

WEEK 1: REVIEW: NARRATIVE SUMMARIES AND THREE-LEVEL OUTLINES

Day One: Review Narrative Summaries



Focus: Writing a brief narrative summary

Remember: you are responsible for reading and following the instructions! Your instructor is available to check your work, and to help if you have difficulty, but you should be able to do most of your work independently.

STEP ONE: Review narrative summaries

Now that you're into the third level of this course, you should be thoroughly familiar with the most basic form of expository writing—the narrative summary.

Since this is your first day back to this writing program, you'll warm up your writing muscles (just in case they're a little stiff from disuse) by working on a brief narrative summary.

As you studied last year, a narrative summary boils a passage down to its most basic information by eliminating all unnecessary details. There are two sets of questions that you might find useful when writing a narrative summary.

For a passage of description: *What does the passage describe? What are the two or three most important parts of the description? What do they do?*

For a series of events: *What happens at the beginning of the passage? What happens next? What happens at the end?*

Last year, you learned that narrative summaries serve a couple of different purposes. Practicing narrative summaries teaches you to write succinctly and powerfully. And the summaries themselves can become useful parts of longer papers.

STEP TWO: **Prepare**

Now you'll prepare to write a narrative summary of an excerpt from the classic novel *The Count of Monte Cristo*, by Alexandre Dumas. Read the passage below *carefully*. If you come across unfamiliar words, circle them in pencil and keep on going. Go back and look up the strange words once you've finished your reading.

This passage comes near the beginning of the novel. The young French sailor Edmond Dantes has been unjustly arrested and thrown into prison at the infamous island fortress of Chateau d'If. He has been alone in his cell for six years, and so far as he knows, he will remain imprisoned for life, with no trial and no chance to declare his innocence.

Dantes knows that there is another prisoner in the cell beside him, but the walls are thick, and for six years, he has seen no one except his jailer. He is on the edge of absolute despair when he hears a sound deep in the wall and realizes that his neighbor is trying to chisel through the stones.

The possibility that he might see another human being gives him sudden hope. But then the sound of scratching stops. And although he spends hours with his ear pressed against the wall, he hears nothing more . . .

— — —

Three days passed—seventy-two long tedious hours which he counted off by minutes!

At length one evening, as the jailer was visiting him for the last time that night, Dantes, with his ear for the hundredth time at the wall, fancied he heard an almost imperceptible movement among the stones. He moved away, walked up and down his cell to collect his thoughts, and then went back and listened.

The matter was no longer doubtful. Something was at work on the other side of the wall; the prisoner had discovered the danger, and had substituted a lever for a chisel.

Encouraged by this discovery, Edmond determined to assist the indefatigable laborer. He began by moving his bed, and looked around for anything with which he could pierce the wall, penetrate the moist cement, and displace a stone.

He saw nothing, he had no knife or sharp instrument, the window grating was of iron, but he had too often assured himself of its solidity. All his furniture consisted of a bed, a chair, a table, a pail, and a jug. The bed had iron clamps, but they were screwed to the wood, and it would have required a screw-driver to take them off. The table and chair had nothing, the pail had once possessed a handle, but that had been removed.

Dantes had but one resource, which was to break the jug, and with one of the sharp fragments attack the wall. He let the jug fall on the floor, and it broke in pieces.

Dantes concealed two or three of the sharpest fragments in his bed, leaving the rest on the floor. The breaking of his jug was too natural an accident to

excite suspicion. Edmond had all the night to work in, but in the darkness he could not do much, and he soon felt that he was working against something very hard; he pushed back his bed, and waited for day.

All night he heard the subterranean workman, who continued to mine his way. Day came, the jailer entered. Dantes told him that the jug had fallen from his hands while he was drinking, and the jailer went grumblingly to fetch another, without giving himself the trouble to remove the fragments of the broken one. He returned speedily, advised the prisoner to be more careful, and departed.

