

Word Magic

Writers are like magicians. They can create amazing illusions. Magicians use special equipment and tricks to create their illusions. Writers use only words — a few good *details* in the right place at the right time.

Imagine an empty street. A good writer might use words to create two entirely different impressions of that street. He might describe the street as if it is full of promise and possibility, or full of terror and uncertainty. Read the following descriptions of Maple Street, for example:

Maple Street #1 — Maple Street lay bare in the early dawn, its cobbled bricks absorbing the warmth of the rising sun. Soon children would be running their bikes up and down the sidewalks, mothers would be pushing their infants in strollers toward the park, and business people would be opening their shops and setting out tables for early morning customers who like a good cup of coffee to start the day.

Maple Street #2 — Maple Street was deserted as the wind whipped across its cold cobbled surface. Empty cans rattled over the bricks like clinking, hollow bells echoing loneliness and fear. There was no one, not a single soul, on the street or in the shops or even driving by. The street was like a graveyard with neat green grass and stiff benches where no one sat to pass the time of day.

In Maple Street #1, which details help create the image of a happy, pleasant place?

In Maple Street #2, which details help create the image of a cold, deserted place?
