

Basic Creative Writing
With
Anecdotal Compositions

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Descriptive Fictional Paragraphs

Out of the dozens of descriptive paragraphs in English literature, I recommend that you teach two: the GPG or general-particulars-general type and the one going from the general to the five senses and back to the general. The topic sentence could be the same for both. Your desire a general statement of the scene the paragraph will describe, giving the people involved and the location.

Topic: Speeding along to the clip, clip of the rails, the girls could observe the magical countryside of China from their windows.

GPG [General-Particulars-General]

1. cattle grazing on the hills
2. river flowing, banked by groves of lilacs
3. gaggle of geese and goslings
4. peasants bending in rice paddies, women carrying loads
5. pyramids of tangerines piled along the path.

Five Senses Approach

See: the river flowing
the gaggle of geese and goslings

Hear: cattle lowing on the hillside
Peasants calling to each other

Feel: The pain of the peasants, labouring in the paddies
The heat of the scorching sun

Smell: freshly cut hay, lilacs in bloom
Fresh oranges stacked in pyramids

Taste: dust in the air, sand in teeth, the taste of China
Bittersweet taste of the pain of women bending under heavy loads.

Clincher: Suddenly total darkness, as the train plunged into a tunnel, blotting out the spectacular view of rural China.

Two model descriptive fictional paragraphs follow. As you proceed you will find a number of descriptive paragraphs of one or other of the types shown above. Two compositions are noteworthy because each one demonstrates both types. See "Blistering Pepper Hot" by the writer and "Michelle" by Joyce Ting, a grade eight student. All student compositions are grouped together near the end.

Descriptive Paragraph [GPG]

1	Each of the dramatic trees in the old man's garden had its own name <u>which</u> described its behaviour and character.	Topic: general behaviour, character
3	Quickly the old man enthusiastically began to recount the history of each. He started with the trees called Sumac.	
1	Standing guard in the garden, Mr. Sumac was <u>mightily even</u>	Particulars
4	<u>inordinately</u> proud of his muscled body and in another life surely would have been a wrestler. As an amorous male, Sumac had conducted a passionate romance with Rose and later, on the rebound, was ignominiously rejected by Miss Cranberry who in her way showed as much pride in her tall, slender curvaceous frame as the old guy did in his <u>squat muscled</u> body. After Rose physically and emotionally freed herself from Sumac, she undertook a "quest for the sun" as she called it. Stretching twenty feet along the patio roof to the east and fifteen feet south, Rose believed she <u>could catch and corner</u> the sun somewhere in the middle. Obviously her quest continues. Two of the more interesting fellows included the young boys, Spots and Speckles. Both are green, as you might expect of youngsters, Spot has large yellow patches while Speckles boasts myriads of freckles. Since Spots turns wholly yellow in autumn, the others tease him about his cowardice <u>while</u> the Lilac twins – teenagers really – at times can readily fly into a purple rage. Shyly Anna Viburnam occupies her own island in the pond. Makes her feel safe. Dressed in a lovely cream-coloured gown in the spring, Anna in the fall doffs a flaming red robe. Quite fetching really! When asked about un-named plants and trees in the garden, the old man sadly replied that they would remain that way <u>because</u> as yet, they have failed to show either unusual character or extraordinary behaviour. They must eventually reveal themselves. Clearly they have not. Therefore no names.	One
5		Two
Triple		Three
2		
4		Four
6, meta.		
1		Five
1		
5		
3		Six
6, 4		Seven
6, 5		
3sss		Clincher: general character, behaviour

Descriptive Paragraph [Five Senses]

d. open, 2	Modern Canadian cities are colourless. In the tropics	Topic: general
4	the outside of building are painted a range of pastels, yellow and pink, mauve, light blue and green. Nestled in a mountain valley, a <u>bright tropical</u> city appears from a distance like a sparkling gem of colourful buildings, flowers and flowing trees bathed in sunshine. What a lift to the senses! Compare this to Vancouver <u>where</u> the skies are leaden grey, the roads are wet grey and the buildings are streaked grey. Upon this greyness came the architectural fashion of earth tones <u>which</u> seemed like more shades of grey through the fog and mist. For a reason earth tones are not called colours <u>because</u> that would stretch believability.	Particulars
sim.	Latest fad is tope. What is tope? Mud colour. It is <u>probably</u> the duller of the earth tones and merely another – and particularly boring – shade of grey. Moving inside our homes, the blandness <u>continues and stretches</u> into every room. While seeking to look like a hospital ward, the houses indoors are white. Unquestionably paint shops stock more shades of white than any other colour; ash white and off white, ice white and eggshell white. Unbelievably people spend hours discussing, debating and choosing their indoor shades of white and outdoor shades of grey. Outside feels moist, smells and tastes like mould while inside the feel is stark, the smell and taste sterile. Colour could make people feel happier, merrier and livelier. Drabness eventually penetrates the soul. It is as if the honking horns, revving engines and screeching brakes have made people as drab as their cities. Canadians could transform their colourless cities with vivid greens and blues, bright reds and yellows, covering the white inside and the grey outside while at the same time blocking the spreading rash of tope wherever it might be found.	Five Senses
3sss, 1		1. See
4		2. Smell 3. Taste
5		4. Feel
3		5. Hear
3		Clincher:
2		general
1		
Triple, 6		
1, Triple		
Simile		
1		

III The “My Dog” Model with Power Paragraphs: Unit VII

Unit VII is the climax – the pinnacle – of creative writing. In the textbook, Blended Sound-Sight & Style in Composition, the creative writing model – primarily descriptive – was diagrammed. Nicknamed the “My Dog” Model, it provided for a five-paragraph composition:

My Dog

by Our Class

_____ Draft Grade _____ Date _____

Introduction

Time, place

Background

3 topics

Looks

Food

Tricks

End with title

Topic 1: Looks

Clincher: Looks

By this point in the syllabus and this time of year, students rarely have difficulty following the model and writing a story. Never in fifty years of teaching have I asked students to write on “My Dog” or “My Cat.” There would however be nothing wrong with it. I have however asked for composition on “My School” and “My Best Friend,” “An Exciting (or Miserable) Day,” or “The Olympics.”

