

Let Me Help You

Sell Your Homework

12-Week Course of Study:

*24 Ways to Write
Articles*

Lesson 8

**Alternating statement/quote
Alternating action/reflection**

By Professor Dick Bohrer, M.Sc., M.A.

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24 Ways to
Sell Your Homework:
Articles

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ALTERNATING STATEMENT AND QUOTE

Give most men a platform and they will give a speech.

Men of all descriptions used to line sidewalks in city parks to denounce the world to passersby. Politicians, clergymen, professors, businessmen—name the trade and you'll find people with opinions and people with messages to give to mankind.

The enterprising feature writer looks and listens. He keys his mind to look for the essential news ingredient of the assignment he has given himself (or the assignment his editor has given him). What is the NEWS? In four-five-six words, he should be able to identify what the world needs to know.

He makes notes of who is speaking, where, when, why. He lists key points. He jots down quotes. (Oh, for the writer who knows shorthand or speed-writing!) He senses audience reaction. He looks for color—mannerisms, gestures, twitches from the speaker. He looks for emotion from the crowd and stars his notes at expressions of laughter or anger or deep silence from the crowd. He notes decorations on the walls, the time, the exits, police control, seating arrangements.

It's your business as a writer to be a

sponge. You drink in everything. Your mother told you never to stare. Forget her! You stare! And eavesdrop. You want audience reaction? Interview the people sitting around you or those loitering in the restroom.

And look for interesting angles so that, when you sit at your word processor, you'll have a launching pad to help you start.

Alternating statement and quote is the technique you use when you report what someone said. It's the way television interviewers go about it. They tell you what someone did or said. Then they'll bring in an action shot of that person saying something that supports the statement. Then they'll make another statement and bring on the quote.

As you cover the event (assuming you have no recorder with you) write down summaries of what the speaker is saying and in parentheses put his quote. Try to get the quote word for word. Develop a system of symbols so you don't have to write a long word out. If you're covering a political speaker, use capital C for Constitution. If you are in church, use capital R for righteousness. Use “=” for “is.” Prctc wrtg wtht vwls. That will speed you up.

On your way back home to your word processor, use the time to compose your first sentence so that by the time you get there you'll know how you want to begin and can ready-set-go get started.

Your lead sentence will usually be a summary statement—unless you've caught a good angle that's even better. You can use a shocker—a short, blistering attack or a short statement of fact that will crystallize all that was said.

John Jones has made football his god.

You've got short, sharp syllables in a simple sentence here.

It reads well. It's staccato. It attracts attention because it's almost all nouns and verbs.

If you are going to expose someone or some thing, keep your lead brisk. If you're merely reporting what was said in a fairly routine speech, don't be so abrupt. In that case bring snatches of the speech into the lead so we get the speaker's opinion as well as your setting of the scene.

The lead tells the direction of the speech. It lets the reader know what's up. It's weak to have the whole first sentence be a quote because the reader has no idea who said it, when, where and why. That's why a half quote or snatches of quote worked into the setting are better. Those snatches should

show strong opinion.

Leilani Stumpf, Philadelphia psychiatrist, says juvenile delinquency "would be cut in half" if mothers made more kids eat liver.

Phatsheedra Phillpott, mother of boxer Felipe Phillpott, says her son "never, ever" took drugs.

Your second sentence should tell the who, what, where, when, why, how—not all, necessarily, but certainly some. This way the reader knows that you're giving a speech report.

Speaking at the Lynchburg armory last night, Mrs. Phillpott told a Juvenile Athletes of America convention that

Do include those important W's in the early part of your article.

Once past the lead, develop the main theme of the speech. You've crystallized it in the lead itself. Now begin spelling it out. It will help immensely if you have written an outline.

If the speaker covered two main items, present the two in the next paragraph. Then explain what he said about the one for several paragraphs before turning to the other.

If he covered three, use the same technique.

In the rest of the article, you will cover the specifics of what he said. You have two choices. You can give

his quote first and then summarize what he meant and where he went with it. Or you can present what he was talking about followed by a supporting and expanding quote.

To repeat—to make sure you’ve got this technique down—following your opening W’s, begin presenting the speech.

