

# Descriptive structure

A lesson for **First Language English**

Paper 2 and Coursework

Descriptive writing

# Video lesson and quiz at [taughtly.co.uk](https://taughtly.co.uk)

This lesson is also available for teachers and students as a mini-course, including a fifty minute video lesson and quiz.

**For free!**

Video is accessible in Mainland China with subtitles.

Find more lessons and resources for First Language English at [taughtly.co.uk](https://taughtly.co.uk)



# Information



# FLE coursework (50%)

Portfolio of three assignments, each around 500-800 words long.

- **Assignment 1:** writing to discuss, argue or persuade in response to a text
- **Assignment 2:** writing to describe
- **Assignment 3:** writing to narrate

# FLE Paper 2 (50%)

A two-hour handwritten exam

- **Section A:** directed writing (40 marks)

Read two articles and respond to the arguments, evaluating the ideas presented to you to create a discursive/argumentative/persuasive speech, letter or article.

- **Section B:** composition (40 marks)

Choice of narrative OR descriptive writing

# Content and structure

## Band 6 Complex

- Many well-defined and developed ideas
- Convincing overall picture with varieties of focus

## Band 4 Relevant

- Selection of relevant ideas, image and details
- May be tendency to write in a narrative style

## Band 5 Developed

- Frequent, well-chosen images
- Mostly convincing picture

## Band 3 Straightforward

- Task is addressed with a series of relevant but straightforward details
- May be more typical of a narrative

# Descriptions versus narratives

## Descriptions

- Like a **photograph**
- No events, dialogue and very little characterization
- Your narrator can observe but not participate
- Nothing happens except for observation
- Can be some form of movement or change, e.g. you can walk through a park, you can watch the sunset

## Narratives

- Like a **film**
- Has a plot, a climax, dialogue and characterization
- Will also include some description but that's not the main purpose of the writing
- Something happens

# Style and accuracy

## Band 6

### Consistently accurate

- Precise and effective vocabulary
- Range of sentence structures
- Almost always accurate grammar

## Band 4

### Frequent small errors

- Some precise vocabulary
- Some variety of sentences
- Frequent small errors

## Band 5

### Mostly accurate

- Mostly precise vocabulary
- Mostly varied sentences
- Mostly accurate grammar, some minor errors

## Band 3

### Serious errors

- Simple vocabulary and sentence structures
- Frequent grammar errors, some serious

Based on these words, what do you think your description will be about?

Graceful Temporary Myriad  
Fleeting  
Rebirth Annual Ethereal Budding  
Vibrant Serene Canopy Landscape  
Renewal Blossoming Enchanting  
Spectacle  
Memory Bewitching Breeze Abundance  
Pastel Mesmerizing Nature Dreamlike

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# **Always consider your deeper meaning**

- What are you trying to **say** through your description?
- What's your deeper message?
- What effect are you trying to create?

# The structure

A thick, solid orange horizontal bar that spans the width of the text "The structure" and extends slightly to the right.

# Five paragraph structure

- 
- **Zoom out – long shot:** describe the whole scene in detail and mention something that you will return to at the end of your description.
  - **Zoom in:** pick one detail, make it symbolic, and describe it in depth. This could be a good opportunity for an extended metaphor.
  - **Change perspective:** imagine the scene through the eyes of somebody who is there – what are they feeling?
  - **Zoom in again:** pick another symbolic detail to describe in depth. Pick something contrasting to your earlier symbol.
  - **Emotional ending:** finally circle back to something mentioned in your opening paragraph, highlighting the emotional atmosphere.

# Circular description



- Return to a **recurring** image or motif throughout the description, creating a sense of unity and continuity.
- Ensure you start and end on the same image – but perhaps something has changed since the start or perhaps this image has now taken on a second meaning

Emotional ending – circle back

What ideas do you have for this image?



# Exemplar



# Read the exemplar

Answer the prompt questions on the worksheet

Then fill in the reflection sheet:

- Why would this get in the top band for Content and Structure?
- Why would this get in the top band for Style and Accuracy?
- Is there anything else I could do to improve my description?

# Exemplar – zoom out

It was April, and the time had come again for Tokyo to be velvety in a pink blanket. Shinjuku National Garden, vast and winding, was bustling with life: lovers made eyes in pedalos on the lake; a pretty girl posed for photos with petals in her hair; a tourist hunted for the best picnic location, dodging and diving around swarms of sightseers; and my grandfather held my sticky little hand, as I looked up at the blooms with awe-struck eyes. The air hummed with the click of cameras, the burble of conversation in a tapestry of languages, and the insistent shrieks of the cicadas. Cameras, conversationalists, and cicadas alike had all united here for a singular purpose: cherry blossom season had arrived.

# Exemplar – zoom in

Winter had been long. I distantly remember that December that year had been brutal, bracing, unrelenting. Distantly, distantly, I recall biting cold mornings, snow crunching underfoot, and my dad bundling me four layers deep before taking me to school. Perhaps because of this, the bees were particularly thankful for Shinjuku's reawakening landscape that year. One such bee danced gracefully between blossoms, bathed in the soft embrace of the late afternoon sun. Its tiny form, a marvel of intricate design, moved with an inherent rhythm, as if nature's heartbeat were channelled through its translucent wings. The bee's body shimmered like liquid gold, catching the sunlight in an iridescent dance. Delicate wings brushed against the petals; each touch was a renewal of life, a promise of another sunrise, another blossoming flower.