Normally along with a diagrammatic model such as shown here, I like to show young writers an example of a composition following the model. Surprisingly I never provided a model composition for this unit, possibly because I had not owned a dog since my childhood. Now retired and possibly entering my second childhood, I have acquired a dog who has inspired me to compose a model composition about her.

The composition follows the model exactly with all the stylistic elements mostly noted in the left-hand margin and notes on structure in the right. A few elements have been added which have so far not been discussed. These include the eyecatcher, descriptive and two variety paragraphs: opinion-reason, and question-answer. These will be discussed in the next handout on power paragraphs.

The assignment to which this composition responds was as follows:

Topic 2: Food

Clincher: Food

Write a five-paragraph descriptive story on the “My Dog” model with an introduction and conclusion. The story should contain: 1. One descriptive and two variety paragraphs 2. Body paragraphs with matching topic and clincher sentences 3. Each paragraph should include:

- a) the six-point dress up underlined
- b) six different sentence openers, numerals in left margin
- c) one decoration, one triple, noted in left margin
- d) structural notes in the right-hand margin.

Topic 3: Tricks

Clincher: Tricks

Conclusion

**3 topics noted
Most important
Why?**

Clincher: Title

Foxy Lady: Super Dog of the Hood

By
J.B. Webster

Leaving Foxy in the car at a filling station, I walked toward the garage and asked the attendant to fill it up. He requested the keys and I replied "Take them from the ignition." When I returned he looked rather peevish. "Your dog," he whined, "won't let me have the keys." Apparently when he put his hand through the window, the matriarch had bared her teeth, snarled and snapped.

Eyecatcher

Introduction

1, 6	Some would argue, "A dog is a dog is a dog." Not so.	
1, 3	There are mutts and there are super dogs. Unquestionably	Time, place
4	Foxy stands tall in the super category. Born on August 9, 1997 near Hope in British Columbia, Foxy Lady was so	Hist. background
Triple	named because she is a fox terrier mixed with a touch of schnauzer, because people had to stop calling her "he" and because in temperament she was undoubtedly a foxy lady.	
2	Upon even a short and <u>superficial acquaintance</u> anyone can <u>readily even rapidly</u> see that she is female with a touch of vanity, a determination to be the lady of the household and	
1	an ability to <u>manipulate and control</u> people and events. She is no shrinking violet but rather a modern liberated female <u>because</u> she knows her objectives and how to get them.	
5	Although timid on the street around other dogs and stranger humans, on the property she appears fierce and dangerous.	
5, conv. quest.	As one Chinese neighbour rightly argued, "She's a lion behind the fence and a lamb outside of it." What is so	Question
3	unusual about this animal that she is referred to as a super dog? Possibly it is her appearance <u>which</u> most find attractive, possibly it is her dogged loyalty to her family or even possibly it is Foxy Lady's ability to talk that sets her apart as the only super dog in the hood, <u>although</u> others are	Topics: 1. appearance 2. loyalty 3. talk
3	bigger, more purely bred and rather arrogant. Mostly they	Title
d. close	are males! Go figure!	

1 Foxy is absolutely and strikingly beautiful in *Descriptive*
 appearance as she delights being told over and over again. **Topic 1:**
 1 A honey blond with soft highlights, in her looks and body **appearance**
 movements she resembles a fox although city officials **Particulars**
 1 recorded her as camel colour. However no camel has ever **One**
 boasted the sheen, softness or fluffiness of her long curly and
 2 unruly hair. From her schnauzer genes she inherits stubborn
sim. curls protruding over her eyes like giant eyebrows or **Two**
 5 antennae on a robotic dog. If anyone cuts or trims these
 4 exaggerated eyebrows, Lady will sulk all day. Refusing to
Triple eat, lying apart with sad, mournful eyes, Foxy lets her world **Three**
 know that it has gone too far because her eyebrows are the
 4 sticking point of her vanity. Shaved for the summer might
 be reluctantly acceptable but cutting the eyebrows reaches
 3 her limit of tolerance. Additionally the hair grows long and **Four**
 thick around her paws so that when standing she gives the
sim., 2 impression of wearing four-legged flared slacks which look
 like bell-bottoms. Her appearance makes Foxy a stand out **Clincher:**
 on the street, so much so that unlike other mutts in the hood, **appearance**
 many neighbours know her name.

Opinion

d. open, 5 She is a restless guard. Since dogs are renowned for **Topic 2: Loyalty**
 their attachment to human families, Foxy may not be unique
 in the loyalty and affection which she lavishes on hers.
 1 However the way she expresses her loyalty might sound
 2 unusual. With a strong herding instinct, Foxy Lady cannot **Reason**
 settle down in the evenings until everyone has gathered in
 1 one room, usually before the television. Only then can she
 leisurely stretch out before the fireplace and partially
 3 sometimes even fully close her eyes. Fundamentally she **Reason**
 assumes the role of the matriarch who demands her family
 gather in one place around the fire and under her watchful
 6,5 eye. It reflects prehistoric behaviour. When relatives,

