

Painting a Picture

Writers paint settings for us. They help us create a picture by using just the right images, words that appeal to the reader's senses. By selecting a few right images, the writer allows us to create the rest of the picture based on our imagination and experiences.

Part A.

Directions: What images do the writers use in each of the following passages?

1. "He sat by the fire with me, with no other light, and told me of their two days together. The dog lay close to him, and found a comfort there that I did not have for him." —"A Mother in Manville," Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings¹
2. "All that hot day they traveled painfully over the cruel landscape, exhausted from the heat and recoiling from the sharp stones which cut through their moccasins and bruised their feet." —"Snake Boy," Jamake Highwater²
3. "Everything looked gray, except for the afternoon sun against the window shade. A sweet-smelling spray mingled with odor of—something like when Hosea found a dead mouse that had gotten caught in the little space between the stove and sink." —"Aunt Zurlletha," Ruby Dee³
4. "It was cloudy, but cold. The car's tires laid behind them on the snowy street, a complex trail of beige chunks like crenelated castle walls. I had stepped on some earlier; they squeaked." —*An American Childhood*, Annie Dillard⁴
5. "In May and June there was no rain and the crops withered, curled up, then died under the thirsty sun." —"The Scarlet Ibis," James Hurst⁵

Part B.

Directions: Are you an image maker? List five quiet words to describe a classroom during a test; list five icy words to describe a snowstorm; list five blazing words to describe a hot afternoon in the desert; list five busy words to describe a day at the mall. Choose one of your lists and write a descriptive sketch that paints a picture.

¹*Literature and Language*, (Evanston: McDougal Littell, 1992), 24.

²*Ibid.*, 116.

³*Ibid.*, 299.

⁴*Ibid.*, 225.

⁵*Ibid.*, 615.

Images in Black and White

Directions: As John Griffin travels through the South, images of black and white travel with him. These images help the reader see emotions that reflect Griffin's struggle between his two worlds. Record the images and feelings for each passage.

Passage	Images	Feelings
1. "... white sands, a beautiful ocean; and opposite the beach, splendid homes. The sun warmed me through."		
2. "By dark I was away from the beach area and out in the country. Strangely, I began getting rides. Men would pass you in daylight but pick you up after dark."		
3. "I thanked him and stepped out onto the wet neon reflections of the road. The air, cool and mist-filled, surrounded me with freshness."		
4. "Despite its poverty, the room had a bare brightness. My host, unlike most Negroes, did not use the more economical low-watt bulbs. He lighted his rooms brilliantly."		
5. "The woods issued no sound. I felt strangely safe, isolated, alone in the stillness of dusk turning to night. First stars appeared in darkening skies still pale and the earth's heat escaped upward."		
6. "I walked down the highway into the darkness again . . ."		
7. "I walked to the back of the bus, past the drowsers, and found an empty seat. The Negroes gave me their sleepy smiles and then we were off. I leaned back and dozed along with the others."		