

Descriptive Writing

*Friendship House, Huntly
with Valentine Venimore*

- 1 Descriptive writing is a versatile writing style that can be used to bring a scene to life, to express a mood, to paint a vivid picture of an object or person, and to create a powerful emotional response in the reader. It is an effective way to engage readers, as it uses sensory details to create a vivid image in their minds. For example, a description of a summer day could include the sound of birds singing, the warmth of the sun on the skin, and the smell of freshly cut grass. By using evocative language, descriptive writing can evoke strong emotions in the reader, bringing a seemingly mundane scene to life.
- 2 Descriptive writing examples can be found in a variety of genres, including novels, short stories, and even poetry. In fiction, descriptive writing is used to create vivid depictions of characters, settings, and plot points. For example, a novel may use descriptive writing to create a vivid portrait of a character, such as their physical appearance and style of dress, as well as their mannerisms, speech patterns, and thought processes.
- 3 Descriptive writing can also be used to create powerful emotional responses in readers. By using vivid descriptions and imagery, descriptive writing can evoke a range of emotions, from fear to joy to sadness. For example, in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven," the narrator's fear and despair are evoked through vivid descriptions of the raven's midnight visits and its ominous words.
- 4 Descriptive writing is a powerful tool that can be used to engage readers and evoke powerful emotions. By using vivid descriptions and imagery, descriptive writing can bring a scene to life, express a mood, or create a powerful emotional response in the reader. From novels to poetry, descriptive writing examples can be found in a variety of genres.
- 5 Descriptive writing is a type of writing that gives life to a story, scene, character and more. It allows the reader to visualize what is happening by providing vivid details. This type of writing is often seen in books, poems, and even in movies. It paints a picture in the reader's mind and helps them to connect to the story in a more meaningful way.
- 6 Descriptive writing uses sensory details to capture the reader's attention and draw them into the story. It involves the use of words that appeal to the five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. For example, a descriptive writing example might include phrases like "the sweet smell of baking cookies filled the kitchen" or "the icy cold wind stung my face." These descriptions bring the story to life and evoke a sense of emotion in the reader.
- 7 In addition to sensory details, descriptive writing also uses figurative language to create an emotional connection. For instance, phrases like "the sun shone like a beacon of hope" or "the dark clouds loomed ominously" can help to set the mood of the scene. This type of language brings the story to life and helps the reader to better understand the emotion of the characters.
- 8 Descriptive writing is a powerful tool that can help to bring stories to life. It can add depth and emotion to a scene, allowing the reader to connect with the characters in a more meaningful way. By using sensory details and figurative language, descriptive writing examples can help to create an emotional impact that can stay with the reader long after they have finished the story.

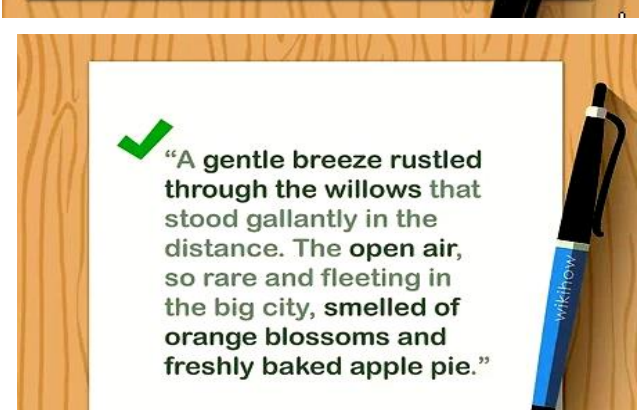
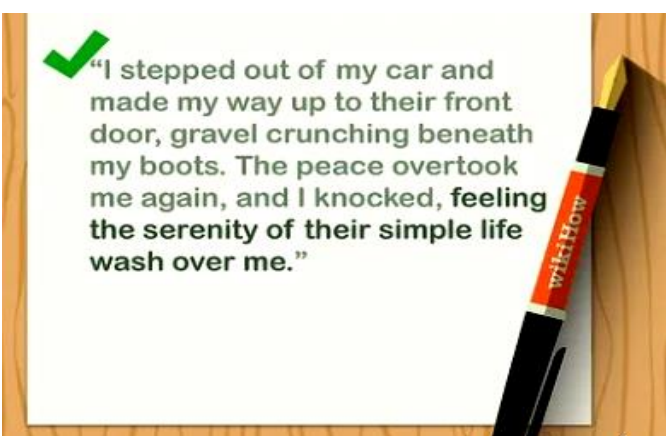
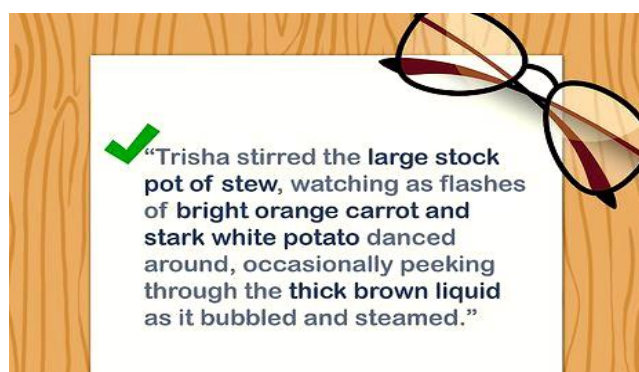
Descriptive Writing Techniques

Make use of literary devices, such as metaphors, similes, sensory writing, hyperbole, personification, and onomatopoeia. These descriptive writing techniques are specific ways to use language to help a reader imagine something in great detail.

