

GCSE English Paper 1: Descriptive Writing- Do's and Don'ts

Section 2 of GCSE English Paper 1 asks you to describe a specified scene or situation. Learn the following guidelines which should help you to produce the type of writing that the examiner is looking for.

Do's

1. Imagine the scene is being viewed like a camera scanning a whole scene, zooming in now and then to focus on interesting little incidents/ scenes/ characters that will be looked at in more detail.
2. Make your scene realistic and varied in tone- include pleasant and unpleasant details to provide a sense of light and shade in the description.
3. Try to use as many senses as possible in the description- sights, sounds, smells, physical sensations.
4. Use interesting and vivid words.
5. Describe the scene in present tense if possible to create a sense of immediacy- but be consistent and keep to this tense.
6. Have a clear start and end to the scene being described.
7. Write **1 page** only- not more, not less; divide it into **3- 4 paragraphs**.

Don'ts

1. Don't tell a story- you're simply describing a scene. To avoid telling a story, don't have characters using dialogue.
2. Don't include yourself in the scene- describe the scene from a third person viewpoint.
3. Don't rely on clichés- avoid the obvious stereotypical details- eg the snowy Christmas scene.