



SOME USEFUL GUIDELINES AND TECHNIQUES FOR DESCRIBING PICTURES

TASK

The examiner gives you two or three pictures and asks you to describe, compare and give your opinion.

DESCRIBE

COMPARE

GIVE OPINION

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In one of the parts of the intermediate (B1) and advanced (B2) exam, you'll be asked to talk about some pictures. You will be shown two theme-related pictures (eg types of houses) and you'll be asked to describe and compare them and to talk about them in relation to yourself for a short time. It's important to bear in mind that you are not supposed to give a very detailed description of the pictures but to compare, contrast and give opinion. You are going to be marked on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, coherence.

In this infographic, you'll find



TIPS
&
TECHNIQUES

USEFUL LANGUAGE
&
EXPRESSIONS

EXAMPLES OF
PICTURE
DESCRIPTION



DO

GUIDELINES

DO

Look carefully at the photo. Think carefully how to start. In some exams you are given some time to think about what you are going to say. Use that time!

Scan the picture and identify the topic. It is better to start with a general statement. For example, They are clearly both connected to the topic of science... but in two quite different contexts

Use present continuous to describe what is happening

Remember the pictures are just an excuse to talk about the topic, so don't give a very detailed description, select the relevant details

When comparing the pictures, talk about the similarities and differences between them. For example: Both pictures show... but this one..., whereas the other one...

Use a wide range of vocabulary.

Remember this is a picture so you cannot be 100% sure what is happening. Use appropriate language to show you are guessing. Speculate about the pictures. You are not asked simply to describe what is happening. For example: He is likely to / she'll probably find it quite tough

Give your opinion, using a variety of structures. If the photographs surprise you, show surprise - your voice should reflect your feelings and attitude.

Don't forget to develop your ideas

Don't forget to use Linking Words to connect your ideas.

Use all the time you're given. If you're given three minutes, you'll need to talk the three minutes. Practise!



DON'T

Don't worry if you don't understand immediately what is going on in the picture. Remember you are allowed some time to organise your ideas . Use it!

Don't worry if you don't know the precise word for what you can see; paraphrase

Don't talk about something that is not relevant to the pictures

GUIDELINES

DON'T

Don't use the present simple to describe what is happening

Don't give enumerations

Don't use "I think.." all the time.

Don't give complicated explanations if you are not sure.

Don't stop talking until the examiner indicates the exam has finished

LANGUAGE



DESCRIBE

"Position" Language



SPECULATING

- ✓ I think / I guess/ I suppose it is...
- ✓ I expect/ I imagine it is...
- ✓ It/he must be....
- ✓ It /he can't be
- ✓ I am not sure but, they could be..
- ✓ It's not very clear but, probably...
- ✓ I can't make it out but, perhaps
- ✓ Maybe, perhaps they are...
- ✓ They seem to be eating something
- ✓ It can/could/might (not) be
- ✓ Probably/Perhaps

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Look

| +Noun | +Adjective | +Sentence |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| She looks like a teacher | She looks happy | She looks as if/though she is reading |



P

PARAPHRASING

- * It is used to write....
- * It is something you do when...
- * It's a person who...
- * It's something which
- * It's a kind of/some kind of..
- * It's a sort of/some sort of ...
- * It's like a ...

COMPARE

CONTRAST USING..

The main difference between the photos is...
In the first picture...whereas the other picture...
Unlike.... this looks like...
In contrast...

Whereas
While
On the one hand... on the other hand
Instead of
Unlike.....

COMPARE USING ...

In both pictures...
Both pictures depict ..
In this one .. and in the other one...
Both of the photos show..
Neither of them
Similar to...
The same as.....
Like...
In the same way....

ILLUSTRATE USING...

For example...
For instance...
such as...

GIVE OPINION

T

TALKING ABOUT
PREFERENCES AND
GIVING OPINION

I think I'd prefer... as...
If I had to choose I would...
It's very hard to say but

- As far as I know...
- Speaking for myself...
- In my opinion...
- Personally, I think...
- I'd say that...
- In my experience...
- I'd like to point out that...
- I believe that...
- What I mean is...
- My personal view is that
- I might be wrong but ...
- It seems to me that..



useful links



-Describing People

-Video: Two students describing
a picture

-Example from a Textbook: Science

-Example from a Textbook: Homes

-Example from a Textbook : Clocks

-Example from a Textbook: People



By Eloy Menendez

These pictures are related to fashion and clothes.

To begin with, the photo on the left shows a group of young people wearing eccentric clothes, with a very particular style: most in black, large boots, fishnet stockings. Many people would say they look scruffy. Probably, they are in a music festival or in a concert and they seem as if they are having fun. In the other photo, we can see a catwalk, in which high-heeled models are wearing very expensive garments, probably from famous designers. Maybe, such events are more targeted towards shopaholics, who are always trying to be in the limelight and constantly renew the way they dress.

From some years up to now, clothes have become a distinguishing factor.

There are multiple urban tribes, some of them wearing outrageous clothes, others with colourful and bright garments, but each one with its own particularity, and they don't care what others may think about them. They dress in the way they want. I am more keen on how the "skins" dress: shaved hair, tight jeans, suspenders, military boots. On the contrary, most of the teenagers are very fashionable because they are influenced by the media and constantly being fed with "tips" about what it's cool to wear or not.

I would say fashion is cyclic and so are trends. Styles from the past are re-invented by designers or they just return in the same way they were many years ago: for that, vintage clothes, patterns, accessories and colours have become trendy nowadays.

One of the most widespread stereotypes is that women pay more attention to their appearance than men do. I think that used to be so in the past, yet today more men are worried about how they are seen by the opposite sex. So therefore, most fashion ads are directed to both sexes.

I believe everyone has to wear those clothes which match their own styles, their thoughts and moral convictions. If you think the most expensive shirt, the old-fashioned skirt or the most ragged jacket fits you, that's what matters. Dressing well or badly is something subjective and if you feel comfortable with that garment, go ahead.



By Fedra Neila

The first picture shows a group of people sitting on chairs, in the middle of San Marcus square in Venice. The square is full of water, so they are wearing swimsuits. They look pretty funny and carefree, despite being in the water.

The second picture shows a child with his back to us. It looks as if he is staring at the dry landscape in front of him. Maybe, he is worried, thinking about his future and the horrible scenery, although it is difficult to say, because I can't see his face.

In the third picture I can see a modern city with skyscrapers. It looks like quite a polluted city. Its sky is completely full of thick smog.

Currently, carbon pollution is the main reason our planet is getting hotter, increasing the risk of weather disasters, drought and flood, and damaging our health.

Since the past century scientists are warning us about the dangers of global warming.

In fact, lately, in the north of Spain, winter is being especially hard and extreme. For example, three years ago it was freezing for months with temperatures below six or five degrees. Two years ago it was pouring from November until June, and last winter was very windy and rainy. Even some people, who live on the coast, had to leave their houses because huge waves had flooded them.

Personally, I think that global warming not only affects the climate change but also the economic problems. So far, governments have spent a lot of money dealing with the damages caused by weather disasters. However, the most affected, the poorest countries, hardly ever receive enough help.

To sum up, from my point of view, if we want to stop global warming we should change our life habits, for example: we should share our vehicle, take more often public transport, have a shower instead of a bath, and above all, we should teach the future generations to take care of our environment and to protect it.

Finally, in my opinion, perhaps the most difficult and necessary thing to do is changing how we produce energy. We'd better reduce the fossil fuels and use clean and renewable energies, so that if governments don't take the climate change seriously, in the future, the earth will end up being a big ball of smog.