

# El Poder de la Oración: The Power of the Sentence

**EVERY GRADE EVERY CLASSROOM EVERY DAY**



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**National Title I  
Conference**

**February 9, 2018**

**11:30-1:00**

**Room 121**

[www.writingwithdesign.com](http://www.writingwithdesign.com)



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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a yellow pencil, writing on a dark-colored index card. The background is blurred, showing a pinkish-red fabric. The text is overlaid on the image.

**On an index card**

jot down the top three struggles your  
English Language Learners face.



# On your Feet; Get Ready to Meet; Go and Greet!

LEARNING INTENTION

Practice speaking with  
diverse partners to  
practice purposeful  
academic language



# On your Feet; Get Ready to Meet; Go and Greet!

- **Step 1:** When signaled, please stand up.
- **Step 2:** Gather your tools: a pencil/whiteboard/source of information/paper.
- **Step 3:** When signaled, put your hand up and find someone not at your table and not your best friends. You have 30 seconds to quietly find a partner.
- **Step 4:** Once you have your partner, put your hands down and face me.
- **Success Criteria:** Collaborate with different people every day.



# Back to Back & Face to Face

LEARNING INTENTION

Provide opportunity for  
students to reflect on  
responses to questions  
that require synthesis and  
analysis



# Back to Back & Face to Face

- **Step 1:** Once in pairs, stand back to back.
- **Step 2:** Look at the question I have posted and consider your response (remember to look for evidence in your sources).
- **Step 3:** At my signal, turn face to face.
- **Success Criteria:** Student responses indicate a deeper understanding of the essential question(s).



# Ask, Answer, Justify

LEARNING INTENTION

Use academic language  
to extend all thinking in  
speaking and writing



# Ask, Answer, Justify

- **Step 1:** Decide who in your pair is A or B.
- **Step 2:** Using the sentence frames....
  - Partner A asks the question and B responds.
  - At my signal, B asks the question and A responds.
  - We will repeat this protocol 3 times for maximum benefit.
- **Success Criteria:** Students practice meaningful content specific academic vocabulary.



# Equity Cards

## “Accountable Talk”

LEARNING INTENTION


**Provide multiple  
opportunities to practice  
academic language**



# Equity Cards “Accountable Talk”

- I will use the cards every time I ask you a question.
  - If you don't have an answer, I will say “back to you in two” and come back to you after calling on 2 other students.
  - Listen carefully to your classmates responses: you can paraphrase what they have said, or come up with your own new response/idea.
- **Success Criteria:** Students regularly engage in academic discourse.





# Facts about English Language Learners

- They are the fastest growing population in schools.
- Most are born in the US (NPRED).
- 1 out of every 10 students is an ELL (National Center for Education Statistics).
- Only 63% graduate from high school, compared to the national average of 82% (NPR Feb, 2017).

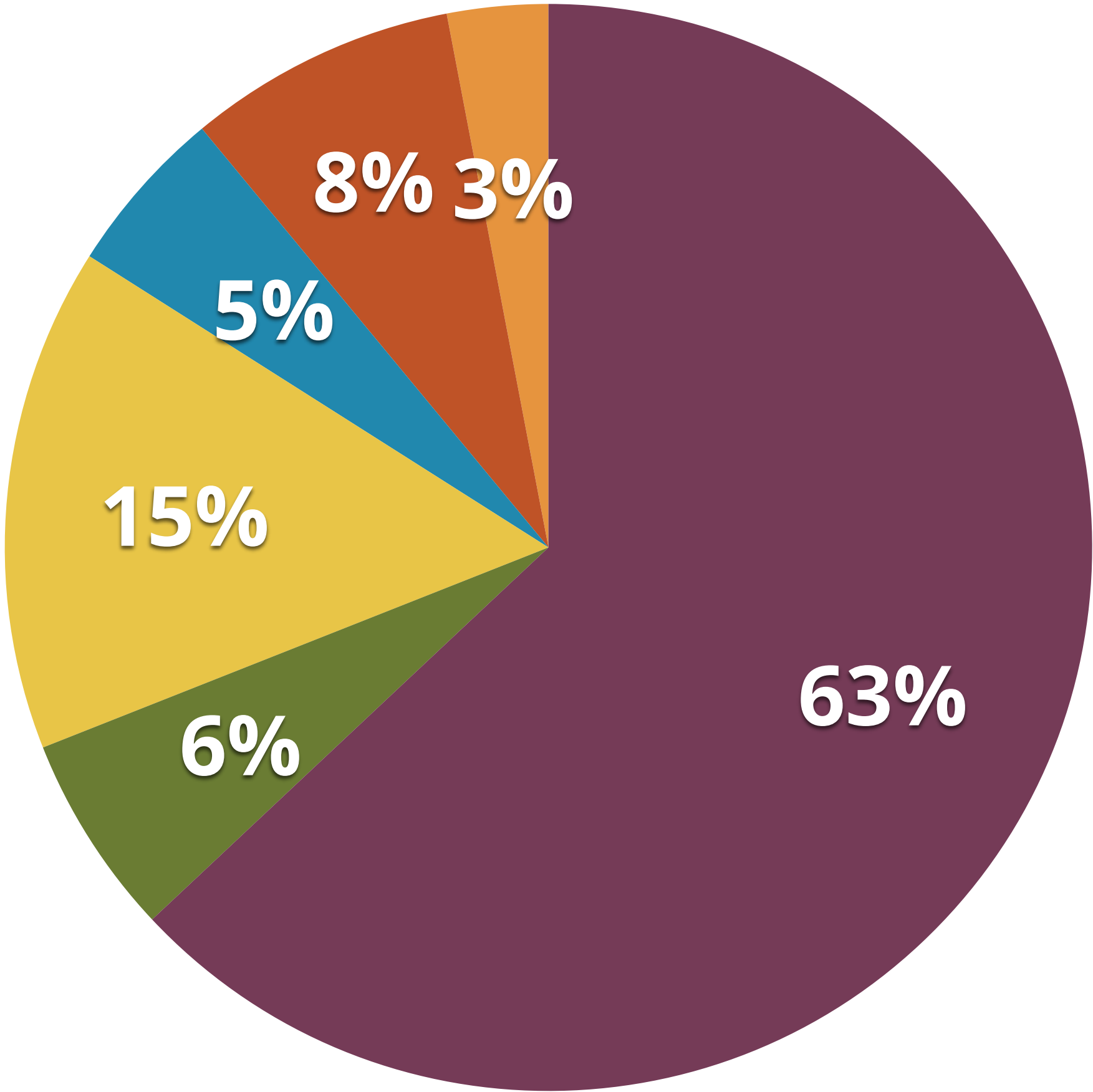




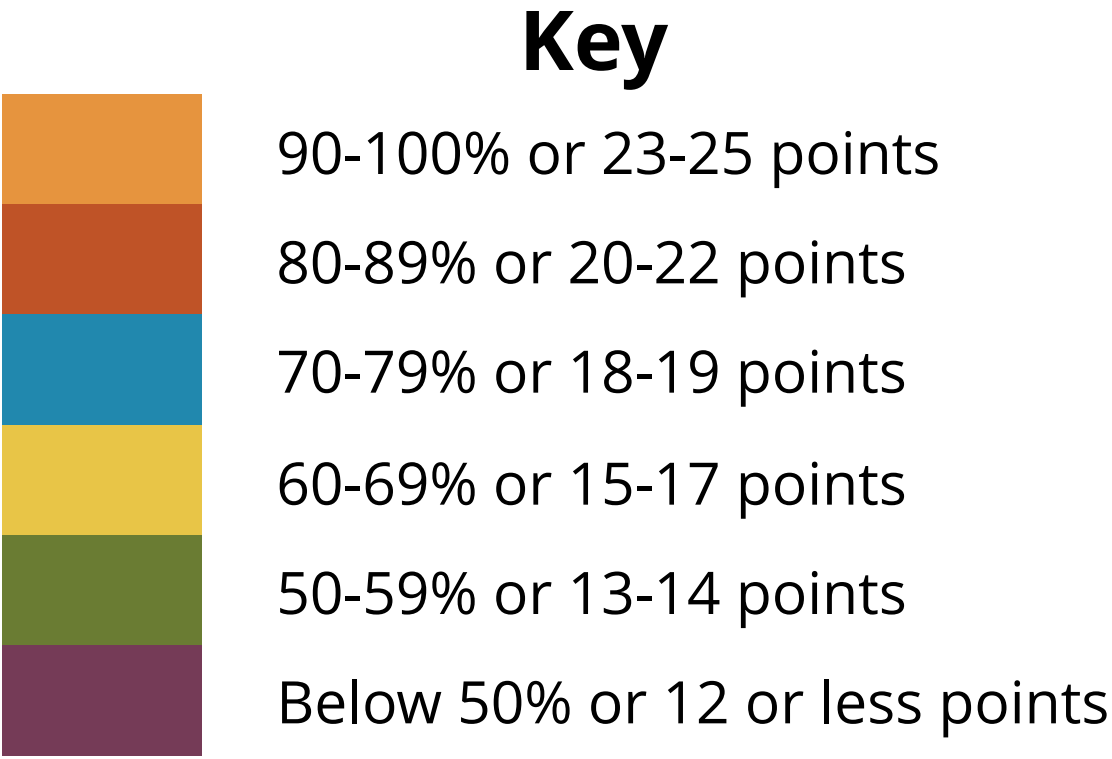
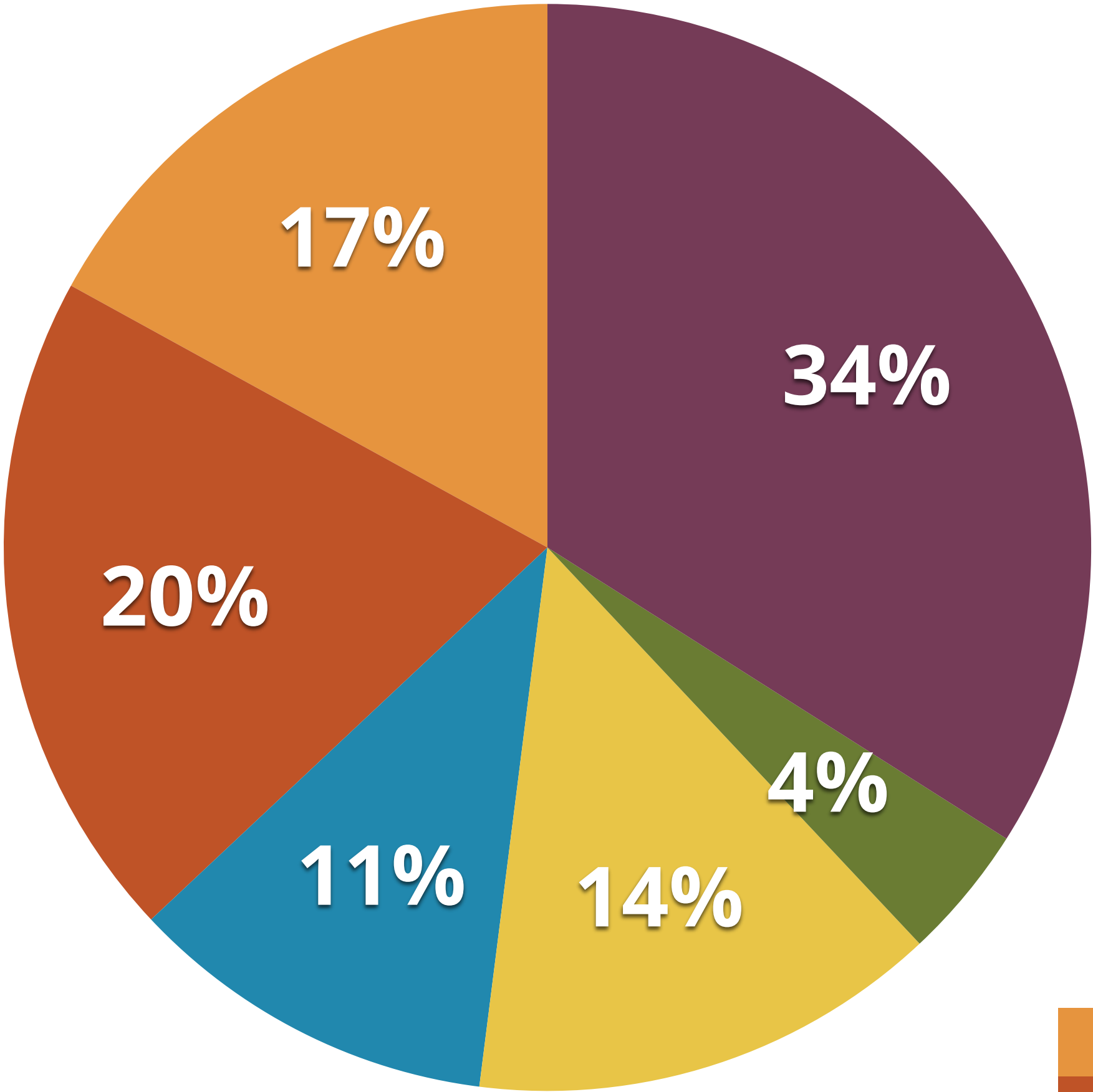
The school, the story,  
the success.



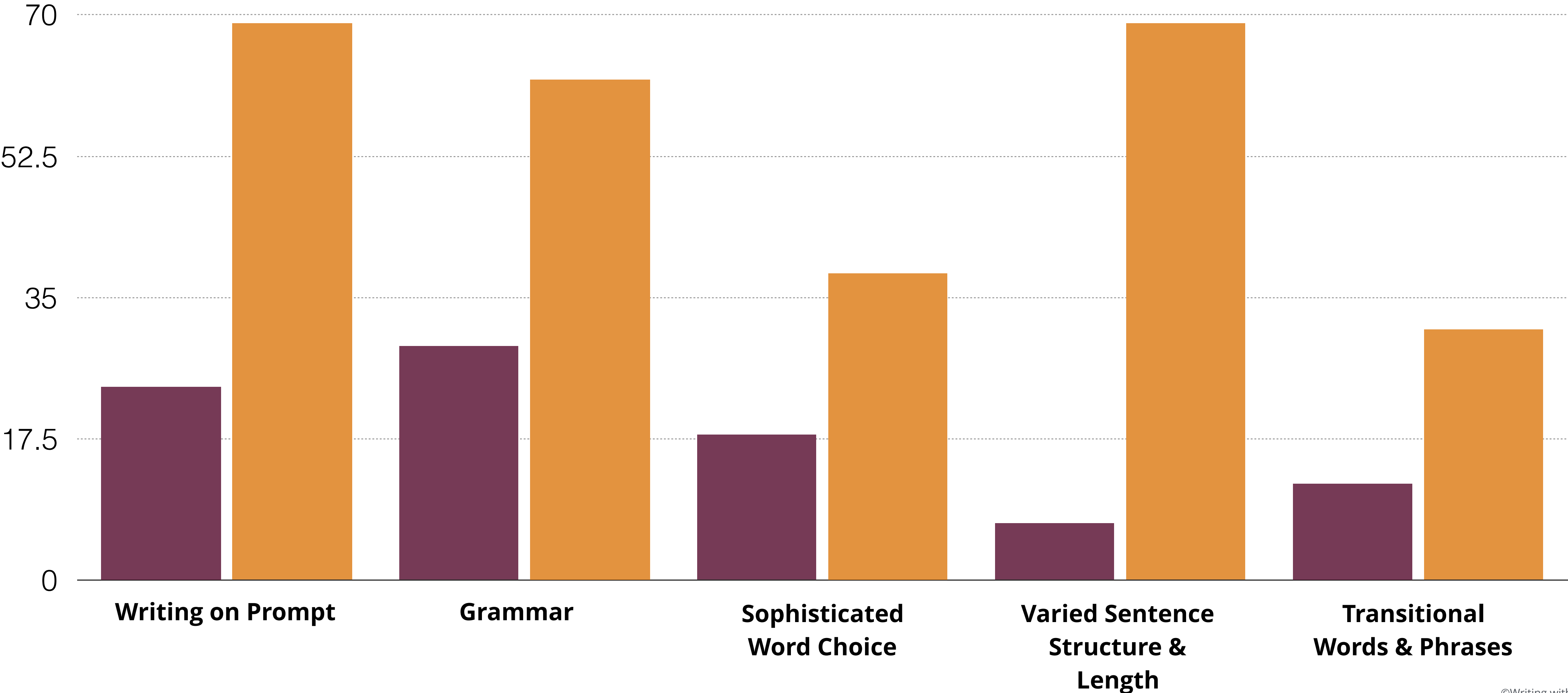
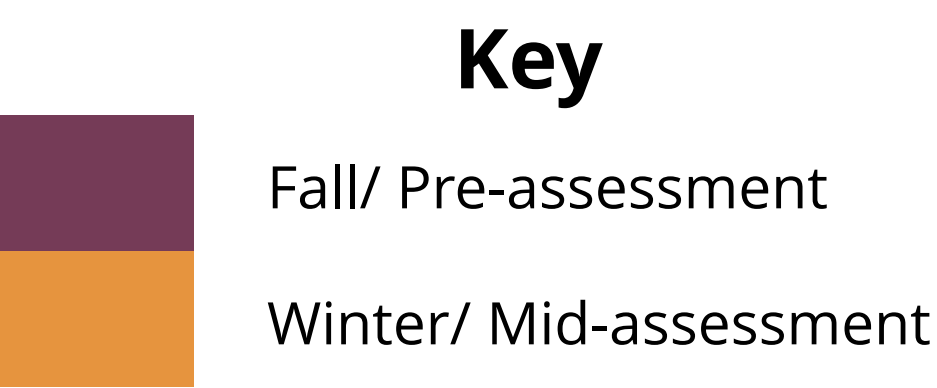
FALL ASSESSMENT SCORES



WINTER ASSESSMENT SCORES

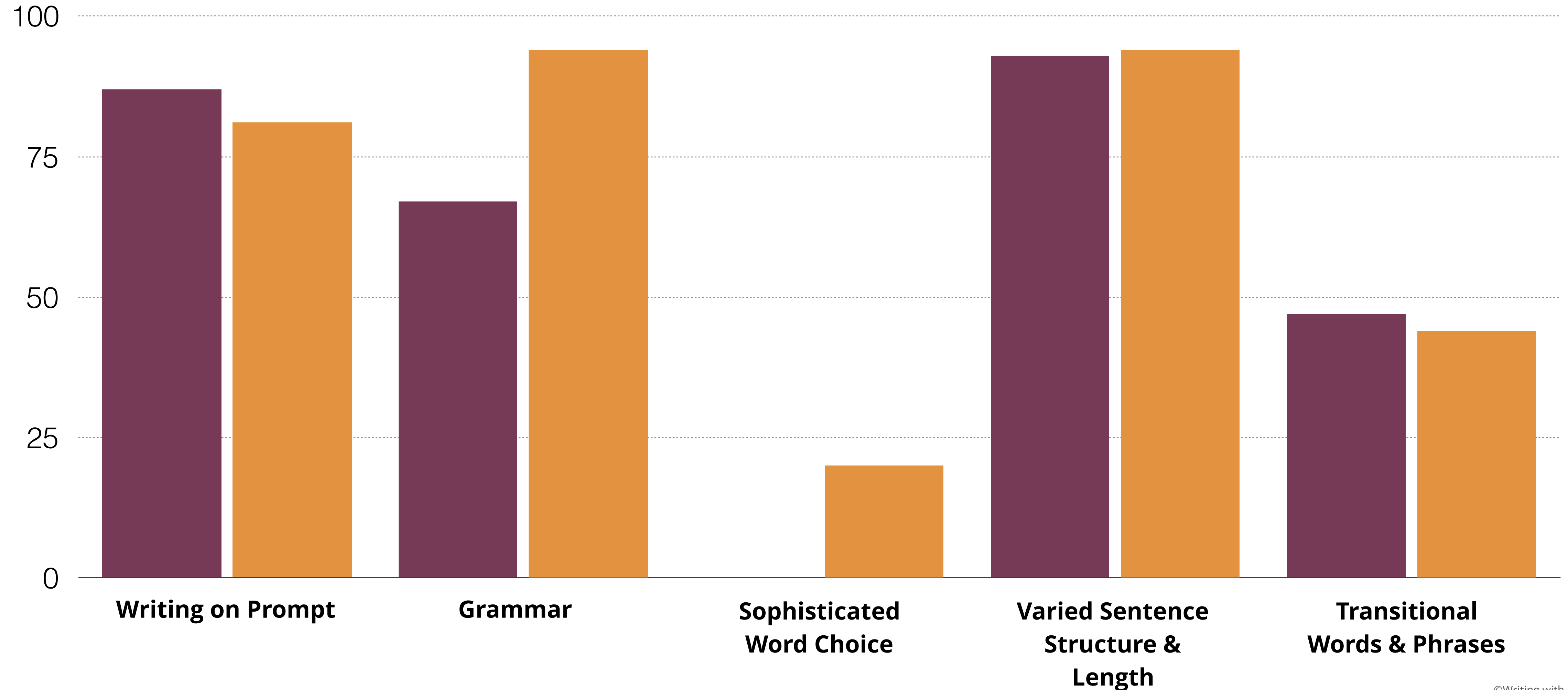
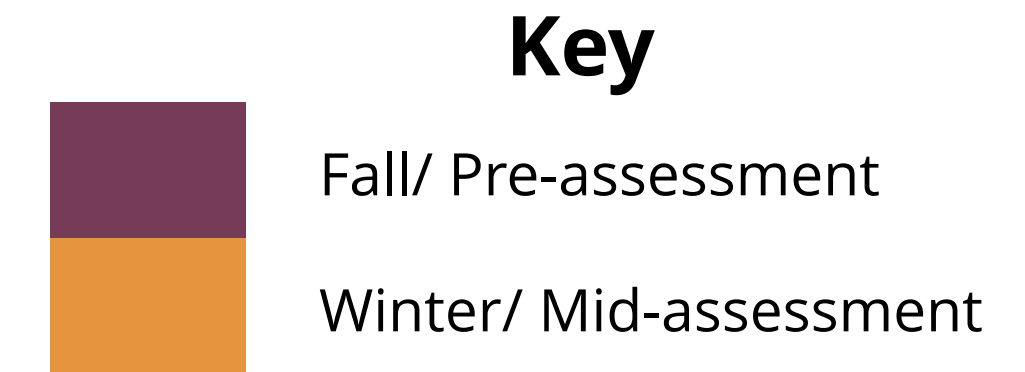


