



How to Best Describe a Place?

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"Easy reading is damn hard writing." - Nathaniel Hawthorne

Ever read a novel, where the author used a descriptive writing technique in such a way that you could actually visualize the place in HD (high-definition)? Descriptive writing is an art and to excel in it, you need a whole lot of imagination and a good vocabulary to support you.

How to be fluent in English language?

Since, it's vacation time, many of our students, who have enrolled for improving English programs, are approach us with the request to learn descriptive writing. Don't we all like to describe our place of holiday at length. Let me tell you a secret, I have written travel blogs for ages, and with each travel escapade I try and improve my descriptive writing. So, what is it that you should learn as part of your spoken English program in order to improve your English writing skills.

What is descriptive writing?

It is a kind of writing that facilitates readers to draw images in their mind or visualize exactly what the writer is describing. It is like making the reader travel to that place and be there in that moment. If you are a novel reader, which you should be as it is integral part of learning English, you would know exactly what I mean.

Have you read Mitch Albom's "The Five People You Meet in Heaven"? It is one of the best examples of descriptive writing. All your five senses are engaged when you read - sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. The detailing, the use of words, the objects, places and people, everything is just described to the T.

Example of descriptive writing

You recently holidayed at a place and want to describe it to your friends or perhaps write a blog. How do you go about it? Learn English vocabulary by reading books and newspapers.

One of the famous descriptive writers is Charles Dickens.

Let us look at how best he describes a situation/place/event.

"I came into the valley, as the evening sun was shining on the remote heights of snow, that closed it in, like eternal clouds. The bases of the mountains forming the gorge in which the little village lay, were richly green; and high above this gentler vegetation, grew forests of dark fir, cleaving the wintry snow-drift, wedge-like, and stemming the avalanche. Above these, were range upon range of craggy steeps, grey rock, bright ice, and smooth verdure-specks of pasture, all gradually blending with the crowning snow. Dotted here and there on the mountain's-side, each tiny dot a home, were lonely wooden cottages, so dwarfed by the towering heights that they appeared too small for toys. So did even the clustered village in the valley, with its wooden bridge across the stream, where the stream tumbled over broken rocks, and roared away among the trees. In the quiet air, there was a sound of distant singing—shepherd voices; but, as one bright evening cloud floated midway along the mountain's-side, I could almost have believed it came from there, and was not earthly music. All at once, in this serenity, great Nature spoke to me; and soothed me to lay down my weary head upon the grass ..."— David Copperfield

Rules for descriptive writing

- Pay attention to details
- Expand your vocabulary
- Use words that can help create a mental picture. Ex: cloudless sky.
- Describe the scene such that it appears real. Ex: A bustling city.

The whole scene came to life in front of you. Didn't it? That is the specialty of Charles Dickens' writing style, through his words he can narrate the feel of the place. We shall look at more tips and examples to help you become a pro at descriptive writing. Stay tuned and till then practice describing a place you just visited! Hope these pointers will help you!

Your [how to improve English](#) exercise for today?

"Describe the scene in this image."



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- By Shailja Varma

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