

# Successful Writing

UPPER-INTERMEDIATE

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**Express Publishing**

# Introduction

## To the Teacher

**Successful Writing Upper-Intermediate** consists of 19 units which cover all types of composition writing (descriptions, narratives, transactional and other types of letters/emails, argumentative essays, articles, reviews) required at FCE level. Each unit starts with a lead-in listening activity through which the basic plan for the type of writing the unit deals with is introduced. This also serves as a brainstorming activity, giving the teacher the chance to elicit useful language and ideas on the topic under discussion. Detailed theory and plans are provided to be used as a reference by students. A variety of models in which the theory is applied are followed by exercises to improve students' writing skills, focusing on register and style. The exercises are graded, leading to the acquisition of those skills needed for students to be able to write successfully at FCE level. Topic identification, revision boxes and study check sections reinforce students' knowledge and remind them of the structures previously presented, thus helping them revise the writing areas covered in the book. The Teacher's Book provides answers to the exercises, model plans, transcripts of the listening exercises and useful teaching tips. At the back of the Teacher's Book are marked model compositions to help teachers mark students' compositions. The book is accompanied by an audio CD with all the listening exercises.

The units can either be presented in the order they appear in the book or teachers can select the unit they want to present according to their own judgement and their students' needs. The course can be covered in approximately 30 one-hour lessons.

## Brainstorming Technique

The brainstorming technique can be used in all the units presented in this book. The technique may be applied each time the students come across a new topic, whether in a model or a writing assignment.

The technique is used as follows: the teacher invites students to say as many words or ideas as possible related to the topic and writes them on the board. The teacher may choose to guide the students further by having them link or categorise related terms. Students then proceed to do the exercise on their own.

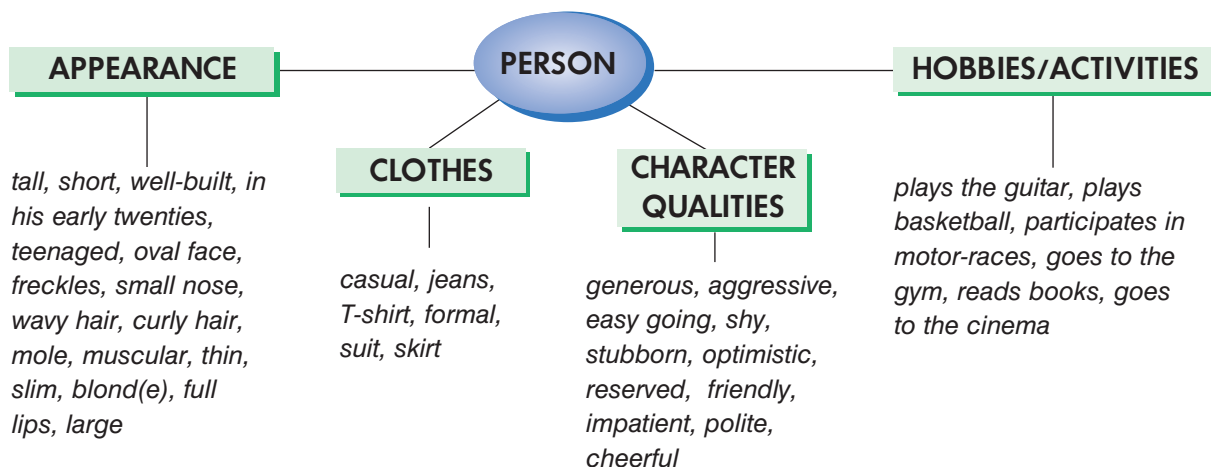
This technique aims to stimulate students' knowledge about the topic, thus drawing together ideas and vocabulary necessary for writing a successful composition.

e.g. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country.

Brainstorming: *quiet, noisy, no flats, nice gardens, lots of trees, not many cars, few hospitals, no stress, few schools, not many cinemas, no pollution, healthy surroundings, etc.*

e.g. Describe your best friend.


Brainstorming. T writes the following key words on the board and asks Ss to give him/her as many words as possible related to each key word



# Contents

1 Describing People.....	4
2 Describing Places/Buildings.....	11
3 Describing Objects .....	18
4 Describing Festivals/Ceremonies/Celebrations .....	20
5 Writing Instructions/Giving Directions/Describing Processes.....	24
6 Narratives — Stories.....	27
7 Witness Statements.....	37
8 Formal and Informal Letters/Emails .....	40
9 Transactional Letters/Emails .....	57
 Study Check 1 .....	 63
 10 “For and Against” Essays.....	 64
11 Opinion Essays.....	71
12 Providing Solutions to Problems Essays.....	76
13 Discursive Essays.....	79
 Study Check 2 .....	 82
 14 News Reports .....	 83
15 Assessing Good and Bad Points .....	87
16 Survey Reports.....	91
17 Reporting Experiences .....	95
18 Articles.....	99
19 Reviews.....	104
 Study Check 3 .....	 107
Revision & Extension Section .....	115
Appendix .....	133

# UNIT 1 Describing People

- 1  Read the following table, then listen and tick (✓) the information mentioned. Finally, use the table and the photograph to describe Paul.

Height	quite tall <input type="checkbox"/>	rather short <input type="checkbox"/>	
Build	well-built <input type="checkbox"/>	thin <input type="checkbox"/>	muscular <input type="checkbox"/>
Age	early twenties <input type="checkbox"/>	mid thirties <input type="checkbox"/>	teenaged <input type="checkbox"/>
Facial Features	oval face <input type="checkbox"/>	high cheekbones <input type="checkbox"/>	blue eyes <input type="checkbox"/> mole <input type="checkbox"/>
Hair	curly <input type="checkbox"/>	short brown <input type="checkbox"/>	wavy <input type="checkbox"/>
Clothes	casual <input type="checkbox"/>	formal <input type="checkbox"/>	
Personality	good-humoured <input type="checkbox"/>	imaginative <input type="checkbox"/>	vain <input type="checkbox"/> short-tempered <input type="checkbox"/>
Activities/Hobbies	going to discos <input type="checkbox"/>	watching old films <input type="checkbox"/>	cooking <input type="checkbox"/>



A descriptive composition about a person should consist of:

- an **introduction** where you give some brief information about the person (his/her name, time or place you met/saw him/her, how you heard about him/her);
- a **main body** where you describe physical appearance, personality characteristics and hobbies/interests/everyday activities in separate paragraphs; and
- a **conclusion** which includes your comments and/or feelings about the person.

