

Revising the first draft of a Descriptive Essay

Setting (Beginning)

Does the beginning identify the thing being described? Does the beginning give details that reveal how this subject relates to me or to my reader (physically or emotionally)?

Does the essay have a clear point of view (personal, objective)?

Does the beginning establish a reason for describing this thing (significance, importance, value) or does it establish a mood (feeling)?

Does the beginning end with a sentence that identifies the dominant impression (essential nature, principle characteristic, enhanced awareness, particular mood) given by this thing, a sentence that suggests *the importance or value this thing being described has for me or for my reader* (thesis)?

Descriptive Details (Middle)

Does the middle begin with my first impressions of this thing (personal) or with the reader's first impressions of this thing (objective)?

Do I keep *explaining* the value or dominant impression of this thing, trying to reword it over and over again? If so, remove the explanations and replace them with *details* that *recreate* the experience of this thing or feeling this thing gives (*envision* for the reader).

Are details grouped according to some scheme that develops the dominant impression (spatial, temporal)? Is this scheme consistently revealed from one point of view (personal, objective)?

Do I simply state details, or do I show the relationships between details and the dominant impression or value?

Is the description *sensual*, that is, is it dense with *sights, sounds, smells, tastes, feelings*? Is the description *imagistic*, that is, does it recreate the subject for the reader through descriptive or figurative language?

Summary/Explanation (End)

Does my ending satisfy? Have the details recreated for the reader an experience of my subject (understanding, appreciation, awareness, emotional climax)?