



60-Second Summary: F*ck the Details by Joel Quinn

I learned very early that it wasn't the book painting the picture, it was *me*. The reader. My imagination filled in all the spaces between words with intense and vivid scenes that built on the writer's descriptions. I want my readers to have the same experience I did when I first figured that out.

I want to use fewer words to engage the reader's ability to fill in their own blanks. I want them to move through the story unhindered by excessive details that will only slow them down – or stop them altogether.

Guidelines for Choosing the Details:

- Figure out which details are important for *you* to know, and which ones are important for the reader. They are not always the same.
- Decide which details are needed for the character. Is it important that the main character's hair is a 2415 on the Pantone chart? Is it enough to just say purple?
- *He ducked under the sign ...* or *His bulk filled the doorway ...* are better than *He was 6'4" and weighed 280 pounds.*
- "If she *said* it, then that's a good enough dialogue tag," she said.
- Does the reader need that clever detail you took a week to come up with? Do they, really?
- Identify and eliminate the speed bumps, cuz if it's not important, the description doesn't need it.
- Trust the reader to know what you're talking about, and ...
- It's okay if the picture in their head doesn't match the one in yours.

It doesn't have to be a lifeless laundry list of facts. That's no fun for you *or* the reader, but if you cut out the excess in the descriptions, there's gonna be more room for the story itself. That's where we all want to spend our time, anyway. Lost in the world the writer and reader created together.