

A DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

A descriptive essay simply describes something or someone by appealing to the reader's senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. Here are the basic steps to writing an effective descriptive essay :

1. Select a subject

Observation is the key to writing a good description. For example, if you are writing about a place, go there and take notes on the sights, sounds, and smells. A descriptive essay paints a picture for the reader, using descriptive devices and the senses. Create a thesis statement that informs the reader who or what you are describing.

Example : "The wooden roller coaster in Coney Island is a work of art."
"My bedroom is an ocean sanctuary."

2. Organize details

The paragraphs in a descriptive essay can be structured spatially (from top to bottom or from near to far) or chronologically (time order) or from general to specific. Descriptive essays can also use other patterns of organization such as narrative or exemplification.

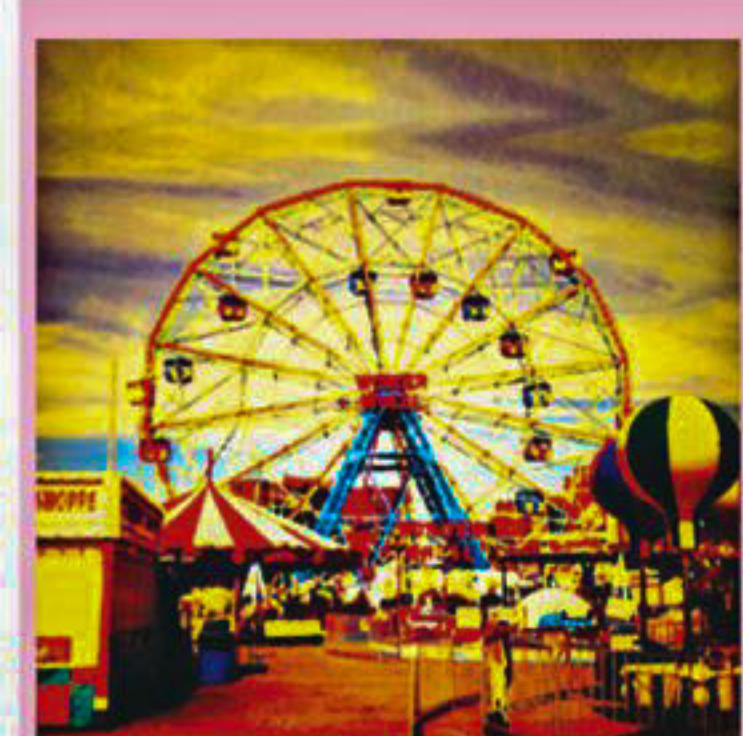
3. Use descriptive words

Do not use vague words or generalities (such as good, nice, bad, or beautiful). Be specific and use sensory, descriptive words (mostly adjectives).

Example : I ate a good dinner.
OR
I devoured a steaming hot, cheese-filled pepperoni pizza for dinner.

4. Provide sensory details :

- Example :**
- Smells :** that are in the air (the aroma of freshly brewed coffee)
 - Sounds :** (traffic, honking horns)
 - Sights :** ("The sun scattered tiny diamonds across dew-covered grass as it peeked out from beyond the horizon.")
 - Touch :** ("The texture of the adobe hut's walls resembled coarse sandpaper.")
 - Taste :** sweet, sour, salty, bitter, tart ("Giant goose bumps formed on my tongue when I accidentally bit into a sliver of lemon.")



Here is an example of a descriptive essay. The words marked in **RED** are descriptive adjectives. Study them carefully and then do the exercise below. The two pictures will help you visualize the scene.

My Favorite Place
Coney Island in My Mind

The whole island is an amusement park with candy stores, taverns, night shows and a magnificent boardwalk. The chatter of children's voices, the happy shrieks of teens, and the smiles of everyone tells one why this place was and will always be America's happy park. The smell of popcorn and hotdog as one walks the streets to the parks reminds us of simple days when our wants and desires were simpler. The people are friendly and in keeping with the amusement business are always ready to make your visit to the island worth remembering. When one strolls around the commercial center, one can do so leisurely without the need to see everything, to ride everything and taste everything in one day, one keeps coming back to Coney Island because it is removed from the hurried, impersonal and rudeness of the city.



B DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Figures of speech are imaginative comparisons between two basically dissimilar things. A figure of speech may enliven a description by making the essay more visual or forceful. Here are some of the more common figures of speech that could prove effective in writing descriptive essays :

SIMILE

Using the words such as "like" or "as" when comparing.
Example : A ride to North Hutchinson Island is like a flight to a Caribbean getaway.

METAPHOR

Implying a comparison between two things that are essentially different.
Example : Stalking their prey, the deputies remained hidden in the bushes and ready to spring on speeding motorists

PERSONIFICATION

Giving human characteristics to inanimate objects.
Example : The truck, covered with mud and love bugs, cried out for a wash.

HYPERBOL

Using a figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect.
Example : I'll die if I don't pass this exam. I can wait for million of years.

ONOMATOPOEIA

Using words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions to which they refer.
Example : "Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is."

Find the answers in next MONDAY issue

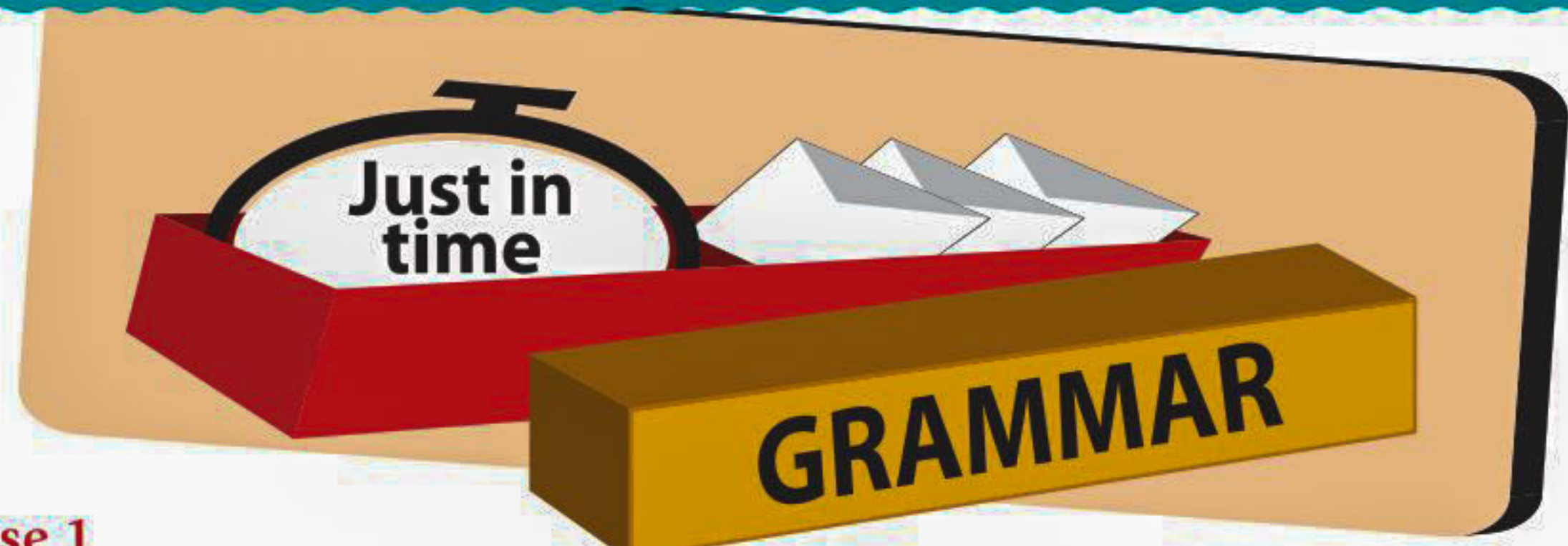


In winter, the place is like a giant ice kingdom, where everything is glistening white and silent. During this time, one can feel the sadness of the city, how it has been suspended in time, and like a bear who sleeps in the winter, it wakes up in the spring. Sadly, not many people visit Coney Island these days. Recently, the magnificent Thunderbolt has fallen from its glory, quite literally. It has lost much of its famous rides and has been stripped of its former grandeur, but nevertheless will always be an icon in America's culture. The more important it is that we visit Coney Island again, by doing so we will help keep it alive and be a living heritage to our children.

