Descriptive Language

One way author Lauren Tarshis helps the reader understand what it was like to be in Pompeii the day Mount Vesuvius erupted is by using descriptive language: vivid words and sensory details that help the reader imagine what people saw, heard, smelled, tasted, or felt.

1. List sentences or paragraphs from the article that contain vivid language and sensory details. Explain what each sentence or paragraph helps the reader imagine or understand. We provided one example for you. Find at least three more. Be sure to include page numbers to show where each example comes from.

• Tarshis writes, “The main street teems with people—women swishing by in long robes, men in tunics, children with leather sandals that slap against the hot stone streets. Vendors shout for your attention, offering slices of juicy melon and sizzling hunks of roasted meat. A parrot calls out from the shoulder of a shopkeeper. ‘Salve!’ he squawks—‘hello’ in Latin, the language of the Roman Empire” (18). This description helps the reader imagine the ancient city of Pompeii—its warmth, what people wore and ate, the smells and sounds of the bustling streets. These details also help the reader understand the contrast between what life was like before and after the eruption that no one knew was about to happen.
**Point of View**

Another way Tarshis helps readers understand what it was like to be in Pompeii the day Vesuvius erupted is by using second-person point of view and addressing readers as though they were in Pompeii during the eruption.

2. List examples of Tarshis’s use of second person. How does each example help readers understand what experiencing the eruption was like? (Think about how the article would be different if Tarshis had not addressed readers directly.)

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**Research**

The research Tarshis conducted played an important role in helping her bring the story to life.

3. How did Tarshis’s research help her? What kind of information did she include to help readers better understand the time and place in which her story takes place? Use details from “My Journey to Pompeii” and “Mountain of Doom” to support your answer.