

Snapshot of the Description Genre

Description	Collections 4	Collections 5	Collections 6
Literary	“Alien World”	“Exhausted!”	“The Formicarium” “Limericks”
Descriptive Poems	“Worms in the Compost” and “The Worm”	“Mountain Poems” and “The Goat with the Golden Eyes”	“The Caterpillar” and “Small Talk”
Description	“My Classroom” “No Garlic!”	“Watching the Judging at the Fair” “Obentoo”	“What Insect Am I?” “Job Description” and “Job Application” “The Worst Moment of My Life”

Genre Type: Description

Purpose: to provide specific details about the features of a particular person, place, impression or thing.

Structure: Descriptions can stand alone, as in poetry, but are usually part of a longer text. They are often used in reports and are an important part of narrative. An introduction is followed by details of the subject matter.

Language Features:

- descriptive language using noun groups related to the topic
- vocabulary specific to the topic
- phrases to build up the description

Literary Description

Alien World

from *Collections 4* (page 59)



Guided Reading Book Link: *My Friend Zog*

Suggested Resources:

- descriptive texts—literary type

Synopsis: Talis, an alien invader, takes Tina, an eleven-year-old human, to his planet. They leave Earth in a glassy bubble and when they reach his planet they explore the city of Ro-yil.

Processes: exploring literary text, studying description features, identifying topic-specific vocabulary, exploring language, spelling and grammar

Vocabulary: *Specialised vocabulary:* alien, complicated, globe, jewelled, million, textures, cushion, sensation, Tina, Talis, Shana, filaments, Shanads, Ro-yil

Grammatical Conventions:

- use of action verbs and past tense
- particular nouns and noun groups
- detailed and multiple noun groups
- adjectives—describing, classifying
- adverbial phrases
- punctuation—quotation marks, commas, full stops, ellipses, capital letters, apostrophe of possession

Spelling Focus:

- “gl” blend
- “ness” ending words

Assessment Focus:

- knowledge of description structure
- understanding of grammatical features; (see **Blackline Master 55**)
- topic-specific language
- ability to read with understanding

Guided Reading

Orientation

Brainstorm books and stories known to students about aliens and alien worlds. Discuss these stories.

Revise the structure and features of a description.

Visual Literacy

Discuss the layout of the pages and the style of the illustrations. Discuss how each illustration helps us to understand the text

Discuss whether the illustrations of the aliens match the students’ ideas of what aliens might look like.

Reading the Text

Read the lead-in and the first paragraph.

- What information is provided?
- Who are the characters?
- In what are they travelling?
- Where are they going?
- What could Talis and Tina see?

Read the rest of page 59.

- Where did they go first?
- What tells you that Tina was scared?
- Why didn't she scream?
- What does "pulsing with light" mean?
- How is the city described?

Working with the Text

Description Structure

Discuss the features of the descriptive passages in the text.

Identify and discuss grammatical conventions used in the text—tense, particular and detailed noun groups, adjectives, actions verbs, adverbial phrases, punctuation.

Spelling and Vocabulary

Locate and list words in the text that start with "gl". Identify what part of speech each word is (noun, adjective, verb).

Locate words in the text that end in "ness". Identify the base word and discuss if adding "ness" changes the part of speech—for example, black (adjective) to blackness (noun). Brainstorm other words ending in "ness".

Locate words that are topic-specific. Discuss reasons for using such vocabulary.

Explore nouns and noun groups. Identify particular nouns and detailed noun groups.

Identify the use of imagery in the descriptions—for example, "a huge complicated globe, jewelled with a million lights, sprinkled with clouds..."

Learning Centre Activities



1 Blackline Master 55

- adjectives
- comprehension of text
- exploring interesting words and descriptions
- detailed drawing of a part of the text
- verbs, adjectives and nouns that start with "gl"

2 Students write a description of themselves, their suburb and their school, including details of their appearance and characteristics.

Guided Writing

Returning to the Text

Recall the text with its detailed noun groups and variety of adjectives. Revise the features of a description.

Preparing to Write

Brainstorm facts about the students' world—for example, the world of the school and playground. Build up a word bank of nouns, noun groups, adjectives and topic-specific vocabulary.

Joint Construction

With student input, construct a description of their world. Decide on a title and an introduction. Write the details about the attributes, using the word bank. Evaluations can be interspersed throughout the details. Jointly construct a concluding comment or summary. Check the structure and features, vocabulary, punctuation and grammar. Discuss what illustrations would enhance the description.

Description

Exhausted!

from *Collections 5* (page 56)



Guided Reading Book Link: *The Passenger*

Suggested Resources:

- pictures of snow-covered mountains
- pictures of night-time campfires

Synopsis: An exhausting day of trekking the snowy mountains is over and the skiers make their way into the camp. The coldness and their exhaustion are soon things of the past as they drink cups of hot soup and warm themselves by the crackling campfire. As night settles in, music and singing are heard through the campsite and the hardships faced through the day seem to melt away.

