

Teaching Illuminators

From *grammar, y'all*

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Introductory Activity

Independent Clause: The teacher stood at the front of the room.

Distribute the following illuminators (participial phrases and absolute phrases) to students. They can read each phrase with the independent clause above, and you, as the teacher, can act it out in the front of the room. As this activity is happening, point out to them that these phrases are illuminating some aspect of what you are doing.

- Reviewing her notes
- Arms crossed
- Glancing at the clock
- Jaw set with determination
- Eyes narrowed slightly
- Hands trembling slightly
- Rubbing her eyes
- Hands clasped behind her back
- Adjusting the microphone
- Shoulders slumped
- Scanning the room for reactions
- Gesturing toward the screen
- Leaning against the podium
- Head tilted in curiosity
- Lips pressed into a thin line
- Turned toward the screen
- Smiling widely

These scenarios are designed for students to play around with creating illuminators in their own writing.

Scenario 1: You are calling the final seconds of your school's championship basketball game. The whole school is watching. The next play is lightning fast.

You have the scene: She releases the shot.

Use illuminators to highlight what you want your listeners to focus on.

Scenario 2: You are writing a crime drama for your podcast. We are at the moment of the crucial reveal.

You have the scene: He opens the envelope.

Use illuminators to highlight what you want your listeners to see.

Scenario 3: You are writing a voice-over for a disaster movie trailer. We are at the critical point where the disaster becomes real.

You have the scene: The scientist sees the warning appear on the screen.

Use illuminators to picture this disastrous scene more clearly.