Such descriptions can be found in articles, letters, witness statements, novels, etc.

## Points to consider

- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence which introduces the subject of the paragraph. A variety of linking words should be used to connect ideas.
- To describe physical appearance, details should be given as follows: **height/build, age, facial features, hair, clothes**, moving from the most general aspects to the more specific details. *e.g. John is a tall, slim man in his mid forties. He has a thin face, blue eyes and a large nose. His short hair is greying at the temples. He is usually casually dressed.*
- To describe character and behaviour you can support your description with examples. *e.g. Sally is very sociable. She loves going to parties and dances.* If you want to mention any negative qualities, use mild language (tends to, seems to, is rather, can occasionally be, etc.). *e.g. Instead of saying Sally is arrogant., it is better to say Sally tends to be rather arrogant.*
- Variety in the use of adjectives will make your description more interesting. *e.g. good-natured, well-behaved, gorgeous, etc.*
- Present tenses can be used to describe someone connected to the present, *e.g. someone you see every day.* Past tenses can be used to describe someone related to the past, *e.g. someone who is no longer alive, someone whom you won't meet again ... etc.*

## Introduction

### Paragraph 1

*name of the person; time you met/saw him/her*

## Main Body

### Paragraph 2

*physical appearance*

### Paragraph 3

*personality characteristics and justification*

### Paragraph 4

*hobbies, interests or any activities he/she takes part in*

## Conclusion

### Final Paragraph

*comments & feelings about the person*



- 2** Read the model composition and write down the topic of each paragraph. Find the topic sentences for each paragraph and try to replace them with other similar ones. Then underline the adjectives which describe physical appearance and circle the ones which describe personality.

*Mavis,  
neighbour for six  
years*

### "My Next-door Neighbour"

Mavis has been my neighbour for six years. I first met her when she knocked on my door and asked for a spade because she hadn't yet unpacked hers. She had only moved in two days before.

Physically, Mavis looks younger than most other women in their late sixties. She is of average height, neither fat nor thin. Her plump round face is framed by a mass of wavy white hair and her sparkling blue eyes show her humour and friendliness. She prefers wearing casual, comfortable clothes. I don't think I have ever seen her in a perfectly ironed suit.

As for her personality, Mavis's most striking characteristic is her generosity. My house, as well as most of our neighbours', nearly always has a vase of flowers from her garden in the living room. Mavis is very good-natured and always has time for a chat. She is also patient. She hardly ever gets annoyed about anything, except when children pick her favourite roses and lilies. However, she tends to be quite stubborn — once she has made a decision, nothing can change her mind.

Mavis always seems to be busy doing something. She spends a lot of her time looking after her garden and often participates in local flower shows. When she is not in her garden she is usually off somewhere raising money for one charity or another.

All in all, Mavis is the perfect next-door neighbour. Since the day she moved in, we have grown very close and I am very fond of her, even if I am woken up by the noise of her lawnmower early in the morning!



- 3** Fill in the table with words from the list below. Using words from the completed table describe your partner's physical appearance, then write a short paragraph describing the appearance of a relative of yours.

*round, oval, slanted, ginger, of medium height, middle-aged, mole, teenaged, curly, blond(e), tall, wrinkled, thick, balding, just over six foot, tanned, slim, thin, scar, elderly, muscular, in his teens, well-built, in his mid-forties, overweight, curved, wavy, pale, crooked, freckled, dimples, straight, skinny, beard, shoulder-length, almond-shaped, short, moustache, long-legged, round-shouldered, in his late forties, full*

HEIGHT:

BUILD:

AGE:

COMPLEXION:

FACE:

HAIR:

EYES:

NOSE:

LIPS:


SPECIAL FEATURES:

## Unit 1 Describing People

- 4** Match the following adjectives with the nouns below. Some adjectives can be used more than once.

*broad, rosy, clear, bushy, thick, full, upturned, double, hooked, fair, crooked, thin, hollow, deep-set, curly, puffy, clean-shaven, pale, oval, spotty, dark*

- |         |            |          |           |
|---------|------------|----------|-----------|
| 1 ..... | eyebrows   | 6 .....  | face      |
| 2 ..... | eyes       | 7 .....  | lips      |
| 3 ..... | complexion | 8 .....  | cheeks    |
| 4 ..... | nose       | 9 .....  | hair      |
| 5 ..... | chin       | 10 ..... | shoulders |

- 5**  *The man in the photograph is wanted by the police. Look at the picture and the text and try to fill in the missing words. Then, listen to find out if your answers were correct. Why is there no description of his personality?*

A dangerous prisoner escaped this morning from Spurswall prison. He is believed to be at large in the Waxerton area and police are warning the public not to approach him as he is likely to react violently.

Neville Slatter is 6 foot 3 inches tall and quite 1) ..... with 2) ..... shoulders. He is 54 years old and unshaven with a 3) ..... jaw, a large nose and 4) ..... lips. He has 5) ..... untidy brown hair and is bald on top. He also has a 6) ..... on his right cheek. Should you see this man, or if you have knowledge of his whereabouts, please contact your local police station.



Avoid beginning all sentences in the same way as this will make your composition boring. Use a variety of structures, trying to link the sentences together.

Instead of writing: *She is a pretty girl. She has an oval face.*, you can write: *She is a pretty girl **with** an oval face.*

Look at the examples suggested below:

*He has wrinkles. They make him look older.*

*He has wrinkles **which** make him look older.*

*She is a beautiful woman. She wears designer clothes.*

*She is a beautiful woman **who** wears designer clothes.*

*She has long hair. She wears her hair in a pony-tail.*

*She wears her long hair **in** a pony-tail.*

*He has a big garden. He grows vegetables in the garden.*

*He has a big garden **where** he grows vegetables.*

- 6** Rewrite the sentences by linking them together as illustrated in the examples above.

