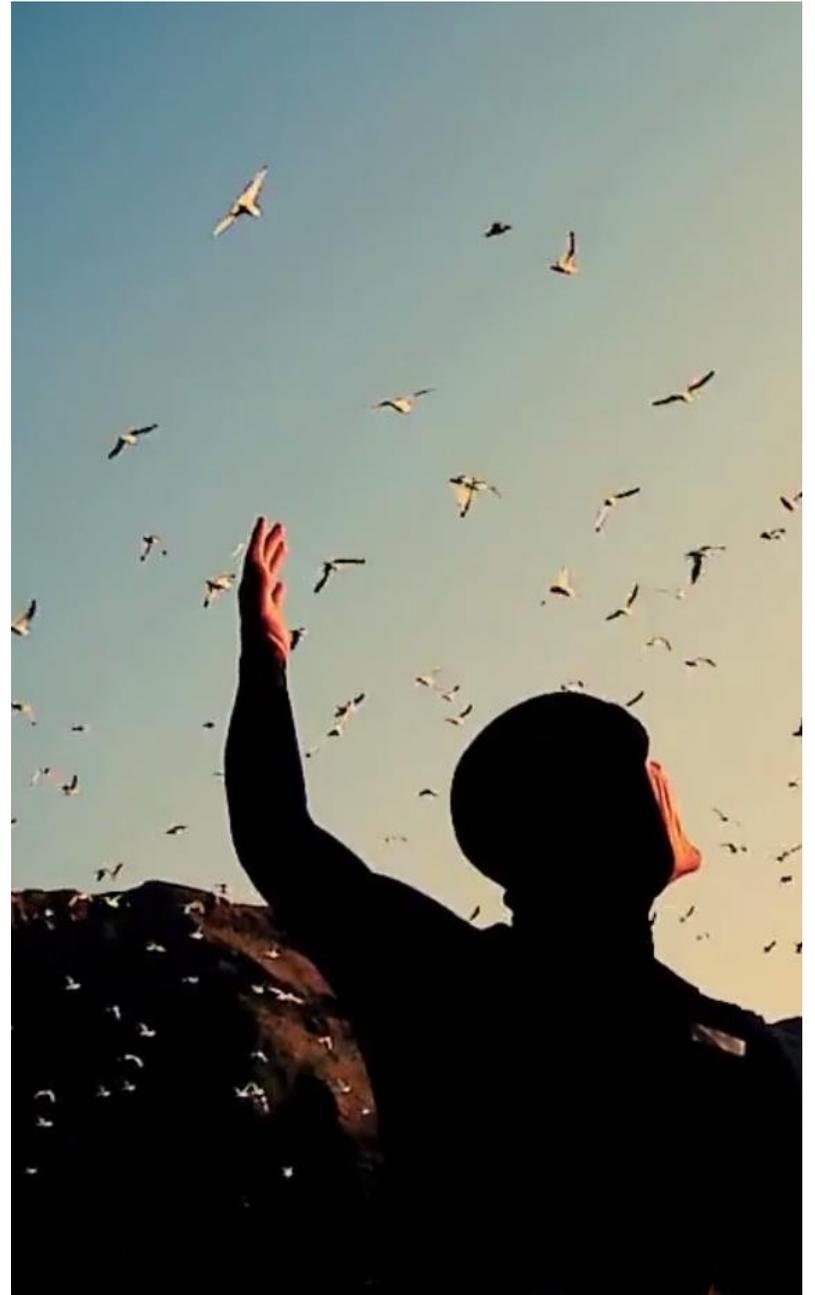
