

# MURRAY HAUNTED TALES CONTEST

## WAKING YOUR WORDS FROM THE DEAD

Ever read something so boring it just makes you want to die? Maybe the words are cursed with deadly dullness. Here are some exercises to help wake your words from the dead.

**Sinister Synonyms.** A thesaurus is a resource that lists words that are related to each other. As you're writing your story (or after each draft), look up some words in a thesaurus. See if you can exchange any words that work harder to tell your story.

Here are some examples. Can you think of more?

Starting Word	Synonyms
Scary	Hair-raising, Petrifying, Blood-curdling, Chilling, Alarming, Eerie, Sinister
Dark	Pitch black, Inky, Dim, Gloomy, Shadowy, Overcast
Horrible	Ghastly, Hideous, Grisly, Monstrous, Wretched
Old	Aged, Grizzled, Ancient, Ramshackle, Crumbling
Pale	Bloodless, Ashen, Ghastly, Corpse-like, Ghostly

**Do Away with Duplicates.** Try playing a game with friends or family.

Have everyone write as many synonyms as they can for a certain word. As each person reads them out loud, cross off the words that are repeated—only use the words that are left! You might discover some vocabulary you've never thought about before!

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**Sensory Words.** As you're describing something, write about how it looks, feels, smells, tastes, or sounds. For example, a black cat drinking milk is not as captivating as an ebony feline guzzling a broken bowl of rancid cream.

**Made-up Words.** There's no better time to be creepily creative than Halloween! Don't be afraid to conjure up imaginative names and make-believe words.