EXAMPLE 1: Extract from Jamaica Inn by Daphne du Maurier

It was a cold grey day in late November. The weather had changed overnight, when a backing wind brought a granite sky and a drizzling rain with it, and although it was now only a little after two o'clock in the afternoon the pallor of a winter evening seemed to have closed upon the hills, cloaking them in mist. It would be dark by four. The air was clammy cold, and for all the tightly closed windows it penetrated the interior of the coach. The leather seats felt damp to the hands, and there must have been a small crack in the roof, because now and again little drips of rain fell softly through, smudging the leather and leaving a dark-blue stain like a smudge of ink. The wind came in gusts, at times shaking the coach as it travelled round the bend of the road, and in the exposed places on the high ground it blew with such force that the whole body of the coach trembled and swayed, rocking between the high wheels like a drunken man.

The driver, muffled in a greatcoat to his ears, bent almost double in his seat in a faint endeavour to gain shelter from his own shoulders, while the dispirited horses plodded sullenly to his command, too broken by the wind and the rain to feel the whip that now and again cracked above their heads, while it swung between the numb fingers of the driver. The wheels of the coach creaked and groaned as they sank into the ruts on the road, and sometimes they flung up the soft spattered mud against the windows, where it mingled with the constant driving rain, and whatever view there might have been of the countryside was hopelessly obscured. The few passengers huddled together for warmth, exclaiming in unison when the coach sank into a heavier rut than usual, and one old fellow, who had kept up a constant complaint ever since he had joined the coach at Truro, rose from his seat in a fury; and, fumbling with the window-sash, let the window down with a crash, bringing a shower of rain upon himself and his fellow-passengers. He thrust his head out and shouted up to the driver, cursing him in a petulant voice for a rogue and a murderer; that they would all be dead before they reached Bodmin if he persisted in driving at breakneck speed; they had no breath left in their bodies as it was, and he for one would never travel by coach again.

Example 2-

The thick, burnt scent of roasted coffee tickled the tip of my nose just seconds before the old, faithful alarm blared a distorted top-forty through its tiny top speaker. Wiping away the grit of last night's sleep, the starch white sunlight blinded me momentarily as I slung my arm like an elephant trunk along the top of the alarm, searching for the snooze button. While stretching hands and feet to the four posts of my bed, my eyes opened after several watery blinks. I crawled out of the comforter, edging awkwardly like a butterfly from a cocoon, swinging my legs over the side of the bed. The dusty pebbles on the chilled, wood floor sent ripples spiralling from my ankles to the nape of my neck when my feet hit the floor. Grabbing the apricot, terry-cloth robe, recently bathed in fabric softener and October wind, I knotted it tightly at my waist like a prestigious coat of armour and headed downstairs to battle the morning.

**Things to Consider as You Write Your Descriptive Essay**

* Think of an instance that you want to describe.
* Why is this particular instance important?
* What were you doing?
* What other things were happening around you? Is there anything specific that stands out in your mind?
* Where were objects located in relation to where you were?
* How did the surroundings remind you of other places you have been?
* What sights, smells, sounds, and tastes were in the air?
* Did the sights, smells, sounds, and tastes remind you of anything?
* What were you feeling at that time?
* Has there been an instance in which you have felt this way before?
* What do you want the reader to feel after reading the paper?
* What types of words and images can convey this feeling?
* Can you think of another situation that was similar to the one you are writing about? How can it help explain what you are writing about?
* Is there enough detail in your essay to create a mental image for the reader?