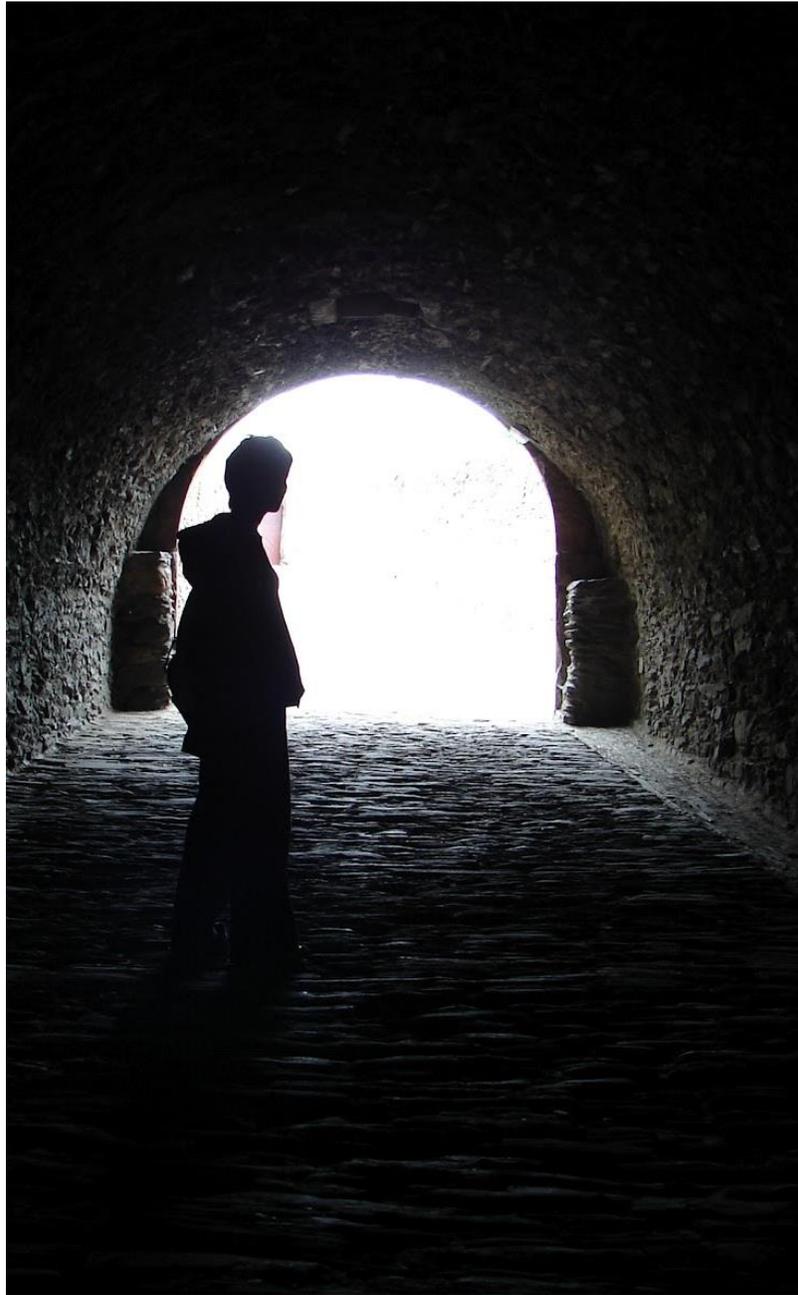


