

Two Techniques for Revision – Adding Sensory Details & Adding Dialogue

How can you revise your short story to fully bring your story's characters, events, setting, and theme to life?

Here are two suggestions, each described in the chart below:

- (1) Add **significant sensory details** to a scene or event, and
- (2) Add **meaningful dialogue** to your story.

Original Passage	Revised Passage
<p><u>When Jessica mows the lawn:</u> She pushed down on the handle, and the mower tilted up surprisingly easy. The sound was much louder. Slowly, she turned, and then she pushed forward to mow the next strip of grass. The grass fell as she mowed.</p>	<p>The author <u>added sensory details</u> to transport readers to the scene and involve readers in Jessica's experience:</p> <p>She pushed down on the handle, and the mower tilted up. Her tense muscles relaxed, and she let out a loud sigh. No longer muffled by the grass, the mower's chainsaw roar increased to jackhammer level. Slowly, she turned, and then she pushed forward to mow the next strip of grass. The shaggy grass fell as she mowed.</p>
<p><u>When Jessica goes to the dance:</u></p> <p>That night, she looked amazing in her new pink top. Her friend Alice said, "You look beautiful! Like a flower or something!"</p> <p>"Thank you!" Jessica replied, thinking about how much fun it would be to mow right through a field of flowers, petals flying everywhere.</p>	<p>The author <u>changed</u> the story's final scene, <u>adding extensive dialogue</u> to create a <i>more satisfying conclusion</i> and to <i>show how the protagonist has changed</i>:</p> <p>When Jessica got to the dance that night, her friend Alice was still setting up, placing a vase filled with flowers on each table.</p> <p>"I'm really sorry I'm late," Jessica said. "I had to do some last-minute clothes-shopping."</p> <p>"That's okay," Alice said. "We're almost finished." Then she noticed what Jessica was wearing. "Hey, I love your new top!"</p> <p>"Really? Thanks."</p> <p>"Did your mom take you to buy it?"</p> <p>"No, I bought it myself."</p> <p>"But I thought you're broke."</p> <p>"Well," Jessica said, "I did some work."</p> <p>Alice stared at her in disbelief. "Jess, <i>you</i> did some work?"</p> <p>"Hey! What's the big deal? I just mowed the lawn."</p> <p>"I didn't know you could use a lawn mower," Alice said. "Was that hard? Was it scary?"</p> <p>"Not really." Jessica remembered the motor's roar, the flying chunks of twigs, and the hum of the powerful machine in her hands. "Maybe a little. Actually, it was cool."</p> <p>"Cool," Alice said. "Well, can you help me set out these flowers on the rest of the tables?"</p> <p>"Sure," Jessica said.</p> <p>They finished placing vases on the tables, and Alice turned to Jessica. "Look at all the flowers. Aren't they beautiful?"</p> <p>"They are," Jessica replied, remembering her yard's tall grass and thinking of how much fun it would be to mow right through an entire field of flowers, petals flying everywhere.</p>