# FALL AND WINTER WRITING DATA FOR BEGINNERS

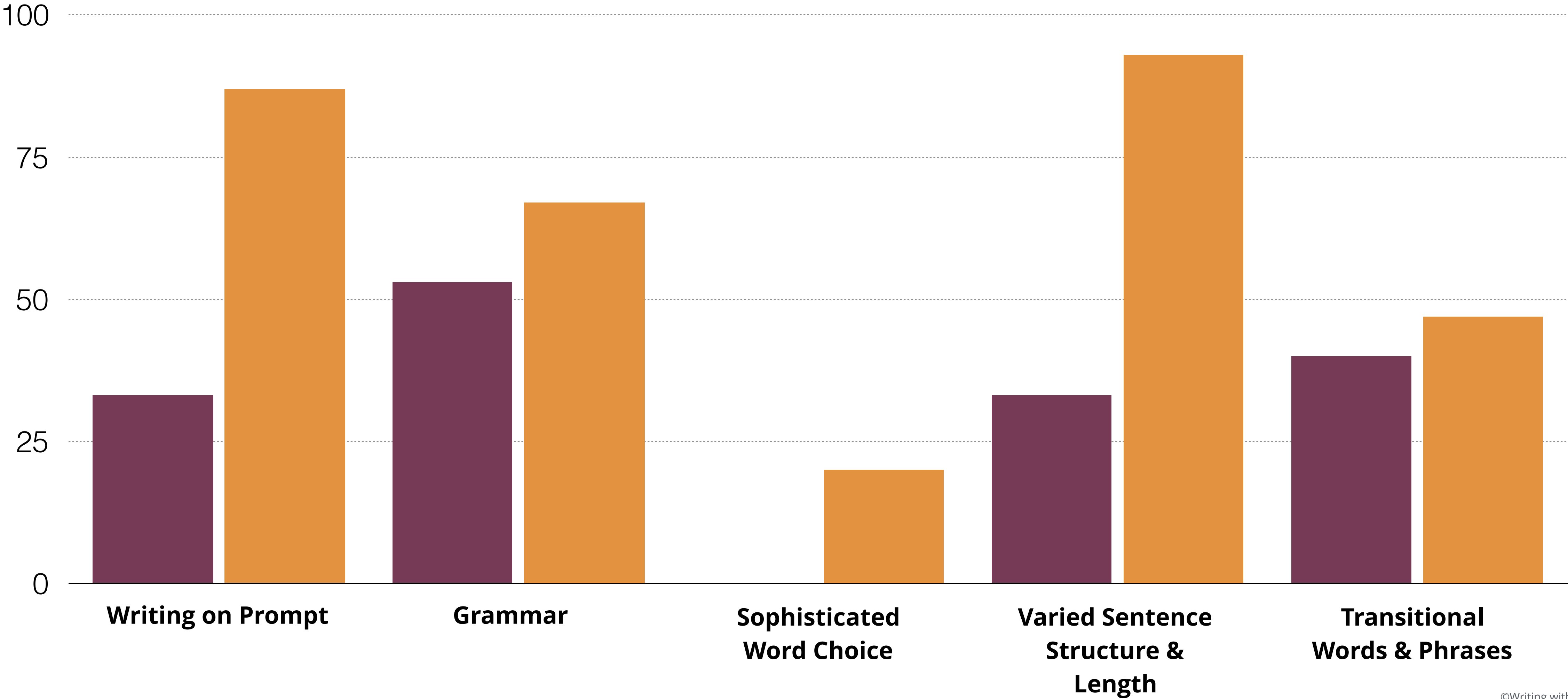
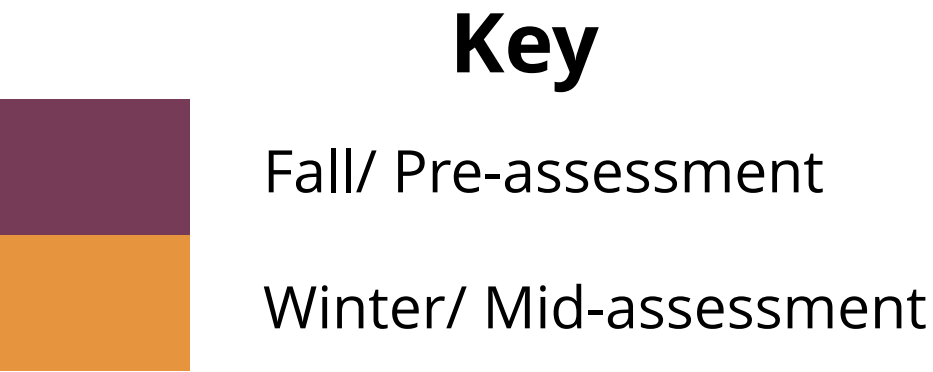




# FALL AND WINTER WRITING DATA FOR ADVANCED



# FALL AND WINTER WRITING DATA FOR INTERMEDIATE





**We must be willing to go back**

**before we can go forward.**





**We are all academic language learners.**







1

What is the number one  
**question students ask**  
about writing assignments?

LENGTH  $\neq$  quality

# So what does?



essays

paragraphs

paragraphs

sentences

sentences

sentences

phrases

phrases

phrases

phrases

words

words

words

words

words

words



**Learning to write is a  
lot like training for a  
marathon.**



**Start out small: 30  
seconds at a time.**



# SKILL *FOCUS* ACTIVITY

K-3rd  
Emerging

## Sentence Scramble

All the words of these sentences are mixed up! Can you put them in the correct order?

1a: Sentences on Prompt



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Sequence the words to make a sentence.

5

lights.

4

bright



2

trucks

3

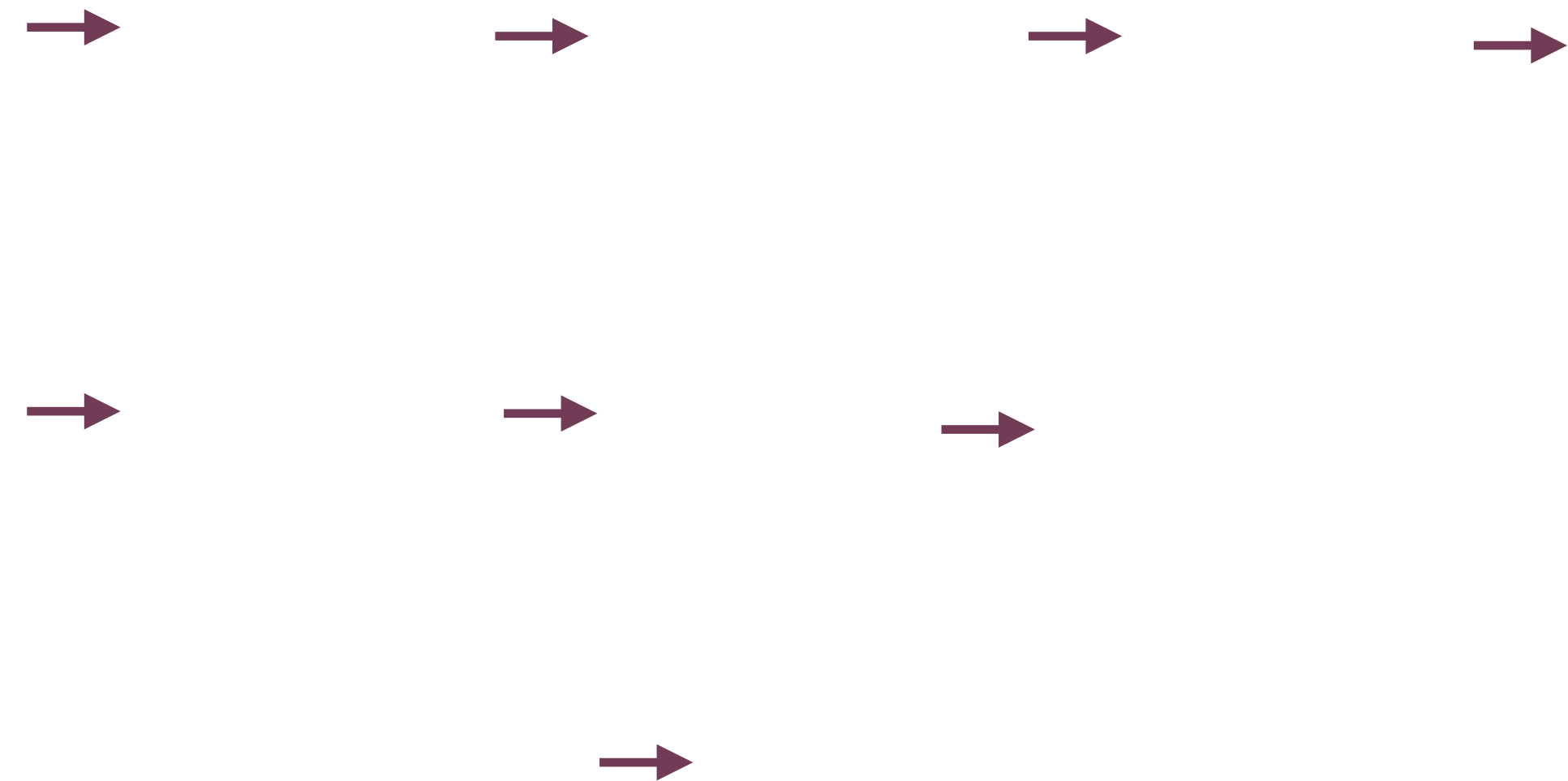
have

1

Fire

Sequence the words to make a sentence.

7	erosion	9	landscapes
4	and	3	water
2	wind	5	even
6	ice	8	transforms
1	through		







**Past and present tense** are challenges for ELL's.

Be strategic and purposeful with verb tense. Choose one and be consistent in the writing activity.

# SKILL *FOCUS* ACTIVITY

K-1st  
Developing  
2nd-3rd  
Emerging

## What's Missing?

Something's missing in the sentences. Can you figure it out and turn the phrases into complete sentences?

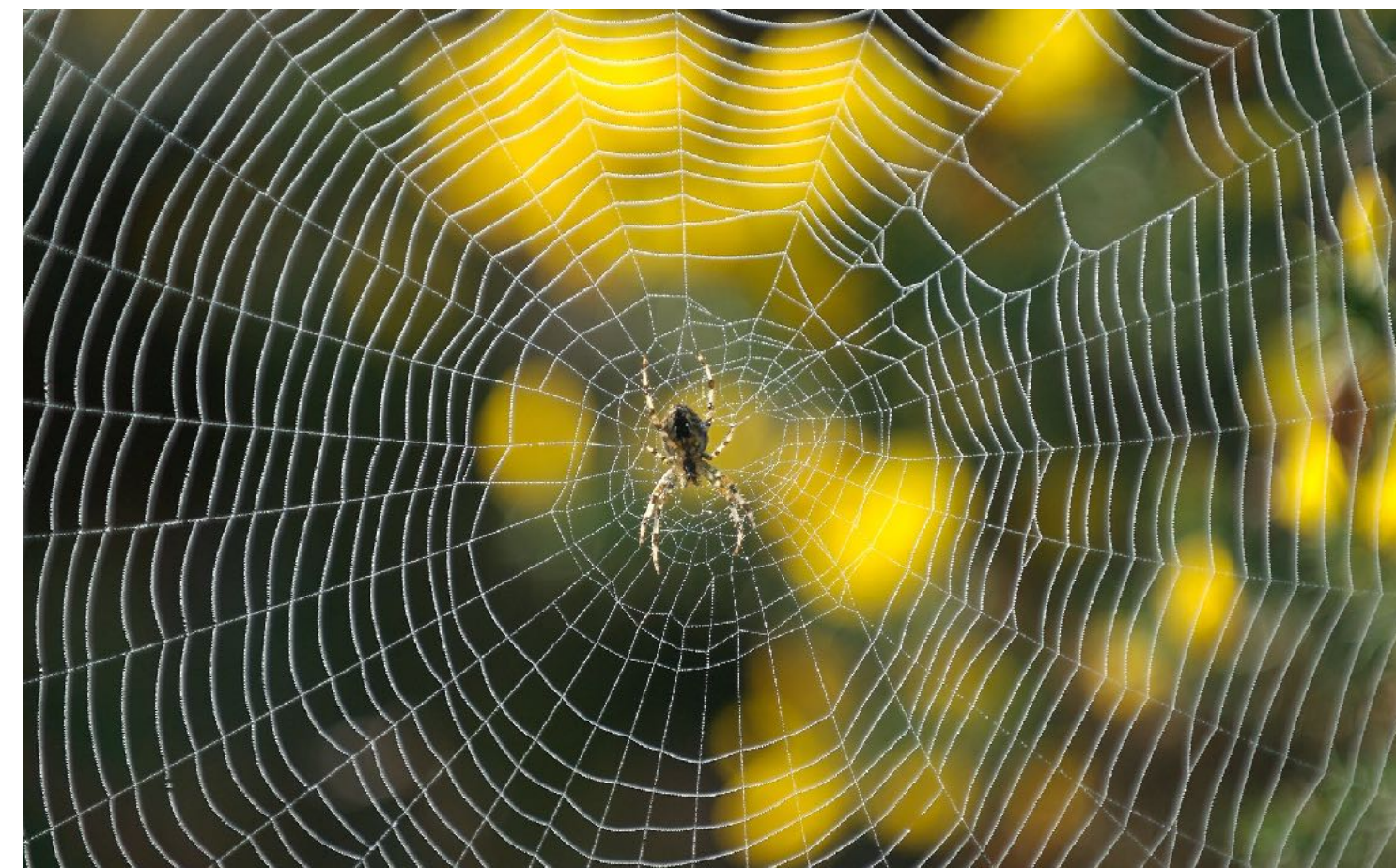
1a: Sentences on Prompt



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Spiders are





build a  
sticky web





# SKILL *FOCUS* ACTIVITY

2nd-4th  
Developing

## Combining and Rearranging Phrases to Create Impressive Sentences

Read the phrases. Then, like pieces to a puzzle, fit the phrases together to create an impressive sentence. Try out the phrases in different orders to see which version you think sounds the strongest and clearest.

8: Varied Sentence Structure and Length



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**short  
sentence**

I saw a squirrel  
and a chipmunk

**when?**

in the afternoon

**where?**

outside in the park





**short  
sentence**

scissor-tail  
flycatchers live

**where?**

all across Oklahoma

**why?**

because this is  
their native habitat



# SKILL *FOCUS* ACTIVITY

All Grades  
All Writing Levels

## The Hidden Power in Pictures: Labeling Pictures for Writing and Language Development

Label the parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, and verbs) to expand your vocabulary and develop your language and writing skills!

Writing Criteria:

7: Sophisticated Word Choice

8: Varied Sentence Structure and Length







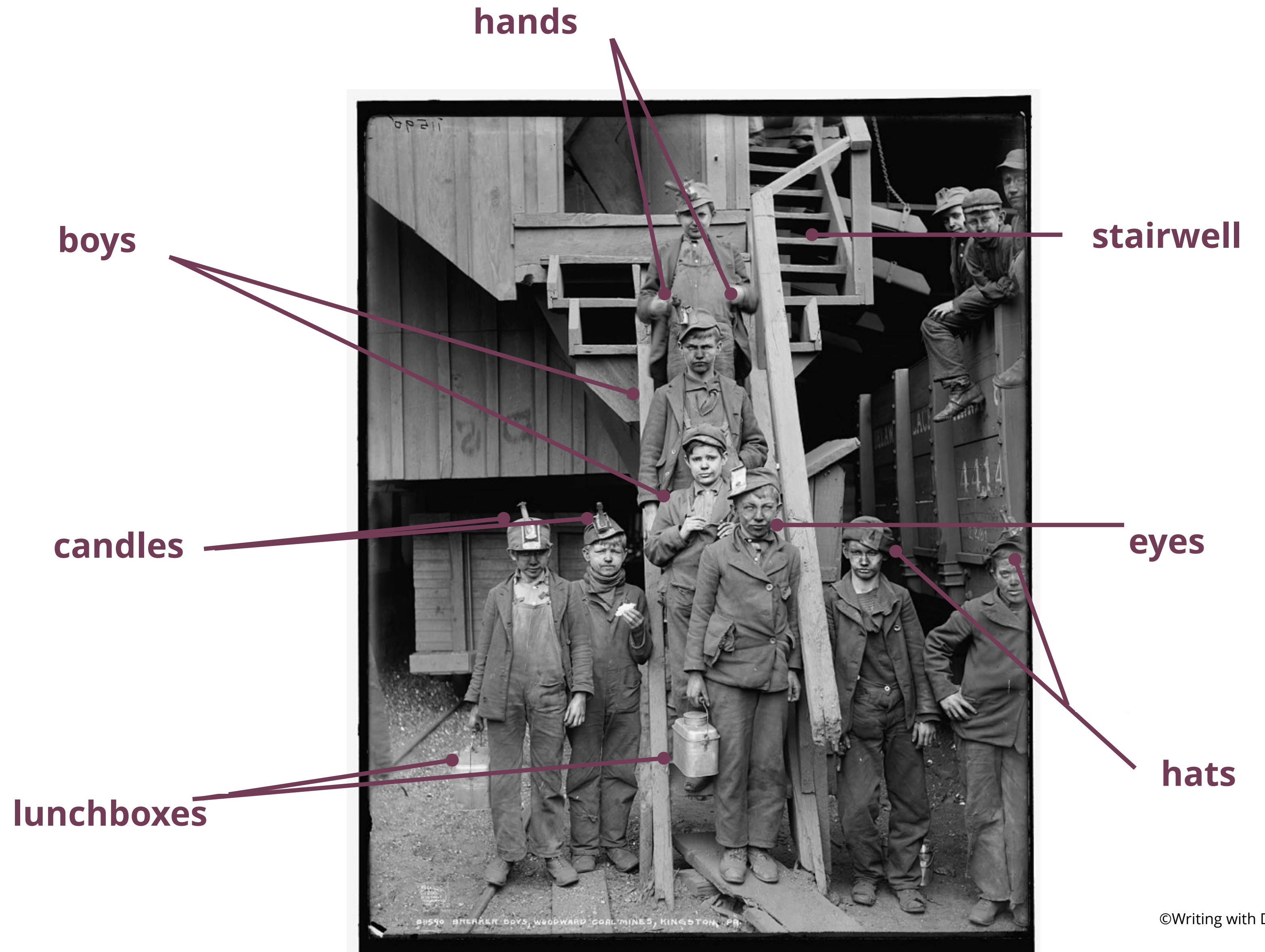
01590 BREAKER BOYS, WOODWARD COAL MINES, KINGSTON, PA.



# Step 1

## STUDENTS LABEL THE NOUNS

- Ask students, "What do you notice?"
- Write the word as they provide the spelling. (This is an excellent opportunity to teach conventional spelling and explain phonetic rules and exceptions to grow spelling skills since they have the picture to help them decipher what the word is.)
- Then have them come up and draw a line from the picture to the word.

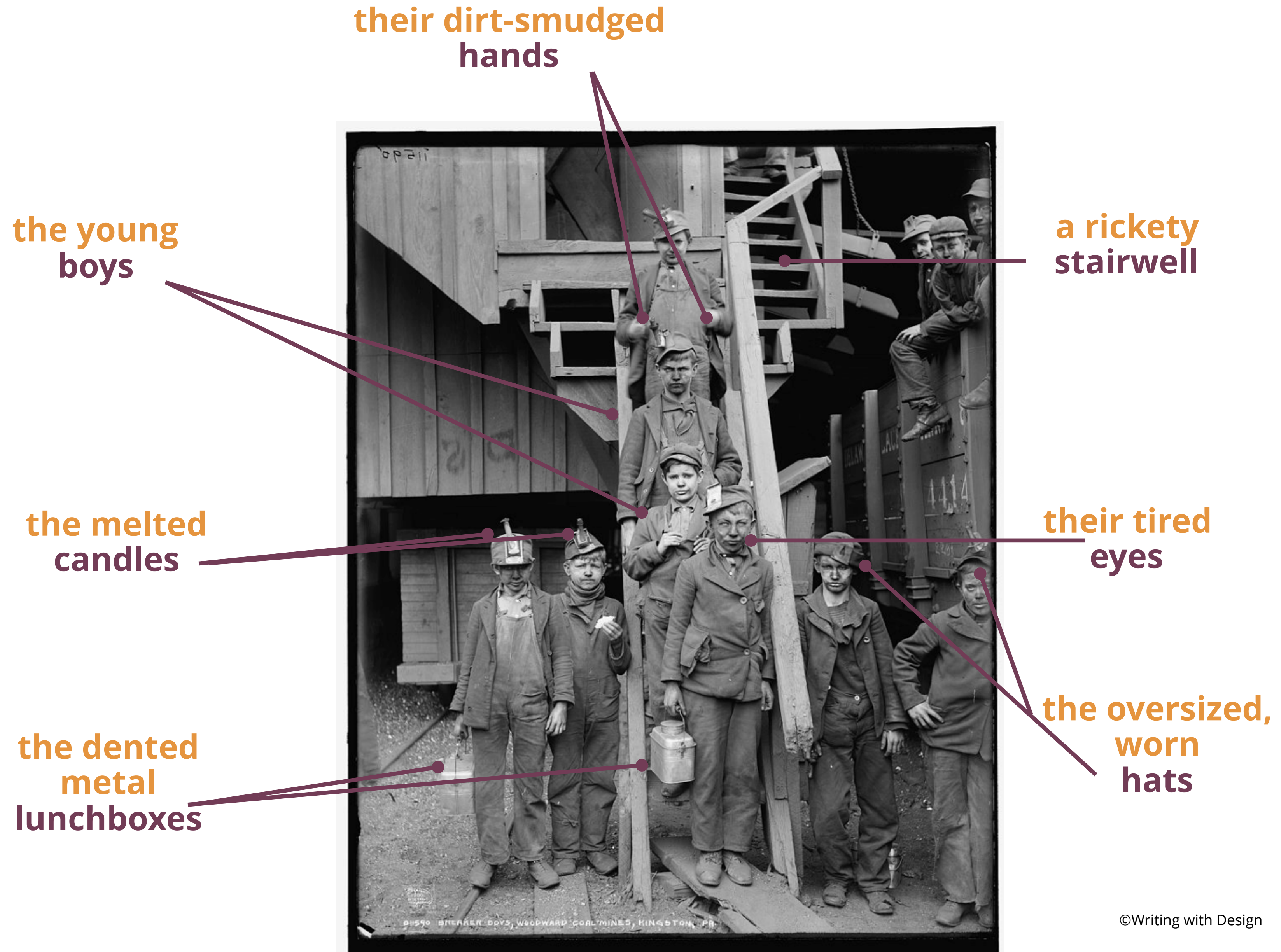




## Step 2

### STUDENTS ADD ADJECTIVES

- Ask students, “How can we describe each noun?” Write the word as they provide the spelling. Be sure to encourage students to think of different types of adjectives (i.e. not just color words for all of the nouns). Possible categories include quantity, size, texture, shape, weight, purpose.
- Guide students in saying the adjective + noun combination to work on placing adjectives in front of nouns in oral speech.

