

Freshman English

Ms. Christensen

Descriptive Writing

Sample Descriptive Paragraphs

A Friendly Clown

On one corner of my dresser sits a smiling toy clown on a tiny unicycle--a gift I received last Christmas from a close friend. The clown's short yellow hair, made of yarn, covers its ears but is parted above the eyes. The blue eyes are outlined in black with thin, dark lashes flowing from the brows. It has cherry-red cheeks, nose, and lips, and its broad grin disappears into the wide, white ruffle around its neck. The clown wears a fluffy, two-tone nylon costume. The left side of the outfit is light blue, and the right side is red. The two colors merge in a dark line that runs down the center of the small outfit. Surrounding its ankles and disguising its long black shoes are big pink bows. The white spokes on the wheels of the unicycle gather in the center and expand to the black tire so that the wheel somewhat resembles the inner half of a grapefruit. The clown and unicycle together stand about a foot high. As a cherished gift from my good friend Tran, this colorful figure greets me with a smile every time I enter my room.

The Blond Guitar

My most valuable possession is an old, slightly warped blond guitar--the first instrument I taught myself how to play. It's nothing fancy, just a Madeira folk guitar, all scuffed and scratched and finger-printed. At the top is a bramble of copper-wound strings, each one hooked through the eye of a silver tuning key. The strings are stretched down a long, slim neck, its frets tarnished, the wood worn by years of fingers pressing chords and picking notes. The body of the Madeira is shaped like an enormous yellow pear, one that

was slightly damaged in shipping. The blond wood has been chipped and gouged to gray, particularly where the pick guard fell off years ago. No, it's not a beautiful instrument, but it still lets me make music, and for that I will always treasure it.

Gregory

Gregory is my beautiful gray Persian cat. He walks with pride and grace, performing a dance of disdain as he slowly lifts and lowers each paw with the delicacy of a ballet dancer. His pride, however, does not extend to his appearance, for he spends most of his time indoors watching television and growing fat. He enjoys TV commercials, especially those for Meow Mix and 9 Lives. His familiarity with cat food commercials has led him to reject generic brands of cat food in favor of only the most expensive brands. Gregory is as finicky about visitors as he is about what he eats, befriendng some and repelling others. He may snuggle up against your ankle, begging to be petted, or he may imitate a skunk and stain your favorite trousers. Gregory does not do this to establish his territory, as many cat experts think, but to humiliate me because he is jealous of my friends. After my guests have fled, I look at the old fleabag snoozing and smiling to himself in front of the television set, and I have to forgive him for his obnoxious, but endearing, habits.

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Based on the examples you've read, how would you describe a successful descriptive paragraph? List 2 criteria for success within each of the 6 Traits.

6 Traits	Criteria for Success
Ideas and Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">Main IdeasSupporting Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none">StructureIntroductionConclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Voice <ul style="list-style-type: none">PersonalitySense of AudienceReadability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Word Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none">PrecisionEffectivenessImagery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Sentence Fluency <ul style="list-style-type: none">Rhythm and FlowVariety of Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none">SpellingCapitalizationPunctuationGrammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct spelling and capitalization• Correct punctuation and grammar