

Mosaics Chap 8: Description Writing

Using Chapter 8 on descriptive writing in your *Mosaics* text as your guide throughout this assignment, write a descriptive essay of three pages or more. You may choose your own topic, as long as you follow closely the writing models that we have reviewed from Chapter 8.

What are some memorable experiences or encounters you have had with nature, or with some other specific place you have visited in the past? Why do you remember those experiences? Do any of them form a single impression when you think about them? Write an essay describing the encounter, using personal associations and sensory details to describe it richly and deeply. Remember to *show* your readers what you wish to describe rather than just telling them about it. Put your major dominant impression of the encounter right up front in your introductory paragraph so that your reader will immediately understand *exactly* what you wish to communicate about it.

As you begin the process of developing your topic, follow the steps outlined below (from pages 128-130). Remember to leave plenty of time in your writing process for revision and proofreading.

1. Decide on a **dominant impression** you wish to convey in your essay – the specific feeling or mood about your topic you wish to have the reader remember after reading your work. Choosing, and then clearly stating your dominant impression up front gives your description clarity and unity, and it also helps you focus your discussion by choosing only the exact details that will best communicate this feeling.
2. Decide how much of your decision should be “**objective**,” or factual, and how much of it should be “**subjective**,” or comprised of personal reactions and reflections. An objective description is like a dictionary definition – accurate and fact based, without much emotion. Subjective description, in contrast, tries to produce a specific emotional response in your reader by relying on your own feelings and impressions. A balance of both kinds of description works well.
3. Draw on your **five senses** to write a good description. Limiting your description to only what you see is a big mistake: good descriptive writing relies on *all five senses* (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting) to communicate its message effectively.
4. When you describe something, **show** it to your readers rather than just telling them about it. Use your writing skills to actually *paint the picture*, recreating the event or scene you are describing so that your readers can actually see, hear, feel, smell, taste and understand it right along with you. Your ultimate goal in writing a descriptive essay is to give your readers a real experience of *being there with you*.
5. **Organize** your description so that your readers can easily follow it – move logically from general to more particular or, conversely, from details to main idea, or spatially through your description. If you do not have a very clear organizational structure guiding your reader through your essay then he or she is likely to become confused and lost in your work. Work hard to make the different sections of description logical, connected, clear, colorful and engaging.