

Voices from the Ship: Descriptive Writing at Sea

HMS Pickle

Lesson 1

P5





Hi friends!!!
My name is
Fred

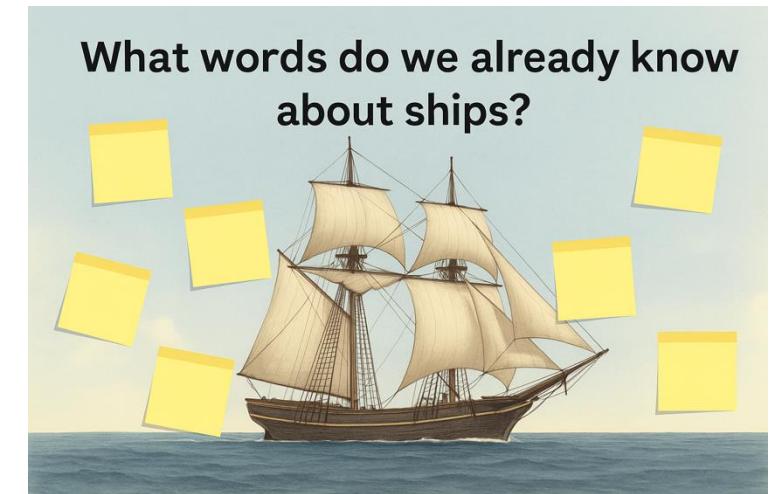
- I will pop up throughout our learning journey as we discover new things....
- I have seen the word "Descriptive" - can anyone share what this word means?
- Let's add it to our physical Word Wall in the classroom so we can see our new vocabulary grow.
- As we keep learning, we'll add words with definitions, pictures, or examples. Our Word Wall will be a space we can look back on to support our talking and writing.

Think/Pair and Share:

Detail detectives

Look closely at these two ships. One is HMS *Pickle*, a fast Bermuda sloop from 1805. The other is Shackleton's *Endurance*, trapped in the ice. Today we're going to use our words to capture what we see, hear, and feel.

- What colours, shapes, or parts of the ship can you see?
- Where do you think this ship is — on the sea, or stuck in something? How do you know?
- What are the people doing in the picture?
- What words could we use to name the parts of the ship?
- How do these picture make you feel: calm, scared, excited, curious? Can you explain why?
- What kind of mood do these pictures create — peaceful or dangerous? How do you know from the details you see?
- If you had to choose one word to capture the pictures of the ships, what would it be? Can you expand it into a sentence?



Today we are learning...



WALT (We Are Learning To...):

- Understand how descriptive language and ship-related vocabulary can bring a scene to life.
- Recognise how sensory details (sight, sound, touch) make writing more vivid.
- Appreciate how writers create atmosphere and setting in texts like *Lost in the Antarctic*.

Success Criteria

- I can collect and use descriptive words for our Ship Word Wall.
- As a whole class read and analyse the prologue of the story "Lost in the Antarctic".
- I can describe objects, sounds, and scenes using sensory details.
- I can write a descriptive paragraph as if I were a sailor, using sight, sound, and touch.
- I can use capital letters and full stops correctly in every sentence.

WALT

We are learning to...

SUCCESS
CRITERIA

For this lesson we need:

- Whiteboards and markers
- Pencils
- Sticky notes
- Mystery bag (any bag you can't see through)
- A learning journal - a copy to keep all our wonderful writing in one place!



Group work : Building Our Ship Word Wall

 What words do we already know about ships and life aboard a ship?

- Before we read our story, let's see what we already know about ships. In your group, think of all the words connected to ships or sailing that you can.
- Write one word per sticky note; big and clear. Maybe you'll think of parts of a ship, what a sailor does, or what the sea is like.
- Then we'll bring them up here to build our *Ship Word Wall*. This wall will help us collect and use powerful describing words in our writing today.



What is Descriptive Language?

How does an author use language so we can create an image of what is happening in the story in our mind?



