



# Descriptive Paragraphs

GOAL: To learn how to write a descriptive paragraph

LANGUAGE FOCUS: Adjectives; denotation and connotation;  
prepositions of location

You use description every day. You might describe to a friend how you feel or what you had for lunch. You might tell what a room in your house looks like. You might describe the colors in the paintings in a museum or how the paintings are arranged. In description, you tell someone what something looks or feels like. What descriptions have you used today?

## WHAT IS A DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH?

A descriptive paragraph describes how something or someone looks or feels. It gives an impression of something. If you only wanted to explain to someone what a *samovar* is, for example, you could write a *definition* paragraph because a definition paragraph does not include how the writer feels. However, if you wanted to tell about the feelings you had when you drank a cup of Russian tea that was made in a samovar, you would write a *descriptive* paragraph.

A descriptive paragraph

- describes
- gives impressions, not definitions
- "shows" the reader
- creates a sensory\* image in the reader's mind

\*related to the five senses: hearing, taste, touch, sight, smell

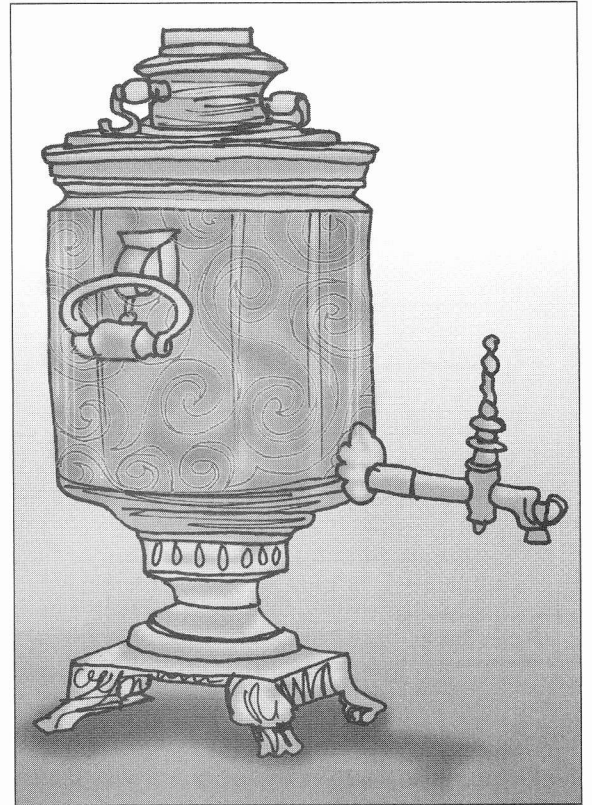
Read this example descriptive paragraph.

### Paragraph 54

#### Samovar Memory

EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH

Every time I have a cup of strong Russian tea, I remember my sweet grandma and her magical samovar. When I was a little girl, my grandmother would make tea for me in this giant, gleaming tea urn. I was fascinated by the samovar and its tasty contents. Its copper sides were decorated with beautiful red and black swirls. Grandma told me that the intricate decorations were painted by skilled craftsmen from her village. I can still remember the smell of the dark tea that my grandma made using the urn. Its leaves always filled her tiny apartment with an exotic aroma, and the rich brew tasted like liquid velvet.



## DESCRIBING WITH THE FIVE SENSES

Good writers use words that appeal to some or all of the five senses—sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell—to help describe a topic. Here is a list of the senses and examples of what they can describe. Add examples of your own under Example 2.

Sense	Example 1	Example 2
Sight	a sunset	_____
Taste	wedding cake	_____
Touch	silk	_____
Hearing	a baby's cry	_____
Smell	perfume	_____

**Activity 1****Using Adjectives to Describe Sensory Information**

In the left column, write your five examples from the list on page 123. In the right column, write three adjectives that describe each object. Try to use different senses. One has been done for you as an example.

Example	Description
Sunset	purple, streaked, majestic
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____



**On the Web**  
Try Unit 8  
Activity 1

**Activity 2****Writing Sentences Using Sensory Adjectives**

Use the five topics from Activity 1. For each one write a descriptive sentence using one or more of the adjectives you wrote. Share your sentences with a classmate.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The best way to learn what descriptive paragraphs look like is to read and study several examples. The three paragraphs that follow are about different topics, but each is an example of a descriptive paragraph.

**Activity 3**
**Studying Example Descriptive Paragraphs**

Read and study these example paragraphs. Answer the questions.

**Paragraph 55**

This first paragraph describes the sights, smells, and sounds of a subway station.

Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.

1. What is a subway? What is its purpose?
2. Where do you usually find a subway?
3. What kinds of people use the subway?
4. Have you ever been on a subway? How did you feel when you rode on it? What did you see, smell, and hear?

Now read the paragraph.


