DETAILS

WHY DETAILS MATTER

Details help build the worlds that we write. Through detail, we're able to learn more about characters, objects and the setting.

THE NITTY-GRITTY: WHAT STICKS OUT

Sometimes the most memorable details are the ones that surprise us. Take a moment to write down as many details about this strange wallet as you can.

What are you noticing?

Sometimes when we write it's easy to just focus on what we can see, but that's only half the picture (well, one fifth!) The **five senses** through which we perceive the world are:

Sight

Hearing

Smell

Taste

Touch

SHOW, DON'T TELL

Perhaps you've heard the line "Show, don't tell" before. But what does it mean?

To show is to use details to reveal information, rather than just stating something.

If you say that a character "smells bad," for example, the reader loses out on an opportunity to learn more about them. But what if "they smell like old sweat and grass clippings?"

BE SPECIFIC

It's important to be specific to help your reader see what you are imagining as a writer. For example, if you were to tell someone you were in your bedroom, you know exactly what that looks like! But to someone else, they might picture this:
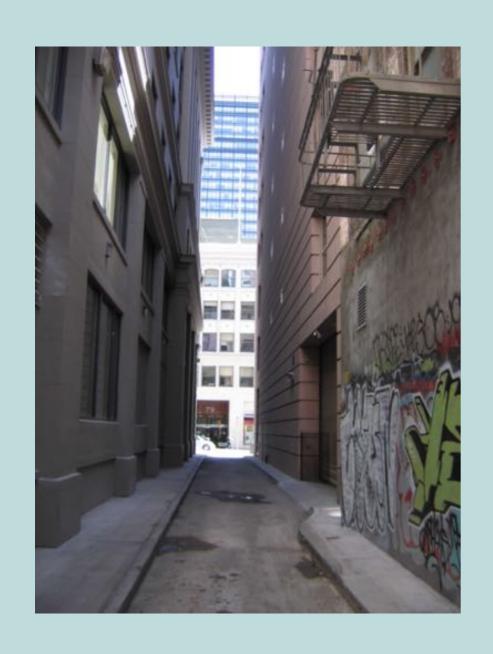
THINGS TO REMEMBER

Keep in mind:

➤ We perceive details with all five of our senses, not just what we see

➤ Specific details are more impactful for your reader

➤ Details can reveal characters and the world around them

➤ It's possible to overwrite and include too many details, which can slow and even halt the action in the story.

  ➤ If you find yourself over-describing, focus on what's important for the reader to know!

EVERYTHING YOU SEE (AND HEAR, AND SMELL, AND...)

This next exercise will help you think about all five senses.

Begin by writing down three specific places at which you have spent some time. It could be a moment, or maybe it's somewhere familiar that you've been to many times.

Take about ten minutes to go through the attached "Five Exercises" document.

Once this is done, spend some time to free write about this place!