

# Descriptive writing structure

## 1 **Setting**

If you are describing a place, it is appropriate to set the general scene of location, surroundings, atmosphere, time of day, week, month, season, weather, temperature. **Either time or distance** can be used as the structure for a descriptive composition. Descriptive compositions must have some kind of framework to give them a shape and logical progression to involve the reader.

## 2 **Positioning**

The observer takes up a position with regard to the object or place being described, e.g. they are standing outside a room. This should be at a distance so that interest is aroused as to what will be revealed on closer inspection, e.g. when the gate into the secret garden is opened or the chest in the attic is opened. The senses of sight and sound will be explored in this section and used to draw the reader in. If time is the framework, then this must be established, e.g. daylight is beginning to fade at dusk.

## 3 **Approaching**

The observer moves towards the object or place being described. New details can be revealed because of the closer proximity, e.g. as the view of the beach becomes clearer. At this stage the sense of smell can be added to sight and sound. Alternatively, time has moved on, e.g. darkness is creeping into the sky and appearances are changing.

## 4 **Arriving**

The observer is now part of the scene, e.g. in the heart of the street market, or in contact with the object, e.g. going through the items in a chest. Minute details of vision and noise can be used here, and also the sense of touch can be used, and taste implied, e.g. people in the scene are eating, the sea is salty. Alternatively, time has reached its climax, e.g. it is now night and the new sky and atmosphere can be described.

## 5 **Leaving**

The observer leaves the scene, with or without a backward glance. They may have replaced anything they disturbed in a room and now close the door so that things are again as they were at the beginning; alternatively it may be going home time for the people on the beach or at the market, so that the scene empties and becomes the opposite of how it was at the beginning. Reference to **either time or distance** is used as closure.