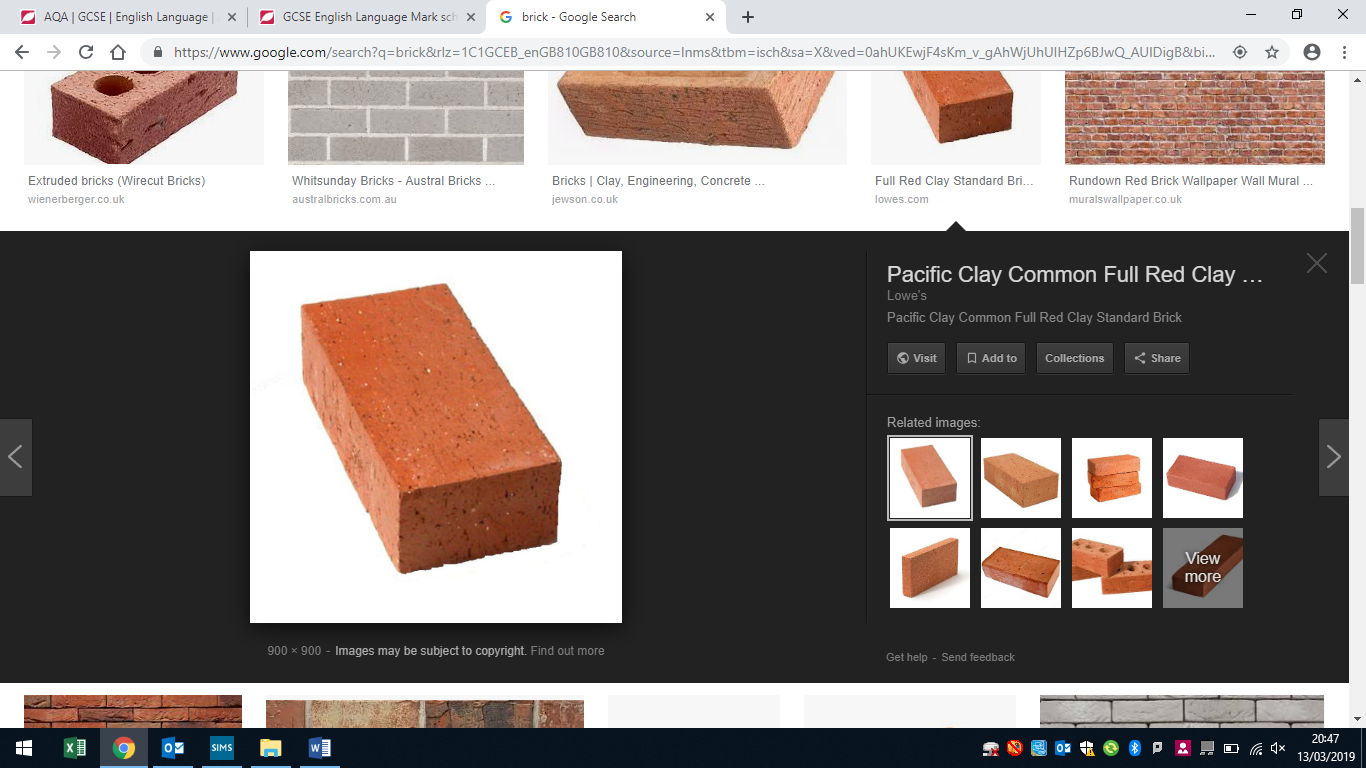
**Descriptive Writing**



AO5 TASK 1: Make it interesting (Part 1) – 10 Minutes

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AO5 TASK 2: self- assess – 5 minutes

Highlight & annotate where you:

1. used any structural devices (shift, foregrounding, juxtaposition, contrast);
2. used any rhetorical devices (metaphor, simile, personification);
3. used a variety of vocabulary for effect;
4. varied sentence lengths & structures.
5. anything else?