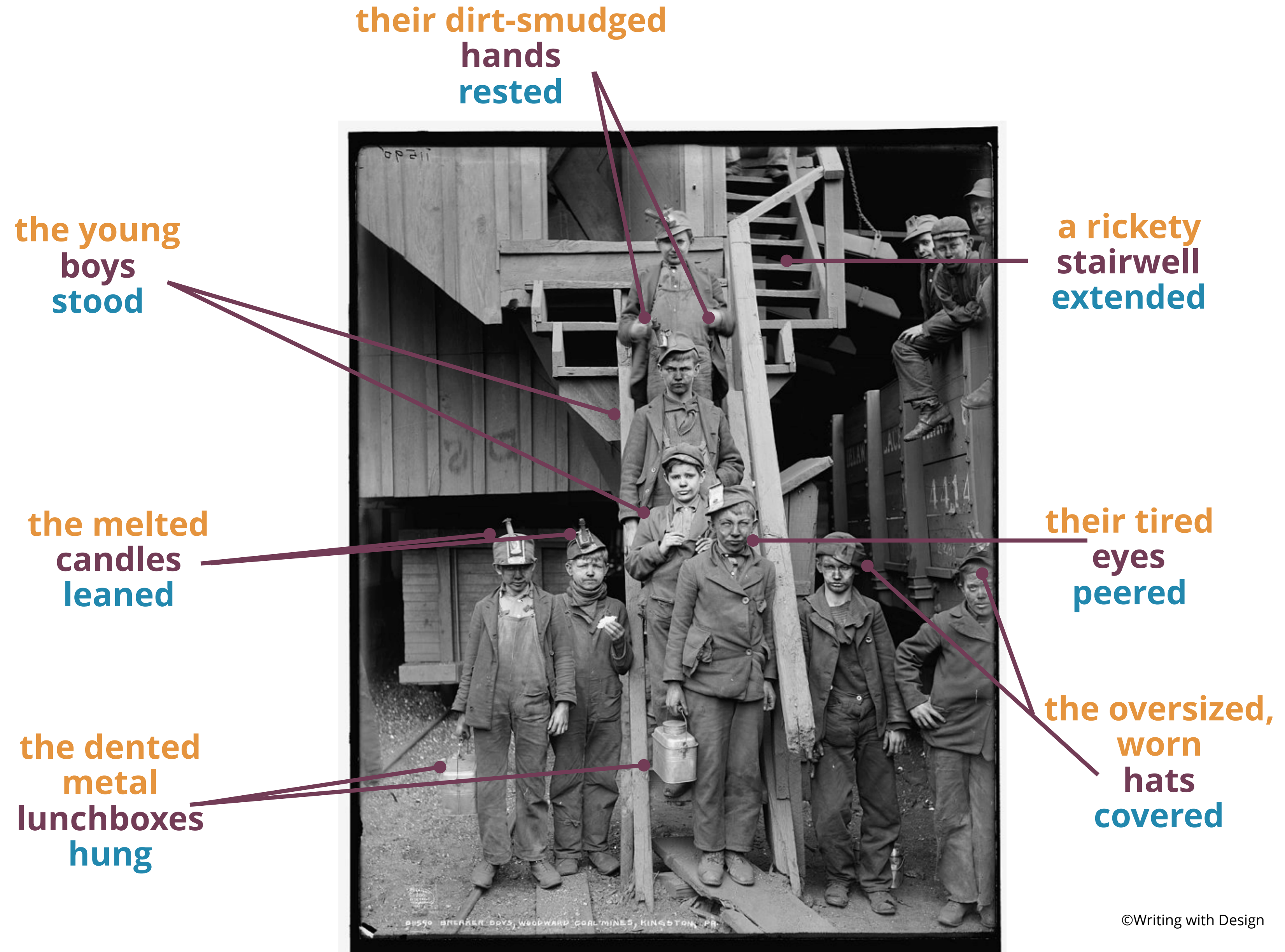




# Step 3

## STUDENTS ADD VERBS

- Ask students, “What is \_\_\_\_\_ doing?” Write the verb as they provide the spelling.
- Make sure to maintain the same verb tense (either past or present) for all the verbs.
- Avoid the present perfect tense “are flapping,” “is walking.”
- For some nouns, a verb may not make sense.
- Write Out Loud the adjective + noun + verb phrases.

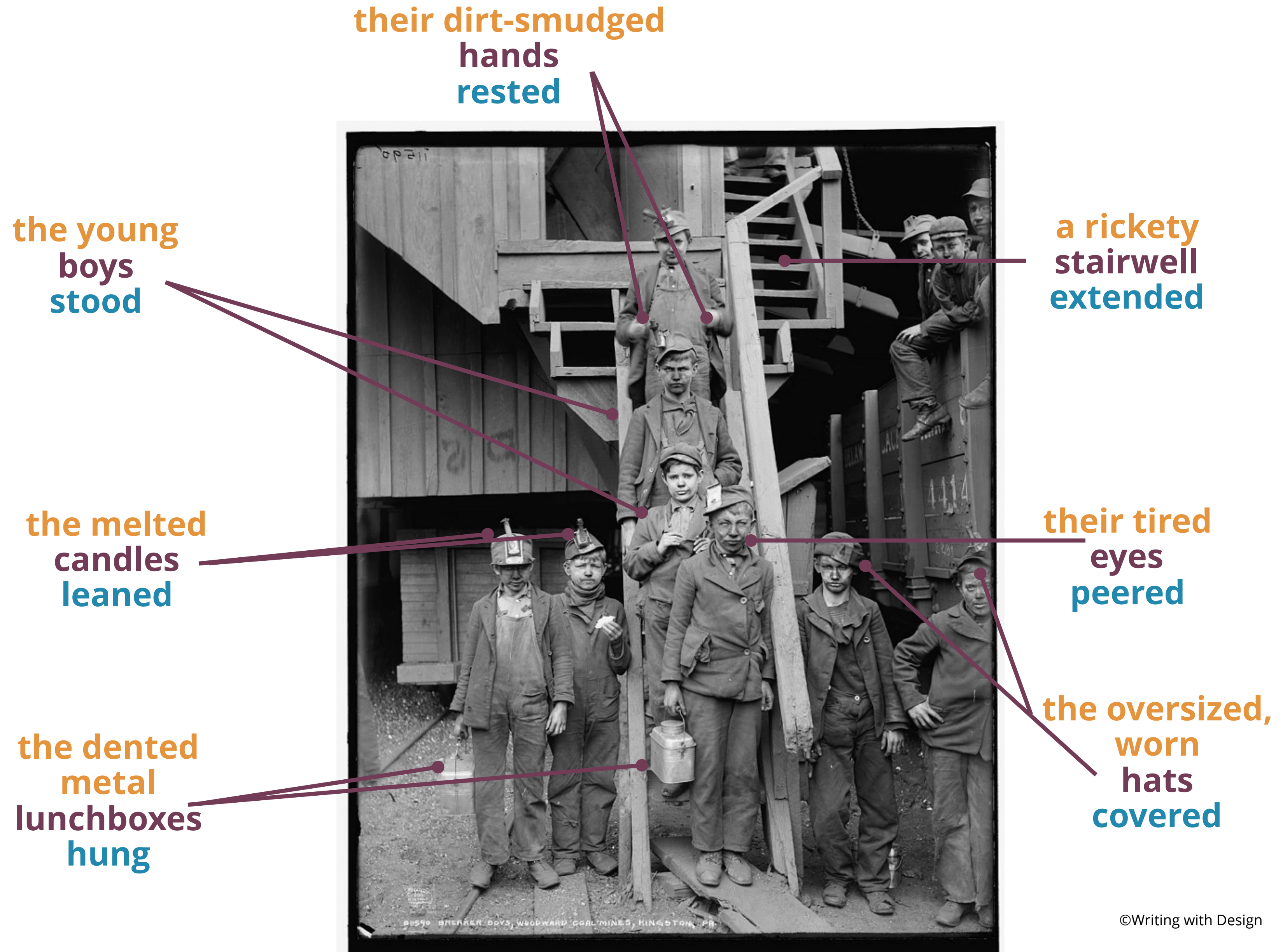




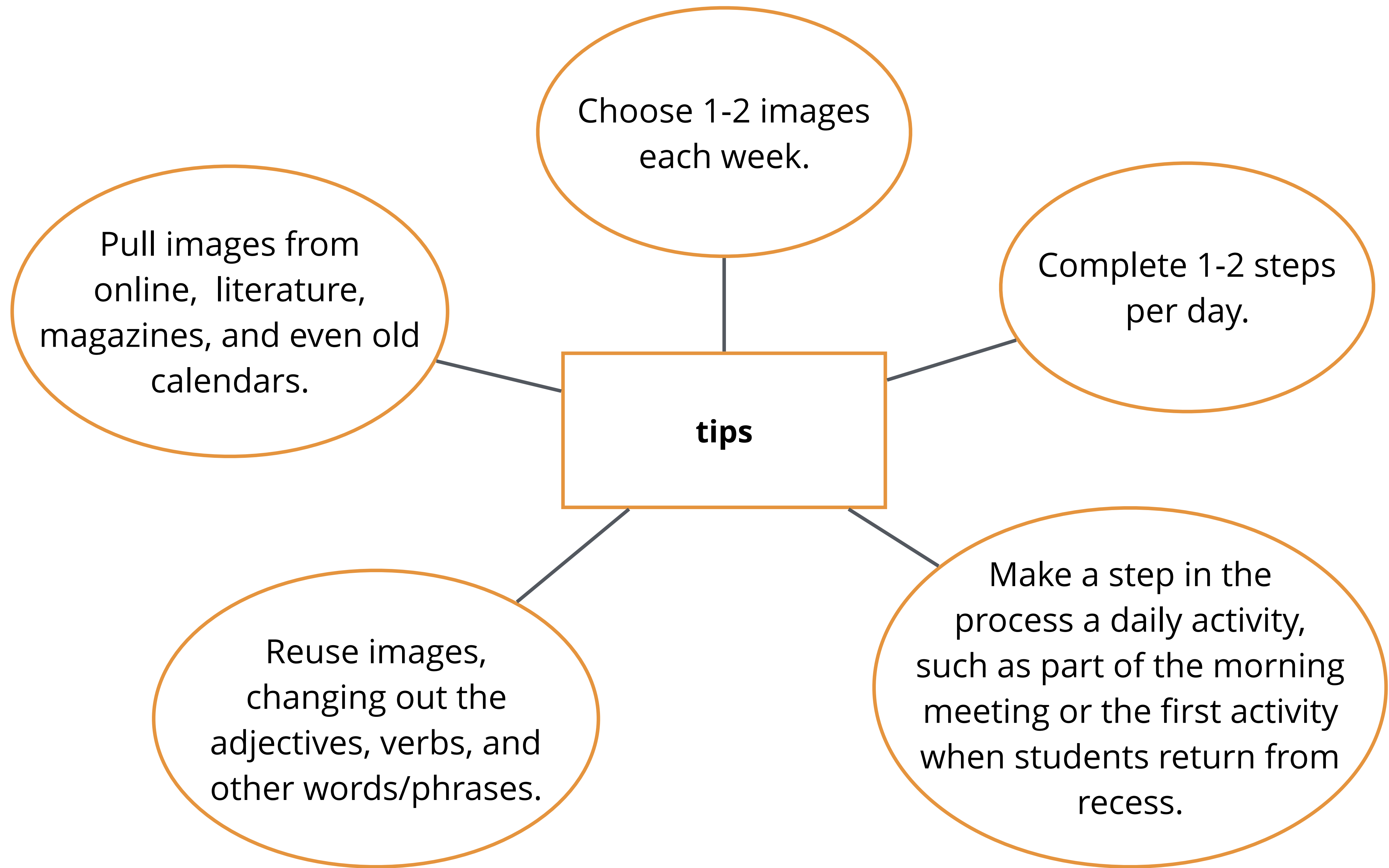
# Step 4

## STUDENTS CREATE SENTENCES!

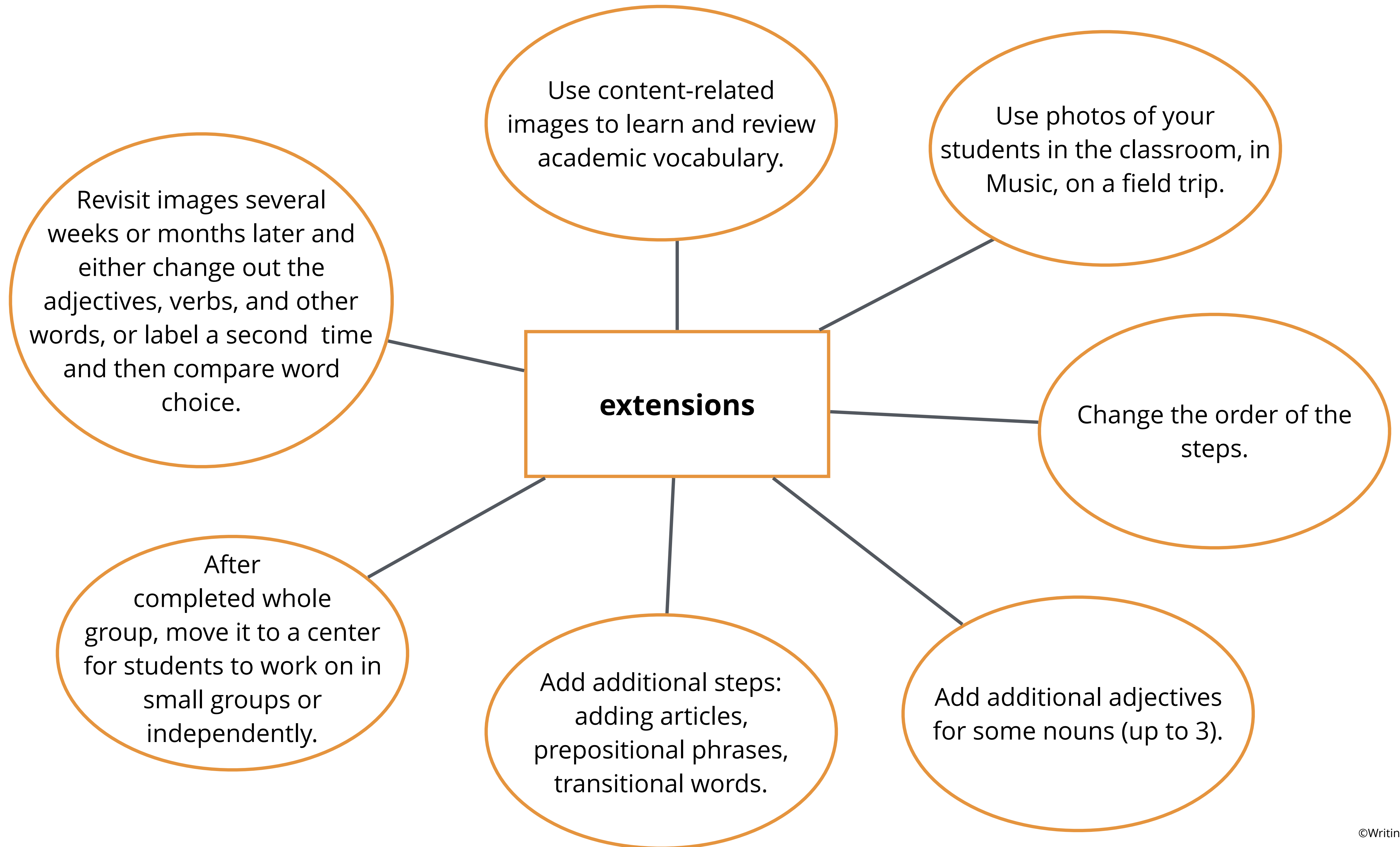
- Sample sentences:  
(Note the underlined words, are the only additional words needed to create sentences.)
- The young boys stood on the rickety stairwell.
- Their tired eyes peered out as their dirt-smudged hands held dented metal lunchboxes.
- The melted candles leaned in the tops of their oversized, worn hats.
- Below the rim of their oversized, worn hats, their tired eyes peered.







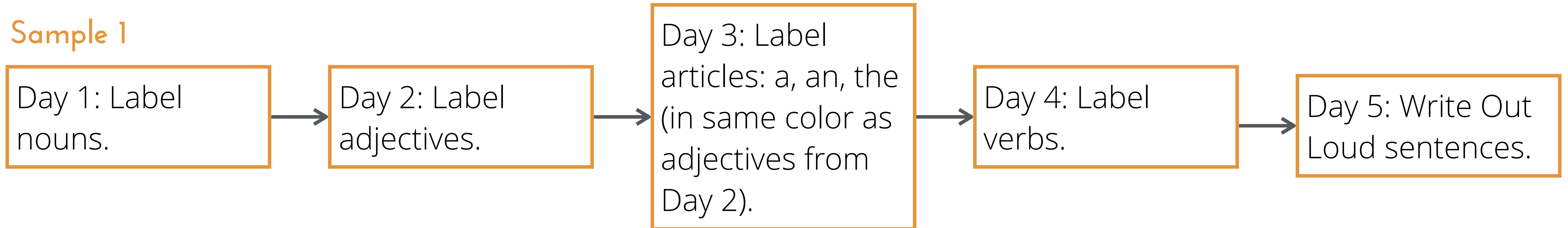






# Sample Weekly Pacings of Picture Labeling

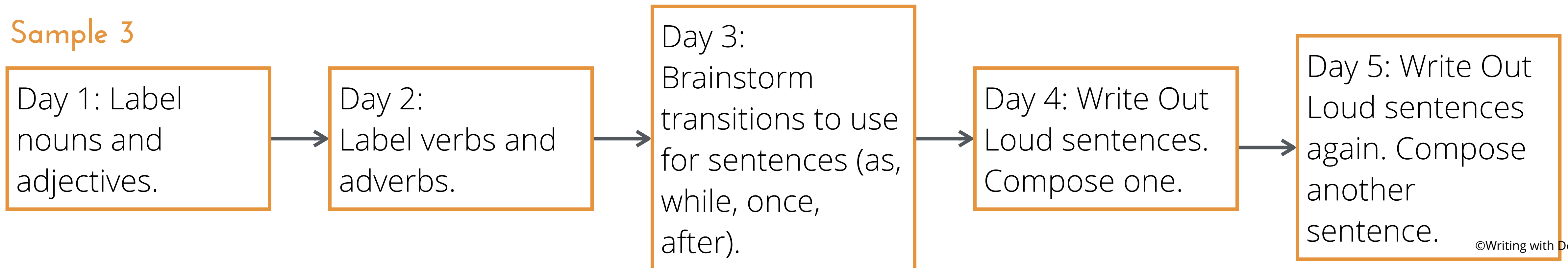
## Sample 1



## Sample 2



## Sample 3





# Sample Weekly Pacing of Picture Labeling: Partner Pictures

Student groups work to label the pictures. All groups can have the same picture and are just assigned a partnering group to meet with, or give two separate groups identical pictures so groups know who their “Picture Partner” will be.

Day 1: Student groups label nouns.

Partner Picture Groups gather together to confer about all the nouns they identified.

Encourage groups to refine the nouns on their sheet if they learn more precise ones when they meet with their Picture Partners.

Day 2: Label adjectives, including articles (a, an, the).

Groups again gather to confer about adjectives and are encouraged to refine and add to their adjectives.

Day 3: Label verbs.

Groups again gather to confer about verbs and are encouraged to refine and add to their verbs.

Day 4: Write Out Loud sentences and compose with home group.

Day 5: Meet with Picture Partners to share and refine sentences.



# SKILL *FOCUS* ACTIVITY

2-4th Grade  
Established

## The Power of Three

Three is the magic number! Yes, it is! To our eyes, ears, and brains, there is a special rhythm to three. Practice adding three words or three phrases to the following sentences to help make the information more succinct, rhythmic, and memorable.