Begin your first point with either a summary statement or a quote depending on which method you have chosen to use. Let’s say you will begin with a summary. Considering the intended length of the feature, decide on how many paragraphs you want to use to present what he had to say. Follow that up with a quote that supports but does NOT repeat what you’ve just written. Let the quote amplify your point or give reasons for your point or other ramifications of the point.

Now, when you have one speaker like this, you don’t need to append “he said” to every sentence or to every paragraph.

If it’s a quote, it’s obvious that your speaker said it because there’s no one else in this story.

And remember, you can use indirect quotes as well as direct ones. The difference, of course, is that you don’t use quotation marks. With these, you will need tags so that the reader doesn’t confuse this kind of quote with remarks YOU might be making as you summarize the speech.

Indirect quote is very good for

longer summaries of the speech or if you are presenting one of his illustrations.

Tags don’t only go at the end of a sentence or paragraph. They go well early on—after the first few words.

Boxers eat garlic, she said, because they think it makes their hair thicken out and turn shiny black.

Indirect quotes can start with the source.

Now, compare the next two sentences:

She said that she used to feed Felipe lots of clams.

She said she used to feed Felipe lots of clams.

Such sentences not only start with the source, but they also show they read better without the “that.” Let the rhythm of the words in your sentence determine whether you’ll use “that.”

Professional writers work a lot on rhythm. They’re very conscious how their sentences sound. Do read your articles aloud before you send them in. If they read smoothly—if they could be a script for a radio announcer or storyteller—you’re halfway home.

When sentences are awkward, change them. Remember, your prose is not inspired. You won’t lose anything if you change it. You’ll better it and make it more saleable if it reads well.

It’s important to use direct quotes where you want to present what the

person actually said. If the quote runs several paragraphs (remember, no more than three sentences to a paragraph and many, many paragraphs are no longer than one sentence in length), then begin each paragraph with quotation marks. Do not put in close quotations until the last word of the total quote. This shows us that the speaker is still going from paragraph to paragraph. The final close quotes show he's finished.

Much of this is obvious to experienced writers. But many beginners will be using this book and it's important they know the secrets.

Alternating statement and quote gives you direction. It's an easy way to write speech reports, book reports—any kind of review. It shows you've done your homework as a writer, and it lets the speaker or the author or the performer speak for himself.

Now, alternating statement and quote can also be used for covering interviews and any kind of event where people have something to say about what went on. Look at this report. It appeared in the newspaper under the headline, "Night prowler brings terror."

FEDERAL WAY, Wash. (AP) -- A prowler who taps on windows with a key and traces patterns with a flashlight outside children's bedroom windows is terrorizing three families in this south King County suburb. (Statement)

"The kids won't go anywhere day or night," one woman said. "They

need an escort to the bathroom." (Quote)

"As soon as it gets dark, everyone freezes up," said one man who lives in the Brigadoon area. "Our ears go to fine-tune. As soon as we relax, that turkey comes." (Quote)

"Now we're suspicious of every phone call, everyone who walks down the street, every car that slows down," a neighbor said. (Quote)

Another added: "One night after he'd been pounding, I found my daughter curled up like a ball on her bed, shaking, afraid to tell me what had happened." (Quote)

The intruder began visiting the neighborhood in July, the families say, and more recently the prowler has been reported to be pounding on windows and walls, breaking at least one window, plus walking on rooftops and running through several houses in the middle of the night. (Statement)

He always gets away when police and private citizens give chase, residents say. (Statement)

King County police say they have spent 200 man-hours on the case. (Statement)

"Right now we can't prove or disprove anything," said Capt. George Helland, commander of the Southeast Precinct. "But we don't intend to stop. We want to end it." (Quote)

One woman says she got a good

look at the prowler in her garage one night when she turned on the light. (Statement)

She describes him as 6 feet tall, about 35 years old, clean-shaven, with dark hair and white tennis shoes. (Statement)

“And the eyes, they were different,” she said. “Cold, confident. He just stared at me. Then he ran out.” (Quote)

Plainclothes and uniformed officers have spent hours sitting in living rooms and patrolling backyards. A police dog has been used, too. (Statement)