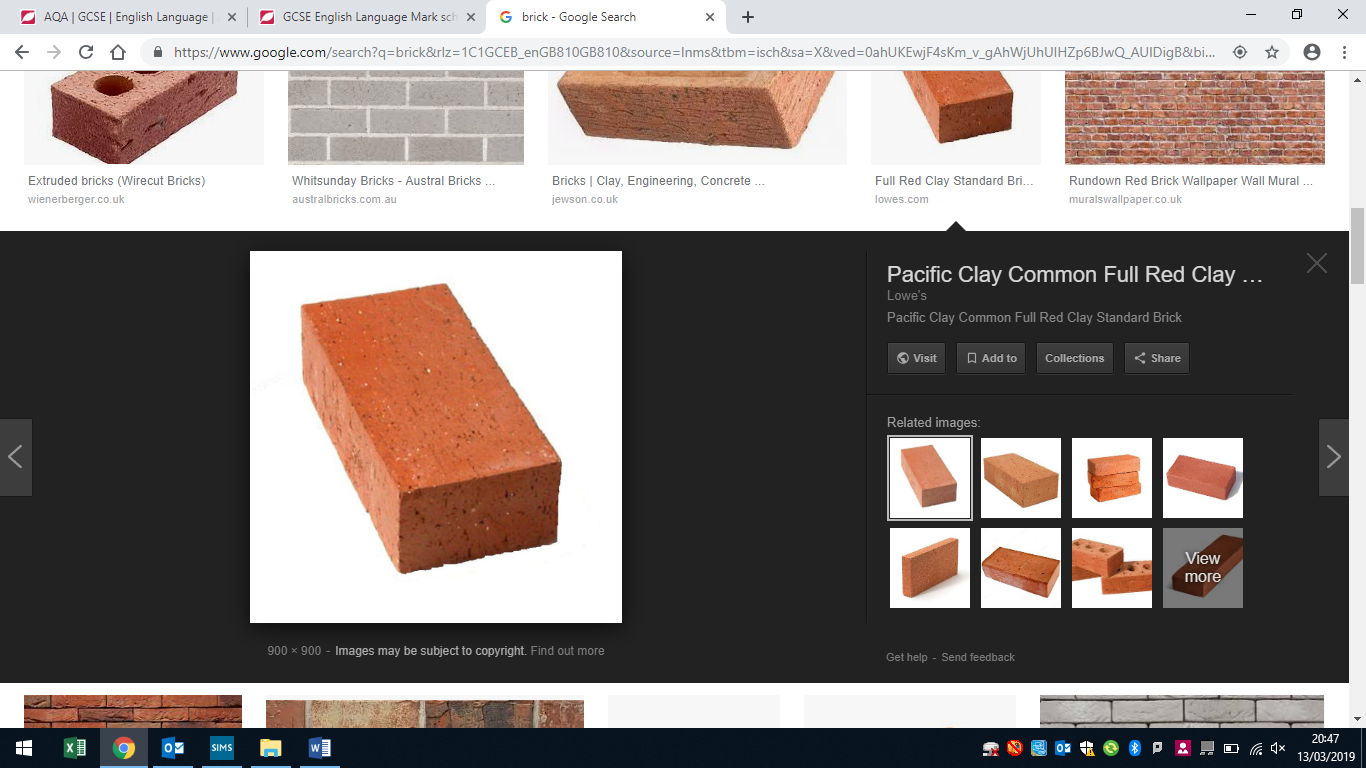
AO5 TASK 3: What a good one looks like - WWW & EBI

Brick was pretty unremarkable. He had the same gritty texture and precise ninety degree corners that existed on a brick of any equivalent quality and size. Hell, he was just ordinary. There was no other way of putting it. The singular remarkable thing about this brick was that he was sitting on the passenger seat of a Ford Fiesta, having just plastered a whole metric ton of glass and plastic over the inside of the car.

It wasn’t really brick’s fault, of course. Five minutes ago, brick was in a hand and that hand was attached to an arm and that arm was attached to a nerve which was connected to a brain and that brain was inside a person. But this didn’t really change the fact that that person was now pelting it through the dark city streets at one hundred miles per hour and brick was left behind; the lone assailant in a crime over which he had no control.