	friends or strangers arrive at the door, she insists they must	Reason
	<u>enter and shake</u> hands with her master or she continues an	
4	urgent bark, running back and forth between them, utterly	Reason
	distraught. Sleeping at the foot of the bed, her eyes are	
5	forever facing the door. If anyone knocks or enters, the	
2, sim.	hullabaloo has to be seen to be believed. She acts <u>as if</u> the	
3	house is collapsing. Surprisingly she remains strangely and	Reason
	totally quiet, if the ninety-two year old father enters the	
3sss	room. He is different. She watches. Silently! Thus Lady's	
	loyalty and affection are expressed through multiple roles,	Clincher:
Triple	as stern matriarch of the clan, as insistent herder of the pack	Loyalty
	and as a fiercely faking guard <u>because</u> she is a restless super	
	dog, no less.	
		Question
d. open, 5	How does she talk? When picked up at the pet shop,	Topic 3: Talk
	apart from statistics of birth and breed, the only remark by	
conv., 1	the owner was, "She's a talker." The comment was ignored	
5	as one of those peculiar fantasies of a dog person. As a	
	<u>frightened, traumatized</u> puppy, Foxy was unusually quiet	
	when brought home and for some weeks never made a	
quest.	sound beyond occasional pathetic whimpering. What had	
1	the man been talking about? However a quiet puppy	
1	became a talkative adult. Surprising transformation! The	
2	older she gets the more talkative she becomes. At six dog	Answer
	years of age (equivalent forty two human years) she <u>seems</u>	
1	<u>to articulate</u> about twenty different sounds. Whining	Answer
	interlaced with short barks says "relative at the door" while	
	low growling and frantic barking means, "danger-stranger."	
6, 1	Whimpering-barking suggests household member. Two	Answer
	short barks followed by frantic tail wagging and more soft	
	barks means "Heh! I know you. Come over here and scratch	Answer
1	my ears." She has her own friends among the neighbours	
	who no one else in the family knows or worries about. One	

1 such is a man who slowly and confidently walks by, parrot
proudly perched on a shoulder and rabbit wrapped in his
1 arms. Another friend is a manageress who must scratch ears
before opening shop in the morning and after closing at
2 night. For these two friends Foxy has her own unique **Answer**
3 greeting. Obviously she knows the father is deaf. No use
1 talking to him, so to get his attention as he sleeps in his
chair, she lays her paw on his knee. Finally and notably is
4 her long conversation. Sitting on a human's lap and looking **Answer**
at him straight in the eyes, Foxy Lady opens the
conversation with a cacophony of sounds, waits for a reply
1 and repeats the sounds almost as if in imitation. This back
1 and forth conversation can continue for some minutes. The
aim of the exercise seems to be Foxy saying, "I want to talk
quest., 5 to you like a human. What's wrong with that?" Since
nothing is wrong with it – except what the neighbours might
think – the conversation proceeds until one partner gets
2 tired. Without question super dog talks and wishes she
could talk more, becoming frustrated upon occasion because
6 she cannot make herself understood. Does she talk? She **Clincher: Talk**
d. close sure does.

1 The talking dog with the classy appearance maintains a **Conclusion**
Appearance
Loyalty
5 dogged loyalty to her family and protects her small piece of
geography which is only thirty by seventy feet in size.
5 While the house guards the north and the garage blocks the
1 south, dangers menacingly lurk to the west and east. Foxy
allit. selects a spot to sit where she enjoys a clear line of vision of
2 the east and west property lines. To the east is the skunk
1 run and to the west the street or man run. Activity on either
can trigger warning shouts from Foxy followed by a barrage
of yelping-barking-howling enough to alert police, firemen
5 and ambulances throughout the city. As a border guard on

the lookout for terrorists – man or beast – Foxy becomes an **Loyalty**
 American dream but also a Canadian nuisance, especially
 when she mis-identifies the doctor coming on a house call,
 6 for one of the danger-strangers. Then how silly she looks!
 4, 3 Guarding is her life, her *raison d'être*. Obviously herding **Appearance**
 and her appearance are genetic and no particular credit to
 her except as she guards against human attempts to alter
 1 them. What makes her unique are her skills of
 communication, in body language and facial expression but
 1 most convincingly by her talk. She never talks asking for **Talk: most N.B.**
 food or drink because for that she merely sits looking
 1 woebegone. Foxy talks as part of her guarding and herding **why?**
 duties – what would happen if she met a real danger-
 stranger? – but also for companionship as in her personal **why?**
 conversations with a few chosen and select humans.
 1 Frustration sets in when her message is misunderstood.
 4 Accusing you with an icy stare, she sits marveling at the
 4 stupidity of humankind. Ever the optimist, inevitably and
enthusiastically she tries again with a new body movement **why?**
 and a different whine-squeal to get her human properly
 1 oriented. It takes a lifetime to fully understand her which is
Triple why Foxy Lady is so fascinating, so intriguing and so **why?**
 interesting as the talking super dog of our hood. One never **Title**
d. close totally comprehends.

Sets of Dialogue Paragraphs

First consider structure. The easiest and most efficient method of teaching dialogue is to confine it to three-to-five paragraph set where there is a new paragraph for each speaker and it is limited to two characters. These three-to-five paragraphs are called a set. Each paragraph within the set should be constructed by writing more than one sentence. Suggest a minimum of two and a maximum of four. This prevents the choppy short retorts which fill modern novels, to little or no purpose. It also prevents long paragraphs where the thread of the conversation can be lost in excessive descriptions of actions and thoughts around it. These are the main elements in the structure of the dialogue set.

Second consider style. The dialogue set of three to five paragraphs acts as one for purposes of style. Within the set the teacher expects their student writers to include the six-point dress up, the six different sentence openers as well as a decoration and triple. Deal with the thoughts and feelings of the main character in those paragraphs where he/she speaks. This is vital because in my personal experience, many student writers rip along with dialogue providing the reader with no feel for the appearance, thoughts or feelings of anyone. Readers become bored. Especially is this so, if the conversation is fairly mundane, leading nowhere. Finally require at least three split quotations within the set. There are basically two types, where one sentence is split or where two sentences are separated. For example:

One sentence split:

“I think I’m going to be sick,” Clara whispered, “because his comments hurt so much.”

Two-sentence split:

“Dad called me a coward,” Robert sobbed. “I didn’t deserve that.”

Remember that the actual conversation need not begin the new paragraph. When Clara, for example, is to speak, descriptive material could come before the actual conversation. Thus:

Clara sat down dejectedly. Fidgeting nervously she looked pale and wan. “I think I’m going to be sick,” she whispered, “because his comments hurt so much.”