Dantes heard joyfully the key grate in the lock; he listened until the sound of steps died away, and then, hastily displacing his bed, saw by the faint light that penetrated into his cell, that he had labored uselessly the previous evening in attacking the stone instead of removing the plaster that surrounded it.

The damp had rendered it friable, and Dantes was able to break it off—in small morsels, it is true, but at the end of half an hour he had scraped off a handful; a mathematician might have calculated that in two years, supposing that the rock was not encountered, a passage twenty feet long and two feet broad, might be formed.

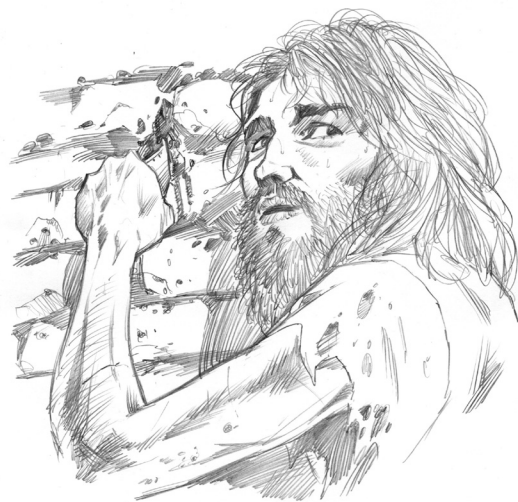
The prisoner reproached himself with not having thus employed the hours he had passed in vain hopes, prayer, and despondency. During the six years that he had been imprisoned, what might he not have accomplished?

In three days he had succeeded, with the utmost precaution, in removing the cement, and exposing the stone-work. The wall was built of rough stones, among which, to give strength to the structure, blocks of hewn stone were at intervals imbedded. It was one of these he had uncovered, and which he must remove from its socket.

Dantes strove to do this with his nails, but they were too weak. The fragments of the jug broke, and after an hour of useless toil, he paused.

Was he to be thus stopped at the beginning, and was he to wait inactive until his fellow workman had completed his task? Suddenly an idea occurred to him—he smiled, and the perspiration dried on his forehead.

The jailer always brought Dantes' soup in an iron saucepan; this saucepan contained soup for both prisoners, for Dantes had noticed that it was either quite full, or half empty, according as the turnkey gave it to him or to his companion first.



The handle of this saucepan was of iron; Dantes would have given ten years of his life in exchange for it.

The jailer was accustomed to pour the contents of the saucepan into Dantes' plate, and Dantes, after eating his soup with a wooden spoon, washed the plate, which thus served for every day. Now when evening came Dantes put his plate on the ground near the door; the jailer, as he entered, stepped on it and broke it.

This time he could not blame Dantes. He was wrong to leave it there, but the jailer was wrong not to have looked before him.

The jailer, therefore, only grumbled. Then he looked about for something to pour the soup into; Dantes' entire dinner service consisted of one plate—there was no alternative.

"Leave the saucepan," said Dantes; "you can take it away when you bring me my breakfast." This advice was to the jailer's taste, as it spared him the necessity of making another trip. He left the saucepan.

Dantes was beside himself with joy. He rapidly devoured his food, and after waiting an hour, lest the jailer should change his mind and return, he removed his bed, took the handle of the saucepan, inserted the point between the hewn stone and rough stones of the wall, and employed it as a lever. A slight oscillation showed Dantes that all went well. At the end of an hour the stone was extricated from the wall, leaving a cavity a foot and a half in diameter.

Dantes carefully collected the plaster, carried it into the corner of his cell, and covered it with earth. Then, wishing to make the best use of his time while he had the means of labor, he continued to work without ceasing. At the dawn of day he replaced the stone, pushed his bed against the wall, and lay down. The breakfast consisted of a piece of bread; the jailer entered and placed the bread on the table.

"Well, don't you intend to bring me another plate?" said Dantes.