Now it's Your Turn

Read the passage and circle the **descriptive details** you find in it :

My brother Michael's bedroom shows his big interest in fantasy and science fiction. Glow-in-the-dark stars are pasted on the ceiling where, at night, they glow in the dark. Other stars can be seen covering the ceiling during the day, giving the appearance of a starry sky. Movie posters line the walls. There is a poster of The Matrix in a shiny frame. Below the posters are two black steel bookcases crowded with old books. Old videos like Raiders of the Lost Ark and Alien are also stacked on the book shelves. Anyone entering my brother's room knows at once that Michael likes to escape to fantastic places.



Exercise 1

Complete the sentences with the **simple past** of the given irregular verbs. There may be more than one possible completion.

- begin. drive. hurt. ring. think. build. eat. keep.
rise write. come . fall. lead. shut.
do. freeze. pay. steal. drink. have. run. take.

- Sue _____ a cup of coffee before class this morning.
- We _____ a delicious dinner at a Mexican restaurant last night.
- When it _____ to rain yesterday afternoon, I _____ all of the windows in the apartment.
- The phone _____ eight times before anybody answered it.
- My brother and his wife _____ to our apartment for dinner last night.
- The architectural firm that I work for designed that building. My brother's construction company _____ it. They took two years to complete it.
- When Alan slipped on the icy sidewalk yesterday, he _____ down and _____ his back. His back is very painful today.
- Alice called the police yesterday because someone _____ her bicycle while she was in the library studying. She's very angry.
- There was a cool breeze last night. I opened the window, but Colette got cold and _____ it.
- Ted _____ his car across Canada last summer.
- Rita _____ faster than anyone else in the foot race.
- None of the other runners was ever in front of Rita during the race. She _____ all of the other runners in the race from start to finish.
- Greg is very cheap. I was surprised when _____ he for my dinner.
- It was really cold yesterday. The temperature was three below zero. In early _____ to death when I walked home!

Exercise 3

Put the verbs in the bracket in the right tense :

began were walking

- It (begin) _____ to rain when Amanda and I (walk) _____ to school this morning.
- While I (wash) dishes last night, I (drop) _____ a plate and (break) it.
- I (see) Ted at the student cafeteria at lunch time yesterday. He (eat) _____ a sandwich and (talk) friends. I (join) them. _____ with some _____ and (hit)
- While I (walk) under an apple tree a few days ago, an apple (fall) me on the head.
- Robert didn't answer the phone when Sara called. He (sing) _____ his favorite song in the shower and (hear, not) the phone ring.
- A : I saw a whale!
B : Really? Great! When?
A : This morning. I (walk) on the beach when I (hear) _____ a sudden "whoosh!" It (be) the spout of a huge gray whale.
- A : There was a power outage in our part of town last night. (your lights, go out) _____ too?
B : Yes, they did. It (be) terrible! I (take) a shower when the lights went out. My wife (find) a flash light and rescued me from the bathroom. We couldn't cook dinner, so we (eat) Sandwiches instead. I (try) _____ to read some reports by candle light, but I couldn't see well enough, so I (go) _____ to bed and (sleep) _____ How about you?
- Yesterday Tom and Janice (go) to the zoo, where they (see) _____ many kinds of animals and (have) a few _____ adventures. While they (walk) _____ by an elephant, it (begin) _____ to squirt water at them, so they run behind a rock and (dry) _____ themselves. Later, while they (pass) the giraffe area, one of the tall, purple-tongued animals (lower) _____ its head toward Tom and (start) _____ to nibble on his green hat. Janice said, "Shoo!" At that point, the giraffe (stretch) its head toward Janice and (try) _____ to eat her ice cream cone. Janice (let, not) _____ the giraffe have the ice because she (stand) _____ right in front of a sign that said, "DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS." She (point) at the sign and (say) to the giraffe, "Can't you read?"

Exercise 2

Complete the sentences with the simple past of any of the given irregular verbs. There may be more than one possible completion.