Descriptive writing

- When you write a description, you need to write about 5 or 6 paragraphs
- The focus should be on describing the thing that is the focus of the task
- You should try to avoid writing a story. One way to do this is to limit the movement of your character. Another way is to write without a character in mind.
- You should plan, organise, write, proof read and edit
- You would normally have between 35 and 45 minutes for this kind of task

Task 1 - Using descriptive techniques

- On the next slide you will see three images
- I have then shown you how to use different techniques in the slides to 11
- For each technique, you can practice using these three images.



Adjectives and verbs

- Adjectives don't have to be boring and simple
- You can mess with reality by choosing unpredictable adjectives and verbs
- The burnt sky flickered above the building.
- Black and bitter smoke bulged out of the factory roof, which creaked in pain.

Adjectives/verbs

- The **grey ash** cloud flew (rose) (floated) (escaped) (drifted) (faded) up to the sky.
- The grey ash cloud rose up to the sky/The grey ash cloud faded up to the sky.
- The **thick, white, creeping** smoke was **visible** in the **dark, (starry) bitter, ominous** sky.
- The **whole** neighbourhood **went to search** for the **missing** boy.
- The viscous, savage crowd went out to search for the lost/ innocent/ orphaned boy.

Simile

- Simile should compare features that give a strong sense of atmosphere
- Don't choose predictable comparisons
- Like a living creature the smoke billowed out through the door which had long since collapsed.
- Burning ash danced in the heat like angry sprites biting the skin on contact.

- The tunnel was dark, gloomy and silent like an abandoned, haunted mill.
- The tunnel was dark, gloomy and silent like the empty dead space in a black hole.
- The dark wet tunnel had the odour of the sewers engulfing people's noses with waste.
- The dark wet tunnel engulfed people's noses with a smell like the sewers.
- The mysterious ominous smoke rose up as if the ghosts of the dead were ~~rising~~ (reaching) from their graves, ~~coming alive~~.

Senses

- Any description should include senses other than sight
- You should try to give a sense of the experience, not a description of an image
- The thick acrid smoke carried with it the choking sour smell of burning plastic
- Crackling, spitting flames could be heard between the wind howling.

Senses

- The thick smoke carried a **dense, choking**, burnt smell through the air.
- The man heard the birds chirping and tweeting as loud as possible **like a vast orchestra/ like a stadium of enthusiastic football fans competing with each other.**
- The crackling smoke filled my nose with a powerful burning aroma.

Personification

- You may already have begin personifying, but you should develop this.
- To personify give the thing a feeling or a motivation, hateful or more gentle.
- Between the red fire sky and the dark buildings, the wind whipped the flames, taunting them to lash out.
- The clouds of smoke escaped into the air through cracks in the walls and roof running to the broad sky from their imprisonment.

Personification

- The miserable brown mud stuck to us as if it were trying to pull us down into its murky kingdom.
- The shady smoke hypnotised the people pulling (drawing) (them towards it) in all of their minds. Them in, **suffocating their thoughts and making them drowsy.**

Reflection

- Reflection means looking back and considering
- You may consider from a sensory, emotional or a thoughtful perspective
- Timid and hopeless before the blaze, I watched powerless to do anything but wait.
- The warm glow that the fire provided in the cold night nearly made me forget that this fire was the enemy, that were I to get to close it would devour me.

Developing descriptive paragraphs

- A paragraph of description should have one focus
- Within an image like the one I have been using throughout, I would probably write a paragraph on each of the following:
 - The red glow as I approached
 - The crowds gathered watching
 - The building itself
 - The smoke and the flames
 - The sky above
 - The tree and the pylons
 - The fire men working
 - The day light and people leaving
- Each paragraph needs to be between 4 and 5 sentences long, but should have one focus.

A paragraph about the smoke

Focus on adjectives

Focus on simile

Senses focus - sound

Focus on personification

Reflection

The **ominous grey ash** cloud rose up to the sky as if the **ghosts of the dead were reaching from their graves**. Crackling ferociously, it filled my nose with a powerful burning aroma. **I watched the suffocating smoke billowing out forming a blanket, smothering those below, slowly.** Resisting the temptation to relax before its warmth, I felt the creeping of wispy tendrils entering my lungs as I breathed and covered my mouth.

A paragraph about the sky

Focus on adjectives

Focus on simile

Senses focus - sound

Focus on personification

Reflection

The burnt sky flickered above the building. Glowing ash danced in the heat like angry sprites biting the skin on contact. Crackling, spitting flames could be heard beneath the wild wind howling, which **whipped the flames, taunting them to lash out in the space between the red, fire sky and the dark buildings.** The warm glow that the fire provided in the cold night nearly made me forget that this fire was the enemy, that were I to get to close it would devour me.

Starting sentences

If you always use a noun starter your sentences will be predictable and mechanical. Try to use a variety of different sentences starters like the ones below.

-ing verbs	Prepositions	Nouns
Walking Crashing Looking Glaring	As, while, during, after Under, on, in, beneath	The A He, she, they, it
Creates a subordinate clause that will not make sense on its own without a main clause.	Creates a subordinate clause that will not make sense on its own without a main clause.	Will create a main clause that will make complete sense, but will be simple.
Crawling through the sand, he hung his head to hide from the glare of the sun. Glancing from left to right, the tiger surveyed the forest glade for her cubs.	After the storm, the sunlight glimmered through the angry clouds. Above the main body of the church, the spire stretched towards the sky.	A tiny particle of dust was enough to momentarily blind him. She could not stand another minute in his presence.

