

Sample Writing Topics

Choose a topic from the list below. Remember to choose the topic you know the most about. Try to make your writing piece about 2 pages in length, handwritten.

Descriptive

1. DESCRIBE a place where people go to have a good time like a fair, a carnival, someone's home, or a place outdoors. DESCRIBE the place so clearly that someone who has never been there could tell what it is like.
2. Music is an important part of most people's lives. DESCRIBE a piece of music that is one of your personal favorites to listen to and/or perform. Include a description of your reactions to the music. (You might choose to describe an individual song or piece of music, or an entire tape, CD, or live performance by a certain group or individual artist.)
3. Most people have their own "territory" or place where they feel most comfortable or most alive. DESCRIBE your "territory" so clearly that a reader could picture what it is like for you and how you feel there.

How to Write a Descriptive Paper

In a good description, you write from a position of authority. Either you must know your subject well, or you must closely observe the person, place, or think you are describing. Use vivid sensory and memory details to bring your subject to life, and make it clear why the subject is important to you.

Gathering Details...Imagine that you are planning a painting of your subject; jot down every shape, color, texture, or feature that comes to mind. (Include sensory details – sights, sounds, smells, and so on.) (From *Writers Inc: A student handbook for writing and learning*, by Patrick Sebranek, Pg. 156.)

Descriptive Writing:

- Uses the five senses.
- "Paints a picture".
- Uses a variety of words.
- Creates a specific emotion or feeling.

Imaginative/Descriptive Student Model

This model is based on an original story submitted by Elise, a sixth-grade writer. Note how she uses dialogue and details to bring her characters to life.

Linden's Library

It was a normal Saturday on Oak Street—the same morning dew sparkling on the grass, the same cherry blossoms swaying in the breeze, the same daffodils bursting with color. Yes, as far as anyone could tell, it was a normal day in Washington, D.C.

When Katie awoke, she got dressed, brushed her teeth and hair, and checked her “to do” list. Then she hurried down for breakfast: rich, fluffy, chocolate-chip pancakes; fresh orange juice; crispy bacon; and crunchy, buttered toast. Katie’s stomach growled loudly.

“Smells good, Mom,” Katie said.

“Good morning!” her mother chimed happily. “Eat up. You sound like you’re starving to death!” Katie sat down and ate. “So what’s on the agenda today, Katie?”

“Today I have the Library Club with June and Cat,” Katie said. As soon as she finished eating, she scraped her plate (even though there was barely a crumb on it) and went outside.

Katie loved everything to do with nature. She wanted to be an environmentalist when she grew up. She sat in her favorite spot under the massive cherry tree, where she had a spectacular view of the Washington Monument. Before heading to the library, she thought of what to do with her week of spring break.

As Katie sat down on the rug of Linden’s Library with her best friends June and Cat (short for Catherine), she noticed a new book on the table. Its title was *Wild Safari*. When the librarian said they could pick their books, Katie ran to the table and snatched the book before anyone else could. Then she walked over to the checkout counter, where Linden stood.

Linden was a tall, lanky man with blazing blue eyes that were strangely magnified by his green glasses. He had brown hair styled in a stubbly crew cut. He was about 35 years old, Katie thought. Most of the time he was cheery, and he always told the truth. “Hello, Katie,” he said.

“Hi, Linden,” said Katie. “I was wondering if I could check out this new book.” She showed him *Wild Safari*.

“I wouldn’t take that book, Katie,” Linden said.

“Why?” asked Katie.

“Because if you take that book, bad things will happen,” Linden said.

Katie gave him a puzzled look. “What kind of things?” she asked.

“I don’t know, but they’ll be bad,” Linden warned.

“Well, will you still allow me to check out the book?” Katie asked.

“Yes, but only because I think I know how to stop the bad stuff if it does happen,” Linden replied.

So Katie checked out the book and went to find June and Cat. She saw that June was holding *The Long Winter* and Cat had *The Secret Garden*. Katie shared with them every word of her conversation with Linden.

“That’s odd,” said June. “Normally he tells the truth, but I think he’s trying to scare you. After all, it’s only a book, right?” But somehow her words didn’t convince Katie.

Katie’s thoughts were unsettled, so she went to her favorite spot, where she could always make sense of things. She sat down under the tree and started to read the book. It was full of jungle animal adventures—everything from anteaters to zebras. After reading three chapters, she brought the book inside and put it on her nightstand.

That evening, after eating a scrumptious dinner, Katie went to her room to change into her pj’s. She went to the living room to watch TV with her family, and then she retreated to her room so she could read more. When she got to the ninth chapter, she fell asleep. That’s when the madness began.

When Katie woke up, her world was upside-down. Everything in sight was covered in ivy, and it seemed to be growing out of her book! She grabbed desperately for some scissors and went outside. The landscape couldn’t have been more different. All of Washington was covered with ivy—even the Washington Monument! She ran back inside and jumped on her mom to wake her up. When her mom opened her eyes, she screamed, which woke up her dad, who also screamed. They seemed to be frozen with fear! Katie decided that they were no help, so she ran to her friend June’s house. They were just waking up and didn’t see the ivy because it wasn’t inside their house. They were all shocked to see Katie there and wondered why she looked so flustered. “Look outside,” she said in little more than a whisper. They all went outside, and their reaction was the same as Katie’s parents. June was the only one who didn’t freeze with fear.

“June,” Katie said, “do you have any clue how this happened?”

“No,” June said, trembling, “but let’s think over the conversation you had with Linden.”

“Good thinking,” said Katie. They went to June’s room and talked for an hour. Finally, Katie remembered that Linden had said that he knew how to stop the bad stuff if it happened.

“Let’s pay him a visit,” said June.

They both ran to Linden’s house. They could tell everything was getting worse—animals were everywhere, and the ivy was getting thicker. They had to cut the ivy with Katie’s scissors just to ring the doorbell at Linden’s house! When he answered the door, Katie asked, “Can we stop it?”

Linden said just one word before he fainted. The word was “shred.”

“He must mean shred the book!” Katie said. She and June ran as fast as they could to Katie’s house and tried to find their way through the thick ivy to the book. When they eventually got to the book, Katie and June beat and shredded the book until it let out a strange shriek, sucked in all the ivy and animals that had escaped its pages, and vanished.

No one except Katie and June knew what really happened that eerie day. To this day, they still look for the mysterious book. Who knows where it will appear next . . . ?