**Underground Events**
**EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH**

The subway is an assault on your senses. You walk down the steep, smelly staircase onto the subway platform. On the far right wall, a broken clock shows that the time is four-thirty. You wonder how long it has been broken. A mother and her crying child are standing to your left. She is trying to clean dried chocolate syrup off the child's face. Farther to the left, two old men are arguing about the most recent tax increase. You hear a little noise and see some paper trash roll by like a soccer ball. The most interesting

**WWW**
**On the Web  
Try Unit 8  
Activity 3**

thing you see while you are waiting for your subway train is a poster. It reads "Come to Jamaica." Deep blue skies, a lone palm tree, and sapphire waters call you to this exotic place, which is so far from where you actually are.

**assault:** attack

**syrup:** thick liquid

**smelly:** smelling bad or unpleasant    **arguing:** verbal fighting

**platform:** raised area

**sapphire (adj.):** dark blue

1. From the information in this paragraph, how do you think the writer feels about the subway?

---

2. Can you think of other places where people wait for something?

---



---

3. Which of the five senses does the writer use to describe this place? Give examples from the paragraph to support your answers.

---



---



---

4. What verb tense is used in this paragraph? Why do you think the writer uses that tense?

---



---

### Paragraph 56

This paragraph describes a memory about a dangerous kind of weather.

*Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

1. What are some dangerous kinds of weather?
2. Have you ever experienced these kinds of weather? How did you feel?
3. When you think of these kinds of weather, what sensory adjectives come to mind?

*Now read the paragraph.*

## Danger from the Sky

## EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH

The long, slender tornado began to descend from the swirling clouds and started the horrible destruction. When the deadly funnel finally touched the ground, pieces of debris were hurled through the air. The tornado ripped the roof from an old house and threw the contents of the home across the neighborhood. The tornado used its power to uproot huge trees and toss cars around as if they were toys. Power lines and traffic lights were also victims of its deadly might. All the while, the tornado's ferocious winds roared like a wild beast. It was hard to believe that something that looked so delicate could cause so much destruction.

**tornado:** a rotating column of air that moves at very high speeds

**swirling:** rotating or spinning

**funnel:** a cone-shaped object

**debris:** broken pieces of something

**hurled:** thrown with great force

**ripped:** torn violently and quickly

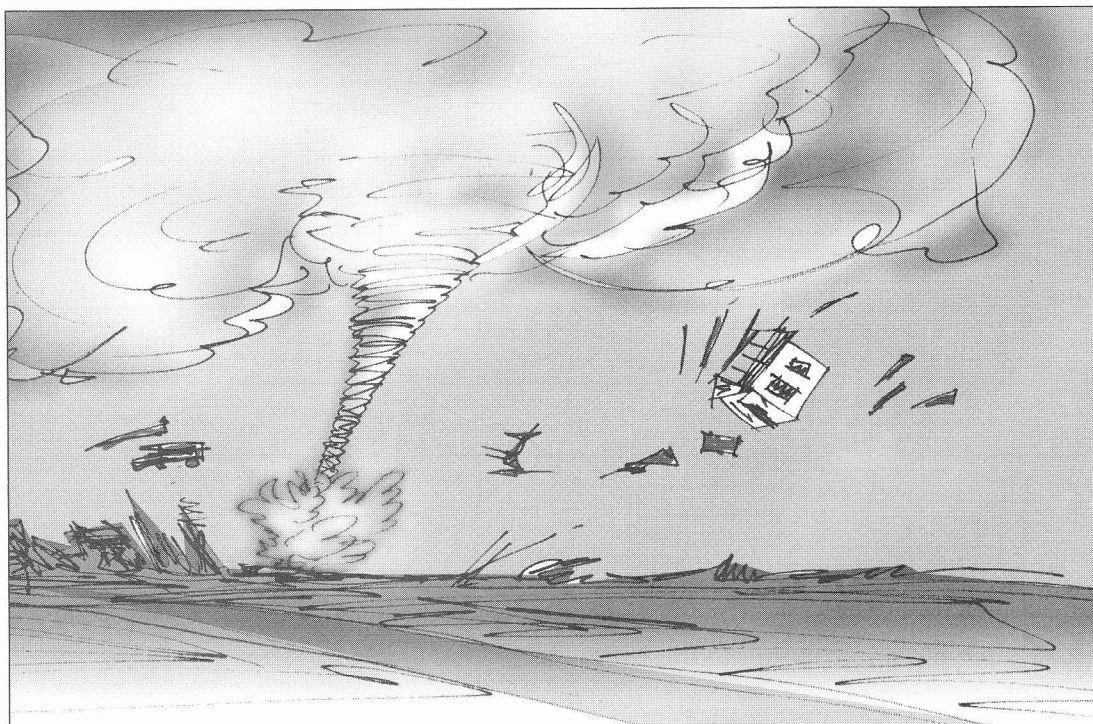
**uproot:** to tear a plant up by the roots

**might:** power

**ferocious:** very wild and savage

**roared:** made a loud, deep, long sound

**delicate:** fragile



1. What does this paragraph describe?

---



---

2. What verb tense does the writer use in this paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

Choose five verbs and change them to *simple present tense*.

