

Story Notes:

1. **Get/Got.** *Get* and *got* are two words that don't say much, and you can usually find a better alternative.

I got two new albums at the store today.
I bought two new albums at the store today.

2. **Italics for emphasis.** Use italics for emphasis rather than quotation marks or underlining. I want to go, *now*. It's not incorrect to use quotation marks, but it's old-fashioned, as is underlining, which was done for manuscripts written with typewriters to indicate typesetters should use italics.

My dog's name is *Dog*.

3. **Would.** Many, many times you can replace *would* in a sentence with the simple past tense, and it makes the sentence much stronger.

I would go to the movies every Saturday afternoon.
I went to the movies every Saturday afternoon.

4. **Sentence structure.** Vary your sentence structure. Move away from your favorite. If you begin most every sentence with the subject followed by a verb, add an opening or closing clause or phrase. *I went to the mall after lunch.*
After lunch, I went to the mall.

5. **Sentence length.** Vary your sentence lengths as well as their structures. Too many long sentences in a row tire the reader, but too many short ones may become singsong. Variety improves impact. You can often combine two short sentences with a conjunction (*and, or, but*) to change the cadence of the piece.