While he felt sorry for his sister, Robert thought to himself that Clara had less to be sick about than he did. "Dad called me a coward," Robert sobbed, "I didn't deserve that."

Let us put the conversation first.

"I think I'm going to be sick," Clara whispered, "because his comments hurt so much." Fidgeting nervously, she looked at Robert dejectedly.

"Dad called me a coward," Robert sobbed. "I didn't deserve that." While he felt sorry for his sister, he thought he had problems much greater than hers.

Finally the mechanics of a dialogue set refer almost exclusively to the punctuation of conversation/quotations. All begin with upper case/capital letters. In the two-sentence split, each sentence begins with a capital. In the one sentence split, the second part of the sentence does not begin with the upper case. Note the punctuation in Clara's conversation. Two commas. In Robert's, one comma and a full stop.

_____, Clara whispered, _____
_____, Robert sobbed. _____

Remember that as elsewhere "said" remains dead and contractions are almost compulsory in conversation.

To make all the three rules easier to remember, they are repeated in outline/note form below. This outline could be enlarged and put on a classroom wall, or photocopied and given to each writer.

For examples of dialogue sets, read them in the model composition "Consequence" and the student anecdotal composition "Eric" and "Michelle." There are two dialogue sets in "No Excuses."

Rules of the Dialogue Set

- Structure**
1. Three to five paragraphs is a dialogue set
 2. New paragraph each speaker
 3. Two to four sentences each paragraph
 4. Two characters only

- Style**
1. Six dress up in set
 2. Six openers, decoration, triple within set
 3. Thoughts of main character
 4. Minimum three split quotations in set

- Mechanics**
1. Begin quotations with capitals
 2. Learn complex punctuation
 3. Use contractions
 4. "Said" remains dead

Flashback Paragraphs

Example 1: Rivalry

Feeling tired even worn out, John slouched and settled comfortably on the couch, casually flicked on the television and rather quickly fell asleep with a smile on his face. For nearly a year he and his best friend, Peter had longingly and passionately yearned to date Lorraine who had become the latest flavour of the month. Frequently they had dreamed about her and together they had longed to take her out. While he felt a slight awkward tinge of conscience about his triumphant feelings, they had been smothered like a flame by the joy he felt over the date he had arranged with her. Later Peter would come over and John would revel in revealing his triumph because they were friends yet rivals. Peter would be jealous. So John fell asleep smiling, while thinking only of his conquest.

Example 2: Loneliness

Sitting in the kitchen, staring at the telephone, Sally felt desperately and deeply despondent, tears streaming down her face. Six months earlier her parents had separated. While she had moved with her mother far across the country, her father had faithfully and confidently promised he would visit every six months. This would have been his first and he had promised they would spend two weeks together at a resort on the Pacific coast of Mexico which she recalled with warm memories. In the last six months she had not been particularly joyful because of loneliness. A new school, friends hard to find and her mother's reduced financial situation, had left Sally depressed. Happily her one ray of hope sprang from her dreams of sandy beaches and wonderful food, riding the surf and the company of her dad. The phone rang. Father had announced the trip to Mexico, and even his visit, were off. An extreme sadness engulfed and overtook her as she stared at the ugly silent telephone while a stream of tears poured down her cheeks. Deepening depression consumed her.

Example 3: Loss

Shamelessly Jason squatted and mourned beside the lifeless form of his dog as tears flowed freely even uncontrollably. For a fleeting second his mind flashed back three years when Pongo had first arrived, had cried endlessly and had hid under the couch, not daring to poke her tiny nose out into the world which seemed so cold and strange. While he had comforted the small, warm bundle of hair then, Pongo would later console him when friends

snubbed him, when girls mocked him and when the big guys chased him. What a faithful companion! Jason recalled how Pongo had tunneled and snuggled under the covers on cold nights, how she had nuzzled his hand for reassurance when fearful and how she had squealed with delight when he put on his coat and cap because of what it promised. Scampering along energetically, she loved walking with him, running from one side of the road to the other, sniffing every tree and clump of grass. As he rubbed Pongo's cold ears – oh! how she had once loved that – his tears flowed copiously and shamelessly. She was no more.

In flashback paragraphs the topic sentence should indicate, a character, a location and most importantly a feeling – happiness, joy, sadness, anger, depression – and the sentence directly after it, should indicate the time of the flashback. Note the following from the three examples above:

1. For nearly a year...
2. Six months before...
3. His mind flashed back three years...

The final or clincher sentence returns to the location and feeling of the topic.

1. Topic: fell asleep, a smile on his face
Clincher: fall asleep smiling
2. Topic: telephone, tears streaming down her face
Clincher: telephone, tears pouring down her cheeks
3. Topic: dog, tears flowed uncontrollably
Clincher: dog, tears flowed shamelessly.

Flashback paragraphs fall easily into the topic-clincher model and of course, like all paragraphs in this method, they should include the six-point dress up, openers, decoration and triple. Probably the most difficult skill is that while the topic and clincher should be written in the past tense – settled, fell, felt, squatted, flowed, engulfed, poured, consumed, rubbed, was – the flashback middle should use the “had” form, the past of the past. In the three paragraphs above, “had” is utilized twenty times as in “had longed,” “had promised” and “had arrived.”

Flashback Paragraph Rules

1. Topic sentence: -character, location, feeling
-past tense: felt, included, was
2. Signal the flashback: She recalled many years ago when...
3. Body: flashback: past perfect "had"
4. Clincher: -Return to location and feelings of topic
-Return to the past tense
5. Dress up, openers, decoration, triple.