"No," replied the turnkey; "you destroy everything. First you break your jug, then you make me break your plate; if all the prisoners followed your example, the government would be ruined. I shall leave you the saucepan, and pour your soup into that. So for the future I hope you will not be so destructive."

Dantes raised his eyes to heaven and clasped his hands beneath the coverlet. He felt more gratitude for the possession of this piece of iron than he had ever felt for anything. He had noticed, however, that the prisoner on the other side had ceased to labor; no matter, this was a greater reason for proceeding—if his neighbor would not come to him, he would go to his neighbor. All day he toiled on untiringly, and by the evening he had succeeded in extracting ten handfuls of plaster and fragments of stone. When the hour for his jailer's visit arrived, Dantes straightened the handle of the saucepan as well as he could, and placed it in its accustomed place. The turnkey poured his ration of soup into it, together with the fish—for thrice a week the prisoners were deprived of meat. This would have been a method of reckoning time, had not Dantes long ceased to do so.

Having poured out the soup, the turnkey retired. Dantes wished to ascertain whether his neighbor had really ceased to work. He listened—all was silent, as it had been for the last three days. Dantes sighed; it was evident that his neighbor distrusted him. However, he toiled on all the night without being discouraged; but after two or three hours he encountered an obstacle. The iron made no impression, but met with a smooth surface; Dantes touched it, and found that it was a beam. This beam crossed, or rather blocked up, the hole Dantes had made; it was necessary, therefore, to dig above or under it. The unhappy young man had not thought of this. “O my God, my God!” murmured he, “I have so earnestly prayed to you, that I hoped my prayers had been heard. After having deprived me of my liberty, after having deprived me of death, after having recalled me to existence, my God, have pity on me, and do not let me die in despair!”

“Who talks of God and despair at the same time?” said a voice that seemed to come from beneath the earth, and, deadened by the distance, sounded hollow and sepulchral in the young man’s ears. Edmond’s hair stood on end, and he rose to his knees.

“Ah,” said he, “I hear a human voice.”¹

— — —

STEP THREE: **Reread**

Now that you’ve read the passage carefully and looked up any unfamiliar words, you should read it one more time before you try to write a narrative summary.

The first time you read a passage, a chapter, or a book, you begin to understand it. But there’s no way to grasp the full meaning of any piece of writing the first time through. The author has written, revised, edited, and then probably revised and rewritten again. Each revision has been done with the ultimate end, or purpose, of the piece of writing in mind.

Here’s an example.

(If you haven’t read the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, or at least seen the movies, this might contain plot-spoilers—stop reading and ask your instructor for directions instead!)

The Lord of the Rings, by J. R. R. Tolkien, is about power, and how power changes and corrupts those who hold it. Power is symbolized by the Ring. In the first book of the trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the hobbit Bilbo has had the Ring for decades. Here’s what he says:

“I am old, Gandalf. I don’t look it, but I am beginning to feel it in my heart of hearts. *Well-preserved* indeed!” he snorted. “Why, I feel all thin, sort of *stretched*, if you know what I mean: like butter that has been scraped over too much bread. That can’t be right. I need a change, or something.”²

1. Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Vol. I (1st World Library, 2007), pp. 150–155.

2. J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Ballantine Books, 1973), p. 58.

If you're reading *The Fellowship of the Ring* for the very first time, you don't realize that Bilbo's "stretched" feeling is caused by the Ring. Only as the book goes on do you understand that the Ring is slowly making Bilbo *less and less* himself—just as it did to Gollum, who owned the ring before him. The Ring gives long life—but that long life is without meaning or significance. The second time you read *The Fellowship of the Ring*, you understand exactly what Bilbo means by *stretched* and *all thin*.

So remember this: You never really understand a piece of writing until you've read it more than once. All this year, you'll be asked to *reread* passages before you begin to work with them.

Now go read the passage from *The Count of Monte Cristo* a second time.

