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SENTENCING

A **sentence** is a single thought or idea expressed through words. Declarative sentences—statements—are the most common type, and come in two flavors: passive and active. Writers sometimes call these two types *showing* sentences and *telling* sentences. *Showing* sentences give the reader sensory images. *Telling* sentences give the reader abstract ideas.

Does that make your head spin? Don't worry. There is an easier, much more interesting and useful way of looking at sentences. All you have to remember for this course is that most sentences are either **movie sentences** or **concept sentences**. Movie sentences create images, sounds, smells, feelings and tastes in the reader's imagination. Concept sentences convey ideas or things that can't be pictured.

Which type of sentence is each of the following? Circle one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|---------|
| 1. The rocket ship flashed across the night sky. | MOVIE | CONCEPT |
| 2. Hydrogen is extremely flammable. | MOVIE | CONCEPT |
| 3. Jill's puppy loves bacon. | MOVIE | CONCEPT |
| 4. Jill's puppy barks and wags its tail whenever she cooks bacon. | MOVIE | CONCEPT |
| 5. The man was angry. | MOVIE | CONCEPT |
| 6. Mr. Smith threw a brick through his garage window. | MOVIE | CONCEPT |

Turn these concept sentences into movie sentences by using images, sounds, etc. to convey the original concept. For instance:

Frank was really hot. *Sweat poured down Frank's forehead.*

7. My aunt's cooking is gross. _____

8. Rich Mullins wrote great music. _____

9. Frank's grandfather was unhappy. _____

10. Milford McAfanaffie always does dumb stuff. _____

STUDENT BOOK

Under most circumstances, would the following sentences give us *too much* information or *not enough* information? Write “too much” or “not enough” next to each sentence.

11. _____ Eskimos are cool.
12. _____ The police officer fired twice at the fleeing suspect, then holstered his pistol and slid behind the wheel of his new squad car, which was equipped with a cool new computer that was connected to the Internet.
13. _____ Abraham Lincoln had a weird life.
14. _____ Janet had gorgeous hair, mostly because she inherited genetically balanced follicles that distributed the red pigment proteins latent in her subdural glands evenly across her scalp, but also because her Uncle Fred worked for a cosmetologist and was able to give her expensive shampoo.

Now rewrite these four sentences so they are *enough* to create the intended emotion, but not so much that the emotion becomes lost or ineffective.

For example:

Not enough Real yams are different.

Different from what—fake yams? What makes a yam “real” and how is it different anyway?

Too much What most North Americans call a yam is really a sweet potato and is not even in the same plant family as the true yam, eaten in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania, especially in seasons when food is scarce, and which can grow up to 4.9 feet long and weigh up to 154 pounds, and which have tough skin; whereas sweet potatoes taste sweet, have smooth skin, and can even be poisonous.

This very long sentence contains so much information it sounds like an encyclopedia—and that’s because I wrote it using Wikipedia! Most Americans only need to know how yams and sweet potatoes are different, not everything about them.

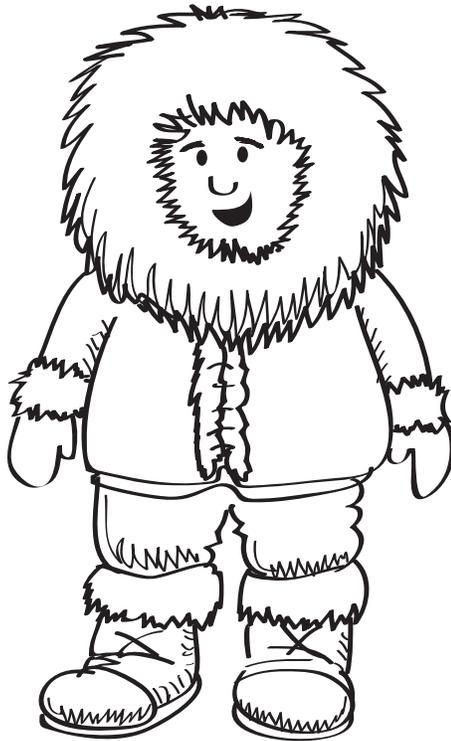
Enough What most North Americans call a yam is really a sweet potato and is not even in the same plant family; true yams are much bigger, have tough skin, and do not taste sweet.

This sentence does not trouble to describe sweet potatoes because North Americans already know what sweet potatoes are.

COVER STORY

15. Eskimos are cool.

16. The police officer fired twice at the fleeing suspect, then holstered his pistol and slid behind the wheel of his new squad car, which was equipped with a cool new computer that was connected to the Internet.



17. Abraham Lincoln had a weird life.

18. Janet had gorgeous hair, mostly because she inherited genetically balanced follicles that distributed the red pigment proteins latent in her subdural glands evenly across her scalp, but also because her Uncle Fred worked for a cosmetologist and was able to give her expensive shampoo.