Now that we've collected our ship vocabulary, we are going to be reading the prologue of "Lost in the Antarctic" by Tod Olson. However, before we do that, we need to understand what Descriptive language is :

- Descriptive language is when an author uses descriptive **words** to help the reader **see**, **hear**, **feel**, or **imagine** something.
- It makes writing **come alive**, like a movie in your mind.

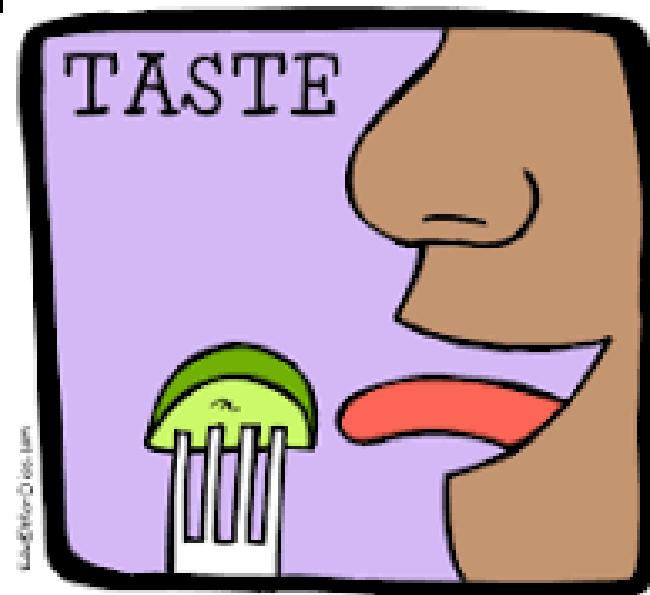
How Authors Use It:

- Authors choose **strong adjectives and verbs** (not just "big ship," but "groaning, splintering ship").
- They use **sensory details** (what you could see, hear, smell, or feel).

Why Authors Use Descriptive Language

- To grab the reader's attention.
- To help the reader picture the scene clearly.
- To make the reader feel what the characters feel (fear, excitement, hope).

In descriptive writing the writer appeals to the senses. We have 5 senses . Today we are going to focus on sight, hearing and touch:



Senses activity....

We are now going to explore these 3 sense through some activities!

- 1. Hearing - listen to what you can hear around you (teacher will play the next slide but will not show the slide on the board - freeze the board). How would you describe what you hear?

Is the sound - Rustling, booming, gravelly, whispering, sizzling, echoing, clattering, velvety, thudding, piercing?

- 2. Touch - Feely bag activity
- 5. Sight



Listen – Copy and paste this link into
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QI3IHS55OaU>



What do you feel?

- Teacher will place a random object into the bag (no one is allowed to see)
- A child will be invited to the top of the room. They must be as descriptive as possible to describe the item without actually naming the item.
- Everyone else must guess what the item is.
- Repeat a few times.

Tiny

Big

Small

Hard

Heavy



Furry

Soft

Describe your pencil case

In groups place all the pencil cases in the middle of the table.

One student is chosen at a time to describe their pencil case, and the teacher will have to guess based off your description which pencil case is yours.





Time to Read... Detail Detectives

Alright detectives....get your ears ready!

As we read, if you hear any **descriptive language**; words that show what you could see, hear, or feel on the first page of the prologue make a magnifying glass shape with your hand and share what you found with the class.

Authors like Tod Olson use descriptive language so readers feel as if they are standing right there on the ship. Today, let's be detectives and notice the powerful words he chooses.

Then ...

For the following 3 pages, use your mini whiteboards to jot down any:

- **Ship vocabulary** (e.g. mast, deck, hull)
- **Language of the senses** (see, hear, feel)

We're being active listeners — collecting details from Olson's writing that we'll be able to use in our own sailor's description later.



