**Painting Pictures with Words: Describing Characters**

**Words are wonderful things! They can weave webs of ideas, paint pictures and help your reader see what you want them to see. They are special – choose them carefully.**

Sometimes we think the way to describe characters more powerfully is to add adjectives in front of the noun but there are lots of other ways to paint characters in words. What comes after the noun can be very powerful. Look at these examples below and try to visualise the characters they describe.

1. **You could add two, or perhaps three, *adjectives* after the noun to draw attention to the description:**

a **lady,** dark-haired and beautiful, …

her **eyes,** wide and intense …

her **fingers**, long, white and dancing, …

1. **You could add a *prepositional phrase* after the noun:**

the **colour** of honey, of gold washed in milk …

the **hood** of his dark cloak …

the **scar** on his neck …

1. **You could add a *non-finite clause* (using an -ing or –ed verb) after the noun:**

her long **fingers** extended …

the **words** flowing from her lips like a dark song …

1. **You could even do two of these things:**

a **lady**, dark-haired and beautiful, wearing a gown of wine-red …

All these noun phrase descriptions of characters come from Michael Morpurgo’s book, ‘*Arthur, High King of Britain’*. Visualise your character, and play with some of these patterns to describe your character, always checking that the words really work to paint a picture!