Writing Criteria:

7: Sophisticated Word Choice

8: Varied Sentence Structure and Length







The Power of

**THREE**



## What makes the power of three powerful?

all three words, phrases, or sentences are about the same length and have a similar structure (i.e. all begin with an adjective, maintain the same verb tense)

---

the longest word or phrase typically goes at the end of the series

---

there's a rhythm when it's read (rearrange and read aloud to find the best rhythm to the three)

---

★ **bonus points for alliteration**



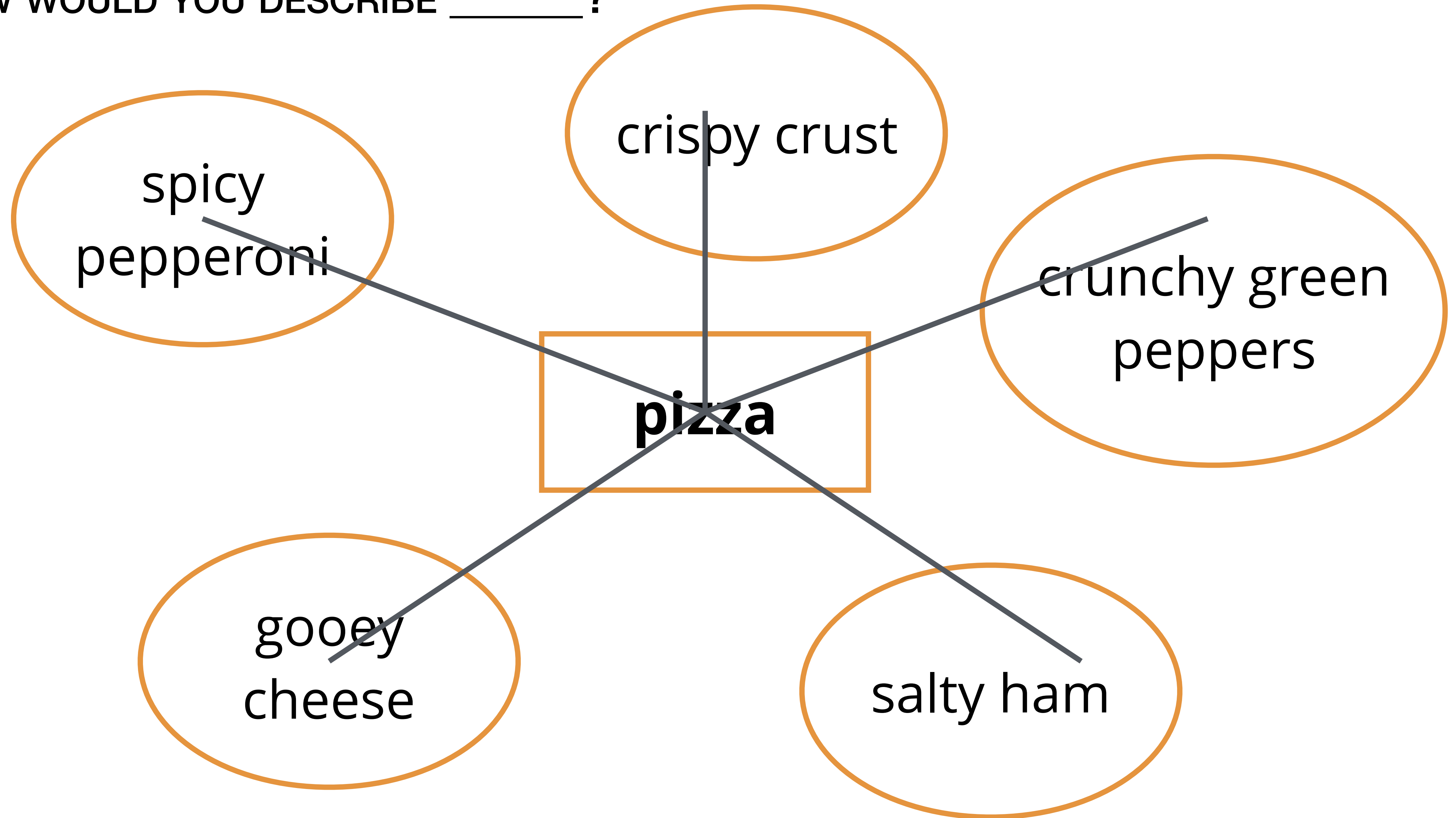
# The Power of 3

Pizza is best with \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and  
\_\_\_\_\_.





HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE \_\_\_\_\_?





# The Power of 3

Pizza is best with \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Pizza is best with spicy pepperoni, gooey cheese, and a crispy crust.





# The Power of 3

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ puddles  
make for a memorable afternoon outside!

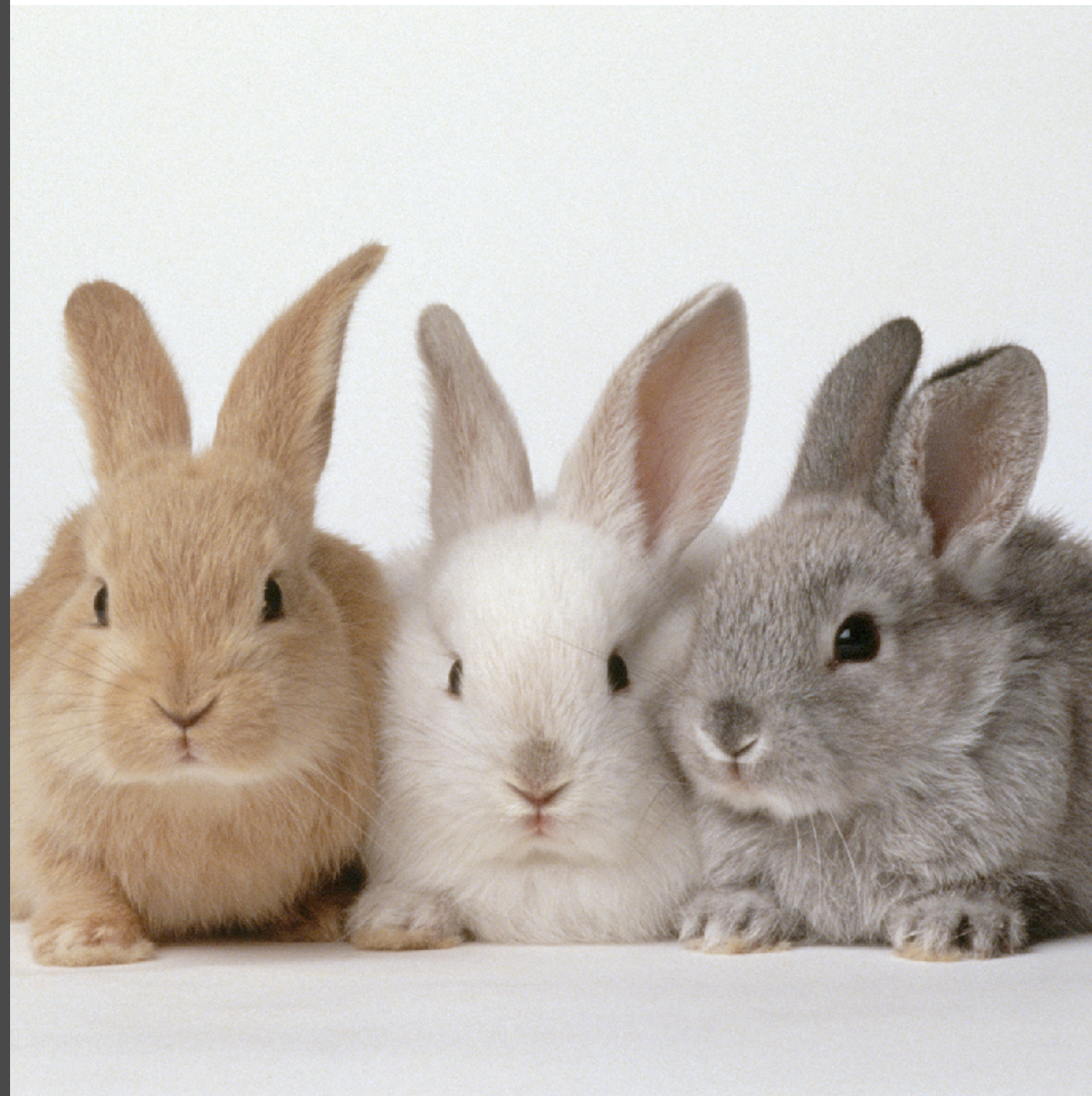




# The Power of 3



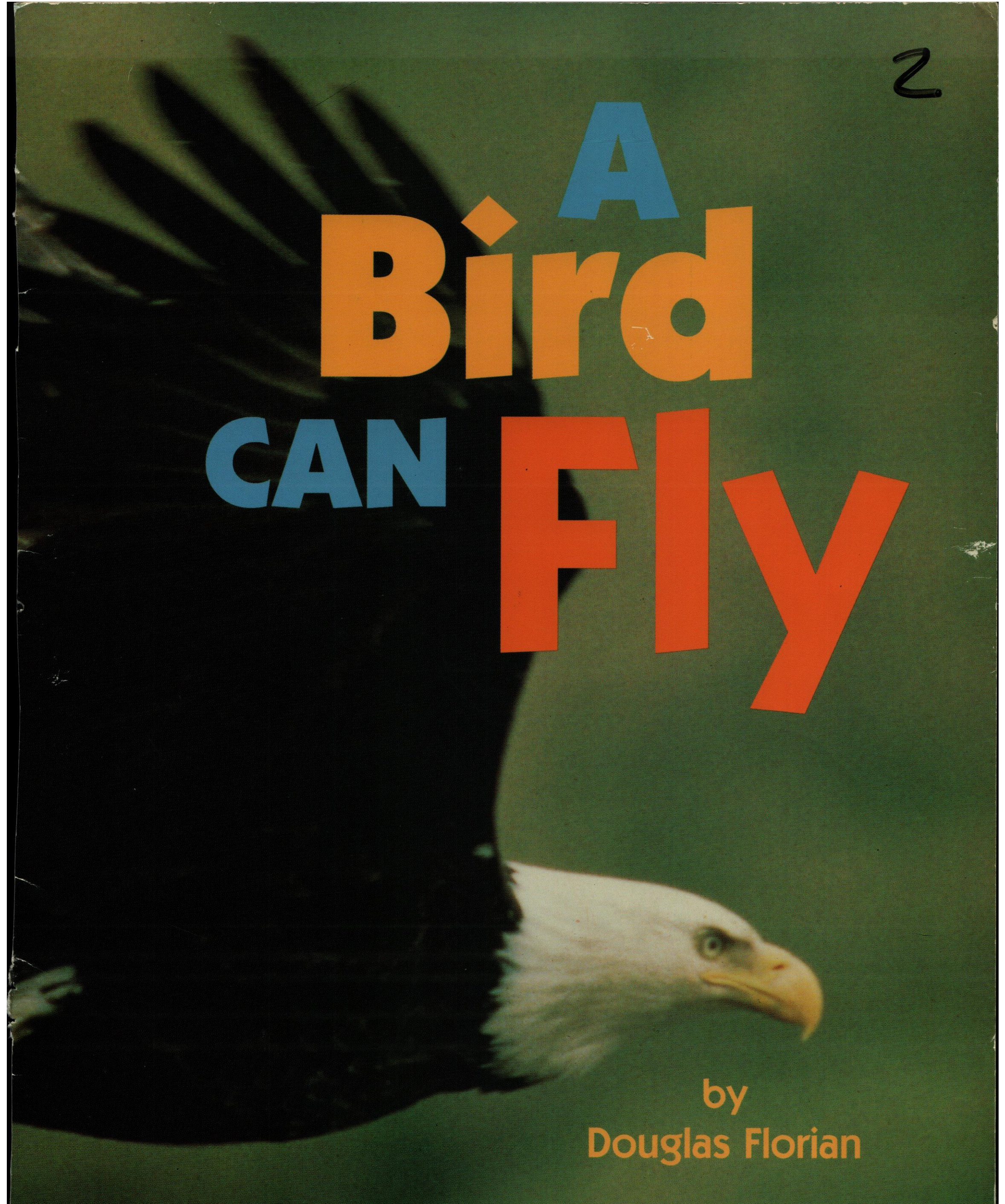
Besides cats and dogs, the animal shelter has \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and even \_\_\_\_\_!





2

# A Bird CAN Fly



by  
Douglas Florian





A bird can  
**fly.**

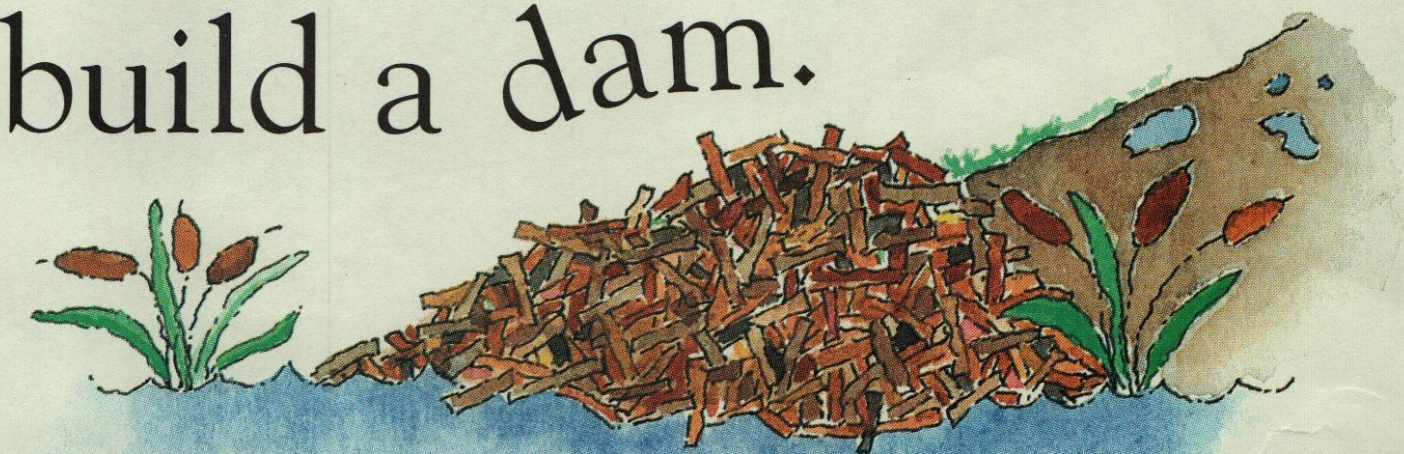
A bird  
can  
**sing.**



A bird can  
**build  
a  
nest.**



But a bird  
can't build a dam.





An ant can live  
underground.



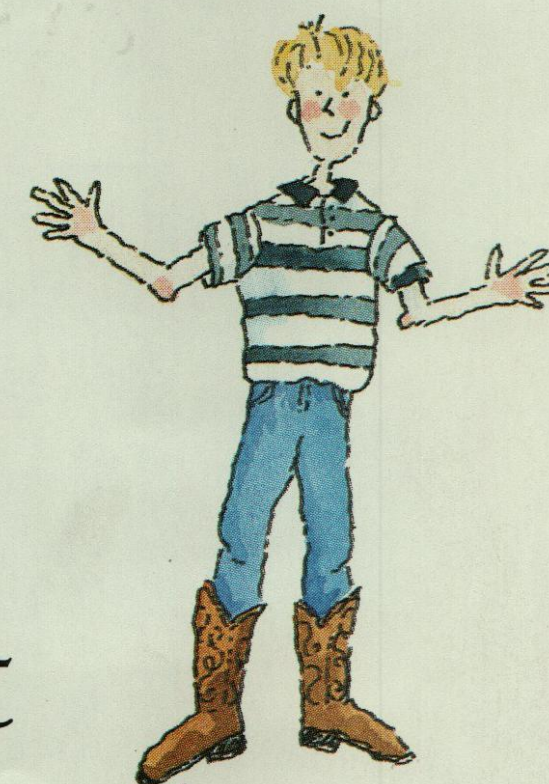
An ant can  
walk  
upside  
down  
on a branch.



An ant can  
carry  
five  
times  
its own  
weight.



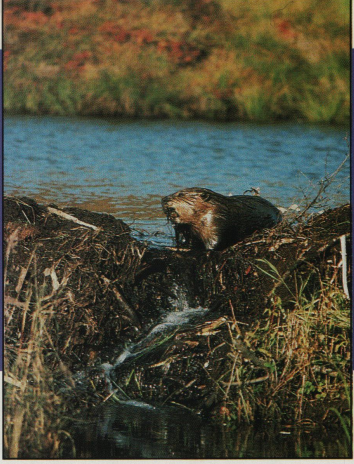
But an ant  
can't carry a boy on its back.






From a writer's perspective, what's weak about the sentences in this text?  
What can be added to make them stronger?

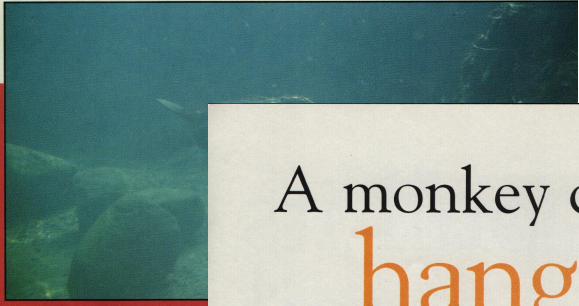
A beaver can build a dam.



A beaver can cut down trees with its teeth.




A beaver can live underwater for fifteen minutes.

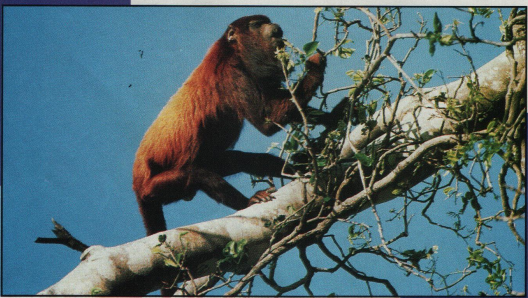


But a beaver can't live under


A monkey can hang by its tail.



A monkey can live in a tree.

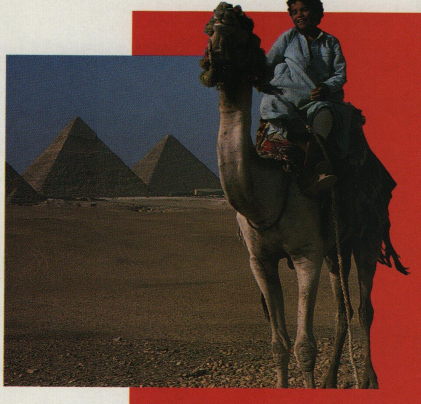


A monkey can travel through the jungle.




But a monkey can't travel across the desert

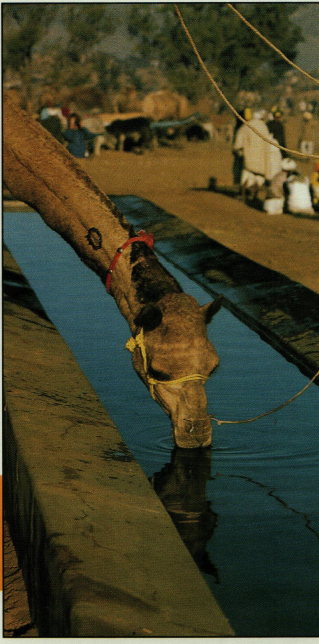
A camel can travel across the desert.



A camel can store food in its body.



But a camel can't breathe underwater.



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# Rewriting and Refining for Richness

Follow these steps to rewrite and refine the page from the book.

Look for places to add **adjectives**. Create Brainstorming Designs about each noun.



Examine the **verbs**. Which ones are weak and need to be replaced? Which tense would be the strongest to use? (Be sure to remain consistent with the verb tense throughout the writing, unless a change is necessary.)



Experiment with **transitional words and phrases** to combine sentences and enhance the writing. Try several combinations of the sentences. How do different transitional words change the meaning of the sentence?

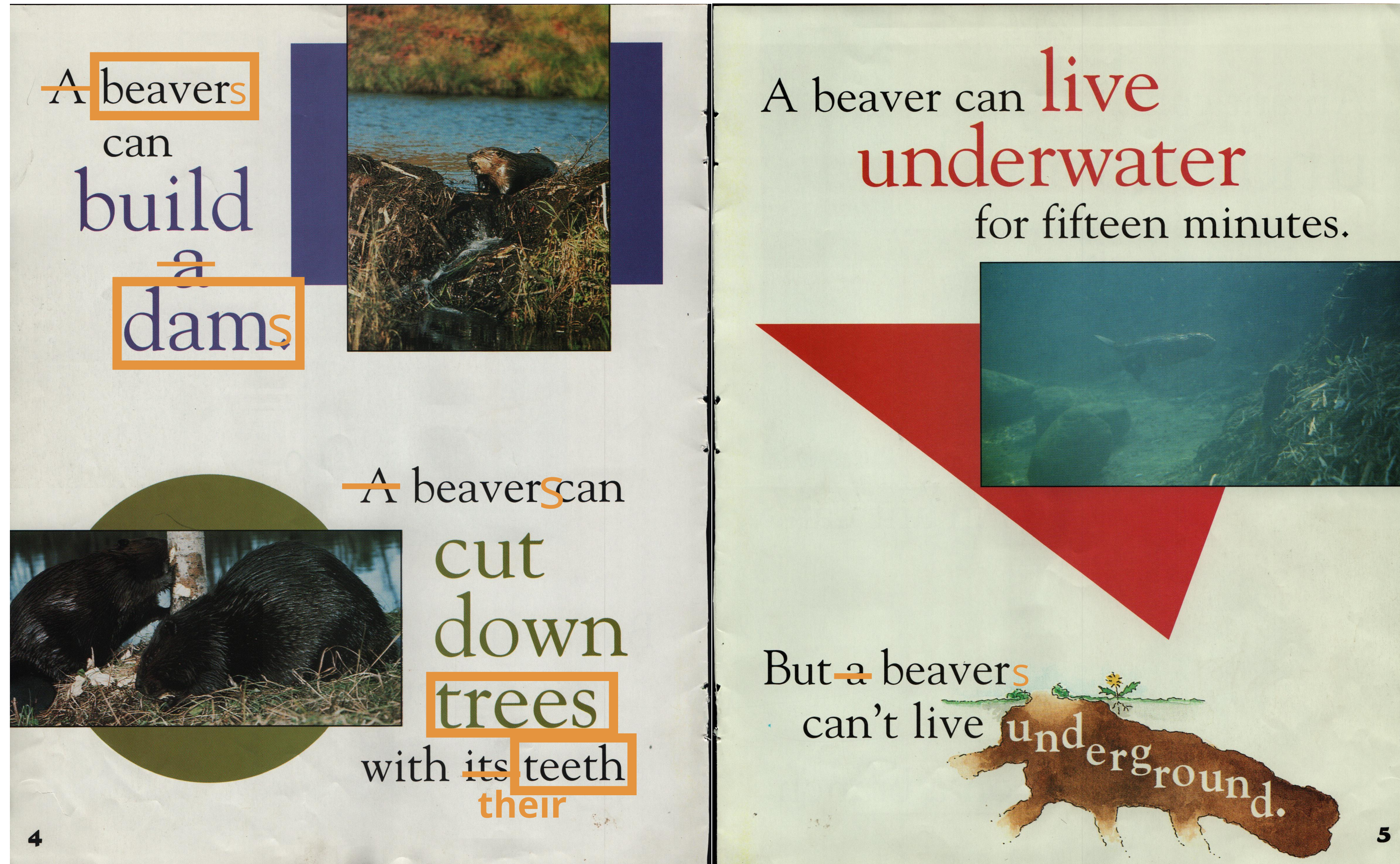


# Rewriting and Refining for Richness

Review the page from the book your group has been given.

