

## STRETCHING OUT A MOMENT TO IMPROVE WRITING

### Share:

- ★ To celebrate your achievements, share your flash-draft with your writing partner. Make sure to story-tell with lots of expression! As you read, notice where you think you need to add more **feeling, dialogue, thinking, &/or action** and/or **sensory details** in your writing. Star those spots!
- ★ When it's your turn to listen, focus on seeing and feeling this powerful small moment just as the writer tells it. Offer feedback!

### Teach:

Imagine something you practice to improve on – a sport, playing an instrument, a hobby?



What do you do to get better? What Now, imagine yourself, practicing a writing skill. Instead of using gym equipment or a recording device, you use your notebook, and your notebook becomes filled with your efforts to do that one thing better, better, better, over and over.

YOUR NOTEBOOK IS NOW GOING TO BE A PLACE TO DELIBERATELY *practice writing strategies and craft*, NOT JUST A PLACE TO COLLECT NEW DRAFTS.

We selected our story seeds, rehearsed our stories, and flash-drafted them. Today, we are going to stretch out parts of our stories by zooming in on details and slowing down a moment. Some of you may wonder what it means to *stretch out a moment*. Let's take moment to figure this out...

Today I want to teach you that *stretching out a moment* is a writing skill in which you magnify an event in your story, much like a filmmaker does when he zooms in on the action using slow motion. Today, we will become familiar with this skill and use it to improve our writing.



- ★ When you *stretch out a moment*, you take a part of your story that you can slow down and expand on. To expand on this moment, you can add **feeling, dialogue, thinking, &/or action**, as well as sensory details.

### Mentor Text:

Let's look at an example of how I stretched out a moment from my flash draft. The first step is to reread the flash-draft to find parts of the important parts of the story that could be stretched out. Next step is to draw a box around these parts.

### Original Personal Narrative Flash Draft

★ John yelled down to me, "Don't look down - just keep climbing. You're almost at the top!" No, I'm not! I thought. John realized I wasn't budging, so he climbed back down to balance out the ropes and help me out. I took a deep breath, and just went for the top.

Not bad... but I can  
**STRETCH  
OUT**

this moment if I  
use some writing &  
craft techniques.  
What can I do to  
improve this?

- ★ Visualize the sensory details in that moment.
- ★ Rewrite the moment in a purposeful way using writing strategies and craft I've learned from lessons and from reading mentor texts. Add **feeling, dialogue, thinking, &/or action**, and sensory details that make sense to the moment and from the narrator's point of view.

### Rewrite:

John was still waiting at the top, to my surprise, holding the boardwalk stuffed animal he had won for me. He yelled down, "Just keep climbing. You're almost to the top!" No, I'm not! I thought.

The ropes swayed slightly and I tightened my grasp. A rough piece of rope dug sharply into the palm of my sweaty hand, but I didn't dare move. I was paralyzed with fear.

"I can't move," I shouted to John, my voice high and tight. I thought about my mother's clear warning to stick to boardwalk games. This must be why. ←

"Hold on, I'm coming down to help," John called. He maneuvered slowly, feet-first back onto the ropes. As he descended, he talked to me in a low voice, but I couldn't hear him over the loud laughter of a mechanical clown. Was it laughing at me?

Suddenly, my brother grabbed my hand and pulled. "Climb!" he commanded, and I made a charge for the top.

I started with a small moment from my flash-draft, relived the scene, and then magnified the details. What do you notice I did to

### **STRETCH OUT**

this scene?



## Active Engagement:

Now it's your turn to practice *stretching out a moment* several times on your flash draft.

1. Reread your flash-draft to find part of your story that you can slow down and expand on.
2. Draw a box around the part that you want to stretch out.
3. Visualize the sensory details in that moment.
4. Rewrite this moment (on the left side of your notebook) in a purposeful way, adding in **feeling, dialogue, thinking, &/or action**, as well as sensory details.
5. Practice this in as many places as possible/necessary.

### stretched out moment

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### Original writing from my personal narrative flash draft

I realized I couldn't continue climbing the ropes because I just couldn't catch my balance. I honestly wanted to cry! I didn't know what to do, so I kind of just stopped. I thought funhouses were supposed to be FUN! This was definitely not fun, and I was definitely scared.

I looked up at my brother who was waiting for me to my surprise. I feel bad for holding him up, I thought to myself. But whatever! Big brother obligations!

★ John yelled down to me, "Don't look down - just keep climbing. You're almost at the top!" No, I'm not! I thought.

John realized I wasn't budging, so he climbed back down to balance out the ropes and help me out. I took a deep breath, and just went for the top.

When we made it to the ledge, I was so relieved! I was also so thankful that my brother had not

Homework:

For the next WW, finish stretching out moments of your flash draft. If you run out of room, go to another page in your notebook.