

Upgrade Your Writing: Expressing Yourself Creatively *Study Guide*

by
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Video Aided Instruction, Inc.
Roslyn Heights, New York

VIDEO AIDED instruction

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Upgrade Your Writing: Expressing Yourself Creatively

1 DVD · 1 hr. 23 mins.

item #VAI-218X · price \$49.95

isbn 9781573852180 · upc 600459218997

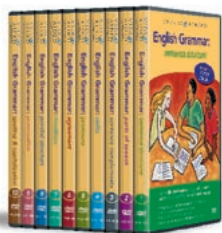
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Introduction

Video Aided Instruction's *Upgrade Your Writing* Series is like a virtual "writing clinic on DVD" that gives middle school students through adults (and challenged learners requiring remediation, in particular) the tools they need to dramatically improve their performance on any academic writing assignment or real-world writing task.

Before you begin viewing this program, please allow us to make a few recommendations. First, we suggest that you have a notebook and pen ready, so you're prepared to use the many on-screen graphics to take notes for yourself—the physical act of writing things down can help you remember them. Best of all, when you're done, you'll have a terrific resource filled with useful tips, key concepts, and easy-to-follow strategies that will help you become a better writer—all in one handy notebook that you can refer back to again and again.

Secondly, don't forget to take advantage of your "pause" button while viewing the program. This will allow you to try to complete the exercises in this study guide before you view the answers on-screen.

Finally, don't try to absorb too much at one time. By viewing the program over a number of short sessions (instead of all at once), you'll stay "fresher" and retain more of what you learn. And don't forget: you can review the entire program, or specific sections, as many times as you need to!

So now you can avoid the kind of incoherent, disorganized, and error-laden writing that inspires teachers to "break out the red pen"—you really can *Upgrade Your Writing*... let Video Aided Instruction be your guide!

About the Author

Laurie E. Rozakis, Ph.D., is a Professor of English and Humanities at the State University of New York at Farmingdale. An award-winning educator and vibrant public speaker, Dr. Rozakis is also a prolific author with more than 100 books to her credit, including numerous test prep titles for Scholastic, McGraw-Hill, and Peterson's and many books in the bestselling *Complete Idiot's Guide* series.

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PART 1: How to Be Creative

Exercise 1

Directions: Take 5–10 minutes to do some *prewriting* (on separate pieces of paper) about the following topic: **MUSIC THAT INSPIRES ME**. Use any one of the *prewriting* techniques we discussed in our *Upgrade Your Writing: Prewriting* program (listing, webbing, charting, freewriting, asking questions).

As you prewrite, try thinking about these questions: What’s my favorite kind of music? Who are my favorite musicians? What are some of my favorite pieces or songs? Who wrote them? Who performs them? What are some adjectives that I could use to describe this music? Where is this kind of music played? Who else enjoys this kind of music? How does this music make me feel emotionally? What do I like most about this music? Are there some people who do *not* like this music? If so, why?

PART 2: Creative Writing: Short Stories

Exercise 2

Directions: Identify the *point of view* in each of the following paragraphs. Underline all the *pronouns* that you used to help identify the point of view.

PARAGRAPH 1

Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o’clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.

[excerpt from *The Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield the Younger* (Chapter 1: I Am Born) by Charles Dickens]

PARAGRAPH 2

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo’s Moses beard... Behrman was a failure in art... He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony...

[excerpt from “The Last Leaf” by O. Henry]

PARAGRAPH 3

One morning, as Gregor Samsa was waking up from anxious dreams, he discovered that in bed he had been changed into a monstrous verminous bug. He lay on his armour-hard back and saw, as he lifted his head up a little, his brown, arched abdomen divided up into rigid bow-like sections. From this height the blanket, just about ready to slide off completely, could hardly stay in place. His numerous legs, pitifully thin in comparison to the rest of his circumference, flickered helplessly before his eyes.

