

A description of a place

Autor: Manzanares Serrano, María del Carmen (Licenciada en Filología Inglesa, Profesora de Inglés en Educación Secundaria).
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Abstract

Through this article, aimed at students of English as a foreign language, an interesting guide is offered to carry out a descriptive writing of a place. Anyone who needs directions to develop a descriptive written text, will be able to find the keys to do it successfully. With a simple sequence of steps to follow, the student is given recommendations on the type of vocabulary or grammar to be used, among other useful aspects.

Keywords: description, place

Título: Descripción de un lugar.

Resumen

Por medio de este artículo, dirigido a alumnos del inglés como lengua extranjera, se ofrece una interesante guía para llevar a cabo un escrito descriptivo de un lugar. Todo aquel que necesite indicaciones para desarrollar un texto descriptivo por escrito, podrá encontrar aquí las claves para hacerlo con éxito. Con una sencilla secuencia de pasos a seguir, se da recomendaciones al alumno sobre el tipo de vocabulario o gramática a utilizar, entre otros aspectos de utilidad.

Palabras clave: descripción, lugar.

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Descriptive texts create an impression in the reader's mind. It is important to bare in mind that the writer expresses his or her opinion / impression of a person, place, event as he or she perceives it: the feelings that this person, place or event transmit him or her. Therefore, the content of the text will be subjective, most of the times.

However, you can also find objective descriptions with a clear purpose: offer information to the reader. Through the choice of words, the author helps the reader to create an image in his or her mind about what is being described and makes it seem real.

Sometimes, students may find it difficult to write certain types of texts. Here, they will find an interesting guide to write descriptions.

Following these steps they will be successful when writing a descriptive text.

BRAINSTORM

Write down the information you want to include in your composition (location, tourist attractions, people, public transport, famous places, the weather, food and drink). You don't have to write complete sentences. Answer the following questions: where is it?, what is it used for?, why people go there?, what does it look like?, what can you see, listen to, find, smell, eat...there?, how do you feel there?, do you like it? Why (not)?

PLANIFICATION

Organise the information into paragraphs.

- Paragraph 1: introduce the place and describe its location.
- Paragraph 2: describe the place in general terms and then give details about what the place looks like.
- Paragraph 3: give your opinion about the place or recommend it.

THINK ABOUT LANGUAGE

1. Vocabulary: use varied adjectives and modifiers to avoid using “very” and “good” all the time.

Buildings	Cities/towns	Atmosphere	Size	Appearance	Weather	Food	People
High	Busy	Peaceful	Big	Attractive	Sunny	Bland	Boring
Low	Quiet	Relaxing	Small	Beautiful	Rainy	Boring	Cold
Ancient	Clean	Friendly	Medium-sized	Lovely	Snowy	Tasty	Polite
Modern	Dirty	Crowded	Tiny	Pretty	Hot	Expensive	Lovely
Traditional	Interesting	Lively	Huge	Ugly	Wet	Varied	Helpful
Old	Boring	Exciting	...	...	Fabulous	...	...
Beautiful	Cosmopolitan	Boring	...	...	Lovely	...	...
Impressive	Lovely	Fun	...	...	Mild	...	...
Magnificent	Historic	Colourful	...	...	...	...	...
...
Modifiers							
Not at all, a bit, a little, extremely, quite, rather, particularly, slightly, very...							

It is important to bare in mind that sometimes you want to use more than one adjective to describe someone and his or her appearance.

What happens is someone’s hands are both small and thin? Would you write *small and thin hands*? Or... *thin and small hands*?

What is the correct order of adjectives in the English language? The preferred one is the following:

- Opinion (pretty, gorgeous, ugly...)
- Size (small, big, huge...)
- Shape (long, square, round...)
- Age (new, old, young...)
- Colour (blue, red, pink...)
- Origin (Spanish, French, British...)
- Material (plastic, glass, paper...)
- Purpose (painting, driving, cooking...)

Let’s see some examples:

On the top of that mountain you could see an ugly, large, old tree.

There, I found amazing and tall skyscrapers.

My house is pretty, small and blue painted.

2. Grammar:

- Relative clauses: It is famous for its museums, which have some of the most famous paintings in the country.
- Comparative and superlative form of the adjective: Its beaches are the nicest!

3. Description of location:

- Five minute from where I live
- Close to
- In the town centre
- Opposite / next to / near...

4. Description of the place:

- It has got...
- It looks / seems / appears to be...
- It is a bit / quite / very...

5. Useful expressions such as...

- It is famous for...
- The most interesting thing about it is...
- I would definitely recommend a visit.
- What I like about... is...

6. Linkers of addition:

Also, moreover, in addition, furthermore...

7. Linkers of contrast:

But, although, despite / in spite of, however...

EXAMPLE (SUBJECTIVE DESCRIPTION)

I walk around my town and I stop when I see the church. It is tiny and old with a chipped wall and a very noisy bell. I remember going there every Sunday morning with my grandmother.

As I go pass the church I get to the main square where some old men, who have lived in the town all their lives, are sitting on a bench just looking at nothing. There, eight trees very old too stand as home for many birds. When I was a little girl, I used to spend every summer afternoon looking at them, listening to their warbling.

In the middle of the square, a tiny fountain made of stone serves to refresh oneself when the weather is as warm as every summer is.

Round a corner, you can see my grandparents' house with its big, wooden door and its big, wooden windows.

I stand at the door for three seconds, take a deep breath, and walk into.

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