

Sensory Language Checklist

Use this checklist to explore and record sensory details across all five senses. Doing so ensures your descriptive writing is immersive, vivid, and engaging. Before drafting, answer the questions and note specific observations for your subject.

1. Sight (Visual Details)

- What colors do you notice? Are they vivid, muted, or changing? Specify exact shades (e.g., crimson, turquoise, amber).
- How is light affecting the scene? Shadows, reflections, glare, or dim areas?
- What shapes, patterns, or textures stand out visually?
- Are there movements or actions to describe? How do they appear visually?

2. Sound (Auditory Details)

- What are the primary sounds in the environment? Identify source and volume.
- Are there patterns or rhythms in these sounds?
- Are there background noises that layer with foreground sounds?
- Can you use onomatopoeia to bring the sounds alive (e.g., crash, sizzle, murmur)?

3. Smell (Olfactory Details)

- What scents are present? Identify strong and subtle smells.
- Are smells pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?
- Can you compare scents to familiar references for clarity?
- Are smells connected to memories or emotions?

4. Touch (Tactile Details)

- What textures can be felt? Are they rough, smooth, soft, hard?
- How do temperatures affect the environment or objects?
- What is the weight or pressure of objects or surroundings?
- Are there other physical sensations (e.g., vibration, moisture, tension)?

5. Taste (Gustatory Details) *(if relevant)*

- What flavors are present? Identify sweetness, sourness, bitterness, saltiness, umami.
- Are there combinations or contrasts in taste?
- Are there lingering aftertastes or textures affecting taste experience?
- Can taste evoke emotional or memory connections?

Tips for Using This Checklist:

- Brainstorm multiple details for each sense before starting your draft.
- Focus on concrete, specific details rather than vague descriptors.

- Align sensory details with your dominant impression or central theme.
- Revisit and refine sensory notes during drafting and revision to maximize immersion.