

# Smiley-Face Tricks

**1. Magic 3** -- Three items in a series, separated by commas that create a poetic rhythm or add support for a point, especially when the items have their own modifiers.



"In those woods, I would spend hours **listening** to the wind rustle the leaves, **climbing** trees and **spying** on nesting birds, and **giving** the occasional wild growl to scare away any pink-flowered girls who might be riding their bikes too close to my secret entrance."  
(Todd, college freshman)

**2. Figurative Language**--Nonliteral comparisons--such as similes, metaphors, and personification--add "spice" to writing and can help paint a more vivid picture for the reader.

"When we first moved into the house on Orchid Street, I didn't like it. My room was hot, cramped, and **stuffy as a train in the middle of the Sahara**. And the **looming skeleton-like gray and white frame** of the place scared me. I dared not imagine living there, but the backyard, oh, the backyard. It was a huge, long mass of plentifully growing trees and blackberries. Goodness, how I loved them." (Teri, grade 7)



### 3. Specific Details for Effect--Instead of general, vague descriptions, specific sensory details help the reader visualize the person, place, thing, or idea that you are describing.

"It's one of those experiences where you want to **call a radio station** and tell your problems to **some guy who calls himself Dr. Myke**, but who isn't more of a doctor than your pet hamster is, one of those experiences where you want to **read a sappy Harlequin novel** and **listen to Barry Manilow** with a box of bonbons as your best friend, one of those experiences where you wouldn't be surprised if someone came up to you and asked **exactly what time yesterday you were born**. Yeah, one of those." (Ileana)



"Remember the time I worked all day Saturday on an English paper? Sunday I accidentally left the only copy I had at your house. You politely handed it back to me the next day, first period, when it was due. But all over page one you'd drawn **zombies**; page two contained **detailed pictures of yet-to-be-discovered worms**; page three was **visited by various space aliens**; the fourth page **featured scenes from Australia and Florida**; and the last page was **covered with 'Mr. Jenkins is from the Stone Age,' 'English stinks,' and 'Mr. Jenkins is a four-eyed geek.'** Maybe that's why he gave me a D-." (Liz)



**4. Repetition for Effect--**Writers often repeat specially chosen words or phrases to make a point, to stress certain ideas for the reader.



"The veranda is your only shelter **away from** the sister in bed asleep, **away from** the brother that plays in the treehouse in the field, **away from** your chores that await you." (Leslie)

**5. Expanded Moment--**Instead of "speeding" past a moment, writers often emphasize it by "expanding" the actions.



"But no, I had to go to school. And as I said before, I had to listen to my math teacher preach about numbers and letters and figures....I was tired of hearing her annoying voice lecture about 'a=b divided by x.' I glared at the small black hands on the clock, silently threatening them to go faster. But they didn't listen, and I caught myself wishing I were on white sand and looking down at almost transparent pale-blue water with Josh at my side....I don't belong in some dumb math class. I belong on the beach, where I can soak my feet in caressing water and let the wind wander its way through my chestnut-colored hair and sip Doctor Pepper all day long. I want to grip a straw all day, not a mechanical pencil that will try unsuccessfully to write the answers to unsolvable questions." (Shelly)

**6. Humor--**Professional writers know the value of laughter; even subtle humor can help turn a "boring" paper into one that can raise someone's spirits.

"He laughed? I'm nothing. I'm the rear end of nothing, and the devil himself smiled at me." (Andrew)



"And you--yes, you Justin!--were the guilty party who, after I took off my shoes to enjoy the hot pavement in early spring, put a frog in them. Of course, I didn't look at the shoes when I put them back on; it was the **squish** that gave your prank away." (Liz)

**7. Hyphenated Modifiers--**Sometimes a new way of saying something can make all the difference; hyphenated adjectives often cause the reader to "sit up and take notice."

"She's got this blonde hair, with dark highlights, parted in the middle, down past her shoulders, and straight as a preacher. She's got big green eyes that all guys admire and all girls envy, and this **I'm-so-beautiful-and-I-know-it** body, you know, like every other super model." (Ileana)



**8. Full-Circle Ending**--Sometimes students need a special ending, one that effectively "wraps up" the piece. One "trick" is to repeat a phrase from the beginning of the piece.

