

All Students' Image Description Projects – SENS LibrETTO 2022

In the SENS LibrETTO 2022 (English Teacher Training Online) course I asked all the students to do what I call an Image Description Project. This was part of an effort to help them see the many uses of images in the English language classroom.

The rules are simple and rather strict.

1. Students should choose an image they find appealing or meaningful in some way or another.
2. They should paste this image into an MS Word document, then credit the image appropriately.
3. They then need to write five lines of *description* based on what they see. These lines should be truly descriptive of what can be seen in the image, as if describing an interesting object to someone who is blind. To a limited degree it is OK to bring in prior knowledge, such as the name of a place or figure, or other identifying features.
4. After writing five descriptive sentences, the students have the chance to explain why they chose the image, and what it means to them. This can be three or four sentences, or roughly a short paragraph.
5. After students turn in their first draft, the teacher meets with each of them to seek greater clarity of meaning as well as grammatical correctness in the text.
6. After corrections have been made and pronunciation difficulties noted and practiced, the teacher records the student reading the entire text.
7. Then the teacher records their own voice reading the text.
8. The students then practice reading the edited text smoothly and clearly, using the recordings as reference material.
9. Finally, on the day of the image project presentations, the teacher shares the screen of the image only, while the students read their description.

This project is useful not only to show the value of images in language teaching. It also provides practice in giving a very brief presentation, in such a way that the presentations are truly of interest to the other students and provide examples of excellent English, while also being genuine expressions of the student's own choices, observations, and ideas. The individualized attention from the teacher provides a good chance to reflect on the writing process itself, with attention to sentence structure, forming connections between sentences, and core themes. It also affords an opportunity to improve upon grammar usage and pronunciation. The Image Description Project is a very good first step in providing practice in giving presentations for intermediate or advanced students, where the chances of success and enjoyment of the process are high. It would also likely be useful for higher beginners.

Ted Mayer, October 9, 2022

Assignment
Submitted by Zin Me Soe



Arts of Mandalay by Swan Htet Aung (May, 2022)

1. In this photo, the first thing we see is a long hedgerow with bright orange hydrangea flowers extending from the lower left of the photo and receding into the distance.
2. Behind the hedgerow, an ancient palace wall is visible—its pale white color is unique in the ancient architecture of Myanmar—and invisible to us is a moat that lies between the palace and the hedgerow.
3. A dark spire in the Burmese style appears prominently above the pale palace wall.
4. The gloomy and foggy weather makes the photo attractive and intriguing.
5. Alongside the hedgerow we see a marbled stone walkway.
6. This photo is entitled “Arts of Mandalay” and was taken by Swan Htet Aung. The reason why I chose this image is that it depicts my hometown, Mandalay. I miss my home. I had tons of memories in that place and it is still my favourite place. For more than 2 years I have not been able to step into my hometown and meet my family in person. Whenever I see photos of my hometown, Mandalay, it drives me to be so emotional. I hope one day I can go back to my home.



<https://images.app.goo.gl/ur1SK9tW9ovZMu6SA> [September 22, 2022]

1. This is a photo of a family trip to a lake.
2. In this picture, we can see three people, each with their own backpack, sitting with a pet dog on a pier made of wood, looking out over a lake.
3. Beyond the lake there is a very thick forest that mostly covers a series of mountains, and this seems to be a place with few human beings.
4. The sky is full of dark gray clouds, with lighter ones too, and some of them look like they're touching the mountains.
5. The cloudy sky, the mountains, and the trees are all reflected in the lake, which is being enjoyed by the family in what seems to be a cool environment.
6. I chose this photo because I have seen Facebook posts in which some of my colleagues looked like they were having lots of fun with their respective family members. In fact, what they posted were their childhood memories. Come to think of it, we, our family, were hopeless at creating these kinds of childhood memories, since my parents were having trouble even making both ends meet. Nonetheless, I still expect to go on to travel *somewhere* with my family, no matter how old each of us will get one day, after good will has triumphed over evil in Myanmar.

By NMA



1. This is a photo of the time of the day when monks and novices return from the round of accepting offerings of food in Mingun, Sagaing, Myanmar.
2. In this photo, there are three novices who are enjoying themselves in front of the Pahtodawgyi Pagoda that was built in 1790 under King Bodawpaya.
3. The novices are holding monk's bowls and sitting under the sunshine, but their smiles and their relaxed posture tell us that they are comfortable.
4. The young novices are not wearing any flip-flops even though the stairs of the pagoda must be very hot.
5. From the big crack in the pagoda wall, the bushes growing out of the wall, the rounded worn-out bricks, and the sandy color of the whole building, we know that this is an ancient pagoda.
6. The reason why I chose this photo is because it shows the combination of the beauty of young and old things. The beauty of the old building stands magnificently behind the young novices. They are smiling without any anxiety or depression. It is very beautiful. It makes me feel free. This photo reminds me that life is simple when we don't need many things for our lives. Despite the beauty of this contrast between young and old, like the novices, we should not let the weight of traditional culture control our lives, because then we will lose our freedom.

