

# Descriptive Writing



Levels 2-6

## Introduction

What is descriptive writing? Let's start with what it does.

- \* It describes—explains, pictures, illustrates—something to the reader.
- \* Descriptive writing uses words as an artist uses paint. He has a picture in his head and wants the other person to “see” it, too.

Yes, but what *is* it? What are the word tools used to craft a piece of descriptive writing?

- \* Vivid, concrete nouns
- \* Strong action verbs
- \* Carefully chosen adjectives
- \* Adverbs that add more to our question of “how?”
- \* “Sensory” words: words for seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching
- \* Often, but not always, descriptive writing uses the first person (the “I” voice).

Let's look at two sample topics. They are:

1. My first roller coaster ride
2. Describe Pharaoh's court

## Prewriting

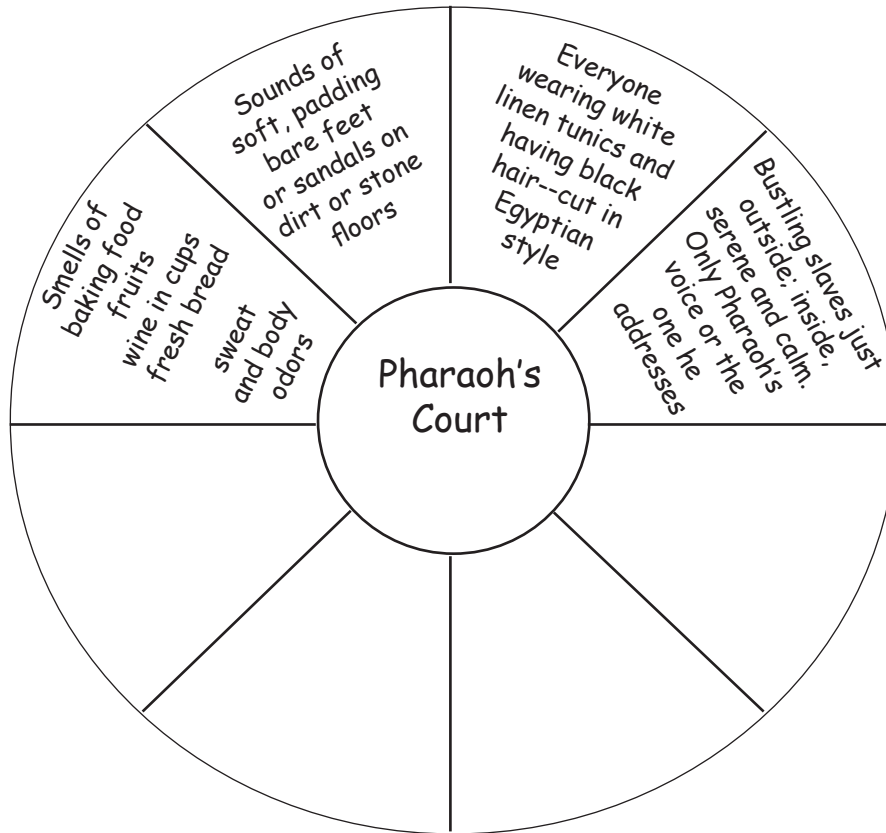
To illustrate our two examples, we will use a Sensory Chart for Topic 1 and a Describing Wheel for Topic 2. Below are our filled-in examples of each.

### Topic 1: My first roller coaster ride

See	Hear	Taste	Touch	Smell
cars whizzing around the track	other kids screaming as we got close	I just finished my cotton candy	smooth seat	smells of the carnival--fried dough, hot dogs
view from the top	quiet and excited talking	taste of fear??	smooth crash bar	fresh air at the top
plunging down	me screaming		cool breeze at the top	
closed eyes tight!	Joe screamed, too!		rushing air as we plunged down	



## Topic 2: Describe Pharaoh's court



Much of the real work of descriptive writing is done in the prewriting process. Ask your teacher to help you if you are having a hard time filling in the blanks on the charts.

If there is a story aspect to the assignment (as there could be in Topic 2), it will help you to make a brief outline or plot line as well.

### Drafting

Now that you have your prewriting skeleton, get your ideas down on paper in a first draft. Start to flesh out your description with vivid nouns and verbs, sensory words, and carefully chosen adjectives.

### Editing

Once your first draft is done, carefully proof your word choices. Read slowly, correcting errors and choosing exact, specific words for your descriptions.

### Polishing

Have your teacher go through your self-edited draft, making suggestions for better word choices and exciting reading. Then you can finish it up and create your final draft.