**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**JSS 1**

**WEEK 5**

**WRITING: Descriptive Composition**

1. **Definition:** The word "descriptive" comes from the word "describe," which means "to tell about how something looks, feels, smells, sounds, or tastes." A **descriptive composition** is a piece of writing that describes something, such as an object, place, person, or event.
2. **Purpose of a Descriptive Composition:** A descriptive composition is meant to show the reader, through the use of **illustrative language**, something that the writer has experienced. Writing teachers often instruct their students: "**Show, don't tell**." This means that writers should strive to create a picture in the minds of their readers rather than simply telling their readers about the setting, the characters, etc. For example, a writer could directly *tell* the reader that it was raining, but it would be more effective to *show* the reader that it was raining by using specific details and descriptive language. Good writers are able to create such effective descriptions that their readers feel like they are experiencing the subject matter firsthand.

* Telling: I got caught in the rain.
* Showing: My wet hair clung to my face, cold water dripped from my sodden clothes, and my feet sloshed and squeaked in my shoes.

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1. **Characteristics of a Descriptive Essay:** Writers "show" by using **imagery**, **figurative language**, and **precise language**.

An image is a representation of something. A photographer can take an image of a woman with a camera, a painter can paint an image of a woman, and a writer can describe an image of a woman. **Imagery** is language that creates an image in readers' minds by addressing the five senses: sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch. Writers can make their readers see, smell, taste, hear, and feel what it is like to go to the beach by using only words. They describe the **sight** of the cloudless blue sky and sparkling turquoise water, the fishy **smell** of the breeze, the salty **taste** of the sea air, the **sound** of seagulls squawking and waves crashing, and the **feel** of hot, gritty sand under one's feet. The sensory details create a vivid image that shows the reader what it is like to experience the beach.

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1. **Descriptive Essay Format:** A descriptive composition should have three parts: beginning (introduction), middle (body), and end (conclusion). The total number of paragraphs may vary.

**Introduction:**

* Get the reader's attention through the use of an **attention getter** or **hook sentence**.
* Identify the subject to be described.
* Include a **thesis statement**, which illustrates the main impression of, or feeling about, the paper's subject based on the details that will be provided in the body paragraphs.

**Body Paragraphs:**

* Begin each paragraph with a **topic sentence**, which states the topic of the paragraph.
* Use **transitions** (next to, another, on top of, below, around) to guide the reader to "see" the subject of the paper.
* Use imagery, figurative language, and precise language to describe the subject.
* End each body paragraph with a **closing sentence**, which concludes the current paragraph and hints at what will be described in the next.

**Conclusion:**

* **Restate the thesis** by reiterating or echoing the main impression of the subject that was given in the introduction.
* Leave the reader with a final thought about the subject.

1. **Sample of Descriptive Composition**

Write a descriptive composition about a relative that you feelparticularly close to.

**A Relative That You Feel Particularly Close To.**

I feel particularly close to my oldest brother, Jonathan. Although Jonathan is only five years older than me, I sometimes feel like he is my more like a father to me, than a brother.

Some people say that we look very much alike. Yet, I know that they are just trying to be polite because I don’t have green eyes like Jonathan has, and neither do I have his height or broad shoulders. He always stands up straight and he walks like he owns the world. Perhaps that is why girls find him so irresistible and phone him all the time.

Jonathan is a soldier in the air force. I can’t wait for him to come home from his base on weekends. He always brings me something small from the canteen. He comes in with laughter and jokes. Although he is popular and very busy with his friends, he always takes the time to ask me about my week, give me advice and sometimes a lecture about doing better in school.

When he goes back to the base the house seems so empty, as if Jonathan takes up a lot of space. The three weeks that he is away seem so long to me.

**HOME WORK**

Write a descriptive composition on “My Place of Interest”. You are expected to write up to 200 words or more.

**Are you a student or a teacher?**