

ACTIVE VERBS LIST

The more specific your language, the more powerful your writing will be. If you find generic verbs while revising, challenge yourself to trade them in for one that allows the reader to visualize the scene better.

Agree

Nod
Consent
Comply
Concur
Accept
Acknowledge

Appear

Show
Flash
Materialize
Surface
Bloom
Flower
Manifest
Surface
Emerge
Develop
Spawn
Arrive
Arise

Ask

Request
Question
Inquire
Pose
Proposition
Solicit
Plead
Cross-examine
Demand
Grill
Interrogate
Needle
Query
Quiz

Attack

Assault
Strike
Ambush
Assail
Rush

Storm
Bombard
Barrage
Smite
Charge
Molest
Waylay
Clobber
Battle
Batter
Hammer
Beat
Beset
Combat
Overwhelm
Raid

Attempt

Try
Endeavor
Undertake
Strive
Tackle
Embark
Shot
Strive
Seek
Gamble
Chance
Venture

Break

Crack
Rupture
Smash
Shatter
Fracture
Splinter
Pulverize
Tear
Rend
Snap
Burst
Explode
Bust

Damage
Fragment
Split (see SPLIT)

Bring

Fetch
Gather
Retrieve
Return
Carry
Deliver
Lug
Fetch
Gather
Guide
Pack
Tote
Convey
Import
Pick up

Build

Erect
Raise
Frame
Shape
Firm
Construct
Layer
Stack
Reinforce
Fortify
Create
Fashion
Form

Bump

Nudge
Tap
Jostle
Jar
Knock
Jolt
Thump
Butt

Clatter
Strike
Whack
Slam
Rap

Call

Summon
Shout
Request
Cry
Yell
Scream
Holler
Utter
Exclaim
Hail
Signal
Bellow
Bawl
Roar
Proclaim

Change

Shift
Transform
Modify
Twist
Mutate
Distort
Blur
Flux
Adjust
Switch
Fluctuate
Warp
Alter
Adapt
Evolve
Reform
Vary

Chase

Hunt
Trail
Pursue
Track
Follow
Stalk
Shadow
Hound
Case

Choose

Pick
Draw
Select
Vote
Opt
Pluck
Prefer
Winnow
Determine

Climb

Mount
Ascend
Rise
Shimmy
Scramble
Scale
Heave
Spring
Top
Crest

Close

Shut
Seal
Shutter
Slam
Fasten
Sheathe
Fold
Batten
Cage
Secure
Batten
Lock down
Plug

Collect

Gather
Corral
Garner
Group
Hoard
Scrape
Stockpile
Reap
Harvest
Amass
Accrue
Assemble

Compile
Save
Cache
Store

Come

Approach
Arrive
Enter
Advance
Converge
Meet
Appear
Show up
Attend

Cover

Shelter
Cloak
Shroud
Enclose
Clothe
Screen
Conceal
Hide
Disguise
Mask
Bury
Smother
Crust
Cloud
Shield
Shade
Film
Seal
Envelop
Veil
Wrap
Blanket
Obscure
Curtain (see HIDE)

Cross

Traverse
Pass
Ford
Bridge
Glide
Cut over

Cry

Howl

Whimper
Call
Scream
Shriek
Squeal
Roar
Mewl
Hoot
Squall
Wail
Holler
Yelp
Bawl
Screech
Yammer
Whoop
Bray
Cheer
Yell
Shout
Trill

Cut

Cleave
Chop
Chip
Sever
Slice
Snip
Divide
Prune
Trim
Split
Axe
Slash
Rend
Tear
Thin
Crop
Carve
Dissect
Hack
Hew
Nick
Pierce
Saw
Score
Shave
Shear

Dig

Mine

Delve
Excavate
Burrow
Drill
Core
Hollow
Rout
Unearth
Gouge
Tunnel
Exhume
Dredge up

Drag

Draw
Pull
Lug
Haul
Tow
Tote
Trawl
Yank
Trail
Tug
Yarn
Transport

Enter

Penetrate
Invade
Board
Access
Barge in
Burst into
Trespass
Drop in
Wander
Infiltrate
Intrude
Encroach
Pierce

Escape

Evade
Flee
Avoid
Bail
Run
Elude
Clear out
Dodge
Duck

Bolt
Sidestep
Scramble
Leave
Slip out
Sneak away (see LEAVE)

Fall

Tumble
Collapse
Spill
Plunge
Crumple
Pitch
Crash
Drop
Buckle
Plummet
Slant
Slip
Dive
Stumble
Topple
Sink
Slump
Trip

