Pattern

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

Five grammatical structures that can add interest and variety to descriptive passages.

Based on ideas from Harry R. Noden’s *Image Grammar* (1999)

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Pattern Participles

“The diamond-scaled snake attacked its prey. “

Add three “-ing” verbs to the beginning of the sentence.
Hissing, slithering, and coiling, the diamond-scaled snake attacked its prey.

You also could add participial phrases:

Hissing its forked red tongue and coiling its cold body, the diamond-scaled snake attacked its prey.
Pattern Absolutes

“The cat climbed the tree”.

Add a noun and an “-ing” or “-ed” verb onto a sentence.
Claws digging and feet kicking, the cat climbed the tree.

OR

The cat, claws digging and feet kicking, climbed the tree.
Pattern Appositives

‘The raccoon enjoys eating turtle eggs.”

Add a noun that creates a second image to a preceding noun.
“The raccoon, **a scavenger**, enjoys eating turtle eggs.

**OR** add a clause

“The raccoon, **a midnight scavenger who roams lake shorelines in search of food**, enjoys eating turtle eggs.
Pattern w/Shifted Adjectives

“The large, angry, red-eyed bull charged the intruder.”

Shift the order of the adjectives.
“And then, suddenly, in the very dead of the night, there came a sound to my ears, **clear, resonant, and unmistakable.**

The large bull moose, **red-eyed and angry**, charged the intruder.”
Pattern
Action vs. Passive Verbs

Substitute action verbs for ‘being’ verbs: is, are, was, were, be, been.”
The runaway horse **was ridden** into town by an old, white whiskered rancher.

or

The grocery store **was robbed** by two armed men.
Passive verb:
The gravel road was on the left side of the barn.

Action Verb:
The gravel road curled around the left side of the barn.
Rockwell was a beautiful lake. Canada geese could be heard across the water bugling like tuneless trumpets. Near the shore, two children were hidden behind a massive maple tree. Watching quietly, they hoped to see the first gosling being hatched. Tiny giggles seemed to be whispers of excitement.
Rockwell Lake *echoed* with the sounds of Canada geese. Their honking *bugled* across the water like tuneless trumpets. Two children *hid* behind a massive maple tree. They silently *watched*, hoping to see the first gosling *hatch*, while tiny giggles *escaped* their whispers of excitement.
Patterning *WORKS*!

We copy what we believe to be good.