PROLOGUE

WEDDELL SEA, ANTARCTICA

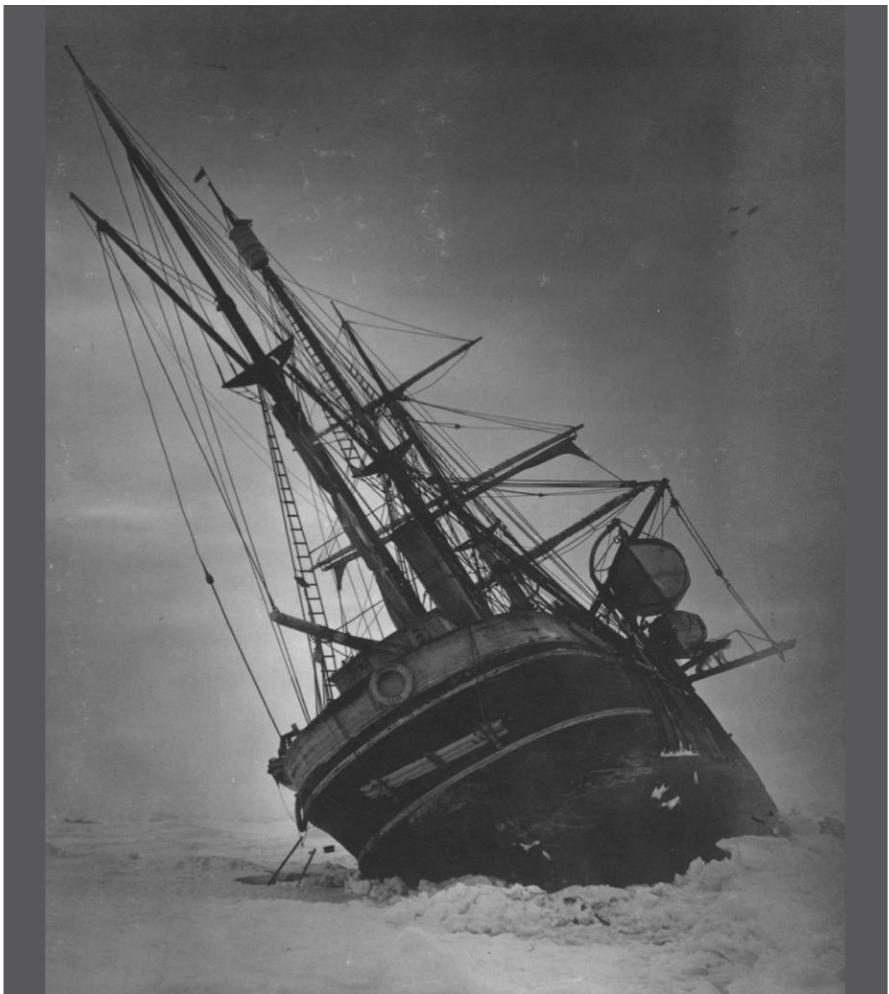
October 26, 1915

The ship didn't stand a chance, and Frank Hurley knew it. He'd been in the engine room with the carpenter, trying desperately to keep the water out. They had walled off the leak, where the sternpost and rudder had been wrenched out of place.

It was hard to imagine how it had happened. The sternpost was a giant pillar of hardwood embedded in a 144-foot ship, and the ice had ripped it loose like an angry kid abusing a toy boat. That was the power this frozen land had over them.

Caulking the wall was miserable, frigid work for Hurley and the carpenter. Ice water soaked their boots. Cold air gnawed their fingers raw.

They were patching seams when Hurley heard the pressure hit again—a fierce grinding sound just outside the hull. On the other side of those planks, the ship stood trapped in a vast frozen sea. Slabs of ice the size of small buildings held her in a vise, and now the grip was tightening. The sidewalls groaned and creaked. The noise tore through the cramped compartment. Any minute, it seemed, the boards would splinter, and the ship that had sheltered them for more than a year would finally give up the fight.



The *Endurance*, trapped in a sea of ice 1,000 miles wide.

The *Endurance* was being squeezed to death around them.

Hurley raced up on deck and took in the scene. The sled dogs, trapped in their kennels, sent out a chorus of howls. The men moved quietly by contrast. They disappeared into the hold and came out with crates rescued from the rising water below. There was canned meat and powdered milk, flour and sugar, rice and barley—all of it ready to be lowered to the ice at a moment's notice.

