

Descriptive - Persuasive Texts

These assignments were first used as follow-up activities after a group writing session entitled "Estate Agents' Ads" - visit our web site for lesson plan, shared text, overhead transparency and other resources. Activities are suitable for levels E2-L2, although not all aims and objectives will apply to every level.

Assignments can also be used as stand-alone activities, but do remember that...

- Group writing sessions give students confidence and an awareness of the planning, drafting and editing process.
- The sharing of ideas increases group cohesion. It also gives lower level students the chance to contribute orally and see their ideas transformed into words.
- Observing the tutor plan, draft, erase and correct on the whiteboard helps all students realise that no one writes a perfect piece of writing straight off!

General aims / objectives / targets



- Recognise different purposes of text
- Understand the difference between fact and opinion
- Use language, format and structure suitable for audience
- To plan, draft, and edit writing.

Curriculum Links

Text Focus

- Recognise the different purposes of text (focusing on descriptive and persuasive texts). Rt/E3.2
- ... and how language and textual features are used to achieve different purposes (*be able to distinguish between an objective description and a persuasive description e.g. a description of what is an NVQ portfolio, compared with a description in an advert*). Rt/L1.2
- ... and infer meaning that is not explicit (*are texts aiming to give: personal opinions / objective facts / explain a process / complain etc.*). Rt/L2.2
- Use language suitable for purpose and audience. Wt/L1.4
- Use format and structure for different purposes Wt/L1.5
- Plan, draft and edit writing. Wt/E3.1 Wt/L1.1 Wt/L2.1
- Proof read and revise writing for accuracy and meaning. Wt/E3.4 Wt/L1.6

Sentence Focus

- To understand the term "adjective" and use adjectives in writing. To look at positive, negative and passive adjectives. Ws/E2.2

Examples / sample activities from adult curriculum shown in italic.

Contents

Page 1 - This page

Page 2 - Handout for Level 1/2 students.

Page 3 - Reading: Property pages, fact v opinion activity for E2 (with help), E3, L1, L2.

Page 4 - Blank chart for page 3 activity.

Page 5 - Writing: objective descriptions, persuasive descriptions, extension ideas. Levels E3, L1, L2 (could be adapted for E2 students).

Adult Literacy. Level E2 upwards

Reading and Writing: Text Focus - descriptive / persuasive texts. Sentence Focus - adjectives.

Non-Fiction Descriptive Texts

This type of text describes actual places, events or objects.

- ◆ Some descriptive texts are just straight facts and do not give the reader any ideas about the feelings or opinions of the author. These are **objective descriptions**.
For example, descriptions in a field guide such as “The British Book of Wildflowers”.
- ◆ However, many descriptive texts are also persuasive and tell us something about the writer's feelings and opinions. These are **subjective (or persuasive) descriptions**.
For example, a travel book such as “Notes from a Small Island” by Bill Bryson.

Property pages and holiday brochures are full of descriptions; they are also persuasive.

- ◆ These types of descriptions contain facts. **Facts** can be checked out or proved:

4 bedrooms	semi-detached	built in 1974	fenced gardens	gas fire	parking for 3 cars
------------	---------------	---------------	----------------	----------	--------------------
- ◆ They also include opinions. **Opinions** are just that! Your opinion may be different from the writer's.

highly desirable	well maintained	popular village	beautiful sitting room	further benefits
------------------	-----------------	-----------------	------------------------	------------------



1. A garage thought to date from the 1950s.
2. A well-maintained garage thought to date from the early 1950s.



1. A house situated in a cul-de-sac location within the Springside Development, near shops and schools.
2. A good-sized modern four bedroom detached house well situated in a cul-de-sac location within the popular Springside Development. Easy pedestrian access to town centre and nearby good schooling



1. The cottage is situated in the village of Longstone, in the heart of the Dales. The conservatory looks out over the countryside. It is suitable for walkers and tourists.
2. The cosy and comfortably furnished cottage is situated in the heart of the beautiful Yorkshire Dales. It is in the small, picturesque village of Longstone. There is the added advantage of a conservatory at the rear with superb views over open countryside. Perfectly situated for exploring the beautiful scenery in the immediate area on foot, there are open fells and moors nearby.

