

Vocabulary Masterclass: Painting Pictures with Words

Learning objective: To improve writing by selecting precise, ambitious vocabulary and sensory language to create atmosphere.

Use the prompts below to build a descriptive paragraph. Remember to use 'show, don't tell' by describing how things look, sound, and feel instead of just stating your emotions.

The ancient forest hummed with a hidden energy as Pip the caterpillar crawled cautiously across the mossy branch.

Word bank: consequently · furthermore · shimmering · cacophony · subsequently · ethereal · vibrant · in the distance · nevertheless · ominous · tranquil · vividly

1. Setting the Scene: Describe the environment using at least two adjectives and one noun phrase that creates a specific atmosphere. Start with: 'As the light began to fade, the forest became...' (2 marks)

2. Sensory Details: Focus on sound and smell. What can the reader hear or smell? Start with: 'A sudden, sharp sound echoed through the trees, which was...' (2 marks)

3. Character Reaction: Describe how your character feels about the scene using a powerful verb. Start with: 'Pip trembled slightly, feeling a sense of...' (2 marks)

4. Adding Action: Use an adverb to describe how your character moves through this space. Start with: 'Moving [adverb], the small creature decided to...' (2 marks)

5. Refining Vocabulary: Choose one 'boring' word you used in your draft (e.g., 'big', 'nice', 'scary') and replace it with a more ambitious synonym. Explain why the new word is better. (2 marks)

Extension challenge: Rewrite your entire paragraph, but this time, change the tone from peaceful to mysterious by swapping your adjectives for synonyms with a more ominous connotation.