

Powerful Descriptions Checklist

Write Vivid, Concise, and Engaging Descriptions

Use this checklist to ensure your descriptions are strong, clear, and never overwritten. Keep it nearby when drafting or revising scenes to sharpen your writing.

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- Ask yourself: What does the reader need to know right now? Remove excess detail.
- Use specific, concrete nouns and vivid imagery over vague generalities.
- Engage one or two senses strategically per moment.
- Let strong verbs carry the description instead of piling on adjectives.
- Use metaphors and similes sparingly — one strong image per scene is enough.
- Match your pacing to the scene's mood with sentence length and detail.
- Run the 'Highlighter Test' — cut or condense anything unnecessary.
- Avoid common traps: adjective stacking, overexplaining, and repetition.
- Trust your reader's imagination — leave space for them to fill in details.
- Read your scene aloud to spot awkward or overly heavy sentences.

⇒ Practice Prompt

Choose a scene from your work and rewrite it using this checklist. First, overwrite it intentionally — include too many details. Then, revise it using the checklist to trim, tighten, and enhance your imagery. Compare the before and after versions to see the impact.