scrunch up like it does when she’s really mad (especially at Daddy), it started raining when he was walking home, and to top it off he fell in a puddle—bad grade and all—because he was thinking about how he was going to feel being grounded for a week.**
- **“The crocodile wanted to be a famous dancer. He wanted to wear a frilly pink dress and ballet shoes, and to dance in a ballet.” (Mahy 2)**

6. Humor (Examples)

- There she was on the first day of school—the picture-perfect girl. Her new outfit looked like something from her big sister’s magazine, her hair—for once—was having a good day, and she was strutting in her new shoes. Little did she know that **she was trailing a three-yard piece of Charmin behind her.** So much for using the bathroom right before class!
- **“My toes point in, and my shoulders droop, and there’s hair growing out of my ears.” (Viorst 3)**
- **The vacuum cleaner’s swallowed Will. He’s vanished. What a drag! Still, we can do without him till, It’s time to change the bag!” (Kennedy 105)**

7. Expanded Moment (Examples)

- I sat down, **crossed my legs, flipped my hair away from my face,** and began to write.

- “I watch Georgia fun through Thompson Park... **I am out of breath when I finally catch up with her. I run my hand along her back, soft as a feather pillow. I pat her heaving sides and scratch her ears, but she hardly acknowledges my presence. I command her to sit, and she does so, but her mind is elsewhere...** (Montgomery 8)
- He reached up to the top shelf, chose the blue covered book, **opened to the first page, turned to face the class with a big smile** and began to read with enthusiasm.

8. Full-Circle Ending (Examples)

- **Math class—it’s like a foreign language**, a mystery, a puzzle. First day—my luck—we do fractions. Invert and multiply, I’ve got it memorized, but when do I do it? The teacher talks in numbers, not words, and when she uses words, there’s always a catch—something about trains or planes leaving cities at some time and how fast were they going. She calls them “story” problems. What kind of story is that—the boring kind? **Math class—it’s like a foreign language.**
- **So, this is the principal’s office.** The first thing I notice is the huge desk. Then I notice the paintings on the wall. Also, I see the principal standing with his arms crossed and a frown on his face as I walk into the room. **So, this is the principal’s office.**