Anecdotal Compositions

From a traditional standpoint it would seem logical that students should practice in turn, each of the three types of paragraphs discussed above, descriptive, flashback and the dialogue set. This would follow the traditional procedure where you work on sentences, then on paragraphs and finally on stories. Blended Structure and Style works in the reverse. In all units, it normally works on other elements within a story context. The story is paramount. Hence my students did not write separate paragraphs. The first assignment as set out below was the first writing in this unit. However before the assignment, students had to know the rules – and know them well – of a descriptive, of a flashback and a set of dialogue paragraphs. Furthermore they had constant access to the charts of rules for each when they were writing. After being given the assignment, students read and studied the model anecdotal composition “Consequences” which I had written for them. While many of the writing samples within the unit had possibly been more attractive to girls, “Consequences” was specifically composed with boys in mind. The assignment which follows was the exact one given to my class. After it you will find the model “Consequences” followed by student anecdotal compositions.

Assignment

Write an incident or anecdotal composition of your own creation approximately three to five paragraphs in length in the third person limited narrative. Within the story include at least one:

1. descriptive paragraph
2. flashback paragraph
3. set of dialogue paragraphs, treated as one for the purpose of dress up and openers, decorations and triples.

In the right-hand margin of your story indicate these features by writing descriptive, flashback or dialogue. Remember to underline dress ups, number your openers and include one decoration and one triple, noted in the left hand margin in each paragraph.

Consequences

by J. B. Webster

Jan. 10, 2003

As the Toyota Camry sped down the freeway, Spike floored the accelerator and the speedometer trembled to ninety, a hundred then finally 105. Apparently that was its limit. Sitting beside him and bouncing gently but anxiously on the seat, Sparky recalled their very successful heist of a bank at Fifth and Commercial. He believed they had lifted almost a million and if they successfully got away, they would never need to do it again. He could hear the police siren which quickly grew in intensity. He grasped the dashboard. As the car twisted and swerved from one lane to another, he could feel his muscles tense, could smell the burning rubber of the tires so acrid Sparky could taste it. For a fleeting moment he could distinguish the startled and angry faces of other drivers as the Toyota swerved to the far left, thereafter crossing three lanes to end up on the right. Cars scattered like chickens. Oh! the power of it, Sparky thought with glee. Looking at Spike, Sparky noted the grim determination on his face, watched his muscles strain as he gripped the wheel and felt his terrifying desperation. Sparky could taste fear as the sirens blared louder, harsher, more demanding. Racing flat out, the Camry seemed prepared for this freeway contest because it was a matter of a future good life.

Descriptive Intro.

Setting,

characters

Topic: general

Five Senses

1. hear

2. feel 3. smell

4. taste

5. see

Clincher: general

“Look here Spike, we can’t outrun them. Let’s hide.” Spike suddenly spoke, not quite sure what he meant but aware something had to be done, and quickly because the police cruiser seemed only one car back.

Dialogue Set

Thoughts

“Hide? Where can we hide,” Spike shouted back, “on this open freeway?” While his arms ached and he felt a growing desperation which showed on his face, he turned slightly to glance at his friend.

Split quote

New paragraph each speaker

With a sudden ray of hope, Sparky answered, "Why not take the East-West connector?" He hurriedly continued, "The turn off is just ahead." He had no idea of how they could turn at a speed over 100 but he held an inordinate and abiding faith in Spike's ability.

**Split
Thoughts**

"We'll flip", Spike muttered. He was again over in the far left lane when the first sign for the connector flashed by.

Directly behind, the powerful police cruiser's siren was blaring so loud, so raucously and so piercingly, they could hardly hear each other. "If you turn quickly and smartly" Sparky shouted, "the cops will fly by. We could shake them and hide on one of the side streets." Surmising it was their only chance, Sparky screamed, "Do it!"

Minimum two sentences each paragraph

Split

*Descriptive
[GPG]*

Sparky had suggested and Spike decided quickly. With a suddenness which threw Sparky violently against the door of the Toyota, Spike swerved and veered across three lanes of traffic. Smashing into the front of one large blue Chevy, it spun, crashing into a second car – and a third – and a fourth. Thereafter the pile up of cars brought the police humiliatingly but surely to a complete halt. The chase was over because the hunters were stymied and the hunted out of control. While the tires screeched and burned the road, the Camry entered the exit curve on two wheels. Crisply careening off the curb, the Toyota somersaulted. The first flip, over and upright again. Immediately the second flip. Two noisy explosions. Third flip. As one ton of scrap metal came to rest, it was wrapped around a steel power pole as neatly as a curled cobra ready to strike. So the Camry died. Such were the tragic consequences of Sparky's advice and Spike's decision to take it.

General Topic

Particulars

Clincher: general

Flashback

He felt numb, nothing. Opening his eyes, Sparky saw a dark red rash (which was)* slowly and steadily spreading over what appeared like a bulging bag of bones. Darkness descended. Suddenly a scene all pink and yellow spread out before him where he was a small child again. Nestled in his mother's arms all warm and cosy, his father bending over, Sparky felt happy and joyous. His father was saying something about the

Topic: Numb

Jumping back

child being rash, about being overly ambitious and about always seeking and taking risks but never considering the consequences. In a soothing gesture his mother gently kissed and caressed his hair. Oh! how delicious it felt, Sparky thought because he was warm, secure and loved. Eventually the pinks and yellows faded into a spreading dark red rash. Red. Mangled bag. Red. Blood everywhere. Blood. As if a blind was slowly being lowered, deepening darkness descended until only a tiny speck of light glinted at the bottom of it. Finally numbness, blackness, consequences.

**Foreword to
present**

**Clincher:
Numbness**

Title

*This is called the silent “which”. It is a superior form and better students should be encouraged to use it. But because the silent which – or silent who – may be difficult to find by the teacher or marker, I ask students to put it in brackets as shown here. Brackets are also convenient for writers since they should count the underlinings to make sure they have the six dress up.

Cattle (which were) quietly grazing in the
field (which was) the highway, turned
to stare.

While seated on the prow, the boy (who was)
watching for tuna, became quite agitated.

Sinking and reddening in the west, the sun,
(which was) now beclouded, disappeared completely.

Michelle

by Joyce Ting

Grade 8

February 19, 2003

"I'm not sure." The ticket salesman had just asked Ann where in California she was going. **Dialogue Set**

"Look ma'am," the clerk tried again, "I can only sell you the ticket if you know where your destination is going to be!"

