

Writing

Things you need to know about 'voice' in writing. Voice is like your fingerprint, it is unique to you. People may know you are coming before they see you because they know your voice. This is also true of your writing, or at least it should be! It's important to be aware of how others write (because you can learn from them) but even more importantly, you need to pay attention to your inner voice and write what you hear coming from you and your mind! Learn to do a few things well and you'll do many things well with them.



" You don't need to know everything about writing. You just need to know the things that matter most." Steve Peha (2016) Part of the Be a Better Writer Series.

Description



When writing a descriptive text, you will be writing about a person, place or thing in such a way that a picture is formed in the reader's mind. Using your five senses, (or more) thoughts, imagination, inner voice, creativity, you can begin to pay close attention to details that will direct your writing. Teaching yourself to write descriptively will be a powerful tool to captivate your readers and get them to pay attention to your ideas and thoughts.

Descriptive text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a person, place, or thing using our senses.

What does it smell like, what does it feel like, what does it look like, what can you hear it say or do? If you touch it, what do you feel?

Don't just TELL your reader, but SHOW them with words.

1. Become an observer

Tasks

Before you start writing you must make sense of what is around you. You need to be able to NOTICE what is around you and put what you see into words.

Begin observing what is around you now. Make a list of the things you see.

Go to the 'example' page of your framework to find ideas on how this looks and some activities to work with.



Things to do

- Begin observing what is around you and put what you see into words.
- Look at the examples in the 'Example' section if you need more inspiration.
- Write about what you saw



Things to try

- List things you see
- List things you smell
- List things you hear
- List things you feel
- List things you taste

When you have done this add a descriptive line to each of the things you listed, like the example 'Noun followed by a descriptive line'.

Imagine what each thing is doing.

Imagine if it were alive or a real-life person. - this is called personification

Example:

Picture books - tickling the mind

Posters - blaring, craving attention

Cushions - inviting, calling

Computers - paling eyes, grabbing time

NV



Noun followed by a descriptive line

A pen abandoned, snuggled against scissors

Stacked paper, hiding secrets

Twisted cables, a confused mess sending messages

An empty glass, begging to be filled

Dead TV screen, reflecting tired eyes

Stapler, hungry to crunch paper

Open book, letters dancing off the pages, telling their story

Scattered pencils, resting from greasy hands

NV

2. Literary devices - to SHOW not TELL

Tasks



- **Paint** a picture for your reader by using words

Showing and not telling means that you paint a picture for your reader. When we paint a picture of a scene, for example, we use paint to help relate the image to the viewer. In writing a description we don't use paint but instead, we use words to describe a person, place or thing. A better way to understand it is to relate it to a real-life moment, like a time where you might have seen a tree next to a river.

- **Take** notes on the sensory type feelings you had and use that in your description.

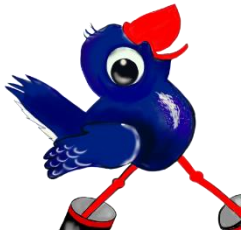
For example, instead of saying, “There were trees near the lake” you could say, “The lake danced light through the trees” or “The trees found a way to lure the reflective light of the lake into its swaying arms.” Metaphors and other figurative languages that you can find in poems are a good way of expanding your understanding of Literary devices Google 'What are literary devices'.

- **Find** examples in stories, poems, and online.

These activities are designed to prepare you for your descriptive writing tasks. Think of it as a warmup.

Ask yourself and discuss with a buddy:

Write your thoughts on paper or on YPI.



- What do I hear?
- What do I see?
- What can I taste?
- What can I smell?
- What can I sense?
- What can I feel?

Things to do

- Paint a picture for your reader using words. This is a good warm-up.
- Look at the expanded framework for ideas
- Write a paragraph bringing together your warm-up ideas.



3.. Using your senses



Tasks

Draw ten columns on a piece of paper with each column labelled with one of the following five senses and emotions. For example, sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, but it can also include feelings, intuitions, thoughts, and emotions the person, place or thing may be experiencing in the setting.

