

Activity

AFTERWARDS

Write a description that creates a strong sense of place and shows how it has changed over time, hinting at what might have happened there. What careful vocabulary and grammar choices can you make to contrast life there before and after an event?

What should I do?

Visit Pobble 365

...and select the image and activities for February 18th:



Source: <http://www.pobble365.com/afterwards/>

Jot down three words to describe the atmosphere and mood of the place pictured. Summarise how it makes you feel. Note any questions you have about the setting and/or what might have happened there. You can try to answer these yourself as you grow your ideas...

Think about what makes an effective description

Read this description below of Coketown, an industrial city, written by Charles Dickens. Don't worry if you can't understand all the words at first – take it a sentence at a time; explain each little bit you read in your own words and discuss it with somebody else. You might like to underline words that you want to look up.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black... It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness.

Hard Times (1854) by Charles Dickens

What does 'interminable', 'ill-smelling', 'monotonously' and 'melancholy' mean? How can you find out?

Sketch a quick picture or rough map of Coketown, using this description. What kind of place is it? How might it feel to walk through it?

Look at some of the synonyms for 'ill' and 'smelling' below, taken from <https://www.thesaurus.com/> and <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-thesaurus>, and find out the meaning of each, perhaps using <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>:

ill-	smelling
acrimoniously-	fragranced
evil-	odoured
foul-	perfumed
noxious-	reeking
rotten-	stenched
sinister-	stinking
unwholesome-	whiffing
vile-	

These words have been changed to a form that allows them to be hyphenated, like Dickens' original (so 'odoured' and 'stenched' might sound a bit odd, like older language - more poetic). If you find other synonyms, you may need to play around with suffixes to make sure they make grammatical sense to fit your sentence.

Choose two synonyms from the same column. Explain to someone the differences between the two, e.g. "*'evil' makes me think that the bad thing has been made on purpose and wants to harm people, while 'foul' could just mean naturally nasty by accident.*"

What's the difference between...

- 'vile' and 'sinister',
- 'noxious' and 'rotten',
- 'acrimonious' and 'unwholesome', etc.?

What synonyms can you find for 'interminable', 'monotonous' and for 'melancholy'?

Charles Dickens thought about the senses when he wrote his description. Colour code or copy the words that tell you what can be...

- seen,
- smelled,
- heard

...when visiting Coketown.

Develop a backstory

Look at the 'Question time!' section of the webpage: can you answer the questions about the Pobble 365 picture?

Make a note of your ideas: what event happened three months ago that could have caused such a change to this place? (You may prefer to imagine the setting many years beforehand instead.)

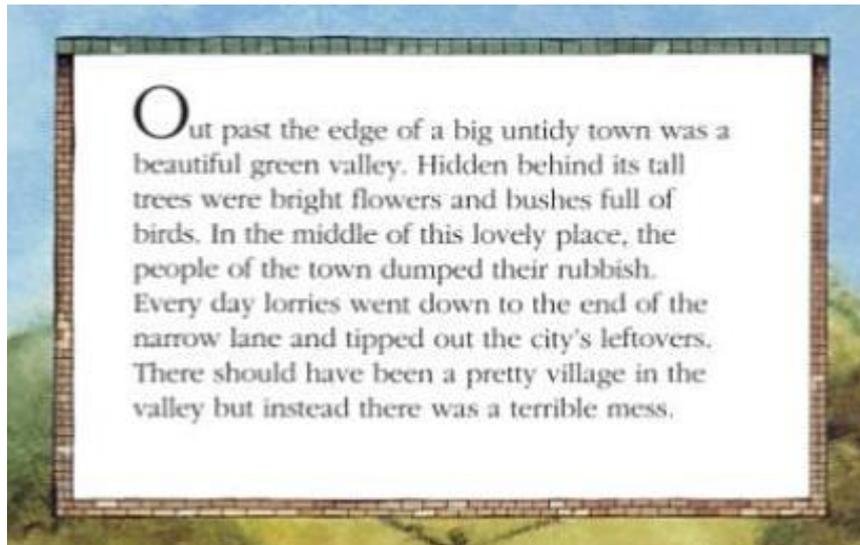
- What caused this event?
- Why did it happen here?
- Who and what did it affect, and in what ways?

