

## *Writing with Style* by John R. Trimble

### **Chapter 10: Dramatizing Your Ideas**

Prologue: With its emphasis on creativity, this chapter makes a good companion to the previous chapter, counterbalancing its analytical discussion with an emphasis on the artful side of writing. A good writer, says Trimble, is as much an entertainer as an idea-pusher. If the last chapter foregrounded the idea part, this one does the same for entertainment.

1. Trimble refers to the techniques that keep your reader interested as “artful presentation.” The first technique is **Attractive Formatting**. In your own words, sum up what he means by this and make a list of the specific strategies he recommends to achieve it. How will you begin to implement these tips into your next writing project?
2. The second technique of “artful presentation” is one Trimble calls **Interesting Phrasing**. Make a list of specific strategies he recommends to achieve this quality. Go over your current writing project and jot MA in the margin next to those passages that are “merely adequate.” Jot MO next to your “missed opportunities.” You can’t freshen up your style until you admit your own drabness. Trimble’s entire method is predicated on the ability to think like your reader.
3. The section Trimble calls **Dramatic Plotting** is concerned with injecting story elements in a paper in order to peak reader interest. The key is to keep your reader turning the pages. Consider how the three-part structure of hook, develop, and resolve (page 110) might compel you to establish suspense in your reader and bring satisfaction in your conclusion. How will you implement this on your next writing project?
4. Trimble concludes that two questions will guide a writer through the process of artful presentation: “If I were the reader here, would this excite me or bore me?” and “How can I dramatize this point more vividly?” Apply these questions to your current writing project.
5. Examine Amy Jetel’s essay, “The Price of Service.” What elements of *artful presentation* do you see at work? Compare this essay to your last effort. What, if anything, can you learn from Jetel about the techniques Trimble teaches in his book? To what extent does her essay exemplify his teachings?

Epilogue: When paired, chapters 9 & 10 provide a nice balance of instruction for college-level writing. Most academic papers (as well as most general writing projects) achieve success by serving the reader’s need for new knowledge while employing a fresh, clear, conversational tone of voice. This synthesis of appealing content communicated in an attractive style embodies the formula for success in writing.