Processes: predicting, identifying features of a narrative, understanding language and information, using description to bring the setting alive

Vocabulary: *Specialised vocabulary:* skiers, campsite, trek, mountains, gloves, skis, boots, campfire, relaxed, heat, soup, guitars, memories. *Challenging words:* through, verandah, collapsed, circulation, crystal-blue, breathtaking, soaring, laugh, brought, strenuous

Grammatical Conventions:

- use of adjectives
- use of adverbs
- synonyms
- syllables

Spelling Focus:

- different letter combinations producing the “or” sound: “au”, “oar”, “ou”, “ar”
- “ough” words

Assessment Focus:

- understanding of narrative genre
- ability to use adjectives and adverbs to enhance writing
- ability to provide information about a location by writing a descriptive text.
- demonstrate comprehension through drawing and listing key events; (see **Blackline Master 56**)

Guided Reading

Orientation

Look at pictures of snow-covered mountains and of campfires. For each picture or group of pictures, write a list of adjectives that describe what you see.

Discuss times when students have been extremely cold, how they’ve warmed themselves, and the feelings that are associated with the “thawing out”.

Visual Literacy

Discuss the image above the text. Why was this chosen? What is the visual effect of the single-word exclamation title?

Reading the Text

Read the title of the text and examine the picture.

- What insight can we gain from these?
- What features of a description will we be looking for?
- What types of words do you think the author will use?

Read the introductory sentence.

- Ask for predictions about the remainder of the text.

Skim the text.

- Locate and discuss any unusual words.

Read the remainder of the text.

- Were the predictions accurate?
- What feelings were experienced as the text was being read?
- What type of day had the skiers endured?
- What words used by the author were able to bring the setting to life?
- How did the mood of the skiers change as the story progressed?
- Locate and discuss the use of listed grammatical conventions.

Working with the Text

Description Structure

Have students outline features of the orientation, complication and resolution. What language did the author use in order to provide the reader with a vivid description of the setting and the feelings being endured by the characters?

Spelling and Vocabulary

Find words in the text with the “or” sound (exhausted, soaring, brought, warmed), and add to each group according to the letter combination.

Discuss the different sounds produced by the “ough” combination in text words (through, enough, brought). List other letter combinations that produce each of these sounds.

Use the list of specialised vocabulary to draw or paint a picture of the setting. These words could be pasted in appropriate positions over the picture.

List the challenging words—write next to each word the part of speech to which it belongs.

Learning Centre Activities



1 Blackline Master 56

- word meanings
- a chain of events
- comparative pictures

2 Students imagine that they are the leader of a small group of people lost in a snow-covered mountain area. They have a two-way radio and have been able to contact the Search and Rescue Team. Students will write up the conversation that they had with the rescuers, giving full details of how they described to them where the lost party was situated.

Guided Writing

Returning to the Text

Recall the discussion about snow-covered mountains and campfires, the characters' stages of recovery and the impact that the author's use of language had on the reader.

Preparing to Write

Look back at the pictures of snowy mountain areas. List things that can be seen. Add to this list any other environment features that could be associated with such an area. Discuss facts that a rescue team would need to know.

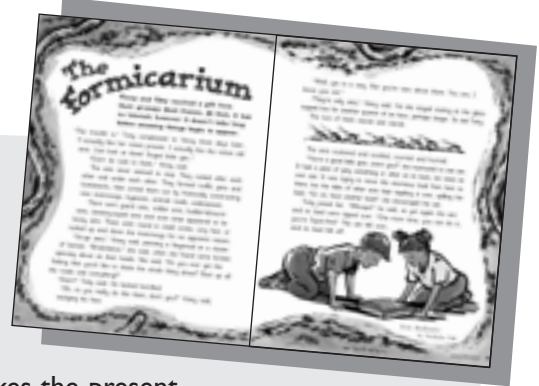
Joint Construction

Referring to the above list, construct a conversation that took place between the leader of the snow team and the Search and Rescue Team. Detailed description will be required if the party is to be found—keep evaluating the effectiveness of the language being used. You should also include the condition of the members of the lost party.

Literary Description

The Formicarium

from *Collections 6*
(pages 58–59)



Guided Reading Book Link: *Incredible Insects*

Suggested Resources:

- books about insects and pets

Synopsis: In this extract from a longer narrative, we observe Toby and Vinny discussing a present, a formicarium, recently received by Toby. Much as he wishes he didn't, Toby actually likes the present. He and Vinny watch the antics of the ants and talk about what the ants are doing.

