

Lesson 29: You will be able to Use Comparisons When Writing Supporting Details in Descriptive Essays

Purpose of Lesson 29: You will be able to use comparisons when writing supporting details in descriptive essays.

Skills: Critical thinking, reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing.

Words to Learn:

accessible - easy to use or get to: *The building is wheelchair accessible.*

adjective - a word that describes a noun: *The color “red” is an adjective.*

definition - explains what something or someone is: *What is the definition of a triangle?*

eject - to throw off, remove: *The pilot pressed the eject button to leave the plane.*

metaphor - compares without using “like” or “as”: *“He was a tiger in battle,” is an example of a metaphor.*

pastel - light colors: *Her bedroom is painted a pastel blue.*

periscope - a telescope that moves in all directions and is used on submarines: *The ship was spotted through the periscope.*

personification - gives human qualities to otherwise non-human subjects: *“The sun smiled down upon the garden,” is an example of personification.*

recessed - set in: *The kitchen has recessed lights in the ceiling.*

simile - uses “like” or “as” to compare two things that are not alike: *“He is as proud as a peacock,” is an example of a simile.*

tweak - improve by adding or changing: *The idea is good, but we need to tweak it.*

Directions: Read the conversation below and do the exercises that follow.

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1



I am entering an essay contest to win a complete bedroom makeover. I have to write about things my room needs and what my dream room would look like.

2

Sounds very challenging to me. But then again, I can't think of anyone else more suited to the job! How long does the essay have to be?



3



No more than 250 words. I also have to send them several color photos of my room with measurements. I can even send them a video. Anyway, I want to win. First prize is worth over \$10,000.

4

I can get the measurements for you. You need to write your story first, so I know what to focus in on. It should correspond to (match) what you have written.



5



Thanks, Dad. I will get Ms. Shine to look at some of my ideas. She is the best when it comes to helping me with my writing.

6

Not my department, Dora. But if I can help you with the technical stuff, you know where to find me.



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7



Ms. Shine, what can I do to make this essay a prize winner?

8

Dora, I think you have the info all there. We just have to tweak your ideas a little to make it better. You can use several writing techniques.



9



I know I have to convince the magazine editors that my room is uncomfortable. I have to make them feel as if they are there, right?

10

Correct, Try this. Take all the things you dislike about your room and compare them in an outrageous way to make your point. I'll show you.



11



Dora's Sentence:
My room is small.

Use "like" to compare your room to something small. Here are some examples:

- My room is like a sardine can.
- My room is like a broom closet.
- My room is like a shoebox.
- My room is like a toll booth.

This is called a simile.

12



I get it. Let me try some similes. My room is like a smart car without wheels. My room is like a bedroom in Barbie's dollhouse. My room is like a no room. Ha, ha.

13

Yes, Dora. That's one way to grab the reader's attention when you are writing. Another way to write a simile is by using "as...as". Let's look at another sentence.



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Dora's Sentence:
It has only one small window.

The only window is as tiny as a peephole. The window lets in as much light as a periscope. The window lets in as much air as a deflated balloon. Can you picture the images?



15



Thanks, Ms. Shine. This is fun. I need to work on some more ideas.



As Ms. Shine has explained to Dora, similes have a way of making a comparison that creates an image in the mind of the reader. You are comparing two things that are very different from each other, and the impact makes a point.

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I'm ready for some of the other writing techniques you mentioned. What do you suggest?

17

Another way to compare is by using metaphors. It's like a simile, but not as obvious. You don't use the words "like" or "as." Think of your closet as another object, and then describe the closet with those qualities or abilities.



18



Can you give me an example?

19

Of course. Think of your closet as a crowded subway car, and all the passengers inside are your clothes. What things could you say about this subway car?



Dora's Sentence:
My closet is tiny.



20



How about, "My dresses and jackets hang on for dear life, crammed in a miniature subway car, as they wait to escape once the door opens."

21

Excellent. Now let's try a metaphor in another sentence.



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Dora's Sentence:
The room is dark.



22



Enter this dead zone at your own risk. It is impossible to study or put on makeup when you are living on the dark side of the moon.

23

Nice job. Keep up the good work.



- When you compare something to else that is different, you must write as if the comparison is a definition.
- Dora's closet became a subway car, and her clothes became commuters.
- It's quite magical to transform words into images using comparisons.

Continued after Quiz 2

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I'm ready for the next idea, Ms. Shine.

25

Yes, Dora. I want you to describe things in your room as if they were people. Let's use your bed as an example. If your bed were a person, how would it react to you sleeping on it?



26



Maybe it would groan or throw me off.

Dora's Sentence
My bed is too small.

27

Correct, so let's see what you come up with.



28



Here it goes: "At night, when I get into my bed, it groans in pain, and has been known to eject me onto the floor in the middle of the night."

29

That's perfect. You are in your way to the winner's circle on this one!



- When you create metaphors that compare things to people or animals, what results is personification.
- When Dora wrote about her clothes being subway commuters, she was actually using personification.
- Just give human qualities or emotions to objects and watch what happens!