STEP FOUR: **Practice**

Decide whether the passage from *The Count of Monte Cristo* is a *description* or a *series of events*. (That should be easy.) Then, use the questions reviewed in Step One to write a narrative summary.

Here's a reminder: Your narrative summary should be *either* in the present *or* in the past tense. Don't mix them together!

Aim for a summary of between 70 and 120 words. To reach this word limit, you'll need to be very careful in identifying which parts of the passage are essential, and which you can leave out without confusing someone who reads your summary.

If you have trouble, ask your instructor for help. When you're finished, show your work to your instructor.

Day Two: Condensed Narrative Summaries



Focus: Shortening a narrative summary
to its briefest form

STEP ONE: **Condense**

You're going to start out today's work by condensing your summary of the passage from *The Count of Monte Cristo* down to an even *shorter* narrative summary, only 20 to 45 words in length.

Why is this useful?

Finding the *one central thought* to any passage of writing helps you to understand and remember that passage. And, when you write, you need to remember the most central idea or event—the dominating theme. Otherwise, you'll have a very hard time figuring out which details to include and which ones you should leave out.

Read through your summary. And then try to condense it to a two to three sentence summary, 20 to 45 words long.

If you have trouble condensing your summary, ask your instructor for help.

When you're finished, show your brief narrative to your instructor.

STEP TWO: Prepare

Read the following story with careful attention. "King John" is probably supposed to be one of the dukes of the Italian Duchy of Spoleto, a semi-independent region that was theoretically part of the Lombard kingdom of Italy during the Middle Ages. The city of Atri was within the borders of Spoleto.

The Horse that Aroused the Town

by Lillian M. Gask

A wise and just monarch was the good King John. His kingdom extended over Central Italy, and included the famous town of Atri, which in days gone by had been a famous harbour on the shores of the Adriatic. Now the sea had retreated from it, and it lay inland; no longer the crested waves rolled on its borders, or tossed their showers of silver spray to meet the vivid turquoise of the sky.

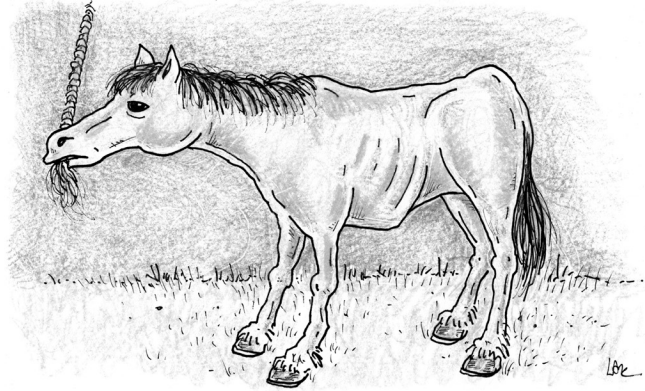
The great desire of good King John was that every man, woman and child in his dominions should be able to obtain justice without delay, be they rich or poor. To this end, since he could not possibly listen to all himself, he hung a bell in one of the city towers, and issued a proclamation to say that when this was rung a magistrate would immediately proceed to the public square and administer justice in his name. The plan worked admirably; both rich and poor were satisfied, and since they knew that evil-doers would be quickly punished, and wrongs set right, men hesitated to defraud or oppress their neighbours, and the great bell pealed less often as years went on.

In the course of time, however, the bell-rope wore thin, and some ingenious citizen fastened a wisp of hay to it, that this might serve as a handle. One day in the height of summer, when the deserted square was blazing with sunlight, and most of the citizens were taking their noonday rest, their siesta was disturbed by the violent pealing of the bell.

"Surely some great injustice has been done," they cried, shaking off their languor and hastening to the square. To their amazement they found it empty of all human beings save themselves; no angry supplicant appealed for justice, but a poor old horse, lame and half blind, with bones that nearly broke through his skin, was trying with pathetic eagerness to eat the wisp of hay. In struggling to do this, he had rung the bell, and the judge, summoned so hastily for so slight a cause, was stirred to indignation.

