

Forms of writing: Literary description

What is a literary description?

A literary description explains the characteristic features of a particular thing. It uses language that helps the reader or listener to create a vivid image in their minds of a person, place, object or event.

Literary descriptions vary in length and can be found in short stories, novels, picture books, brochures, advertisements, songs and poems.

This type of description can occur as a piece by itself or as part of another longer text (e.g. a description of a character or setting in a story).

Structure of a literary description

A literary description is usually organised around a basic structure that includes:

- a **title or heading** that identifies what the description is about
- an **introduction** that introduces the topic or subject of the description to the audience
- the **body** of the text, which describes the characteristic features of the subject. The body is broken up into paragraphs based on different parts of the topic.
e.g. physical appearance, qualities, behaviour, attributes

There may also be a **conclusion or concluding comment** to sum up the information or main ideas in the description.

Language features

The following language features are used in a literary description:

- particular nouns
- detailed noun groups
- a variety of adjective types
e.g. describing, numbering, classifying
- a variety of verbs
e.g. relating, thinking, feeling, action
- adverbs to provide more information
- figurative language to make the topic 'come alive'.
e.g. similes, metaphors