“All we know is, those people are truly scared,” Helland said. “They do hear noises, and we aren’t planning on stopping our work until we find out what or who is causing them.” (Quote)

“We don’t know what he wants, but we can’t let him run us out,” one man said. “That would give him great satisfaction, I think.” (Quote)

Some residents have strung wires across their yards. As many as six men have patrolled the neighborhood with shotguns, clubs and machetes. (Statement)

“We asked them to stop that,” Helland said. “Someone could get hurt.” (Quote)

See how this works? It reads very naturally. It provides all the information you could want. The summaries

provide a kind of narrative flow. They unify the whole article together because they show someone is telling a story. It’s as if a viewpoint character is narrating fiction.

It’s very professional.

So, what can you do with this technique?

As mentioned already, it will work for any kind of review.

It works for action stories where people can be quoted. It would work for a hearing where a judge is questioning a felon. It could work for a scientist’s report of new findings in his field. It would work for a report of a pastor’s Sunday morning sermon. It could work for coverage of a Parent-Teachers Association meeting or a union meeting—any kind of meeting where the public would be interested in what went on.

The feature writer, remember, is the paper on the wall. He/she tells everything—the atmosphere as well as the facts.

Alternating statement and quote is the technique that provides the nuts and bolts so that you, the writer, can really pull this off.

This is the perfect structure to use when you have conducted research. You find the main point, the thesis statement, first. Then you support it with your findings, using the statement and quote method to present them. You reduce to a few words (however many

you need) what your source gave you and then you support it with a quote from that source.

If you are working under the direction of an editor, find out how many words he wants you to use in your article. Usually, he will tell you in his response to your query.

Now, let's take a strong article that's full of dogmatic and/or colorful statements and let's write a review.

In your first paragraph identify the speaker, the article, the source and, most important of all, tell the essential thesis of the article.

What is the author's most significant point?

You may wish to put the strong point in the first sentence of the article and the 5Ws next or you might want to reverse that order, putting the source material after the 5Ws.

Both ways are perfectly fine.

You just need to develop a sense of what works best for you, and you must remember your first paragraph must hook the interest of the reader.

Then, either support that strong statement in the lead with a quote-summary-quote sequence or you restate the essential point and follow it with his quote.

You may let your author provide the specific in his quote and your own summary statement then would summarize that point.

The warning is that you must avoid the trap, let me repeat. Don't use the same words in the statement that the author uses in the quote.

That gives the reader the feeling he's reading the same material twice. You be general and let the author be specific.

For practice, study the following article.

We published it more than 20 years ago when I was senior editor of "Moody Monthly" magazine.

It reflects the thinking of that time when Russia, still a major power, invaded Afghanistan.

Using what you know now of world affairs—that although Russia is no longer seen as a threat to Israel, God's Word stands true—write a then-and-now review of this article to point up international expectations.

Your first sentence could go like this:

When Edgar C. James published his article, "The USSR: Is It Prophecy's Northern Confederacy?" in Moody Monthly magazine in 1980, Russia had just then invaded Afghanistan in what was viewed as "the beginning of the last days" before the great war of Armageddon.

Use alternating statement and quote as you reduce this article to a review.

THE USSR: IS IT PROPHECY'S NORTHERN CONFEDERACY?

By Edgar C. James
Moody Monthly (magazine), Oct. 1980

Russia's invasion of Afghanistan and its moves in Iran could signal the beginning of the last days by triggering the great war of Armageddon.

Afghanistan may be but one link in Russia's goal to control world oil supplies. From there she is only 350 miles from the straits of the Persian Gulf, through which passes 40 percent of the world's crude oil. From Iran she can control oil fields and the entire Persian Gulf. . . .

Twenty-five centuries ago, the Bible prophesied that a great Northern Confederacy would march into the Middle East during Israel's "latter years," the time when she would exist as a nation and under world protection so she could dwell in "unwalled villages." Is the Soviet Union this Northern Confederacy?