Tents and sleeping bags had piled up in a corner of the deck—just a few yards of flimsy canvas, reindeer hide, and wool. If the ship gave in, the crew would have nothing else to shelter them from the worst weather on Earth. Today, the sky was blindingly clear, but the temperature hadn't made it above zero degrees Fahrenheit.

Stretching to the horizon around Hurley and the men and the ship was the new home that awaited them: 1 million square miles of ice—an entire sea, frozen almost solid. Beyond it lay Antarctica, a continent bigger than the United States and Mexico combined, also covered in ice and completely uninhabited.

As the expedition's official photographer, Hurley had spent a year capturing the strange, stark beauty of this world. Now, he and 27 other men were about to be dropped into it with no guarantee they would ever get out.



One man stood mostly still, watching the commotion from the raised deck in the stern. The crew referred to him as Sir Ernest in writing. In person they called him “the Boss.” He had broad shoulders and a compact frame, blunt features and a square jaw. He looked like he was built for this kind of venture—leaving every known thing behind to risk his life in a frozen wilderness.

Ernest Shackleton had been to the Antarctic twice already. Twice he had almost died there. Now, his third expedition hovered on the brink of disaster.

The expedition had left England more than a year ago, in August 1914. The goal was to cross the Antarctic continent by dogsled—1,800 miles in a land where temperatures can drop to -80 degrees at night. It was an ambitious idea. *Crazy* was another word used to describe it.

Just getting to the Antarctic coast to start the overland journey was a near impossible feat. Shackleton had decided to sail south from South America and

push deep into the Weddell Sea, headed for a landing point at Vahsel Bay. That meant navigating a body of water roughly 1,000 miles across, most of it frozen into sheets of ever-shifting ice that could crush the ship into splinters—"the pack," as it was called.



The Boss, Ernest Shackleton.

The *Endurance* had to make its way with a mix of finesse and brute force. Sometimes she nosed her way through open waterways. Sometimes she made her own openings by ramming the ice head-on until it split down the middle.

In January 1915, both strategies had failed. The pack froze around them, and the ship had nowhere to go. It was now October, and the ice still held her

prisoner.

The Boss knew how close they had come to their goal. Vahsel Bay had been a day's sail away when the ice grabbed them for good. If only the current and the wind had opened a clear lane 60 miles farther. Shackleton and five companions would right now be trekking across Antarctica—an epic journey to the bottom of the world.

Standing on the deck with the *Endurance* groaning under his feet, Shackleton still had hope. If the ship held out long enough, the pack would break up. They could sail into open water. They might even be able to resupply in South America and make another run at Vahsel Bay before the sea froze solid again.

But right now, some combination of current and wind was squeezing the pack together, and the *Endurance* was caught in the middle. Where the pressure built to a breaking point, the ice buckled into giant ridges. Slabs 5 feet thick and 20 feet tall sprouted into long, jagged tents. To Shackleton it seemed like a mighty giant, buried under the ice, was writhing to break free. He'd been watching all day while a ridge on the starboard side slowly rumbled closer to the ship.

At around 6 p.m., the pressure began to close a crack that had opened behind the *Endurance*. Two giant sheets of ice—known as floes—ground together. They lifted the stern and jerked the entire ship forward in a series of shocks—one, then another, then another. The force wedged her bow into a floe 5 feet thick, squeezing her from end to end.

The deck under Shackleton's feet twisted and bent. Gaps inches wide opened between the planks. He could actually see the sidewalls bend under the strain like an archer's bow. If the front end of the *Endurance* didn't slip above the floe that held it fast, the ship wouldn't last the night.

Shackleton gave the order to lower the lifeboats to the ice. The three 20-foot boats could soon be the only seaworthy vessels they had.

Then, sometime after 8 p.m., the pressure suddenly gave up its hold on the ship. The aching timbers settled back into place. The terrible creaks and groans faded. There was only the steady *clickety-clack* of the pumps, laboring to stay ahead of the leaks. The crew would have to man the pumps in shifts all through

the night. But maybe—just maybe—the worst of the damage had been done.

