

Y8 Descriptive Writing Unit (4 Weeks)

Unit Summary

This term we will be studying **descriptive writing**. We will use all the important knowledge from our English lessons across the year to demonstrate our writing ability by writing **accurately** and **creatively**.

Over the coming weeks, we will:

- Use settings effectively to express an appropriate **emotion**
- Begin our descriptions effectively to have an impact on the reader
- Use effective **imagery** to describe settings and people
- Think about how we **sequence** our writing
- We will combine and **practise** using emotion, imagery and sequencing to create an effect
- We will practise our writing and have time to **craft** and **edit** our responses

Core Writing Outcomes

Describe a mountainous area ensuring that it meets this criteria:

1. It is clear.
2. It has an emotive description
3. It uses imagery effectively

Core Writing Objectives

- Plan to manipulate tone and viewpoint (formal/informal; neutral/persuasive).
- Amend vocabulary, grammar and structure of writing to improve its coherence and effectiveness
- Achieve concision and precision through thoughtful vocabulary and syntax choices.
- Eliminate clichés and vague words; strengthen verbs and nouns.
- Proofread systematically (target personal error patterns).
- Know when to use/not use repetition for effect.
- Use punctuation to craft meaning and rhythm in sophisticated ways.
- Analyse and emulate style features from high-quality models.
- Confidently use the full range of punctuation for effect and clarity across the curriculum

Careers Link

This unit...

- Helps people visualise ideas.
- Makes communication clearer and more persuasive.
- Shows emotional intelligence and audience awareness.
- Enhances storytelling — a skill used in interviews, presentations, and leadership.
- **Explore careers links using AI software with the class**

Background Information

Pupils need to be shown how a range of writers and poets have been inspired by nature to create emotive descriptions. Prose and poetry by Robert Frost and George Orwell are contained within the unit, but wider reading for more able pupils might include Wordsworth's poems, that teach emotion through landscape, Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney, both of which have written poems with strong vivid imagery and clear metaphorical symbolism. Bronte's landscape descriptions with analysis are also worth looking at.

Core Reading Objectives

- Analyse how writers present themes, viewpoints, and perspectives.
- Adapt tone and style for different audiences and analytical purposes.
- Evaluate how context influences themes and reader interpretation across periods.
- Analyse layers of meaning in vocabulary, including figurative and symbolic language.
- Make sophisticated inferences about themes, motivations, and authorial perspective.
- Justify interpretations with close textual analysis and contextual understanding.
- Critically evaluate authorial techniques, considering how structure, form, and viewpoint create meaning, style, and impact across genres and contexts.

