

The Art of Descriptive Writing

Learning objective: To analyse the use of descriptive techniques and vocabulary to build atmosphere in a narrative.

Read the following passage carefully, then answer the questions that follow in full sentences.

Pip the caterpillar sat atop a curled oak leaf, watching the sunset paint the horizon in bruised purples and burnt oranges. He was searching for the perfect word to capture the feeling of the day. Around him, the forest was waking up. The wind whispered secrets through the silver birch trees, and the long shadows of the ancient oaks stretched like reaching fingers across the mossy floor. Zara the zebra stood nearby, her striped coat camouflaged against the flickering patterns of light and shade. She was busy sketching the scene, noticing how the golden light turned the stream into a ribbon of molten honey. Pip scribbled in his miniature notebook; he wanted his writing to be as vivid as the world around him. He knew that great stories were not just about what happened, but how it felt to be there. By using sensory details—the scent of damp earth, the rhythm of the rustling leaves—he could transport his readers to this very moment. With a satisfied hum, he tucked his pencil away, ready to begin his next chapter under the watchful gaze of the moon.

Word bank: atmosphere · metaphor · vivid · sensory · alliteration · personification

1. What two colours is the horizon described as being painted with at sunset? (2 marks)

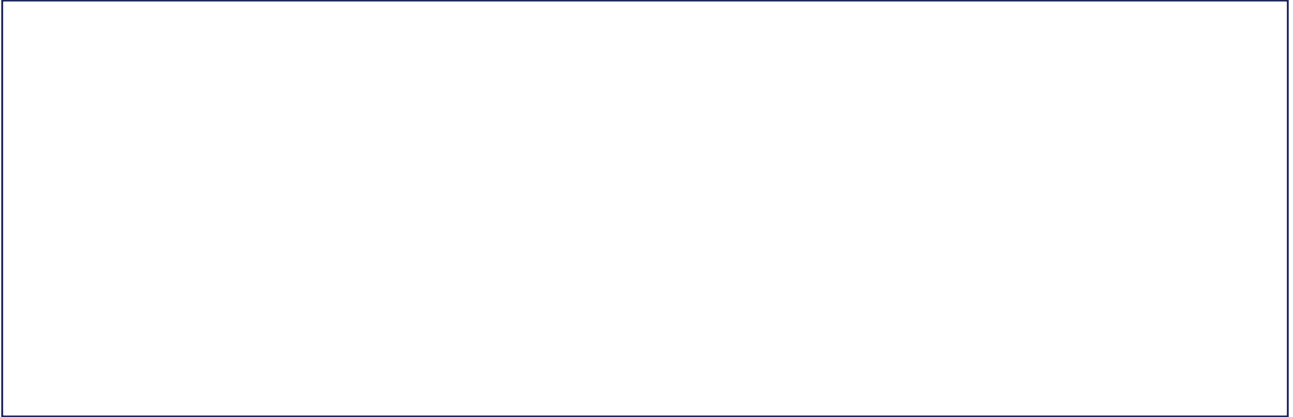
2. What is Zara the zebra doing while Pip is observing the sunset? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author describe the stream as a 'ribbon of molten honey'? (3 marks)

4. How can we tell that Pip takes his writing seriously? (3 marks)

5. Do you agree that sensory details are the most important part of descriptive writing? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw the forest scene described in the passage, including Pip on the oak leaf, Zara sketching nearby, and the golden light reflecting on the stream.



Extension challenge: Choose an object in your classroom and write three sentences describing it using at least one metaphor and one example of personification.