God told Ezekiel to set his face against "Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh" (Ezek. 38:2 NASB). Although these names seem strange to us, Bishop Lowth, a Hebrew scholar, says that "Rosh, taken as a proper name, signifies the inhabitants of Scythia, from which the modern Russians derive their name" (John Cumming, *The Destiny of Nations*).

So Ezekiel's message is against Gog, the symbolic leader of the land

of Magog—the people of Russia.

This confederacy

will come from the "remote parts of the North" (Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2 NASB). Moscow is on the exact longitude as Jerusalem.

What other nations will be confederate with Russia?

According to Ezek. 38:5, one is Libya, an African state far removed from Russia geographically but united with her in foreign policy. Another is Ethiopia, which used to be committed to the west but today is aligned with Russia. A third is Persia—now the country of Iran. Scripture predicts Iran will be lined up with Russia as world end-time events come to a head. Could we be seeing the alignment predicted by Ezekiel?

Until recently, few recognized the economic wealth of the Middle East and Israel. Few, that is, except Ezekiel. He prophesied that the greedy Northern Confederacy will come to take a "spoil from the land" (Ezek. 38:12, 13). Russia needs this area for self-preservation. Her Baltic sea-ports are frozen most of the year. If Russia is to have a warm-water port, it must be the Persian Gulf and Middle East in order to protect her commerce.

Soviet intention

to control the Middle East is clearly stated in Russian documents.

The Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, signed in November, 1940, agreed that “the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union.” Is it any wonder Russia is on the march?

Ezekiel says Russia is coming because of the spoil of the land. Throughout the centuries the Middle East has had great wealth such as agriculture in Egypt, dates in Saudi Arabia, cedars in Lebanon. But why would a nation with the natural resources of Russia want these?

It wouldn't. But with the discovery of oil, the Middle East suddenly took on an entirely new significance. The nations that control oil control the world.

Surprisingly,

the largest oil producer in the world today is the Soviet Union (Forbes, October, 15, 1979). She even supplies oil to the European Iron Curtain countries. But Russia's oil is running out. New reserves are not being discovered and the wells now being drilled lie in western Siberia, a difficult and expensive area to drill.

Where is she going to get more? The only obvious answer is the Middle East. Russia borders Iran. From there she could easily move into the Persian Gulf and then into Israel.

Yet why would a world super-power be interested in a country smaller than the state of New Jersey and not known for oil? Although only small amounts of petroleum have been discovered in the land, some experts believe the marine shelf off Israel's Mediterranean shore may have more. And Israel's boundaries may change and encompass some oil fields.

One day, during the millenium, the tribe of Asher will “dip his foot in oil” (Deut. 33:24).

Another reason

is the Dead Sea, one of the richest chemical beds in the world. It contains immense quantities of potash, bromine, magnesium, and other treasures. Potash is a nourishing fertilizer, essential for a nation like Russia that must import so much grain.

Bromine is important in pharmaceuticals and gasoline. Magnesium is used in aluminum alloys, important in airplane construction and for war gases and explosives.

The Dead Sea also could offer oil. Israeli scientists have discovered in the water and salt flats the halophilic algae *Dunaliella*, which can be converted into petroleum. It is possible that huge “oil farms” may develop in areas south of the Dead Sea.

The Dead Sea also may produce huge amounts of electricity. Experts

envision a channel and tunnel arrangement that would pour the Mediterranean water into the Dead Sea (National Geographic, February, 1978), becoming a major source of hydroelectric power.

If Russia could control Israel, she would gain important military bases and control of the Mediterranean Sea. Israel would further provide the land bridge between the Middle East and Africa.

Whether or not she realizes it, Russia's interest in Israel ties into Israel's relationship to a great Western Confederacy. According to prophecy, Israel will be protected by a western bloc of nations, a bloc which will be controlled by the Antichrist and which will make a covenant with Israel, giving her religious sanctions for a short time (Dan. 9:27). Could it be that Russia will try to threaten such a great superpower by attacking Israel?

Surprising things will happen when Russia moves against Israel. Instead of letting Israel fight and defend herself, God will utterly destroy this confederacy on the mountains of Palestine. He will rain upon Russia "an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ezek. 38:22).

