Nouns are words that name persons, places, things, or events. Good writers choose nouns that are specific rather than general. The word dog, for example, does not give the reader an exact mental picture. A specific noun such as whippet, greyhound, dalmatian, or cocker spaniel would create a much more precise image.

A. Rewrite each sentence, replacing the underlined word with a more specific noun that creates a clearer picture.

1. Please pass the vegetables.

2. We went to a restaurant for dinner on Saturday.

3. After dinner, we split a dessert.

4. Patrick bought a new car.

5. Jean lives in a place with an ocean view.

6. The game started at 3 o’clock.

7. We saw an interesting animal at the zoo.

8. Tom and Bob fished from a boat.

9. Gloria’s pet is cute and friendly.

10. The machine made a lot of noise.
B. This picture shows a typical day in a park. Suppose you want to describe this scene to someone else. Where would you start? You might begin with vivid nouns. Make a list of nouns that could be used in a description of this picture.

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C. Now use some or all of the nouns you listed to write a description of the picture. Make sure your nouns are specific enough to help your reader visualize the scene.
Lesson 2
Using Vivid Verbs

Good writers use strong, specific verbs to express action. Why? Precise verbs make it easier for the reader to imagine the action. Sometimes, strong verbs can give clues about a character's motivations or feelings. To see how a vivid verb can clarify meaning and bring a picture into focus, compare these two sentences:

The football team came onto the field for their final game.
The football team bolted onto the field for their final game.

Notice that the verb bolted gives the reader a sense of the players' determination. It also helps you imagine how emotionally charged up the team was.

A. Rewrite each of the following sentences, replacing the underlined word with a more vivid verb.

1. The couple moved on the dance floor.
   _____________________________________________________________

2. Allan went out the front door.
   _____________________________________________________________

3. Barbara got out of bed at 6 o'clock in the morning.
   _____________________________________________________________

4. The child walked through the rain puddles.
   _____________________________________________________________

5. The lioness looked for a meal for her family.
   _____________________________________________________________

6. Chris drank a glass of ice water.
   _____________________________________________________________

7. The fat cat slept by the fire.
   _____________________________________________________________

8. All of a sudden, the police came in the door.
   _____________________________________________________________

9. The out-of-control car went into the concrete wall.
   _____________________________________________________________

10. The hungry man ate a sandwich.
    _____________________________________________________________
B. This picture shows a typical scene at a circus. Suppose you want to describe the picture to someone else. Where would you start? You might begin with vivid verbs. Make a list of verbs that could be used in a description of this picture.

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C. Now use some or all of the verbs you listed in a written description of the picture. Make sure your verbs are specific enough to help your reader visualize the scene.

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