

Talking and Writing about Places

Here are some questions to get you started talking about places that are important to you:

- Are there any places that are special to you?
- What is your favorite place in the world?
- What is one place that you really, really dislike?

- What kinds of things do you see when you think of this place?
- What colors come to your mind when you think of this place?
- What does this place smell like? What effect does the smell have on you?
- Are there any sounds that come to mind when you think of this place? How do those sounds make you feel?
- Is there any feeling—texture, not emotion—that you think of when you think of this place? What has this texture in the place?

- What are some important objects in this place, and how do you feel about them?
- What do you usually do in this place?
- What makes this place special in a good or bad way in your mind?
- What (approximate) time of day do you usually go to this place: morning, afternoon, evening, or night? How does that affect the mood of the place?

Grammar Tip:

Try to observe the correct order for adjectives when you use more than one together. Here's a chart I found online:

Order of Adjectives

1-Opinion	Nice, ugly, smart, etc.	A nice person.
2-Size	Big, small, large, tall, etc.	A small table.
3-Physical quality	Delicate, lean, muscular, etc.	They are delicate.
4-Age	Old, young, new, etc.	A new TV.
5-Shape	Round, rectangular, flat, etc.	A round table.
6-Colour	Pink, purple, black, white, etc.	A purple house.
7-Origin	Mexican, Korean, French, etc.	Korean food.
8-Material	Wooden, plastic, cotton, etc.	A plastic bottle.
9-Purpose	Sleeping, kitchen, sports, etc.	Kitchen utensils.

Examples:

- The ugly old velvet doll sits on the big brown wooden table.
- A tiny round green marble rolled quietly toward the mysterious, dark hole in the ground.

Descriptive Writing

When you are describing a place, there are a few tricks you can use to make your writing more powerful:

Use at least three senses:

Most people using the sense of sight. Hearing is also a powerful sense, but the most powerful sense of all is smell. Smell has the ability to unlock memories in ways that other senses cannot. Therefore, it is a powerful sense to use in writing. When you finish your paragraph, go back and look to see how many senses you've used, and see if there are other senses you could include.

Note: For example, a mountain doesn't taste like anything, but if you usually drink Gatorade or soju when climbing a mountain, that has a taste that is part of your mountain experience.

Identify "telling details":

Sometimes, a detail or two can tell us a lot about a person or a place. For example, most bedrooms have some furniture and windows, but what does the furniture look like? Is it old and ragged, or brand new? Is the window clean or dirty, big or small? Does the window face a beautiful scene, or a brick wall? Is the room messy, with dirty clothes scattered on the floor, or is it extremely tidy, with everything in its place? Picking these kinds of details can help you to make the paragraph really communicate something powerful and meaningful, besides just describing a place.

Work your nuances:

This is tricky when you're writing in a foreign language, but it's worth trying. Adjectives and nouns often have a nuance: for example, "affordable" is either neutral or positive, where "cheap" is definitely negative. On the other hand, "inexpensive" can be neutral or even sometimes positive. As another example, consider an old pair of shoes. You might call them "well-worn" (which means you've worn them a lot and they're old, but in a comfortable, positive way). You might call them "scruffy" (which means they look old and bad in a negative way). "Scuffed," meanwhile, would describe the shoes as looking not-new, but in a relatively neutral way. This is often true with adjectives, but sometimes even nouns have nuances.

Note: if you're struggling to find the adjective or noun with the right nuance, ask your teacher for help in choosing the right word. Another way is to look online to see how people use the word in real life: Googling the word is a great way to see how it's used.

Focus on feelings:

Descriptive writing isn't really about just describing a person, place, or thing. In fact, it's about making the reader *feel* something about that person, place, or thing... or, really, make the reader feel the feelings that the writer has about that person, place, or thing.

The same object could be described in a way that makes the reader feel calm and relaxed, or could be described in a creepy way that makes the reader nervous and afraid. A great exercise is to try describing the same place or thing twice in two different paragraphs, but make the reader feel very differently in each paragraph.