**How to Write a Descriptive Essay**

To write a **descriptive** essay, you’ll need to describe a person, object, or event so vividly that the reader feels like he/she could reach out and touch it.

**How to Write Vivid *Descriptions***

Having trouble describing a person, object, or event for your narrative or descriptive essay?  **Try filling out this chart:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What do you smell?** | **What do you taste?** | **What do you see?** | **What do you hear?** | **What might you touch or feel?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Remember:  Avoid simply telling us what something looks like--tell us how it tastes, smells, sounds, or feels!**

Consider this…

* Virginia rain smells different from a California drizzle.
* A mountain breeze feels different from a sea breeze.
* We hear different things in one spot, depending on the time of day.
* You can “taste” things you’ve never eaten: how would sunscreen taste?

**Student Sample: Short Descriptive**

The old fence stands weathered and tired. It has been holding cattle in the field ever since the farmer put it up. The cows have occasionally tried to break through, but they have lost their battles; only the small yearlings have been able to squeeze under the fence.

The poles stand rotten and weary; they are lined up in a sporadic order. The spaces between are not always equal and their heights differ greatly. Some have pulled loose from their holes, and they are held up only by the line of barbed wire that clings to their hide. The line of fence looks much like a parade of weary, beaten soldiers who have been defeated in battle and are lining up for their last breath of honor before they are shot and killed.

In several places on the fence the barbed wire has been cut or bent out of shape. But neither the rain and rust nor the cattle's fury has made the wire calm or dangerous. Sharp, erect pins still show their warning of power; many times they have acted as a catalyst between the cows and their angered emotions.

Even though the fence is old and historical, it will not last very long because there is a new owner. He is a man of power and wealth who has big plans, a man too high to care for the cattle or the soil, a man whose only dream is riches.