Showing not telling

Writing a description is really about trying to avoid **telling** me something in a matter of fact way. You should be trying to avoid simply passing on information. A description should try to capture more than the facts so you need to **show** the effects rather than telling me the facts.

• The house that he lived in was old and not very nice.

- Cobwebs
- Wall paper peeling off
- Cracks in the wall
- Crumbling cement between bricks
- Bare floorboards
- Slats in the wall
- Buckets collecting drips
- Mould on the ceiling

This sentence tells me what the person thinks, but they do not help me to visualise or even experience what the 'old' house looks like.

Peering in through the cracked glass pane in the door, I let my eyes adjust to the gloom. In the shadows the flaps of wall paper peeling from the ceiling were like open wounds. Beneath this thin layer of mismatching handy work, the cracks were beginning to show in the plaster which revealed the skeletal slats of the walls. I cast my eyes around the space. The hall way was bare except for a single small table and two half full buckets that waited patiently beneath dark patches on the ceiling where drops of water gathered in the mould.

I have taken these bullet pointed ideas and shown the reader a part of the house instead of telling them what I think of it.

Can you change this from a series of facts to a paragraph that suggests the information without telling the reader?

His family had died in a fire when he was six years old. He had never forgotten them any day since and now he was thirty.

- A photograph of a family together inside a diary
- Singed edges to the picture
- Pictures on the wall only include the boy
- Man sat in the gloom
- Newspaper article about a blaze
- Flowers beside him

Can you change this from a series of facts to a paragraph that suggests the information without telling the reader?

His family had died in a fire when he was six years old. He had never forgotten them any day since and now he was thirty.

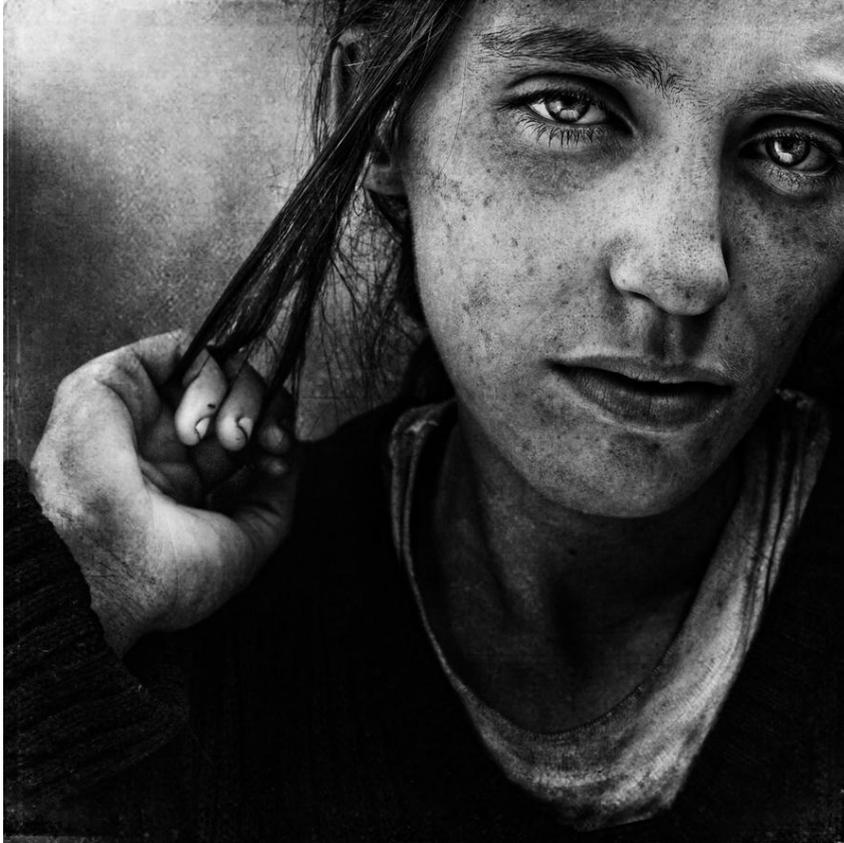
- A photograph of a family together inside a diary
- Singed edges to the picture
- Pictures on the wall only include the boy
- Man sat in the gloom
- Newspaper article about a blaze
- Flowers beside him