---



---

3. Which of the five senses does the writer use to describe this kind of weather? Give some examples to support your answer.

---



---

4. One of the features of a good descriptive paragraph is the use of adjectives that help the reader feel the situation. List any five adjectives in "Danger from the Sky." Then write the feelings they describe.

Adjective	Feelings
a. _____	_____
b. _____	_____
c. _____	_____
d. _____	_____
e. _____	_____

### Paragraph 57

The next paragraph describes what the writer's mother did while she worked in her garden. Notice how often the writer appeals to the senses of sight and touch.

*Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

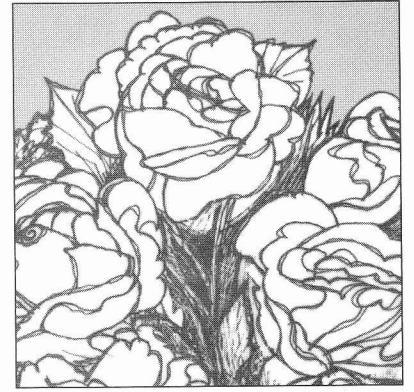
1. What is a garden? What kinds of gardens can you grow?
2. What is a rose? What does the rose symbolize?
3. What other flowers can you name? Do you think they are as popular as the rose?
4. When you think of a garden, especially a flower garden, what sensory adjectives immediately come to mind?

*Now read the paragraph.*

## EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH

## My Mother's Special Garden

My father constantly teased my mother about the amount of time she spent in her beautiful rose garden. He told her that she treated the garden as if it were a human being. However, Mom ignored his teasing and got up very early every morning to take care of her special plants. She would walk among the large green bushes that were covered with huge flowers of every color. While she was walking, she would rip out any weeds that threatened her delicate beauties. She also trimmed the old flowers to make room for their bright replacements. Any unwanted pests were quickly killed. When she was finished, she always returned from the garden with a wonderful smile and an armful of fragrant flowers for us all to enjoy.



**constantly:** always

**teased:** playfully made fun of someone or something

**ignored:** did not pay attention to someone or something

**would (would + verb):** modal indicating a past event that happened many times

**weeds:** useless plants

**threatened:** put in danger, promised to harm

**trimmed:** cut

**pests:** bugs

**fragrant:** pleasant smelling

1. What does this paragraph describe?

---



---

2. Can any sentences be deleted without changing the paragraph's meaning? If yes, which ones, and why? If no, why not?

---



---

3. The writer's mother treated the roses as if they were human beings. Find two example sentences from the paragraph that show how she protected her roses.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## LANGUAGE FOCUS: Adjectives

Adjectives are important in a descriptive paragraph. They are like spices—they add flavor to your writing. Compare these two sentences. The underlined words in the second sentence are adjectives.

The bride walked down the aisle to meet her groom.

The tall, graceful bride in her white dress walked down the long aisle to meet her proud groom.

Which sentence is more descriptive? The second sentence gives you more sensory information—in this case, the sense of sight. The writer gives a more detailed impression in the second sentence.

### What Is an Adjective?

An *adjective* is a part of speech that describes a noun. An adjective usually answers the question: *Which one? What kind? How many? or How much?*

Which one?	<i>this, that, these, those</i>
What kind?	<i>big, old, yellow, crumpled</i>
How many?	<i>some, few, many, two</i>
How much?	<i>enough, bountiful, less, more</i>



### WRITER'S NOTE: Use Adjectives in the Correct Place

It is important to remember that in English, an adjective never follows the noun it modifies or describes. Generally, adjectives come before the nouns they modify. In these examples, the adjectives are underlined and the nouns are in italics.

Angry *customers* have complained about poor *service* in the new *restaurant*.

Blue *skies* ensured that bronzed sun *worshippers* could improve their golden *tans*.

When you proofread your rough draft, circle all of the adjectives and draw a line to the nouns they modify. This will help you notice misplaced adjectives.

*Incorrect:* The samovar's shiny sides are decorated with beautiful swirls red.

*Correct:* The samovar's shiny sides are decorated with beautiful red swirls.

Adjectives sometimes appear after a linking verb. You may want to read the following Grammar Note for a more detailed explanation.

On the Web  
Try Unit 8  
Activity 3

### Grammar Note about Verbs and Adjectives

When an adjective occurs after a linking verb, it is called a *predicate adjective*. The predicate adjective's job is to modify the subject and complete the meaning of the linking verb. The predicate adjective must *immediately* follow the linking verb.

Some common linking verbs are:

be      become    seem    feel    taste  
 sound   appear    remain   keep   look

**Examples:** The teacher is *intelligent* and *kind*.

The soup tastes *good*.

Mr. Cioffi feels *ill*.

The decorations at the dance looked *horrid*!

### Activity 4

### Correcting Adjectives

Read each sentence. Circle all the adjectives. Are the adjectives placed correctly? If the sentence is correct, put a C on the line. If you find an adjective error, draw an arrow from the adjective to its correct location in the sentence. An example has been done for you.

