



**O'level**  
**Foundation**  
**Set 2**

**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:

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***Describe a childhood toy, or a game you played, which still means a great deal to you. Why is it so important? (English O-Level 2016, Syllabus 1128)***

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When I was nine, I spent a good number of months begging my parents for a chess computer. In those days of the floppy disk — when they were still truly floppy — that meant my parents had to spend a few hundred dollars on a child's toy that was not guaranteed to last for more than a couple of years, especially when that child was somewhat destructive around fragile things. I was good at chess, though — I was already on the school team, and three years later I would go on to place fourth in my age group at a national tournament. My small but meaningful level of success really was thanks in part to the clunky chess computer my parents bought for me after enduring my begging and whining (their acquiescence was probably also due to the fact that they could no longer defeat their child at the game). It is probably obvious why the game of chess, while torturously boring to most people, remains important to me. The memories of learning, practicing, and winning certainly are dear in my mind, but the game still retains a romance that has seen me continue playing it to this day.

My first significant memories of chess centre around my mother, who taught me the basic moves, and then to love and hate the game. Our first matches were even, since we both were groping in the dark when it came to strategy. Slowly, however, I began to defeat her regularly. This was probably due to my more regular exposure to the game (while she did the housework, I could play chess against myself). I began to become accustomed to winning our matches, and thus became complacent and embarrassingly smug, when my beloved mother sprang the delightfully infuriating trap called the Scholar's Mate on me, defeating me in a mere four moves. I was surprised, shocked, amazed, nay, utterly astounded! Apparently she had gone to her brother, an engineer who plays chess at a very high level, to ask for help in winning a final chess match with her son before she called it quits. He probably also told her that she needed to practice more to play at a higher level, something that a busy housewife who also took care of aged parents could not afford. That day's defeat saw my mother taking me to the library for chess books which could further my chess



education without making her pull her hair out in frustration, marking the beginning of a more serious approach to chess preceding the success I was to see on the national stage.

Now that I have done some growing up, chess no longer holds the same position it once did in my life. My preteen self could probably easily defeat me now, but I still have continued to play casually. Sitting down at a chessboard across from another human being, I feel the world slowing down, and there is a soothing intensity that accompanies a well-played game, even if I end up losing. I am unsure if those feelings are nourished by my childhood experience, or by the nature of the game itself. Playing chess above a certain level forces a player's attention to become laser-sharp; anything less intense would mean an embarrassing defeat, somewhat along the lines of a tennis player losing because he forgot to wear the proper shoes. Of course, chess still reminds me of the sweeter moments of my childhood. Consequently, while chess takes up much less of my time now, the game itself is still dear to me. Numerous studies have also found that playing chess brings improvements in attention, concentration, and interest in learning



**Topic:** Describe a childhood toy, or a game you played, which still means a great deal to you. Why is it so important? (English O-Level 2016, Syllabus 1128)





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Blank writing area for the student's response.

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