Fight

Battle
Tussle
Wrestle
Scuffle
Duel
Brawl
Joust
Spar
War
Clash
Grapple
Scrap
Quarrel
Struggle
Assault
Attack
Feud
Skirmish

Find

Discover
Locate
Detect
Notice

Catch
Obtain
Solve
Acquire
Uncover
Unearth
Reveal
Expose

Fit

Set
Rig
Cram
Place
Nest
Mold
Blend
Wedge
Implant
Lock
Apply
Arrange
Stuff
Force
Jam
Pack
Press
Pound
Settle

Fix

Repair
Patch
Mend
Cure
Service
Darn
Cobble
Rebuild
Tinker
Refit
Maintain
Renovate
Improve
Correct
Doctor
Restore

Get

Take
Receive

Catch
Gain
Obtain
Earn
Reap
Gather
Score
Win
Acquire
Accomplish
Procure
Attain
Elicit
Extract
Fetch
Inherit
Secure

Give

Gift
Pass
Toss
Hand
Deliver
Distribute
Offer
Donate
Bestow
Grant
Parcel out
Sacrifice
Award
Bequeath
Confer
Dispense
Present

Grab

Take
Steal
Snatch
Seize
Clutch
Hook
Grip
Net
Snag
Arrest
Apprehend
Appropriate
Claim
Grapple

Trap
Catch
Snap up
Nick
Wrench
Pluck

Help

Aid
Support
Assist
Comfort
Boost
Further
Relieve
Attend
Nurture
Advise
Guide
Encourage
Heal
Advocate
Befriend
Intercede
Save
Serve

Hide

Conceal
Obscure
Cover
Disguise
Mask
Hole up
Squirrel away
Stash
Smuggle
Stow
Bury
Camouflage
Protect
Screen (See COVER)

Hit

Bash
Smack
Slap
Slash
Slam
Punch
Clap
Bump

Swing
Slug
Poke
Wallop
Knock
Slam
Drill
Smoke
Deck
Ram
Strike
Beat
Clobber
Flog
Pound
Swat
Whack

Hold

Cradle
Grasp
Support
Bolster
Carry
Prop
Shoulder
Shelter
Handle
Grip
Clasp
Clench
Clutch
Squeeze

Hurry

Speed
Rush
Hustle
Scamper
Pelt
Scurry
Bolt
Bustle
Dash
Advance
Glide
Cruise
Sweep
Zip
Slide
Scuttle
Expedite

Hasten
Quicken

Join

Meld
Blend
Weld
Hinge
Staple
Pin
Splice
Couple
Seam
Stitch
Tether
Unite
Marry
Knit
Bridge
Add
Graft
Glue
Cement
Merge
Adhere
Affix
Attach
Combine
Fasten
Fuse
Link
Pair
Weave

Jump

Leap
Bounce
Spring
Vault
Bound
Hop
Hurdle
Pounce
Trounce
Skip
Lurch
Surge
Leapfrog

Kick

Boot
Punt

Dropkick

Know

Sense
Perceive
Detect
Intuit
Feel
Realize
Understand
Identify
Discern

Lay

Deposit
Set
Place
Position
Rest
Plant
Settle
Nest
Lodge
Seat
Spread
Drop
Put

Leave

Depart
Abandon
Set forth
Vacate
Quit
Maroon
Evacuate
Take off
Ditch
Forsake
Split
Scram
Withdraw
Disappear
Defect
Exit
Retire (see ESCAPE)

Lessen

Fade
Bleed
Evaporate
Shrink

Wane
Shrivel
Slacken
Curb
Weaken
Taper
Dampen
Deplete
Lighten
Limit
Trim
Reduce
Curb
Cull
Dwindle
Blunt
Abate
Minimize
Diminish
Curtail
Cut back
Decrease
Mitigate
Thin out

Lift

Raise/Rise
Hoist
Heave
Elevate
Winch
Heft
Crane
Hike
Boost
Jack up
Mount
Uphold

Listen

Hear
Eavesdrop
Heed
Attend
Mind
Monitor
Overhear
Tune in
Catch

Look

Eye

Gawk
Stare
Watch
Peek
Ogle
Browse
Glimpse
Leer
Glance
Peep
Squint
Scan
Seek
Notice
See
Focus
Behold (See WATCH)

Make

Fashion
Invent
Forge
Brew
Create
Form
Sculpt
Assemble
Mold
Combine
Beget
Conceive
Design
Forge
Produce
Shape

Move

Slide
Shift
Jar
Maneuver
Position
Nudge
Budge
Pop out
Work at
Displace
Relocate
Tap
Fiddle
Jiggle
Manipulate