Use your senses and emotions, write down sensations and feelings you imagined, felt, experienced, etc. under each heading. Experiment with literary devices such as metaphors, similes, alliteration, onomatopoeia, personifications, and more.

Look in the 'example' area to find ways you can improve your own work.



Things to do

- **Write** an opening statement. An opening statement is an idea that will direct everything you write. Look at the expanded framework to get a better understanding if you need it.
- **Write** a good descriptive paragraph which uses the skills you have learned so far and tells the reader more about your opening statement.

4. Create an opening statement



Tasks

- **Write an opening statement**

An opening statement is an idea that will direct everything you write. It gives the reader a very brief introduction to the subject or purpose of your descriptive writing. For example, "My bedroom is a dump" (This is your opening statement).

Then you will use a range of literary devices to SHOW the reader your bedroom as a dump.

A good piece of descriptive writing provides details such as sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, but it can also include feelings, intuitions, thoughts, and emotions the person, place or thing may be experiencing in the setting.

Use literary tools like descriptive adjectives, similes, metaphors, and personification.

- **Smells** The scent of the newly opened rose danced sweetly upon the wind.
- **Sounds** When she laughed, a wild array of exotic birds burst from within her; it was pretty to look at but there was a lot of squawking involved.
- **Sights** The beach curved into a smile above a flowing blue beard that sometimes grew too high and was then shaved away.
- **Taste** The sugar plum filled my mouth with memories of Christmas mornings long past.
- **Touch** The ferns brushed like a whisper against my skin.



5. Writing your first paragraph

Tasks

- Write your first paragraph by elaborating on your opening statement. Use your skills of observation you learned in previous frameworks.

Structure your writing in a way that makes sense for your topic. If you are writing about an event, give your paragraphs a chronological order. If you are writing about a place or thing, try ordering your paragraphs

so that they go from general to specific. For example,

- **First paragraph:** The things you notice when you look at something for the first time (basic details).
- **Second paragraph:** The sights, sounds, smells, tastes, feelings etc. that you experience when you were there.
- **Third paragraph:** A detailed description of the most important part of your experience.



Create a topic sentence at the beginning of each body paragraph. This sentence lets your reader know what the paragraph is going to be about. It should be clear and concise. Each topic sentence should relate back to the opening statement.

Example:

Opening statement: My backyard is like a jungle I love to explore.

Topic Sentence: When I climb a tree in my backyard, I feel like I am climbing a tall jungle tree.



Write your body paragraphs based on your topic sentences. Body paragraphs are where you get to prove that your opening statement is true. Always keep in mind that everything you write in your body paragraph should relate to your topic sentence.

Example: The trees in my backyard are filled with the music of birds. Emeralds leaves sway in the sun-filled breeze, etc.



Things to do

- Write your first paragraph by elaborating on your opening statement from 'framework 3'.
- Structure your writing that makes sense for your topic.
- Create a topic sentence at the beginning of each body paragraph
- Write your body paragraphs based on your topic sentence (opening statement).
- Look, listen, or watch the expanded framework.

6. Write your conclusion.



Tasks

- **Write a conclusion**

Your conclusion should summarise everything you have written in your descriptive piece of writing. It should also restate your opening statement. It is important to have a well-written conclusion because it is the last thing the reader will read and will stay in his or her mind the longest.

- **Proofread and edit**

Take a break from working after you have

finished writing.

- **Read** your Descriptive work with the reader in mind. Ask yourself: Does this make sense and give my reader a clear picture of the person, place or thing?

- **Read your work out loud.**

By reading out loud, when you read out loud you can pick up things that don't make sense, or clearly is not giving the reader the information, you thought you had. Are there any awkward or confusing aspects to your writing that need fixing?



- **Get someone else to read your work out loud,**

Listen for errors, cloudy descriptions etc.

- **Does it make sense** to them?

- Do they think you should add or delete anything?