WWW:

EBI:



AO5 TASK 4: Make it interesting (Part 2) – 10 Minutes

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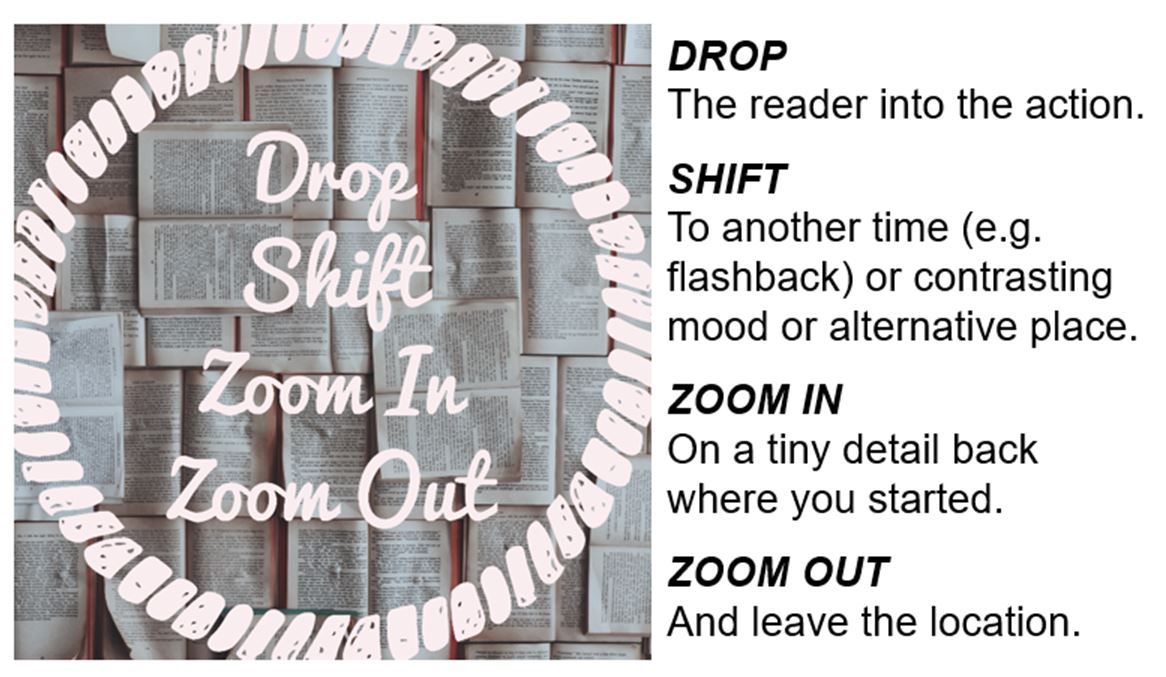
AO5 TASK 5: Underneath, write down three ways you have improved your work from the first writing task.

1.

2.

3.

WRITING TO DESCRIBE – A TECHNIQUE TO USE



TASK 2: Label and circle the picture below with interesting words & ideas you could use to describe it.



STRETCH AND CHALLENGE: Think big. Think of some words with more than three syllables that you could use to describe the picture.

*The desert seemed endless. The sky stretched on for miles in every direction: north, south, east and west. The ground was punctuated by small sprigs of grass. Even these were clinging on to life with utter desperation. Nothing survived here.*

TASK 3: ‘Drop’ the reader in to the moment as you see it in the picture.

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*Aiming high*

* Adopt a clear tone
* A wide variety of techniques
* Incorporate the 5 senses
* Emotional content
* Ambitious, precise vocabulary

*It wasn’t always like this. Before the drought we were free, we were happy, we ate, we drank. We thrived.*

TASK 4: ‘Shift’ back in time or to a different place.

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*Aiming high*

* provide a clear contrast
* use controlled repetition (of words, phrases, sentences structures)
* include a short, sharp, staccato sentence
* maintain the tone & emotional content

TASK 5: Zoom in on a specific detail of the picture. Look back at the notes you made in Task 2.

*The mountains were our only hope. They had watched over us, standing guard since the dawn of time. They couldn’t let us down now. Their snowy peaks offered salvation; water, shelter, life. But with each step we took, the mountains seemed to get further away. They were elusive and cunning. They’d want something in return.*

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*Aiming high*

* Use literary techniques: personification, extended metaphor, pathetic fallacy, etc.
* Use a mixture of longer complex & simpler, short sentences
* Include a variety of punctuation marks

TASK 6: Zoom back out. Leave the location.