#### Example:

\_\_\_\_\_ John's puppy chewed on his shoes (new.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ A yellow piece of paper is on the floor.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher wrote our assignment on the blackboard old.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ My best friend wrote a letter long.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The five black dogs chased the police car.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Colorado is a place great to go skiing when it is cold.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ My neighbor found a large wallet filled with new one dollar bills.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The gourmet chef created a slightly spicy but delicious meal.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ The clock on the rough stucco wall of the busy railway station was antique.

WWW

On the Web  
 Try Unit 8  
 Activity 4

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Egyptian pyramids are an example excellent of ancient architecture.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The ducks swimming in the tiny pond had feathers deep green.

**Activity 5****Adding Adjectives**

Read each sentence. Write adjectives in the blanks to create a more visual description. You may write more than one adjective in a blank. An example has been done for you.

**Example:**

The tired teacher walked into the noisy room.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ couple watched a \_\_\_\_\_ sunset.
2. My \_\_\_\_\_ dog is a \_\_\_\_\_ pet.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ samovar sat on an \_\_\_\_\_ table.
4. That \_\_\_\_\_ spider scared my \_\_\_\_\_ sister.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ car raced down the \_\_\_\_\_ road.
6. My \_\_\_\_\_ feet ached from walking on the \_\_\_\_\_ sidewalk.
7. Barbara wore a \_\_\_\_\_ dress to the \_\_\_\_\_ party last night.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ cow ate \_\_\_\_\_ grass in the \_\_\_\_\_ field.
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ boy sat on the \_\_\_\_\_ ground and played with some \_\_\_\_\_ toys.
10. Have you seen the \_\_\_\_\_ movie at the \_\_\_\_\_ theater?

**Activity 6****Writing Descriptive Sentences Using Adjectives**

Read each set of nouns. Write an original sentence with at least 2 adjectives in each sentence. Circle the adjectives. The first one has been done for you.

1. vacation / California

People who want the perfect vacation should visit sunny California.

---

2. students / computers
- 

3. dictionaries / libraries
- 

4. trees / forest
- 

5. skyscraper / city
- 



### Building Better Sentences

### Practice 15

Correct and varied sentence structure is essential to the quality of your sentences and paragraphs. For further practice with the sentences and paragraphs in this part of the unit, go to Practice 15 on page 242 in Appendix 5.



### WRITER'S NOTE: Use a Bilingual Dictionary

Most English learners own a bilingual dictionary. A bilingual dictionary is divided into two parts. One part lists words in English with their foreign equivalent(s), and the other part lists a word in a foreign language with its English equivalent(s).

#### **Check the Meanings**

A bilingual dictionary is especially helpful when you are first learning English. However, be careful when you use this kind of dictionary. It is easy to choose the wrong word listed in the entry. Always double-check the meaning of the word you choose by checking its equivalent in the other section of your dictionary. This will help make sure that you choose the appropriate word.

#### **Practice with a Word**

Practice double-checking meanings by looking up the English word *nice* in your bilingual dictionary. How many meanings are listed? Think of two words that mean *nice* in your language. Look them up in the other part of the dictionary. Was there a change in meaning? Were you surprised by what you found?

## USING DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION TO DESCRIBE

Good writers learn to distinguish between denotation, which is the dictionary definition of a word, and the connotation of a word, which is its emotional or associated meaning. This distinction can help your writing convey your specific meaning.



### LANGUAGE FOCUS: Denotation and Connotation

When you write, it is important to use words that have the precise meaning that you want. Sometimes words have more than one meaning. The *denotation* of a word is its actual, or dictionary, meaning. The *connotation* of a word is its emotional meaning, or the meaning beyond the basic definition. Many words can cause an emotional reaction, either good or bad, in the reader. If you choose a word with the incorrect connotation, you may give your reader the wrong idea.

The thrifty old man saved all his money for his retirement.

The stingy old man saved all his money for his retirement.

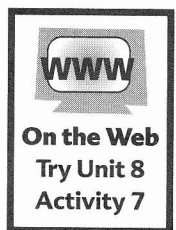
Look up *thrifty* and *stingy* in your dictionary. The denotative meanings for these words are similar—they both describe someone who is careful with money. However, there is a big difference in their connotative meanings. The *thrifty* person is wise and economical with money, but the *stingy* person is greedy and does not want to spend or share money.

Words that leave a good emotional impression have a positive connotation. Words that leave a bad emotional impression have a negative connotation. Not all words have a separate connotative meaning. Always check both meanings of new words.

#### Activity 7

#### Positive and Negative Connotations of Adjectives

Think of adjectives that describe the nouns listed below. In the first blank, write one or more adjectives with a positive connotation. In the second blank, write adjectives with a negative connotation. Remember: The purpose of this activity is to increase your vocabulary, so do not use simple or general words such as “nice” or “bad.” Use your favorite dictionary to find the precise vocabulary that you need to express your idea.