- **Proofread** your work for any grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

- **Delete clichés.** (Google clichés)



Things to do

- **Write** a conclusion
- **Proofread** and edit
- **Read** your work out loud
- **Get someone else** to read your work
- **Check** it all makes sense
- **Delete Cliche's**

Reflective and Marking Rubric

Audience and Purpose

Beginner

The purpose of my description is not clear. I have not chosen content or language to interest my audience.

Novice

I have written a description, although the purpose is not always clear. I am sometimes selecting content and language that could interest my audience.

Advanced

I am developing the ability to write a story with a clear purpose. I am beginning to meaningfully select content and language that will interest my audience.

Expert

I have confidently written a story with a clear purpose. I have carefully and meaningfully selected content and language that will interest my audience.

Descriptive Language

Beginner

I have hardly used any descriptive language in my writing. This means that my writing does not have emotion or tone.

Novice

I have tried to use descriptive language, but this may not be appropriate for the topic I am writing about. It might not show emotion or set the tone.

Advanced

I am beginning to use some meaningful descriptive language to show emotion and set the tone.

Expert

I have confidently used a lot of meaningful descriptive language that is appropriate to the topic and the purpose, to show emotion and set the tone.

The Five Senses

Beginner

I have identified one or none of the five senses in my writing

Novice

I have used some of the five senses in my writing without much detail.

Advanced

I have used most of the five senses in my writing to paint a picture of a scenario.

Expert

I have successfully used all five senses in my writing to paint a complete picture of a scenario.

Punctuation

Beginner

I have not used punctuation appropriately, effectively or accurately throughout my writing.

Novice

I have only used one or two different kinds of punctuation in my writing. The punctuation in my writing is sometimes used accurately.

Advanced

I am beginning to use a wider range of punctuation appropriately, effectively, and accurately.

Expert

I have confidently used a wide range of punctuation appropriately, effectively, and accurately throughout my writing.

Sentences

Beginner

I have not experimented with a variety of sentence structures, beginnings, and lengths.

Novice

I have used one or two different sentence structures, beginnings, and lengths.

Advanced

I am beginning to use different sentence structures, beginnings, and lengths for effect.

Expert

I have confidently used a variety of sentence structures, beginnings, and lengths accurately and for effect.

Spelling

Beginner

I have a lot of spelling mistakes in my writing, which mean that my writing is not clear and does not make sense.

Novice

I have a developing knowledge of spelling patterns; however, I do not have many strategies to monitor and self-correct my spelling. I have a lot of spelling mistakes, but my writing still makes sense.

Advanced

I am developing a wide range of strategies; and sometimes apply my knowledge of spelling patterns, to monitor and self-correct my spelling. I have some spelling mistakes, but my writing still makes sense.

Expert

I can confidently use a wide range of strategies; and apply my knowledge of spelling patterns, to monitor and self-correct my spelling. Most of my writing is spelt correctly

Structure

Beginner

I have not organised my ideas into paragraphs. My ideas are not sequenced.

Novice

I have organised my ideas into paragraphs, but they may not be sequential. This means my writing is not always easy to follow.

Advanced

I am developing skills and strategies to organise and sequence my ideas into paragraphs. My writing is easy to follow.

Expert

I have confidently organised and sequenced my ideas into paragraphs for effect. This makes my writing easy to follow.

Key Competencies - Managing Self

Beginner

I had a low level of motivation and did not stay authentic to my original purpose. I was not flexible enough to follow the lead of others, act independently, or, when appropriate, lead. This all had an impact on how I managed by goals, met challenges, and self-assessed my work.

Novice

I had a low level of motivation but remained authentic to my original purpose. I was not flexible enough to follow the lead of others, act independently, or, when appropriate, lead. This all had an impact on how I managed by goals, met challenges, and self-assessed my work.

Advanced

I had a good level of motivation and stayed authentic to my original purpose and was flexible enough to follow the lead of others, act independently, or, when appropriate, lead. This all had an impact on how I managed by goals, met challenges, and self-assessed my work.