*We were tired. With each passing minute, tiredness turned to weariness, weariness became exhaustion and exhaustion turned to collapse. I felt my head plummet towards the ground. Sand began to invade my mouth, every grain sucking more vital moisture from my body. Darkness began to take me and I slipped out of all consciousness.*

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*Aiming high*

* Think carefully how you can end your description effectively
* Try to leave the reader with something powerful and important to think about
* Use abstract nouns and concepts to give the ending power & weight

TASK 7: Peer assessment

Has your partner…

* Used a wide range of interesting & ambitious vocabulary?
* Established a clear & consistent tone?
* Included appropriate sensory information?
* Varied sentence types & lengths for effect?
* Used a variety of linguistic techniques? (e.g. similes, metaphors, personification, pathetic fallacy, etc.)
* Used structural techniques such as repetition, contrast, cyclical structures?
* Built to a satisfying ending?
* Accurate spelling/punctuation and grammar?



WWW

EBI:

Planning your descriptive response

**METHOD 1:** Zoom in on a small and seemingly insignificant part of each picture below – draw a circle round it. Make this the starting point, the focus point or an ingredient in what you write.

**METHOD 2:** Identify someone or something in the picture which might be able to see things from a different perspective. Use this as your way of exploring & describing the details in the image.

**TASK 1: looking at the four pictures below, try each of the above methods to help you identify a focus or perspective for your descriptive writing.**

**Picture 1**

**Picture 2**

**Picture 3**

**Picture 4**



**Planning some of the details of your writing**

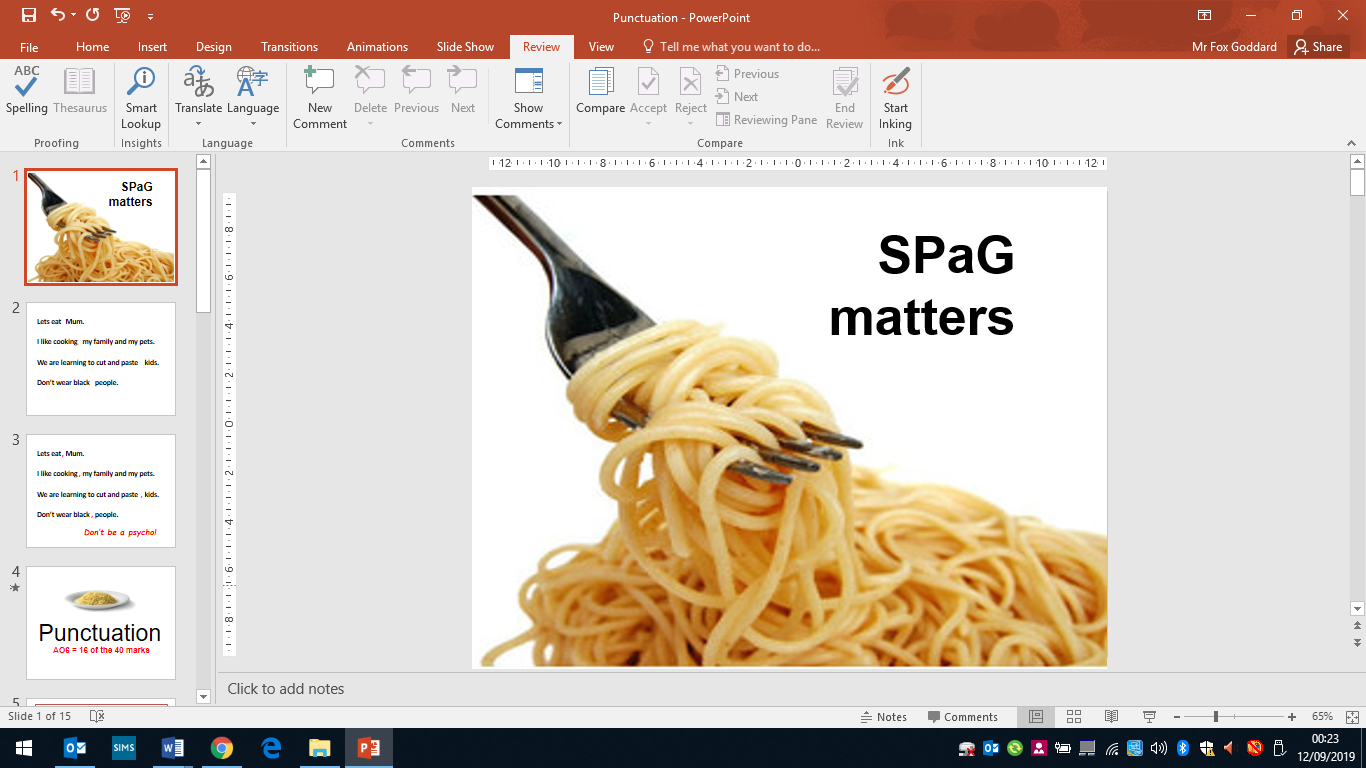
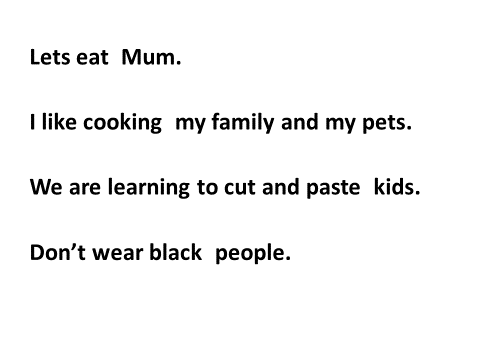
The best planning helps you think of some of the details you are going to use in your work. Some of the things you need to consider are:

