

Activity:

- 1) “Color” the two examples on the next page
 - **Green:** Narration = descriptions/setting, backstory, internalizations
 - **Yellow:** Dialogue = spoken words between quotation marks
 - **Orange:** Action = character movements and body language incl. senses

- 2) Compare both samples
 - What do you notice? Is there balance?
 - Readability?
 - Pace?

Now, choose a scene in your own manuscript that you’re struggling with and COLOR it.



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Example #1

Rolando is from a small town in Eastern Delaware, White Shell. His mother tends bar at a local dive, and he has never known his father. Ro, as everyone calls him, is ten. He is white, small and rail thin with huge brown eyes, his most pronounced feature. Big giant windows, wide, ever-staring full moons, moist teary Christmas card puppy dog eyes. They tear out emotion— help me- help me orbs, peepers of starving Dicksonian beggar-waifs. His lithe bird-like physique fills the susceptible viewers with images of a struggling soul, unable to rest, eternally wandering, hopelessly trying to fulfill his pitiful constant quest for food and shelter.

Ruby Swain, Ro's mother, legally Rebecca Beatrice Swain, grew up in New York City's no-nonsense Brooklyn in the late 1930's. She is the youngest of 4 sisters and was raised in an all-female home after her father died shortly after her birth. The women survived in a hostile city by working long hours and enjoying little luxury. A hard working and uneventful childhood was followed by a hardworking and uneventful early adult life. Now in the late 1960's she finds herself managing a working man's bar, called predictably, the Pack Em Inn.

Example #2

“Rooooooo! Getupyagonnabelatefor SCHOOL. Iaintgonna TELL yaonemoretimeya LATE sogetupalready!” screams Ruby from the downstairs deep of the Pack Em Inn.

Ro staggers out of bed, scoops up yesterday's clothes from the floor and throws them on: shirt inside out, fly unzipped, belt loops bypassed. He pads over to the kitchen counter, unscrews a big lid and hand scoops two green-marbled pickled eggs from his breakfast bar jar.

“Areyaup?! Come on already! Moveyaass! Moveit! ROOOOO! MOVE!”

Ro gags down the olivine zygotes in a snakelike fashion and looks inside his lunch bag, hoping for some leftover burgers from the Sunday Night Dinner Special. Instead, he predictably discovers three more pickled eggs, ten sticks of beef jerky and assorted single-serving condiments.

“WHATS GOING ON? MOVEIT! MOVEMOVE!” Complete meltdown is imminent.

Ro grabs the lunch bag and his books then places his Flash Gordon cap, crested with a raised lightning bolt mounted brim to band, on his small head and opens the apartment door to confront the verbal hurricane of his mother. He carefully descends the dungeon-worthy dark and steep stairs, down into the musty gloom of the Pack Em Inn.