

CHAPTER 1: DESCRIPTION

A. Modeling

Activity 1

Work in a pair to discuss the answers to the following questions.

1. When you describe something, what do you actually figure out? Think of this question in terms of its physical appearance.
2. Do you think that something you describe has parts?
3. What do the parts function with respect to the whole thing you describe?

Activity 2

Ask your partner the following questions.

1. Is your house big or small?
2. What is the colour of the walls of your house?
3. How many doors and windows does your house have?

Activity 3

Read the following passage. Concentrate on the way the writer describes his house by paying close attention to (1) parts in relation to the whole and (2) the specifications of the house as an individual thing in comparison with houses in general.

THE HOUSE I LIVE IN

I live in a big house which is located in a small town. It is traditionally designed and consists of two adjoining buildings, which are actually two houses, where one is placed in front of the other. The front building which is usually called “pendhapa” is like a hall that functions as a visiting room or a meeting room. The back building functions as a living house and has six bedrooms, one living room, and one kitchen. There is another separate building next to the main buildings. It consists of two bathrooms and a garage. There is a well near the bathrooms.

Seen from outside, my house is sky-blue in colour. All of the outer walls, except its doors and windows, are painted sky-blue. But inside the house, all of the inner walls are painted pink. The doors and windows are made from wood and are painted brown.

My house has a large yard in the front and a fascinating garden at the back. It is now about twenty years old, but it looks newer and nicer. It looks newer because it is complete with new appliances, and it is nicer because it is well decorated. I am thankful that my family can afford this house where we have our ordinary lives.

Activity 4

Identify the linguistic features of Description.

1. What semantic relation is used in the text?
2. Look at the way participants are used in the text, and why it employs such participants?
3. Why are adjectives used?
4. What tense is used in the passage?
5. What type of verb is mostly used in the passage (doing, being, saying, or behaving)?

THE HOUSE I LIVE IN

I live in a *big* house which is located in a small town. It is traditionally designed and **consists** of two *adjoining* buildings, which **are** actually two houses, where one is placed in front of the other. The *front* building which is usually **called** “pendhapa” **is** like a hall that functions as a visiting room or a meeting room. The *back* building functions as a living house and **has** six bedrooms, one living room, and one kitchen. There **is** another *separate* building next to the *main* buildings. It **consists** of two bathrooms and a garage. There **is** a well near the bathrooms.

Seen from outside, my house **is** sky-blue in colour. All of the *outer* walls, except its doors and windows, are painted sky-blue. But inside the house, all of the *inner* walls are painted pink. The doors and windows are made from wood and are painted brown.

My house **has** a *large* yard in the front and a *fascinating* garden at the back. It **is** now about twenty years old, but it **looks** *newer* and *nicer*. It **looks** *newer* because it **is** *complete* with *new* appliances, and it **is** *nicer* because it is well decorated. I **am** thankful that my family can afford this house where we have our *ordinary* lives.

After you have identified the text, you can see that Description:

1. has to do with an individual thing,
2. is concerned with parts and whole relationships, so it employs meronymous and co-meronymous semantic relations (in this case, house–rooms, house– yards, house–bathrooms),
3. employs general non-human participants (i.e. the house, rooms and their related pronouns).
4. employs adjectives (*italic type*) to describe factual things in terms of their shapes, colours, measures, and other physical characteristics;
5. mainly makes use of present tense (e.g. are, consist, is, and have) to give an account of factual events and general truths;
6. employs relational processes, i.e. verbs of being (**bold type** in the example), and material processes, i.e. verbs of doing (underlined) to identify things as they are or they do, but no mental processes, i.e. verbs of perceiving or believing;

Activity 5

A Description text is structured in two stages, i.e. “Thing(s) to be Described” and “Parts/characteristics to be Described” Now, fill in the box bellow to show which sentences belong to which stages.

Numbers of Lines	Stages
	Thing(s) to be Described
	Parts/characteristics to be Described

Activity 6

Pay attention to the following noun groups taken from the passage above. These noun groups can be analyzed in the following way.

Pre-Modifier →				Thing	Post-Modifier ←
Deictic	Numeric	Ephitet	Classifier		Qualifier
a		big		house	which is located in a small town
	two	adjoining		buildings	
	two			houses	
the		front		building	which is usually called "pendhapa"
a				hall	that functions as a visiting room or a meeting room
the		back		building	
a			living	house	
	six			bedrooms	
	one		living	room	
	one			kitchen	
another		separate		building	
the		main		buildings	
	two			bathrooms	
a				garage	
a				well	
the				bathrooms	
my				house	
the		outer		walls	
its				doors and windows	
the				house	
the		inner		walls	
the				doors	
a		large		yard	in the front
a		fascinating		garden	at the back
		new		appliances	
this				house	
our		ordinary		lives	

Notes:

- Deictic : Articles, Possessive Adjective
 Numeric : Ordinal and Cardinal Number
 Ephitet : Describing things by their shape, size, color, and physical or psychological condition (Adjective, Present Participle, Past Participle).
 Classifier : Classifying things in terms of their kinds or types (Noun, Adjective, and Gerund).
 Qualifier : Additional information (Adjective Clause, Infinitive Phrase, Present Participle Phrase, Past Participle Phrase, Adjective Phrase, Prepositional Phrase, and Ordinal or Cardinal Number)

Write your own noun groups in the table below. Make sure that you put your words in the right columns.

Pre-Modifier →				Thing	Post-Modifier ←
Deictic	Numeric	Ephitet	Classifier		Qualifier

B. Working out the Genre in Group

Activity 1

The following is a text entitled “Ireland” where the paragraphs are put at random. Rearrange them to form a good text of Description, by putting numbers in each paragraph. Be careful that paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 show parts or aspects of Ireland.

IRELAND

The north is known as Northern Ireland and is still part of the UK, while the Republic of Ireland, in the south, has been an independent state since 1921. The Republic has three and a half million inhabitants and two official languages, English and Gaelic. The capital of the Republic is Dublin, with a population of half a million; the second city is Cork, situated in the southwest.

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Ireland is an island that lies off the west coast of Great Britain. The island is separated into two parts, the north and the south.

Ireland is also famous for its traditional music, its many great writers (Oscar Wilde, W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, to name just a few), and finally for its traditional drink, Guinness, a thick black beer.

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Ireland is famous for its beautiful scenery, especially its coastline and green rolling hills. It is often known as ‘Emerald Isle’. The most important river in Ireland is the River Shannon.

(Adapted from *Cutting Edge*, 1998: 32)

Activity 2

In a group, describe the city you live in from the points of view of its geographical location, its traditions, the language used there. Discuss such things as:

1. Title of your description.
2. How you begin your description in the opening.
3. How you arrange the aspects you are going to describe.
4. How you use grammatical forms to support your description.

C. Working out the Genre individually

Activity 1

Individually, go to places such as: museum, library, city, or mall. Take notes everything you see. You will write a description of your visit in three days! Your individual description will be marked and returned to you in the following meeting.

Activity 2

Write a text of Description of your own. You are free to choose your own topic. Make sure that you will employ the linguistic features required by the text.