

Description Toolkit – Progression Document

Purpose: to create a description that the reader can imagine, making it sound real			
Reception	Year 1 and 2 As in Reception plus:	Year 3 and 4 As in Year 1 and 2 plus:	Year 5 and 6 As in Year 3 and 4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look attentively and talk about new experiences. • Look carefully at images, objects, animals, events, etc. • Use adjectives (describing words) to say what images and objects look like. • Orally use all the senses to discuss and describe – look, touch, taste, hear and smell. • Orally describe where something is using simple prepositions e.g. The scruffy dog sat <u>under</u> the bed. • Orally help the reader to see what you are describing using a simile e.g. as cold as ice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use precise nouns to ‘name it’ and create a picture in the reader’s mind, e.g. poodle rather than dog • Choose adjectives to help the reader imagine. • Write sentences which contain two adjectives separated by ‘and’ or a comma e.g. He was a tall and thin man/ the small, round pot. • Choose powerful verbs: limit got, came, went, said and look. E.g. crept instead of walked. • Use adverbs to describe how something does something e.g. she tiptoed quietly. • Experiment with alliteration. • Use ‘as’ and ‘like’ similes. • Observe carefully and draw on all the senses when describing. • Pile up the description using sentences of 3 to describe e.g. Fred was old, tired and bored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Show’ not ‘tell’ – describe a character’s emotions using senses or a setting to create an atmosphere e.g. The shadow darted forwards. Her skin crawled! • Select powerful, precise and well-chosen nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs that really match the mood/ atmosphere e.g. rusted, overgrown, smeared, smothered • Write 2a sentences which contain two nouns, with two adjectives per noun, e.g. He was a tall, thin man with an old, crumpled jacket. • Use personification e.g. the bushes seemed like they were holding their breath • Use metaphors and similes to create atmosphere, e.g. even the tables froze • Use alliteration to add effect, e.g. Sally slept silently/ the dark, damp, dangerous wood... • Use expanded noun phrases to add intriguing detail e.g. The shaggy dog at the end of the lane begged on all fours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select detail and describe to suit the purpose, e.g. to scare the reader, to lull the reader. • Use a character’s reaction or the author’s comments to show the effect of a description, e.g. Joanna shuddered. • Use onomatopoeia rather than alliteration to reflect meaning, e.g. The bees buzzed busily. • Ensure all word choices earn their place and add something new and necessary, e.g. not the red letterbox but the rusted letterbox • Use precise detail when describing to bring a scene alive, e.g. His gold fob watch glinted • Write De: de sentences in which the first part is a description and the second part adds detail. The two clauses are separated by a colon, e.g. The vampire is a dreadful creature: it kills by sucking all the blood from its victim.

Useful ideas for teaching description – always co-construct the toolkit with the class.

Reception	Year 1 and 2 As in Reception plus:	Year 3 and 4 As in Year 1 and 2 plus:	Year 5 and 6 As in Year 3 and 4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new experiences and encourage children to notice details and talk about them e.g. places, objects, characters. • Look carefully at images =, objects, animals, events etc. Select objects etc. with interesting detail to support observation. • Develop the use of the 5 senses and related language through specific experiences e.g., feely bag, curiosity corner, nature tables, nature walks etc. • Draw, paint, model objects, settings and characters based on looking really closely at them and noticing detail. • Guided discussion, focussed on a stimulus with word gathering. • Constant modelling of descriptive language by adults using shared and guided writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular painting and drawing of objects, animals, scenes etc. • Develop use of 5 senses across the curriculum so that noticing and commenting becomes habit. • Constant modelling of descriptive language and add to their word banks with new vocabulary. • Use collections to reinforce language – shiny things, soft things, colour tables etc. • Collect interesting descriptive words and sentences, e.g. from quality books, and bank for future use e.g. a bank of colour words (blue, sapphire, azure, red, scarlet, crimson). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach drawing – close observational work. • Develop language and observation work through science work. Use tenses. • Regular new experiences to discuss and describe. Play descriptive barrier games. • Use short burst writing ‘spine’ writing to practice observational writing. • Brainstorm banks of vocabulary, list and use when writing. • Use magpie books and boards to gather great descriptions from quality books. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid overwriting when describing. Learn how to trim/ tighten sentences. • Avoid repeating ideas, telling the reader the obvious (hot flames) and only select description that adds something new and moves the plot forwards. • Discuss how good authors balance description and action. • Gather creative imagery into banks and discuss effects on the reader. • Map, learn and write in the style of the best descriptive passages available e.g. description of the barn in Charlotte’s Web. • Gather specific word banks through short burst writing before writing narrative. • Draw on previous writing and raid for effective imagery and description.