

## Imagery Types and Excerpts

Senses	Explanation and Sample Words	Passage Excerpts
<b>Sight (Visual)</b>	Visual imagery—the most common type—is when authors describe what they want readers to see, such as a particular place or a character's physical appearance or clothing. To conjure up a visual, authors might use particular words and phrases to describe colors ( <i>color/less, crimson, pitch black, sky blue, vermillion</i> ), shapes ( <i>irregular, oblong, shape/less, triangular</i> ), sizes ( <i>diminutive, massive, wide</i> ), movement ( <i>bolt, meander, saunter, scramble, slide, slither</i> ) or appearances ( <i>disheveled, handsome, muscular, shimmering, transparent</i> ).	“ . . . dim and little-traveled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland. It was a steep bank . . . ” “North and south, as far as his eye could see, it was unbroken white, save for a dark hair-line that curved and twisted from around the spruce-covered island to the south . . . ”
<b>Sound (Auditory)</b>	Loud or soft sounds and someone's speech are all associated with this type of imagery. For example, authors can describe a dog's bark, the snap of a twig, the sizzle of bacon, a grown man's moaning, a baby's wail, or the hoarseness or register of someone's voice. The author can also include onomatopoeia—a word that imitates its sound—like <i>bang, beep, buzz, clang, or whoosh</i> . See these words associated with sounds: <i>loud—bang, bawl, blare, crash, stomp, or thunder; soft—chime, crackle, gurgle, hiss, hush, rumble, rustle, sigh, or snap; speech—chatter, drawl, murmur, scream, stammer, or whimper</i> .	“ . . . he spat speculatively. There was a sharp, explosive crackle that startled him. He spat again. And again, in the air, before it could fall to the snow, the spittle crackled.” “He had felt the give under his feet and heard the crackle of a snow-hidden ice-skin.”
<b>Taste (Gustatory)</b>	Describing what food or something other than food tastes like is another form of imagery that writers use to make a story realistic. Words to define taste include <i>bitter, bland, burnt, buttery, crisp, fruity, medicinal, savory, sour, spicy, sugary, sweet, tangy, or tasteless</i> .	“He smiled agreeably to himself as he thought of those biscuits, each cut open and sopped in bacon grease, and each enclosing a generous slice of fried bacon.”
<b>Touch (Tactile)</b>	When writers provide readers with an experience that involves texture and what someone might feel, they are using another sense that is ripe for imagery. Words for touch might be <i>bumpy, cool, crisp, feathery, furry, greasy, gritty, hairy, rough, rubbery, scalding, sharp, slippery, sticky, thick, velvety, or waxy</i> .	“Day had broken cold and gray, exceedingly cold and gray . . . ” “Fifty degrees below zero stood for a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear-flaps, warm moccasins, and thick socks.” “ . . . and lying against the naked skin.” “But rub as he would, the instant he stopped his cheek-bones went numb, and the following instant the end of his nose went numb.”
<b>Smell (Olfactory)</b>	Describing nature, foods, or scents can capture the sense of smell. Writers may describe brownies baking in an oven, an athlete's uniform after a game, or freshly blooming jasmine in a garden to conjure up various scents that readers can imagine. Writers might use words like <i>piney, acrid, rotten, perfumed, fishy, fresh, earthy, salty, rancid, dank, musty, spicy, or sweet</i> .	“Next he brought out his bunch of sulphur matches.” “His flesh was burning.” “And still later [the dog] crept close to the man and caught the scent of death.”

Source: London, J. (1908). To build a fire. Accessed at [www.classicshorts.com/stories/freelndn.html](http://www.classicshorts.com/stories/freelndn.html) on September 12, 2017.