Expert

I had a high level of motivation and stayed authentic to my original purpose but was flexible enough to follow the lead of others, act independently, or, when appropriate, lead. This all had an impact on how I managed by goals, met challenges, and self-assessed my work.

Key Competencies - Participating and Contributing

Beginner

I don't feel like I belong within a learning community. I do not know when to use others to help me to make better connections so that I can improve my learning.

Novice

I am beginning to feel like I belong to a learning community. I don't always know how to ask for help but I am getting better at it. When I do it really helps improve my work.

Advanced

I feel like I am getting closer to my learning community and gaining a lot of confidence to share my ideas. When I do this, I notice my work improves.

Expert

I have a strong sense of belonging to a learning community and love sharing ideas which improve my work a lot. I know when to contribute and how to participate in conversations and actions within my learning community.

Key Competencies - Relating to others

Beginner

I haven't interacted with other people because I like to work on my own as a way of avoiding having my ideas challenged. I have a growing awareness of how my words and actions affect others so tend to keep my position, thoughts, feelings or intuitions private.

Novice

I have interacted with a small range of people with a growing attitude of respect, but I sometimes lack a willingness to listen to others when their opinions differ from my own. I have a growing awareness of how my words and actions affect others but often fail to act appropriately without compromising my own position, thoughts, feelings or intuitions.

Advanced

I have interacted with a diverse range of people with a growing attitude of respect, a willingness to listen, and thought about the appropriate ways to deal with the different opinions of others. I have a growing awareness of how my words and actions affect others and have done my best to act appropriately without compromising my own position, thoughts, feelings, or intuitions.

Expert

I have interacted with a diverse range of people with an attitude of respect, a willingness to listen, and thought about the appropriate ways to deal with the different opinions of others. I am aware of how my words and actions affect others and have acted appropriately without compromising my own position, thoughts, feelings, or intuitions.

Key Competencies - Using Language, Symbols and Text

Beginner

I have not applied my knowledge, research, experience, and intuition well enough to express my opinions with confidence. I have little understanding of how words, images, language, and symbols affect people's interpretation of my writing and how this may impact on my readers.

Novice

I have applied my knowledge, research, experience, and intuition to express my opinions with growing confidence. I have some understanding of how words, images, language, and symbols affect people's interpretation of my writing and how this may impact on my readers.

Advanced

I have applied my knowledge, research, experience, and intuition to express my opinions with clarity and strength. I have a better understanding of how words, images, language, and symbols affect people's interpretation of my writing and how this may impact on my readers.

Expert

I have applied my knowledge, research, experience, and intuition to express my opinions with clarity and strength. I am developing my understanding how the words, images, language, and symbols affect people's interpretation of my writing and how this determines the impact for my readers.

Key Competency – Thinking

Beginner

I am not thinking critically, creatively or curiously to make sense of new information, experiences and ideas. I am not aware of the best way that I learn new information. I do not know how to use my thinking skills to develop an understanding, shape my actions or construct knowledge. I am not asking the right questions to build on what I already know and am not challenging myself to think deeper.

Novice

I am beginning to think curiously to make sense of new information, experiences and ideas. I am only starting to realise some of the best ways that I learn new information. This means that I do not always use my thinking skills in an effective way to develop an understanding, shape my actions or construct knowledge. I do not always ask questions to expand my thinking, and I would prefer to work in my comfort zone rather than challenge myself to build on what I already know.

Advanced

I am beginning to think curiously, critically and creatively to make sense of new information, experiences and ideas. I am developing an awareness of the best way that I learn new information. I am starting to use my thinking skills to develop an understanding, shape my actions and construct knowledge. I sometimes ask questions or set myself challenges to build on what I already know.

Expert

I am always thinking curiously, critically and creatively to make sense of new information, experiences and ideas. I am thinking about the best way that I learn new information. I have used my thinking skills to develop an understanding, shape my actions and to construct knowledge. I have asked questions and set challenges to build on what I already know.