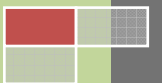


PICTURE DESCRIPTION

GUIDELINES, TECHNIQUES & EXAM TIPS

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PICTURE DESCRIPTION

IN THE BACKGROUND...
IT LOOKS LIKE...
IN THIS PICTURE..

A picture description is an ideal way of practising your English vocabulary in all sorts of fields. Pictures provide serious language practice and can be invaluable in the classroom for stimulating discussion and bringing enormous variety to lessons. They also provide the teacher with a flexible and convenient tool to test many different things in exams.



GUIDELINES, TECHNIQUES & EXAM TIPS

LET ME SEE...
AS I SEE IT...
IT SHOWS...
AT THE TOP...

Here you have some techniques and exam tips I have put together to help you describe a picture or photograph. Study them carefully and decide on how to structure your picture description. Don't worry if you find it a bit difficult at first, we'll practise a lot to make things easier in time. I've also included some exercises that we'll correct in a future revision class.



After all, as the saying has it:

"A picture paints a thousand words"

4. Give your opinion & Use hesitation words



- Remember you may also be asked to give your opinion on the content of the picture or topics related to it. To start with, here are some expressions you can use:

In my opinion

As I see it

If you ask me

I suppose/believe/think/guess

As far as I'm concerned

I would say that

Personally

From my point of view

- In order to play for time, to give yourself time to think, you can use hesitation words or sounds ('delaying sounds'). Make sure you don't use them from your own language. They can sound strange in English!

Well,... Er..., Let me see..., Mmm..., Then..., I mean..., You know (what I mean)

5. Ask for clarification & Correct yourself

- Don't be afraid to interrupt and ask if you don't understand what you are being told. It's important to familiarise yourself with the right phrases to ask for clarification or repetition and be able to go on:

Shall I start?

What do you mean?

I don't (really) understand...

Do you think you could say/explain that again?

Would you mind repeating it, please?

May/can I ask you a question?

I'm not (quite) sure what I have to do...

Can I interrupt or say something?

- Asking the examiner to repeat can actually be the perfect opportunity to show off some complex language - e.g.:

'I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch the last part...'

'I didn't quite get what you said...'

'If I can just check what you are saying, you'd like me to...'

- And, be confident to correct yourself if necessary!

What I mean... What I'm trying to say...

I don't think I explained that very well...

6. What to include

LOCATION (describe where things are in the picture)

Remember to use the position language you have learnt so far in order to do it in a proper way.

What can you see in the picture?

Where are things placed in the picture?

PLACE (mention something about the place)

Where is it?

What's the place / scenery like?

ACTION (describe what is happening)

What are the people **doing**?

PEOPLE (speculate about the characters)

Talk about people's appearance, clothes, relationship. If there is not a main character, focus on the group

What are the people like?

What are they **wearing**?

How are they **related**?

IDEAS & OTHER DETAILS

(speculate about the scene)

Give extra information about the scene to add further details to your description.

What has happened?

What do you think will happen **next**?

What is the weather like?

What else can be interesting in the picture?

IMPRESSION (give some impressions and opinions)

How do they **look**?

What is his/her emotional state?

What are they thinking/talking **about**?

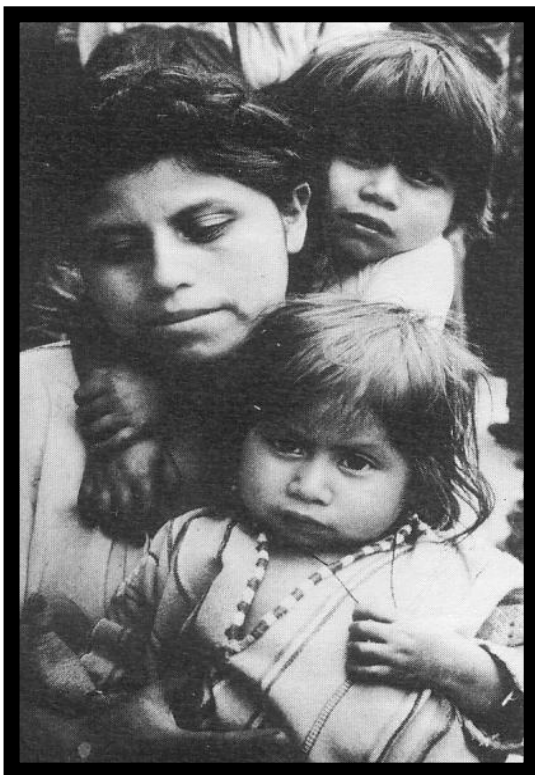
PRACTICE 1

Takes after
Might
Could be
Shows

To tell
The background
Make it out
Perhaps

She has got
Would say
It looks as though
Looks like

Looks
Can't be
Maybe



This photo **(1)** a young mother and her two kids.
I **(2)** they must be from somewhere in South America.
(3)they're in a crowded market, although it is difficult **(4)**....., because you can't see much of **(5)**.....

The mother has her hair up in a bun and a roundish face. She **(6)** fed up, but this **(7)** because she's tired. **(8)** she's had a busy day shopping.

The child with its arm around her neck **(9)** a little boy.

It seems he's aware of the camera.

The little girl **(10)** more than three. She's a little plump, but you can see that she really **(11)** her mother. **(12)** her mother's mouth and the most beautiful almond-shaped eyes. She's holding something in her hand ...

I can't really **(13)** It **(14)** be a charm or **(15)**it's a crucifix.

PRACTICE 2

Location

- Match the phrases on the left with the appropriate places in this photograph

at the bottom
at the top
on the right-hand side
on the left-hand side
in the top left-hand corner
in the bottom right-hand corner
in the foreground
in the background
on the left
on the right
in the middle



Picture discussion

- Look carefully at the photograph and answer the questions. Remember to use the expressions you learn to make suggestions and give your opinion.

A Description

1. What can you see in the photograph?
2. How are the eight people in this photograph related?
3. What else could you describe to the examiner?

B General questions

1. How many people are there in your family?
2. Would you like to be a twin, a triplet a sextuplet? Why? Why not?
3. Why do you think parents often dress twins in the same clothes?
4. From a child's point of view, what are the pros and cons of being part of a big family?
5. From the parents' point of view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of having only one child?

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