

Literary description

Student booklet



4

English

Queensland Comparable
Assessment Tasks
(QCATs) 2011

Given name:

Family name:

School:

Setting the scene: Group discussion

Literary descriptions

Literary descriptions are an important feature of narrative text.

Literary descriptions are used to:

- describe the setting
- develop characters and plot
- describe events or actions leading to a problem.

Language choices

Writers choose words to:

- help the reader **see** and **feel** what is happening
- describe a character's reaction to events.

Writers **show** what is happening rather than **tell** readers by carefully choosing **verb groups** and **noun groups** that create action, evoke feelings and paint a clear picture in the reader's mind.

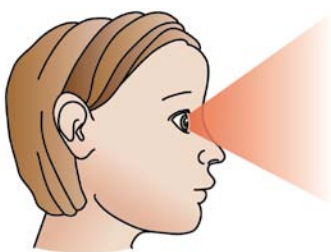
Listening

Listen as your teacher reads a literary description to you.

The description is from *The Barrumbi Kids* by Leonie Norrington.

Discuss the language choices that **bring the experience alive** for you.

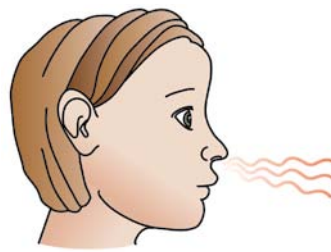
Think about the words used to describe these experiences:



See



Hear



Smell



Feel

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Literary description

It's bright — bright and hot — stone country in the middle of the day. Up here on the escarpment you'd never know you were a hundred metres up in the air unless you looked over the edge. It's just flat like the ground. There's a breeze. They lift their arms to cool their sweaty armpits and start walking, arms outstretched like little kids playing aeroplanes. There's spinifex and red red rocks. The trees are stunted and gnarled, bent over double.

From up here they can see for miles. There's a floodplain trembling in the heat waves. There are the women looking for turtle with their crowbars. They look like tall coloured strings moving across the shimmering land. Behind them the sky is dark. Clouds rumble and boil, rolling over and over themselves as they move across the floodplain, dark and threatening underneath, pure white on top. Dale and Tomias take no notice. Those clouds build up thick and black, filling the air with moisture till you can smell the rain, but nothing happens. They blow over, taking the rain with them, leaving the land hotter and more humid than ever. So the boys ignore them as they walk along, skirting clumps of spiky spinifex, watching the ground carefully for snakes. The sun is beating down on them and reflecting up from the stone — it's hot ...

Suddenly the boys become aware of a roar — a constant roaring sound ...

Before they get a chance to look, the wind rushes towards them ...

Discussion questions

- What does “gnarled” look like?
- Why does the floodplain appear to tremble?
- Do clouds really “rumble and boil”?
Why might the writer choose these words?

In this assessment, you will:

- **interpret** a literary description
- **plan** and **write** a literary description.

Interpret a literary description

Read this **description** adapted from *Wreck!* by Allan Baillie.
Answer the questions that follow.

Reene tried to turn away from the storm and forget about Ian. The clouds boiled across the sky. The wind, an icy animal shriek, hissed over the dunes.

Reene retreated into the house, but she had hardly closed the flywire door when thousands of small winged insects battered against it and the window. The insects scrabbled on the screen, as if desperately trying to reach her. She stepped back and closed the glass door. The insects rose with a soft burr, leaving as suddenly as they had come, but she did not go out again.

A flickering light began to move about the clouds, as if things up there in the sky were scraping against each other. Then lightning broke away from a dark green gorge, quivered, and plunged into the sea. Three seconds later a shuddering crack left the house ringing.

Where *is* that boy? Reene looked through the glass again. Still no sign.

Where *is* he? Probably sitting on the cliff watching the storm coming up.

The first drops of rain were hurled horizontally against the window, driving Reene back a step. Heavy rain shook the window, streaking the fine dust on the glass, then washing it clean: to make sure she could see all the anger in that sky just that more clearly.

1. a) What is the natural event described in this passage?

.....

b) List words to show that the story is taking place near the beach.

.....

c) Who is the main character in this description?

.....

2. Number the squares 1 to 3 in the order that the events happened.

☐

The first drops of rain hit the window.

☐

Reene closed the glass door.

☐

Reene retreated into the house.

3. Write one noun group used to describe a sound.

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4. Write one noun group used to describe what could be seen in the sky.

.....

5. List two verbs from the second paragraph used to describe the actions of the insects.

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•

6. What words in the last paragraph show the weather getting worse?

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7. How is Reese feeling about Ian?

a) Tick your choice:

☐ **worried**

☐ **pleased**

b) Explain your choice. Refer back to the description.

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8. **Why does the writer describe the wind as “an icy animal shriek”?**
Refer back to the description.

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Stop here: Wait for your teacher’s directions.

Plan a literary description

Plan a literary description for a story.

Your **purpose** is to show the reader what is happening.

- **Choose** a natural event.
- **Think** of a character who could experience this event.
- **Decide** where the event is taking place.

You need to:

- describe what happens during the event
- describe what your character might see, hear or feel and their reactions to the event
- choose words that evoke feelings, and paint clear and interesting pictures.



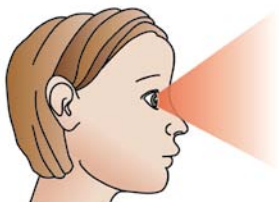
Your language choices may include:

- a variety of verbs and verb groups
- vivid noun groups
- circumstances of place, time and manner.

Complete the **Senses chart** on the next page.

Senses chart

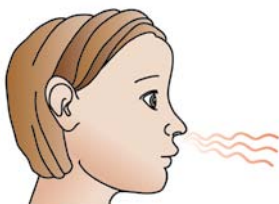
What does the natural event
look like?



What does the natural event
sound like?



What does the natural event
smell like?



What does the natural event
feel like?



Write a literary description



Remember to use:

- a variety of sentences
- paragraphs to separate your ideas
- punctuation.

9. Use your planning to write a literary description for a story.

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Edit

Have I chosen words that paint a picture for readers?

I have:	Yes	No
• used a variety of sentences to pace the action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• chosen vivid noun groups to describe the event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• chosen a variety of verbs to show what is happening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>


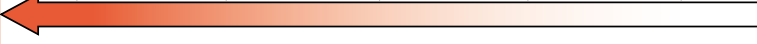
Proofread

I have:	Yes	No
• used paragraphs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• checked my punctuation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• checked my spelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Guide to making judgments — Year 4 English

Name

Focus: Interpret and construct a literary description.

Interpreting texts Knowledge and understanding		Constructing texts Knowledge and understanding	
Questions 1–8		Question 9	
Uses comprehension strategies to identify and evaluate language choices and to make and support inferences about characters and events in a literary description.		Constructs a literary description by using a variety of language elements (sentence structure, vocabulary, prepositional phrases, punctuation and paragraphs) to develop subject matter with imagery.	
	Precisely identifies language that creates imagery. Uses evidence from the text to clearly explain an inference. Effectively explains and evaluates the writer's language choices.		A
	Makes simple explanations using supporting evidence from the text.		B
	Selects relevant noun groups and verbs. Correctly sequences events. Makes an appropriate inference. Lists evidence from the text to support an inference.		C
	Selects a relevant noun group or verb from the text. Identifies the main idea. Identifies some language that creates imagery.		D
	Restates elements from the text. States personal opinions.		E

Feedback

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