Sitting in the gloom, a single tear welled up and glistened in the light that cut through the curtains. In his hand he held a well worn diary, open, displaying a photograph. The edges of the photograph were singed and curled in the bottom left corner, but the image itself was pressed flat by being always shut inside the diary. Behind the photograph the headline of an article including the words 'family blaze' peeped out briefly before he covered it again with the photograph. Standing up from the chair he reached out and picked up the flowers that had sat in the vase next to him. It was time to visit them.

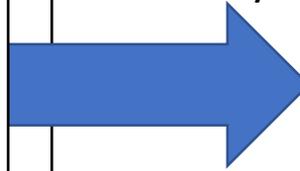
Self Assess

WWW	EBI
You have used a range of different sentence starters	Try using..... To start sentences
You have used some linguistic devices effectively	Try using a simile or referring to the senses to make your description more interesting
You have created a character with believable motivations and built up tension	Think carefully about how a realistic character would think, feel and react
You have written a developed description	You need to develop your description. It is a bit short.
You have used basic punctuation accurately	You need to use full stops to separate every bit of sense or main clause

When you plan, begin by listing features that you can describe.



This includes senses, but also the room she is in, the movement that happens during your description, the things outside of the picture.



Features you can see

Features you can zoom in on

Features you can imagine

The context around them

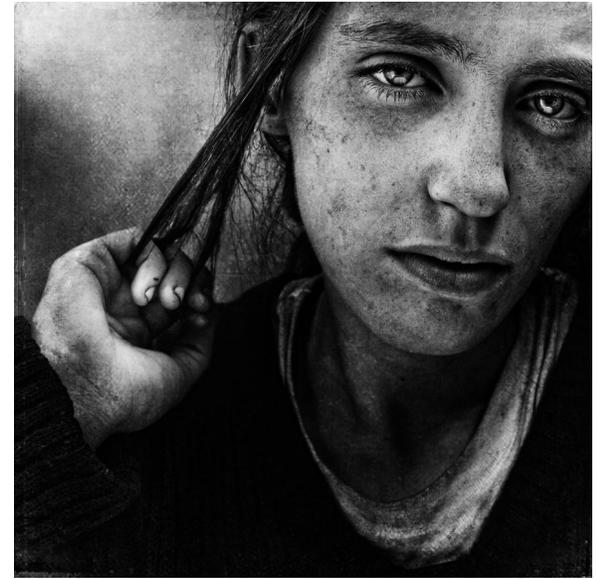
The stories

Description

Having decided what you will focus on in each paragraph, you should then try and write your paragraphs. Remember to use a range of techniques.

Sat across from her, the cutting silence had me by the scruff of the neck, but I was determined to wait for a response. All I could do was look back into those eyes like black holes that seemed to drag me in. I sensed beads of sweat forming on my forehead in the intense atmosphere of this situation, waiting...waiting. Her gaze cut through me now, to the heart of my own apathy. I should have helped her.

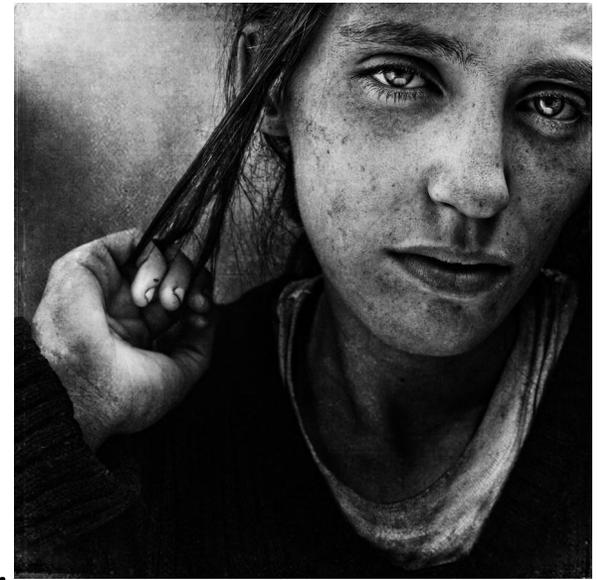
- Adjectives/verbs
- Simile
- Senses
- Metaphor/personification
- Reflection