Push
Prod
Twist

Need

Require
Demand
Exact
Claim (see WANT)

Open

Spread
Unfold
Peel
Unzip
Reveal
Widen
Expose
Gape
Bare
Expand
Unbolt
Unlock
Unhinge
Unfasten
Uncover
Unfurl
Unroll
Display
Uncork
Undo
Free
Release

Play

Dabble
Act
Gambol
Flirt
Caper
Toy
Maneuver
Frolic
Entertain
Cavort
Clown
Rejoice
Romp
Dally
Frisk
Joke
Kid

Tease

Pick

Gather

Collect

Pluck

Select

Bag

Clasp

Grasp

Hook

Harvest

Cull

Push

Shove

Press

Nudge

Drive

Prod

Poke

Elbow

Jostle

Knock

Strain

Thrust

Crowd

Jam

Squish

Bulldoze

Force

Crush

Encourage

Impel

Muscle

Propel

Remember

Recall

Memorialize

Recognize

Recollect

Call to mind

Revive

Think back to

Flash back to

Reminisce about

Ride

Gallop

Jockey

Mount

Surf

Cruise

Speed

Coast

Glide

Rub

Chafe

Nuzzle

Caress

Grind

Smudge

Smear

Scrub

Lather

Polish

Knead

Scrape

Scour

Stroke

Massage

Smooth

Buff

Graze

Brush

Touch

Caress

Scrub

Smooth

Wipe (see TOUCH)

Run

Gallop

Trot

Race

Streak

Lope

Scurry

Scamper

Jog

Dash

Scuttle

Rush

Stampede

Jet

Dart

Scoot

Speed

Sprint

Canter

Amble

Scout

Barrel

Flee

Fly

Hustle

Pelt

Say

Speak

Articulate

Yammer

Blubber

Blab

Address

Mouth

Utter

Murmur

Mutter

Stammer

Swear

Curse

Rant

Rave

Jabber

Converse

Discuss

Whisper

Snarl

Stutter

Banter

Chant

Chat

Dictate

Drone

Drawl

Spout

Jibber

Sputter

Yell

Search

Quest

Forage

Hunt

Rummage

Seek

Probe

Delve

Scout

Scour

Investigate

Ferret

Browse

Pursue
Explore
Ransack
Sift
Dig
Examine
Inquire

Send

Ship
Cast
Maneuver
Transport
Broadcast
Transfer
Radiate
Channel
Route
Volley
Transmit
Relay
Wire
Publish

Shake

Shiver
Convulse
Quiver
Quake
Tremble
Totter
Judder
Vibrate
Rattle
Jolt
Churn
Shudder
Tremor
Slosh
Agitate
Quaver
Thrash
Flutter
Jerk
Twitch
Spasm
Lurch
Squirm
Twinge
Palpitate
Throb
Ripple

Sit

Recline
Squat
Perch
Roost
Rest
Sprawl
Straddle
Crouch
Huddle
Slouch
Lounge
Flop
Laze
Plop
Park
Hunker
Relax
Settle

Split

Part
Cleave
Chop
Rupture
Hack
Sever
Slit
Carve
Cut
Divide
Halve
Break
Sunder
Separate
Rend
Rip

Start

Begin
Jump
Launch
Embark
Enter
Set out
Dawn
Plunge
Erupt
Birth
Spring
Sally

Activate
Initiate
Commence
Initiate
Pioneer

Stop

Retire
Halt
Cease
Quit
Stall
Pause
End
Hitch
Finish
Rein
Freeze
Suspend
Hold
Belay
Terminate
Desist
Conclude
Discontinue
Refrain

Throw

Hurl
Flip
Toss
Fling
Propel
Sling
Chuck
Heave
Launch
Fire
Catapult
Pitch
Thrust
Volley
Cast
Discharge
Lob
Pelt
Peg

Touch

Feel
Caress
Brush

Fondle
Glove
Palm
Smooth
Stroke
Tickle
Dab
Finger
Graze
Pat
Pet (see RUB)

Trap

Imprison
Snare
Corner
Entangle
Hold
Pin
Catch
Restrain
Bind
Hook
Snag
Snatch
Clutch
Pinch
Chain
Cage
Surround
Handcuff
Shackle
Capture

Turn

Twist
Tilt
Round
Lean
Crank
Swerve
Switch
Swing
Swirl
Twirl
Swivel
Pivot
Whirl
Curl
Circle
Fork
Sway