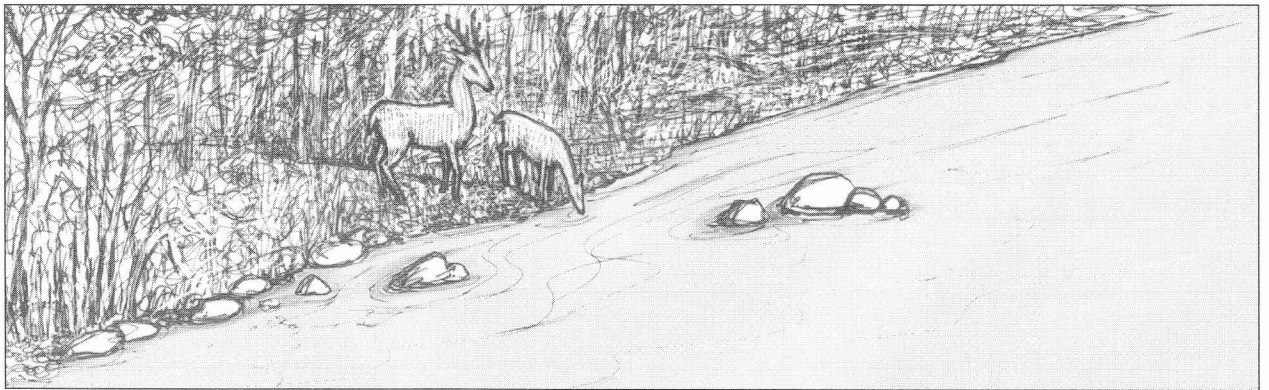


Noun	Positive Connotation	Negative Connotation
1. cheese	<u>creamy, buttery, light</u>	<u>rancid, smelly, stinky</u>

- |             |       |       |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| 2. rock     | _____ | _____ |
| 3. painting | _____ | _____ |
| 4. laughter | _____ | _____ |
| 5. flavor   | _____ | _____ |
| 6. smell    | _____ | _____ |
| 7. music    | _____ | _____ |
| 8. texture  | _____ | _____ |

**Activity 8****Recognizing Adjectives in Paragraphs**

Below are two descriptive paragraphs about the same topic. Read the paragraphs and underline the adjectives. There are fourteen adjectives in Paragraph 58 and twelve adjectives in Paragraph 59. The first adjective in each paragraph has been underlined for you.

**Paragraph 58****EXAMPLE  
PARAGRAPH**

The Blue River is an important part of the forest, and the quality of the river shapes the environment around it. The fresh, clear water is home to a wide variety of fish and plants. Colorful trout compete with perch for the abundant supply of insects near this beautiful river. The tall shade trees that line the banks are green and healthy. Wild deer come to drink the sweet water and rest in the shadows cast on the grassy banks of the river.

## Paragraph 59

EXAMPLE  
PARAGRAPH

The Blue River is an important part of the forest, and the quality of the river shapes the environment around it. The sluggish brown water contains few fish or plants. Scrawny trout struggle with perch to catch the limited number of insects that live near this dirty river. The old trees near the river are gray and brittle. They do not provide protection for the wild animals that come to drink from the polluted river.

1. Briefly, what is being described in each paragraph?

Paragraph 58 \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 59 \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your impression of the topic in Paragraph 58? What words helped you form this opinion?

---



---



---



---

3. What is your impression of the topic in Paragraph 59? What words helped you form this opinion?

---



---



---



---

4. Can you find an adjective in one paragraph that has the opposite meaning of an adjective in the other paragraph? For example, we can say that *clear* in Paragraph 58 is opposite in meaning to *brown* in Paragraph 59. Can you find other examples?

---



---



---



---



---

**Activity 9****Changing Meaning with Connotation**

The paragraph below describes a man walking into a room. Many of the adjectives have been deleted. Fill in each blank with an adjective and create your own paragraph.

The \_\_\_\_\_ man entered the \_\_\_\_\_ room. He had \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ hair. He wore a \_\_\_\_\_ suit with \_\_\_\_\_ shoes. The man was very \_\_\_\_\_. Everyone in the room was \_\_\_\_\_ when they saw him. He was such a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ man!

They could not believe that he was in the room with them.

Next, rewrite your paragraph in the space below. Be sure to indent. Then switch books with a partner and compare paragraphs. What impression do you have of the man in your partner's paragraph? Is it positive or negative? Add an original title.

**Paragraph 60**


---



---



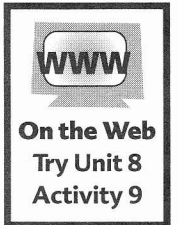
---



---



---





## USING PREPOSITIONS OF LOCATION TO DESCRIBE

To be precise in description, writers often need to indicate where something or someone is, particularly in relation to something or someone else. You can use prepositions of location to help you place people and things in description.