Plot Summary		Keywords	
The Tempest (I.i) Alonso, the King of Naples, is on a ship with his son Ferdinand and his companions Sebastian, Antonio, Stephano and Trinculo. They are struck by a terrifying, howling storm. They abandon ship and swim to a nearby island but are washed ashore in different places. The island seems to be abandoned.	Ferdinand and Miranda (I.ii, III.i) Ferdinand has survived the storm. He is safely on the island and is found by Miranda. They fall instantly in love. Prospero wants to test that the love is real. Ferdinand has to endure hard labour to prove his intentions are honourable. Miranda pities Ferdinand and wants to marry him. Prospero blesses their marriage.	colonialism – when one country establishes itself in another country. When someone colonises a new country, they are called a coloniser . The original inhabitants of the land are called natives .	
	The End (IV.i, V.i) A marriage for Ferdinand and Miranda is arranged and celebrated with a masque attended by spirits. It is interrupted when Prospero recalls the threat from Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban. Prospero and Ariel send spirit dogs to scare them away. King Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio meet Prospero. He explains what has been happening on the island. He shows them Ferdinand and Miranda who are now married. King Alonso is filled with regret and asks for forgiveness from Prospero which he grants.	usurp – to take control of someone else's power when you do not have the right to. Someone who usurps is called a usurper .	
	Epilogue Prospero declares that he will be giving up his magic. Ariel is released from his service. The party travel back to Milan. We do not know what has happened to Caliban.	tempest – a violent storm.	
	Characters	'The Tempest' Knowledge Organiser	
After the Storm (I.ii) From a nearby island, Miranda watches the huge tempest. She lives with her father Prospero and has little memory of her life before the island. Prospero tells his daughter of their past: he was the Duke of Milan twelve years ago, but he was so involved with his books and secret studies that he did not realise his brother Antonio was stealing power from him. One night, Antonio ordered soldiers to take Prospero and Miranda and put them on a boat to their death. But they were washed ashore this island safely and have lived there ever since. Prospero has been ruler of the island. Prospero has created the storm to bring his brother to the island.	Alonso – King of Naples		
	Sebastian – Alonso's brother		
	Ferdinand – Alonso's son		
	Antonio – Prospero's brother. Antonio stole Prospero's title as Duke of Milan.		
Ariel and Caliban (I.ii. cont./II.i) Prospero is a powerful magician who controls the spirit Ariel who completes tasks for him. Prospero has agreed to release Ariel after this last mission. Caliban is a deformed savage slave who is also under Prospero's control. He is the son of an old witch, Sycorax, and is a native of the island. Prospero taught Caliban how to speak but Caliban resents the control Prospero has over him.	Gonzalo – the old counsellor to the King of Naples	Background Information Shakespeare was born in the Elizabethan era, named after Elizabeth I. After she died, James I became king. This period of history is called the Jacobean era, because Jacob is the Latin for James. Shakespeare lived and worked in both eras.	
	Trinculo – a jester		
	Stephano – a drunken butler		
	Prospero – the rightful Duke of Milan		
Kind Alonso (II.i) King Alonso and his younger brother Sebastian, as well as Antonio (the usurping Duke of Milan), wander around the island. King Alonso weeps as he believes his son Ferdinand is dead. Sebastian and Antonio plot to kill Alonso so that Sebastian can be king. They are stopped by Ariel's magical intervention.	Miranda – Prospero's daughter	Italian city states - A city-state is an area that is ruled by a major city. During the Elizabethan and Jacobean era, Italy wasn't one unified country, but a number of small independent city-states.	
	Ariel – an airy spirit; a slave of Prospero's who earns his freedom		
	Caliban – a savage and deformed slave of Prospero's; a native of the island		
Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo (II.ii, III.ii) The monster Caliban is found by Stephano and Trinculo. They give him alcohol to drink and he gets drunk. Caliban offers to serve Stephano because he believes he is a god because of the heavenly drink! Caliban explains to them how Prospero has treated him and that he will be their guide on the island if they overthrow him. The three drunks go to find and kill Prospero.		Tragicomedy – a play that has some features of a tragedy and some features of a comedy.	
		Sea exploration was booming in the Elizabethan era as people 'discovered' new parts of the world. Queen Elizabeth I was obsessed with their discoveries and was happy to pay for their travels. Led by her example, the rest of the country were also fascinated by their stories and goods.	

'The Tempest': Knowledge Organiser

Key Reading Objectives

- Read and respond to increasingly challenging texts
- Read fluently demonstrating control of tone and pace to enhance meaning
- Demonstrate growing familiarity with canonical literature
- Provide analytical justifications supported by textual evidence
- Analyse and perform dramatic and poetic texts, exploring structure, metre, tone, and staging
- Discuss how performance communicates layers of meaning and subtext
- Explore nuanced vocabulary
- Analyse how characterisation and setting convey implied meaning
- Predict outcomes and thematic developments based on textual evidence and awareness of genre conventions
- Analyse how writers use language to achieve specific effects and convey ideas

Key Reading Assessment:

Essay – How is Caliban Presented in the play?

Key Oracy Tasks

- Perform a variety of scenes from the play
- Whoosh through the play through drama
- Debate the nature/nurture factors that cause Caliban's behaviour
- Discussions around plot and characters using key words

Key writing Objectives

- Sustain accurate and effective sentences
- Use punctuation to craft meaning and rhythm in sophisticated ways
- Blend formal and informal voices deliberately where genre allows
- Confidently use the full range of punctuation for effect and clarity across the curriculum
- Eliminate clichés and vague words; strengthen verbs and nouns
- Proofread systematically (target personal error patterns)
- Know when to use/not use repetition for effect
- Compose openings and endings that suit the audience and purpose
- Maintain a confident narrative or argument voice over extended pieces
- Experiment with structure (flashback, dual narrative, withheld information) with clarity

Key writing Outcome

Writing Task: Message in a Bottle

A piece of extended writing from either Caliban or Miranda including backstory, emotions, metaphor, first person, relationships etc. See detailed task planning for more information.