**Revising Idea Development**

also referred to as ‘elaboration’

Often, when we are developing ourselves as writers, we include a lot of ideas in our writing. What we can sometimes forget, is that stopping to develop an idea can be very powerful.

In **stories**, and even in **recounts**, idea development can include:

* developing characters through dialogue, description and their reactions to things, their thoughts, etc.
* developing the setting of the story by describing it in more detail (a Y-chart is very useful for this)
* slowing down the action at the most suspenseful parts – this is where you really start to add in all of those ‘close up’ details, like the way his eye twitched, his hand reaching for the rock as he begins to fall, the toes slipping slowly but unstoppably off the rock...

In **essays** like opinion pieces, idea development can include:

* explaining – explaining each idea further. Readers don’t always understand what you mean with just one sentence. Expand on your explanation. Tell the reader what you mean.
* examples – giving examples from real life
* causes – explaining what led to this thing
* effects – explaining the short term effects – who will be affected and how? explaining long term effects – what will likely happen further down the track?

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One way to develop setting is by asking what can the character see, hear, smell, taste, feel. Look at this note-taking sample:

**See**: Moss clinging to the rock overhead, water trickling over rock, a slow dimming of light until it’s just darkness in the distance

**Hear**: water dripping, heart thumping with fear

**Taste**: damp air, musty air

**Smell**: musty air, onion-stink of sweat

**Touch**: slippery rock, uneven path, sweaty palms, a cool breeze from the cave, rocking back and forth from heel to toe.

See how it becomes a passage in the story:

I hesitated, my heart thumping, at the boundary between light and dark. From the overhead clumps of moss, cold drops plopped into my hair, a water clock ticking away the precious seconds. The musty smell, was it from bats? Or was there something more sinister in this cave? What you need to develop is more description about the setting by giving a more overall sense of where they are, as well as smaller details to describe other people, objects, weather in the scene.

Try your own:

|  |
| --- |
| See: |
| Hear: |
| Taste: |
| Smell: |
| Touch: |

Now write a paragraph using your ideas:

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