

# Outlining a Descriptive Paper

It can be more of a challenge to outline a descriptive paper than a research paper or opinion essay. You aren't presenting information or developing an argument, so there often doesn't seem to be a natural flow. Nevertheless, it's still good practice to outline your paper before you begin.

If you're describing an interior scene, like a room, you may want to start at one place and work your way around. For example, you might start at the door and go around the room clockwise. Another choice, which may work better for a natural scene, is to start with a broad view and work your way to some important detail. (Imagine a movie scene that starts with a wide view and slowly moves to an extreme close-up.) You can also do this in reverse, starting with a detail and widening out.



Another choice can be separating out the senses. Perhaps you start with what can be seen, then devote a paragraph to sounds, another to what you can feel, and a final one to smell and taste. You could also construct a more inward journey. For example, you could start with those things in the environment that are familiar to you, move on to those that you're aware of but don't think about much, and end with what you discovered for the first time.

As you can see, there is no one right way. What's important is that you think about how to order the paper and decide on what seems right to you for this particular description.

Your turn! Write an outline for your descriptive paper.

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**This sheet corresponds with Lightning Literature & Composition  
Grade 4, Week 21, Day 3**