



THE INVENTION
OF
HUGO CABRET

BRIAN
SELZNICK



WARM UP

List as many speech verbs as you can, e.g. said, screeched, whispered

"Thief! Thief!" the old man yelled down the empty hallway. "Someone call the Station Inspector!"

At the mention of the Station Inspector, Hugo panicked. He twisted and tried to get away, but the old man pulled hard on his arm and wouldn't let go. "I finally caught you," announced the old man. "Now, empty your pockets."

Hugo growled like a dog. He was furious with himself for being caught. The old man squeezed tighter until Hugo was practically standing on his toes.

Hugo protested, "You're hurting me!"

Ignoring his complaint, the old man simply demanded, "Empty your pockets!"

And now for a poor example:

"Thief! Thief!" the old man yelled. "Someone call the Station Inspector!"

Hugo tried to get away, but the old man would not let him go.

"I finally caught you," said the old man.

"Let me go!" said Hugo crossly.

The old man replied, "No."

"Yes, please," said Hugo.

"No," said the man, "I am not letting you go. Empty your pockets."

Hugo moaned, "You're hurting me!"

But the old man simply demanded, "Empty your pockets!"

What makes it poor? How could it be improved?

"Thief! Thief!" the old man yelled. "Someone call the Station Inspector!"

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In the original, they have used the preposition phrase 'down the empty hallway'. This lets us know how loud the old man must be shouting and makes us imagine it echoing down the hall.

In the poor example, the old man simply 'yells'. The original creates far more tension and drama.

Original	Poor Example
<p>"Thief! Thief!" the old man yelled down the empty hallway. "Someone call the Station Inspector!"</p> <p>At the mention of the Station Inspector, Hugo panicked. He twisted and tried to get away, but the old man pulled hard on his arm and wouldn't let go.</p> <p>"I finally caught you, " announced the old man.</p> <p>"Now, empty your pockets."</p> <p>Hugo growled like a dog. He was furious with himself for being caught. The old man squeezed tighter until Hugo was practically standing on his toes.</p> <p>Hugo protested, "You're hurting me!"</p> <p>Ignoring his complaint, the old man simply demanded, "Empty your pockets!"</p>	<p>"Thief! Thief!" the old man yelled. "Someone call the Station Inspector!"</p> <p>Hugo tried to get away, but the old man would not let him go.</p> <p>"I finally caught you, " said the old man.</p> <p>"Let me go!" said Hugo crossly.</p> <p>The old man replied, "No."</p> <p>"Yes, please," said Hugo.</p> <p>"No," said the man, "I am not letting you go. Empty your pockets."</p> <p>Hugo moaned, "You're hurting me!"</p> <p>But the old man simply demanded, "Empty your pockets!"</p>

In the poor example Hugo says 'let me go' crossly, but in the original they use the simile 'growl like a dog' and add that he is not only cross but furious.

If somebody is growling and they are furious it is far more serious than only being cross. We can see the situation is really escalating.

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The dialogue in the poor example has Hugo saying 'yes, please' as he's arguing with the old man to let him go.

If Hugo really was cross and was being grabbed by the old man, I don't think he would say please so politely and calmly!

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Thinking about how the conversation started with Hugo and the old man, we can rewrite their first interaction. We need to remember that the dialogue should show the old man does not know the boy that well.

While double-checking the lock on his stall, the old man asked, "What's your name anyway, lad?"

Hugo hesitated: he considered lying, but then, for some reason, told him the truth, "it's...it's Hugo...Hugo Cabret."

PROOFREADING, SELF-ASSESSMENT AND EDITING

"I finally caught you," announced the old man. "Now, empty your pockets."

Hugo protested, "You're hurting me!"

Ensure your speech is correctly punctuated.

When you are editing, consider the following:

- choice of speech verbs (e.g. said, muttered, demanded)
- information about what the characters did as they spoke