Description

She pulled at her matted greasy hair, twisting it between her fingers. Observing her fingers run between the strands, was like watching her change from begin a homeless person into a girl again. It struck me that she would want to be beautiful, attractive, noticed in the same way that anyone would if people could see beyond the grime, reach out beyond the musty odour. As she teased at her hair, every strand seemed to hold meaning: a minute sat in the cold iced wind; a person whose pocket rattled, but not with spare change; an opportunity that had passed by without even showing itself. She was a girl with the same humanity as anyone, but she was seen as little more than litter on the pavements of the city.

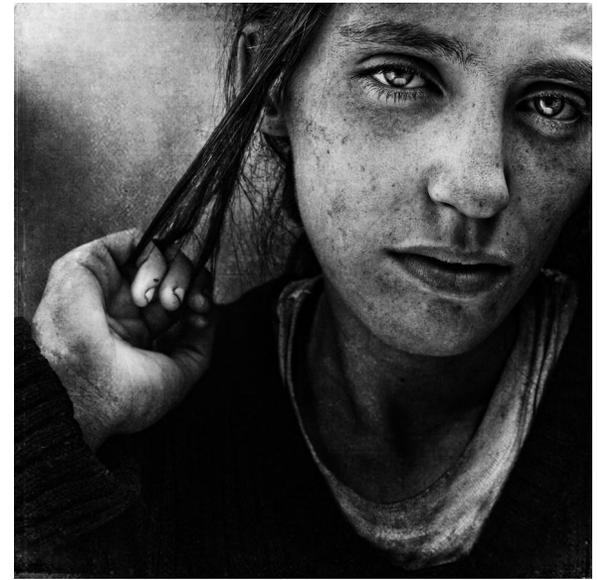
- Adjectives/verbs
- Simile
- Senses
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- Reflection



Description

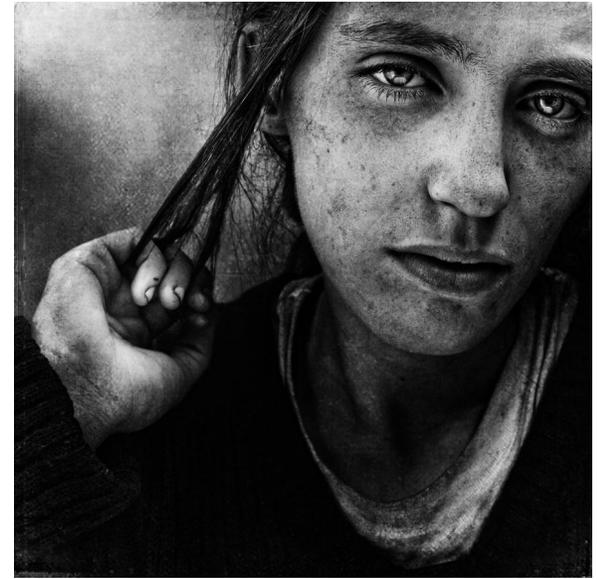
She stood up closing her eyelids down and breathed the same stagnant air as me. She barely filled her clothes which looked more like they were hung on a line they were draped so loosely on her bird like frame. From the tunnel ceiling water dripped into the puddles making a sonorous echoing sound. Darkness and disappointment hung in the musty air, clung to her like the shadows that she seemed to pull around her in the absence of a coat. I felt some of her despair beginning to claw at me, to stretch out and grasp at me.