Make description active: Consider the following description of a room: There was a bookshelf in the corner. A desk sat under the window. The walls were beige, and the floor was tiled. That's boring. Try something like this: A massive oak desk sat below a large picture window and beside a shelf overflowing with books. Hardcover, paperbacks, and binders were piled on the dingy tiled floor in messy stacks. In the second example, words like overflowing and piled are active.

Weave description through the narrative: Sometimes a character enters a room and looks around, so the narrative needs to pause to describe what the character sees. Other times, description can be threaded through the narrative. For example, instead of pausing to describe a character, engage that character in dialogue with another character. Use the characters' thoughts and the dialogue tags to reveal description: He stared at her flowing, auburn curls, which reminded him of his mother's hair. "Where were you?" he asked, shifting his green eyes across the restaurant to where a customer was hassling one of the servers.

EXAMPLES



1

Descriptive Essay Example

A Swamp for All Seasons: The Appeal of an Ogre's Home

TITLE

INTRO

Home is where the heart is, but not everyone has the same heart. For some, a home is four walls, some furniture, and a fireplace. For others, home is a cactus, sand dunes, and a nearby oasis. Comfort is subjective, and the only comfort I have known is from the mud and gunk of my humble swamp.

A swamp, a bog, a quagmire, whatever you might call it, my swamp is the only place I would ever consider home. The climate ranges with the season, and the mudpits offer a surprising level of insulation from the weather, never too hot or too cold. Nights are filled with the sounds of crickets, toads, and the wayward donkey, the soft sounds of the angry village in the distance.

BODY

To many, the swamp might seem like a scary and unwelcoming space, but for me, that is part of its charm. It is a place of warmth and love if you look close enough, and much like an onion, it is a place of layers. The humble bog may be the most ideal environment to live, and yet part of its appeal is that it is not for everyone. That is the ideal home; a place that perfectly fits you.

CONCLUSION

2

"The library is my haven. Rows upon rows of brightly colored books are crammed onto the towering bookcases, worlds of words waiting to be raided. The musty pages waft veils of dust into the air that tickle my nose and hint at long forgotten adventures to be unearthed. The dead silence makes it the perfect place to immerse yourself into the world of swash-buckling pirate that can almost taste the salt in the air drying your mouth and feel the jostling waves crashing against the hull of the ship. The only thing that dares break the silence is the squeaky wheel of the librarian's trolley. It's the only thing that doesn't wilt under her harsh glare."

Writing to Describe - Example

Strolling along the promenade was always a special thrill. I loved the familiar sights - the white houses and hotels along the front, the shelters occupied by little old ladies, the beach and the ravenous pleading gulls that circled above it. My mother would stand by the seafront railings and inhale great lungs full of sea air and cry "Oh, smell that sea air - the sea never smells as good anywhere else as it does here."

The sticks of rock that we all sucked, were like barbers' poles made of sugar...

Descriptive Writing Example

Belle Lake is tucked away in a quiet corner of the county. After following the tree-lined dirt roads, the woods clear, and there it is. Water as blue and far-reaching as the wide sky that touches it. A light breeze blows every now and again, gently rustling the cattails. When you dip your hand into the water, it's cold at first, but the sun's rays hit your face and shoulders and keep you warm. You toss a pebble into the calm water and watch the circles move slowly outward. A dragonfly dances on the water's surface.

You settle in on the shore, toes digging into the rough sand. As day fades to evening, the setting sun burns fiercely red and orange in the sky over the water. The soft, low croaks of a nearby frog are the only sound you hear as the first stars begin to twinkle in the darkness.



A giant of a man was standing in the doorway. His face was almost completely hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard, but you could make out his eyes, glinting like black beetles under all his hair.

Hagrid held out an enormous hand and shook Harry's whole arm.

His eyes fell on the fireplace. He bent down; they couldn't see what he was doing but when he drew back a second later, there was a roaring fire there. It filled the whole damp hut with flickering light and Harry felt the warmth wash over him as though he'd sunk into a hot bath.

6



A Gift From the Sea

by Anne Morrow Lindberg (paraphrased)

This is a snail shell, round, full and glossy as a horse chestnut. Comfortable and compact, it sits curled in the hollow of my hand. Milky and opaque, it has the pinkish bloom of the sky on a summer evening, ripening to the rain. On its smooth symmetrical face is penciled with precision a smooth spiral, winding inward to the pinpoint center of the shell. Now it is as the moon, solitary in the sky, Now it is an island set in an ever widening circle of waves. It is alone, self-contained, and serene.

7

From a boat it appeared to be an impenetrable wall of green, stretching as far as the eye could see in any direction and so wildly curved that the bays could hide any number of the pirates. The coastline was brilliant in the morning sun with its chalky white ribbon of cliffs, jagged and folded, shrinking into the distance. Below the cliffs were beaches of rocks made rough by the barnacles upon them. Each beach was divided by wooden groynes that stretched out to greet the coming waves, some like gap-toothed children, were missing planks. In the distance a spit stretched out into the sea and upon the end was a lighthouse, lonely and abandoned. The foamy crests of the crashing waves were the only sound other than the cry of the gulls.

8

Mary's hands curled into fists as she saw the smoking ruin that had once been her beautiful forest. She hardly felt the sharp points of her fingernails digging into her palms. Everything that she had worked so hard to maintain, was gone. It wasn't only the acrid smoke that made her eyes water

Challenge: Use one (or some) of these local images as a source for a descriptive paragraph.

