

Detailed Sentences in your Musher Journal (Stopping the List...)

Q: What's wrong with this writing?

I felt the wind on my face. I saw the thick woods around me. I could smell the smoke coming from the cabin on the left.

A: Well, it seems dull and repetitive like a list...I felt...I saw... I smelled. It's not very specific or interesting.

Writing tip: Don't start your sentence with, "I saw, I heard, etc..." Instead create sentences with "power" words and more interesting sensory details as well as your thoughts.

Sentence Rewrites:

I felt the wind on my face.

or

The wind whipped across my face making my eyes sting. Still, it didn't discourage me. I was used to it from all the training we had done.

I saw the thick woods around me.

or

The thick, dark green forest that surrounded me was a massive living wall filled with birds, wolves and other Alaskan animals. Right now, though, everything seemed so still...so quiet. It was almost eerie, but nothing would keep me from winning this race.

I could smell the smoke coming from the cabin on my left.

or

Suddenly, a familiar smell greeted my nose. It was air filled with smoke from a fireplace--a smell I had grown up with. I looked and I saw the small, log cabin and the shifting shadows of an eskimo family eating dinner inside.

Final Rewrite-- Notice the Improvement!

Old:

I felt the wind on my face. I saw the thick woods around me. I could smell the smoke coming from the cabin on the left.

New:

The wind whipped across my face making my eyes sting. Still, it didn't discourage me. I was used to it from all the training we had done. The thick, dark green forest that surrounded me was a massive living wall filled with birds, wolves and other Alaskan animals. Right now, though, everything seemed so still...so quiet. It was almost eerie, but nothing would keep me from winning this race. Suddenly, a familiar smell greeted my nose. It was air filled with smoke from a fireplace--a smell I had grown up with. I looked and I saw the small, log cabin and the shifting shadows of an eskimo family eating dinner inside.