Spin
Revolve
Bend
Loop
Rotate

Use

Wield
Handle
Work
Employ
Adopt
Practice
Manipulate
Operate
Utilize

Visit

Haunt
Frequent
Attend
Call on
Tour
Court
Drop in

Wait

Delay
Pause
Linger
Remain
Stay
Hold
Stand
Adhere
Haunt
Bide
Loiter
Hover
Roost
Settle
Lag
Pause
Perch
Tarry
Dwell
Dally
Hang out
Idle
Hesitate
Procrastinate

Walk

Coast
Pad
Amble
Saunter
Stroll
Strut
Swagger
Trudge
Stride
Tiptoe
Creep
Sneak
Stamp
Clump
Tramp
Parade
Plod
Slog
Limp
Totter
Glide
Pace
March
Shuffle
Lurch
Trample
Prowl
Mosey
Toddle
Slink
Scamper
Clomp
Lumber
Scoot
Roam
Waddle

Want

Desire
Thirst
Crave
Long for
Lust
Covet
Hunger
Pine
Yearn
Wish
Ache
Dream (see NEED)

Wash

Clean
 Bathe
 Launder
 Rinse
 Sluice
 Scrub
 Lather
 Shower
 Cleanse
 Buff
 Freshen up
 Scour
 Shampoo
 Soak
 Soap
 Swab

Watch

Spy
 View
 Witness
 Monitor
 Keep tabs
 Spot
 Detect
 Attend
 Follow
 Regard
 Scope
 Scrutinize
 Survey
 Observe
 Contemplate
 Examine
 Inspect
 Note
 Observe
 Stare (see LOOK)

Whisper

Mutter
 Murmur
 Mouth
 Mumble
 Wheeze
 Confide

Wonder

Muse
 Ponder

Consider
 Dwell
 Debate
 Mull
 Study
 Ruminant
 Weigh
 Question
 Doubt
 Meditate
 Speculate
 Puzzle
 Think

Laugh

Giggle
 Snicker
 Snigger
 Howl
 Titter
 Chuckle
 Roared
 Snort
 Cackle

Say

Call
 Whisper
 Respond
 Question
 Remark
 Ask
 Demand
 Reply
 Exclaim
 Offer
 Mention
 State

Talk

Converse
 Gossip
 Joke
 Speak
 Communicate
 Chat
 Engage
 Boast

Like

Enjoy

Prefer
 Adore
 Love
 Admire
 Appreciate
 Savor

Lose

Misplace
 Drop
 Forget

Grow

Mature
 Develop
 Bloom
 Expand
 Balloon
 Swell
 Stretch
 Blossom
 Ripen
 Enlarge
 Inflate
 Flesh out
 Spread
 Widen
 Increase

Reach

Gain
 Grasp
 Strain
 Swipe
 Extend
 Stretch

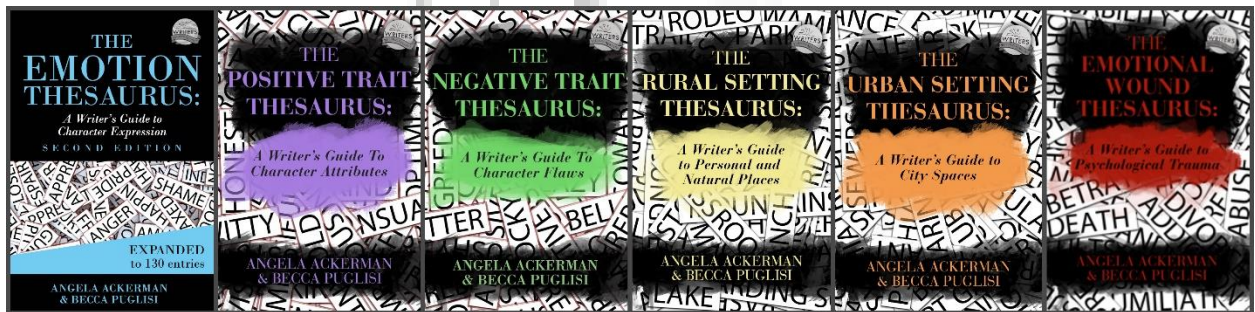
Kill

Murder
 Obliterate
 Destroy
 Annihilate
 Exterminate
 Suffocate
 Wipe out
 Slaughter
 Assassinate
 Eliminate
 Snuff

WHAT IS A WRITERS HELPING WRITERS® DESCRIPTIVE THESAURUS?

Have you ever had a critique partner or editor suggest you need to show, not tell? Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi have, which is why the two set out to learn as much as possible about showing and telling, and how to master both. To help others, they created the [Writers Helping Writers Thesaurus series](#), where they dive deep into an area of description and provide comprehensive lists of specific details that will help writers bring that element alive on the page.

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