

How to Describe a Picture

Step 1: Summarize the picture in one or two sentences.

Start your sentence with one or more of these prompts...

There is...

There are...

The picture shows...



Summary Examples:

- 1) *There are* 2 teenagers having a picnic at the park.
- 2) *The picture shows* two people having a picnic while reading books at the park.

Step 2: How to describe where things are in the picture.

Here is some language you'll need to help you describe things you see in the picture.



Here are some examples:

- 1) *On the left*, there is a man picking up a bottle of milk.
- 2) *On the right*, there is a girl watching her mother put butter on toast.
- 3) *At the bottom*, we can see a tabletop with different types of food on it.

Other phrases you might need include:

In the background... (mountains, ocean, sky)

In the middle... (ocean)

In the foreground... (beach, boats)

Here are some examples:

- 1) *In the foreground* of the picture there are two boats tied to the shore of the beach.
- 2) *In the middle* of the picture the ocean and some mountains touch.
- 3) *In the background* the sky and clouds touch the mountains and ocean.



Step 3: Add important details

For example, give details that tell us what the two people look like and what they are doing.

In this step, focus on the most important objects in the picture.



Here are some examples:

- 1) The two people look comfortable or relaxed.
- 2) They are sitting on the blanket back-to-back as they read a book.
- 3) The girl on the left is wearing a dark blue jean jacket.
- 4) The boy on the right is wearing a light blue jean jacket.

Step 4: Speculating about the picture

Speculating means talking about possibilities...



In this step try to answer questions like the following:

Why are the umbrellas here?

Who put them here?

Here are some examples:

- 1) I suppose it might be some kind of art project.
- 2) Maybe, one person put an umbrella up there as a joke and then others started doing it, too.

Picture 2



What can you speculate about this picture?

Some possible ideas are...

Who made the footprints and why?

Where were they going?

Where is the person who made the footprints now?..

Here are some examples:

- 1) The footprints must have been made by a climber.
- 2) The person who made the footprints might be behind the tree now.
- 3) The person who made the footprints is heading towards the forest.

Here is some useful language to use when making speculations:

- I suppose...
- Maybe...
- [It] must...
- [He] might...

Let's try this with another picture,



Here are some examples:

- 1) I suppose the guy is a climber or he is on an adventure holiday.
- 2) Maybe he climbed up the rock and now he is on the way down.
- 3) He must have a lot of experience because he has a lot of equipment on him.
- 4) He might be focusing on what he is doing or might be resting for a minute.

Step 5: Speculating about the context of the picture

In this step, you can speculate about what you can and can't see in the picture.



Answer questions like these...

Where and when was the picture taken?

Who took the picture?

What was the photographer doing there?

Here are some examples:

- 1) I think this could be in the USA or maybe Europe
- 2) It's a good photo, so perhaps it was taken by a professional photographer.

In these two examples we talked about what we can't see in the image. This can be very useful.

Let's try another example:



- 1) This must be somewhere tropical, like the Caribbean or the Maldives.
- 2) Perhaps it was taken by a tourist who came to the beach on one of those boats.

Step 6: Making longer answers



In the picture there are two people having a picnic while reading books at the park. There is a girl on the left and a boy on the right. In the middle of the picture there is a large grassy field. In the background you can see a wall of trees touching the sky. The two people in the picture look comfortable and relaxed. They are wearing jean jackets and are sitting back-to-back as they read. There is a basket of bread and two glasses of milk on the blanket next to them. They each have a book open in their hands that they are reading. I suppose they are relaxing at the park on the weekend doing something they enjoy. I guess they don't want to stay at home, so they have prepared a simple picnic outside. I'm guessing that it must be fall since the leaves on the trees are turning brown and the two people are wearing jackets. I think they are probably friends or maybe brother and sister since they are out together. Maybe reading is their hobby or interest, so they have decided to bring a book along for fun.