“To whom does this wretched horse belong?” he shouted wrathfully. “What business has it here?”

“Sir, he belongs to a rich nobleman, who lives in that splendid palace whose tall towers glisten white above the palm-grove,” said an old man, coming forward with a deep bow. “Time was that he bore his master to battle, carrying him dauntlessly amid shot and shell, and more than once saving his life by his courage and fleet-



ness. When the horse became old and feeble, he was turned adrift, since his master had no further use for him; and now the poor creature picks up what food he can in highways and byways.”

On hearing this the judge’s face grew dark with anger. “Bring his master before me,” he thundered, and when the amazed nobleman appeared, he questioned him more sternly than he would have done the meanest peasant.

“Is it true,” he demanded, “that you left this, your faithful servant, to starve, since he could no longer serve you? It is long since I heard of such gross injustice—are you not ashamed?”

The nobleman hung his head in silence; he had no word to say in his own defence as with scathing contempt the judge rebuked him, adding that in future he would neglect the horse at his peril.

“For the rest of his life,” he said, “you shall care for the poor beast as he deserves, so that after his long term of faithful service he may end his days in peace.”

This decision was greeted with loud applause by the town folk, who gathered in the square.

“Our bell is superior to all others,” they said to each other, with nods and smiles, “for it is the means of gaining justice, not only for men, but for animals too in their time of need.”

And with shouts of triumph they led the old war-horse back to his stable, knowing that for the future its miserly owner would not dare to begrudge it the comfort to which it was so justly entitled.³

Now that you’re read the story through one time, guess what you should do next?
That’s right; read it again.

3. William Patten, ed., *The Junior Classics: Animal and Nature Stories*, Vol. 8 (P.F. Collier, 1918), pp. 57–60.

STEP THREE: **Practice**

Decide whether the story is more of a description or more of a series of events. (That should be even easier than in the last day's work.) Then write a narrative summary of 50–80 words (four to five sentences).

If you have trouble, ask your instructor for help. When you're finished, show your work to your instructor.

STEP FOUR: **Condense**

Now condense your narrative summary down to an even *shorter* narrative summary, not more than 30 words in length. Remember, you're looking for the most central idea or event—the dominating theme.

Aim for two sentences. If you have trouble condensing your summary, ask your instructor for help.

When you're finished, show your brief narrative to your instructor.

Day Three: Review Three-Level Outlines



Focus: Constructing a three-level outline

In Level Two of this course, you learned that outlines serve a slightly different purpose from narrative summaries. Summarizing gives you the most central information in a passage. Outlining, on the other hand, shows you *how* a writer has chosen to present that information—the structure of a passage.

Outlining the work of good writers can teach you a great deal about how to organize a composition. And an outline can also help you to remember what's *in* a passage—very useful when you're studying for a test.

STEP ONE: **Review one- and two-level outlines**

Here's a quick summary of what you've already learned about one- and two-level outlines.

When you outline a passage of writing, you begin by finding the main idea in the paragraph and assigning it a Roman numeral (I, II, III . . .). Remember that your main point is *not* supposed to sum up all of the information in the paragraph! Instead, the main point states the theme, idea, or topic that all of the other sentences in the paragraph relate to. Often, you can find the main point by answering the following two questions:

What is the main thing or person that the paragraph is about?

Why is that thing or person important?

Once you've found the main idea in the paragraph, you locate the *subpoints*. Subpoints are given capital letters (A, B, C . . .). Each subpoint should be a piece of information that relates *directly* to the main point. One way to find subpoints is to answer the following question:

What additional information does the paragraph give me about each of the people, things, or ideas in the main point?

Each capital-letter subpoint should make an independent statement relating directly to something in the Roman-numeral point. So, don't make small details that aren't essential to the topic of the paragraph into subpoints!

