Chapter 1

Description

**🖎 Description**

This chapter discusses the social function, the generic structure, and the linguistic features of a description text.

**🖎 Basic** **Competence**

You will be able to evaluate the genre of a text through its structure and features.

**🖎 Objectives**

After finishing this chapter, you will be able to analyze a description text.

**🖎 Indicators**

After finishing this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Analyze the social function of a description text
2. Analyze the generic structure of a description text
3. Analyze the language features of a description text

1.1 What Is Description?

You write a description text when you want the reader to **picture** what you are describing. For effective descriptions, you need a clear picture in your mind of who or what it is that you are setting out to describe. Doing this allows you to focus on precise details which make the descriptions come alive in the reader’s mind.

A description text describes a particular living, non-living or natural phenomenon. Descriptions can ‘stand alone’ but are often part of other texts, e.g. Information Reports.

1.1.1 Social Function

Description texts describe the characteristics or features of a thing or a phenomenon.

1.1.2 Generic Structure

The generic structure of a description text usually consists of the following elements:

* Identification: identifying the phenomenon to be described.
* Description: describing the phenomenon in parts, qualities, or/and characteristics.

The following is an example of a description text structure.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **My Dog, Romeo**  |
| **Identification** | My dog, Romeo, is the best pet anyone could have. He is beautiful and easy to care for. Playing with him is lots of fun. He always takes care of me. There isn’t a better pet anywhere. |
| **Description*****What does it look like?******What can it do?******What are its special features?*****index** | Romeo is a beautiful tricolor Sheltie. He is mostly black with white and a bit of brown. Caring for him is easy because I simply have to make sure he has fresh water and food every day. I exercise him by throwing his toys. Romeo is a good pet because he is nice looking and doesn’t require much care.Romeo is lots of fun to play with. He loves to play catch. He follows me around the house with a toy and drops it on my foot so I will kick it. He can catch just about anything, but his favorite is chasing a Frisbee. I really have fun playing with Romeo.Romeo takes care of me. He always follows me when I leave a room. When I am sitting on the couch he plops down right beside me. When we are outside in the woods he always makes sure that I keep up with the rest of the family. He always watches out for me. |
| **Conclusion (Optional)** | As you can see, Romeo is a great pet. I am proud of him and he doesn’t need much care. Playing with him is always enjoyable. He watches over me and keeps me safe. Romeo is absolutely the best pet that anyone could ever have! |

1.1.3 Language Features

The following list is the common language features of a description text:

* Use of nouns or noun groups/phrases, e.g. my dog, the best pet, a great pet
* Use of a variety of types of adjectives, e.g. opinion, factual, numbering, classifying
* Use being verbs or linking verbs, and action verbs
* Use of similes, metaphors and other types of figurative language, particularly in literary descriptions
* Focus on specific participant, e.g. Romeo, my dog
* Use of simple present tense

Study the language features of the following description text.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **My Dog, Romeo**  |
| Nouns or noun groups/phrases*Adjectives***Being verbs, linking verbs** (Focus on specific participant) SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE | My dog, (Romeo), **IS** the *best* pet anyone could have. He **is** *beautiful* and *easy* to care for. Playing with him **is** lots of fun. He always TAKES care of me. There **isn’t** a *better* pet anywhere. |
| Romeo **is** a beautiful tricolor Sheltie. He **is** mostly black with white and a bit of brown. Caring for him **is** easy because I simply HAVE to make sure he HAS *fresh* water and food every day. I EXERCISE him by throwing his toys. Romeo **is** a good pet because he **is** *nice* looking and DOESN’T REQUIRE much care.Romeo **is** lots of fun to play with. He LOVES to play catch. He FOLLOWS me around the house with a toy and DROPS it on my foot so I will kick it. He can catch just about anything, but his favorite **is** chasing a Frisbee. I really HAVE fun playing with Romeo.Romeo TAKES care of me. He always FOLLOWS me when I LEAVE a room. When I am sitting on the couch he PLOPS down right beside me. When we **ARE** outside in the woods he always MAKES sure that I KEEP up with the rest of the family. He always WATCHES out for me. |
| As you can see, Romeo is a great pet. I **am** proud of him and he DOESN’T NEED much care. Playing with him **is** always *enjoyable*. He watches over me and **keeps** me safe. Romeo **is** absolutely the best pet that anyone could ever have! |

1.2 Exercise

1. Read and study the text below. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What is the social function of the text?
2. Which part of paragraph belongs to identification?
3. Which part of paragraph belongs to description?
4. Find the noun groups.
5. Find the adjectives.
6. What participant is involved?
7. What types of verbs can you find? Give examples.
8. What kind of tense is mostly used? Give examples.

My pet is a dog named Tipsy. Tipsy is an adorable brown dog that has a few black spots spread across his body and tail. Tipsy is a kelpie crossed with a border collie, and he has fluffy velvety ears. Even though Tipsy has a very strong body frame, he has a very gentle face and is always a friendly dog to those whom he knows. If a stranger approaches out house, however, Tipsy can get very aggressive. He always barks loudly to attract our attention to the approaching stranger.

Tipsy loves many things. Among these is to nuzzle his wet nose in my hands and in the hands on my parents and siblings. He craves attention most of the time because he is scared of being abandoned or ignored. Tipsy can actually spend whole afternoons chewing bones because he loves them so much. Whenever Tipsy is worried, he looks at us with desperate eyes that appear like he is sad. He does so while wagging his tail from one side to the other. Whenever we see him exhibiting these signs, we immediately prepare him a quick meal and some bones for him to eat.

Tipsy also likes the chipping sound made by the birds that reside on the trees in our compound. Whenever Tipsy hears these sounds, he raises his ears and points them towards the direction where the chirping sound is originating. One can always observe the way his eyes light up with excitement whenever the birds begin making their soothing noises.

2. Read and study the following text. Then, analyze it in terms of its genre.

**Island of Sand**

At over 120 kilometers long with an area of 184.000 hectares, Fraser Island is the largest san island the world. Fraser Island lies along the southern coast of Queensland, Australia. It is an island of outstanding, natural interest and beauty.

Fraser Island’s massive, dune systems have built up over 700.000 years. Great patches of gleaming, white sand-blows and huge slopes of spilling sand are formed as the dunes continue their march from east to west across the island. The tallest dunes are over 240 meters above the sea level. On the eastern side of the island, layers of brilliantly-colored sand form intricate, sculptured cliff faces, a dramatic backdrop to the uninterrupted panorama of Seventy-Five Mile Beach.

Amazingly, these ancient, evolving dunes contain numerous, crystal-clear, freshwater lakes. Rain falling on the centre of the island takes over fifty years to filter through the sand, often emerging as pure, spring-fed creeks meandering across the beaches.

Fraser Island supports a remarkable diversity of vegetation, from stately rainforest to swampy fens, inhabited by a wide variety of animal species.

Because of its exceptional beauty, ecological diversity and ongoing geological process, Fraser Island was added to the World Heritage List in 1992.

1.3 Summary

Description texts describe the characteristics or features of a thing or a phenomenon. The generic structure consists of identification, description, and conclusion (optional). A description text uses noun groups, adjectives, linking verbs, and focuses on a specific participant.