

WHAT IS DESCRIPTIVE WRITING?

Descriptive writing creates a vivid picture in the reader's mind. It uses sensory details, powerful vocabulary and figurative language to describe people, places, objects and atmosphere.

PURPOSE

- To create a clear image
- To evoke feelings
- To engage the senses
- To entertain or persuade

THE 5 SENSES



SIGHT

What can you see?
Colours, shapes, size, movement.



SOUND

What can you hear?
Volume, pitch, rhythm, tone.



SMELL

What can you smell?
Fresh, sweet, rotten, smoky.



TOUCH

What can you feel?
Texture, temperature, pressure.



TASTE

What can you taste?
Sweet, salty, sour, bitter.

EXAMPLE EXTRACT (ANNOTATED)



The sun dipped below the horizon, painting the sky in shades of fiery orange and soft pink.

Waves crashed against the jagged rocks, sending up a spray of salty mist that cooled my face.

The air smelled of seaweed and freedom, while the sand squished warmly beneath my bare feet.

Gulls cried overhead, their harsh calls echoing across the endless blue.

It was a moment I wanted to bottle forever—wild, beautiful and completely unforgettable.

1 SIGHT

Vivid colour and imagery.

2 SOUND

Describes the noise.

3 SMELL

Evokes sense of smell.

4 TOUCH

Creates physical sensation.

5 SOUND

Uses sound again for atmosphere.

6 FINAL THOUGHT

Leaves a strong impression.

POWERFUL WORDS



Adjectives

majestic, crumbling, glittering, eerie



Adverbs

gently, furiously, silently, endlessly



Verbs

soared, whispered, crashed, shimmered



Figurative Language

similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING CHECKLIST

- I have described using at least 3 of the 5 senses.
- I have used strong, specific adjectives.
- I have used varied verbs and adverbs.
- I have included figurative language.
- I have shown, not just told.
- I have organised my description clearly.
- I have used a range of sentence types.
- I have checked my spelling and punctuation.

★ If a reader can SEE it, HEAR it or FEEL it, you've described it well!

USEFUL PHRASES



SIGHT

- In the distance, I could see ...
- The sky was a canvas of ...
- Shadows danced across ...



SOUND

- The only sound was ...
- A loud crash echoed ...
- Whispers of the wind ...



SMELL

- The air was filled with ...
- There was a hint of ...
- The scent of ... lingered.



TOUCH

- The rough texture of ...
- It felt ... against my skin.
- The heat of ...



TASTE

- A burst of ... on my tongue.
- It tasted ..., like ...
- The aftertaste was ...

STRONG vs WEAK DESCRIPTIONS

WEAK

- The beach was nice.
- The house was old.
- The forest was dark and scary.
- The food was delicious.
- The wind was strong.

- Too general
- Tells, not shows
- Boring for the reader

STRONG

- The golden beach stretched for miles, sparkling under the sun.
- The crumbling house creaked with every gust of wind.
- The forest loomed dark and silent, every shadow hiding a secret.
- The creamy dessert melted on my tongue, rich with chocolate and sweetness.
- The wind howled through the trees, slamming the branches together.

- Specific and vivid
- Engaging and memorable
- Uses the senses

SENTENCE VARIETY



Short: It was cold.



Compound: The sun set, and the sky turned purple.



Complex: Although it was raining, we continued our journey.



Triplet: Silent, still and surreal.



Emotive: My heart raced with excitement.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Using boring or overused words (e.g. good, nice, big).
- Listing details without creating an image.
- Saying "it was" too often.
- Forgetting the senses.
- Not checking punctuation.



CHALLENGE: IMPROVE IT!

Rewrite the weak description below to make it vivid and engaging using the 5 senses.

Weak: The market was busy and noisy.

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-
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TOP TIP

SHOW, DON'T TELL.

Don't just say how something is—show it with details that appeal to the senses.

TELL: It was cold.

SHOW: The icy wind bit my cheeks, turning them red as I pulled my jacket tighter.



GOOD DESCRIPTIVE WRITING BRINGS YOUR READER INTO THE PICTURE.

Use your senses. Choose powerful words. Create an experience.