- 1 David Keen was well-built. He had fine wrinkles around his eyes. They showed when he laughed.

- 2 Willy is in his mid twenties. He has an oval face and long curly hair. He ties it back in a pony-tail. He has a big kitchen. He likes to cook for his friends.
- 3 Helen is dark-skinned. She has beautiful almond-shaped eyes. She dyes her hair. It makes her look younger than she is.
- 4 Marcy's mother is an attractive woman. She has long blond hair. She wears her hair in a bun.

- 7** Use the adjectives listed below to complete the character descriptions.

*honest, reserved, outgoing, frank, tactless, persuasive, trustworthy, fussy*

- 1 Tina is a very ..... person. She is capable of convincing you to do almost anything she wants.
- 2 Sarah can be ..... on occasion. She often says things that offend people.
- 3 Jim is very .....; he always says exactly what he is thinking.
- 4 Stephanie is one of the most ..... people I know; she would never consider doing anything illegal.
- 5 My little sister is very ..... about what she eats; there are very few foods she likes.
- 6 Anna is a very ..... person who hardly ever lets her feelings show.
- 7 Mark is extremely .....; when it comes to keeping secrets, he will never tell a soul.
- 8 Annabel is a(n) ..... person who loves meeting people and making new friends.

- 8** Decide which adjectives describe positive or negative qualities. Choose any five of them and write sentences justifying each quality, then write a short paragraph describing the character of one of your relatives.

*patient, boring, pessimistic, mean, ambitious, generous, mature, interesting, hostile, immature, friendly, impatient, tactful, good-natured, short-tempered, thick-skinned, easy-going, hard-working, deceitful, fair, shy, helpful, aggressive, reserved, outgoing, polite, cheerful*

Positive Qualities	Negative Qualities
<i>patient</i>	<i>boring</i>

*e.g. My grandmother is very **patient**; she takes time and care with everything she does. etc.*

Sentences can be linked together in a variety of ways. Read the examples and say which words are used to link descriptions of similar qualities and which to join descriptions of opposing qualities.

#### Similar qualities (both positive or both negative)


- e.g. She is kind-hearted. She is cooperative.  
*She is kind-hearted **and also** cooperative.*  
*She is kind-hearted **and** cooperative **as well**.*  
*She is kind-hearted, **as well as (being)** cooperative.*  
***In addition to** being kind-hearted, she is **also** cooperative.*  
*She is **both** kind-hearted **and** cooperative.*

#### Opposing qualities (one positive and one negative)

- e.g. He is usually well-behaved. He can be naughty at times.  
*He is usually well-behaved **but** can be naughty at times.*  
*He is usually well-behaved; **in spite of this/nevertheless/** **however**, he can be naughty at times.*  
***Although/In spite of the fact that** he is usually well-behaved, he can be naughty at times.*

- 9** Rewrite the following sentences using linking words/phrases from the table above.

- He is humorous. He has a tendency to be immature.
- He is kind-hearted. He can, on occasion, be absent-minded.
- She is enthusiastic. She is cooperative.
- She has a pleasant personality. She can be shy and unsociable.
- He is well-balanced. He has a sensitive nature.
- He has a generous disposition. From time to time he can be aggressive.

- 10**  You are going to hear a conversation between two company executives who are trying to decide which of the two people below should be promoted. Read the information and try to fill in the missing adjectives, then listen to find out if your answers were correct.



..... ; he has doubled clientele  
 ..... ; he uses his own judgement to make decisions  
 ..... ; he works well with employees  
 ..... ; he is never late for work

