

我的三步法：把难忘的一天从清单改成一件事

先把我第一次交的作文抄在这里，一个字没改：那天早上六点钟我起床，妈妈叫我快点，不然赶不上车。我们吃了早饭就出发了。到了车站人很多。上车以后我坐在窗边。中午我们到了动物园，先看了大象，大象的鼻子很长。然后看了猴子，猴子在假山上跳来跳去，很好玩。下午两点我们往回走，三点到家。我今天真开心，这是我最难忘的一天。这是我们班大多数人都写过的样子，我自己数过，我们组六个人里有四个的句子跟这个差不多。

作文本发下来，本子上只有一个红圈，圈在猴子那一句旁边，旁边写着四个字：就写这个。我一开始没懂，以为老师嫌我字写得少。第二天老师把我叫到走廊，问了我一个问题：你那天一整天，脑子里现在还剩哪个画面？我说猴子。我说得很快，因为那个画面真的还在：那只老猴子坐在假山顶上，剥一个橘子，剥完先闻一下，才往嘴里送。老师说，你的作文里这个画面在哪儿？我翻自己的作文，猴子只有两行，猴子在假山上跳来跳去，很好玩。画面还在，作文里却没有，这就是问题。

老师教了我三步，我把它叫三步法。第一步，挑一件事：整天里只留一个地方，我留了猴山，其他全部不要。第二步，定格一瞬：在这件事里挑一个最慢的瞬间放大，我挑的是老猴子剥橘子，老师让我把剥这个动作拆开来写，我就拆成抠、掰、闻、送四个动作，又加了我听到的声音，旁边一个小男孩喊妈妈你看。第三步，删掉其余：早上起床、吃饭、车站、上车、大象，全部删掉，只留一句话交代我去了动物园。删的时候我心疼极了，那些都是我写的，老师说一句口诀给我：舍不得删，读者就找不到重点。

改完的作文开头是这样的：猴山前围了一圈人，那只老猴子坐在假山顶上，先用指甲抠开橘子皮，再两瓣掰开，放到鼻子底下闻了一下，才慢慢送进嘴里。它吃得很慢，比动物园里任何人都慢。旁边一个小男孩喊，妈妈你看。全文四百多字，只写了猴山这一处。

作文本第二次发下来，老师画了三个红圈，这次圈的是抠、闻、送三个动词。我的检查口诀也传给同桌了：一个地方，一个瞬间，四个动词，其余删完。现在每次写作文前，我先在草稿纸角上写这四个词，写完对照一遍，少一样就补一样。从清单到一件事，我用的办法其实就这一句话：把我脑子里还剩的那个画面，老老实实写出来。

My Three-Step Method: Turning an Unforgettable Day from a List into One Event

Let me first copy my first submitted essay without changing a word: I got up at six that morning, my mother hurried me or we would miss the bus. We ate breakfast and set off. The station was crowded. On the bus I sat by the window. At noon we reached the zoo and saw the elephants first; their trunks were long. Then we saw monkeys jumping on the rock hill, very fun. At two we headed back and arrived home at three. I was so happy today, this is my most unforgettable day. This is what most of my class wrote; I counted, and four of the six people in my group had sentences almost the same.

When the notebook came back, there was only one red circle, around the monkey sentence, with four characters beside it: write only this. At first I did not understand; I thought the teacher disliked that I wrote too little. The next day she called me into the corridor and asked one question: of that whole day, which picture is still in your head right now? I said the monkey, and I answered fast, because that picture really is still there: the old monkey sitting on top of the rock hill, peeling an orange, smelling it first, then putting it into its mouth. The teacher asked, where is this picture in your essay? I looked through my own writing; the monkey got only two lines, monkeys jumping on the rock hill, very fun. The picture survived but the essay lost it. That was the problem.

The teacher taught me three steps, and I call it my three-step method. Step one, pick one event: keep only one place from the whole day; I kept the monkey hill and threw away everything else. Step two, freeze one moment: find the slowest instant inside that event and enlarge it; I chose the old monkey peeling the orange, and the teacher asked me to split the verb peel, so I split it into pick, break, smell, put-in, and added a sound I heard, a little boy shouting, Mommy, look. Step three, delete the rest: getting up, breakfast, the station, the bus, the elephants, all deleted, leaving one sentence that we went to the zoo. Deleting hurt; those were all my words. The teacher gave me one line: if you cannot bear to delete, the reader cannot find the point.

The rewritten essay begins like this: a ring of people stood before the monkey hill; the old monkey sat on top of the rock hill, first picking the orange peel open with its nails, then breaking it into two halves, holding it under its nose for one sniff, only then slowly putting it into its mouth. It ate very slowly, slower than anyone in the zoo. Beside me a little boy shouted, Mommy, look. The whole piece was over four hundred characters and wrote only the monkey hill.

When the notebook came back the second time, the teacher drew three red circles, this time around pick, smell and put-in. My checking chant also passed to my deskmate: one place, one moment, four verbs, delete the rest. Now before every essay I write those four phrases in the corner of my draft paper, and after writing I check against them; whatever is missing, I add. From a list to one event, my method is really one sentence: honestly write out the picture that still remains in my head.