

Descriptive Essay Outline Template (College Level)

I. Pre-Writing Focus

Essay Topic / Subject:

Purpose of Description: Create a vivid image / Convey a mood or emotion / Reveal meaning

Controlling Impression: (Central feeling or idea)

II. Introduction Paragraph

Opening Hook: Anecdote, sensory image, statement, or emotional reaction

Context: Brief background (who/what/where/why)

Thesis Statement: States subject and controlling impression

III. Body Paragraphs

Focus Aspect: Specific feature, moment, or angle

Sensory Details: Sight, Sound, Smell, Touch, Taste (as relevant)

Figurative Language: Simile, metaphor, personification (optional)

Emotional / Interpretive Significance: Why this detail matters

IV. Conclusion Paragraph

Restated Controlling Impression: Reworded, not repeated

Reflection: Insight gained by the reader

Final Image or Thought: Memorable ending detail

V. Final Check

All details support the controlling impression

Sensory description is concrete and specific

Organization and tone are consistent

Essay shows meaning, not just appearance