

Descriptive Writing – Setting

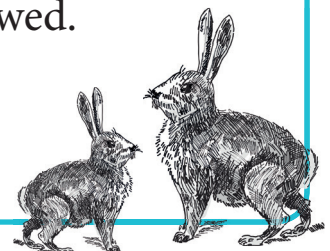
Extract from *Watership Down* by Richard Adams (Chapter 1)

The primroses were over. Toward the edge of the wood, where the ground became open and sloped down to an old fence and a brambly ditch beyond, only a few fading patches of pale yellow still showed among the dog's mercury and oaktree roots.

5 On the other side of the fence, the upper part of the field was full of rabbit holes. In places the grass was gone altogether and everywhere there were clusters of dry droppings, through which nothing but the ragwort would grow. A hundred yards away, at the bottom of the slope, ran the brook, no more than three feet wide, half choked with kingcups,
10 watercress and blue brooklime. The cart track crossed by a brick culvert and climbed the opposite slope to a fivebarred gate in the thorn hedge. The gate led into the lane.

The May sunset was red in clouds, and there was still half an hour to twilight. The dry slope was dotted with rabbits—some nibbling at the
15 thin grass near their holes, others pushing further down to look for dandelions or perhaps a cowslip that the rest had missed. Here and there one sat upright on an ant heap and looked about, with ears erect and nose in the wind. But a blackbird, singing undisturbed on the outskirts of the wood, showed that there was nothing alarming there, and in the
20 other direction, along the brook, all was plain to be seen, empty and quiet. The warren was at peace.

At the top of the bank, close to the wild cherry where the blackbird sang, was a little group of holes almost hidden by brambles. In the green half-light, at the mouth of one of these holes, two rabbits were sitting
25 together side by side. At length, the larger of the two came out, slipped along the bank under cover of the brambles and so down into the ditch and up into the field. A few moments later the other followed.



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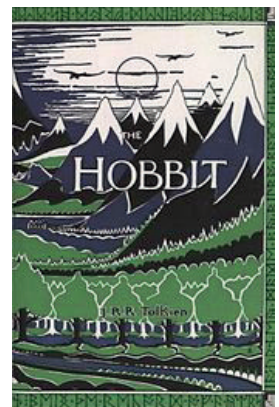
Extract from *The Hobbit*

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

5 It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats—the hobbit was fond
10 of visitors.

The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill—The Hill, as all the people for many miles around called it—and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms,
15 bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining-rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage.

The best rooms were all on the left-hand side (going in) for these were the only ones to have windows—deep-set round windows looking over
20 his garden and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.



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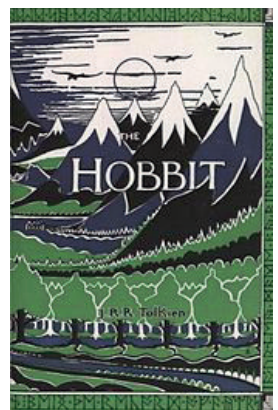
Extract from *The Hobbit*

“Here it is at last,” he called, and the others gathered around him and looked over the edge.

5 They saw a valley far below. They could hear the voice of hurrying water in the rocky bed at the bottom; the scent of trees was in the air, and there was a light on the valley-side across the water. Bilbo never forgot the way they slithered and slipped in the dusk down the steep zig-zag path into the secret valley of Rivendell.

10 The air grew warmer as they got lower, and the smell of pine-trees made him drowsy, so that every now and again he nodded and nearly fell off, or bumped his nose on the pony’s neck. Their spirits rose as they went down and down. The trees changed to beech and oak, and there was a comfortable feeling in the twilight. The last green had almost faded out of grass when they came at length to an open glade not far above the banks of the stream.

15 “Hmmmmmm! it smells like elves!” thought Bilbo and looked up at the stars. They were burning bright and blue. Just then there came a burst of song like laughter in the trees.



Descriptive Writing - Setting

Extract from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

A scarlet steam engine was waiting next to a platform packed with people. A sign overhead said Hogwarts Express, 11 o'clock. Harry looked behind him and saw a wrought-iron archway where the ticket box had been, with the words Platform Nine
5 and Three-Quarters on it. He had done it.

Smoke from the engine drifted over the heads of the chattering crowd, while cats of every colour wound here and there between their legs. Owls hooted to each other in a disgruntled sort of way over the babble and scraping of heavy trunks.

10 The first few carriages were already packed with students, some hanging out of the window to talk to their families, some fighting over seats. Harry pushed his trolley off down the platform in search of an empty seat. He passed a round-faced boy who was saying, "Gran, I've lost my toad again."



Descriptive Writing – Setting

Extract from *Black Beauty* (Chapter 1)

The first place that I can well remember was a large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. Some shady trees leaned over it, and rushes and water-lilies grew at the deep end. Over the hedge on one side we looked into a plowed
5 field, and on the other we looked over a gate at our master's house, which stood by the roadside; at the top of the meadow was a grove of fir trees, and at the bottom a running brook overhung by a steep bank.

10 While I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could not eat grass. In the daytime I ran by her side, and at night I lay down close by her. When it was hot we used to stand by the pond in the shade of the trees, and when it was cold we had a nice warm shed near the grove.



Descriptive Writing – Setting

Extract from *The Wind in the Willows* (Chapter 1)

It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting—everything happy, and progressive, and occupied. And instead of having
5 an uneasy conscience pricking him and whispering “whitewash!” he somehow could only feel how jolly it was to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working.

10 He thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before—this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook
15 themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver—glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble.

The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. By the side of the river he trotted as one trots, when very small, by the side of a man who holds
20 one spellbound by exciting stories; and when tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered on to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea.



Descriptive Writing – Setting

Extract from *The Minpins* by Roald Dahl (Billy visits The Forest of Sin)

Through the window, not so very far away, Billy could see the big black secret wood that was called The Forest of Sin. It was something he had always longed to explore.

5 His mother had told him that even grown-ups were frightened of going into The Forest of Sin. She recited a poem to him that was well-known in the district. It went like this:

*Beware! Beware! The Forest of Sin!
None come out, but many go in!*

10 Very, very slowly, he walked forward into the great forest. Giant trees were soon surrounding him on all sides and their branches made an almost solid roof high above his head, blotting out the sky. Here and there little shafts of sunlight shone through gaps in the roof. There was not a
15 sound anywhere. It was like being among the dead men in an enormous empty green cathedral.