By Phyio



<https://www.irrawaddy.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/insert-4-1536x1062.jpeg> [September 23, 2022]

1. This is a photo of downtown Yangon in Myanmar.
2. In this image, you can see a crossroads, traffic lights, and a lamppost in the foreground and a square overpass with people walking on it in the middle.
3. There are several people with umbrellas crossing the road and walking on the sidewalks, some cars on the road and some parked on both sides of the road.
4. At the very front of this image, you can see four people holding up black umbrellas imprinted with the Myanmar digit "8" (၈).
5. In the background you can see a large golden pagoda, some old buildings as well as skyscrapers, and the cloudy skies which seem to indicate a light rain.
6. I chose this photo because I want to show you the continuing activism of Myanmar people and their unwavering efforts against the military regime, despite atrocities and genocides. This was a peaceful but unsafe demonstration on the 8th of August 2022, commemorating the 34th anniversary of the 8888 Uprising on the 8th of August, 1988. This photo inspired many demonstrations of Myanmar people all over the world. Later that month, two of the anti-regime activists in this photo were arrested and tortured by the military troops. I can't imagine their struggles and experiences under the regime's interrogation.

By H

*Huong Tho primary school
[September 23rd, 2022]*

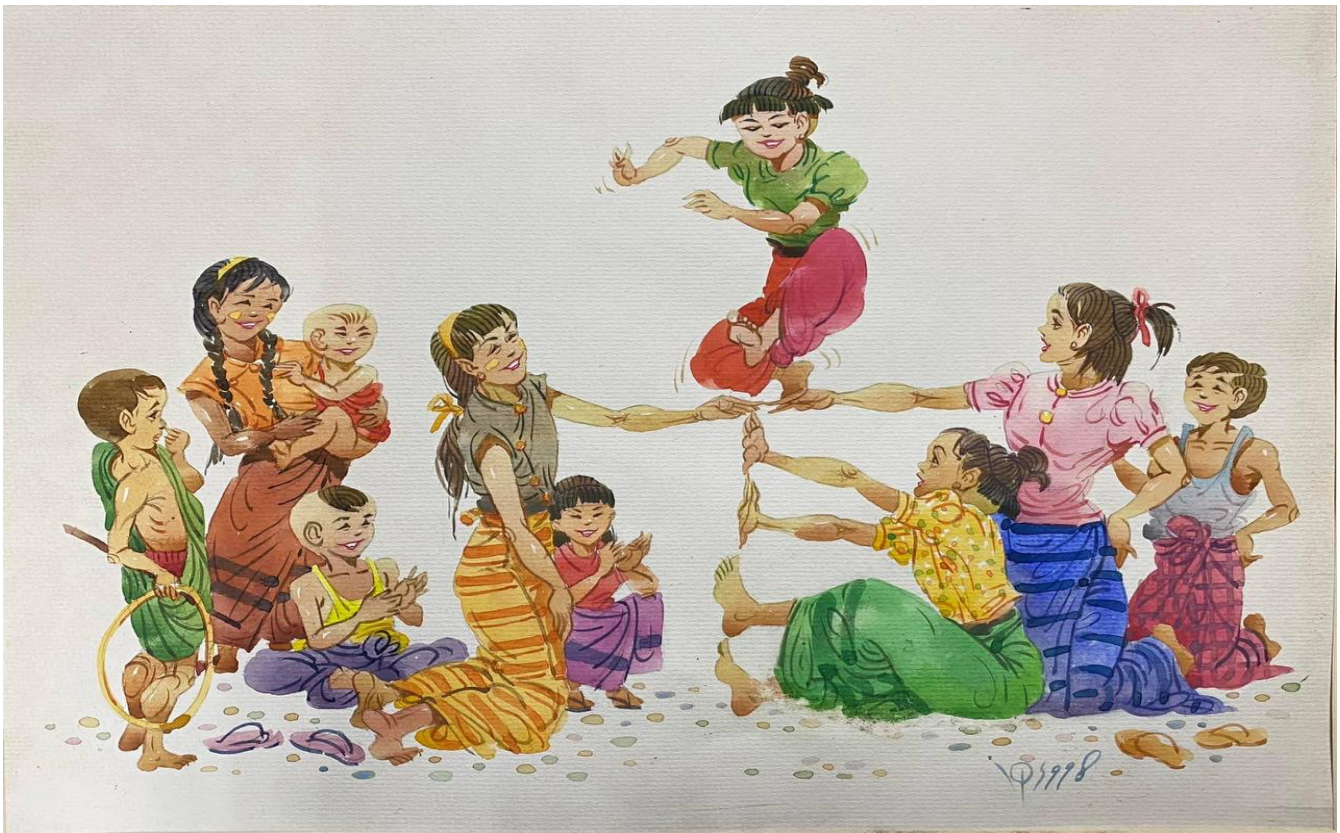


1. This is a photo of a class playing outdoors at Huong Tho primary school in a village some distance outside of Hue, my hometown.
2. It is sunny and boiling hot in the summer, so all the children are wearing T-shirts, jeans, shorts, or dresses.
3. I am standing on the left in this circle along with my students, who seem relaxed as they get ready to play a warm-up game, hand-in-hand with smiles on some of their faces.
4. However, the boy who is wearing a white mask, a grey T-shirt, and blue jeans on the right looks worried; a woman in white stands close to him and seems to be talking to or guiding him.
5. Outside the circle, there are three other moms: one on the left in a silver helmet is handing a water bottle to the little girl in pink; one on the right in a red helmet and another in blue in the back are watching the children playing.
6. This photo was taken at the end of July this year by Mr. Phuong, the secretary of Huong Tho commune. I chose this picture mainly because it marks the very first day the students and I met each other. Some were a little bit shy and didn't cooperate at first; however, they were more open after the ice-breaker game. I felt so thankful for being part of a project called "Zero-Fee Class for Underprivileged Children in Huong Tho." Recently, there has been one more class set up for other young people in the commune. I hope that there will be more sponsored classes so that children in remote areas will have wider access to English.

By Chau Bui

Describing a Painting

Chit Snow Aung Aung



1. This is a watercolor painting of Burmese children playing a traditional game called “Phan Khone Tan” in a village, by the artist Kyaw Phyu San, from 1998.
2. In this painting the little girl with the green blouse is jumping over an obstacle created by the stacked-up hands and feet of three other girls in the scene.
3. We can also see that the children are wearing colorful longyis, and two girls have small yellow patches on their cheeks, which is a kind of Burmese makeup called “thanakhar.”
4. Three or four girls, including the one jumping, are wearing the same hairstyle—hair shaved on the sides, tied in a topknot, and bangs—and this is called “San Yit Wine.”