[excerpt from “Metamorphosis” by Franz Kafka]

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Exercise 3

Directions: Rewrite **PARAGRAPH 1** from **Exercise 2** in the **third-person omniscient** point of view. Try to stick as closely to the original paragraph as you can, just changing pronouns and nouns. (**NOTE:** Your answer may vary slightly from the program.)

Exercise 4

Directions: Rewrite **PARAGRAPH 2** from **Exercise 2** in the **first-person** point of view. Try to stick as closely to the original paragraph as you can, just changing pronouns and nouns. (**NOTE:** Your answer may vary slightly from the program.)

Exercise 5

Directions: Rewrite **PARAGRAPH 3** from **Exercise 2** in the **first-person** point of view. Try to stick as closely to the original paragraph as you can, just changing pronouns and nouns. (**NOTE:** Your answer may vary slightly from the program.)

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Exercise 6

Directions: Identify the *type of conflict* in each of the following paragraphs.

PARAGRAPH 1

All this the man knew. The old-timer on Sulphur Creek had told him about it the previous fall, and now he was appreciating the advice. Already all sensation had gone out of his feet. To build the fire he had been forced to remove his mittens, and the fingers had quickly gone numb. His pace of four miles an hour had kept his heart pumping blood to the surface of his body and to all the extremities. But the instant he stopped, the action of the pump eased down. The cold of space smote the unprotected tip of the planet, and he, being on that unprotected tip, received the full force of the blow. The blood of his body recoiled before it. The blood was alive, like the dog, and like the dog it wanted to hide away and cover itself up from the fearful cold. So long as he walked four miles an hour, he pumped that blood, willy-nilly, to the surface; but now it ebbed away and sank down into the recesses of his body. The extremities were the first to feel its absence. His wet feet froze the faster, and his exposed fingers numbed the faster, though they had not yet begun to freeze. Nose and cheeks were already freezing, while the skin of all his body chilled as it lost its blood.

[excerpt from "To Build a Fire" by Jack London]

type of conflict = _____

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PARAGRAPH 2

No doubt I now grew very pale;—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? It was a *low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton*. I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. Why *would* they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observation of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh, God; what *could* I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—*louder!* And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they *knew!*—they were making a *mockery* of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! *louder!*—

[excerpt from “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe]

type of conflict = _____

Exercise 7

Directions: Identify all of the **characters** in the following paragraph. Underline the first time each character is mentioned.

An Eagle swooped down upon a Serpent and seized it in his talons with the intention of carrying it off and devouring it. But the Serpent was too quick for him and had its coils round him in a moment; and then there ensued a life-and-death struggle between the two. A countryman, who was a witness of the encounter, came to the assistance of the Eagle, and succeeded in freeing him from the Serpent and enabling him to escape. In revenge, the Serpent spat some of his poison into the man’s drinking-horn. Heated with his exertions, the man was about to slake his thirst with a draught from the horn, when the Eagle knocked it out of his hand, and spilled its contents upon the ground. “One good turn deserves another.”

[a telling of “The Serpent and the Eagle” by Aesop]

characters = _____

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Exercise 8

Directions: Identify the character's **traits** in the following paragraph. Underline the clues that helped you determine details about the character's traits.

Old Mrs. Mingott's foreign daughters had become a legend. They never came back to see their mother, and the latter being, like many persons of active mind and dominating will, sedentary and corpulent in her habit, had philosophically remained at home. But the cream-coloured house (supposed to be modelled on the private hotels of the Parisian aristocracy) was there as a visible proof of her moral courage; and she throned in it, among pre-Revolutionary furniture and souvenirs of the Tuileries of Louis Napoleon (where she had shone in her middle age), as placidly as if there were nothing peculiar in living above Thirty-fourth Street, or in having French windows that opened like doors instead of sashes that pushed up.

[excerpt from *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton]

Exercise 9

Directions: Identify the **setting** in the following paragraph. Underline the clues that helped you determine details about the setting.

