

## Lesson starters for descriptive writing.

1. Start with something fun and light hearted. For example, you can play with adjectives using the sentence "It was a dark night." Ask your students for more adjectives, and you will get "It was a dark and stormy night." Build the sentence one adjective at a time until you get something like "It was a dark, gloomy, stormy, murky, unpleasant, terrifying night."
2. Compare your final sentence with the sentence "It was night." Ask your students what the adjectives tell you that you wouldn't know otherwise. Ask which sentence is more artistic.
3. Do a copy change. Find a funny, descriptive and irreverent paragraph in a book the class is reading. Have the class change its meaning while keeping its structure. For example, suppose the paragraph says, "It was the worst sound you could imagine. It was like a thousand babies with heartburn crying into megaphones at the same time." A copy change might go like this: "It was the most disgusting smell you could imagine. It was like a million gym socks stuffed with old cheese in the same room."
4. Ask your students to imagine walking around a place. It could be a favourite room, or somewhere imaginary. Have them include what they can hear, feel, smell and see. Keep it in the present tense to make it more immediate. For example, "The ground feels soft and damp and I can hear the calls of seagulls in the distance.
5. Have students make lists of words they think have interesting sounds. Then have them make sentences from their lists. Unusual word combinations can call up brilliant mental images.
6. Tell students to describe a person in a poignant or stressful situation. Maybe it's the losing quarterback hobbling off the field after a heartbreaking loss, or a first-year drama student about to go on stage during an opening-night play.

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