

## creative writing describing a scene

## 1 generating ideas for writing

- a Look at this exercise from the first lesson of a course in creative writing. Which example would you most like to read?

Write a short anecdote with the title *Seen through a window*, describing what is seen and the feelings of the person looking. This person may be you or someone else. The reader will also be looking through that window and sharing the feelings of the character.

Here are a few examples: a firefighter on a ladder looking into a burning room; a sick old woman looking out at the garden she used to look after; a man looking into a shop window at something he would love to buy but can't afford.

- b Imagine you are going to do the exercise in a. Think for a few minutes and imagine what you are looking at.
- Where is the window? (in a house, shop, palace, prison, etc.)
  - Who is the person? (you, someone you know, an imaginary character)
  - Are they looking in or looking out?
  - What can they see?
  - What is the person thinking or feeling?
- c Now tell a partner your ideas.

## 2 describing people, places and things

- a Read this description that someone has written following the instructions in 1a. Answer the questions in 1b.

Seen through a window

Looking through the window at the scene below her office, she felt she had a window on the modern world. She looked at the tall, grey blocks opposite and thought of all the busy people doing their jobs inside their offices. At street level there were sandwich shops and cafés; they were empty now, but at lunchtime there would be long queues. She watched the traffic going past in the crowded street. There were long buses with their tired passengers, black and white taxis, and cyclists wearing masks and helmets against the dangers of the traffic. On the corner, she could see a thin young man in an old leather coat playing magical music on a shining saxophone. People walked quickly along the pavement without stopping to listen.

- b Look at the description in a again.
- 1 Underline any examples of descriptions using this pattern: *description + noun*.  
example the modern world
  - 2 Circle any examples of descriptions using this pattern: *noun + description*.  
examples busy (people doing their jobs)  
long (buses with their tired passengers)
  - 3 What kind of words give information *before* a noun? What kind of words can introduce information *after* a noun?
- c Which prepositions are used in the description in a to say where things or people are?

## 2.3 writing

d Choose the appropriate preposition to complete these pairs of sentences.

1 *out of/ outside*

I looked \_\_\_\_\_ the bedroom window of the cottage I had rented.

I looked at the scene \_\_\_\_\_ the bedroom window of the cottage I had rented.

2 *in front of/ opposite*

There was a cherry tree \_\_\_\_\_ my cottage.

There was a large old farmhouse \_\_\_\_\_ my cottage.

3 *on/ over*

There was a little stone bridge \_\_\_\_\_ the river.

There was a swan swimming \_\_\_\_\_ the river.

### 3 improving a description

a Work in pairs to improve this description looking *in* through a window. Choose the correct words in *italics* (1–12).

Every summer I arrive at the back of my grandmother's house (1) *in/ on* the country and look through the kitchen window. (2) *There's/ It's* a(n) (a) \_\_\_\_\_ table with eight (b) \_\_\_\_\_ chairs (3) *along/ around* it. Next (4) *of/ to* the cooker is a(n) (c) \_\_\_\_\_ cupboard (5) *with/ of* glass doors and along the opposite wall (6) *there's/ there are* several shelves with (d) \_\_\_\_\_ bottles and jars. (7) *In/ At* one corner, I can see the (e) \_\_\_\_\_ armchair where my grandmother usually sits in the evening. (8) *On/ In* the wall (9) *above/ under* this there are some (f) \_\_\_\_\_ pictures (10) *by/ of* fruit and flowers. My favourite sight is always my grandmother's (g) \_\_\_\_\_ cat (11) *lies/ lying* asleep in her basket (12) *by/ nearby* the armchair.

b Make the description more interesting by choosing one or two of these adjectives for the spaces (a–g). You can use words more than once.

old-fashioned	pretty	large	wooden	comfortable	old	tall
attractive	colourful	long	rectangular	glass	small	round

c Check the order of adjectives you chose in b. Remember that adjectives are usually written in this order:

opinion + size + age + shape + colour + material

### Writing task

Imagine you have seen the following advert:

#### Creative writers wanted

Write a description with the title *Seen through my window*. The scene can be real or imaginary and you can be looking in, or looking out. Start like this:  
*If you look through my window, you ...*

**The three best descriptions will be published in an online magazine.**