**Beginning:**



"Hey, you, with the green and neon-orange striped shoelaces, you who always pulled on my old frazzled white ones in math. Hey, you, who always added your versions of 'art' to my math problems for Mrs. Caton's class so that  $9 \times 7 = 64$  turned out to be a train with puffs of smoke and two boxcars and made me get an 83 instead of a 93 since Mrs. C. doesn't count locomotives as correct answers."

**Ending:**



"Now Justin still sits behind me in math with his neon-green and orange striped shoelaces and pulls on my old white frazzled ones. He still draws zombies on my homework, but he hasn't dumped another pitcher of Kool-Aid on me--not yet at least. Oh, and by the way, in case you're wondering, his first words when he opened his eyes were, 'It was James Kenton who hid your clothes and made you walk around in a chicken suit...I'm not that mean.'" (Liz)

# Glossary of Terms

You will need to become familiar with many of the terms listed in this glossary in order to complete the Dailies.

## Literature Terms

**Adage**--a traditional saying or proverb

"The first thing you learn in life is you're a fool. The last thing you learn in life is you're the same fool" (Bradbury 62).

**Alliteration**--a figure of speech formed by repeating the same initial consonant sound in several words in close succession

"boys, behave" (Bradbury 4)

**Allusion**--a reference in a story to the proper name of a character, thing, or setting from another literary work or from real life.

It's not as if I were Scarlett O'Hara and you were Rhett Butler.

(The author is referring to the fictional characters in Gone with the Wind.)

**Assonance**--a figure of speech in which the same accented vowel is repeated through several words in succession

"trunks of junk" (Bradbury 76)

**Conflict**--a struggle between opposing forces

✎ External--between two characters or forces (e.g., protagonist vs. antagonist; character vs. the elements)

## Glossary of Terms

2


"Suddenly she spun her green, snarled finger at me. 'You!' she snarled, her eyes wide. 'And your name is?'"

'Jabari,' I gasped, still in shock that she had picked me.

"You will read the first two paragraphs and answer the sample question. Aloud!"

"The air became as still as death. The entire room seemed to stare down on me as I began to read." (Jabari)

(The protagonist is being singled out by the "creature teacher"; the conflict is between the teacher and the student.)

 Internal--struggle within a character (e.g., a character's coming to terms with the fact that he or she is not "like everyone else")

"And then there's me, my legs twisted around each other, my nails gnawed to a nub, my hands clammy--with forehead and underarms to match--trying unsuccessfully to figure out where I was when God passed out instant recall. There's so much injustice to this system. There's so much I know that I won't be able to express today." (Mary)

(The protagonist is taking a college entrance exam and is worried that she will not be able to answer all the questions correctly; the conflict is between the protagonist and herself, what she perceives to be her weakness--instant recall.)

**Hyperbole**--an exaggeration for effect

"He hit the rug so hard all the dust of five thousand centuries jumped from the shocked texture" (Bradbury 66).

**Imagery**--the use of sensory words (sight, sound, smell, taste, feel) to describe an object or person

"And he heard a thousand people in another sunlight, and the faint, tinkling music of an organ grinder playing "La Marimba"--oh, a lovely, dancing tune" (Bradbury 133).

## Glossary of Terms

3

**Inference**--a conclusion based on a premise

"Douglas moved his right hand stealthily to the ticking, pulled out the watch stem. He set the hands back" (Bradbury 107).

(Readers can infer that Douglas did not want his friend, John Huff, to move so he set the hand of his watch back to avoid facing reality.)

**Irony**--the opposite of what is expected


"More than once he [the junkman] had delivered babies at four in the morning and only then had people noticed how incredibly clean his hands and fingernails were--the hands of a rich man...." (Bradbury 208).

(It is ironic that Mr. Jonas, the junk man, the man who deals in people's discards and rejects, has "incredibly clean" hands, those of a "rich man.")


**Literary Apostrophe**--an address to someone not present, or to a personified object or idea

"I don't want to die! Douglas screamed, without a sound. You'll have to anyway, said the voice, you'll have to anyway..." (Bradbury 189).

**Metaphor**--comparison between two unlike things not using "like" or "as"

 **Explicit**--a metaphor that uses a "be" verb (i.e., is, am, are, was, were, be, been, being)

"The words were summer on the tongue" (Bradbury 13).