A young man, named Giovanni Guasconti, came, very long ago, from the more southern region of Italy, to pursue his studies at the University of Padua. Giovanni, who had but a scanty supply of gold ducats in his pocket, took lodgings in a high and gloomy chamber of an old edifice which looked not unworthy to have been the palace of a Paduan noble, and which, in fact, exhibited over its entrance the armorial bearings of a family long since extinct. The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno. These reminiscences and associations, together with the tendency to heart-break natural to a young man for the first time out of his native sphere, caused Giovanni to sigh heavily as he looked around the desolate and ill-furnished apartment.

[excerpt from "Rappaccini's Daughter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne]

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Exercise 10

Directions: Identify the *climax* in the following story. Underline the sentence that best captures the moment of the climax.

A Workman, felling wood by the side of a river, let his axe drop—by accident into a deep pool. Being thus deprived of the means of his livelihood, he sat down on the bank and lamented his hard fate. Mercury appeared and demanded the cause of his tears. After he had told him his misfortune, Mercury plunged into the stream, and, bringing up a golden axe, inquired if that were the one he had lost. On his saying that it was not his, Mercury disappeared beneath the water a second time, returned with a silver axe in his hand, and again asked the Workman if it were his. When the Workman said it was not, he dived into the pool for the third time and brought up an axe that had been lost. The Workman claimed it and expressed his joy at its recovery. Mercury, pleased with his honesty, gave him the golden and silver axes in addition to his own.

The Workman, on his return to his house, related to his companions all that had happened. One of them at once resolved to try and secure the same good fortune for himself. He ran to the river and threw his axe on purpose into the pool at the same place, and sat down on the bank to weep. Mercury appeared to him just as he hoped he would; and having learned the cause of his grief, plunged into the stream and brought up a golden axe, inquiring if he had lost it. The Workman seized it greedily, and declared that truly it was the very same axe that he had lost. Mercury, displeased at his knavery, not only took away the golden axe, but refused to recover for him the axe he had thrown into the pool.

[a telling of “Mercury and the Workmen” by Aesop]

Exercise 11

Directions: Identify the *theme* of the following story—is it: 1) No pain no gain; 2) Don’t try to do the impossible; or 3) Don’t attempt too much at once?

A Boy put his hand into a pitcher full of filberts. He grasped as many as he could possibly hold, but when he tried to pull out his hand, he was prevented from doing so by the neck of the pitcher. Unwilling to lose his filberts, and yet unable to withdraw his hand, he burst into tears and bitterly lamented his disappointment. A bystander said to him, “Be satisfied with half the quantity, and you will readily draw out your hand.”

[a telling of “The Boy and the Filberts” by Aesop]

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Exercise 12

Directions: Identify the *theme* of the following story—is it: 1) Waste not, want not; 2) Whatever you do, do it with all your strength; or 3) Unity gives strength?

An old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered his servants to bring in a bundle of sticks, and said to his eldest son: "Break it." The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the bundle. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful. "Untie the sticks," said the father, "and each of you take a stick." When they had done so, he called out to them: "Now, break," and each stick was easily broken. "You see my meaning," said their father.

[a telling of "The Bundle of Sticks" by Aesop]

Exercise 13

Directions: Identify the *style* of the following story—is it: 1) simple and direct; 2) literary and descriptive; or 3) cold and gloomy?

He was a big Norman, one of those strong, full-blooded, bony men, who can lift apple carts on their shoulders. Half a peasant, half a gentleman, rich, respected, influential, authoritative, he had kept his son...at school up to the third form, so that he might be educated, and had stopped his studies there for fear that he might turn out a gentleman who didn't care for the land.

[excerpt adapted from "Hautot Senior and Hautot Junior" by Guy de Maupassant]

Exercise 14

Directions: Imagine that you have been asked to write a short story about two children, Jamal and Mark, who find a lamp with a genie in it, on the sidewalk on their way home from school. Take a few minutes to answer the following *questions*, which will help you create a quick plan for your short story.

WHO? (who are the characters? what are their traits?) _____

WHAT? (what happens in the plot? what is the conflict?) _____

WHEN/WHERE? (what is the setting?) _____

WHY? (what establishes or causes the conflict?) _____

HOW? (how is the conflict resolved?) _____

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Exercise 15

Directions: Suppose that you have been asked to write a short story. You have not been given any specific instructions regarding its subject. Take a few minutes to complete the following items which will help you create a quick "outline" for your short story.