Read carefully through the following three paragraphs (which should also prove very useful if you ever decide to raise a pig of your own):

The best time to buy pigs is in the spring when they are being weaned. Be sure that any pig you buy has been raised on clean ground under a strict system of sanitation. A pig weaned at 8 weeks of age should weigh at least 35 pounds, and should have a thrifty, clean, and alert appearance. Choose a female pig, or a male pig that has been castrated (a barrow). A male pig that has not been castrated will produce meat with an undesirable odor and flavor.

A hog eats about 600 pounds of feed from a weaning age of 8 weeks to a finished weight of about 200 pounds. The feed should consist of grains, a protein supplement, and a mineral supplement. Yellow corn is the standard grain; however, barley, wheat, or grain sorghums can also be used. Soybean meal is a very satisfactory protein supplement. The grain and protein supplements should be mixed so that the ration contains about 16-percent protein. A good mineral mixture consists of equal parts of steamed bone-meal, ground limestone or air-slaked lime, and common salt. This should be kept in a self-feeder where it is available at all times. In addition, keep an ample supply of fresh drinking water before hogs.

If hogs have access to good pasture, they will thrive on 10 to 15 percent less feed. In the northern half of the United States, the following crops make good pasture for hogs: alfalfa, ladino, red clover, alsike, white clover, bluegrass, burclover, timothy, and combinations of these. In the South, bermudagrass, lespedeza, carpet grass, crabgrass, and dallisgrass are preferred for hog pasture. Temporary pasture—rye, oats, wheat, rape, soybeans, and cowpeas—can be sown in the hog lot.⁴

Here's how I would answer the first set of questions for these paragraphs:

4. United States Department of Agriculture, *Raising Livestock on Small Farms* (United States Extension Service, 1983), p. 19.

Paragraph 1

What is the main thing or person that the paragraph is about? Pigs

Why is that thing or person important? You have to buy the right kind

Paragraph 2

What is the main thing or person that the paragraph is about? Feed

Why is that thing or person important? Hogs have to have the right kind

Paragraph 3

What is the main thing or person that the paragraph is about? Pasture

Why is that thing or person important? It needs to be good for hogs

Here are the main points I would use in an outline:

- I. Buying pigs
- II. Hog feed
- III. Hog pasture

Now, work on finding your own subpoints. Complete the following outline, using your own paper.

- I. Buying pigs
 - A.
 - B.
- II. Hog feed
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
- III. Hog pasture
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.

When you're finished, show your outline to your instructor.

STEP TWO: Review three-level outlines

Last year, you began to practice three-level outlines. In a three-level outline, important details about the subpoints are listed beneath each subpoint, using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4 . . .).

Using the model below, finish the outline on your own paper. If you can't figure out how to put the information in the paragraphs into the number of points provided, ask your instructor for help.

I. Buying pigs

A.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B.

- 1.
- 2.

II. Hog feed

A.

- 1.

B.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

C.

- 1.
- 2.

III. Hog pasture

A.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

B.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

C.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

STEP THREE: **Prepare**

Now that you've been walked through a review of three-level outlines, practice outlining a brief passage independently.

Prepare by reading the following paragraphs from Patricia Lauber's *Tales Mummies Tell* (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1985), pp. 47–48.

The chief dental problem among the ancient Egyptians was extreme wear. It showed in the teeth of skeletons and mummies that medical scientists had examined earlier. Now the X-rays of pharaohs, priests, and nobles showed that their teeth too had rapidly worn down. The only possible explanation was sand. Somehow sand from the desert must have got into the food. As the Egyptians chewed, particles of sand ground down their teeth.

