

DESCRIPTIVE COMPOSITIONS

A **descriptive composition** can be about a person, a place, a building or even an object.

▪ A descriptive composition about a **person** should consist of:

1. An introduction in which you give general information about who the person is, when/where/how you first met them, how you heard about them, etc.
2. A second paragraph in which you describe their physical appearance (give details of the person's height, build, hair, clothing...).
3. A third paragraph in which you provide information about the person's personality, character and behaviour¹.
4. A fourth paragraph in which you write about the person's life and lifestyle: their habits, likes and dislikes (e.g. interests, hobbies, sports, languages they speak...), profession, family, their ambitions and dreams...
5. A conclusion in which you can comment on why the person is of interest, express your feelings and opinion concerning that person, why they made such a strong impression on you or how they have influenced you...

Descriptions of people can be found in **emails, articles, narratives**, etc.

A descriptive composition about a **place or building**² should consist of:

1. An introduction in which you give the name and location of the place or building, and/or the reason for choosing it. In the case of the building you can also state who designed it and when it was built. In the case of the place you can mention its population.
2. A main body (two or three paragraphs) in which you describe the main aspects of the place or building in detail. For example, when you describe a place, you should mention what you can see and do there. When you describe a building, you should first describe the building outside (what it is made of, appearance (size, style, colour...), gardens...), and then in another paragraph the building inside (different areas/rooms, light, colour, furniture, pictures, floors, windows, doors...).
5. A conclusion which includes your comments on why the place/building is of interest, express your feelings and opinion concerning that place/building, and/or a recommendation.

Descriptions of places or buildings can be found in tourist **magazines, travel brochures, narratives, emails**, etc.

DESCRIPTIVE ARTICLES

An **article** is a piece of writing about a particular subject for publication in a newspaper, magazine, leaflet or brochure. Those that are printed in newspapers and magazines typically present an opinion about social/ environmental issues, describe a place/ event/ experience, provide information, etc. Those that are printed in leaflets and brochures provide information, describe and/or advertise a company/product/service, offer suggestions, etc. Therefore, articles can be **descriptive, narrative** and **discursive**, but we will concentrate on descriptive articles at this level. You can be asked to write a descriptive article of a person, place, building, experience...

¹ For vocabulary on physical appearance and character and personality, check your handout "Personal identification".

² For vocabulary to describe houses, buildings, cities, etc. check your handout "House, home and surroundings".

Structure of descriptive articles:

1. **A title:** which suggests the main topic of the article.
2. **An introduction:** as we saw before, giving general information about the person/place/building/experience/etc. that you're going to describe.
3. **Body paragraphs:** write two or three paragraphs where you describe the person/place/building/experience (e.g. a holiday)/ etc. in detail.
4. **A conclusion:** where you can make general comments, express your opinion/feelings about the person/place/building/trip/ etc. that you have described.