

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Here are some suggestions for writing descriptively. First, it's good to have in mind a person, place, or thing that needs to be described. You will probably want to ask yourself certain questions that will reveal the appearance, the background, the history, the behavior, or the distinguishing characteristics of that person, place, or thing. Then, you will want to use your five senses (taste, touch, sound, sight, smell) to fine tune your people, places, and things. Finally, you need to think about perspective: what is the point of view? who is your narrator? would the story/poem/essay be different if it were written from the perspective of the pen instead of the author?

Asking the right questions about:

A person:

If someone were to set you up on a blind date, what kind of questions would you ask?

1. Appearance: Does s/he have a monstrous mole on the tip of his/her nose?
2. Background: Is s/he a foreign refugee?
3. Behavior: Has s/he frozen any human parts in his/her freezer lately?
4. Distinguishing characteristics: Does s/he tend to write poetry into the night

and wake up

grumpy?

A place:

The word "place" has various implications. A place can be Paris, France, or your own bedroom.

Either way, the questions to ask yourself in order to describe that place are pretty much the same

as for a person.

1. Appearance: Are the gutters flooded with muddy water?
2. Background/History: How old is the city?
3. Distinguishing characteristics: Is the city known for its art museums or

giant potato replicas?

A thing:

If the thing you are describing is, for example, a tree, then you would want to ask the same questions

you asked with the other two.

1. Appearance: Does the tree have leaves or needles?

2. Background: Did a small child climb its branches at one time?
3. Behavior: Does it bend low in the wind?
4. Distinguishing characteristics: Is there a particular hole in the tree where a family of squirrels live?

Sensory detail

Think about an orange. How many words can you think of in describing an orange?	C. Smell
	1. Citrus
	2. Fresh
	3. Pungent
A. Sight	D. Taste
1. Orange	1. Tart
2. Round	2. Sweet
3. Ball	3. Juicy
B. Sound	E. Touch
1. Slurp	1. Bumpy
2. Squish	2. Sticky
3. Splat	3. Soft

Perspective

Think of the story of the three pigs. If you wanted to create your own story using this fairytale as a background, you could simply rewrite it from another character's perspective. For example, use:

The wolf's perspective

"I just wanted to be friends with those pigs, but they were much too well-to-do to have anything to do with me..."

A neighbor's perspective

"I was out fertilizing my turnips, when those obnoxious pigs and their rowdy friend, Wolf, came tramping down the road..."

The youngest pig's perspective

"Charlie, my oldest brother, had told me about that no-good wolf, but I wouldn't know till later how right Charlie was..."

Now, armed with descriptive writing skills, you too can paint a beautiful three-dimensional picture simply by knowing what kinds of questions to ask, using sensory detail, and experimenting with perspective!

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