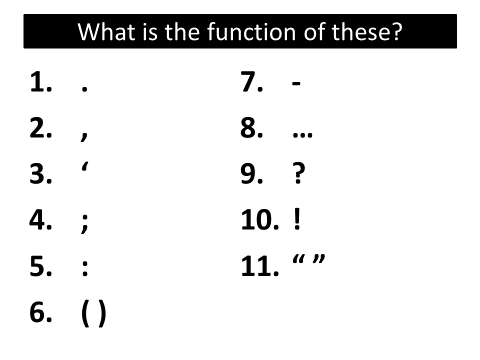
1. **What is the problem?** Most writing focusses around a problem that required some sort of solution – often we arrive at this solution by the end of the writing.
2. **Focus on a moment.** Rather than try to create a massively sweeping piece of writing that covers a lot, aim instead to focus upon a single moment and really draw this out in descriptive detail. This will give your writing a sharp focus.
3. **Sensory information.** We learn about the world through the five senses, so it makes sense to include some of these in any detailed description.
4. **Thoughts and feelings.** We want some sort of emotional response from the writing – not just ‘say-what-you-see’ facts. Try and tell us how people feel or what they think. Try to include feelings, emotions & thoughts as this gives writing a ‘human’ quality.
5. **Recurring motif.** It can be effective to have a single idea or image crop up several times throughout a piece of descriptive writing – the weather? A sound? A reference to an event or object? Don’t overdo it – three or four times will work well.
6. **Cyclical structure.** It feels neat and satisfying when the ending of a piece of writing comes full circle and takes us back to where we were at the start. Aim to refer to or repeat at the end something you included at the very start.
7. **Single-sentence paragraph.** Aim to include one single-sentence paragraph somewhere in your writing. It is best if this comes somewhere in the middle as it creates a variety in your paragraphing structure and helps draw the attention of the reader to something important (e.g. the shift).
8. **Plan the structure: beginning – middle – ending + shift.** Think through the main parts of your description. This might involve the ‘DROP-ZOOM-SHIFT’ method. It is always good to include some sort of change or shift.

**TASK 2: planning practice**

Choose **one** of the four images on pages 14 & 15. Use the grid & headings below to plan some of the details for a piece of descriptive writing based on your chosen picture.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *The problem & the solution* | *What is ‘the moment’?* |
| *Sensory imagery* | *Feelings & emotions* |
| *Recurring motif* | *Single-sentence paragraph* |
| *Cyclical structure* | *B-M-E+S* |



TASK 3: What are the functions (i.e. jobs) of these punctuation marks?