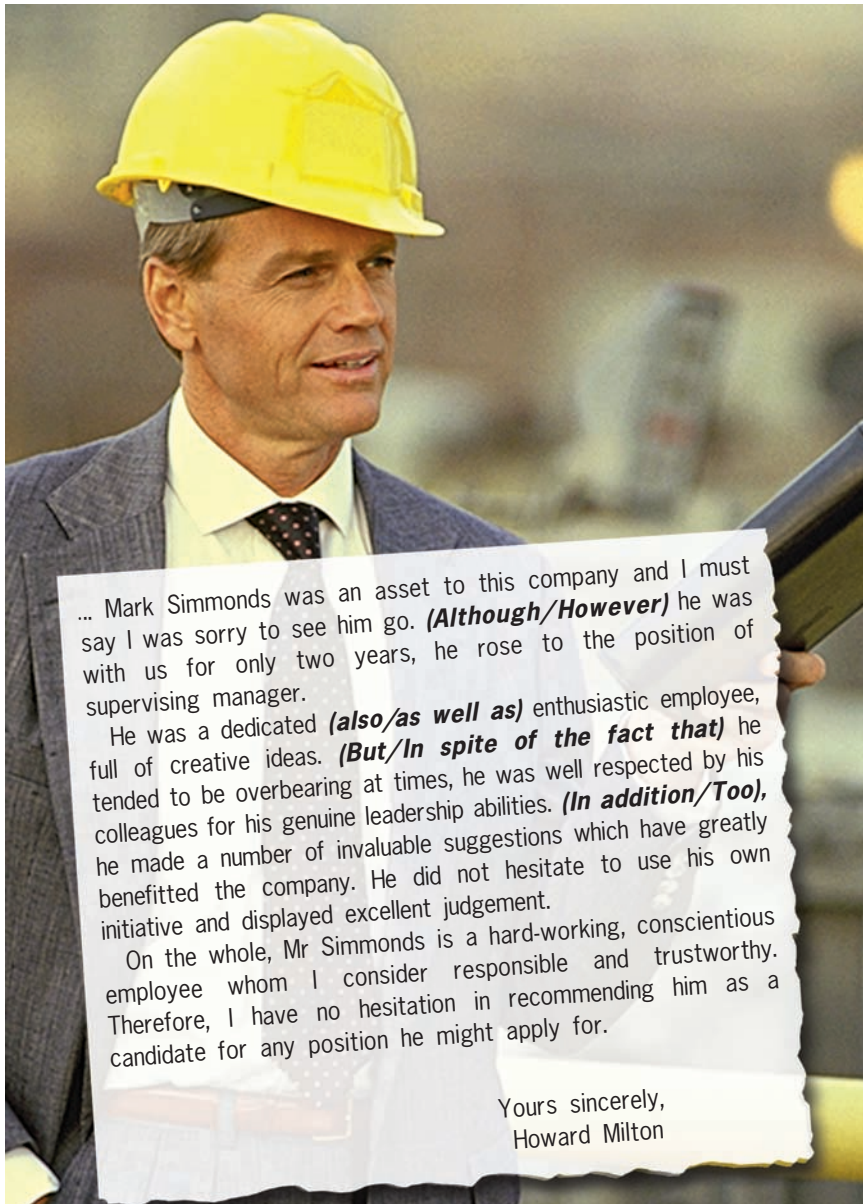


..... ; she has been with the company for many years  
 ..... ; she has difficulty in facing customers  
 ..... ; if her work is criticised, she sometimes bursts into tears



## Unit 1 Describing People

- 11** Read the following extract and underline the correct linking words/phrases. Then list the positive and negative qualities mentioned. Where do you think this extract is taken from? Why do you think there is no description of physical appearance?



... Mark Simmonds was an asset to this company and I must say I was sorry to see him go. **(Although/However)** he was with us for only two years, he rose to the position of supervising manager.

He was a dedicated **(also/as well as)** enthusiastic employee, full of creative ideas. **(But/In spite of the fact that)** he tended to be overbearing at times, he was well respected by his colleagues for his genuine leadership abilities. **(In addition/Too)**, he made a number of invaluable suggestions which have greatly benefitted the company. He did not hesitate to use his own initiative and displayed excellent judgement.

On the whole, Mr Simmonds is a hard-working, conscientious employee whom I consider responsible and trustworthy. Therefore, I have no hesitation in recommending him as a candidate for any position he might apply for.


Yours sincerely,  
Howard Milton

- 12** You used to be the employer of the person whose qualities are listed below. Write a reference for her. Include a variety of appropriate linking words/phrases, using the model in exercise 11 as a guide. You can start as shown in the example.

*reliable, honest, professional, determined, knowledgeable, impatient, cheerful*

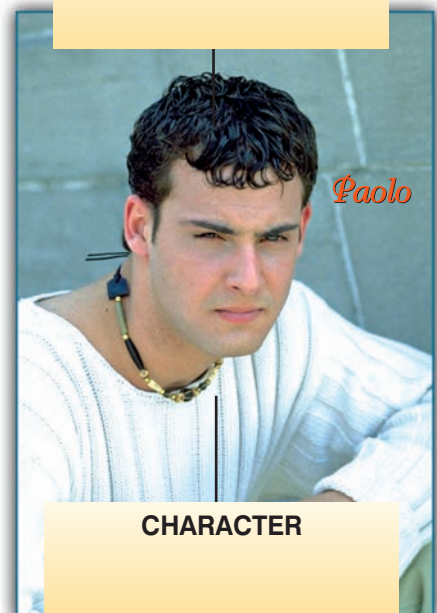
*e.g. Jennifer Grant worked as a teacher for Brighton Primary School for two and a half years.*

- 13** *Pietro's brother, Paolo, is going to study abroad. He will be staying with a couple of Pietro's English friends. His friends are going to meet Paolo at the airport but they haven't seen him since he was little, so Pietro has decided to write them a letter with all the necessary information. What information should Pietro include in his letter?*

- 14**  Listen to the letter Pietro wrote and make notes under each heading. Then, using this information, describe Paolo.

### APPEARANCE

### CLOTHES



### CHARACTER

### HOBBIES/ ACTIVITIES



## Manner and Mannerism

Instead of only using adjectives to describe a person's character, you can also include examples of the way they speak/look/smile, etc. in order to give a clearer picture and to make the description more lively. *e.g. His blue eyes light up whenever he sees his grandchild.* Although the adjectives **kind** and **affectionate** could be used to describe the person, giving examples of mannerism makes the description more vivid.

### 15 Read the following descriptions of mannerisms and match them with the adjectives below.

*shy, loving, vain, inattentive, aggressive*

- 1 Whenever Roger got involved in an argument, he would shout and become quite violent.
- 2 Sue is often seen with her children, holding them close, stroking their hair and speaking softly to them.
- 3 When everybody else is busy studying, Sheila spends her time staring at the ceiling, yawning and playing with her hair.
- 4 She blushes when she talks to people she does not know and her palms sweat.
- 5 She always runs her fingers through her golden hair and admires her reflection in the mirror before she goes on stage.

### 16 Read the model composition and answer the following questions: a) In which paragraph does the writer describe Archie's personality? b) Which phrases describe manner/ mannerism? c) What tenses are used and why? d) What are the writer's feelings about Archie?

#### Describe a person you will never forget

I first met Archie about thirty years ago when I was a child. Archie was a sailor and a very good friend of my father's. As we lived near a major port, he would visit us whenever his ship came in. He was a tall, broad man with short brown hair, sparkling blue eyes and a wide smile. His neatly trimmed beard made him look older than he was. He always wore a white sailor's uniform with a dark blue collar and a round white hat.

Archie had a wonderful personality. My brother and I loved it when he told us tall tales of storms and sea monsters. Archie was always telling jokes and his whole body would shake with laughter whenever he found something funny. He was very generous and never forgot to bring us exotic gifts from his travels. There were times, though, when he could be stubborn and he would frown angrily and stamp his feet. He enjoyed being a sailor and spent his whole working life in the Navy, even though many better opportunities came up.

When he was not travelling, he worked on his sailing boat at home. He managed to build it all by himself and went sailing on it in his free time. When he retired, he bought a fisherman's cottage in New Zealand and moved there. Although we never see him any more, I will always treasure those childhood memories of him.