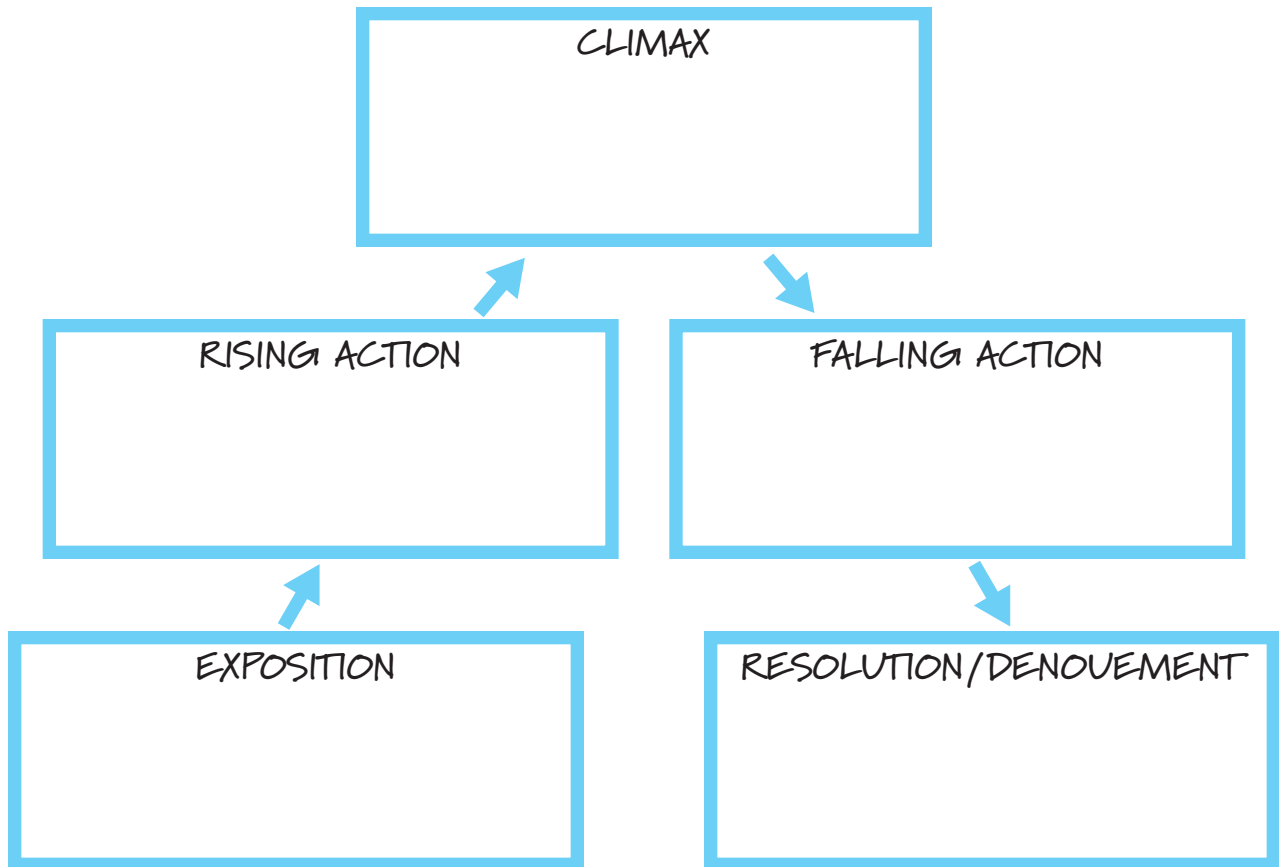
Choose a point of view: _____

Name and describe the main character(s): _____

Describe the setting: _____

State the conflict: _____

Trace the plot on this diagram:



Identify the theme: _____

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Exercise 16

Directions: Let's return to your *prewriting* from *Exercise 1*. Take something from that prewriting and, on separate pieces of paper, turn it into an idea for a short story related to the topic of **MUSIC THAT INSPIRES ME**. You may wish to complete the following items, which will help you create a quick "outline" for your short story. (You don't have to write the full story now, but at least write one or two paragraphs that draw from your prewriting.)

