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# 16 Descriptive Writing

**Descriptive writing** is when you write to tell about something. You use words to “create a picture” for a reader. You pick details that tell what you see, hear, feel, taste, or smell. The details should be arranged in an order that makes sense.



## Guided Practice

Read the writing assignment. Then answer the questions.



Look at the photograph. You have been asked to write a short essay for your class that describes what is happening in the picture. Use details so someone who reads your paragraph can imagine the entire scene.

Be sure to:

- follow the five steps of the writing process
- begin with a topic sentence
- use exact verbs and describing words
- arrange the details in an order that makes sense
- tell what you see
- tell what you might hear, smell, and feel



## Step 1: Prewrite

Read the writing assignment again. Underline clue words.  
This will help you know what to write about.

What words or phrases will you underline?

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What is the subject?

What type of writing will you do?

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Look for clues that tell you what you will be writing.

Who is the audience?

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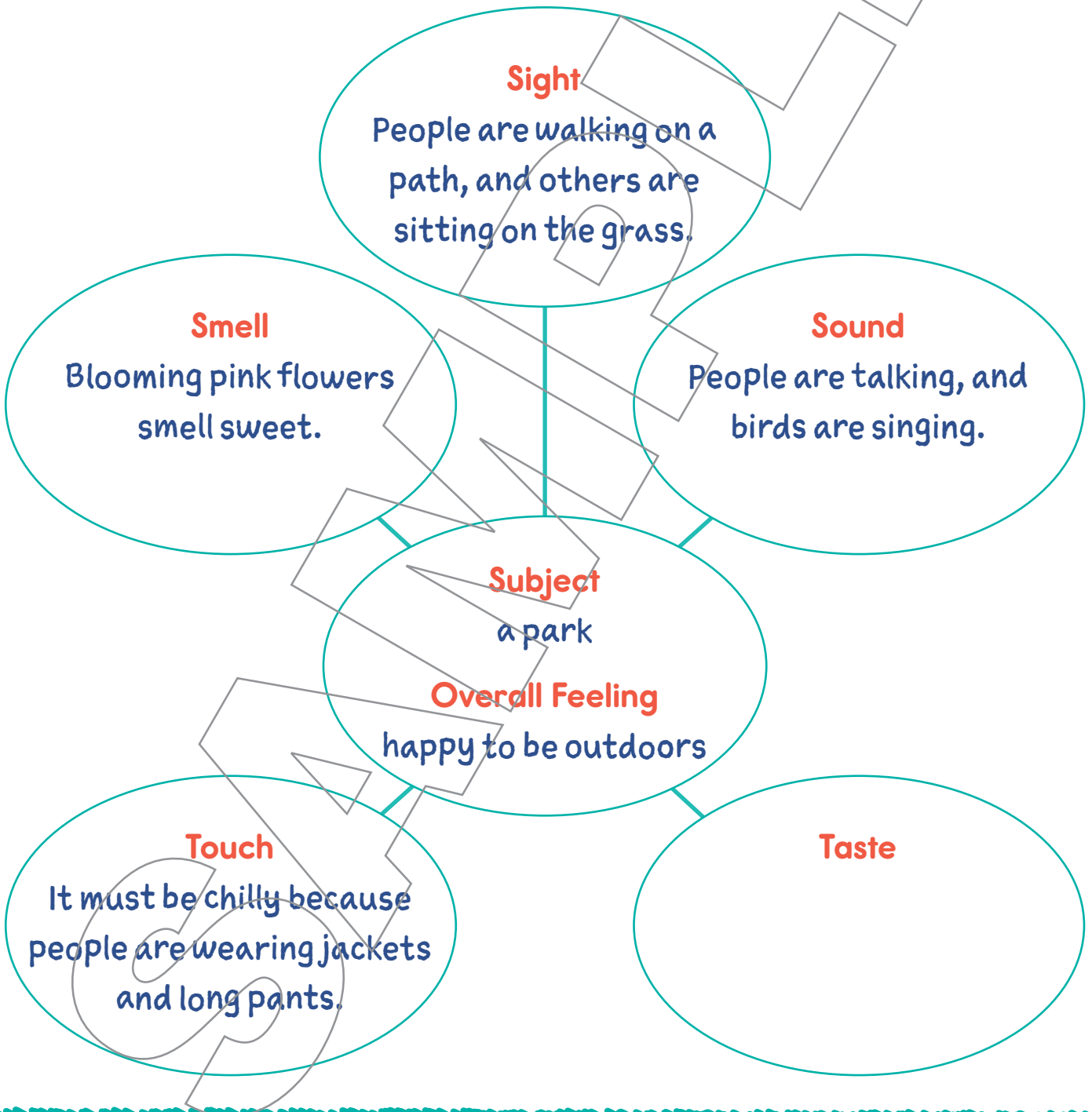


When no audience is given, you can guess that it is the person who gave the assignment.



The next step is to plan what to write. You can use a graphic organizer to put your thoughts in order. A five-senses web will help you think about the details.