### 17 Read the following descriptions and say which quality each one describes.

- 1 When little Tommy wants a new toy, he screams until his parents buy it for him.
- 2 Jim tends to stand by himself at parties and hardly ever meets anyone's eye.
- 3 When Sarah listens to sad music her eyes fill with tears.
- 4 Whenever he received bad news, John would remain quite still and expressionless.
- 5 Little Annie makes a face and sticks out her tongue each time she wants to show she doesn't approve of someone.
- 6 Whenever someone disagrees with Louise, she gets red in the face and shouts until she gets her own way.
- 7 Jerry is always ready with a smile and a good joke. I've never seen him cross or sad.



Narrative techniques (use of direct speech, weather description, use of dramatic language to create mystery/suspense, reference to feelings/moods, etc.) can be used when describing people. This will make your composition more interesting to the reader. See how an ordinary beginning can be made more exciting:

Instead of saying: *I first met Steven, the secretary of the manager of Sunnington Ltd, last Monday.*

You could say:

- *A cold wind was blowing down the street last Monday morning as I pushed open the heavy glass door of Sunnington Ltd. Chilled and nervous, I walked up to Mr Tibbs' secretary. A pair of friendly dark eyes met mine. So this was Steven! (weather description, your feelings, suspense)*
- *"Mr Tibbs is at a meeting. Would you like to wait? He'll be about ten minutes." He had a sharp clear voice, and a narrow intelligent face. I could see why Mr Tibbs, the manager of Sunnington Ltd, spoke so highly of Steven. (direct speech, mystery)*

### 18 Read the following sentences and rewrite them using narrative techniques.

- a I was introduced to John McKay, the painter, at Suzie's party on Saturday.
- b We first met Mr Simmons on a Tuesday morning when the head teacher introduced him to us as the supply teacher who was taking Mrs Perkins' place.
- c I first heard about Tom Cruise two years ago.

### 19 Read the following models. Which is purely descriptive? Which includes narrative techniques? Give the paragraph outline.

#### MODEL A

Whitney Houston is a person one cannot fail to admire. Over the past ten years she has become both a popular singer and a famous actress, appearing in successful films such as *The Bodyguard*.

Looking at Whitney, it is not difficult to see why she is so popular. She has gorgeous black hair, kind brown eyes and a beautiful smile which lights up her whole face. The elegant clothes she wears always complement her perfect figure.

Whitney has a reputation for being a very warm and generous person. At the same time, she is obviously very determined and can sometimes be rather strong-willed, but this comes from her desire to do things well.

In her free time Whitney, a sociable person, can often be seen at glamorous Hollywood parties. However, she is a very family-minded person who would never let her social life get in the way of her relationship with her daughter.

All in all, Whitney is an incredible woman. Few people manage to fit as much into their lives as she does. It must be exhausting, but she always manages to look fresh and beautiful for the cameras.

#### Describe a famous person



#### MODEL B

I was shaking with fear and nervousness as I waited to interview the star of *The Bodyguard*, Whitney Houston. I was a rather nervous and inexperienced young journalist back then, and interviewing Whitney in a hotel room in Los Angeles was my first big job.

As she opened the door, the first things I noticed about her appearance were her kind brown eyes and her beautiful smile which seemed to light up her whole face. As always, she was dressed elegantly in a stunning long dress which really complemented her perfect figure.

As we chatted, I discovered that Whitney certainly deserves her reputation for being kind and generous and I soon relaxed in her presence. At the same time I noticed a determined side to her, but when I told her that she sometimes comes across as very strong-willed she smiled and told me that this probably came from her desire to do things well.

When she is not working, Whitney, a sociable character, can often be found at glamorous Hollywood parties. Her family life, though, seems to be more important to her than her social life. Her eyes gleamed proudly when I glanced at the photograph of her daughter. Her reaction revealed another side of her character, that of a caring mother.


I felt sad when it was time for me to leave as I had found Whitney to be an incredible woman. I have never met anybody else who could lead such an active life, yet still manage to look fresh and beautiful for the cameras.

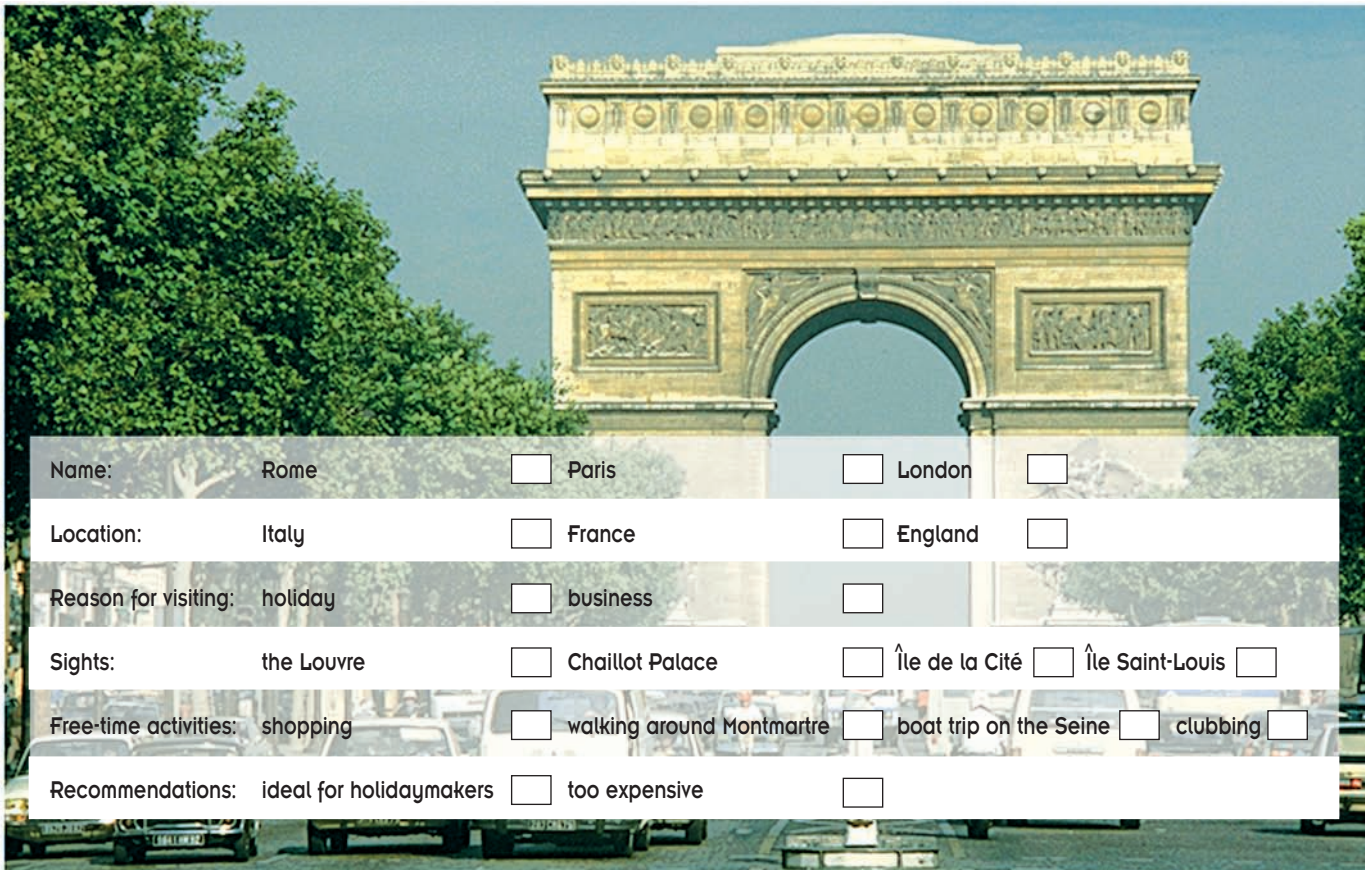
### 20 Write any two of the topics below in the appropriate style using 120-180 words.