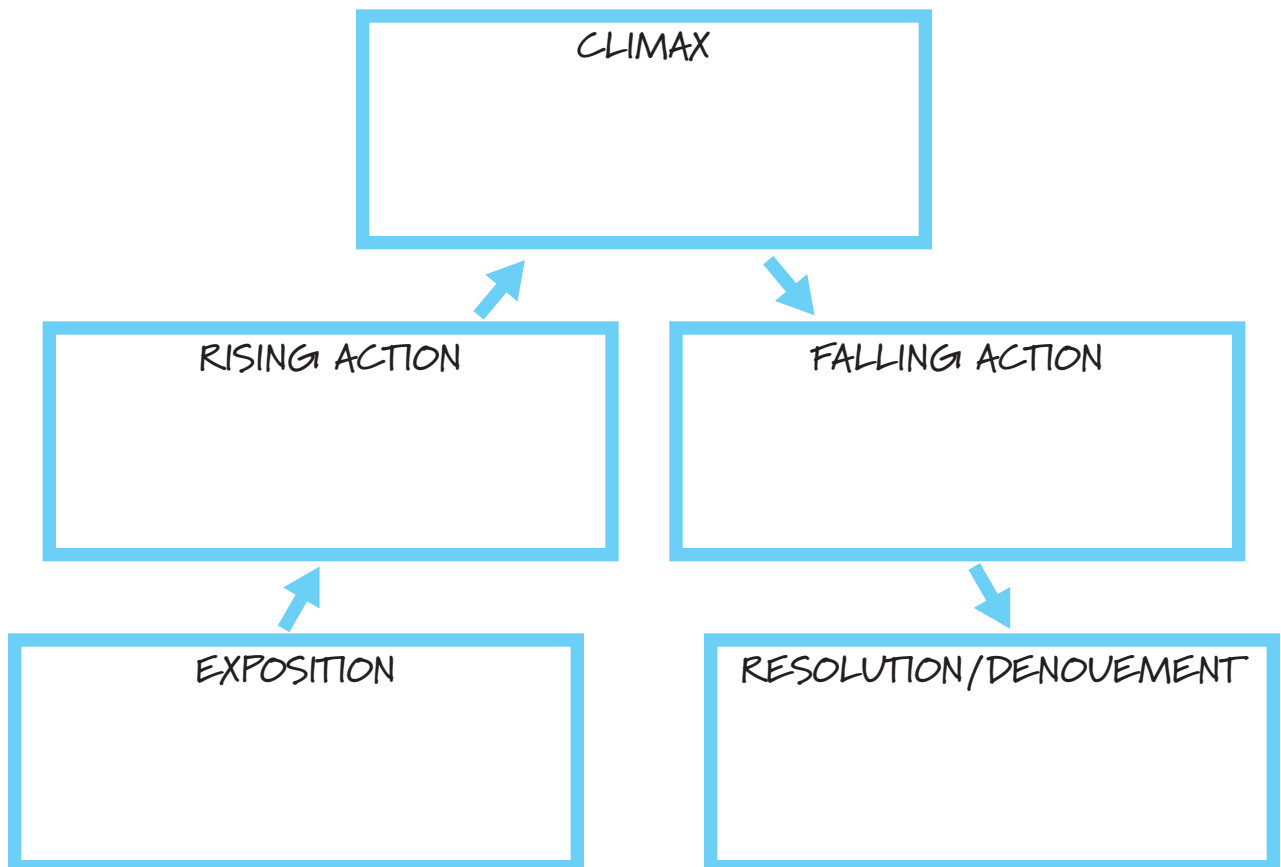
Choose a point of view: _____

Name and describe the main character(s): _____

Describe the setting: _____

State the conflict: _____

Trace the plot on this diagram:



Identify the theme: _____

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PART 3: Creative Writing: Poems

Exercise 17

Directions: Write a *haiku* about a butterfly, sitting on a branch, that looks like a flower. Follow proper haiku form.