Processes: exploring description, identifying adjectives in noun groups, direct speech

Vocabulary: *Specialised vocabulary:* guard ants, builder-labourer ants, sanitary-squad ants, glass-topped box. *Challenging words:* trouble, complained, stupid, rude, quarter, frantically, apparent, scuttered, scuttled, scurried, murmured, enormous, toppling, arterial, bypasses

Grammatical Conventions:

- use of adjectives
- specific noun groups
- figurative language
- direct speech
- punctuation

Spelling Focus:

- the suffix “arium”

Assessment Focus:

- knowledge of description framework and features
- ability to understand figurative language; (see **Blackline Master 57**)
- ability to identify direct speech
- demonstrates use of punctuation

Guided Reading

Orientation

Discuss interesting things about ants. List some features for which ants are known.

Share experiences of keeping ants and ant colonies and reasons for keeping ants.

Revise description in narratives and features of a description.

Visual Literacy

Discuss the layout of this text as compared to a factual text (such as “Setting Up an Insect Display” on pages 50–51). Compare the differences in layout and the reasons for these differences. Note the illustrations. Discuss the links with the body of the text and the fictional nature of the illustrations.

Reading the Text

Read the text.

- What is the relationship between the two children?
- How do you know?
- Who received the formicarium?
- What was the reaction when the gift was received? How do you know?
- How did the ant colony appear to the two children?
- What did they compare the activities of the ants to?
- Why did they use these comparisons?
- Were the children ant experts?
- How do you know?
- What observations would have been made had the children been experts?
- What words would they have used?
- Were the children interested in the ants?
- How do you know?
- What does the reader know about ants after reading the text?
- The text is a description. Why would such a text be included in a narrative?

Working with the Text

Description Structure

Discuss how this text demonstrates the features of a description. Locate and discuss the noun groups that indicate the position of the author in relation to the subject. Note the use of figurative language. Read through the text and note the direct speech. Discuss how the direct speech provides an insight into the characters.

Spelling and Vocabulary

Focus on the suffix “arium”. The name formicarium is derived from the word “formic” and the suffix “arium”. Formic acid occurs naturally in the bodies of ants.

List words ending with “arium”, such as aquarium, planetarium, solarium.

Identify the adjectives and compare them with adjectives from a factual text.

Locate the figurative language used to describe the ants.

Locate the direct speech. Try ways of reporting the same conversation in indirect speech.

Learning Centre Activities



1 Blackline Master 57

- exploring words
- using creativity
- illustrating
- writing captions

2 Students can choose a passage containing dialogue from a fiction book, and rewrite it as indirect speech. The joint construction can be used as a model.

Guided Writing

Returning to the Text

Recall the text from the collection.

Revise the features of a description, writing descriptive sentences and punctuating sentences.

Discuss changing direct to indirect speech.

Preparing to Write

Focus on the first section of text to “no apparent reason”. This section will become a model for another text.

Brainstorm a list of animals or insects which are interesting to watch. Choose one of these to be the subject of a new text.

Prepare by creating a mind map about the creature, using descriptive words and phrases.

Joint Construction

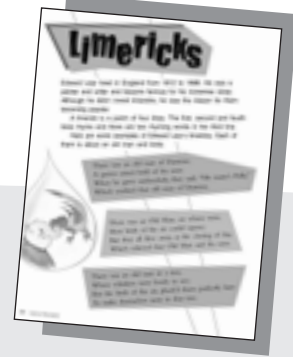
Using the text as a model, and the descriptive words and phrases, construct a text about watching the creature.

Discuss graphic features that could enhance the description.

Literary Description

Limericks

from *Collections 6* (page 64)



Guided Reading Book Link: *Iris and Me*

Suggested Resources:

- anthologies of Edward Lear's verse
- the introduction about Edward Lear who made limericks popular

Synopsis: The three limericks by Edward Lear focus on old men and birds: an old man of Dunrose; an old man in a tree; and an old man on whose nose birds rested.

Processes: exploring description, exploring limericks, using descriptive language

Vocabulary: *Specialised vocabulary:* old, man, parrot, nose, name, tree, whiskers, lovely, birds, bare, nests, trees, flew. *Challenging words:* melancholy, soothed, repose, closing of day, relieved

Grammatical Conventions:

- use of adjectives
- specific noun groups
- figurative language

Spelling Focus:

- rhyming pairs of words

Assessment Focus:

- knowledge of description framework and features
- understanding of figurative language
- writing descriptions; (see **Blackline Master 58**)
- writing limericks

Guided Reading

Orientation

Share information about poetry, humour in stories and poems, nonsense verse and familiar limericks.

Find out what the students know about limericks and their form.

Visual Literacy

Explore the layout of limericks and note the consistent structure of the poems.

Discuss the element of humour and how this is reinforced by the inclusion of a comic illustration.

Discuss the use of different fonts on the page.