- 1 Your teacher has asked you to write a description of your favourite classmate. Write your description for your teacher.
- 2 A popular children's TV programme has asked its viewers to send in a description of a relative of theirs, commenting on how this person has influenced them positively or negatively. The best description will win a prize. Write your entry for the competition.
- 3 Your teacher has asked you to write a composition describing the person you admire most from history. Write your description for your teacher.



# UNIT 2 Describing Places/Buildings

- 1  Read the following table, then listen and tick (✓) the information mentioned. Finally, use the table to talk about Sally's trip.



Name:	Rome	<input type="checkbox"/> Paris	<input type="checkbox"/> London	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location:	Italy	<input type="checkbox"/> France	<input type="checkbox"/> England	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for visiting:	holiday	<input type="checkbox"/> business	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sights:	the Louvre	<input type="checkbox"/> Chailot Palace	<input type="checkbox"/> Île de la Cité	<input type="checkbox"/> Île Saint-Louis <input type="checkbox"/>
Free-time activities:	shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> walking around Montmartre	<input type="checkbox"/> boat trip on the Seine	<input type="checkbox"/> clubbing <input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendations:	ideal for holidaymakers	<input type="checkbox"/> too expensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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

- an **introduction** in which you identify it, give its exact location and state the reason for choosing it;
- a **main body** in which you describe the main aspects of the place or building in detail; and
- a **conclusion** in which you mention your feelings and your final thoughts about the place or give a recommendation.

Such pieces of writing can be found as articles in newspapers, tourist magazines or brochures, or as part of a story or letter/email.

## Points to consider

- A wide variety of adjectives (*enormous, delightful, etc.*) and adverbs (*horribly, beautifully, etc.*) will make your description more interesting.
- Use of the senses (hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch) as well as narrative techniques to start and finish your composition will make your description more vivid. *e.g. On entering the hospital I was struck by the strong smell of antiseptic.*
- Present tenses should be used when describing a place/building for a tourist brochure. Past tenses should be used when you describe a visit to a place or building which took place in the past. First and second conditionals (will/would) can be used when you describe your ideal house/city, etc.

## Introduction

### Paragraph 1

*set the scene (name & location of the place/ building, reason(s) for choosing the place/ building)*

## Main Body

### Paragraphs 2, 3

*overall look and particular details (Place: sights, facilities, free-time activities Building: first look and specific details)*

## Conclusion

*feelings & final thoughts about the place/building and/or a recommendation*



## Unit 2 Describing Places/Buildings

- 2** Read the model below and write down the topic of each paragraph. Are there any sights of special interest? What can holidaymakers do? Where would you expect to find a description like this?

name, location  
(London, England)

Set in the heart of southern England, London is one of the biggest and busiest cities in Europe. A truly international city, London attracts millions of visitors every year from all over the world, yet never loses its own unique charm.

London has many impressive sights to see, ranging from the historical beauty of St Paul's Cathedral and Big Ben to Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament. In this city of contrasts, you can be walking along one of the busiest streets, yet still be less than a mile from one of the many huge, peaceful parks. London is a great cultural centre, too; the National Gallery contains one of the finest collections of classical paintings in the world.

London is also well known for other things apart from its monuments and art galleries. Shoppers will enjoy visiting the department stores on Oxford Street or they could try Harrods, the most exclusive shop in London. For evening entertainment, the choice of theatres is enormous. From the famous Southbank Theatre complex to the smaller theatres of Covent Garden, there is no end of plays to see. Soho and its pavement cafés are also worth visiting.

London is an exceptional place, a truly modern city that has managed to keep its traditional style and sense of history. You may get exhausted in London, but one thing is certain; you will never get bored because, as Dr Johnson once said, "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life."



- 3** Read the model and fill in the missing prepositions. Then, write down the topic of each paragraph. Where would you expect to find a description like this?

My father works for a large company which is located 1) ..... a huge skyscraper in the city centre.

His office, which is 2) ..... the seventh floor, is spacious and bright due to the natural light coming in 3) ..... the large, full-length windows. It is peaceful too, as a result of its position high 4) ..... the traffic-filled city streets.

The interior is very comfortable. Long curtains hang 5) ..... the ceiling all the way down 6) ..... the pale pink carpet and there are several potted plants 7) ..... one corner of the room. My father's wooden desk with its luxurious black leather chairs, is situated 8) ..... the window so he can look 9) ..... over the city. 10) ..... his chair there is a large wood-panelled cupboard where he keeps his files.