Using an orange marker, draw a box around nouns that could be strengthened by adjectives.

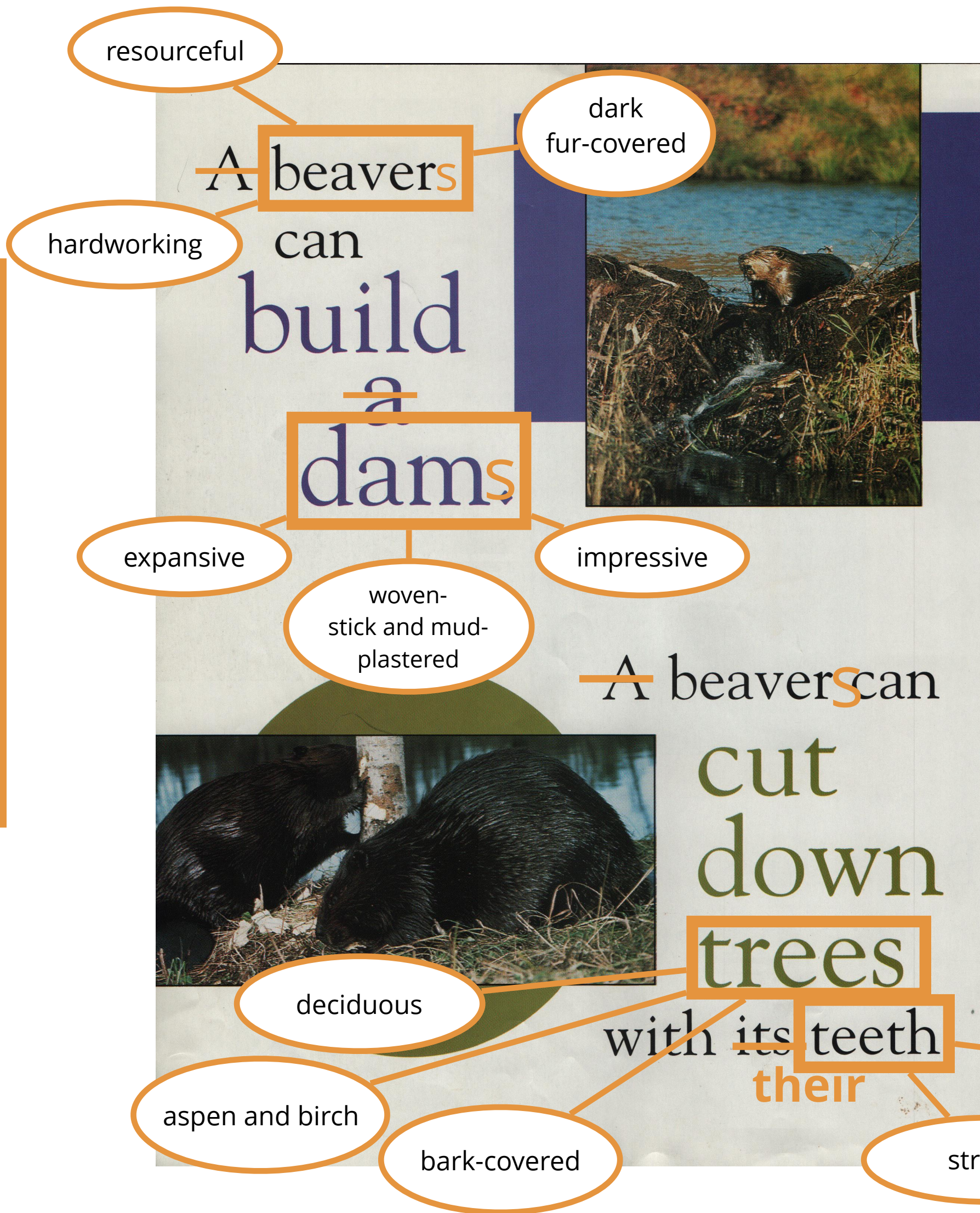
Change the nouns to plural.



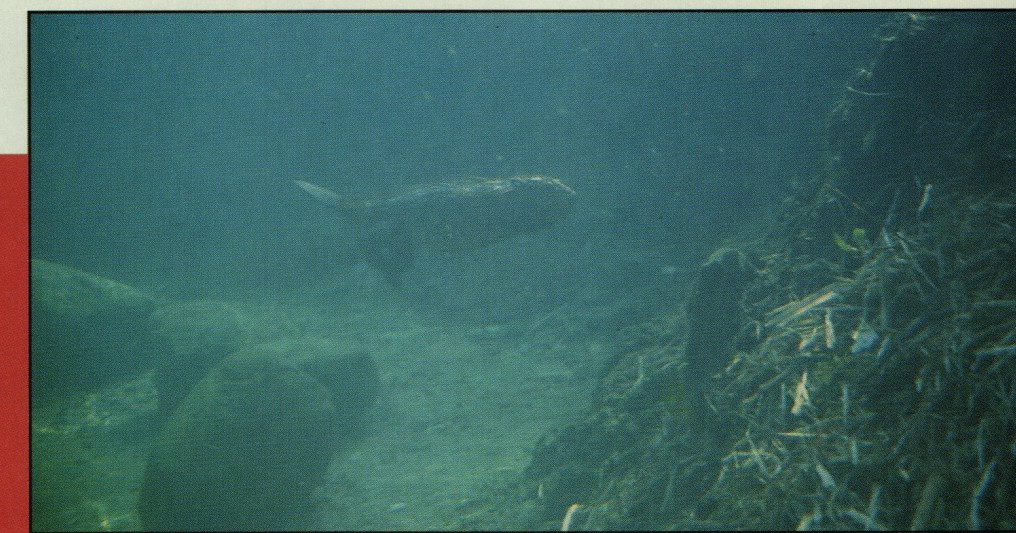


# Rewriting and Refining for Richness

Using your resources  
(technology,  
discussion, additional  
sources), add 2-3  
strong adjectives that  
vividly describe each  
noun.



A beavers can live  
underwater  
for fifteen minutes.



But a beavers can't live underground.



# Rewriting and Refining for Richness

Using a purple marker, draw a box around the verbs that could be strengthened with synonyms or additional words.

Using your resources (technology, discussion, additional sources), add the synonyms or additional words needed for each verb and cross out the weak word 'can' in front of the action verb.

The diagram illustrates the process of rewriting a sentence about beavers by adding descriptive words and removing the weak word 'can'. It features two versions of a sentence, with the original on the left and the rewritten version on the right. The original sentence is: "A beaver can build a dam." The rewritten sentence is: "A beaver can live underwater for fifteen minutes." The original sentence is further elaborated with a second sentence: "A beaver can cut down trees with its teeth." The rewritten sentence is: "But a beaver can't live underground." The diagram includes various annotations and images to support the rewriting process.

**Original Sentence:** A beaver can build a dam.

**Annotations for 'build':** resourceful, hardworking, construct, assemble, impressive, woven-stick and mud-plastered, expansive.

**Original Sentence:** A beaver can cut down trees with its teeth.

**Annotations for 'cut down':** gnaw and fell, deciduous, aspen and birch, bark-covered, strong, orange-colored.

**Annotations for 'live':** swim underwater without surfacing, remain submerged without breathing.

**Annotations for 'teeth':** orange-colored, strong.

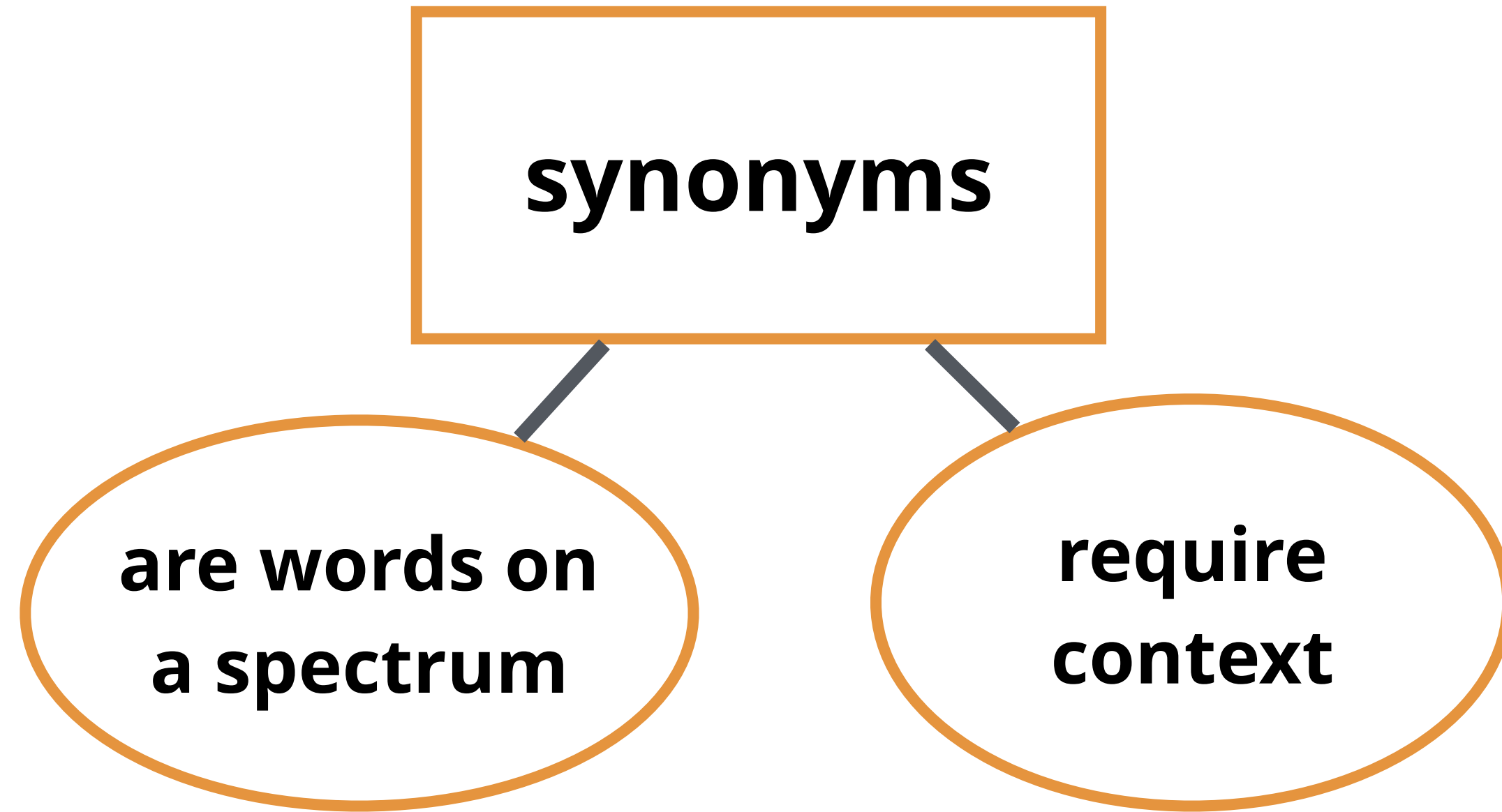
**Annotations for 'can':** dark fur-covered.

**Annotations for 'can't':** orange-colored.

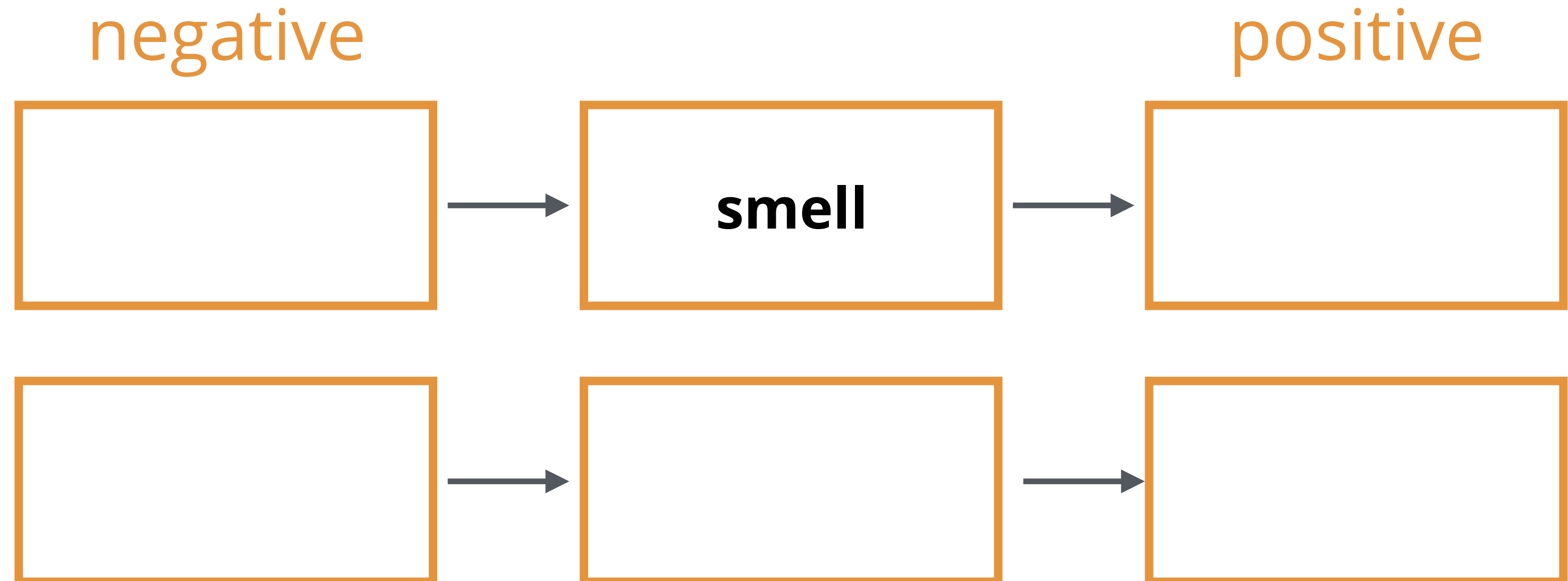
**Images:** A beaver building a dam, a beaver swimming underwater, a beaver cutting down a tree.



# A QUICK LOOK AT SYNONYMS



What's that smell?





**synonyms**

**are words on  
a spectrum**

**require  
context**

Would you like to go  
for a run?

slow

fast

**run**



**synonyms**

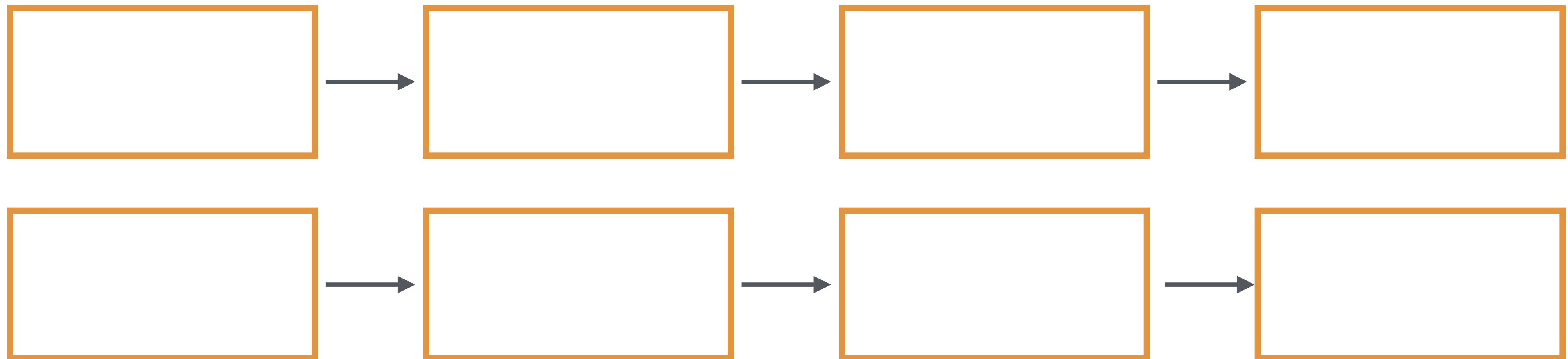
**are words on  
a spectrum**

**require  
context**

How cold is it?

coldest

cool

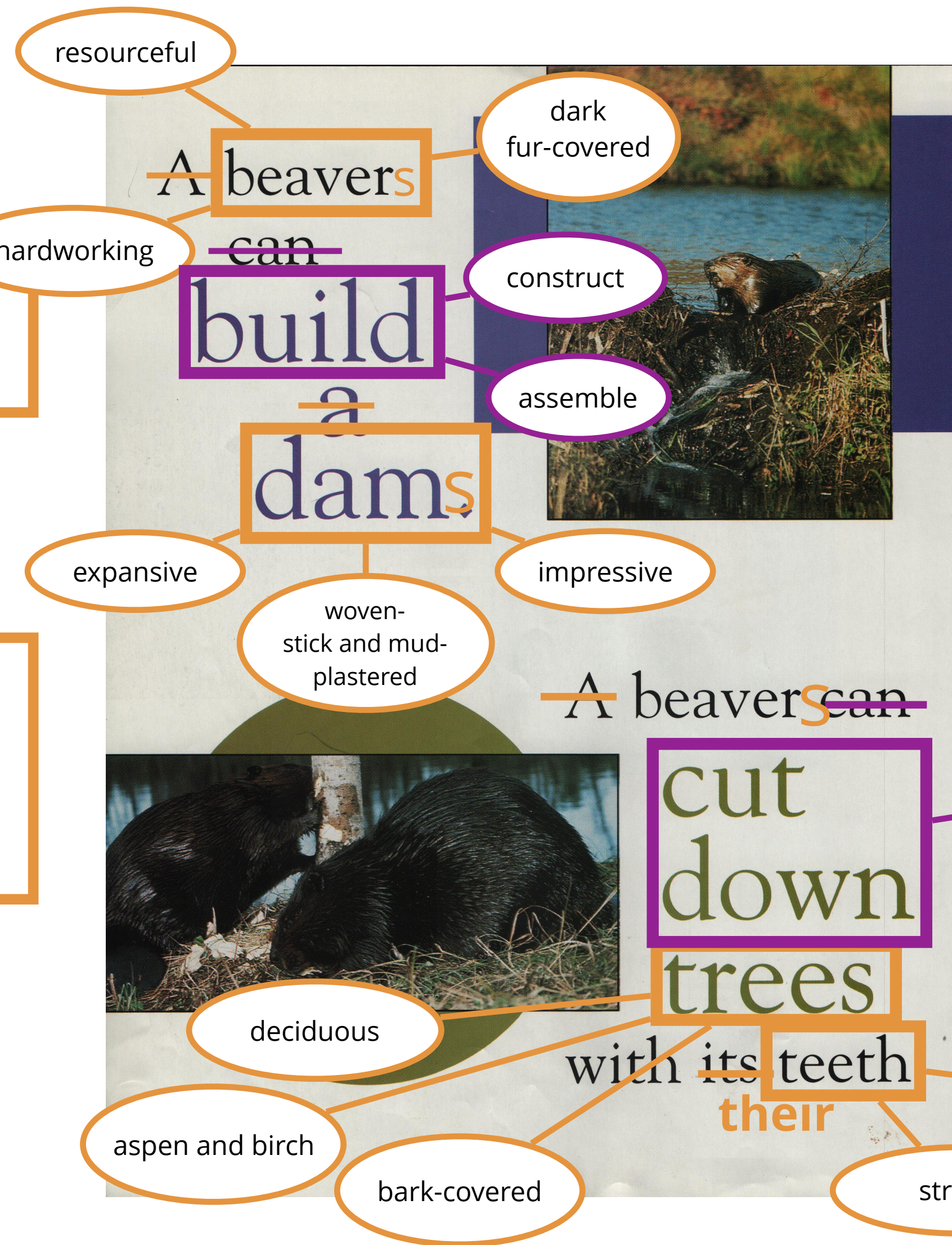




# Rewriting and Refining for Richness

Check the verb tense and plurality of the nouns.

Write Out Loud the sentences with the adjectives and stronger verbs.



~~A beaver~~ can **live** **underwater** for fifteen minutes.