- break. draw. give. quit. steal. buy. fall. grow.
read. teach. choose. feel. hear. shake. cut. find.
lose. sleep. dig. forget. meet. speak

- A : Why isn't Bill here for the meeting?
He's supposed to give the weekly report.
B : I spoke to him on the phone last night, and he said he'd be here.
- After I gave a large bone to each of my three dogs, they went to separate corners of the backyard and _____ holes to bury their bones.
- After looking at all the chairs, I finally _____ the red ones. It was a difficult decision.
- The players are depressed because they _____ the game last weekend. Next time they'll play better.
- A : How can you take a three-month vacation?
What about your job?
B : I won't be going back to that job ever again.
I _____ yesterday.
- Laurie has circles under her eyes because she _____ only two hours last night. She was studying for her final exams.
- Matt lost his watch. He looked everywhere for it. Finally, he _____ it in his pants that were in the washing machine. He had washed his watch, but it was still ticking.
- Joy was barefoot. She stepped on a piece of broken glass _____ and her foot.
- Danny and I are old friends. We _____ each other in 1985.
- My father _____ me how to make furniture.
- The student with the highest grade point average _____ a speech at the graduation ceremony. She _____ about her hopes for the future of the world.
- I didn't have a garden, so, I _____ tomatoes in a pot on the balcony outside my apartment.
- Paul was in a hurry to get to class this morning. He to comb his hair.
- Last week I _____ an interesting book about the volcanoes in Iceland.
- When Erica and I were introduced to each other, we _____ hands.
- Mike is in jail because he _____ a car.
- When I heard about Sue's problem, I _____ sorry for her.
- The students _____ all pictures of their teacher, but few of the drawings looked like her. She tried not to laugh at the pictures.
- A few minutes ago, I _____ on the radio about a bad plane accident.
- Joe had an accident. He _____ off the roof and _____ his leg.

Exercise 4

Can you put the story in the correct order ?



The sentences given below are taken from a story, but they are jumbled. That means they are not arranged in their proper order. Rearrange them in their logical sequence.

- The young man sold his share of the property and left for another country.
- The father tried to dissuade his son, but he wouldn't listen to his father whom he regarded him as an old man.
- Years went by. The younger son began to get restless because he was unhappy with his lot.
- He led a luxurious life and spent a lot of money on gambling.
- They were living together happily.
- Soon all his money was gone and he became a pauper.
- Once there lived a rich farmer.
- He went to his father and asked for his share of the property.
- So the father gave him a third of his property.
- He had two sons.

ANSWER KEY TO THE LAST EIS PAGE ACTIVITIES (DATED APRIL 13, 2015)

EXERCISE 1
KEY : 1.C, 2.D, 3.C, 4.D, 5.D, 6.B, 7.D, 8.D, 9.C, 10.B
EXERCISE 2
1. This means that he received a very light and easy punishment.
2. This means that we were in very similar situations.
3. This means that Kim is asking the wrong person.
4. This means that the outcome of the game will not be clear until the very end.
5. This means that Janet cannot perform the necessary duties.
6. This means that he wanted to talk about the important issues.
7. This means that the lawyer wanted to waste time.
8. This means that the quarterback was getting tired
9. This means that she is lying or fooling around
10. This means that she would take a chance.

EXERCISE 3 (Summary)
1. Other countries landed in America before England, but England's colonies grew into the United States of America.
2. Sir Walter Raleigh started the first English colony to plunder Spanish treasure ships.
3. The English settlers at Roanoke got into a fight with the natives over a small property dispute. The English burned their village and the natives attacked the English fort.
4. The English adventurers were disappointed with the New World and unfit colonists. The colony was abandoned.
EXERCISE 4 (Simile & Metaphor)
a. his seat like a toaster strudel.
b. like an old battleship.
c. looked like clock parts.
d. like a bad taste on his tongue.
e. were stuck in place like wax statues.
f. as though she were giving him tax advice.
g. like flat soda to the children.
h. kitchen was like a holy place:
i. like a teardrop.
j. handshake felt like warm laundry.
k. hung her head like a dying flower.

l. like dueling with hand grenades.
m. classroom was as quiet as a tongue-tied librarian in a hybrid car.
n. as an ape might appreciate an algebra book.
o. clouds were like ice-cream castles in the sky.
EXERCISE 5
(a) The detective _____ with a wooden face.
(b) life was a fashion show.
(c) boy's room is a disaster area.
(d) ocean of my sleep.
(e) The children _____ roses grown in concrete gardens.
(f) Kisses _____ flowers of love in bloom.
(g) His cotton candy words _____ with an army of children.
(h) eyes were fireflies.
(i) the ocean of love
(k) a sea of nameless faces.
(l) John's answer _____ a Band-Aid, not a solution.
(m) cast on Michael's broken leg was a plaster shackle.
(n) fruit of knowledge.