"Actually, I'm looking for someone," Ann explained, "but I don't really know which city he lives in."

The ticket man gave a small sigh, glanced through the day's schedule, then asked, "When do you need to leave?"

"As soon as possible. Do you have many trains heading that direction... Today? I know it's rather last-minute, but I was hoping you'd have a seat open for me."

"I've just checked, and we actually have two more seats open for the noon train which is heading down to Los Angeles. The ticket is \$160.00. Would that suit you?"

"\$160.00? I hadn't counted on so much! What am I going to do when I get down there if I don't have any money to at least stay in a hotel for a couple of days? I still have no idea where he lives!" While the ticket salesman glanced about impatiently, Ann panicked for a moment.

Deciding unsurely and hesitantly, she found herself replying yes, because she had very few options, anyway. With a tentative, uncertain shrug, she removed the money from her purse and placed the cash on the counter.

Ann gave a sad, desperate sigh. Gazing out the window of the train, the picturesque fields began to blur. Events had happened so quickly, could the fire really have been only last week? She could still see that day so vividly in her mind. Around dinner time, Ann had enjoyed a simple meal in her fourth floor apartment room. The distant pounding of **Flashback**
Topic: desperate

feet, distant shouting of voices, and distant crying of a baby had first aroused her curiosity. The smoke alarm would have sounded if her building had been more recently built. However, because the apartments had no smoke alarms, Ann had not understood and evacuated immediately. Lingered, she had called her friend on the floor below hers, attempting to understand the cause of the commotion. Her neighbor, who hardly ever went out, had not answered the phone. Worriedly racing down the stairs, she had found herself in a lounge full of smoke and flames. She had passed out. When Ann had come to, she had found herself in the burn ward of Evergreen State Hospital. Apparently, fire men had discovered her. Not having suffered any serious injuries, Ann was soon released from hospital. Suddenly and unexpectedly, reality had struck. She had nowhere to go. She had no home. With hardly any options, Ann had decided to find her brother. Her only clue was that he lived somewhere in southern California. Sighing again, Ann felt just as desperate after recalling her story.

Clincher:
desperate

As the train eased into the station in Los Angeles, Ann woke up from her brief, restless nap, worried about what she would do next. Climbing off the train, she observed many other passengers reuniting with certain individuals at the station. She glanced around, wishing someone from the crowd would come to meet her. Thoroughly preoccupied with her situation, she nearly missed feeling and hearing the gentle nudge and kind "Excuse me," of a lady nearby. Whirling to face the speaker, Ann beheld a blonde, beautiful woman smiling at her. Ann cautiously smiled in return, wondering what this stranger could want. "Can I help you?" This question startled Anne. Hardly anyone knew of her situation. However, for some curious reason, she felt a liking for this lady, as if she knew her and believed she could be trusted. Hesitantly at first, but gaining more confidence as she went along, Ann related her story. With an understanding nod, the stranger calmly and mysteriously whispered, "I know." She then motioned for Ann to follow her, as she began disappearing in the crowd. Ann, who still stood rooted to her original spot, felt even more puzzled. How could she possibly know? Who was

Descriptive
[GPG]
Topic: worried

Particulars

this lady? Was she lying? Although she felt worried, Ann decided to follow, because she had no other place to go.

Clincher:
worried

The lady paused in front of a diner, held open the door, and led a baffled Ann towards a small table. Ann scanned the room, surprised at seeing nearly all the tables full. Each one seemed to generate their own share of noisy chatter. The lady ordered coffee for both of them, while Ann sleepily closed her eyes and smelled the sweet, cinnamon-y rolls from the table nearby. She suddenly noticed her hunger, as well as her urge to sleep. How could the lady have known she was hungry and brought her to a diner? Curiously, she tried to learn a few things about her companion. After a few tries, she discovered the stranger's name, Michelle, and that no personal questions were completely or satisfactorily answered. When their order came, the black, bitter coffee tasted delicious to Ann. She held the mug in both hands, enjoying the warmth it radiated. She felt better immediately. Suddenly, she decided to ask Michelle for help in finding her brother, because she seemed like a kind, helpful person. She did not have enough money to initiate or perform a wide search. Just as she was about to open her mouth and ask, the lady reached into her pocket, removed a small scrap of golden paper, and slid it across the table. Shocked, bewildered, and confused, Ann read the paper, which had her brother's name neatly penciled across the top. Beneath that was written an address located near Los Angeles. Shaking her head in mystification and disbelief, she was about to thank Michelle when she noticed – Michelle had disappeared.

Descriptive [Five Senses]

1. see

2. hear

3. smell

4. taste

5. feel

Title

The Misfortune

by Jimmy Chen

Grade 12

May 23, 2003

*Descriptive
[Five Senses]*

Shaking, crying, and sweating, his hands slowly opened up the envelope. It was the evening after the year 2000 World Cup closing ceremony. Under the dim moonlight, he unfolded and spread the paper, so there was enough brightness for him to read the twisted, barely legible writing from his uncle. Ernest cried out. He threw the fax on the ground, leaned upon the wall, and lowered his head. Unexpectedly, his grandfather had died because of cancer. In the narrow, gloomy hallway, there stood this six foot five man with full-grown beard. Quietly yet clearly, heavy breathing filled the space surrounding him. Rolling down from his eyes, the tear, pulled down by gravity, infiltrated into his mouth when he breathed deeply. The salty liquid augmented the sorrow, and it tasted even more grievously. Trembling non-stop, his body seemed as if shocked by electricity. For the instant, there was something in his nose which stopped the man from snuffing. The envelope was torn. Everything was mournful. Ernest was crying.

Topic: envelope

1. see

2. hear

3. taste

4. feel

5. smell

**Clincher:
envelope**

“Why?” he yelled in the middle of the hugely hollow hallway, “Why so soon?” Ernest loved his grandfather more than anyone since they had first become best friends. After Ernest’s parents had died in a major and tragic car accident fifteen years ago, he had lived with his grandpa ever since.