5. We can also see two children sitting on the ground and clapping their hands, which makes us feel they might be cheering on their teammates.
6. I chose this painting for many reasons. Firstly, it captivated my heart with the pure innocence of Myanmar village culture and traditions. In the big cities children are very busy, and they don’t have open spaces to play, unlike the village scene we see in this painting. Secondly, I always wanted to show other people the culture of the San Yit Wine hairstyle, in which *every* girl in the village has the same hairstyle. I personally saw this kind of hairstyle in a village for the first time when I was an adolescent. Only two villages in Myanmar maintain this tradition, one in Bagan and one in Magway. Thirdly, it reminds me of my childhood visit to my mom’s native town where I first saw children playing “Phan Khone Tan.” I thought to myself, “Wow! They can jump that high?”



<https://www.kenyasafari.com/christian-the-lion.html> [September 24, 2022]

1. This picture shows the surreal relationship between two human beings and a wild animal, the lion named "Christian."
2. In this photo we see a lion and a man hugging each other, while another man is petting the lion's back.
3. The lion is taller than the man, and by the man's posture, we can tell that the lion is very heavy.
4. From the way the men are dressed—with bell-bottom jeans, wide belts, and boots—along with their hairstyles, we can guess this photo was taken in the 1960s or 70s.
5. It seems as if their feelings overflow despite the dry and barren landscape.
6. I chose this picture because I was touched by this heartfelt, no boundaries relationship between these human beings and an animal. It truly shows a special bond between two living species where no language is needed. The picture itself is the proof. Christian was a city lion that was born in a local zoo. Two Australians, Ace and John, bought him when he was a lion cub from Harrods, during the time when wild animals were legal as pets. They raised him in the basement of their antique furniture shop in London. When Christian became a mature lion, the city environment no longer suited his wild instincts. Ace and John placed him in Kora Nature Reserve in Kenya to rehabilitate him for relocation to the wilds of Africa where he belonged. This photo was taken at their first reunion. Christian had never forgotten his best human friends after a full year of living apart in the wild.

By Wanna



1. This is a photo of Sagaing University of Education in Myanmar.
2. In this picture, you can see a large, attractive, modern building with columns across the front and reddish stairs leading to the ground.
3. In the foreground we see a roundabout where the sidewalk is painted carefully with red and white paint; in the middle of the roundabout there is a university signboard surrounded by a lawn.
4. You can also see two traffic signs, a blue one pointing out the entrance and a red one indicating the exit.
5. Above the university we see a big deep blue sky that looks like the sea, with bright yellow clouds that look like flames.
6. I love this photo because this is the university where I got my first degree as well as my master's in education. From the front of the university there is a beautiful view of Sagaing City, the mountains, and Kaung Hmu Taw Pagoda. At this university I was able to make friends with students from across my country and I met my first love there. It guided me on the right path and showed me how to work in real life situations. When I see this photo, I miss all of my teachers and my friends.

Credit Kyaw Zay Yar Lin who posted it on Sagaing University of Education page [October 6, 2020]

By Sayar John