Choose what you think is your strongest idea and keep this in mind when writing your description. You will need to drop little hints about it for your readers, and think about how best to do this. You might find it helpful to find a picture that could represent the same place before the event and keep the two images side by side.

How can you contrast before and afterwards, then and now?

Look again, closely, at the 'Afterwards' picture. You may want to use the table below or create a series of word webs, as in the example included, to help set out your thoughts.

1. Make a list of what somebody might see, smell, hear and perhaps touch if they were there now.
2. Make a list of what somebody might have seen, smelled, heard and touched if they had been there over three months earlier.
3. Collect vocabulary to use for each section – before and afterwards. Try exploring antonyms (opposites) to really give the impression of a difference between the two times. Which is nicer – the place before or after the event?
4. Collect synonyms for the words you have jotted down, using a thesaurus. Then use a dictionary and talk to someone about the slight differences in meaning between the words. Highlight any you think will be particularly useful and cross out all that don't quite fit with what you mean.
5. Look at how Colin Thompson contrasts a peaceful area of countryside with the rubbish dump that has now been formed in the middle of it:



Colin Thompson, *The Paperbag Prince* (1994)

(You can find this image by using the 'Look inside' feature on Amazon's UK site:
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Paperbag-Prince-Red-Picture-Books/dp/0099933209>.)

What writer's 'tricks' does he use? Talk to somebody about what you notice and like about his description.

- Think about and collect words and phrases that could help *you* to show how things have changed, e.g. conjunctions, adverbials of time:

Once,... but now...	Then,... Now,...
Where... once stood/crawled/stetched, now,used to...
Three months ago,... These days,...	Since then...
Before, ... Afterwards, ...	yet
In times past,... Today,...	but
There should have been...	when
Instead,...	Previously,...
Every day,...	From that day on,...

Write your description

Draft your description of the place. Drop in little hints about the event that was responsible for changing things. You may like to include some lines about the little girl now standing there, or replace her with a different character, and explain things from her point of view.

Edit your work to improve it further. Does your vocabulary choice hint at whether your reader should feel positively or negatively about the thing being described? Can your reader have a good guess about what happened three months ago?

Proofread and correct your writing, thinking about the sorts of mistakes you usually make. Pay special attention to these to try and get your work as accurate as you can.

Share your work

How might you share your work with your friends and your teacher(s)? Can you call a friend and read your description aloud, then challenge them to draw a picture of what it makes them imagine? Is there somewhere you can email or upload your writing to share with your teacher and classmates, or children from other schools?

You can tweet what you've been up to using the Twitter handle @BabcockLDPEng and the hashtag #BabcockEnglishAtHome.

IMPORTANT: Just remember everything you have been taught about staying safe online, and talk to the person who looks after you before making any decision about where and how to share work.

Things that
could help me

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english>

<https://www.thesaurus.com/>

Change it up!
...Go further!

- A) Use your description as the opening for a story. How might you continue it to create a complete narrative?
- B) Using your favourite vocabulary choices from your description, transform your work into the form of a poem.
- C) Browse some of the other pictures on Pobble 365. The site suggests activities to accompany each daily image. If you'd like to have a go at some of these, we'd suggest the following order: Question time! Perfect picture! Sentence challenge! Sick sentences! Story starter! though you can choose as many or as few as you like and in a different sequence if you'd prefer - it's completely up to you.

Notes for
parents and
teachers

Encourage your child to create and rehearse full sentences out loud before writing them down. It will help if they try out several for each sentence structure pattern, for example:

Once, many children played and laughed here **but now** the girl was alone.

Once, car engines hummed and throbbed from the nearby road **but now** the only sound was the whirring and scuttling of secretive insects.

Once, tall, concrete buildings dwarfed the people bustling about their dull, daily business below **but now** only the whisper of paper-thin leaves interrupted the sky.

Contrasting before and afterwards

	AFTER the event	BEFORE the event
Things to see		
Vocabulary ideas		
Things to smell		
Vocabulary ideas		
Things to hear		
Vocabulary ideas		
Things to feel		
Vocabulary ideas		

Word web example

You should find a way to record your ideas that best suits you...

