


# The Words You Choose Matter!<sup>1</sup>

Let's see what adding specifics—based on the five senses—adds to the writing. First, read the passage below carefully.



## Warriors: Into the Wild

(wrecked)  
Chapter 1

Rusty knew something was near. The cat looked at the ground. This place was not familiar, but he kept going. He was hungry.

Then he smelled the forest and a creature.

Something went past him. Rusty listened. It was hiding. He knew it was a mouse; he could hear its heartbeat. He swallowed. Soon he would eat.

He got near the mouse. He knew it was not aware of him. With one more look, Rusty jumped.

The mouse moved, but Rusty got it and flung it. The mouse landed. It tried to run, but Rusty got it again and tossed it again. The mouse walked a few paces before Rusty caught up with it.


There was a noise. Rusty looked, and as he did the mouse got away. When Rusty looked, he saw it go into some tree roots.

Rusty gave up. He looked around to see what had made him lose the mouse. The sound continued. Rusty opened his eyes.

The forest had disappeared. He was in his bed. Light came through the window. There were shadows on the floor. The noise had been the food they were putting into his dish. Rusty had been dreaming.

We know what happened, but not much else.

Now read the same passage, this time with the specifics and descriptive words that make the writing rich and compelling to read left in. **Underline the descriptive words.**



## Warriors: Into the Wild

(as published)  
Chapter 1 (excerpt)

It was very dark. Rusty could sense something was near. The young tomcat's eyes opened wide as he scanned the dense undergrowth. This place was unfamiliar, but the strange scents drew him onward, deeper into the shadows. His stomach growled, reminding him of his hunger.

---

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from *Warriors: Into the Wild*, by Erin Hunter. Adapted (wrecked) by Joseph Sigalas

He opened his jaws slightly to let the warm smells of the forest reach the scent glands on the roof of his mouth. Musty odors of leaf mold mingled with the tempting aroma of a small furry creature.

Suddenly a flash of gray raced past him. Rusty stopped still, listening. It was hiding in the leaves less than two tail-lengths away. Rusty knew it was a mouse; he could feel the rapid pulsing of a tiny hearty deep within his ear fur. He swallowed, stifling his rumbling stomach. Soon his hunger would be satisfied.

Slowly he lowered his body into position, crouching for the attack. He was downwind of the mouse. He knew it was not aware of him. With one final check on his prey's position, Rusty pushed back hard on his haunches and sprang, kicking up leaves on the forest floor as he rose.

The mouse dived for cover, heading toward a hole in the ground. But Rusty was already on top of it. He scooped it into the air, hooking the helpless creature with his thorn-sharp claws, flinging it up in a high arc onto the leaf-covered ground. The mouse landed dazed, but alive. It tried to run, but Rusty snatched it up again. He tossed the mouse once more, this time a little farther away. The mouse managed to scramble a few paces before Rusty caught up with it.

Suddenly a noise roared nearby. Rusty looked around, and as he did so the mouse was able to pull away from his claws. When Rusty turned back he saw it dart into the darkness among the tangled roots of a tree.

Angry, Rusty gave up the hunt. He spun around, his green eyes glaring, intent on searching out the noise that had cost him his kill. The sound rattled on, becoming more familiar. Rusty blinked open his eyes.

The forest had disappeared. He was inside a hot and airless kitchen, curled in his bed. Moonlight filtered through the window, casting shadows on the smooth, hard floor. The noise had been the rattle of hard, dried pellets of food as they were tipped into his dish. Rusty had been dreaming.

Now answer the questions below:

1. Other than length, what is different between these passages?
2. Did those differences make the story's "world" seem different? If so, in what specific way(s)?