

Collaborative Style Activity, Part 1

Directions:

For this activity, you'll translate passages of one writer into the style of another. Some key features of each author's style are listed below. In your groups, work to rewrite each quotation as it might have been written by the other author. We'll share the translations with groups and the entire class.

Group Members:

Features of Nathaniel Hawthorne's Style:

Words with Greek and Latin roots (some of his clear favorites are *lurid*, *physiognomy*, *retribution*, *malefactress*, *evanescent*, *impelled*, *ignominy*)

Archaic forms from the Elizabethan-Jacobean period appropriate to the stories about Puritans (such as *wottest*, *verily*, *prithie*, *sayest*, *hath*, *betwixt*, and *behoof*)

Litotes, or understatement, in which something is expressed by a negation of the contrary ("The age had not so much refinement that any sense of impropriety restrained the wearers of petticoat and farthingale from . . . wedging their not insubstantial persons . . . nearest to the scaffold at an execution." Chapter 2, p. 58)

Subordinate clauses and parenthetical expressions ("It was a circumstance to be noted, on the summer morning when our story begins its course, that the women, of whom there were several in the crowd, appeared to take a peculiar interest in whatever penal infliction might be expected to ensue." Chapter 2, p. 58)

(Excerpts from Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Scarlet Letter*. NY: Signet, 1980.)

Features of Ernest Hemingway's Style:

Sparse, journalistic description ("Nick was hungry. He did not believe he had ever been hungrier. He opened and emptied a can of pork and beans and a can of spaghetti into the frying pan." p. 1278)

Simple words ("He turned on his side and shut his eyes. He was sleepy. He felt sleep coming. He curled up under the blanket and went to sleep." p. 1280)

Minimal subordination — frequent use of simple, declarative sentences (subject-verb-object sentences) ("Nick looked down into the pool from the bridge. It was a hot day. A kingfisher flew up the stream. It was a long time since Nick had looked into a stream and seen trout. They were very satisfactory." p. 1275)

Direct phrasing — describes characters' emotions and thoughts matter-of-factly ("The beans and spaghetti warmed. Nick stirred them and mixed them together. They began to bubble, making little bubbles that rose with difficulty to the surface. There was a good smell." p. 1278)

(Excerpts from Ernest Hemingway. "Big Two-Hearted River." *The American Tradition in Literature*. Vol II. 9th Ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999.)

Style Example Quotations

AN EXERCISE IN STYLE

HAWTHORNE		HEMINGWAY
1. "There was, moreover, a boldness and rotundity of speech among these matrons, as most of them seemed to be, that would startle us at the present day, whether in respect to its purport or its volume of tone." (Chapter 2, p. 58)		1.
2. "It was wonderful, the vast variety of forms into which she threw her intellect, with no continuity, indeed, but darting and dancing. Always in a state of preternatural activity, soon sinking down, as if exhausted by so rapid and feverish a tide of life, and succeeded by other shapes of similar wild energy." (Chapter 6, p. 97)		2.
3. "Misshapen from my birth-hour, how could I delude myself with the idea that intellectual gifts might veil physical deformity in a young girl's fantasy!" (Chapter 4, p. 78)		3.
4.		4. "They opened the door and went out. It was very cold. The snow had crusted hard. The road ran up the hill into the pine trees." ("Cross Country Snow," p. 188)
5.		5. "He liked to look at them, though. There were so many good-looking girls. Most of them had their hair cut short." ("Soldier's Home," p. 147)
6.		6. "In the fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it anymore. ("In Another Country," p. 267)
7.		7. "Gee, I could listen to my old man talk by the hour, especially when he'd had a couple or so of drinks." ("My Old Man," p. 202)

(Excerpts from Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Scarlet Letter*. NY: Signet, 1980; and from Ernest Hemingway. *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. NY: Scribners, 1939.)