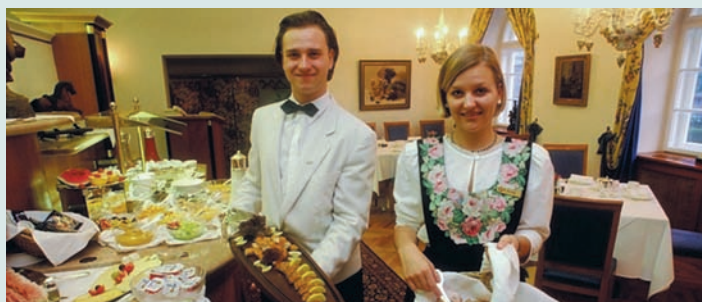
My father's office is a very pleasant working environment and I am sure that working there helps to make his job a lot easier.



- 4** The following extracts include descriptions of atmosphere. Read them and underline the phrases which describe use of the senses (i.e. *sight, hearing, etc.*) and identify each sense, e.g. *rustling* (*hearing*). Then say which of the extracts could be part of a story and which part of a tourist brochure.

### A Funfair

Even before you enter the funfair you can hear the sound of loud music playing and the shrieks of people on the rides. As you go in, you may be tempted by the smell of fresh popcorn and candy-floss. Lights are flashing and people are bustling everywhere. From the Big Wheel you have a breathtaking view over the whole town.



### B Restaurant

The moment we entered the restaurant we began to feel hungry, as the delicious smells of fine cooking reached us from the kitchen. Soft music and quiet conversation created a relaxing atmosphere. A smiling waiter came over to take our order, and we sat back on comfortable cushioned chairs.



### C Mountain Village

As you stand on the balcony of the mountain chalet, the cold crisp air makes your skin tingle. All you can hear is the sighing of the wind in the pine trees. The snow-covered mountains in the distance contrast with the thick green forest surrounding the resort.



### D Jungle

As we were walking through the jungle, we could hear the rustling of leaves and the screeching of parrots. The scent of wet earth and exotic flowers filled the warm, moist air, which was delightful to breathe.

Two sentences can be joined together by using past participles.

Instead of writing: *The village is surrounded by mountains. The village has a peaceful atmosphere.*

You can write: **Surrounded by mountains, the village has a peaceful atmosphere.**

### 5 Rewrite the sentences beginning each one with past participles.

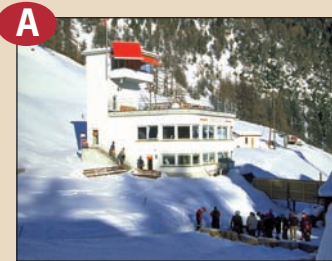
- 1 Paris is dominated by the Eiffel Tower. Paris is well known for its architecture.
- 2 The swimming pool is located near the city centre. The swimming pool is very popular with city residents.
- 3 The hotel is sheltered by trees on either side. The hotel is a favourite with people who want a quiet holiday.
- 4 The town is hidden beyond a range of mountains. The town is best known for its wine industry.



## Unit 2 Describing Places/Buildings

- 6** Look at the following list of phrases and match them with the pictures, then identify each sense used. Finally read the example and write short descriptions for any two of the pictures.

*crowded streets, glossy green peppers, burning sand, icy cold air, colourful shop signs, snow-covered mountains, whistle of cold wind, crystal-clear water, tall buildings, car horns beeping, fresh scent of pines, swaying palm trees, acrid smell of old tomatoes, hurrying passers-by, colourful stalls, exotic plants, towering peaks, shrill cries of tropical birds, soft snow, cheerfully shouting stallholders, salty sea smell*



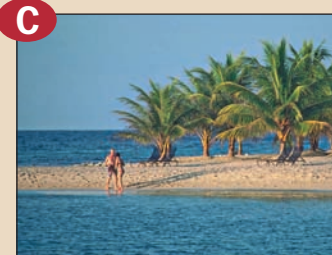
icy cold air (touch) .....

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- 7** Look at the following tables, then listen to this person describing what her home town used to be like and what it is like now and complete the missing information. How does the author feel about the changes? Looking at the notes, talk about how the writer's home town has changed. Then write a description of what your town was like forty years ago and what it is like now.



**THEN**

- fields she used to play in
- small road on the outskirts
- house she grew up in
- old stone bridge
- old houses

**NOW**

- huge supermarket
- major .....
- new .....
- wider..... bridge
- new .....

e.g. *The icy cold air blew around the towering peaks of the snow-covered mountains. The fresh scent of pines filled the air. I heard the whistle of the cold wind as the soft snow fell around us. No view on earth could be more wonderful.*

e.g. *A huge supermarket has been built in the fields the author used to play in. A motorway has been ...*



Descriptions of places can be found in travel brochures, letters/emails, magazine articles and stories. They can be written in a formal or informal style depending on whom they are addressed to and how the writer wants to present the description. For example, a description of a place you visited in a letter/email to a friend would be informal, while a description of a place in a travel brochure could be written in a formal style. It could also be written in a less formal style when the writer wants to sound more persuasive. This can be achieved by writing in a more personal style, addressing the reader directly.

### Characteristics of Formal and Informal Style

**Formal Style:** impersonal style, frequent use of passive voice, complex sentences, use of participles, non-colloquial English, no descriptions of feelings/emotions, short forms acceptable only in quotes, advanced vocabulary

**Less Formal Style:** personal style, use of idioms, address the reader, chatty descriptions, variety of adjectives, use of short forms, non-colloquial English

**Informal Style:** personal style, use of colloquial English (idiomatic expressions), use of idioms, use of short forms, chatty descriptions

- 8** Read the following extracts and say: a) what style of language has been used for each one, justifying your answers; b) where each extract has been taken from; and c) what the content of each extract is.



- A** A visit to the Scottish Highlands is recommended to those who are in search of a peaceful holiday and the opportunity to enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery in the world. One place especially worth visiting for those who are interested in folklore is Loch Ness, famous for its monster.

