

Focus on: what makes a good description

Using the senses

- The senses are: looking, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling. A good writer will make you use your senses:

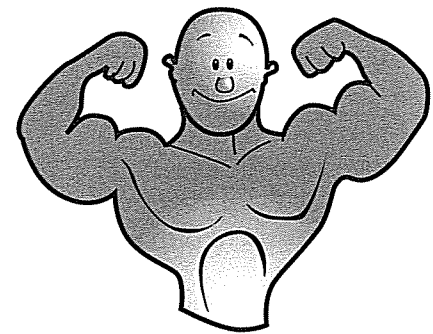
I felt my legs buckle beneath me. The ground rose up and hit me between my eyes. The earth didn't taste too good.

- A **visual image** is particularly important, as it lets the reader 'see' what is happening.

Imagery

Look out for these special ways of creating an image, or picture:

- **similes**, which compare something to something else, e.g. *Each harsh word was like the lash of a whip.*
- **metaphors**, which describe something as something else, e.g. *His body was a finely tuned machine which needed constant maintenance.*
- **personification**, which describes non-human things as if they were people, e.g. *The wind provided a helping hand as he cycled up the final hill.*



Top Tip!

Remember that a **simile** uses the words 'like' or 'as' to compare two things. A **metaphor** describes something directly as another thing.

Powerful words

- **Verbs** are 'doing' words. Precise or colourful verbs are very effective in passages describing action, e.g. *The eagle plummeted (rather than 'dived'), He hurled the book (rather than 'threw').*
- **Adjectives** are describing words, which usually go with nouns. They can make descriptions more vivid and detailed, e.g. *The piercing noise caused a frenzied squealing in the pig pens.*

Spot Check

What kind of imagery are these?

- 1 On the morning of my exam the sun rose reluctantly.
- 2 The flames of her hair crackled as she tossed her head.
- 3 He used his pen like a sword to attack his critics.