

# DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

One of the easiest of the four domains in writing is *descriptive*, because it deals with the concrete. It is within this domain that students try to present word pictures. The writer draws on all the senses to capture a visual image and transform it into the written word. Important skills for writing in the descriptive domain include sharpening the power of perception and the ability to choose precise words. The following are suggested activities for writing in the descriptive domain.

## K - 1st Grades

At the K-1 level descriptive writing is encouraged through conversation. For example, when your child is sharing an experience encourage them to elaborate on the experience by providing more information, such as colors, sizes, shapes or sounds that might be associated with that experience. Focus on the five senses for further elaboration. Developing the habit of using descriptive oral language eventually leads to descriptive written language.

Some writing activities that can be used when developing descriptive writing are:

- Encourage your child to draw a picture (any subject) and then dictate a description of that drawing. Ask them to tell you more by describing the size, shape, color, smells or sounds represented in the drawing.
- Encourage the child to draw a picture of a specific subject such as a pumpkin, flower, or a favorite animal. Ask them to dictate a description of the subject including how it moves or sounds or smells.
- Encourage your young writer to label pictures using his/her temporary spelling. This can be as simple as single word descriptions of the drawing.
- Have your child do a self-portrait. Use descriptive words to tell about him/herself.

## 2nd - 3rd Grades

At this level young writers are ready for independent writing that is increasing in length. They can also be using authors' tools such as comparisons and contrasts, as well as similes and personification.

Some writing activities that can be used to develop descriptive writing are:

- Write sentences describing your favorite dessert.
- Write a paragraph describing yourself in a costume.
- Take a trip to the park, store or other interesting spot and take notes on the smells, sounds and sights you see. When you return home write a paragraph describing what you observed.
- Visit a farm and write only about the smells (sights, sounds, etc.) you experienced. You may need to brainstorm with your family to find words that describe interesting smells (sights, sounds, etc.).

## 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades

The 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade writer succeeds in the descriptive domain through the use of comparisons and contrasts, as well as through the use of similes, metaphors, and personification. They will benefit from the use of a thesaurus to choose vocabulary words that are more precise and vivid.

- Describe a memory using vivid language that transports the reader into the experience by tapping into the reader's five senses (hearing, smell, taste, touch, and sight).

- Describe an experience where the reader is made to share the author’s feelings/emotions (e.g. joy, fear, sadness, etc.) through the use of vivid language.
- Describe a setting (e.g. mountain stream, ocean storm, abandoned castle, etc.) so that the readers can experience it for themselves, through the use of vivid language.

## **Additional Support**

Our adopted textbooks provide varying levels of support for writing. Refer to your specific text for further information.

“Generic” writing packets can be found on our webpage. These contain more information and details for both parent-teachers and students. <http://hcs.hickmanschools.org/writing-packets.html>

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