Reading the Text

Read the introduction.

- When did Edward Lear live?
- Why was he famous?
- What is the form of a limerick?

Read and discuss each limerick.

Talk about:

- the nonsense aspect of each limerick
- the absence of reality
- the use of rhyme
- the common theme through the texts selected

Working with the Text

Description Structure

Discuss how these texts (limericks) demonstrate the features of a description.

Spelling and Vocabulary

Focus on rhyming pairs of words. Create rhyming pairs from noun groups—a very cheerful man is a happy chappie; a wide piece of building material is a thick brick. Make up the rhyming pairs first then think up the clues to go with them.

Locate and list the noun groups. Note how the author uses a noun group as the focus of the limerick. Discuss how humour is generated in the text by using serious words, such as “melancholy” to describe nonsense situations.

Learning Centre Activities

1 Blackline Master 58

- exploring words
- using creativity
- illustrating text

2 Students write a limerick independently, using the text as a model.



Guided Writing

Returning to the Text

Recall the text and the structure of a limerick. Revise the features of a description.

Preparing to Write

Read through, or listen to, a collection of limericks. Brainstorm situations such as those depicted in Edward Lear’s poetry. Brainstorm words and phrases that sound sensible but become nonsense when applied to the nonsense situation. Brainstorm and list possible rhyming words that could be used in the writing of limericks about these situations.

Joint Construction

With student input, and using the original text as a model, construct a limerick. Draw from the words and phrases put together in the preparation.

Descriptive Poems

Phase 4

Worms in the Compost and The Worm

from *Collections 4* (page 58)



Guided Reading Book Link: *Heep*

Suggested Resources:

- poetry texts

Synopsis: The two poems describe worms, one in the compost and the other humorously.

Processes: exploring literary text, exploring descriptive poetry, identifying specific vocabulary, exploring language, spelling and grammar

Vocabulary: *Specialised vocabulary:* compost, vibrations, segmented, tongue, swallow, squirm.

Grammatical Conventions:

- adjectives building up noun groups
- use of action words and past tense
- adverbs
- use of commas, full stops, exclamation marks and ellipses
- personal opinion
- rhyme, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition

Spelling Focus:

- “ought” spelling pattern
- “gue” spelling pattern
- “squ” trigraph

Assessment Focus:

- knowledge of descriptive poetry structure
- grammatical features
- topic-specific language
- poetic devices and features
- ability to read with understanding; (see **Blackline Master 59**)

Guided Reading

Orientation

Ask the students to share their experiences of composting and worms. Discuss ways to describe compost and worms.

Discuss the benefits of having worms in the garden.

Revise the features of descriptive poetry.

Visual Literacy

Discuss the layout of the pages. Discuss the style of the illustrations and how they help us to understand the text. Identify what is shown in the illustrations and match the pictures to lines in the poems.

Examine and discuss the lettering style of the titles.

Reading the Text

Students read each poem.

- What is the title?
- What information is provided by the title?
- What is the poet describing?
- What poetic features are the poets using?
- What personal opinion is expressed in “The Worm”?
- Compare the two poems and their common subject matter. Discuss how each poet described the same subject differently.
- Reread the poems. Model how to use appropriate pause and emphasis.

Working with the Text

Descriptive Poetry Structure

Discuss how the poems fit the framework for descriptive poetry or description.

Identify and discuss grammatical conventions used in the text—topic-specific language, past tense, noun groups, action verbs, adverbs, punctuation.

Identify poetic devices used in the text, such as rhyme, assonance (“strange danger”), repetition (“coil after coil”), alliteration (slowly and surely), onomatopoeia (“pop”).

Spelling and Vocabulary

Examine the word “sought”. Brainstorm and list words that have the “ought” spelling pattern.

Examine the word “tongue”. Identify the “gue” spelling pattern.

Identify the “squ” trigraph in “squirm”. List words that start with “squ”.

Discuss rhyme and identify pairs of rhyming words.

Discuss the rhythm patterns in each poem.

Identify the alliteration in “slowly and surely”.

Discuss its effect.

Identify and define the use of assonance (“strange danger”).

Identify and define the use of onomatopoeia (“with a faint little pop”).

Identify the use of repetition (“coil after coil”) and discuss its effect.

Learning Centre Activities



1 Blackline Master 59

- adjectives
- similarities and differences between poems
- poetry reading
- story map
- handwriting poetry

2 Students independently construct a descriptive poem based on a personal experience.

Guided Writing

Returning to the Text

Recall the text. Revise the features of a descriptive poem.

Preparing to Write

Choose a theme. Build up a word bank of theme-specific vocabulary and discuss appropriate poetic features.

Joint Construction

With student input, and using the word bank, construct a descriptive poem. Check vocabulary, punctuation and grammar.