

What will you have to do?

- In **Question 5**, you will need to **communicate imaginatively**.
- You will need to make sure your description **comes to life** for your readers.

How can you appeal to the senses in writing?

- Remember, there are **five senses**: sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste.
- Include **sensory details** ('Sunlight filtering through the bars created a stark pattern of light and shade on the cell wall.')
- Make **comparisons** ('He spoke in a voice like gravel dredged from treacle.')
- Use well-chosen **adjectives** ('Its skin felt smooth and slippery, but the soles of its feet were sandpaper-rough.')
- When describing **smells**, you could use 'pungent', 'acidic', 'perfumed', 'fragrant', 'sweet', or use comparisons that readers will recognise ('The bottle gave off an odour of fish.')
- **Tastes** can be 'bitter', 'sharp', 'sickly sweet', 'minty', 'spicy', etc., or you could compare them to things a reader might know or be able to imagine ('Eugh – it tastes like hairspray!').



Note it!

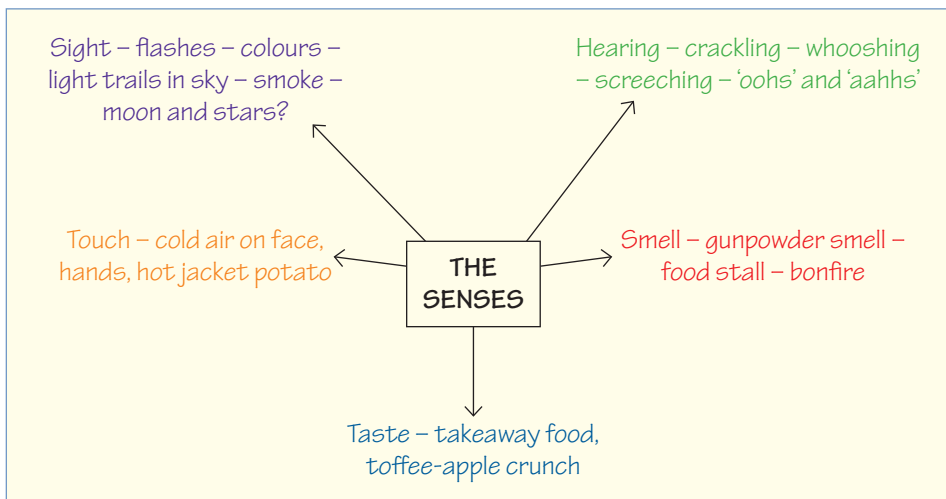
Use sense appeal sparingly. Do not try to include all the senses in a short description just for the sake of it.

Putting it into practice

Imagine you are writing a description suggested by a picture of a crowd at a winter firework display. How would you include appeals to the senses?

How can you approach it?

- Make a list or ideas map of the senses, branching out to things suggested by the picture that have sense appeal.
- Add details on which to focus.
- Add words and phrases you could use.
- Select and order your details.



Exam focus

How can I write in a way that appeals to the senses? A05

Read this successful extract from a description.

The display bursts into life with a **spluttering staccato** of quick-fire explosions, each briefly illuminating the crowd and the surrounding trees in **ghostly white light**. A volley of screeching rockets follows, each one popping into a starburst of blue, pink or green overhead, accompanied by the oohs and aahhs of the appreciative crowd. Smoke hangs on the air impregnated with the **metallic scent of gunpowder**, and wisps of bonfire ash **brush my face like snowflakes**.

Onomatopoeia and alliteration

Visual detail

Gives a sense of the smell

Implies a soft touch

What mistakes might you have made?

- You might have included too much sense appeal.
- You might have referred to senses without suggesting effects, such as ‘bits of bonfire ash fall on my face’.

Now you try!

Write a paragraph that appeals to the senses about a crowded beach. Look back at the guidance on these pages to help you.

What will your task be?

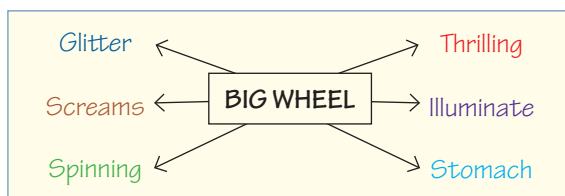
- In **Question 5**, you will be given a choice to write a **story (narrative)** or a **description**.
- You will be given a **prompt** such as a **photo** and a **suggested topic** to write about. For example:

5. Write a description of a ride on a 'big wheel' as suggested by this picture.



How can you use the prompt?

- Use **word chains** to come up with ideas: start with a key word and quickly think of **connected words**: 'spokes', 'cycle', 'centre', 'axis', 'turning', etc.
- Create a quick **ideas map** with the main idea in the centre. Then add detail to **appeal to the senses**, to **show emotions**, to **reflect movements**, etc. For example:



- Build on these words by adding **further details**: 'silvery spokes spinning'.

What overall structures could you use?

- Each paragraph** could deal with a **different aspect** of the description:
 - Paragraph 1: The whole wheel lit up
 - Paragraph 2: The first rotation and feelings
 - Paragraph 3: View from the top, etc.
- You could go from **long distance** to **close up**:
Big wheel at centre of fair → single 'basket' and excited couple → someone's screaming mouth.
- Build up suspense or emotion**: the wheel starts slowly → gathers speed → reaches highest point → fear and excitement.

Note it!

Remember, don't slip into telling a story with characters, plot or dialogue. Focus on what can be seen, heard and sensed.

How can grammar help you?

Grammar aspect	How can it help?	Example
Sentence variety	Short sentences can help pinpoint a specific feature. Long sentences can develop lots of details.	<i>The girl's hair flew everywhere. It tossed and tumbled like golden candy-floss as she clung to the seat, her knuckles white with fear.</i>
Prepositions and prepositional phrases	They can help you be precise about the position or relationship between things.	<i>Under the wheel, light flickered on the brown earth. Above it, a cold moon watched.</i>
Present and modal tenses	They can make things seem immediate , prevent story-telling and suggest mood .	The wheel tilts, spins and rocks as if about to fall, but that won't happen. will it?

Exam focus

How can I write effective descriptions? A05

Read this successful extract from a description.

Under the big wheel, light flickers on the brown earth. Above it, a cold moon watches. Distant cries and screams echo, as the huge gold spider spins its web. At the foot of the wheel, a red and white striped booth houses a bored-looking teenager who takes money from the line of parents and children snaking away.

- Aspects of whole scene at a distance
- Sensory details
- Use of imagery
- Zooms in on a new detail

Now you try!

Plan a description based on the following task. Then write the first two paragraphs.

5. Write a description of a spectacular travel experience as suggested by this picture.