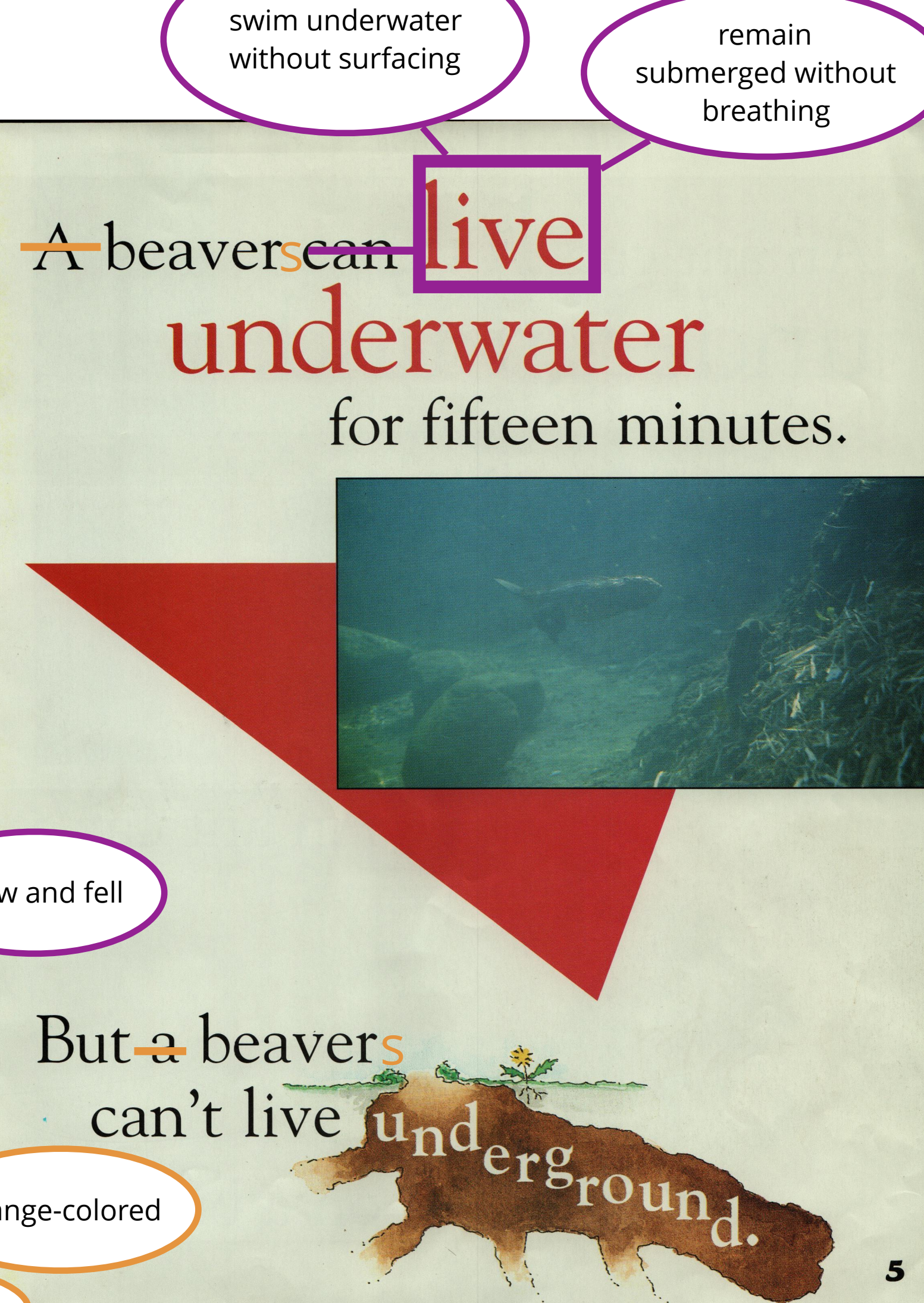
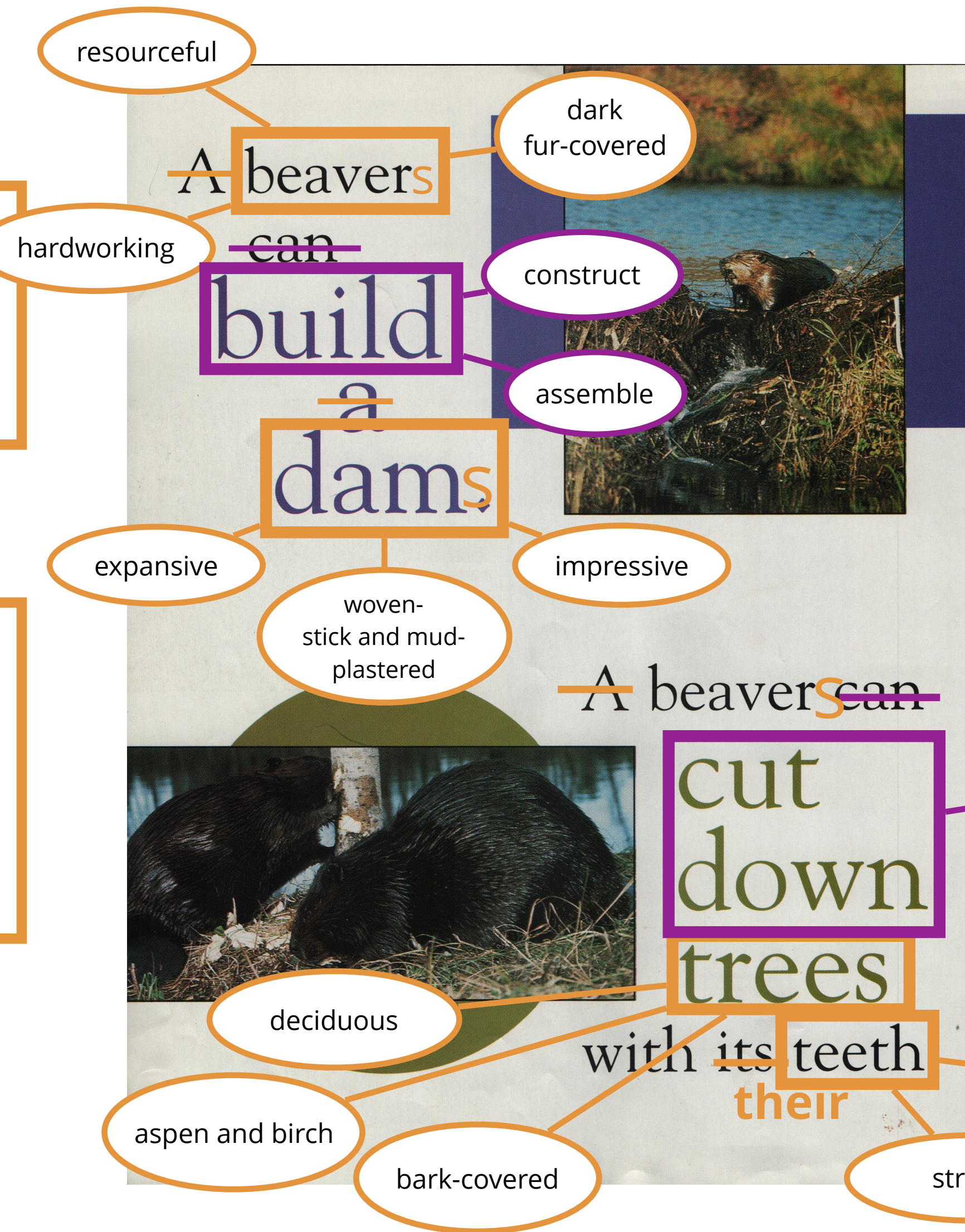
But ~~a~~ beaver~~s~~ can't live **underground**.



# Rewriting and Refining for Richness

Review your sheet of transitional words and phrases.

Experiment with transitional words to combine sentences and enhance the writing.





9: Informational Transitional Words and Phrases  
for Developing Writers

Developing Writers' List, page 1	
What's the purpose?	transitional words and phrases
common transition phrase starters	After..., As..., At..., By..., For..., From..., If..., In..., On..., Once..., When..., While..., With...,
to add	Additionally, Also, Another..., In addition
to compare/find similarities	A/One/Another commonality between {A} and {B} is..., A/One/Another similarity between {A} and {B} is..., Both {A} and {B},
to contrast	but, By comparison, However, In contrast, On the other hand, While
to conclude or summarize	Clearly, Indeed, Overall, Truly
to counter	Actually, Although, Even though, While it is true that...
to explain/clarify/generalize	In other words, Said differently, To clarify
to exemplify/illustrate	For example, For instance, such as

Note: All transitional words that are capitalized can start a sentence. Those that appear only in lower case are best embedded within sentences.

9: Informational Transitional Words and Phrases  
for Developing Writers

Developing Writers' List, page 2	
What's the purpose?	transitional words and phrases
to locate or show spatial arrangement	Above, Across, After, Against, Along, Alongside, Around, At, Before, Behind, Below, Beneath, Beside, Between, Beyond, By, Close to..., Down, Far from..., Far off, From, In, In front of, Inside, Into, Near, Next to, Off, On, On one side, On top of, Out of, Outside, Over, Past, Since, Surrounding, Through, To the left, To the right, Toward, Under, Underneath, Up, Within
to prove	By all means, Clearly, Furthermore, In any case
to repeat/emphasize/intensify	Above all, Certainly, In fact, Indeed, It has been noted, Most importantly, Notably, To repeat, Undeniably, Unquestionably
to sequence/show time	After, After a while, Afterwards, As..., As soon as..., At..., At last, Before, Before long, Concurrently, Currently, During, Eventually, Finally, Immediately, Meanwhile, Historically, Initially, In an instant, Just as..., Lastly, Later on, Not long after, Now, Often, Once..., Previously, Recently, ___ Seconds/minutes/hours/days/years later, Simultaneously, Sometimes, Soon, Suddenly, When..., Whenever, While...
to show cause/reason/purpose	Because of..., Depending..., With that in mind, Since...
to show frequency	Always, Never, Sometimes
to show results or effects	Accordingly, As a consequence, As a result, For this reason, Hence, If {A}, then {B}, So, Subsequently, Under those circumstances



# Rewriting and Refining for Richness

On an index card, rewrite the text of the page with all the refinements you think sound best.

Let's share!

The diagram illustrates the process of rewriting a text for richness. It shows two versions of a page, with the original text on the left and the rewritten text on the right. The refinements are highlighted in colored boxes and ovals.

**Original Text (Left):**

A beavers can build a dams

A beaver can cut down trees with its teeth

**Refinements (Left):**

- resourceful
- hardworking
- dark fur-covered
- construct
- assemble
- expansive
- woven-stick and mud-plastered
- impressive
- deciduous
- aspen and birch
- bark-covered
- strong
- orange-colored

**Rewritten Text (Right):**

A beaver can live underwater for fifteen minutes.

But a beaver can't live underground.

**Refinements (Right):**

- swim underwater without surfacing
- remain submerged without breathing
- gnaw and fell



# Rewriting and Refining for Richness

Even though beavers can swim underwater without surfacing for fifteen minutes, they are best known for their impressive dam building skills. After beavers gnaw and fell deciduous trees with their strong, orange-colored teeth, they construct expansive dams made of woven sticks and mud plastered.

resourceful

dark fur-covered

hardworking

construct

assemble

expansive

woven-stick and mud-plastered

impressive

swim underwater without surfacing

remain submerged without breathing

A beaver can live underwater for fifteen minutes.

gnaw and fell

deciduous

aspen and birch

bark-covered

strong

orange-colored

with its teeth

cut down trees

But a beaver can't live underground.

5



# SKILL *FOCUS* ACTIVITY

2nd-12th  
Developing  
and Established

## It's in the Bag!

**Boring sentences just won't cut it! Get ready to evaluate sentences and work as a team to give them a much needed makeover!**

Writing Criteria

7: Sophisticated Word Choice

8: Varied Sentence Structure & Length





# It's in the Bag!

Read the weak, basic sentence on the front of the bag.





# It's in the Bag!

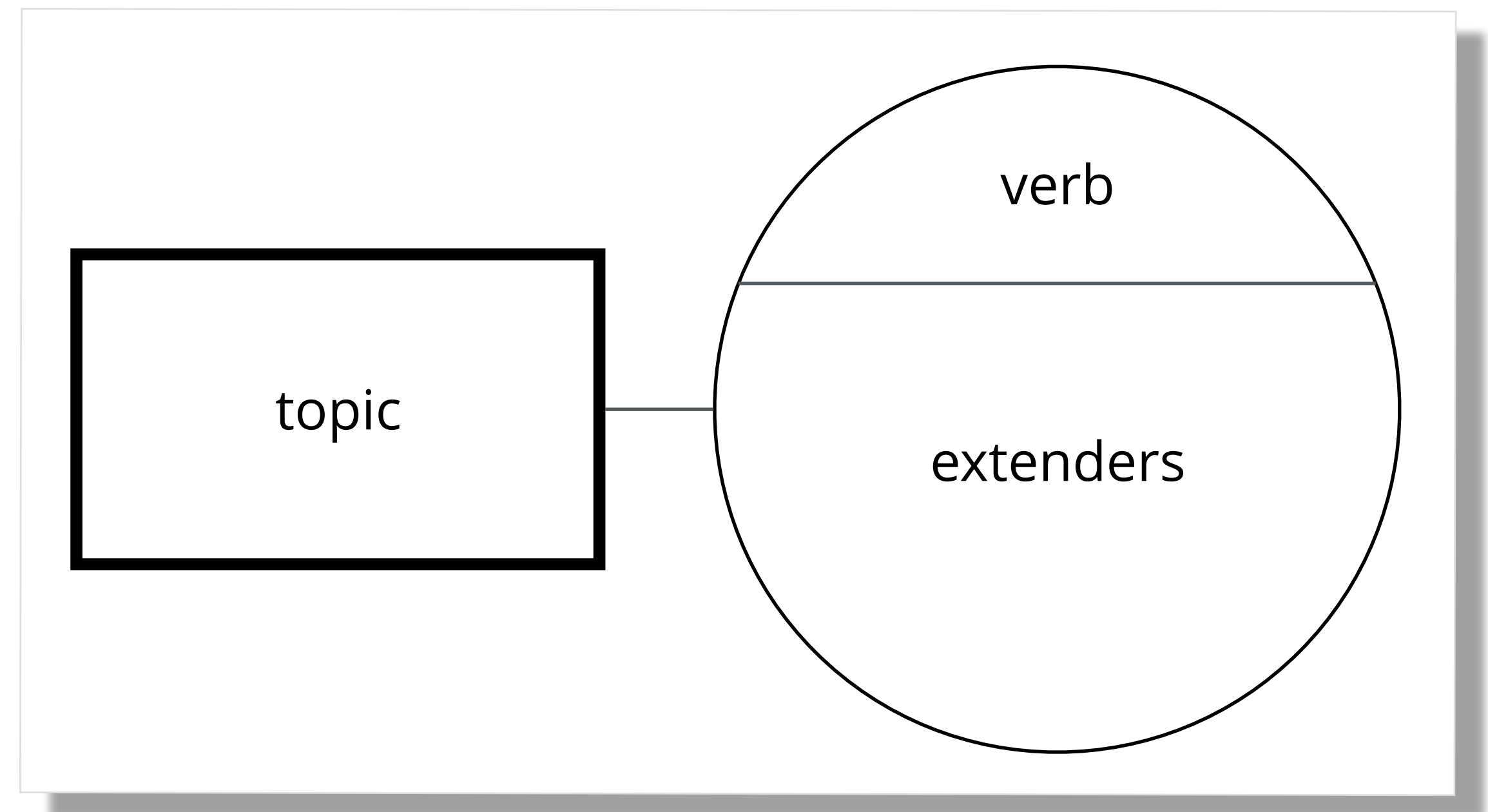
As a team, redesign the sentence in a Level 1 Brainstorming Design on an index card.



Remember, you can change any words in the sentence as long as the message of the sentence stays the same.

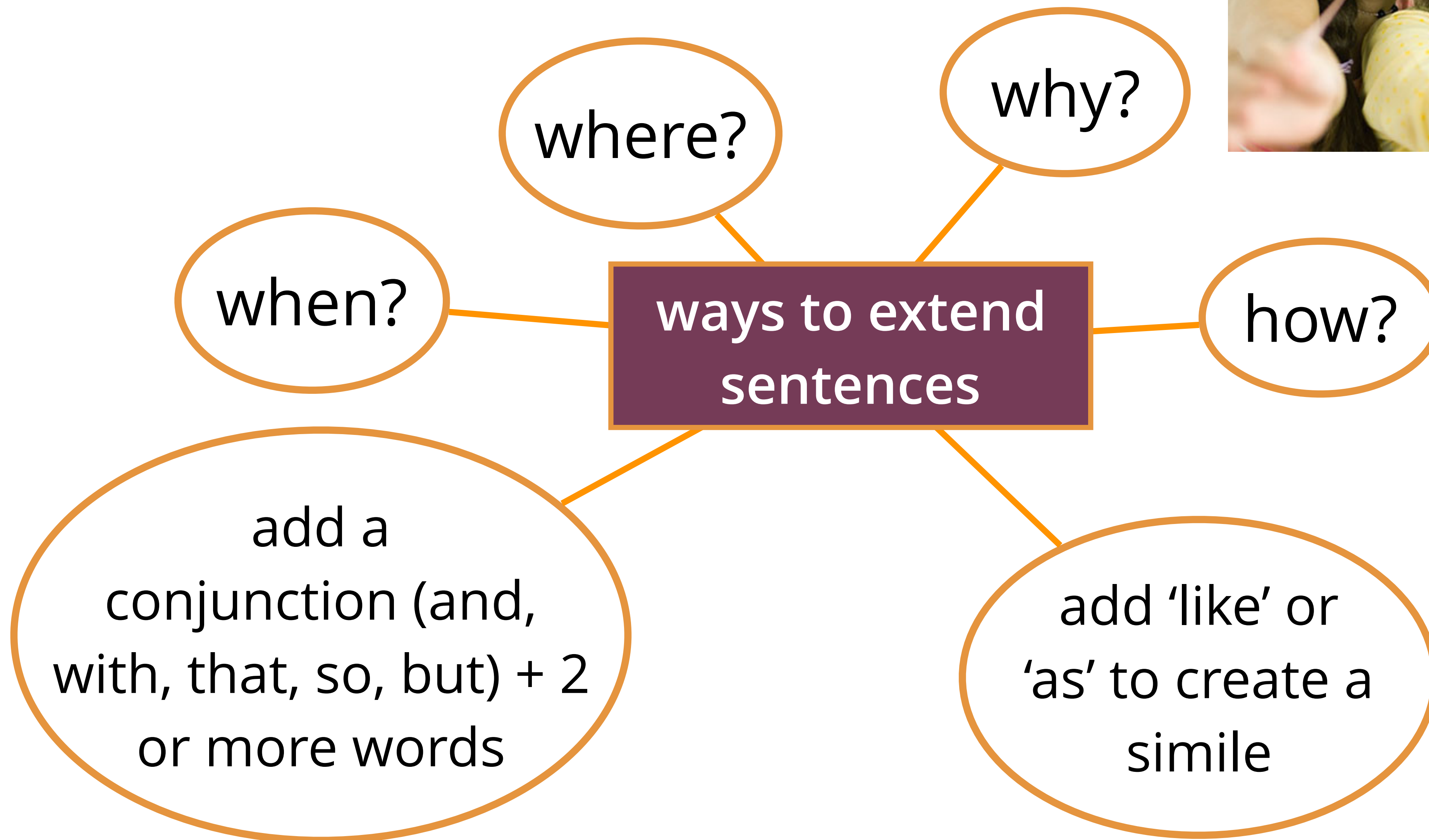


Use the resources on the next few slides to add sophistication and description as you refine the sentence.



