

LESSON 3. Describing Objects: Attention to Details

Grade Level: 7

1. Grades 7

2. Overview The study of science helps us to be good observers of things in our surroundings. Every day we see things around us and whenever we want to tell other people about what we observe, we try to describe. It is an important part of science to describe things. Our ability to describe things will depend on whether we are able to give a correct picture of those things.

3. Purpose The purpose of this unit is to teach children how to describe things using some basic science words. It is important that we learn how to describe objects, people and scenes accurately.

4. Objectives Students will be able to:

- i. Describe things in terms of their size
- ii. Describe things in terms of their colour
- iii. Describe things in terms of their smell
- liv. Describe things in terms of their taste
- v. Describe things in terms of their texture.

5. Resources/materials A collection of common things available in the students' environment.

- Plants, flowers, fruits
- Insects
- Non-living materials of different shapes, colours and sizes.

6. Activities and Procedures Describing objects is one way of communicating information. By and large, descriptions begin from the general to the specific, from qualitative description to quantitative. To be able to describe things properly, a good observation would have been made and that observation would have to be translated to communicable language. Communicating as a process skill can be done in different ways.

The students should therefore be encouraged to start descriptions first from the general. "My house is far from the school". In a way that statement conveys some meaning. But when a description involves comparison of more than one thing, that description can usually be faulted. Now let two students make the statement about

their house relative to the school. The teacher should let the students see the problem with qualitative description by considering other examples that involve comparison. Adamu may be described as a tall boy but relative to other students in the class, he may not really be described as tall if all the other students are taller than Adamu.

The transition from qualitative description to more specific quantitative description will call for use of certain words to represent size, colour, smell, taste and texture. The teacher should encourage the students to look for appropriate vocabulary. The use of known standards of quantities will have to be introduced. How far is far can be answered by referring to a specific measure-10 kilometres, for instance.

Objects that have been collected should now be displayed before the students and then they should be asked to make accurate description. That part of the lesson should generate a lot of discussion among the students. Any time there is controversy, the teacher should be prepared to be the judge.

Previous experience can influence the description of certain objects. In the area of smell and taste, reference will often be made to a previous experience. "It smells like rotten egg" or "It tastes like sugar". These forms of description are accepted.

7. Tying it all together Descriptions could either be qualitative or quantitative. Both convey meanings but one is more precise than the other especially if comparison is involved. One area which can be a bit troublesome for African students is the limitation in local dialects for describing for instance "colours". Shades of colours especially secondary colours may be troublesome. When such problems arise, teachers are advised to display a **colour chart** in the classroom.

8. Assessment Assessment of the descriptions of the student can very often be cross checked with that of the teacher. Students should also be encouraged to act as judges of the descriptions of their colleagues.

9. Author(s) S. T.Bajah, **Early Learning Science Series for Africa [ELSSA]**. stan@alpha.linkserv.com

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Bajah, Sam. Tunde et al (1996) **Integrated Science: A New Approach for Junior Secondary Schools. Book One** [New Edition] Ibadan: University Press, Plc.

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