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Describing People, Places & Things

Describing People

How do we describe people? Begin with the physical attributes:

Colour of the eyes, hair and skin

The shape of the eyes, nose and eyebrows

Height and weight

Try to be as specific as possible. So rather than just saying that she has blonde hair and white skin, think what shade of blonde hair does she have? Light blonde? Ash blonde? What shade of skin does she have? Lightly tanned? Freckled? Etc.

Think of the vocabulary you know and want to use and then look them up in a dictionary and see if there are any new words or alternative words you can use.

How would you describe the following - give three alternative words for the following:

1. Weight _____
2. Height _____
3. Looks _____
4. Eye colour _____
5. Nose _____

Then consider the person's personality and character. Are they happy? Lucky? Angry? Rude? Etc. Are they funny? Morose? Boring? (Look up all the words you do not know)

Remember pronouns and the verb "to be" so:

I am; he / she is; they are and so on.

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Practice 1: (In Pairs)

1. You are on the phone to a friend and talking about Angelina Jolie, an American actress. Your friend is not too sure who she is, and so you are trying to describe her to them. Use your imagination or your own opinion as to their personality and character. Write a short conversation between you, including at least three sentences describing Angelina Jolie and practice talking on the phone with your partner.



A _____
B _____
A _____
B _____
A _____
B _____

2. Now write a role-play describing Johnny Depp with your friend.



A _____
B _____
A _____
B _____
A _____
B _____

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Describing Places

If you were trying to describe the Eiffel Tower in Paris,
how would you do this?

You could say:

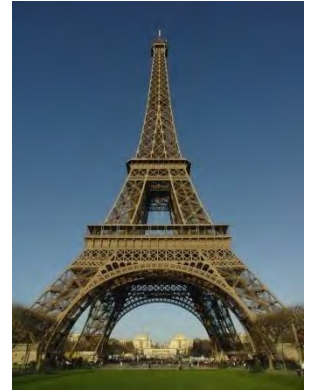
“It was wonderful. Lots of metal and very big!”

Ok, so this does describe it, in a way, but there are much better
ways to do so, which will bring it to life.

“The huge metallic structure towers over the skyline, dominating the capital city of France.”

To use simple short words is OK, and you will get by, but you will be very limited in your conversational abilities. You may even sound boring, and that is never good! If you wish to enter into the tourism and service industry in particular, you will be expected to be able to describe all manner of places and objects to travelers, in English.

Using the same formula as above, think about what it is you are describing and what in particular is important that makes it stand out, so the person you are talking to will know what you are talking about. Think about the main features of the place and how best to describe it. Using a dictionary and thesaurus, look to see what other alternatives can be used and use them.



Practice 2

What other words can you use instead of the following:

1. Large _____
2. Bright _____
3. Good _____
4. Busy _____
5. Dirty _____

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Practice 3



1. Which city is represented in the picture above? _____
2. Where is it? _____
3. What is there to see and do? _____
4. In pairs, describe this place to a visitor: (make it up if you wish)



1. Which city is this? _____
2. Where is it? _____
3. What is there to see and do? _____
4. In pairs, describe this place to a visitor: (make it up if you wish)

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Describing Things

As you have seen, being descriptive about something is very important and will be used on a daily basis, particularly when speaking to a foreigner. There may be a specific object that you like and may want as a present. You may be recommending it to a friend or colleague. Describing something you have had in the past, and you are reminiscing about and want the person to know what it is you are talking about. How would you do this? As above, think of how you would describe it as specifically and clearly as possible. Is it soft; fragile; rough; hard; strong; weak; flexible; what colour is it; what shape is it?

Name three synonyms and antonyms for the following words:

	Synonyms	Antonyms
1. Delicate	_____	_____
2. Sturdy	_____	_____
3. Flexible	_____	_____
4. Shiny	_____	_____
5. Round	_____	_____

Practice 4

Think of something in your life that is important to you, a toy perhaps or something that you depend on or something you would like to have.

Think of two ways to describe it, without actually saying what it is. Now describe it to the class, and we see who can guess what it is. Do not describe your phone. That is too easy.

Practice 5

1. Describe the worst place you have been to in your life. What is so awful about it and why? Would you recommend it as a place to go to anyone? Consider where the place is, what it's called, how to get there, what there is to do there, how long you stayed, what you did and why you were there (Write at least three sentences).

2. Then, write about the same place, but as if you were a tour agent, and you had to sell the place to tourists. How would you describe it now? (Write at least three sentences)