### LANGUAGE FOCUS: Prepositions of Location

A common way to describe something is to describe the parts of that thing and where they are. For example, if you are describing a room, you can describe what is on the right side, what is on the left side, what is on the ceiling, and what is on the floor. If you are describing a sports car, you might talk about what is in the front seat, what is in the back, what is on the hood, and what is under the hood. If you are describing a person, you can talk about what he is wearing on his head (*a hat or cap*) or what he has on his wrist (*a shiny watch*).

When you tell the location of something, it is important to use the correct preposition of location, followed by a noun. This noun after a preposition is called the **object of the preposition**. This preposition and noun combination is called a **prepositional phrase** (*in the kitchen*).

Good descriptive writing uses many adjectives and prepositional phrases to help readers visualize the thing or person in their head.

#### Common Prepositions of Location

Here are some prepositions of location, followed by examples of prepositional phrases.

above	across	after	against
ahead of	along	among	around
at	before	behind	below
beneath	beside	between	beyond
by	close to	far from	from
in	in back of	in front of	inside
near	next to	on	on top of
opposite	outside	over	past
throughout	under	with	without

#### Examples of Prepositional Phrases

The new bank is on Wilson Road near the park.

Next to the river, there is a field that goes from Wilson Road to the corner of Maple Street and Lee Road.

On the left, there is a sofa. On the right, there are two chairs.

**Activity 10****Using Prepositions of Location to Describe a Place**

Write five true sentences about the location of things or people in your classroom. Mark the prepositional phrases by circling the prepositions and underlining the objects of the preposition.

**Example:** The teacher's desk is (in front of) the whiteboard.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 11****Studying Example Paragraphs with Prepositions of Location**

Read and study each example paragraph. Then answer the questions.

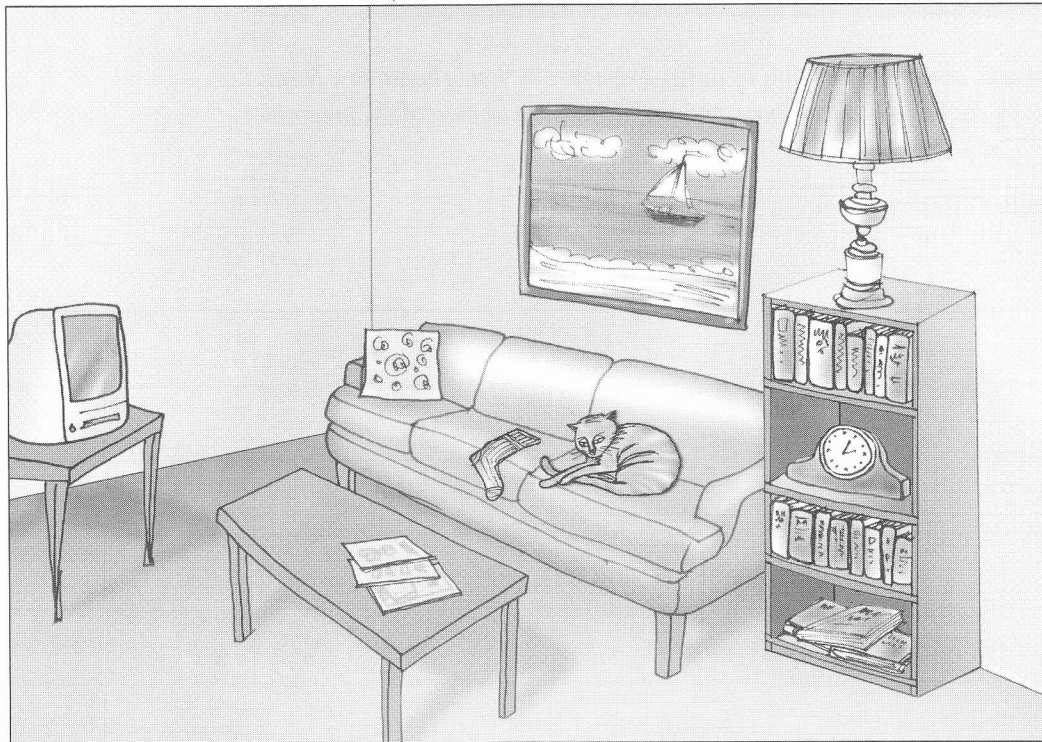
**Paragraph 61**

This paragraph describes a room in a house. Notice how often the writer appeals to the reader's sense of sight by describing the location of the things in the room.

Before you read, discuss these questions with your classmates.

1. What are three things that most people expect to find in a living room?
2. Is your living room always neat? Usually neat? Almost never neat?
3. What is in the middle of your living room? To the left side? To the right side?

Now read the paragraph.



### A Great Living Room

#### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH

My living room may be small, but it is tidy and well-organized. On the right, there is a wooden bookcase with four shelves. On top of the bookcase is a small lamp with a dark base and a matching lampshade. The first and third shelves are filled with carefully arranged books. On the second shelf, there is an antique clock with faded numbers on its face. The bottom shelf has a few newspapers. On the opposite side of the room is an old television set with nothing on top of it. Between the television and the bookcase is a large sofa. A fat, striped cat with long whiskers is curled up in a ball on the right side of the sofa. Lying to the left of my cat is a single sock that the cat probably brought from another room. Directly in front of the sofa, there is a long coffee table with short legs. On the right side of this table lie two magazines. They are stacked one on top of the other. Perhaps the most striking item in the room is the beautiful beach painting above the sofa. This extraordinary painting shows a peaceful beach scene with a sailboat on the right, far from the beach. Although it is a small room, everything in my living room is in its place.