When Frank Hurley went below for the night, he took out his diary and wrote, “All hope is not given up yet for saving the ship.”

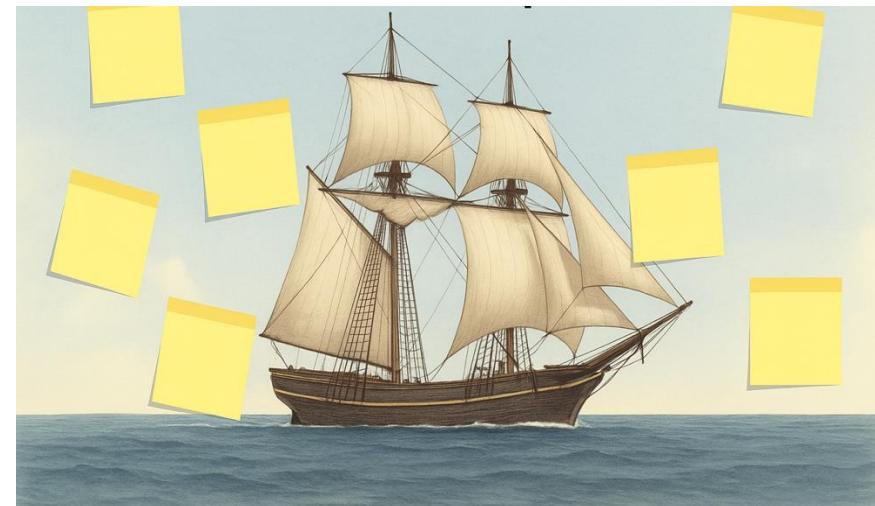
But for many of the men, a strange memory lingered as they lay in their bunks. In the evening, just as the pressure reached its height, eight emperor penguins had hopped up from a crack in the ice. They waddled in their stiff, strangely human way toward the ship. The birds lined up in formation as if to give a formal address to the intruder in their land. For a few seconds, they chattered the way they often did—a range of calls between a pigeon’s coo and a crow’s shrill caw. Then they threw back their heads and let out an eerie, wailing fugue.

The men had seen plenty of penguins during the last ten months, but they had never heard a sound like this. To the ship’s captain, Frank Worsley, it seemed the creatures were singing a funeral dirge for the *Endurance*.

Thomas McLeod, one of the older seamen, watched the ghostly concert from the deck. He turned to the man next to him. “Do you hear that?” he said in his Scottish brogue. “We’ll none of us get back to our homes again.”

What descriptive language did we find?

- Let's add it to our word wall ...



Independent DEAR (Drop Everything and Record)

Learning Journal

“Imagine you are a sailor on the Endurance...”

Now you are going to step into the boots of a sailor on the *Endurance*. Imagine it is your first night on board, and the ship is groaning and splintering in the ice. What would you see around you? What noises would you hear? What would you be able to feel around you?

Remember, your reader wasn't there — so you need to describe it as if they have never seen this ship. Your job is to make them feel like they're standing on the deck with you.

Task Instructions :

- Write a **descriptive paragraph**.
- Pretend this is **Chapter 1 of your sailor's story**.
- Use the **Ship Word Wall** to include boat vocabulary.
- Describe **what you saw, heard, and felt onboard the ship**.
- Remember: the person reading knows **nothing** about the ship - you must paint the picture with your words.
- Use **capital letters** and **full stops** in every sentence.



✿ Juicy Sentence Starters

- "I could see the ..."
- "I could hear the ..."
- "I could feel the ..."
- "The ship seemed to ..."
- "All around me ..."
- "The sound reminded me of ..."
- "It was as if the ship ..."
- "The ice was ..."
- "My heart felt ... when ..."
- "The air smelled of ..."
- "The deck was ... under my feet."
- "In the distance I noticed ..."
- "The night sky looked ... above the ship."
- "The noise grew ... as ..."