Dialogue Set

“I still have a lot of things,” he raised his head and roared, “to say to you. I did it. I finally did it.” During the last year, Ernest had been working very hard, trying to win the world cross-country skiing championship. It had been a dream. It had been a goal. It had been a possibility.

Split quote

“How could this have happened,” he asked out loud, “when modern doctors seem so smart?” When his grandfather was young and

strong, he had won the gold medal twice. Consequently, there had been a history of participating in this sport. Years ago, Ernest's father had also been an exceptionally excellent athlete. Influenced by the persons who Ernest respected and looked up to the most, he had been determined to win the championship.

"I never stopped training myself because I wanted you to see my success, which you would be very proud of. How could you leave me so early? I've just got the gold medal five hours ago. I didn't even have a chance to share my joy with you. How could you?"

Contractions

Flashback

Ernest sat down on the bench, his shirt soaked with tears. He felt desperate. Tightening his fists, this new world champion could not handle it anymore because the image of Grandpa kept forming in his mind. His mind flashed back. In the middle of winter, which had been snowy and cold, a young lad followed his grandfather's footsteps, walking up the hill. Time after time, they had glided down mountains and had enjoyed the speed, the wind, and the excitement. When they had finished ten hours of exercise, these two experts would sit and visit at the coffee shop near the bottom of the mountain for a leisurely dinner. Living in a country-style life, Ernest had gradually grown up. How joyful and wonderful had been the time when his grandfather had been around! Ernest stopped letting the tears pour down his cheeks, like a waterfall suddenly dried up. Immediately, he stood up and moved toward the end of the hallway. As soon as possible, he reluctantly prepared to go to the hospital with moistened eyes. He could only think of his misfortune.

Topic: tears

8 "had" tenses

Clincher: tears

Checksheet for Descriptive Compositions: Unit # VII

Name _____
 Composition _____

Date _____
 Grade _____

Presentation

- Correct format [2] _____
 Title, name, date, spacing, margins
- Correct indicators [2] _____
- Double spacing, paragraph clear [1] _____ [5 pts. total] _____

Introduction

- Time, place, background [3] _____
- Themes [2] _____
- General sentence structure [2] _____
- Dress-up [6] _____ Openers [6] _____
- Decoration [2] _____ Triple [2] _____
- End with title [2] _____ [25 pts. total] _____

Body Paragraphs

	I	II	III	IV	V
<input type="checkbox"/> Dress-up [6]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Openers [6]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Decorations [2]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Triple [2]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sentence structure [2]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Topic-clincher [2]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Total [20 per paragraph]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Specialty Paragraphs: maximum three of total five

- optional two of: Descriptive _____ flashback _____
 any variety paragraph _____ [5 each] [10] _____
- optional one dialogue set _____ [15] _____

Conclusion

- Three themes [1] _____, Most N.B. [2] _____, Why? [5] _____
- Sentence structure [2] _____
- Dress-up [6] _____ Openers [6] _____
- Decoration [2] _____ Triple [2] _____
- End with title [2] _____ Paragraphs approximately the same size [2] _____
 [30] _____

Eyecatcher (optional) [10] _____

Language

- Correct spelling, Canadian forms: colour, centre, traveling, cheque, dialogue
- Avoid "because", "and", "but", "also" and "then" as openers
- Avoid contractions except in conversation
- Never repeat a major word in a sentence
- Use past tense: (ed) could not can, would not will, might not may
- Use past perfect: had grown, had developed, had been denied
- Avoid the "That" disease

Numerals: 99 and below in words, 100 and above in numbers [19] _____

Creativity

Consistency, logic holds reader interest novel style

Believability quality of description good ending

[25] _____

Content of Composition [11] _____

Maximums: Five-paragraph descriptive composition [175]

Including one or two specialty paragraphs [5 each]

Including one dialogue set [15 each] [180 – 200]

Eyecatcher (optional) add 10 points to total [185 – 210]

Your points _____	Total _____	_____ %
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Check Sheet for Anecdotal Compositions With Dialogue: Unit VII

Name _____
Composition _____

Date _____
Grade _____

Check form used:

- First person Third person omniscient;
 Third person limited Dramatic

Presentation

- Format: title, name, date, spacing; margins
 Indicators: Dress-up underlined, openers numbered, decorations, triples noted in left margin. Paragraph structure in right margin.
 Double spacing, paragraphs clear. [5 pts. total] _____

Descriptive Paragraphs

	First	Second
<input type="checkbox"/> Five senses approach or GPG [6]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Topic clincher [4]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dress-up [6]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Openers [6]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Decorations/triple [4]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> General sentence structure [4]	_____	_____
Totals	_____ [30]	_____ [30]

Dialogue Set: (4 to 6 shorter paragraphs treated in style as if they were one)

	First	Second
<input type="checkbox"/> Feelings and thoughts Main All None [4]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Split quotations [4]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> "said" is dead [2]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dress-up [6]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Openers [6]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Decorations/triple [4]	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> General sentence structure [4]	_____	_____
Totals	_____ [30]	_____ [30]

Dialogue Set Mechanics

- Minimum two sentences each paragraph
 Use contractions in quotations
 Begin quotations with capitals
 No capital after a one-sentence split: "He jumped," or so Ann argued, "because he feared the dog."
 Place marks (., ?, !) inside the quotation. She shouted, "Halt!"
[10 pts. total] _____

Flashback Paragraph

<input type="checkbox"/> Topic location, feelings or thoughts [4]	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Jump back in time clear [2]	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Clincher reflects topic & title [4]	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dress up [6]	_____

- Openers [6] _____
- Decoration/triple [4] _____
- General sentence structure [4] _____

[30 pts. total] _____

Language

- Correct spelling, Canadian forms: colour, centre, traveling, cheque, dialogue
- Avoid "because", "and", "but", "also" and "Then" as openers
- Never repeat a major word in a sentence
- Use past tense: (ed) "could" not "can," "would" not "will," "might" not "may"
- Use past perfect: had grown, had developed, had been denied
- Avoid the "That" disease
- Numerals: 99 and below in words, 100 and above in numbers. [10] _____

Creativity

- Consistency, logic
 - Holds reader interest
 - Novel style
 - Believability
 - Quality of description
 - Quality of ending
- [15 pts. total] _____

Eyecatcher: quotation or real fictional incident.