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# Exemplar – zoom in again

Softly, petals spiralled to the ground, scattering like stardust beneath our feet. The floor was a confetti of blossoms, dusky pink, alabaster, fuchsia and ivory, vibrantly alive. But soon, the march of the crowds through the park ground the petals down into a soggy mulch that clung to my shoes. Over time, raindrops and footsteps worked together, coaxing the petals to merge with the soil, creating a rich bed that would nourish the very trees from which they had fallen.

# **Exemplar – emotional ending that circles back**

It is April. I am no longer a little girl with sticky hands, and my grandfather no longer walks me through Tokyo's parks. But nature does not heed the passage of time and has filled the skies with fireworks of blossoms once more. It is very quiet here. Singular petals fall from the trees above my grandparents' grave before winding down to earth. They find home on my clothes, in my hair. When I close my eyes, I am back there, that April in the park when cherry blossoms briefly brought the world to life. How precious it is, to wait all year to see something so beautiful it cannot possibly last beyond a week and to possess memories too beloved to ever be replicated.

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# Inspiration



# Look at the inspiration photos

Make notes of any ideas as we look through the inspiration photos:

- What **words** or phrases could you use to describe this scene?
- What would the **atmosphere** and **tone** of your description be?
- What **imagery** could you zoom into?
- What imagery could you **circle** back to?
- What **symbols** could you use?
- What **perspective** could you shift to?
- How could you create an **emotional ending**?

Note down anything that inspires you!









# Video inspiration

As you watch the inspiration video, write down any ideas that come to your mind:

- What **words** or phrases could you use to describe this scene?
- What would the **atmosphere** and **tone** of your description be?
- What **imagery** could you zoom into?
- What imagery could you **circle** back to?
- What **symbols** could you use?
- What **perspective** could you shift to?
- How could you create an **emotional ending**?

Note down anything that inspires you!

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# Planning and writing

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# Fill in your five-paragraph planning sheet

- You can change the location; it doesn't have to be in Japan
- If you've been inspired, feel free to go with any other idea
- However, if you still don't have an idea of your own, go ahead with my suggestion of cherry blossom season in Japan description, fill in the sheet and see if you get inspired.

# Reminders

- **Exam:** give yourself 45-60 minutes and handwrite it.
- **Coursework:** write between 500-800 words and type it up.
- Use my five-paragraph structure.
- You can use any **idea** (but don't copy any phrases!) you've heard in this video course; it isn't plagiarism to do so.
- Similarly, you can write something completely original too.

# Final tips

## Clarity

Is your description clear both literally and metaphorically?

## Zoom out

Did you zoom out and describe your overall scene?

## Zoom in

Did you zoom in and describe 2+ things in depth?

## Extended metaphor

Include one extended metaphor that is at least 3+ sentences long

## Consistent tone

Decide on a tone and stick to it! Ensure all your vocabulary choices and imagery match this tone

## Check SPAG

Always spell check, Grammarly check and proofread your writing.

# Content and structure checklist

- ✓ My description is 2+ pages/800 words
- ✓ My description makes sense both literally and metaphorically
- ✓ My description establishes the scene with a long shot
- ✓ My description zooms into at least two details in depth
- ✓ My description uses symbolism
- ✓ My description uses a circular structure
- ✓ My description is correctly paragraphed throughout
- ✓ My description doesn't have plot, developed characters or dialogue

# Style and accuracy checklist

- ✓ My description has been spellchecked, Grammarly check and proofread aloud by myself
- ✓ My description uses a variety of sentence lengths
- ✓ My description uses a variety of punctuation ; : - ... ! ?
- ✓ My description uses sophisticated but precise vocabulary

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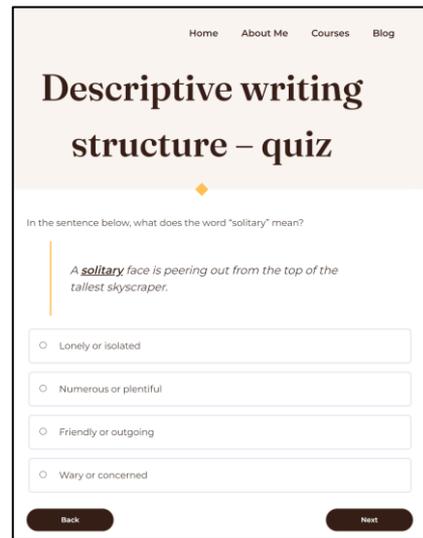
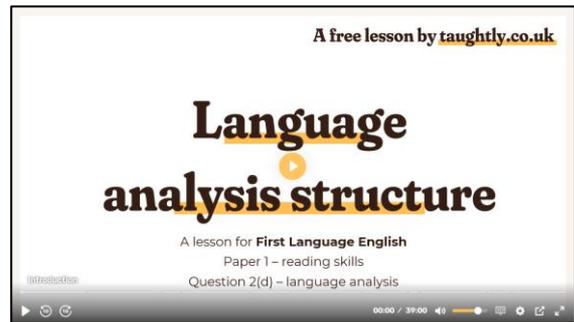
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More exemplar descriptions:

- <https://taughtly.co.uk/model-description-for-igcse-first-language-english-after-the-bomb-dropped/>
- <https://taughtly.co.uk/model-description-with-a-cinematic-structure-for-igcse-first-language-english-new-york-city/>

Free video lesson, PowerPoint, worksheet and quiz for Language Analysis (Q2):

- [Language Analysis \(Q2\) for First Language English – Taughtly](#)



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