**Description Essay Assignment**

Components of a description essay:

* Describes a person, place, event, moment, or object that is meaningful to you.
* Has had a profound impact on the writer’s life.
* Paints a picture in the reader’s mind.
* Uses vivid language; utilizes all of the senses; the reader should be able to touch, smell, feel, see, and hear what you are writing; use figurative language: metaphors, similes, hyperbole, litotes, personification, synecdoche, and onomatopoeia.
* Be organized; don’t ramble; have a definite path in your writing.
* Has a significant, impactful purpose.
* Provides a definite reason for sharing.
* Presents a memorable person, place, event, moment, or object that has altered the writer in such a way that changes the narrator’s view of the world, the way the narrator sees himself/herself/themself, and/or the world around him/her/them.
* Use careful, descriptive diction/word choice/language; paints a picture in the reader’s mind.
* How you organize your essay is important. Organization is a key component in helping your reader understand the person, place, event, moment, or object and the impact of the moment/experience upon the narrator. Suggestions: order of importance, chronological order, or spatial order.
* Having a writer’s voice is important. Avoid using words that you normally wouldn’t use or writing in a way that isn’t “natural” to you. Be true to your writer’s voice. Your writing should be better than your speaking voice (you have time to go back and revise/rewrite your words), but your writing should “sound” like you. The reader should hear your voice in his/her/their head.
* If you write about a person, place, or thing impacting you, avoid just **telling** the reader about the person, place, event, moment, or object. Paint a picture. Remember, this essay is about you and how this person/place/object has affected you. Show don’t tell.

**Step 1:** (Choosing a topic/prewriting)

Brainstorm; think about a person, place, event, moment, or object that has impacted you, or changed your perspective. Suggestion: jot down the first five words that come to mind when you think about this assignment. When you think of your life, what is the first “thing” that pops into your head? Why? Whatever you choose to write about, be mindful of your audience. Consider your audience; this is not a diary entry. Think snapshot.

**Step 2**: (Rough Draft)

Narrow down your topic choices. Develop your thesis statement. Your thesis establishes the purpose of your essay. Answer the question: Why and how has this person, place, event, moment, or object changed/affected you? Why should the reader care? Work on the structure of your essay. At the heart of your essay, you are writing about how a person, place, event, moment, or object has affected/changed/impacted your life. Think about the best way to convey this impact. How should you start? What details should you include? Don’t forget to include how and why the person/place/object affected you. Voice and tone are important. Don’t forget who your audience is. Using slang, informal, or inappropriate language might be offensive and/or off-putting to the audience. Only use this type of language when the word or phrase is needed/appropriate; think dialogue.

Suggestions for writing a rough draft: just write! Get your thoughts “down on paper.” Seeing your words on the computer screen is easier than in your head. A rough draft is named “rough” for a reason.

**Step 3:** (Editing/Revising)

Suggestions: read your essay aloud. Share your essay with someone who doesn’t know anything about your essay. Remove and replace the following words from your essay (not direct quotes): it, seems, very, a lot, things, stuff.

**Step 4:** (Peer Editing)

Print your essay and share your essay with a peer. Use this link, [TAMU: Description Essay: Peer Editing Questions](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OnlbMLZb5rSemqMglfCchgPmxuW-0aLIjfv65udyrdY/copy) to answer the questions and prompts.

**Step 5:** (Revising/Final Draft)

Remember, take your peer’s suggestions/comments with a “grain of salt.” However, be open to those suggestions and comments. Before turning in your final draft, take a break from your essay; give yourself time to look at your essay with “fresh eyes.” Then, look at your essay by its parts.

Start with the introduction. Is your thesis clear? The harder your reader has to work to figure out the purpose of your essay, the lower your grade. The goal of a well-written essay is one in which the writer has painted a clear picture. The reader should be able to hear your voice in his/her/their head.

Next, look over your body paragraphs. Do you have a topic sentence for each body paragraph? Does the topic sentence convey what each paragraph is about? Do you provide evidence that proves your thesis? How are your body paragraphs organized? Do you have transitions? Are you jumping from one point to another? Do you connect each piece of evidence to your thesis through commentary sentences? Is your evidence vivid in detail? Can the reader visualize through your words what you are writing about? Do you have a conclusion sentence at the end of each body paragraph that “wraps up” the body paragraph and transitions to the next?

Now, read over your conclusion paragraph. Does your conclusion paragraph “wrap up” your whole essay? Did you restate and rewrite your thesis, topic sentences, and main points? Do you have a “lesson learned” statement?

Writing suggestions on how to improve your essay:

* Write in active voice; try to use active verbs.
* Avoid beginning a sentence with the following words: that, there, which, conjunctions.
* Have variety in your sentence structure; avoid writing in simple sentences all of the time.
* Avoid using the same word or same phrase in the same sentence or in the next sentence.
* Replace the following: it, seems, very, a lot, things, stuff.

**Format:**

* MLA format
* 12 size font
* Times New Roman
* Double-spaced
* One-inch margins
* 2-3 typed pages