The land will shake so that even the mountains will be thrown down and the steep places and walls will fall to the ground (Ezek. 38:20). Civil

war will break out for every man's sword will be against his brother (Ezek. 38:21).

The Lord Himself will destroy this nation because of her greed and because she came against His chosen people. Although God is a God of love, He is also a God of holiness and justice. He therefore must judge sin. He must also judge all who come against Him.

Why will God destroy this Northern Confederacy? Ezekiel answers plainly: to magnify and sanctify the Lord. He will be "known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek. 38:23). God's purpose then as now is to glorify Himself.

Already a huge diplomatic and military build-up along the Arabian Sea is turning the Middle East into a fortress. The Soviet news agency Tass said recently events could lead "to a war in the Persian Gulf area" (Chicago Tribune, April 26, 1980).

Many believe we are on the brink of Armageddon. Work for Christ needs to be done now.

The article is long, but it is full of strong opinion. Dr. James was on the faculty of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago when he wrote the article. He was a professor of Bible and theology and he has written the book: *Arabs, Oil, and Energy* (Moody Press).

It's important when you analyze a writer's style with a view to reviewing

it that you look for the place in each paragraph where he puts his point. Dr. James usually makes the first sentence in his paragraphs a kind of topic sentence. He says something and then he expands on what he said. Knowing this, you can take a yellow felt-tip marker and highlight his major points. That will help you analyze the article better.

Some authors will use the diamond method and build up to their main point at the middle of a paragraph and then explain or expand on it in the rest of the paragraph. They may take a whole section to do this.

Others will build up through the paragraph or section to the statement that summarizes their point. This is the pyramid method we'll get to in a later chapter.

Remember now, you will alternate statement and quote. Your statements and quotes may be more than one paragraph long; but, since you're writing a review, you should confine your paragraphs to one or two or three sentences each. You should not go to much more than seven or eight manuscript-length lines of type per paragraph.

This is contrary to formal English. Teachers like you to write long paragraphs that fully expand your main point. But you are writing for publication. Editors like lots of white space. Short paragraphs are easier to read.

If you develop a flair for this kind of

writing, research the editors who print reports in their magazines and newspapers. Write them and offer your services. Send them copies of reviews you've written.

But the secret of success is that you've got to think. Learning writing techniques is not enough.

You've GOT to think!

Now there's another angle to alternating statement and quote. It's the alternating statement and example.

Dorothy Van Ark in a story for Parents' Magazine and later picked up by Reader's Digest, used this method in her article, "Who Says Kids Want to Be Understood?" She makes a flat statement and then illustrates her point by retelling a story that fits.

She began by saying that we hear so much about understanding our kids, but what we fail to understand is that it's important to misunderstand them.

For her example she told how she had commiserated with her oldest daughter on the advent of her first heartbreak.

I was so sympathetic that I ruined half her fun in suffering.

With her younger daughter she just told her there would be plenty of other boys in her life and in so saying plunged her "into delicious despair" and gave her the opportunity to say, "Oh, *Mother*, you just don't understand."

That gave Dorothy the transition into her next point:

The truth is, children don't want to be understood.

Her son jumped on her when she sympathized with him for not making a team. The next year he jumped on her again when she dismissed it as not important.

In a crisis he simply begs for misunderstanding—so he can take it out on me instead of himself.

She examines the frustration of a teenage girl whose mother doesn't misunderstand her. Then she says that fathers can help by misunderstanding the boys in the family.

I'll even stand up for the big, important misunderstandings that we are told can mark children for life. Why, without one of these to brood over, a child might never amount to a hill of beans.

She uses the anguish her daughter endured when her favorite kitten of the 12 in the house went to the pound and was given away before she could retrieve it. It was then that daughter vowed to leave home and become an actress. And sure enough, she eventually did.

Her four-year-old stole a pack of gum and she made her take it back and confess to the manager. Years later, the girl told her mother, "You don't have

to worry about my not knowing what's right and wrong. I'll never forget that as long as I live."

Dorothy's next statement is:

We're urged to be so understanding that we sometimes even fail to show our shock over what is wrong.

She illustrates that with a story from her own childhood when she used a naughty word in front of her grandmother. The shock and chagrin it caused impressed her.

