

# **DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPHS**

**THE KEY WORD IS DESCRIBE!**

# THE GOAL

- Descriptive writing ***describes*** a person, place, thing or event for the reader.
- The goal is to make the readers ***feel*** like they are experiencing exactly what you experienced.
- Concentrate on creating an **overall mood** or **atmosphere** and choose images that will contribute to it.
- **HOW?**
  - Sensory details
  - Figurative Language
  - Strong Verbs/Precise Nouns
  - Descriptive Adjectives

# FORMS:

**There are two main forms of descriptive writing:**

## **1. Informative:**

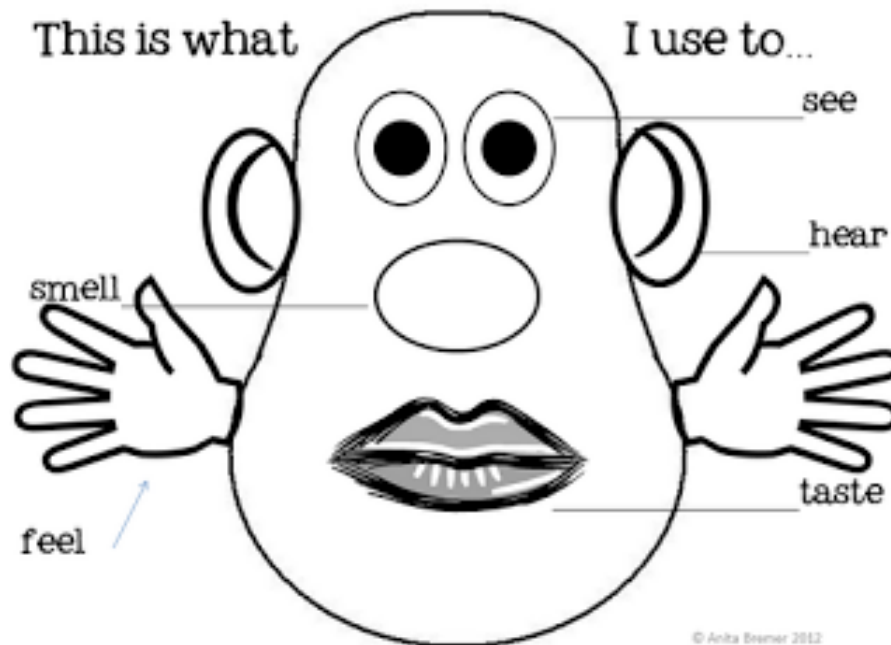
- a) Creates a clear image for the reader, is factual, does not seek an emotional response from the reader.
  - a) E.g. the description of a house for sale

## **2. Imaginative**

- a) Creates images that appeal to reader's emotions
- b) Interested in impression over accuracy
  - a) E.g. the description of the hot girl/guy you met at the Lake last summer

# SENSORY DETAILS

- In descriptive writing we make use of the five senses: sight, sound, taste and touch to engage and affect the reader.
- We make the senses “come alive” through our use of language.



# DESCRIPTIVE ADJECTIVES

Describe nouns in detail by assigning an attribute (quality) to the noun.

Choose vivid adjectives—you want your picture to be HD not SD.

SD—ho hum...	Getting Better...	HD—OMG! so clear and life-like!
Happy	Delighted	Ecstatic
Nice	Friendly	Cordial
Fast	Hurried	Hasty

# **STRONG VERBS/PRECISE NOUNS**

**Why say walk when you can say saunter, swagger or skip?**

**One way of making your writing impacting, memorable and engaging is to use strong verbs and precise nouns**

**Using strong, exact language in place of vague language will help to build a vivid mental picture for your reader.**

SD		HD
Runs	Sprints	Flies
Danced	Grooved	Tangoed
Woman	Actress	Jennifer Lawrence

# FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Using figurative (non-literal) language will enable you to create imaginative comparisons.

Imaginative comparisons work to evoke images in the mind of the reader and create emotional responses.

- **Metaphors:** “Juliet *is* the sun...”
- **Similes:** you are *like* the sun
- **Personification:** The sunlight danced on the water.
- **Hyperbole:** I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.
- **Understatement:** it was alright (WHEN IT WAS THE BEST TIME OF YOUR LIFE!!!!!!)

# MAKING SENSE:

A clear and vivid picture is not possible if your details are not ordered appropriately.

Two options:

1. **spatial**—the order in which you **see** things

- Left to right, front to back, clockwise etc. (THINK about how you would see it, then describe it!)

2. **Chronological**—the order in which something happens/  
you experience something

- First to last or vice versa (which would be reverse chronological)
- E.g. *“when you first arrive at Karen’s Donut Shoppe, the smell of cinnamon sugar fills the air. Next, one cannot help but notice the inviting samples—sweet and sticky—on the front counter. It’s then that the...”*

**★Effective Transitions are necessary to tie your details together! \*handout\***



# **IN SUMMARY:**

## **Good Descriptive Writing:**

- 1. Details are specific, allowing readers to feel or experience what the writer describes through appealing to the five senses.**
- 2. Details are well-organized and are related to the main point.**
- 3. Details work together to create vivid image in the mind of the reader.**