**tidy:** neat, clean, arranged, organized

**shelf/shelves:** the flat surfaces inside a bookcase

**base:** the bottom part, the foundation

**matching:** going together well, similar

**antique:** old, from earlier days

**faded:** difficult to see

**whiskers:** the hairs on a cat's face

**curled:** in a circle, not in a line

**striking:** exceptional, very noticeable

**item:** thing

**extraordinary:** not usual, very special

**peaceful:** quiet, serene

1. Why did the writer write this paragraph?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. to define a living room
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. to describe a living room
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. to tell us the process of creating a good living room
  
2. What is the sequence of describing the room?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. from right to left to middle
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. from left to right to middle
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. from right to middle to left
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. from left to middle to right
  
3. How many prepositional phrases can you find? Count carefully! \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. In the topic sentence, the writer says that the room is tidy. Can you find words or phrases that paint this image for the reader?  

---

---

---
  
5. Can you think of one part of the room that was not described well enough? Use your imagination and your good English skills to write a sentence here for that area of the room. Use prepositions of location.  

---

---

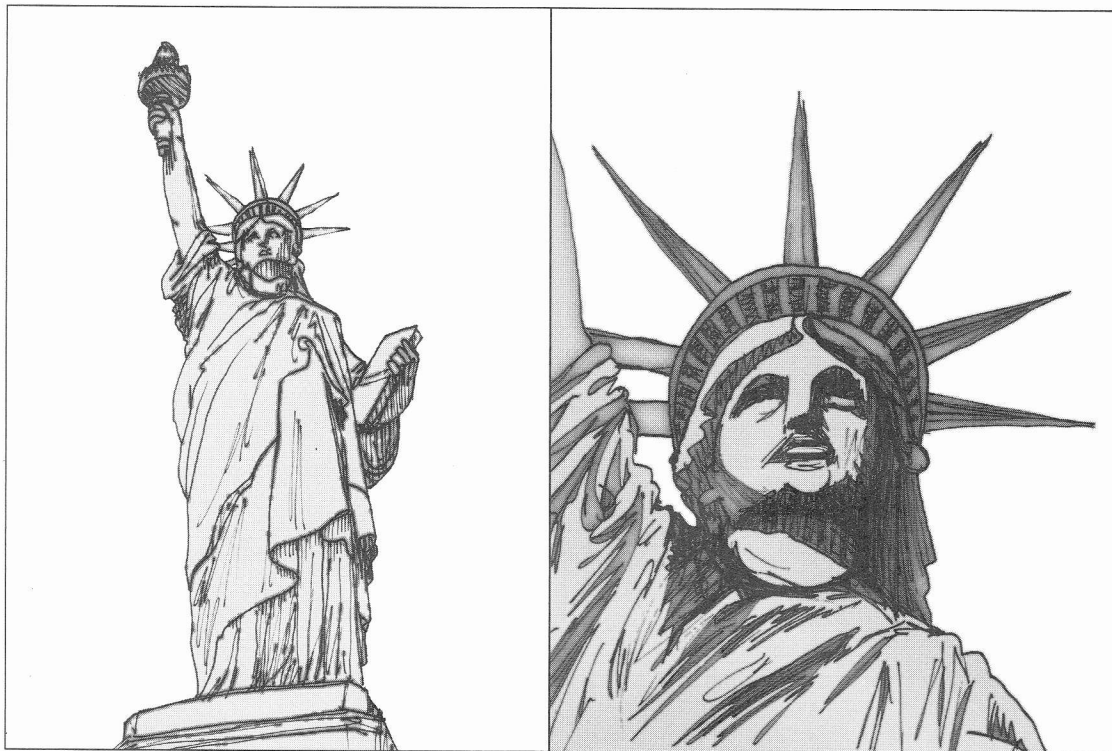
---

### Paragraph 62

This paragraph describes a famous monument in New York Harbor. Notice how often the writer appeals to the reader's sense of sight by describing different parts of the monument.

*Before you read, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

1. If you have visited the Statue of Liberty, what was the experience like? What, if anything, was different from what you expected?
2. How high do you think the Statue of Liberty is? What does the Statue of Liberty symbolize?
3. When you think of the Statue of Liberty, what adjectives come to mind?



The Statue of Liberty

## EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH

The Statue of Liberty, an internationally known symbol of freedom that was completed in 1886, is certainly an impressive structure. The Statue is of a woman who is wearing long, flowing robes. On her head, she has a crown of seven spikes that symbolize the seven oceans and the seven continents. The Statue weighs 450,000 pounds and is 152 feet high. The Statue appears much larger, however, because it stands on a pedestal that is about 150 feet high. In her raised right hand, the woman holds a torch. In her left hand, she carries a tablet with the date “July 4, 1776” written on the cover. At her feet lie broken chains, which symbolize an escape to freedom. The Statue of Liberty is an amazing monument.