She ends the article by giving up grieving over the constant friction between her and the teen who wants to feel persecuted because she's working up her courage to leave home.

Birds push their young out of the nest, but we work more subtly by giving them the incentive to fly away. Perhaps by misunderstanding we're being most understanding.

The strength of the article comes from both the strong, declarative statements of fact and the illustrative examples of her justification for feeling that way.

Alternating statement and example works.

Use it.

Speak with authority. Then support that with good examples.

GRAMMAR

Item: Verbs agree with their subject in number, whether the subject comes before the verb or following it.

There were giants in the land.

From the house in all directions stretches a lovely park

Verbs agree with their subject in number.

Item: A word that is plural in form but names a single object or idea takes a singular verb.

Four miles is too far to walk tonight, Charlie.

Twenty-eight points is often what it takes to win in the Rose Bowl.

Item: Two singular subjects connected by *OR* or *NOR* take a singular verb.

Neither Jack nor Jill wants to run up the hill.

Either Tom or Harry is going to run in their place.

Item: A verb does not agree with its predicate noun (subjective complement) in number. Don't be fooled by the noun that sits behind the linking verb. Only the subject controls the number of the verb.

Tonsillitis is pains in the throat.

The punishment he disliked most was the chains around his ankles.

Item: When a compound subject contains both plural and singular words, the verb agrees in number with the subject noun nearest it.

Neither two crutches nor one ski instructor is going to keep me from skiing again.

ALTERNATING ACTION AND REFLECTION

This alternating device is too good to let go.

It also works VERY well when you wish to show an analytical character who acts and thinks at the same time.

This kind of story will usually be told in first person.

The hero blasts off into orbit and then explains why he did what he did. As he continues the action, he comes to realize he was wrong or pre-mature or insane or too doubting or

The article ends when he comes back to his launching pad, determined to make a better effort next time. You could do this about a person who quits the team and goes off in a huff. Or it could examine a domestic tragedy. Or it could be about a corporation executive who can't live with a decision, but then he comes back to give it another try.

Read this sample and then write an article of your own, using an incident in your life when you did this same thing.

ESCAPE FROM A BLUE WORLD

by Noreen Todd

Action

“Where are you going?”

“Out!” I shouted back, trying to block out the sound of my mother’s voice. I had to get out and be by myself and I rushed out the door before she had a chance to call me back.

It was cold and the first snow of November had fallen. I pulled my sweater down over my hands because I’d left my mittens at home. Nobody else was on the street, so I let out a sigh of relief at finally being able to think by myself. I felt so confused.

Reflection

When had it all started? The fights, the nagging, and finally last night the slap across the face. Why did she hate me—and I her?

But did I really hate her?

Action

I kicked through a small drift of snow and turned the corner. The next street was empty except for a little dog.

I called to him, and he ran up and sniffed my hands. I petted his wet, icy fur and tickled him under his chin. Someone up the street whistled, and my little friend scampered off.

I stood looking after him, enveloped in the white smoke my breath made. Feeling the cold, I moved on.

Reflection

We had moved that summer from a town that I loved. My mother had got a job and it tired her out. Coming home exhausted at night, she'd notice only the wrong things.

She didn't notice the dinner I'd made; only the laundry I'd forgotten. I had problems adjusting to a new school, but she wouldn't listen, so I'd just cry at night.

She asked me why I was so moody. I didn't know.

Action

I was startled when I felt something cold and wet on my hand. The little dog was back at my side. He wagged his tail furiously and danced around my feet.

I picked up a stick and threw it for him.

He ran and proudly returned it to me. I threw it again and again until we both tired of the game.

"Let's go, boy," I called as I began jogging down the street, the little dog running at my side.

Reflection

It hadn't been so bad at first. I could understand that everybody feels grouchy at times. I didn't do everything she wanted me to, but I was in a new school and I wanted to belong.

I felt I needed to spend more time away from home until I'd made friends.

Wasn't my happiness more important than clean dishes?

Action

We had reached the end of the street, and it was so cold my fingers were turning blue. I didn't want to go back home, but it was too late to go visit a friend.