Here is a five-senses web that one student, Carlos, uses. He includes details about what the park setting in the photo looks like. He also includes details about what it might smell like, sound like, and feel like.



What details would you add to the five-senses web?

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Think about what words and details about the five senses you will use.

The next step is to write the draft.

SAMPLE

## Step 2: Draft

Read Carlos's draft. Then answer the questions.

The photograph shows a city park. There are many people in the park. The park has a path. Some people are walking on the path. Other people are sitting on wooden benches. A group of people is sitting on the grass. The trees in the park have green, leaves. Some bushes have pink flowers. The flowers may smell sweet. The weather may be chilly. People are wearing jackets or hoodies and pants or jeans. You might hear people talking and birds chirping. The park may be a quite place. Or you might hear cars, buses, and trucks drive by or their horns honking. I thin this park looks very clean and green. I would like to visit it.

What is the topic sentence?



What does the photo show?

What words does Carlos use to describe sound?

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Good writers use words that let the reader experience what something sounds like.

What details based on the five senses help you tell the season?

Smell \_\_\_\_\_

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Sound \_\_\_\_\_

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Touch \_\_\_\_\_

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Sight \_\_\_\_\_

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What does it feel like or smell like?

The next step is to revise the draft.



### Step 3: Revise

Read the revised draft. Then answer the questions.

The photograph shows a city park. <sup>during the day</sup> There are many people in the park. The park has a path. Some people are walking on the path. Other people are sitting on wooden benches. A group of people is sitting on the <sup>green</sup> grass. The trees in the park have green leaves. Some bushes have pink flowers. The flowers may smell <sup>It is probably spring.</sup> sweet. <sup>because</sup> The weather may be chilly. People are wearing jackets or hoodies and pants or jeans. You might hear people talking and birds chirping. The park may be a quite place. Or you might hear cars, buses, and trucks drive by or their horns honking. I thin this park looks very clean and green. I would like to visit it.

Why does Carlos add the words “during the day” to sentence 1?



Is the meaning clear to the reader?

What two sentences are joined?



Revising shows connections between ideas.



### Peer Review

Use the rubric on the next page to review Carlos’s writing and give it a score. This is called **peer review**. A number is assigned to tell how well the question was answered. The rubric tells what is needed for the highest score. It also tells why some writing might receive lower scores.

## Descriptive Writing Rubric

### Score 3

- The writing answers all parts of the question.
- The topic sentence clearly describes the subject.
- The writing brings the subject to life by using details related to the five senses.
- The last sentence gives a clear feeling about the subject.
- Words are used correctly and well.
- There are almost no mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

### Score 2

- The writing answers almost all parts of the question.
- The topic sentence describes the subject, but it could be clearer.
- The writing uses some details related to the five senses.
- The last sentence gives a somewhat clear feeling about the subject.
- Some words are misused.
- There are some mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

### Score 1

- The writing answers only part of the question.
- The topic sentence is missing or unclear.
- Most of the details do not come from describing the senses.
- The last sentence does not give clear feeling about the subject.
- Many words are overused or misused.
- There are several mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

What score would Carlos's draft receive?

Score: \_\_\_\_\_



Is the writing clear? Does it answer the question?

Why do you think it would receive this score?

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Are there any mistakes?

The next step is to edit the draft.

## Step 4: Edit

Carlos made the big corrections to his draft. The next step is to edit the draft. Carlos will read the draft again. He will check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. He will use proofreading symbols to mark changes to be made.

Proofreading Chart	
Symbol	Example
^ Add letters or words.	This game is played <sup>on</sup> a computer.
⊙ Add a period.	These dice are for the game ⊙
≡ Capitalize a letter.	<u>you</u> can practice a lot.
/ Lowercase a letter.	Soccer is my favorite <del>S</del> port.
↗ Add a comma.	We brought the game, some food, and balloons.
↶ Take out letters or words.	You have the <del>board and</del> game.
↻ Switch the position of letters or words.	Use the (red) (large) pieces.

Read Carlos's draft. Find and correct any mistakes. Use proofreading symbols to show changes.

The photograph shows a city park during the day. There are many people in the park. The park has a path. Some people are walking on the path. Other people are sitting on wooden benches. A group of people is sitting on the green grass. The trees in the park have green, leaves. Some bushes have pink flowers. The flowers may smell sweet. It is probably spring. The weather may be chilly because people are wearing jackets or hoodies and pants or jeans. You might hear people talking and birds chirping. The park may be a quite place. Or you might hear cars, buses, and trucks drive by or their horns honking. I thin this park looks very clean and green. I would like to visit it.

How many mistakes did you find?



Are there any mistakes in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling?

## Step 5: Publish

All mistakes and problems have been corrected. The final step is for Carlos to turn in the writing to his teacher.

SAMPLE



# Independent Practice

Read the writing assignment. Then answer the questions.

