



O'level
Foundation
Set 1

The Write Tribe

DESCRIPTIVE



What is needed in a descriptive essay?

- 1 *Use your five senses to describe*
- 2 *Use present tense to describe*
- 3 *You may include personal experiences
(change to past tense)*
- 4 *One paragraph, one point*
- 5 *Don't forget the explanation part of the question*



3. DESCRIPTIVE:

Describe the things that you do to relax after you have been very busy. Explain why you find them enjoyable. (2020 O-level English Paper 1, Q3)

If you found yourself running away from a lion, you would not be able to think very deeply about whether the dagger that Macbeth saw was only in his imagination, or if a bystander would have been able to see it too; you would be running away from a lion. When we worry about something, our brains and bodies react with a stress response that resembles what happens when we have to run from danger. That is why my teachers have taught me to pay attention to my body when I unwind after a long day of busyness. Through this process, I have found myself more deeply enjoying my time listening to music, reading, or just sitting still.

It is no secret that I am not very good with the Chinese language, but I have found that I can relax and get better at the subject at the same time by listening to Chinese music. In the past, I would torture myself into memorising characters and meanings of words, reading my textbook and painstakingly checking the dictionary so that I could match the foreign words with what I already knew in English. I did not enjoy it. Now, after a day spent working on whatever else I have to work on, I sometimes unwind just by sitting and listening to Chinese music. As the plucked notes of acoustic guitars and lightly tinkling pianos comfort my heart, I unavoidably end up enjoying the beautifully sung words that I would otherwise shudder to meet in an assessment book.

‘There are a million possibilities and uncertainties’, the singer tells me musically, and the words sink into a part of my brain that feels layers and layers deeper than when I engage only with the words on a page. When I become curious about the deeper meanings of a song’s lyrics, I engage with it with a level of stress that paradoxically feels relaxing; it is an expanding feeling I feel at the back of my head, and it is difficult to convey exactly how deeply relaxing this form of learning feels.



Reading novels also relaxes me, and as someone who enjoys fictional violence, I effortlessly devour books that deal with different kinds of violence. I read one recently that had the protagonist smash someone's skull in a shockingly graphic manner, and while my parents may balk at the idea of such a story, this is one of the main ways I have gotten better at the language. I have to admit, this habit of mine is relaxing and agitating almost in equal measure, especially since I have been known to stay up till the early hours of the morning to finish a book. In those instances, even though I may wake up tired, the sheer joy of reading an exciting book fuels me in an unexplainable way the next day. It remains mysterious to me why something can be tiring and relaxing at the same time, but I guess it reflects the limitation of the words we use to reflect human experience.

What makes the most sense is the way I enjoy the relaxation that comes from sitting still, which took a surprising amount of effort to learn how to do in the first place. Young people these days have trouble sitting still because of how our attention is perpetually cut into pieces by social media and gaming apps, and while most people have trouble learning how to sit still, I have one advantage: I love classical music. Before covid-19 hit, my parents would bring me to classical music concerts at the Esplanade, where it would be thoroughly embarrassing to reveal that one could not sit still when hundreds of people are sitting as quietly as they can. In the last moments of Gustav Mahler's Ninth Symphony, the final notes of the violins fade out so slowly, tenderly, and quietly that one is never sure of the exact moment when the piece ends. Could you sit still with that without getting agitated, in silence? Achieving that is enjoyably energising and relaxing all at once, and I recommend it to anyone who is curious about how this feels.

Over the years, I have come to the realisation that hanging loose after a long day involves careful choices. When I hear about other teenagers who have become addicted to video games and social media, I think of how sad it must be for something that was once relaxing to become a source of stress itself. Thankfully, there are other much more enjoyable ways to relax!



Topic: *Describe the things that you do to relax after you have been very busy. Explain why you find them enjoyable. (2020 O-level English Paper 1, Q3)*



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