**Use an attention-grabbing starter!**

“Target acquired”, whispered the diver. He could see the obscene wealth on the ship – so many millionaires, so many targets.

“Target acquired”, whispered the diver. He raised the scope of his silenced rifle, taking aim at the captain of the aircraft carrier who had appeared on deck.

It makes us think:

* Who is the target? Why do they need to be killed?
* Is it a robbery? Is it a military operation?

It’s good because:

* It blends description in with the dialogue.
* It uses complicated punctuation (comma clauses and dashes) to build suspense

**Build up the tension in the story!**

“Target acquired,” a bead of sweat moved down his forehead.

“Roger that.”

He boarded the craft. Moving like a shadow, he crept on board and ………………… (shoots/kills target)

He ran. **Sprinting** across the deck, he made his way to the rear of the ship where he had hidden a motorised (……..). The night sky, **cool and calm**, was now being disturbed by shouts and sirens from the ship – they were on to him. Quick as a flash, he sped across the diamond-like waves, clenching the throttle of his device tightly. His brain, **panicked and filled with adrenaline**, was working overtime.

It’s good because:

* **Short sentences** for tension
* **Varying the sentence starters**
* **Sub clauses for detail**

**Have a twist/change in the story!**

He slowly began to realise… he was being played for a fool.

All of a sudden it hit him – his own bosses were the people chasing him.

**Have clear images and feelings at the end!**

Smoke was rising from the barrel of his rifle. He had fired off so many rounds. But as he looked back over his shoulder, he could see his enemies littering the floor. And the hostages were safely filling the helicopter, ready to be transported to freedom.

As the sun began to set and the helicopter was whirring in the distance, he felt a lump in his throat – this was why he did his job.

It’s good because:

* It has feelings and images which show what the character is like

**Use a variety of sentence types!**

STATEMENT – EXAMPLE

STATEMENT; EXAMPLE

(or you can swap the order if it makes sense)

Dave went to the shop – he was hungry.

The explosion was enormous – a smoking crater was left in the centre of the street.

A smoking crater was left in the centre of the street – the explosion was enormous.

The man was highly embarrassed; his face was glowing red.

His face was glowing red; the man was highly embarrassed.

**Use different sentence starters!**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pairs of adjectives | **Dirty and disgusting**, the swamp was full of sewage and rubbish. |
| Verbs | **Sprinting across the beach**, he left the police trailing in his wake. |
| Adverbs | **Quietly**, he crept through the garden, avoiding the expensive alarm system. |
| Prepositions | **Along the pier**, he used his binoculars to scout his victim.  |
| Sub clause | **Despite the pain**, he was desperate to achieve his aim. |
| Connective | **Because of his promise to his son**, he knew he had to go on. |
|  |  |

(if you delay the subject, you need a comma to connect to it)

Here are some examples:

Despite the smoke, the burning wreckage was clear for all to see.

Despite the smoke, the burning wreckage was clear for all to see; bodies littered the floor.

Despite the smoke, the burning wreckage was clear for all to see; bodies littered the floor, covering the beach in a sea of blood.

Despite the smoke, the burning wreckage, which was still glowing, was clear for all to see; bodies littered the floor, covering the beach in a sea of blood.

**Punctuate speech properly!**

* New speaker = new line
* Punctuation INSIDE the speech marks. Capital letters after speech only if starting a new sentence. If part of the same sentence, even after ? or !, you keep it small
* Break up dialogue with description
* Thoughts are treated the same as speech

The alleyway was haunted by leftover needles, limitless rubbish and a scent of human misery. Beneath the waste pipe from behind an anonymous store, a body lay, partially clothed and drenched from the overnight rain.

“Looks like another murder,” said the police officer **to his partner as they viewed the body**.

“Yeah, that the third this week?” he said, with an **edge** to his voice. A group of scavenging crows squawked on the power lines above their heads.

“Yeah. Another day in paradise.”

The officer slowly approached the body before finding the words to express how he was feeling. “Poor kid,” he said. “He never stood a chance.” As he spoke, the sky began to darken and rain began to fall.

“Looks like another murder.”

“Yeah, that the third this week?”

“It’s terrible.”

“I know. Why do we do this job?”
“Gotta pay the bills”