

## DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH SAMPLE

A type of expository paragraph, but the purpose is to describe something instead of explain it.

You are painting a picture so that the reader may experience the topic as close to firsthand as possible.

Use the senses: smell, sight, sound, feel/texture, taste, emotional (inner feelings), intellectual inspiration (what thoughts it inspires), memories it inspires

Use descriptive words and phrases (adjectives and adverbs will be used more in this type of writing than any other). A **THESAURUS** will be helpful here to find fresh terms.

It sometimes helps to close your eyes and imagine the topic in a kind of "moving picture" manner. You are "there", what is happening? What does it make you feel, think, know?

**Prompt:** Think of a time when you experienced a rainstorm. In a composition, use sensory details to describe what the rainstorm was like so that a classmate could clearly imagine the experience.

**Analyzed Prompt:** Think of a **time when you experienced a rainstorm**. In a composition, use sensory details to **describe what the rainstorm was like** so that a classmate could clearly imagine the experience. **Answer: "Hurricane David in Florida 1979"**

**BRAINSTORM!!** (You will NOT use every single idea you brainstorm! Brainstorming helps you capture images and sensory information that you will collect and use the most important in order to tell the story.)

### "Hurricane David in Florida 1979"

sounds: clacking on large flat leaves, pattering on sidewalks, rushing sound as it falls in sheets, sprinkling on smaller shrubs and as it starts and stops, winds howling through cavities in the house and through trees, thunder clapping directly after lightning is seen

sights: the grayish whiteness of the sky as the rain falls in large amounts; the dark purple of the sky as thunderclouds loom overhead; bending slender palm trees with swaying fronds; puddles forming in the low places soaking the grass; lightning flashing daylight across the sky; debris from trees and loose objects flying in the sky

feel/texture: rain "pelting" the skin in hard large droplets, cold winds like an air conditioner

Smell: dank black and sandy hot earthy soil rising up mixed with the nitrogen-rich rain

emotions: thrilled at adventure; safe and warm inside concrete block house; excitement of danger

thoughts: waiting to see something unusual about a hurricane but no eerie green glow; waiting for eye of the storm but only quiet then rowdy again; sorrow to see the aftereffects of lives lost and saved

taste: none

**OS:** Hurricane David, my house in Cocoa, FL, 18 yo, w/family/friends

**D#1:** big picture window in living room, dark purple and blue skies  
thrilling threat of storm; different than any other day;

EX: Excitement of danger and adventure; warm and secure

**D#2:** Banana trees and philodendron, clacking & clattering

Ex: sounds of rain on grass and plants, "sh-ing" like pouring water,  
silence during "eye" of the storm, repeat of rain after

**D#3:** Winds beating on picture window in sheets

Ex: bending the palms, sheets of wind pouring in different slanted  
directions often horizontal, turning on and off at different rates  
like a water faucet is being played with; debris being carried

**CS:** The soaked ground afterward is quiet, the lawn scattered with fallen  
limbs and debris. The quiet intensifies the memory of the loud and  
soft sounds of the FL rainstorm. We survived.

(See next page for paragraph)

**DRAFT** (A shorter version appears on the next page.)

I experienced Hurricane David at my small, concrete block house in Cocoa, FL, when I was 18 years old. I was with my family and two friends, my sister's boyfriend and his brother who was my boyfriend at the time. This was not the first hurricane I had experienced, but it was the only one I could remember since the first one happened when I was very young. My home had a large picture window that reached from the ceiling to the floor and covered most of the wall in our living room. Through this window, I could see the purple-blue skies darken and the winds begin to blow hard against the tropical plants that grew in our yard. I was excited with the danger and adventure of a "big storm", unafraid because I felt warm and secure in that solid house. At first the rain fell clacking on the large-leafed plants such as the philodendron, and I could hear the clattering of palm fronds as they were swept to one side by the winds. The rains came in sessions of white noise, a "sh-ing" sound like pouring water from a faucet. Then the rains came harder and the sound of the watery winds became louder until the eye of the storm when all fell eerily silent for a space of time. Soon the winds picked up again, beating on the picture window in sheets, bending the tall, slender palms in almost horizontal position, raining in "fits" of heavy pouring and lighter sheets awaiting the next bands of storm winds. The soaked ground afterward was quiet, the lawn scattered with fallen limbs and debris. The quiet intensified the memory of the wild fury of my first real hurricane experience. We had survived.

I experienced Hurricane David with my family at my small, concrete block house in Cocoa, FL, when I was 18 years old. This was not the first hurricane I had experienced, but it was the only one I could remember since the first one happened when I was very young. My home had a large picture window that reached from the ceiling to the floor and covered most of the wall in our living room. Through this window, I could see the purple-blue skies darken and the winds begin to blow hard against the tropical plants that grew in our yard. At first the rain fell clacking on the large-leafed plants such as the philodendron, and I could hear the clattering of palm fronds as they were swept to one side by the winds. The rains came in alternating sessions of white noise, a "sh-ing" sound like pouring water from a faucet. Soon the winds picked up, beating on the picture window in heavy sheets, bending the tall, slender palms in almost horizontal position, only to stall momentarily, awaiting the next bands of storm winds. The soaked ground afterward was quiet, the lawn scattered with fallen limbs and debris. The quiet intensified the memory of the wild fury of my first real hurricane experience. We had survived.

NOTE: The underlines show where I adjusted the words from the original to account for the deleted sentences.