

# ***A CATALOG OF BRUSH STROKES***

## ***ABSOLUTE BRUSH STROKE***

An absolute is a noun and an -ing verb. Some writers put one or two absolute brush strokes at the beginning or end of sentences.

A dozen volcanic faces with fiery eyes crushed close to the window, **fists hammering the glass.** -Ray Bradbury

### ***Examples:***

Heart pounding, arms stretching, the skydiver glided toward the earth from 20,000 feet.

Feet stomping, ears flapping, the elephant charged the lions.

*Write your own example below.*

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## ***APPOSITIVE BRUSH STROKE***

An appositive is a noun that refers to another noun directly in front of it. Think of the appositive brush stroke as a noun phrase that is acting like an adjective. Appositives are set off by commas in a sentence.

Charles Beckendorf, **senior counselor for the Hephaestus cabin,** would make most monsters cry for their mommies. - Rick Riordan

### ***Examples:***

The elephant, **an angry 1,200 pound beast,** charged the lions.

The newborn harp seal, **a tiny creature with snow-white fur,** nestled in the snow.

*Write your own example below.*

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## **PARTICIPLE BRUSH STROKE**

Participle brush strokes are participles (verbs with -ing or -ed) used at the beginning or the end of the sentence. (They are not used as the predicate of the sentence.)

The moose charged him again, using her head and front hooves, slamming him back and down into the water. – Gary Paulsen

Examples:

Roaring a loud warning screech, the elephant charged the lions. (participle brush stroke phrase)

Trailing, tracking, accelerating, the cheetah gained on the injured zebra. (3 participles used together for effect)

*Write your own example below.*

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## **ADJECTIVES OUT OF ORDER BRUSH STROKE**

Adjectives add detail to sentences, but often a string of three adjectives together sounds like a list. Experienced writers often shift some adjectives away from the usual before the noun position, to put them after the noun. This breaks up a string of adjectives and is called the adjective out of order brush stroke.

More tormentors, Buck decided, for they were evil-looking creatures, ragged and unkempt. – Jack London

Examples:

The **angry** elephant, **monstrous and fierce**, charged the lions.

The **metal** steam shovel, **large and powerful**, dug into the ground.

*Write your own example below.*

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## ***ACTION VERB BRUSH STROKE***

### **Being Verbs**

Being verbs are forms of the verb to be: is, was, were, are, am and others. They are necessary in writing, but replacing them with action verbs makes your writing stronger and more vivid for your reader.

### **Action Verbs**

Action verbs are like engines. They move noun images into action as in these examples: "The car screeched. The dog howled. The eagle soared."

The Bumpas women, their lank hair streaming down their red necks, **cackled** fiendishly. – *Jean Shepherd*

### **Examples:**

The elephant **attacked** the lions.

The cold wind **whipped** along the back side of the tent.

*Write your own example below.*

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## ***USING BRUSH STROKES***

Many writers add brush strokes or combine sentences to create brush strokes during the revising stage of the writing process. When you get comfortable using the brush strokes, try adding in one or two to your rough drafts as you revise. Not only will your writing sound much more sophisticated, but you will help your reader really experience your description with more sensory detail.