**symbol:** figure, representation

**impressive:** outstanding, special, making an impression

**flowing:** moving easily

**crown:** what kings and queens wear on their heads

**spikes:** points

**symbolize:** represent

**pedestal:** base

**torch:** an instrument for carrying fire as light

**tablet:** an item that you can write on, somewhat similar to a notepad or notebook

**chains:** circular, connected links, usually metal, that can be used to prevent someone from moving or escaping

1. What is the writer’s purpose for writing this paragraph?
  - a. to inform us of the history of the Statue of Liberty
  - b. to explain why the Statue of Liberty was built

- \_\_\_\_\_ c. to tell the steps in the construction of the Statue of Liberty  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. to describe the Statue of Liberty
2. What is the sequence of describing the Statue?
- \_\_\_\_\_ a. body — head — base — right hand — left hand — feet  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. body — head — base — left hand — right hand — feet  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. body — right hand — left hand — head — base — feet  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. body — left hand — right hand — head — base — feet
3. The writer organizes the description of parts of the statue by location. To help you understand this organization better, answer these three questions.
- a. Where is the tablet?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Is the Statue on the ground? If not, what is it on?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Where is the torch?  
 \_\_\_\_\_



### WRITER'S NOTE: Word Order with Prepositions of Location

Prepositional phrases of location usually occur at the end of a sentence

The room was a mess. There were many papers on the floor. A fat, fluffy cat was sleeping on top of the television. . . .

However, for sentence variety, these same prepositional phrases can also occur at the beginning of a sentence. In this case, use a comma between the prepositional phrase and the rest of the sentence.

The room was a mess. On the floor, there were many papers. On top of the television, a fat, fluffy cat was sleeping. . . .

Notice that when a sentence begins with a prepositional phrase of location, writers sometimes put the verb in front of the subject if the verb is a stative (nonaction) verb such as *be* or *lie*. We use a comma to separate this phrase of location and the word *there*. If the word *there* does not appear, we do not usually use a comma.

VERB                      SUBJECT

On the floor, there were many papers.                      (comma)

VERB                      SUBJECT

On the floor were many papers.                      (no comma)

**Activity 12****Identifying Objects of Prepositions**

Read the paragraph. Look at the five underlined prepositions. Circle the object of each preposition. Then correct the three comma errors.

**Paragraph 63**

Monica

One of the most beautiful people that I know is Monica Fischer, a paralegal in my lawyer's office. Monica has curly hair. She has big beautiful brown eyes that she does not cover up with makeup. On her cheeks, she usually wears a little blush, however. Around her neck hangs a thin chain that fastens to her eyeglasses so that she does not lose them. On the right side of her blouse, she wears an I.D. tag that indicates her name and her position at the law firm. Monica always wears unique earrings that she collects from all over the world. Everyone agrees that Monica is one of a kind.

**Building Better Sentences****Practice 16**

Correct and varied sentence structure is essential to the quality of your sentences and paragraphs. For further practice with the sentences and paragraphs in this part of the unit, go to Practice 16 on page 243 in Appendix 5.

**Activity 13****Original Writing Practice**

Write a paragraph that describes something. Your goal is to give the reader an impression of what you are describing. Follow these guidelines:

- Choose a topic.
- Brainstorm some sensory adjectives (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch).
- Write a topic sentence with controlling ideas.
- Write supporting sentences that relate to the topic.
- Make sure the adjectives mean precisely what you want them to mean—check both the denotation and the connotation.
- Use prepositional phrases of location in your paragraph. Be sure to vary the placement of the phrases. Put some at the beginning of the sentence and some at the end of the sentence. Remember that good writers use sentence variety.
- Make sure your concluding sentence restates the topic.

If you need help, study the example descriptive paragraphs in this unit. Be sure to refer to the seven steps in the writing process in Appendix 1 on pages 198–206.

**Activity 14****Peer Editing**

Work with a partner and exchange paragraphs from Activity 13. Then use Peer Editing Sheet 8 on page 263 to help you comment on your partner's paper. Remember that it is important to offer positive comments that will help the writer.

**Activity 15****Additional Writing Assignments**

Here are some ideas for descriptive paragraphs. When you write, follow the guidelines in Activity 13.

1. Describe a national monument that is important to you. What does it look like? What feelings does the monument inspire in you?
2. Describe a family tradition. When do you follow the tradition? Why is the tradition important to you and your family?
3. Describe your favorite or least favorite meal. Be sure to tell how the food tastes, smells, and looks.
4. Describe something that makes you happy, sad, nervous, or afraid.
5. Describe a person you know. What is this person like? What are some characteristics? Make sure that the description would allow your reader to identify the person in a crowd.