



Descriptive Essay

What is a Descriptive Essay?

A descriptive essay contains writing that creates a vivid impression of the topic. It captures the author's experience of a person, place, or thing into words by appealing to the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

Three Steps to Effective Description:

1. Create a main impression about a topic.
2. Use concrete details that appeal to the five senses.
3. Use special order to maintain organization.

Using Concrete Details:

This is a key step in writing a descriptive essay. To support the main impression, i.e., the overall feeling, effect, or image, use concrete details that appeal to the five senses. An effective descriptive essay uses vivid images that stimulate the reader's imagination and make a place or event "come alive."

Thesis Statement of a Descriptive Essay:

The thesis statement usually includes the topic and conveys the main impression.
(topic) (main impression)

Ex: My English professor's office is a complete mess.

How to Write an Effective Descriptive Essay:

1. **Find a main impression.** To create an effective main impression, think about your topic and what is the quality that best describes it. Ask yourself, "What do I think of first when I think of this topic? What are the first words that come to mind? What is the lasting impression I want my readers to have about the topic?"
2. **Use vivid details.** Use concrete details and images, via the senses, to support your main impression of the topic. State how it looks, sounds, feels, smells, or tastes. Try to *show* rather than *tell* by avoiding abstract or general words. For example, instead of writing, "Jack sat under a dead tree," change the abstract word "dead" to make it concrete: "Jack sat under a bare, brittle tree whose bark was rotting off."
3. **Use spacial order.** Arrange your ideas using spacial order, so that the readers can see your topic as you do. Your description can move from front to back, near to far, top to bottom, left to right, or inside to outside.

Remember:

A descriptive essay is writing that creates a vivid impression of the topic. When writing an effective descriptive essay, remember to create a main impression about a topic, to use concrete details to support the main impression, and to use spacial order to arrange the ideas.