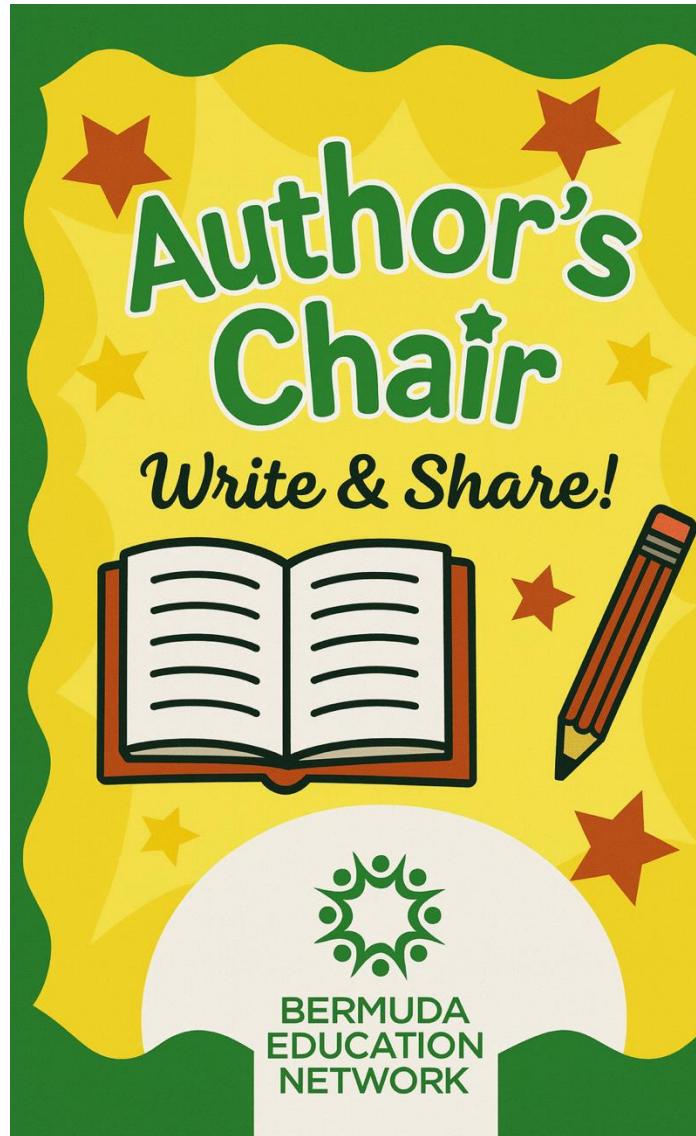


PEER READ

Did your partner include these things in their paragraphs...

1. Write a descriptive paragraph?
2. Use the Ship Word Wall to include boat vocabulary in their writing?
3. Describe what they saw, heard, and felt onboard the ship?
4. Use capital letters and full stops in every sentence?





Author's Chair time to share

Now a few of us will read our descriptive paragraphs aloud.

Peer feedback prompts:

**2 stars - 2 things
your friend did well**

**1 wish of what they
could improve on**

Did we learn these things?

Thumbs up/down



反思 - Did I...

- Did I understand how descriptive language and ship-related vocabulary can bring a scene to life?
- Did I recognise how sensory details (sight, sound, touch) make writing more vivid?
- Did I appreciate how writers create atmosphere and setting in texts like *Lost in the Antarctic*?

成功标准 - Did I...

- Did I collect and use descriptive words for our Ship Word Wall?
- Did I contribute to reading and analysing the prologue of *Lost in the Antarctic* with the class?
- Did I describe objects, sounds, and scenes using sensory details?
- Did I write a descriptive paragraph as if I were a sailor, using sight, sound, and touch?
- Did I use capital letters and full stops correctly in every sentence?

WALT

We are learning to...

SUCCESS CRITERIA



End of Lesson Actions

- Tidy up journals and return them to the basket
 - Push in your chair and get ready for the next activity

Movement Break



Copy and paste this link into YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfzRP6V5rE4&list=RDQfzRP6V5rE4&start_radio=1