- Single space, indent from both margins, italics
- Provide source in brackets, if quotation
- Catches the eye?
- General sentence structure [10] _____

Grand Totals:

Three paragraphs 130 (descriptive, dialogue, flashback)
 Four paragraphs 160 (if two dialogue sets 170)
 Five paragraphs 190 (if two dialogue sets 200)
 Eyecatcher: add ten points to totals

Your points _____	Total _____	_____ %
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Checksheet for Descriptive Short Stories: Unit VII

Name _____
 Composition _____

Date _____
 Grade _____

Presentation

- Correct format [2]
 Title, name, date, spacing, margins
- Correct indicators [2]
- Double spacing, paragraph clear [1]

[5 pts. total] _____

Introduction

- Time, place, background [3] _____
- Themes [2] _____
- General sentence structure [2] _____
- Dress-up [6] _____ Openers [6] _____
- Decoration [2] _____ Triples [2] _____
- End with title [2] _____

[25 pts. total] _____

Body Paragraphs

	I	II	III	IV	V
<input type="checkbox"/> Dress-up [6]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Openers [6]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Decorations [2]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Triple [2]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sentence structure [2]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Topic-clincher [2]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Total [20 per paragraph]	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Descriptive Description [10] For each paragraph in one of these styles

- Styles: 5 senses, 5 w's or GPG, one mark
 for each of five details [5] **I** **II**
- Structural indicators in rt. hand margin [3] _____ _____
- Attempting two different styles [2] _____ _____

[10 or 20 pts. total] _____

Conclusion

- Three themes [1], Most N.B. [2], Why? [5]
- Sentence structure [2] _____
- Dress-up [6] _____ Openers [6] _____
- Decoration [2] _____ Triple [2] _____
- End with title [2] _____ Paragraphs approximately the same size [2] _____

[30 pts. total] _____

Creativity and Content

- Consistency, logic Believability
- Holds reader's interest Quality of description
- Novel style Satisfactory ending

[30 pts. total] _____

Language Mechanics [20] Deduct 2 marks to a total of 20 for each error taught & listed below. Deduct only for mechanics previously taught. When marking errors direct students to the exact rule violated. e.g. See B3.

- A
1. Correct spelling. (Can) colour, centre, traveling, jewelry, cheque, dialogue.
 2. Numerals: 99 & below in words, 100 & above numbers, except dates & percent.
 3. Number agreement: Chinese – they, China – she, government – it.
Crowd, populace, proletariat, herd “it” not “they”
 4. Linking items: [1&2, 3&4, gold & silver, copper and iron]. [1&2, 3, 4&5, silk & satin, cotton, linen and wool]
 5. Begin conversation in quotation marks with a capital letter.

B Banned words/phrases

1. As sentence openers avoid “because” (since), “and” & “also” (in addition, furthermore), “then”. (thereafter, eventually), “but” (however)
2. Never use – “a lot of”, “nice”, “great” “got”, “mad” “big”
 - a. “said” [see “Said is dead”] for substitutes.
3. Never repeat a major word in a sentence: “once or thrice but never twice”. Find synonyms: Japan, country, nation, state, empire, homeland.
4. Minimize adjectives, maximize adverbs (the lys)
5. Use “the” before all common nouns & thereby be correct 80% of the time.
 - i. He suffered from a cold last night.
 - ii. He suffered from chills last night.
 - iii. He suffered from the flu last night.

Note that in examples b & c “the” is optional while in a. it would change the meaning. These sentences demonstrate it is wiser to use “the” rather than omit it as ESL students often do. Note countries: where there is one word – e.g. Japan, Canada – never use “the.” Where there are two or more words use “the” as in “the United States,” “the Democratic Republic of Congo.” Note: We went to Taiwan & the Peoples Republic of China. Exceptions: Hong Kong, Costa Rica, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and “the” Vatican, “the Netherlands.”

C Avoid

1. Contractions except in conversation or vss. Compulsory in conversation.
2. The “That” disease: who (people), which (Things)
3. Avoid the apostrophe. e.g. elephants’ habitat (habitat of elephants)
4. Avoid the personal (“I”, “we” or “one”) in academic compositions.
5. Avoid “like” when you mean “such as.” Go to a cheap restaurant like [such as] McDonalds.

D. Tense

1. Use past tense (ed) –drowned, looked, raced or past perfect “had broken”
2. Use “could” not “can”, “would” not “will”, “might” not “may”. “Can, will, may” are present tense used in direct conversation even when the narrative is written in the past tense.

Before the court adjourned the judge informed the defense counsel, “No one can be sure the accused will not or may not kill again.”

Remove quotation marks and revert to past tense throughout.

Before the court adjourned the judge informed defense counsel that no one could be sure the accused would not or might not kill again.

3. Except for conversation or the vss, avoid the verb "to be" (is, are, was, were) as in:
The boys were in a gang.
 - a. Add an "ed" or "ing". The boys were enrolled (or running) in a gang.
 - b. Or substitute "seemed or appeared to be." The boys seemed (or appeared to be) in a gang.
 - c. Or use "had become." They had become gang members.
 - d. If all else fails add an "ly". They unfortunately were in a gang.
 4. Except for conversation or vss, avoid "to have" or "had" standing alone. He had a cold [suffered from]. They have a home in town. [own]
- [20 pts. total] _____

E. Teachers: Add rules as student writing dictates.

Maxims

Five paragraphs 170 Six 190 Seven 210
 Add 10 points for each distinctive paragraph

Your points _____	Total _____	_____%
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