

Explode the Right Moment



Writers can often get carried away with “exploding a moment” because they are afraid that their short descriptions haven’t said enough. However, it’s important to only explode the most important moment(s) in a piece. In the example below, you can see how the writer slows down the story by trying to explain how Sam got to the church when all he needs to do is acknowledge that Sam got from his apartment to a church:

Sam moved slowly down the stairs of the apartment building. He walked across the street and climbed into his car. He turned the ignition key and put the car in gear. Then he pulled out into Maple Street traffic. When he reached Wilder Avenue, he took a left and drove for three blocks. At Warren Street he waited for a red light that seemed to take forever. Finally, he got onto Carver. He could see the Bethany Church up ahead.

A better explanation appears below.

Sam drove to the church.

Really think about the action of your story. Unless something important happened to Sam while driving his car over to the church, don’t describe the drive. Explode only the most important moment(s) in your story.

—Adapted by Marilyn Yung from “100 Ways to Improve Your Writing” by Gary Provost