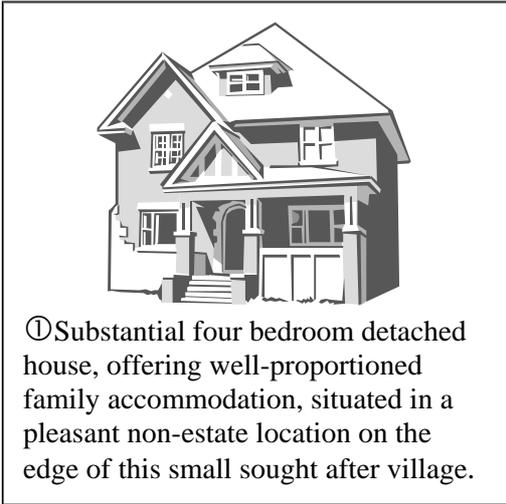
Differences between these 3 pairs of texts...

- ◆ Look at the underlined words in the example texts, most of these words are adjectives. **Adjectives** describe nouns.

Nouns are naming words - for people, places, things, feelings or ideas. For example: garage, village, conservatory, Longstone, countryside, location.

- ◆ The second version of each text describes the buildings in a more interesting and appealing manner. The writer is “persuading” the reader buy the house, go and take a look at the garage, rent the holiday cottage, etc.

Descriptive - Persuasive Texts: Looking at Property Pages



Facts or Opinion?

Use the numbered texts available in class or choose your own from the newspapers and magazines available.

- a) Read a variety of descriptions and list them below under the appropriate heading.
- b) If you use one of the newspapers or "Property Guides" available in class please cut out the descriptions, number them clearly and attach them to your work.
- c) You may find highlighter pens or underlining helpful.
- d) Study at least three or four different descriptions.
- e) Continue on another sheet if you wish.

Property no.	Facts	Opinion
(example)	four bedroom detached non-estate	substantial well proportioned pleasant small sought after village

Writing descriptions: Step 1 – facts

Think about your home...

- a) Write a short description of your house / flat / room.
 - ◆ Stick to the facts.
 - ◆ You will need to plan your description first. Make a list or a diagram.
 - ◆ Think about how you organise your description. For example:
 - You might want to begin with a general introduction (number of rooms, detached, terraced, etc.) followed by the location (town centre, near shops, near link road, etc.).
 - To conclude you might want to mention any special or unusual features (conservatory, water feature, extension, etc.).
 - This is just one idea - you may want to arrange your thoughts differently.
- b) Now start your description. Use the ones you have studied in class for ideas.

Improve your description: Step 2 - add opinions and persuasive language

- a) Imagine you are trying to sell your home (or rent it out as a holiday home).
- b) Rewrite your description using interesting adjectives and persuasive language.
 - ◆ Use adjectives to extend the information about your house.
 - ◆ Think about persuasive language. Your purpose is to persuade people to come and look at your house. If you're stuck for ideas, look back at your list of "opinions" on page 2.
 - ◆ Use proper sentences. A sentence must make complete sense on its own.

Extension activities and writing prompts

- a) Type your description on the computer, using Word or Publisher. You could...
 - ◆ use different fonts and/or font sizes
 - ◆ put the description in a box or frame
 - ◆ add a piece of clipart
 - ◆ bring in a photo of your house and scan it into your document
 - ◆ have your work uploaded to the class web site (anonymously if you wish)
- b) Write a description of your "dream house".
- c) Write description of the house you grew up in as a child.

IMPORTANT: Please date all your work and file in your portfolio. This includes plans, notes, newspaper cuttings and all rough work.