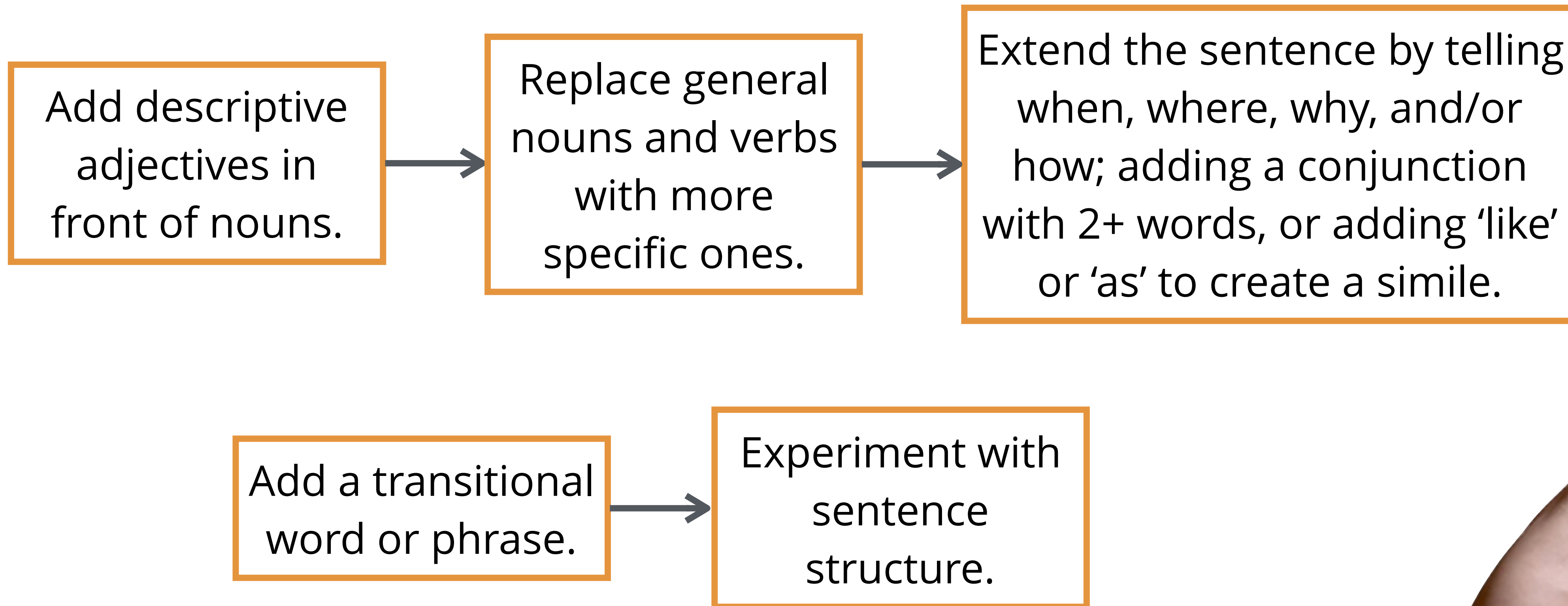


## SENTENCES STRETCHERS



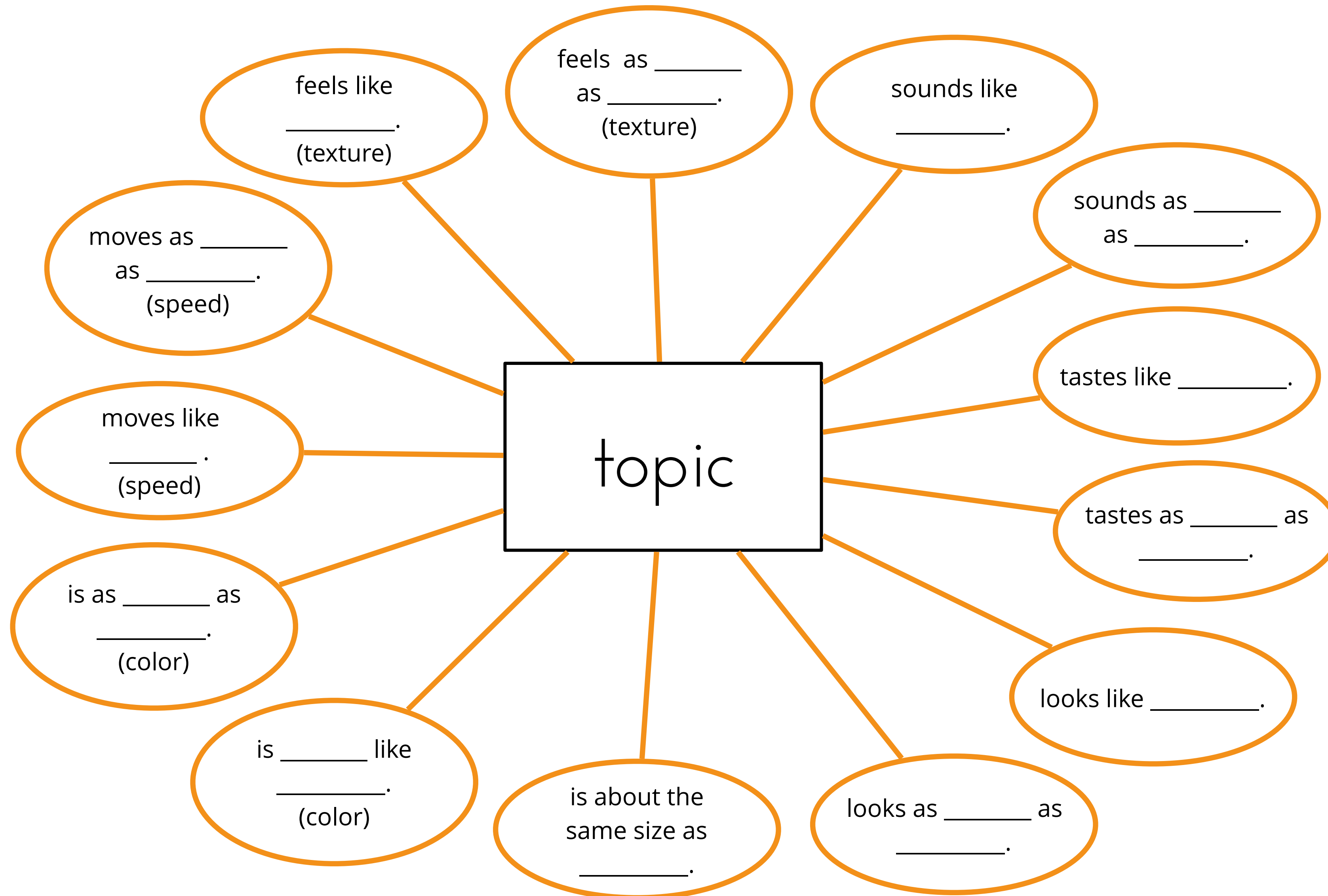


## WAYS TO ADD STRENGTH AND LENGTH



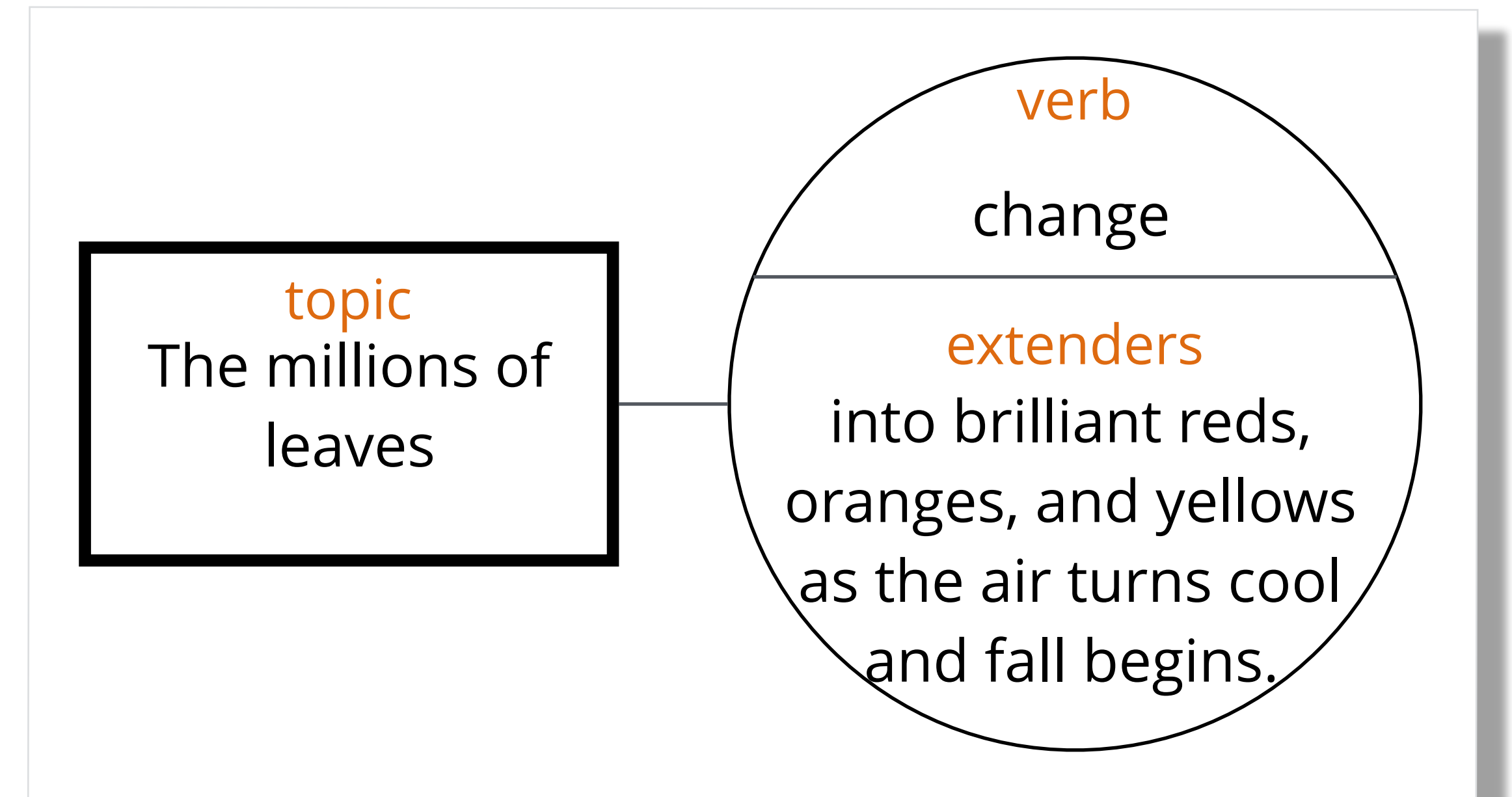


# SIMILE SENTENCE EXTENDERS





# It's in the Bag!





# It's in the Bag!

Place your redesigned Level 1 Brainstorming Design/ sentence in the bag.



```
graph LR; A[Place your redesigned Level 1 Brainstorming Design/ sentence in the bag.] --> B[When told to do so, pass the bag to the next team.]; B --> C[When you receive a new bag, only read the sentence on the outside. Now, if you want to see what the other group wrote, you can. However, you then must make sure your sentence sounds completely different. If you'd rather not look, you don't have to read the other group's sentence.]; C --> D[Redesign the new sentence in a Level 1 Brainstorming Design on an index card and place your newly designed sentence in the bag.];
```

When told to do so, pass the bag to the next team.

When you receive a new bag, only read the sentence on the outside. Now, if you want to see what the other group wrote, you can. However, you then must make sure your sentence sounds completely different. If you'd rather not look, you don't have to read the other group's sentence.

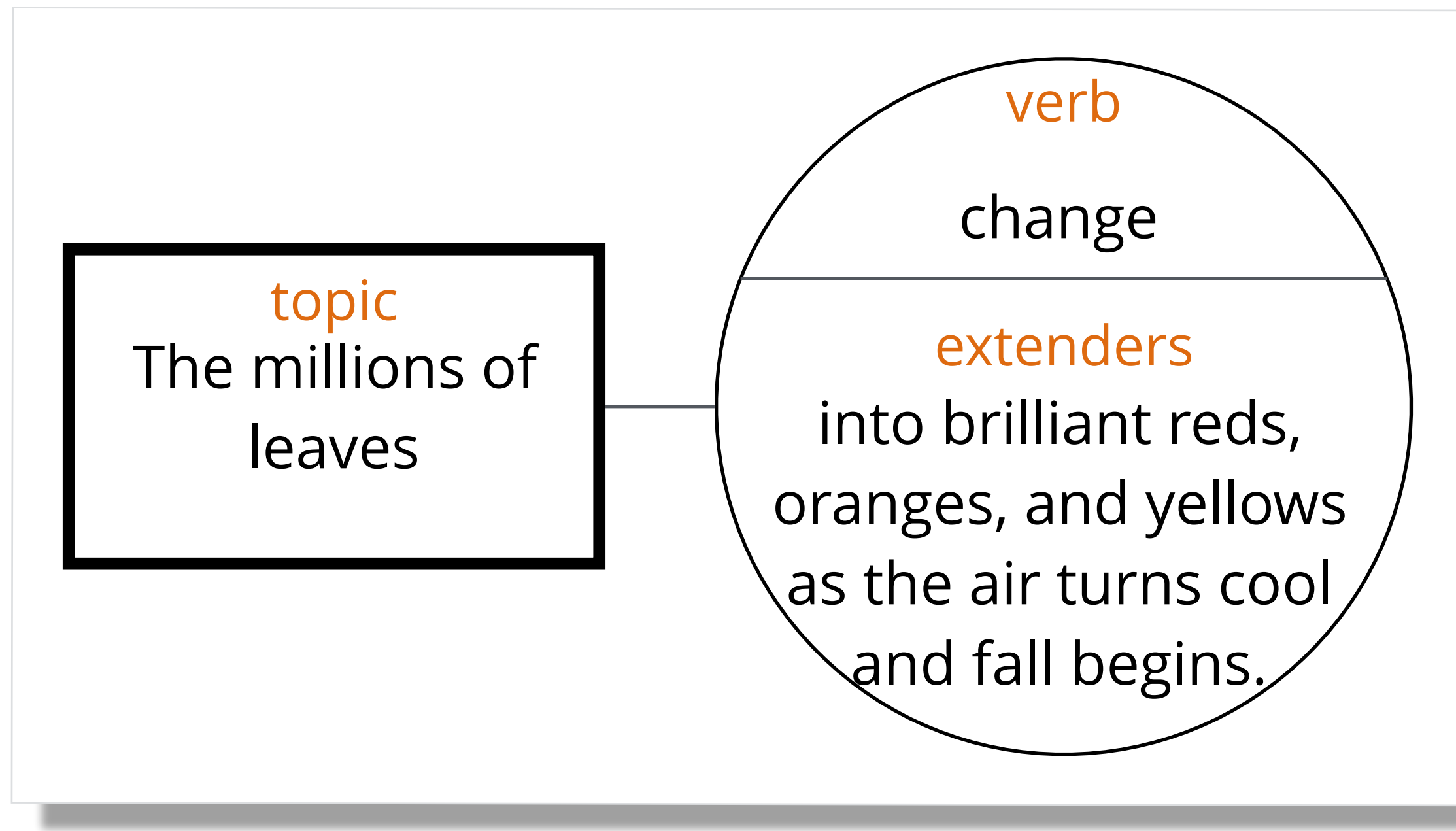
Redesign the new sentence in a Level 1 Brainstorming Design on an index card and place your newly designed sentence in the bag.



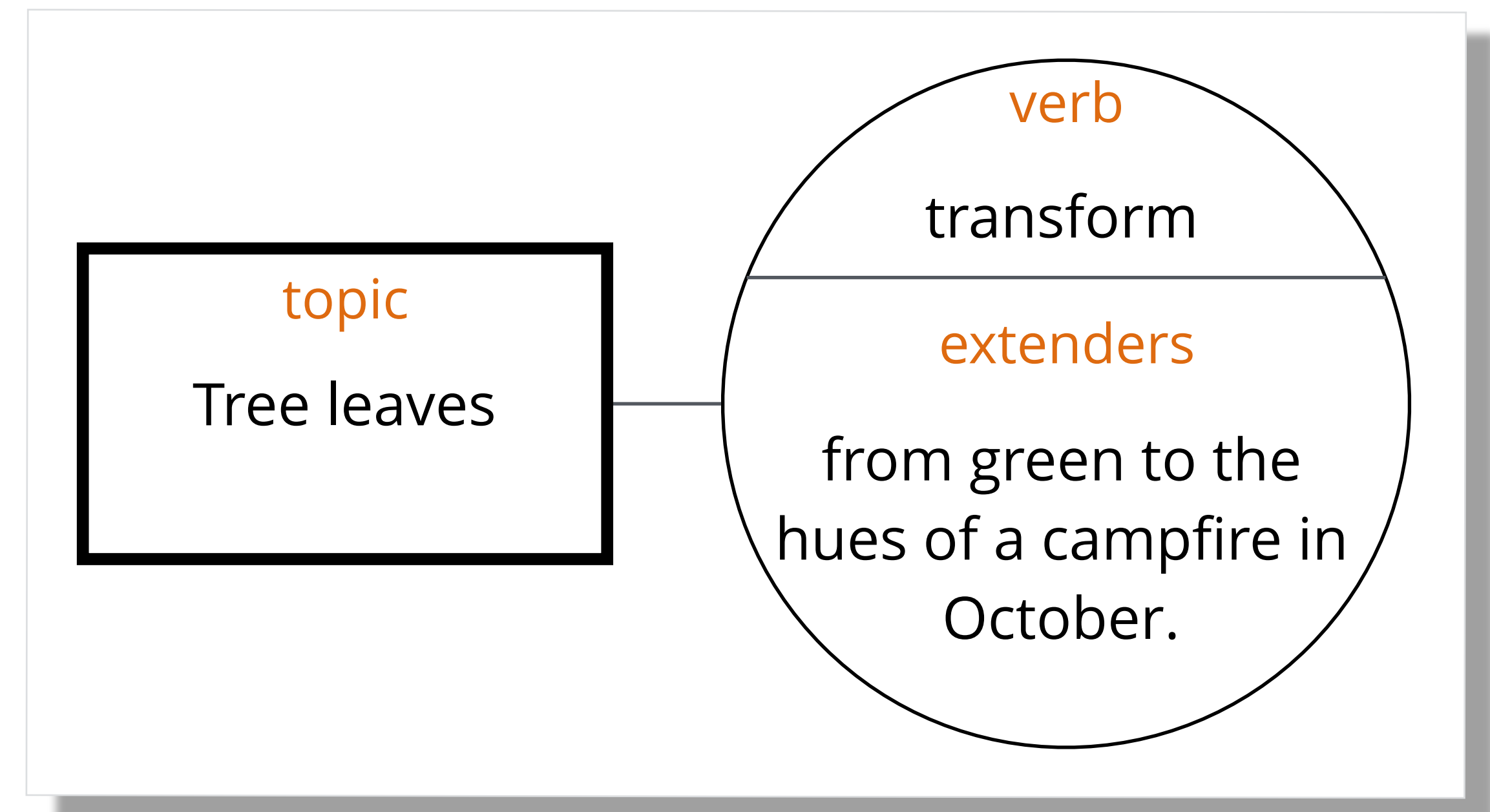
# It's in the Bag!

This time, when you receive an bag, pull out all of the samples. As you read them, discuss what is most impressive about each example.

## Team 1's sentence



## Team 2's sentence

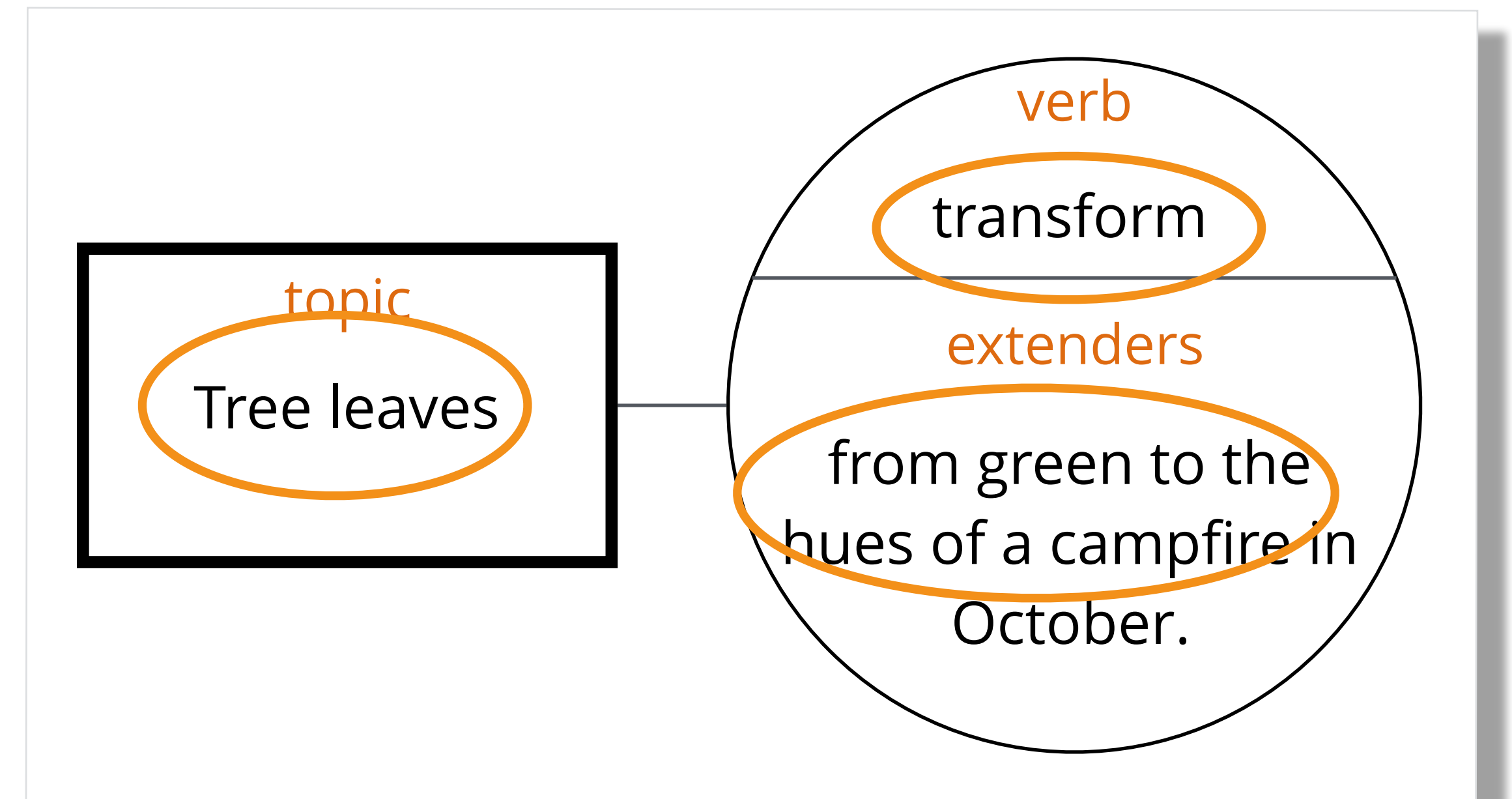
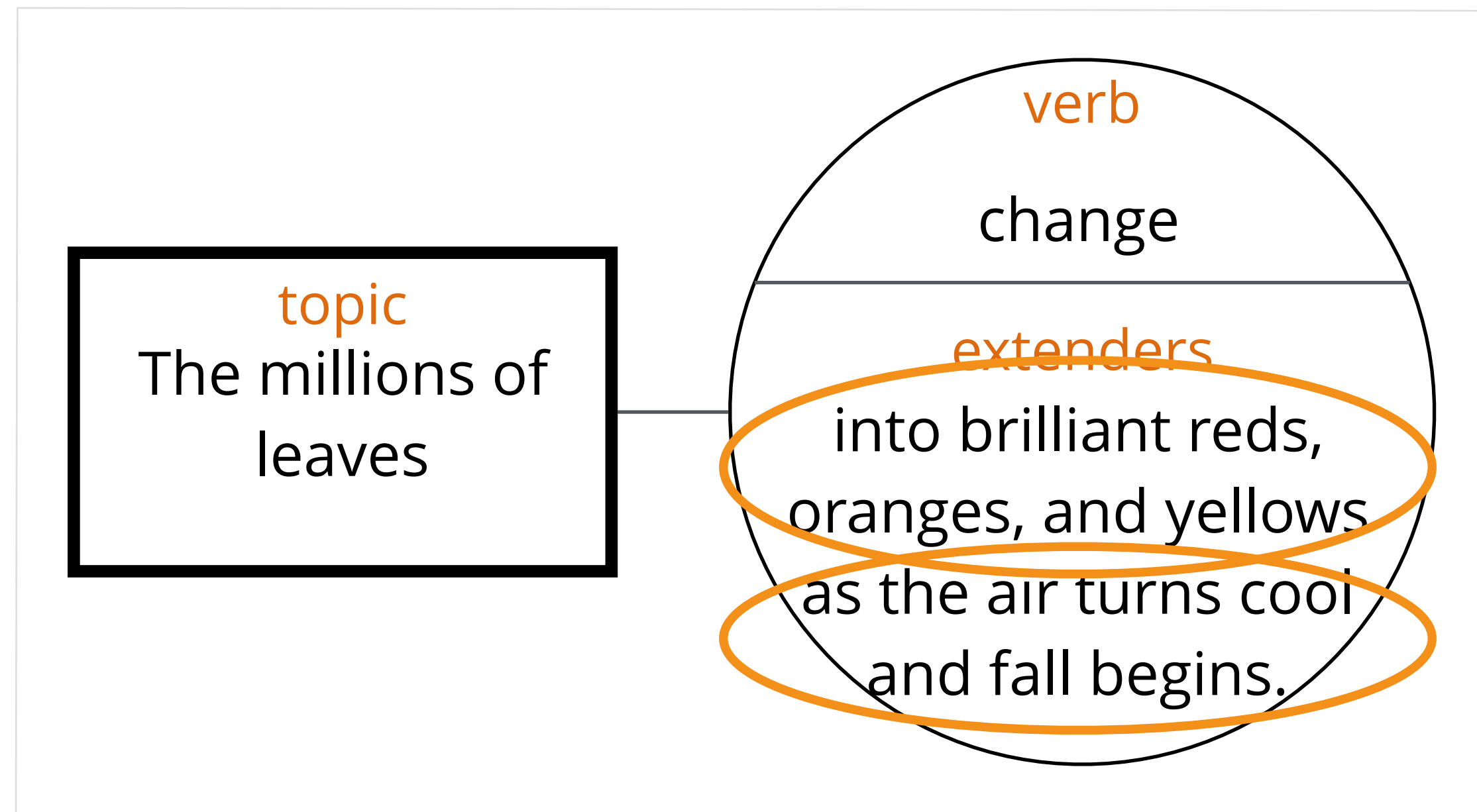




# It's in the Bag!

As a team, pull the strongest phrases and most vivid words from all of the cards and compose the strongest, most descriptive sentence on another index card.