- Adjectives/verbs
- Simile
- Senses
- Metaphor/personification
- Reflection



Change/contrast

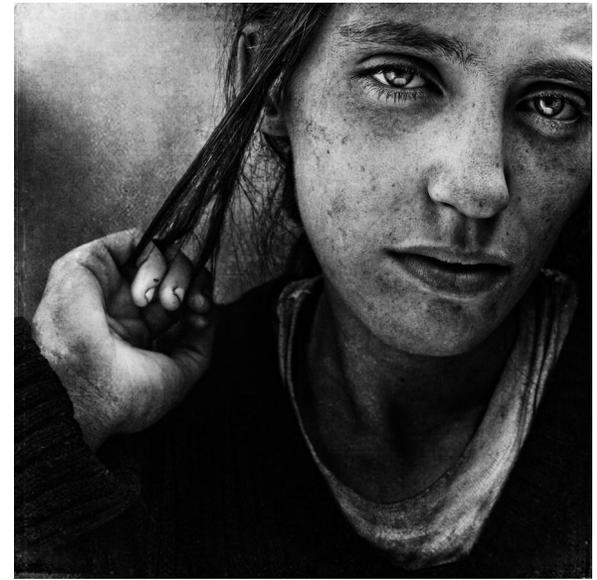
She was not for talking. Not any more. But, I had what I needed. I had the story that would make the papers, would touch the hearts of the readers, would make my name. As I stood to leave, I felt a hand on my shoulder and I was lowered into the rusty chair again. I turned to look up at the face of a much larger male, dirty, with the same stench, the same dark shadows around the eyes, but significantly larger. It was only then that I realised the dark, shelter of the tunnel was also a place cut off, isolated from passers by. It was their shelter. It was now my chamber.



- A change or contrast gives you a chance to re-imagine the situation
- You could have light going dark
- You could be alone having been in a busy place

Ending

She stepped towards me holding a tattered, worn picture in one hand and a familiar newspaper clipping in the other. The sun shone in the picture lighting a family smiling together outside of a house, the father stood over them like a proud lion. “Look closely,” she said in a voice that had the tone of gravel dragged under foot. The picture reached out and the name on the bottom of the article froze me to the spot. I had done this. I was the one who had exposed him. I had hung them out to dry and left them to fend for themselves. The grip tightened on my shoulders.



- An ending should just give some shape.
- I have chosen to give a story like ending that gives the descriptive details some context.
- I have focussed on showing her past rather than telling

Success?

- Have you use of descriptive adjectives?
- Is your description realistic or believable?
- Have you used different sentence starters?
- Have you described by showing rather than telling
- Have you stayed in one tense
- Do you have a range of different sentence lengths
- Have you used: Metaphor/simile/imagery/personification/senses



Another way to help yourself plan for different features and zoom in on details is to turn the image into a grid.



Features you can see

Features you can zoom in on

Features you can imagine

The context around them

The stories

Planning and structuring

- Begin by planning lots of things that you can describe
- When you have lots of features you need to decide on a direction
 - Introduction to character/setting overview
 - Zoom in 1
 - Zoom in 2
 - Movement zoom 1
 - Zoom in 3
 - Conclusion/contrast

Intro

I walked the night duty alone in this city of suspicious, devious creatures. Through the streets, the hanging glowing mists made the buildings seem like phantoms towering over ancient streets. Watchful and silent in the sky, the monthly blood moon cast its disturbing glow onto the city below bathing it in a deep scarlet hue. It felt as if the whole city was washed in the blood of every crime that had been committed over the centuries. Right now, all I wanted was to be safe. I wanted to be at home, but my duty was the early warning system we needed to keep us safe from the night crawlers.

Focus 1

As I looked along the cobbled street towards the factories that clanged and hummed all day and night, I traced a path that would avoid me having to jump over the large puddles. In the moon's glow these puddles looked less like glassy water than pools of sticky blood. Their dark depths would draw me in and who knew how far down they would go. It seemed more than possible that these pools were gateways to an even more hellish world beneath. I looked up, tearing my imagination away from the horror it was creating. Looking up ahead, the street disappeared into the red glow of the mist. This was the very place that nightmares were born.

Try this one



