

Tips on Descriptive and Creative Writing

The goal of creative writing is:

...to engage the reader

...to entice them to question

...to make them want more

& most importantly ... to move the story forward.

*(*If a detail or description doesn't move story forward then you don't need it.*)*

1. **Realize your goal.** This might sound silly, but I promise it will help. Tell yourself that your goal of using description is to entice the reader to want more, not to overpower them. You don't want to lose focus on character, conflict, and goal by smothering them with too much frosting.
2. **Say what you mean.** Don't get lost in the details of the daintily stitched emblem on the private school sweatshirt and miss the ketchup stain on the sleeve that is a clue to the mystery of your story. Ex: let's say the ketchup stain leads to some bigger revelation in your story. So you decide to write a scene with your main character in a fast food restaurant. Use the surroundings to tell something about your character and leave out useless or unnecessary details.
3. **Use active details.** Use active details that move the story forward.
4. **Less is more.** When writing individual sentences and/or full paragraphs use necessary words to get the action and meaning across in as simple a way as possible. Use adjectives and adverbs sparingly. Less will gain your message/action more notice.
5. **Use unique descriptions.** Don't physically describe things like the 'white' clouds or the 'green' trees. Save descriptions for items, people, specifics unique to your story and the world you're building.
6. **Varying sentence & paragraph lengths.** This expands upon the two previous tip. Pair a long, elegant sentence with two short ones and then maybe a medium-length sentence. A short sentence here and there are very effective when you want to make a detail or point stronger. The only way to gain strength in this area of writing is to practice.
 - a. Exercise: sit in a public place, observe your surroundings, and then write a paragraph engaging a character within the world you're viewing.
7. **Be a sneak.** Don't be obvious when using description. Sneak it in. When building your world, add details that filter into character's lives or can be used in a scene.
8. **Show don't tell.** Action, action, action. And that doesn't mean it has to be two cars racing or a character being chased by a dinosaur. It can be as simple as a character showing frustration by combing their fingers through their hair.

Extra Note: Keep a story bible. Jot down unchanging details of your characters and world to use as reference later on; this is especially helpful when writing a book series.