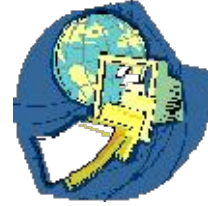


Metro Writing Center



DESCRIPTIVE WRITING- PART II

We lived on Waverly Place, in a warm, clean, two-bedroom flat that sat above a small Chinese bakery specializing in steamed pastries and dim sum. In the early morning, when the alley was still quiet, I could smell fragrant red beans as they were cooked down to a pasty sweetness. By daybreak, our flat was heavy with odor of fried sesame balls and sweet curried chicken crescents. From my bed, I would listen as my father got ready for work, then locked the door behind him, one-two-three clicks.

Excerpt from Amy Tan's "The Alley"

Static vs. Dynamic

Try to create a dynamic environment or dynamic images for your reader. Dynamic images are ones with movement and descriptions that help the reader experience the setting (for example: **From my bed, I would listen as my father got ready for work, then locked the door behind him, one-two-three clicks**).

Static descriptions fall flat and don't add any level of understanding to the reader's experience (for example: **Yesterday was a nice day**).

Sensory Images

Use descriptions that illustrate what you experience through your senses (sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste). Sensory descriptions allow your reader to better feel in touch with and relate to the depiction of your experience.

Sight= . . . *I could smell fragrant red beans as they were cooked down to a pasty sweetness.*

Smell= *By daybreak, our flat was heavy with odor of fried sesame balls and sweet curried chicken crescents.*

Sound= *In the early morning, when the alley was still quiet . . .*

Touch= *We lived on Waverly Place, in a warm, clean, two-bedroom flat that sat above a small Chinese bakery specializing in steamed pastries and dim sum.*

Taste= . . . *I could smell fragrant red beans as they were cooked down to a pasty sweetness.*

Brandon, Lee. *Paragraphs and Essays*. 8th Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