 **Implicit**--a metaphor that is implied rather than stated, one that does not use a "be" verb

"...a great swelling symphony of lawn mowers..."  
(Bradbury 48)



## Glossary of Terms

4

**Metonymy**--a figure of speech in which one word is substituted for another associated with it

We are studying Shakespeare.

(We are not studying "Shakespeare" but, in fact, Shakespeare's works.)

**Paradox**--a seemingly contradictory statement that, on closer examination, may be true

"Leo Auffman was too busy noticing that the room was falling swiftly upward" (Bradbury 55).

**Personification**--giving human attributes to something nonhuman

"dead cement" (Bradbury 19)

"...for last year's pair (of tennis shoes) were dead inside" (Bradbury 20).

**Simile**--a comparison between two unlike things using "like" or "as"

"He made careful stacks of nickels, dimes, and quarters on the counter, like someone playing chess" (Bradbury 22).

**Symbol**--something that stands for more than just itself

"...you need Old Colonel Freeleigh to shove and say look alive so you remember every second!" (Bradbury 89).

(Colonel Freeleigh is symbolic of the Time Machine because he takes boys back through time by telling them stories of his past.)

**Theme**--the main idea; the lesson learned

"Time hypnotizes" (Bradbury 75)

## Glossary of Terms

5

**Tone** (author's attitude toward his/her work); **Mood** (reader's response to the work)

" 'I wish your father was home,' said Mother....The Lonely One's around again. Killing people" (Bradbury 40-41).

(Frightening tone and mood)

## Grammar Terms

**Coordinate Adjective**--Two or more adjectives modifying the same noun require a comma to separate them.

Last night there was a cold, stinging wind.

**Interrupter** (Parenthetical Phrase)--A group of words that interrupts the "train of thought" requires commas to set it off from the main clause.

My mother, on the other hand, was a prolific reader.

**Subjunctive Mood**-- A mood of a verb used to express uncertainty, a wish, or an unlikely condition.

If I were rich, I could travel anywhere.

## Writing Terms

**Hyphenated Modifier**--Use a hyphen between words used as a one-thought modifier immediately before a noun

She gave me that go-to-your-room look.

**Character Sketch**--A brief picture of a character painted with words. The author may choose actions, speech, inner thoughts and feelings, what others say, and/or environment.

## Glossary of Terms


6

"He could jump six-foot orchard walls, swing up branches faster and come down, fat with peaches, quicker than anyone else in the gang. He ran laughing. He sat easy. He was not a bully. He was kind" (Bradbury 102).


**Vignette**--A small literary sketch; a slice of life

In Dandelion Wine, when Great-grandma is dying, she calls her family to her death bed and tells them that they are not to worry about her impending death. Her recounting of her life is a perfect example of a vignette or slice of life.


## Methods of Sentence Combining

 **Independent Clause**--A sentence having a subject and verb


My knees were shaking. I walked to the principal's office.

 **Compound Sentence**--Two independent clauses separated by a comma and a conjunction


My knees were shaking, and I walked to the principal's office.

 **Adjective Clause**--A dependent clause (one that cannot stand alone) that modifies a noun or pronoun in an independent clause; adjective clauses usually begin with words such as "who," "whom," "which," or "that."


My knees, that had felt like rubber, suddenly stopped shaking when I entered the principal's office.

 **Adverb Clause**--A dependent clause that modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb in an independent clause; adverb clauses usually begin with words such as "when," "since," "if," "because," "after," etc.

When I walked into the principal's office, my knees started to shake.

 **Participial Phrase**--A verb phrase used as an adjective to modify a noun or a pronoun. Participial phrases can be present (using an "-ing") or past (using an "-ed").

Shaking in the knees, I walked into the principal's office.

 **Noun Absolute**--a noun that has no grammatical function in the sentence in that it is not the subject, direct or indirect object, predicate nominative, or object of the preposition; a noun absolute is followed by a present or a past participial phrase.

My knees shaking, I walked into the principal's office.

(The noun absolute is "Knees.")

All quoted material is from:

Bradbury, Ray. Dandelion Wine. New York: Bantam, 1990.