

## Describing your neighbour by Caterina Mastroianni

<b>Age:</b>	Teenagers and adults
<b>Level:</b>	Intermediate–advanced
<b>Time:</b>	60 minutes +
<b>Objective:</b>	To encourage students to think about the language and structural features of a description
<b>Key skills:</b>	Writing, reading
<b>Materials:</b>	One copy of the worksheet per student

### Procedure

#### Introductory activities

1. Introduce the topic by asking students whether they have ever entered a writing competition.
2. Tell students that they will write a short description in response to a competition, but first prepare them for the topic. Hand out the worksheet, and discuss the quote. Ask students to research the concept of Neighbour Day at [www.neighbourday.org](http://www.neighbourday.org).
3. After their online research, ask students what they thought of Neighbour Day. Discuss and respond to their comments.

#### Reading and language activities

4. Have students read the Neighbour Day Competition text. Discuss the meaning of any vocabulary and phrases that are not understood by your students. Explain the structure of the text as indicated (introductory sentence, description and so on).
5. Direct students to the structure activity, and instruct them to correctly order the sections.  
**Key:** 1. e; 2. c; 3. d; 4. b; 5. a
6. Discuss the meanings of the new words and phrases in the vocabulary on the worksheet. Instruct students to write a sentence for every word or phrase that is new to them.
7. Tell students to complete the cloze reading activity on adjectives. Check the answers.

**Key:** 1. lovely; 2. friendly; 3. safe; 4. annual; 5. generous; 6. helpful; 7. thriving; 8. caring

8. Ask students to think about why adjectives are important in this kind of text.
9. Ask students to identify the verbs that describe what the neighbours do.  
**Key:** share; organize; pick up (post); assist; transform
10. Ask students why the writer might have chosen these verbs. The questions about the adjectives and the verbs will help them think about which grammar features are important in a description of a person.
11. Point out the synonym activity. Have them complete the activity, then check the answers.  
**Key:** 1. pleasant; 2. sociable; 3. secure; 4. yearly; 5. giving; 6. considerate; 7. flourishing; 8. kind
12. Point out that when we write, we can choose from a variety of words to express our intended meaning. Ask students to think about which word they would prefer to use in the text – either the word in the original text or in this modified text – and discuss why they would make that choice.

#### Writing activity

13. Students will now write a description of a favourite neighbour. This activity will allow students to think about the structural and linguistic features they have learned about. Your assessment of their text will allow you to check that they have understood this.
14. To prepare for the writing activity, ask students to think about a neighbour and jot down words and phrases that describe their neighbour.
15. Put students in pairs, and ask them to talk about their neighbour before they start the writing activity.
16. Finally, instruct students to complete the writing activity, monitoring and offering help as needed.
17. Display the texts around the room, then ask students to vote on the best text. If it's a draw, you get the deciding vote. Announce the winner of the writing competition.

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### Neighbour Day

'Neighbour Day is Australia's annual celebration of community, encouraging people to connect with those who live in their neighbourhood.

Whether through a cuppa, a picnic in the park or a message of support; Neighbour Day is the perfect opportunity to say thanks for being a great neighbour and for being there ...'

[www.neighbourday.org](http://www.neighbourday.org)

### Neighbour Day Competition

Your chance to win a year's magazine subscription for you and your neighbour. Say thanks to your neighbour. To enter the competition, write about your favourite neighbour. See the example below.

**Introductory sentence** → Our neighbours are a lovely, retired couple who moved in a few months after we did. All being new to the street, we immediately hit it off as we shared information about our local area. We didn't know anyone in the street when we first moved in, but thanks to Margaret and Terry, the street has become a friendly and safe little neighbourhood. Margaret has even organized annual neighbourhood parties. They're generous and helpful in many other ways, too, picking up post when someone is away, assisting if someone is unwell and sharing baked goodies. They have totally transformed this little street into a thriving and caring community. Thank you, Margaret and Terry.