Exercise 18

Directions: Identify the *rhyme scheme* of the following poem.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; _____
Coral is far more red than her lips' red; _____
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun; _____
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. _____
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white, _____
But no such roses see I in her cheeks; _____
And in some perfumes is there more delight _____
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks. _____
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know _____
That music hath a far more pleasing sound; _____
I grant I never saw a goddess go; _____
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground: _____
 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare _____
 As any she belied with false compare. _____

[Sonnet 130 by William Shakespeare]

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Exercise 21

Directions: Fill in each blank with a word from the list to create an *allusion* that makes sense given the context.

1. Because Shakira was so stingy with her money, her friends called her Ms. _____.
2. He was in a real _____, not knowing whether to confess to the teacher and suffer the consequences or let the other students take the blame.
3. Her husband was so romantic that she started referring to him as "My _____."
4. He'd been lifting weights for a month, but he was still no _____.
5. Always seen together on campus, Hi-Jing, Lin, and Esmerelda became known as _____.
6. She thought she was a regular _____, but she didn't even know how to turn the computer on.

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Bill Gates

Romeo
Scrooge

Catch-22
The Three Musketeers

Exercise 22

Directions: Fill in each blank with a word from the list to create a phrase that uses language *figuratively*. Then identify the *type* of figurative language used.

1. The horse's mane so soft and smooth—it was _____.
(type of figurative language used = _____)
2. She was so stubborn that talking to her was like talking to the _____.
(type of figurative language used = _____)
3. The colors were so vibrant that he said they _____ on the page.
(type of figurative language used = _____)
4. The wind _____ through the trees.
(type of figurative language used = _____)
5. The teacher's lecture was so boring that it was like watching paint _____.
(type of figurative language used = _____)
6. I think about getting a puppy _____ times a day.
(type of figurative language used = _____)
7. The room was as cold as a _____.
(type of figurative language used = _____)

wall
dry

sing
silk
refrigerator

whistled
a million

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Exercise 23

Directions: The list of words provided below contains examples of *onomatopoeia*. Fill in each blank with a word from the list that makes sense given the context.

1. As he walked through the field, a mosquito _____ in his ear.
2. We couldn't understand her; the bad connection _____ her phone message.
3. The car door, needing oil, _____ every time it was opened.
4. The cat _____ at the dog walking by.
5. The potato chips _____ in the bag when I sat on it.

crunched
garbled

hissed
squeaked

buzzed

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Exercise 24

Directions: Mark up the following poem, labeling each instance of onomatopoeia, alliteration, metaphor, simile, and personification and then identify the poem's rhyme scheme.

"Darnell's Queen"

In his mind's eye, he conjured a familiar scene, _____

A smoke-filled room, accompanying his queen. _____

Onto the stage, she shuffled into view, _____

A specter of a woman, gaunt and blue. _____

Like a worn-out recording, scratchy and old, _____

Too many indulgences had taken their toll. _____

A shadow, a shell, a shard of the past, _____

Life for her had flown much too fast. _____

Yet when she sang, with tones not young, _____

The years melted away despite all she'd done. _____

And there stood Darnell, like a Cupid with bow in hand, _____

Joining his idol with her gardenia, on the stand. _____

His chest puffed out, appearing tall and proud, _____

His bass popped and zinged, booming through the crowd. _____

To the dulcet music they pulsed and swayed, _____

Enjoying every mellifluous note he played. _____

At the end they cheered, rising to their feet, _____

The night, it seems, turned out so sweet. _____

Exercise 25

Directions: Let's return once more to your *prewriting* from *Exercise 1*. Take something from that prewriting and, on separate pieces of paper, turn it into a poem related to the topic of **MUSIC THAT INSPIRES ME**. Try to use some of the techniques and elements you have learned.