

Sensory Detail Prompts for Advocacy Storytelling

Module 2.2 · Advocacy Academy · Steampunk Farms

Use these prompts when you need to ground a scene in vivid, concrete detail. Pick one or two per scene — not all twenty. Remember the Rule of Two: one dominant sense and one surprise sense.

■ Sight (4 prompts)

1. Describe the light — what direction is it coming from? What color? What does it fall on?
2. What's the first thing you see when you walk through the door? Describe only that one thing.
3. Look at the hands of the person in your scene. What do they tell you?
4. What's the smallest visual detail that would be missing from a stock photo of this place?

■ Sound (4 prompts)

1. What sound is conspicuously absent? What silence tells a story?
2. Describe the sound an animal makes when it feels safe. Now describe when it doesn't.
3. What do you hear just before the conversation starts? That background sound IS your scene.
4. If you recorded one minute of audio from this place, what would a stranger hear?

■ Smell (4 prompts)

1. What hits your nose first? Name it specifically — not "it smelled bad" but what KIND of bad.
2. Describe the difference between the smell of a clean barn and a neglected one.
3. What does this place smell like after rain? That detail is yours alone.
4. Name a smell from your childhood that is connected to your cause. Describe it.

■ Touch / Texture (4 prompts)

1. Pick up one thing in your scene. What does it feel like in your hand? Weight, texture, temperature.
2. Describe the ground under your feet. Gravel? Concrete? Straw? Mud? What does it tell you?
3. What does the air feel like on your skin — humid, dry, sharp, still? Air has texture.
4. Touch the wall, the fence, the cage, the soil. What does that surface tell the story your words haven't?

■ Taste (4 prompts)

1. Describe the difference between food that was made with care and food that was manufactured.
2. What taste brings you back to the moment your perspective shifted? Name it.
3. If the listener could taste one thing from your world, what would change their mind?
4. What does water taste like in this place? Clean? Metallic? Like nothing? Even nothing is a detail.

Remember: Sensory details don't argue. They show. And showing is how you get past the listener's defenses. One vivid detail does more than a paragraph of explanation.