

Writing the first draft of a Descriptive Essay

Prewrite

What things matter to me? Generate a list of as many things as possible. Include people, places, situations or events, things, and ideas or concepts. A "thing" (noun) can be any of these.

Focused Prewrite

Select one thing from your list

Who/What is this thing? Describe it briefly in a few sentences.

Why does it matter to me? Explain why in a few sentences.

What details can best illustrate why this matters to me?

Give illustrations of situations or details that reveal the significance/importance/value of this thing to you. *Do not explain* why it matters. Try to think of ways to *show* why it matters by describing situations or observations that *reveal* the significance of this thing. Focus on sensory details. If the thing being described is an idea or concept, describe situations where this thing has affected you deeply.

Creating a first Draft

Generating a thesis

Write a single sentence that explains why this thing matters to you.

Write a single sentence that explains what effect this thing has had on you.

Using these sentences, write a new sentence where the subject of the sentence is the thing being described and the remainder of the sentence explains why this thing matters to you or explains what effect it has had on you. Be sure there is only *one* reason or effect. If there is *more* than one, choose the one which seems *most* important or significant. This will be the thesis.

Structuring details around a thesis

Prewrite any additional details needed to make the thesis clear.

Eliminate any details that do not develop the reason why this thing matters to you or that are not needed as background for understanding what this thing is.

Sort the details into groups that share similarities.

Place any details (context) which explain *who/what* this thing is *before* the thesis. Place details which reveal *why* this thing matters *after* the thesis.

Ending the draft

End by briefly *recapping* the most outstanding details revealing the significance/importance/value of this thing and/or *explaining* why this thing is significant, important, or of value.