**Description** → Our neighbours are a lovely, retired couple who moved in a few months after we did. All being new to the street, we immediately hit it off as we shared information about our local area. We didn't know anyone in the street when we first moved in, but thanks to Margaret and Terry, the street has become a friendly and safe little neighbourhood. Margaret has even organized annual neighbourhood parties. They're generous and helpful in many other ways, too, picking up post when someone is away, assisting if someone is unwell and sharing baked goodies.

**How they met** → All being new to the street, we immediately hit it off as we shared information about our local area. We didn't know anyone in the street when we first moved in, but thanks to Margaret and Terry, the street has become a friendly and safe little neighbourhood.

**Qualities and actions** → Margaret has even organized annual neighbourhood parties. They're generous and helpful in many other ways, too, picking up post when someone is away, assisting if someone is unwell and sharing baked goodies.

**How they have changed the neighbourhood** → They have totally transformed this little street into a thriving and caring community. Thank you, Margaret and Terry.

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### Structure

Reorder the text by writing the correct section number (1–5) next to each paragraph (a–e) below.

1. Introductory sentence
  2. How they met
  3. Qualities and actions
  4. How they have changed the neighbourhood
  5. Closing sentence
- a. Thank you, Margaret and Terry.
  - b. They have totally transformed this little street into a thriving and caring community.
  - c. All being new to the street, we immediately hit it off as we shared information about our local area. We didn't know anyone in the street when we first moved in, but thanks to Margaret and Terry, the street has become a friendly and safe little neighbourhood.
  - d. Margaret has even organized annual neighbourhood parties. They're generous and helpful in many other ways, too, picking up post when someone is away, assisting if someone is unwell and sharing baked goodies.
  - e. Our neighbours are a lovely, retired couple who moved in a few months after we did.

### Vocabulary

Check the meanings of these words. For every word or phrase that was new to you, write an example sentence.

**hit it off** (*phrase*)

become friendly with someone straight away

**goodies** (*noun*)

things that are nice to eat, such as cakes and chocolates

**local area** (*noun phrase*)

the part of a city, town or country where you live

**transform** (*verb*)

completely changed

**generous** (*adjective*)

giving people more of your time or money than is usual or expected

**thriving** (*adjective*)

successful, growing, flourishing

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### Cloze reading

a. Complete the text with the appropriate adjectives.

annual    helpful    caring    lovely    friendly    safe  
generous    thriving

Our neighbours are a \_\_\_\_\_(1), retired couple who moved in a few months after we did. All being new to the street, we immediately hit it off as we shared information about our local area. We didn't know anyone in the street when we first moved in, but thanks to Margaret and Terry, the street has become a \_\_\_\_\_(2) and \_\_\_\_\_(3) little neighbourhood. Margaret has even organized \_\_\_\_\_(4) neighbourhood parties. They're \_\_\_\_\_(5) and \_\_\_\_\_(6) in many other ways, too, picking up post when someone is away, assisting if someone is unwell and sharing baked goodies. They have totally transformed this little street into a \_\_\_\_\_(7) and \_\_\_\_\_(8) community. Thank you, Margaret and Terry.

b. Circle the verbs that describe what they do.

### Synonyms

Write in the appropriate synonym in the blank space.

considerate    pleasant    kind    secure    flourishing  
sociable    giving    yearly

Our neighbours are a \_\_\_\_\_(1), retired couple who moved in a few months after we did. All being new to the street, we immediately hit it off as we shared information about our local area. We didn't know anyone in the street when we first moved in, but thanks to Margaret and Terry, the street has become a \_\_\_\_\_(2) and \_\_\_\_\_(3) little neighbourhood. Margaret has even organized \_\_\_\_\_(4) neighbourhood parties. They're \_\_\_\_\_(5) and \_\_\_\_\_(6) in many other ways, too, picking up post when someone is away, assisting if someone is unwell and sharing baked goodies. They have totally transformed this little street into a \_\_\_\_\_(7) and \_\_\_\_\_(8) community. Thank you, Margaret and Terry.

### Write about your neighbour

Think about:

- your introductory sentence and how you first met;
- adjectives you would use to describe your neighbour;
- verbs you would use to describe what they do;
- what qualities you value most in them and how the neighbourhood has changed thanks to them.