Personal Narrative: Details: Using adjectives, adverbs, active verbs properly

Adjectives and **adverbs** are modifiers that modify nouns and verbs respectively. They help to create an image or a feeling about how something looks, or how it moved/acted. Oftentimes students use them, but do not go far enough to make them really vivid. Using adjectives and adverbs are important when giving details to describe a scene (a moment) or a feeling.

Active verbs are important when describing action. Active verbs can also be used to describe ideas and feelings as well. The more active the verb, the more specific the image you can create in the reader's mind.

Passive Verb Ex: She **thought** about the decision.

Active Verb Ex: She **contemplated** the decision.

Oftentimes when students use these parts of speech in their descriptive writing, like a personal narrative, their idea is still not as vivid as it can be. For example:

1. The play was so **boring**. (Adj)
2. The lake was very **beautiful**. (Adj.)
3. Her voice **trembled**. (Active verb)
4. They walked **quickly** down the hall. (Adv)

To make writing more vivid, you should always follow a sentence that uses as an adj, adv or active verb with a sentence that gives a detail. This detail usually describes the *why or how of* the detail.

1. (Why) The play was so **boring**. The actors spoke with no emotion and the acting was not convincing anyone in the audience. I looked around and saw more than one person asleep in their chair.
2. (Why) The lake was very **beautiful.** The sun's rays reflected across the water. The ducks swam peacefully across the water, all of the babies lined up in an obedient single file behind their mom. Flowers lined the shoreline representing all of the colors of the rainbow.
3. (How) Her voice **trembled**. As she tried to speak, each word came out shaking. She sounded like she was speaking for the first time in her life.
4. (Why) They walked **quickly** down the hall. They kept looking over their shoulders, completely certain they had been caught.

In your own writing, first look for places where you can use an adjective, adverb or more active verb. Then make sure that you give a detail explaining *why **or** how.*