Get ready to share.

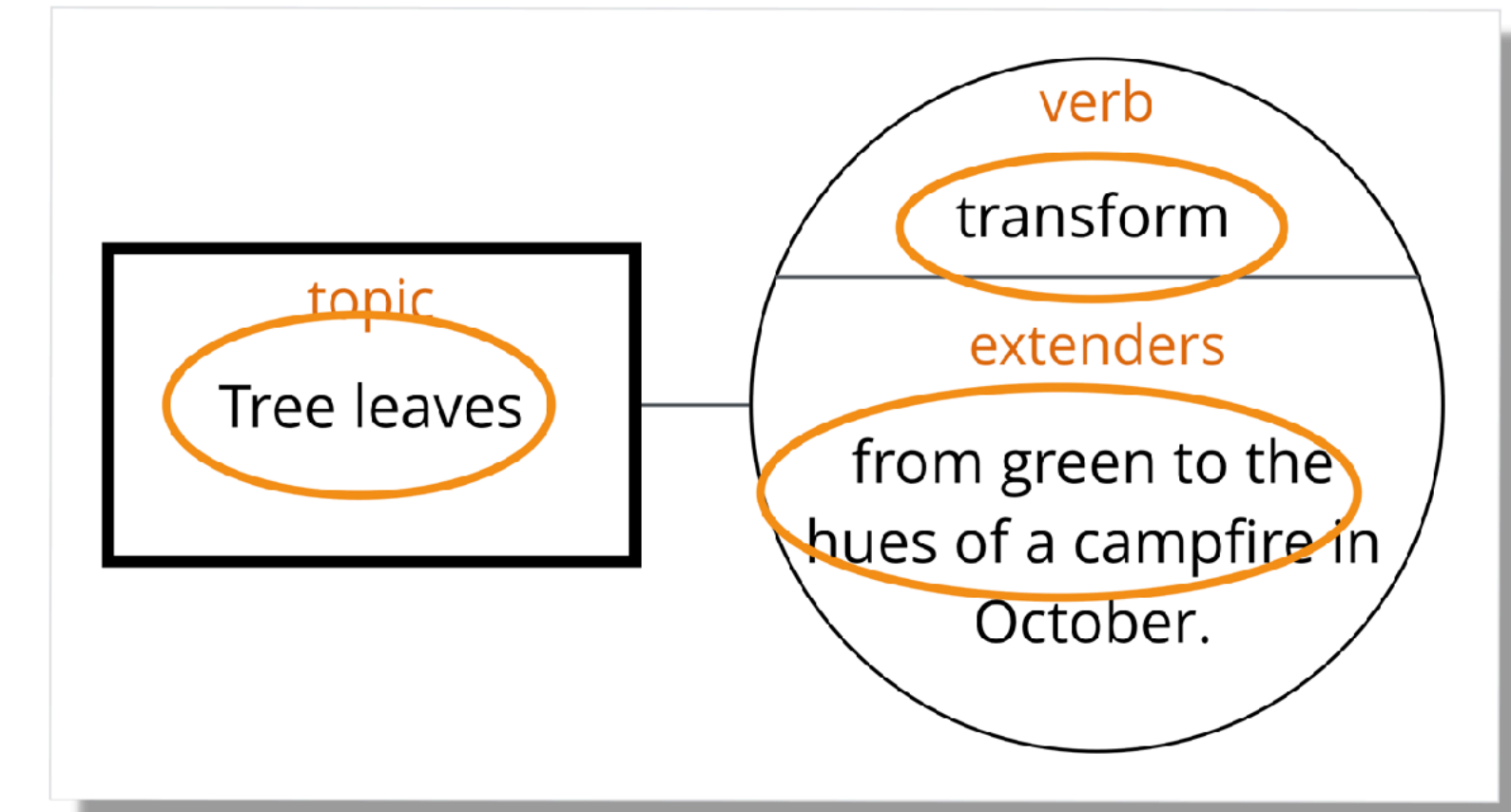
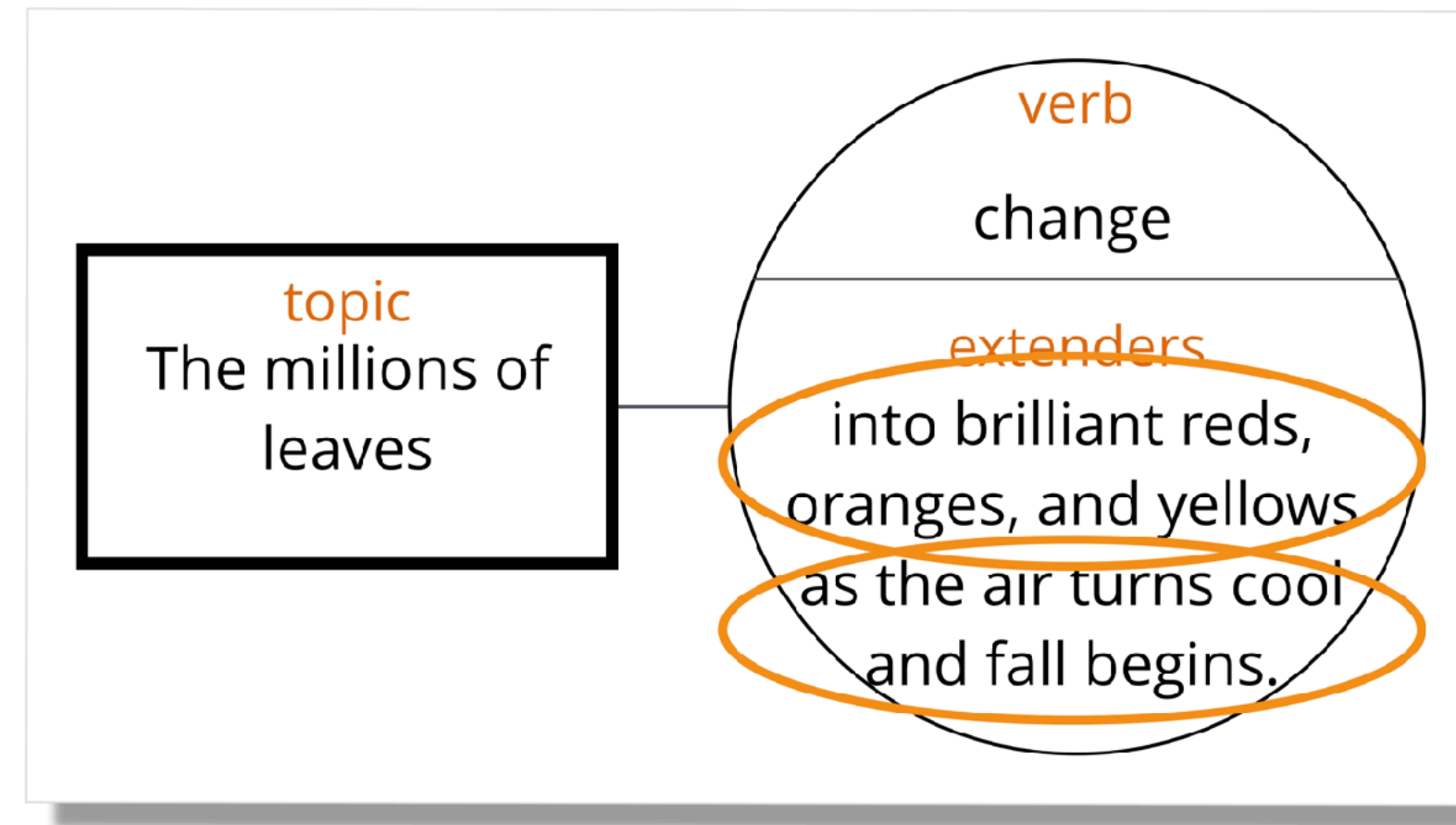




# It's in the Bag!

When it's your team's turn to share, read:

1. the basic sentence on the front of the bag
2. the 1st strong sentence
3. the 2nd strong sentence
4. your final sentence that combines elements from both sentences



As the air turns cool and fall begins, tree leaves transform from green into the hues of a campfire: brilliant reds, oranges, and yellows.



A male teacher with glasses and a beard, wearing a white shirt and a patterned tie, stands in a classroom. He is looking down at a group of young students who are seated at their desks. The students are engaged in an activity, with some looking up at the teacher. In the background, a large green chalkboard is visible, with some writing on it, including the word "Earth" and the number "113". The overall atmosphere is one of a focused learning environment.

Now, more than ever, writing matters,  
especially for English Language Learners.


**Discuss how oral language protocols and writing activities you've learned can address the struggles your ELLs face.**





Would you ever hear a choreographer say, "Stop copying me; that's too easy"?





Just math for  
20 minutes.



It's time to  
science.

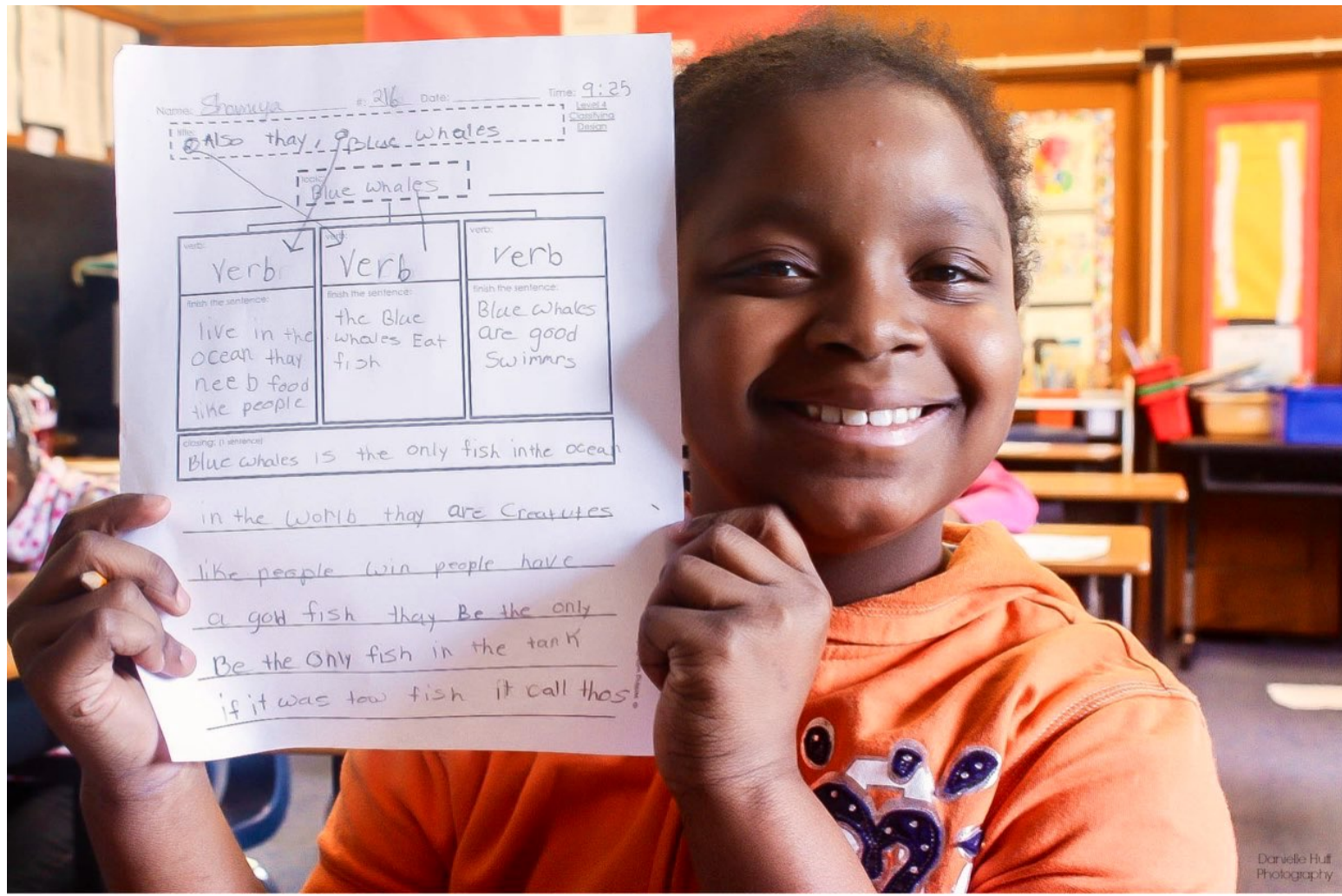
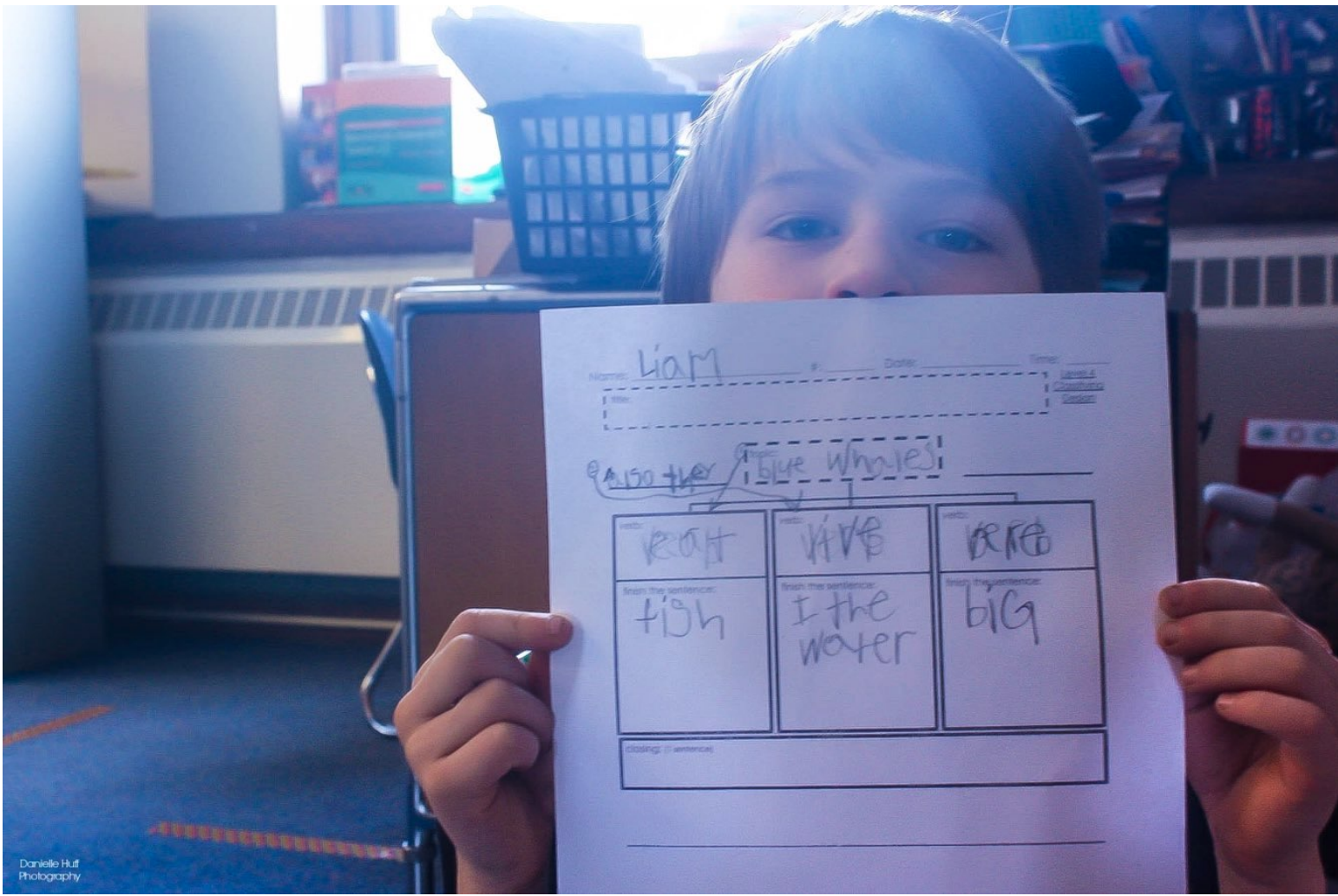
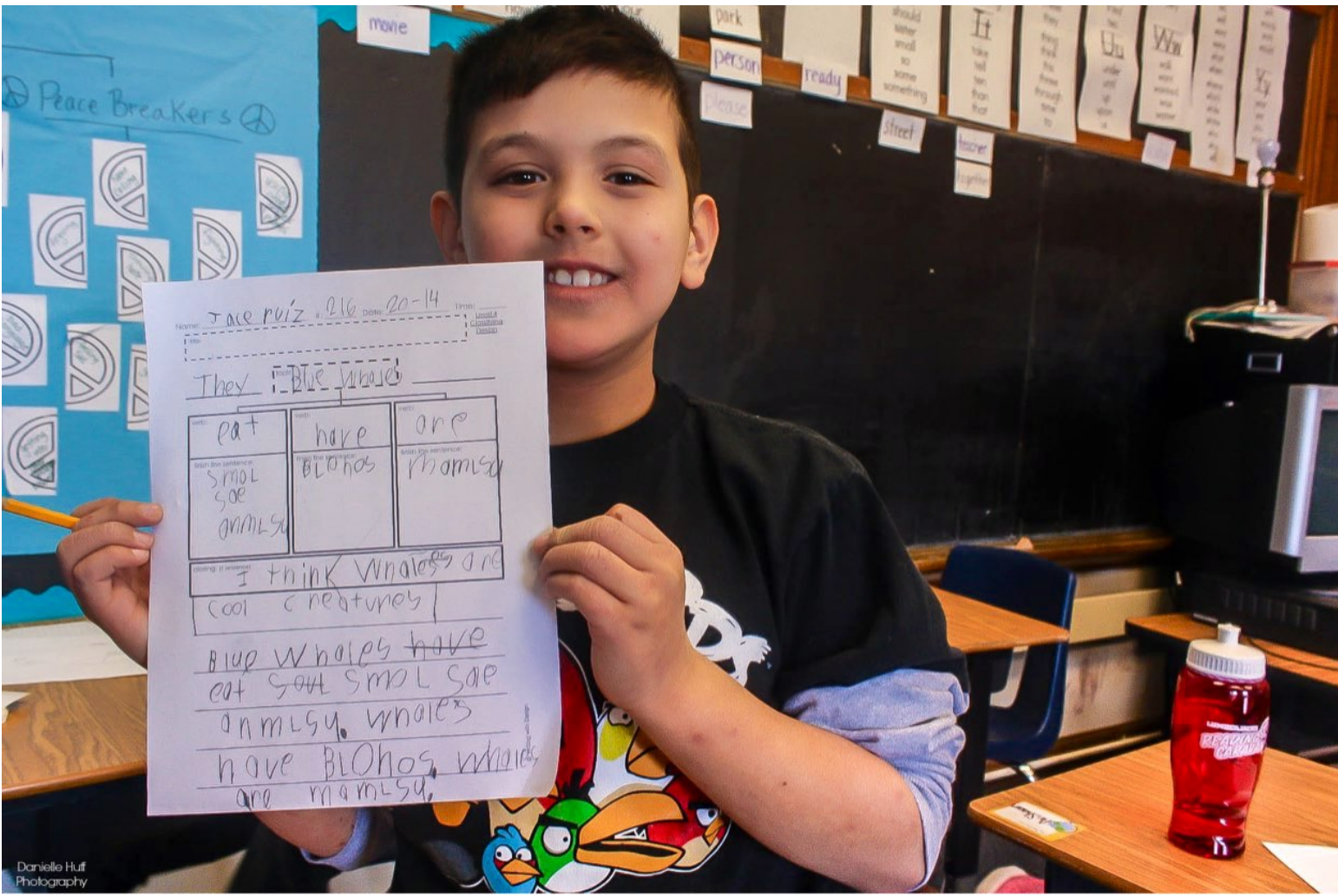




**Nothing is more intimidating than a  
blank sheet of paper and the directions,**

**“WRITE.”**





Day by day, purposefully grow writers.





*every time*

A STUDENT WRITES

IT MUST BE

*worth their time*

TO COMPOSE IT

AND

*worth your time*

TO READ IT





# El Poder de la Oración: The Power of the Sentence

**EVERY GRADE EVERY CLASSROOM EVERY DAY**



Amber Parks

Director & Lead Consultant

[amber@writingwithdesign.com](mailto:amber@writingwithdesign.com)

**National Title I  
Conference**

**February 9, 2018**

**11:30-1:00**

**Room 121**

[www.writingwithdesign.com](http://www.writingwithdesign.com)



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