## Step 1: Prewrite

Write an essay for the class website about a restaurant you have visited. Use details to describe this place and bring it to life.

Be sure to:

- follow the five steps of the writing process
- write a topic sentence
- use exact verbs and describing words
- arrange the details in an order that makes sense
- tell what it looks like
- tell what it sounds like
- tell what it smells like
- tell what it feels like

1. Who is your audience?

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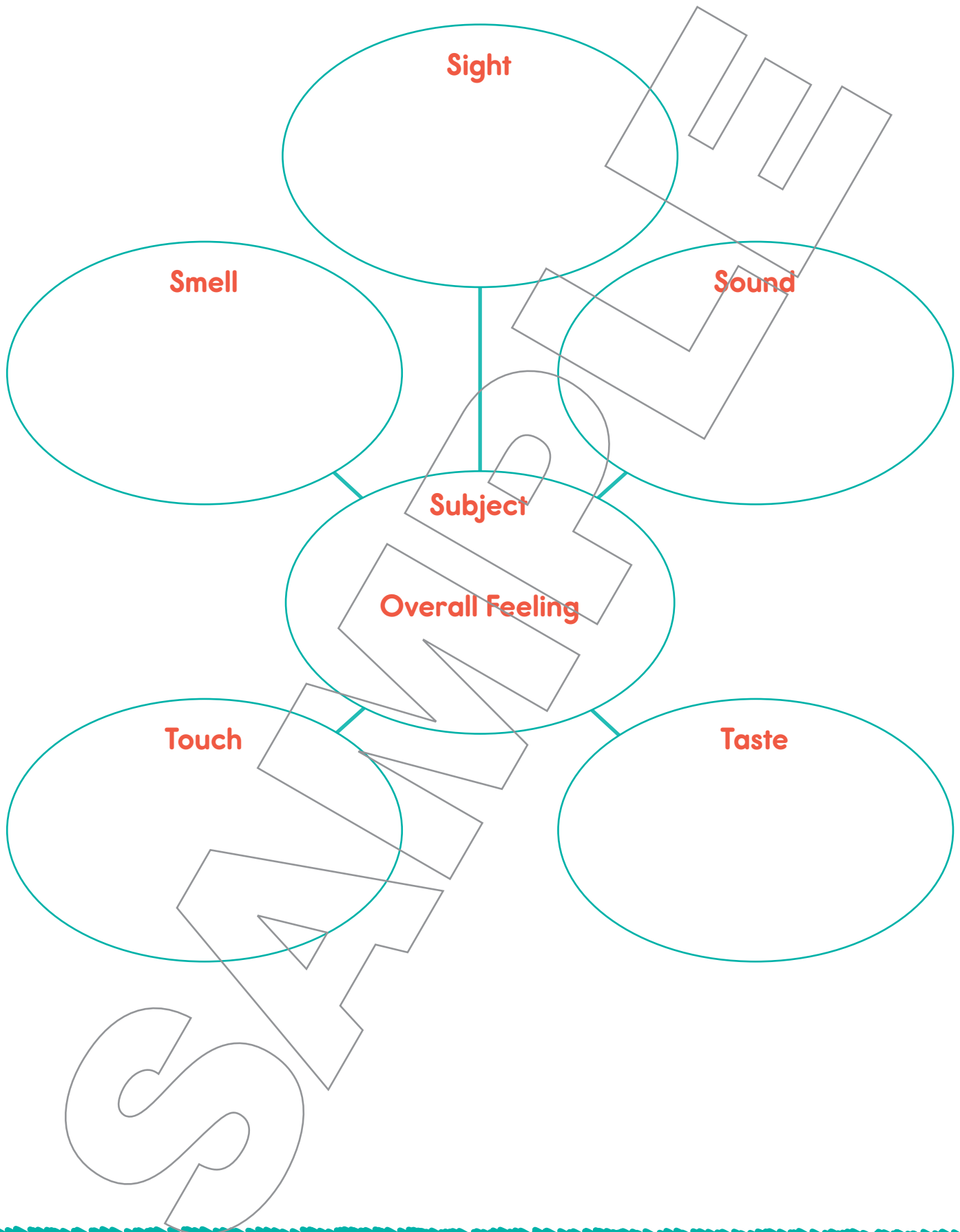
2. What kind of writing are you being asked to do?

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3. Fill in the graphic organizer to plan your writing.



## Step 2: Draft

4. Write your draft below. Use the graphic organizer on the previous page to help you write your draft. Be sure your topic sentence tells the main idea. Then write a detail that relates to each of the five senses.

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### Step 3: Revise

### Step 4: Edit

5. When you have finished your draft, go back over it. Make your revision on this page. Then edit your revised draft. Use the rubric on page 211 and the proofreading chart on page 213 to review your writing. Ask a peer to edit your writing, too.

15 horizontal lines for writing.

### Step 5: Publish

6. Write or type your final answer on a separate sheet of paper. Publish your writing by turning it in to your teacher or by sharing it with the class.