*(formal: impersonal style, complex sentences - part of a travel brochure or magazine article - reasons for visiting)*

- B** The smell of the air, the colours, the bustle of the people and the sound of their excited voices all told Jim he was in Venice. Venice was Jim's favourite city, but this time he wasn't here on holiday. He knew that sooner or later they would find him here. Jim chose a quiet little hotel, tucked away in a back alley. In his room he drew the curtains and sat back, planning his next move.



- C** Take a trip up the Eiffel Tower to witness the spectacular view, and if you are an art lover you should spend at least a day in the famous Louvre Art Museum. Evenings can be spent in one of the great number of cafés and bistros, where you can sample delicious French cuisine.



- D** We both feel so relaxed after our holiday in Switzerland, I don't know why we have never been there before. I'd recommend it to anyone who wants to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city and breathe some fresh air. We'll definitely be going back next year.

## Unit 2 Describing Places/Buildings

Narrative techniques can be used when you describe a place or building. You can start or end your description by:

- using your senses to describe the weather, surroundings, etc.
- asking a rhetorical question (a question which expects no answer)
- using direct speech
- describing people's feelings or reactions about the place or building
- using a quotation (e.g. *As Dr Samuel Johnson once said, "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life."*)
- creating mystery, anticipation or suspense
- addressing the reader

- When you describe places, you may use prepositional phrases and verbs. Prepositional phrases such as **all around, to the left of, at the top of, as far as the eye can see**, etc are used to describe static features. Verbs such as **flow, run, stretch, wind, curve, rise**, etc are used to describe features which suggest movement.

**9** The following sentences are beginnings or endings for a *description of a cottage*. Read them and say which are beginnings and which are endings, then identify the narrative techniques which have been used each time.

**1** Have you ever wanted to live in an old cottage by the Atlantic, with granite walls more than a metre thick, built to withstand the ocean gales? That's where my grandparents live.

**2** As I got onto the ferry I repeated to myself, "A mother's love is a blessing no matter where you roam," thinking of the family I was leaving behind in their cosy stone cottage by the sea.

**3** I shivered in the chilly drizzle as I turned off the main road past the harbour, heading for my grandparents' cottage. The house, built of granite, seemed to suffer nothing from the strong wind.

**4** "Good luck, and may God be with you," said the old man in Gaelic as I glanced back at my grandparents' stone cottage and then walked towards the harbour.

**5** I turned off the main road past the harbour and headed for my grandparents' cottage. There it was, its granite walls standing proudly. There was something strange, though. There was no smoke coming from the chimney and it looked abandoned. I shivered as I approached it.

**6** As I prepared to leave, I realised that something about visiting my grandparents' cottage always makes me feel safe and secure. Perhaps it's those solid granite walls, or maybe I never feel quite at home or at peace until I'm standing by the old house by the harbour. Whatever it is, that house means more to me than any treasure on earth.

**10** Your teacher has asked you to describe a) a visit to a castle, b) a famous holiday resort in your country. Write possible beginnings and endings for each description, using as many narrative techniques as possible.

**11** Underline the words or phrases which describe moving features and circle those which describe static features.



The grand old house is situated at the end of a long country lane which runs through a small wood. To the left of the house is the coachman's lodge, and as far as the eye can see there is green grass and tall, spreading trees. Beyond the house is a grey rocky mountain and on the other side of it lies a small village with old cottages and a little church in the village square.



- 12** Read the following description given in a jumbled order and put the paragraphs in the correct order. Then underline the phrases which involve the senses. Which tenses have been used and why?

### The House of my Dreams

- A** ☐ My house would have a large, bright kitchen where I could sit quietly at a wooden table admiring the view of the garden through the window. My living room would be simple, with basic furniture like a long soft sofa and two large armchairs. It would also have a fireplace so I could keep warm on cold windy nights. There would also be several wooden bookcases full of books to keep me company. My bedroom would have a four-poster bed with a white linen bed cover and the walls would be painted a soothing pale blue.
- B** ☐ It would be a small wooden cottage surrounded by a neat green lawn stretching all the way down to a river. There would be colourful flowers gently swaying in the cool breeze and an orchard at the back of the house with trees full of sweet and juicy oranges, apples and pears.
- C** ☐ If I could choose, I would live in a house just like this with its beautiful natural surroundings and peaceful atmosphere.
- D** ☐ Imagine waking up to the sound of birds singing in the trees outside and warm sunlight shining through your bedroom window. This is what I dream of when I imagine my ideal house.



- 13** Read the model below and correct the mistakes. Write **S** for spelling, **WO** for word order, **G** for grammar, **P** for punctuation or **WW** for wrong word. What is the topic of each paragraph?

G "of" omitted

### A visit to a Museum

Standing outside of the British Museum last week, I **had ignored** the pouring rain as I gazed up at the **marble tall** columns, unprepared for the dignified beauty of the famous building. Ms Green, our teacher, **she hurried** us inside, impatient to **show to us** all the artefacts of the ancient **greek and egyptian** civilizations which we **had studying** in our history class.

Inside, the museum was **quiet** impressive. The gentle hum of voices echoed through huge halls with polished marble floors and sweeping staircases as we **were followed** Ms Green on tiptoe to the section with the Greek exhibits.

We **in admiration gasped** at the beautiful sculptures displayed there. The delicate features and graceful bodies of the figures were **such** lifelike that they looked more **as** actual people turned to stone than carvings from thousands of years **before**.

The Egyptian display was even more breathtaking. Huge statues towered above us, gleaming with gold, and beautiful **jewellery** filled the display cases.

It was like waking from a lovely dream when Ms Green whispered that it was time for us to go. I **saw** a long, final look, reluctant to **live** these magical rooms, before I **had followed** my classmates to the **bus waiting** and the real world outside.

- 14** Write one of the topics below in the appropriate style using 120-180 words.

- 1 The town council is running a competition entitled "The house I like most in my neighbourhood". Write a description for the competition.
- 2 A travel magazine is running a competition and has asked its readers to submit descriptions of a place they think is ideal for holidays. Write your description for the competition.
- 3 Your teacher has asked you to write about a visit to the zoo. Write your description for your teacher.