How that much sand got into their food was something of a puzzle until 1971. In that year the Manchester Museum in England was having an Egyptian exhibition. Among the displays were a large number of pieces of ancient Egyptian bread. X-rays showed that each piece contained vast quantities of mineral fragments. Some of the minerals were kinds that came from the soil in which the grain had grown. Some came from the kind of stones used to grind the grain. But most of the fragments were the pure quartz of desert sand. Dust storms must have added sand to grain when it was being harvested, winnowed, and stored. The sand went into bread along with the flour. Because the Egyptians ate large amounts of bread, they also chewed large amounts of sand.

Now . . . read it again.

STEP FOUR: **Practice**

Construct a three-level outline of the passage from *Tales Mummies Tell*. Use one Roman numeral for each paragraph.

Try to work as independently as possible, but if you need help, ask your instructor. When you're finished, show your outline to your instructor.

Day Four: Copia Review I



Focus: Working with nouns and adjectives
to vary sentences

You'll need to use your thesaurus to complete today's work.

STEP ONE: Review noun and adjective transformations

In the first two levels of this course, you learned five different ways to change nouns and adjectives into new forms. You started off by using a thesaurus to select vivid and exact synonyms for basic nouns and adjectives. You then practiced four additional methods to transform nouns and adjectives. Read these carefully now.

descriptive adjectives \longleftrightarrow nouns

an eloquent man
a man of eloquence

adjective \longrightarrow intensified adjective

The sun was bright.
The sun was incandescent.

adjective \longrightarrow added adjective

He leaped into the cold water.
He leaped into the cold and
murky water OR
He leaped into the cold, murky water.

word \longrightarrow phrase describing what
the word is or does
metaphor
kenning

letter \longrightarrow words from your pen
letter \longrightarrow pearls of wisdom
sea \longrightarrow whale road

If you need help remembering how any of these transformations are done, ask your instructor.

STEP TWO: Provide new examples

To demonstrate your understanding, complete a new set of the examples by filling in the blanks on the following chart. When you are finished, show your work to your instructor.

noun \longrightarrow synonym with appropriate shade of meaning

adjective \longrightarrow synonym with appropriate shade of meaning

The terrifying dream struck a chill into her heart.

The _____ dream struck _____ into her heart.

descriptive adjectives \longleftrightarrow nouns a fashionable woman

adjective \longrightarrow intensified adjective The apple cobbler was tasty.
The apple cobbler was _____.

adjective \longrightarrow added adjective Her work clothes were grubby.
Her work clothes were grubby and _____.

word \longrightarrow phrase describing what
the word is or does path \longrightarrow _____.

metaphor path \longrightarrow _____.

kenning path \longrightarrow _____.

STEP THREE: Practice transformations

On your own paper, rewrite the following sentences, adapted from the novels and stories of the 19th-century Russian storyteller Ivan Turgenev, as translated by Constance Garnett in *Dream Tales and Prose Poems: The Novels of Ivan Turgenev* (The Macmillan Company, 1920).

You must use each of the following transformations at least once:

- adjective \longrightarrow synonym with appropriate shade of meaning
- noun \longrightarrow synonym with appropriate shade of meaning
- descriptive adjectives \longleftrightarrow nouns
- adjective \longrightarrow intensified adjective
- adjective \longrightarrow added adjective
- word \longrightarrow metaphor
- word \longrightarrow kenning

To help you, the words that can be transformed are underlined below. You will have to decide which transformation suits which words.

If you really get stuck, ask your instructor what transformation you should be using. When you're finished, show your work to your instructor.

It had not struck midnight when he had a scary dream.

All the walls were covered with small blue tiles with gold lines on them; slender carved alabaster pillars supported the ceiling of marble; the ceiling itself and the pillars seemed half clear.

The pressure of various conflicting emotions had brought her to breakdown.

In the distance, on the horizon, [was] the bluish line of a big river.

All about are whole new hay piles.

I looked round, and saw an old woman, all muffled up in grey rags.

She is looking at me with evil eyes.

To his own surprise, tears rushed in streams from his eyes.