

## Illustration Writing – Essay Assignment Description

Using Chapter 13 on illustration writing in your *Models for Writers* text as your guide for this assignment, write a descriptive essay of **at least 3 full pages**. You may choose your own topic, as long as you model the descriptive strategies we've learned about this unit from the assigned chapter readings

Using one of the illustration prompts I have provided separately, write an essay about a particular subject or theme where you make a single, important point about that subject and then provide lots of detailed examples to illustrate your central point. Remember to *show* your readers what you wish to illustrate rather than just telling them about it: use well-organized examples in your body paragraphs to support your thesis statement. Put your thesis statement, the sentence that states what you wish to say about your topic, in your introductory paragraph so that we will know *exactly* what you wish to communicate with the examples you provide.

**Please Note:** You may or may not choose to do outside research to help you with this essay, but you *must not write about yourself or about your own personal experiences or about us this time*. I want you to make conclusions about something outside of you, and then show us examples and illustrations that support those conclusions. This means that **all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person speech (I, me, you, your) must be completely eliminated** from your sentences and paragraphs. Keep your attention focused instead on the examples you include in your discussion.

Use **academic language** in this essay. This means making sure all of your **verbs are in the same tense**, it means **eliminating contractions and slang speech**, and it means **proofreading your work slowly and repeatedly** to ensure that your sentences are complete and error free.

As you begin the process of developing your topic and writing, follow the steps outlined below. Remember to leave plenty of time in your writing process for revision and proofreading. Remember also to study and review carefully the structure and writing strategies you see being used in the sample student essay(s) I've made available for you on our 846 course page at GregTeach.net.

1. State your main point and your opinion (also known as a **thesis**) about that main point in the last sentence of your introduction. This is the controlling idea of your essay – every body paragraph that follows will echo, support, and illustrate through detailed examples and explanations this one big idea. Spend a lot of time shaping and clarifying your thesis statement: it will stand as the single focus of your entire discussion. You want it to make sense to your reader, you want it to be interesting and worth saying, you want your reader to care.
2. Choose **examples** that are truly relevant to your thesis. Examples serve as your primary explanation – they must be well-chosen so that we can actually see and understand your thesis through your examples. Examples serve a vital function: they help you prove your point, whatever that is. Examples that are not relevant or well chosen are distracting, causing your reader to lose interest, which you don't want. Readers will appreciate your examples NOT because you tell them what to think but because you show them how to think.
3. Assume your **audience knows nothing** about your subject: describe and explain everything about your examples that you wish us to see and know, and make sure to link your conclusions about a specific example back to your thesis each time, so that we know exactly why you have provided a given example in your discussion. Do not assume your reader understands a given concept or point until you explain it.
4. Use a **sufficient number** of examples to make your point. Remember, you have 3 full pages to fill with substantive discussion. Sometimes several short examples will make your point best. Or perhaps three or four fairly detailed examples – each in its own body paragraphs – work best. Or maybe you will choose one long, very well described and explained extended example. If you are in doubt whether to add another example or more vivid details, you should do so – most students err by using too few examples or not adding enough detail to their examples. So include examples and illustrations that display multiple perspectives so that we, your readers, will see and understand the complexity and importance of your thesis point.
5. **Organize** your examples so that readers can easily follow the thread of your thesis through them – move logically from one example to the next, introducing and explaining and discussing and linking back to your thesis as you go. If you do not have a very clear organizational structure guiding readers through your essay, they will likely become confused and lost in your work. Work hard to make the different sections of your discussion logical, connected, clear, illustrative and engaging.