

over he will be able most easily to amplify his paragraphs from the ideas suggested by the different headings of his plan. From the reader's standpoint, too, there is a great advantage, since the unified, compact, symmetrical nature of the composition gives him a clear impressive conception of the scene. He feels the composition is a complete harmonious structure—as well-built, as perfectly balanced as a piece of architecture or a figure in marble.

(i) *The Statement of the Theme.* To write clearly and effectively, a writer must know very definitely the theme of his discourse. Especially in abstract themes it is of decided advantage at once to state the theme, and define its nature. On the other hand the reader finds such a statement of theme almost indispensable, because without it he cannot easily understand the general drift of the writer's thought, nor can he grasp his subsequent statements in their proper relationship. There is, however, as we saw before, one important exception to be made. In narration, where curiosity must be aroused, it is usually advisable to keep the reader for a time in suspense as to the real drift of the story. This can best be done without any definite statement of the theme.

**Rule 1.**—*State at the outset (unless you have good reasons to the contrary) the theme of the description.*

(ii.) *The General Outline.*—It is usually helpful to a writer to have before him in general outline the scene he is about to describe. He is, then guided in selecting those details that will amplify and illustrate the general effect of the scene. The reader, too, finds a general outline helpful, for by it he is enabled most easily to grasp the general character of the description and to arrange the details in their proper connection, and—most important of all—he is put into that disposition of mind in which the author wishes him to receive the composition.

**Rule 2.**—*Let a general outline of the scene you describe precede the detailed description, and, when possible, give the key-note to the description—its grave, pathetic, romantic tone—by means of this general outline.*

(iii.) *The Details.*—(a) *The Point of View.*—In the description outlined above we do not find a confused mass of details. The author does not enter into minute details of the history of the castle, nor does he describe its interior. He chooses his point of view outside the castle, and rigidly excludes all details not naturally unfolding themselves from that point of view.

**Rule 3.**—*In the selection of the details the writer must be guided by the point of view from which he writes. He must select only such details as harmonize with his plan.*