The church bells rang ten times and I thought of going to see my minister. But suddenly I felt embarrassed. It was my problem, and I had to solve it.

I turned around and slowly walked back home.

Reflection

Ten chimes from the church bells made me think of the ten commandments, especially the one that said to honor your mother and father.

What if your parents didn't honor you? Wasn't there anything in the Bible about that?

I wished then that I had taken time to read the Bible. It probably held the answer to my problem.

Lately, I had been doubting whether there was a God. My world was so blue, and what had God done to make it better?

I was standing there cold and alone in the middle of the street, afraid to go home. I wanted to be home again so badly. I wanted to feel warmth and happiness there.

Action

The wind howled and blew snow in my face.

I looked up and around at my surroundings. The black, bare trees were silhouetted against the white snow of the hill behind my house. I caught a glimpse of moving deer at the ridge of the hill.

The little dog barked as a couple of birds fluttered out of the woods next to me. The whole street was a scene of quiet, winter peace. I'd never noticed how pretty my neighborhood was.

I thought how nice it must be in the spring with the wild flowers and birds. God hadn't forgotten me here as He was creating His beauty.

Reflection

Suddenly I didn't feel so cold anymore. I no longer felt the sting where my mother had hit me.

Maybe the loss of dignity had hurt more. It was my problem and I had to do something. I couldn't wait around holding a grudge. That wouldn't help anything.

What was it they said in church about forgiving those who wronged you? Why hadn't I paid attention before? I'd heard it Sunday after Sunday but I'd never really listened.

I'm listening now.

Action

I rushed up the street and, hesitating slightly at the door, went into my house. My mother was downstairs and I went to her.

She looked up with a cold expression on her face, but it warmed up when she saw my smile. She asked me where I had been.

"I was out walking and thinking," I answered. "How was your day at work?"

"Tiring," she said wearily.

Reflection

I realized then that I'd never even asked her how her job was or how anything was with her.

Suddenly I felt the wall between us crumbling.

Action

"You just rest," I smiled. "I'll take care of everything."

See how smoothly that pattern works? And do you know what heightens the emotion? She used very few adjectives and adverbs. This very tight writing makes it a prize-winner.

Now, you go and do likewise.

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GRAMMAR

DIRECTIONS: Circle each adverb and cross out each prepositional phrase in the following paragraphs:

Late, after family devotions, Timmy loudly clambered up the stairs to Grandpa's old room, pulled the white sheet and coverlet down and sleepily hoisted himself up and in.

The wind souged through the branches by his window and his eyelids drooped low. A cricket sawed against the boards of night. The wind softened to a vagrant stir among the leaves. The moon edged slowly out its door behind the hill and the cricket chirped again.

The moon had almost slipped away when Grandma stretched upon her bed near the stove downstairs. Her tabby cat yawned and curled again to sleep. The old woman kneeled to pray beside her bed and then stood in her slippers

and wrapped her robe around her. The darkened room was graying near the sills where tips of morning light were seeping under the shades. The rose-glow of the pot-bellied stove, banked the night before, wrapped a cozy warmth around the family room.

Grandma shuffled to the sink and lifted a metal dipper to the lip of the old pump that was rooted to her drain-board. She splashed a gargle of water down its throat and pumped the handle up and down, up and down. With a creek-crawk, it rasped against the morning stillness until it gushed up a bucketful of cold well-water. As the smell of perking coffee filtered through the house, Grandma lifted the shades

and pushed aside the curtains to let the morning shine fill the room (*Easy English*, p. 106).

ANSWERS: Adverbs: late, loudly, sleepily, low, down, up, in, slowly, again, almost, away, down-stairs, again, before, up, down, up, down, up, aside.

Prepositional phrases: after family devotions, up the stairs, to Grandpa's old room, through the branches, by his window, against the boards, of night, to a vagrant stir, among the leaves, out its door, behind the hill, upon her bed, near the stove, beside her bed, in her slippers, around her, near the sills, of morning light, under the shades, of the pot-bellied stove, around the family room, to the sink, to the lip, of the old pump, to her drain-board, with a creek-crawk, against the morning stillness, of cold well-water, of perking coffee, through the house.