

Possible Answers for *Successful College Writing, Sixth Edition* – Chapter 13

Ex 13.1

Answers will vary, but point out that narration can be a tool for describing these items.

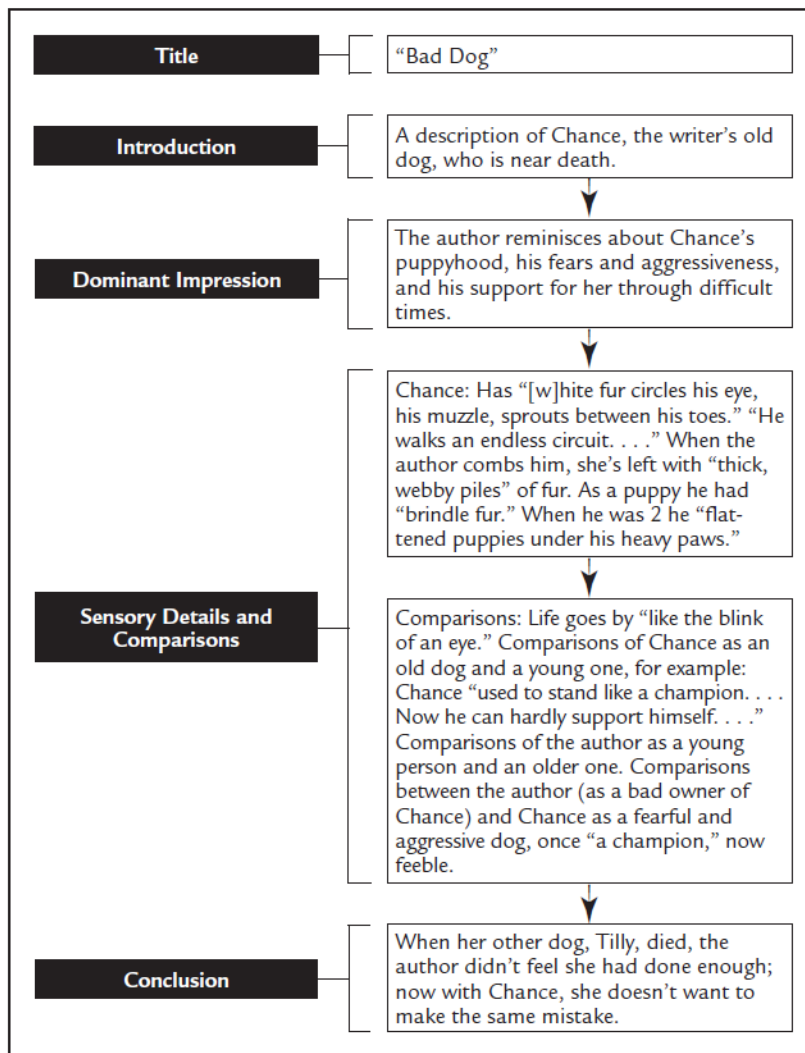
Ex 13.2

Details that might be edited out: “which had been newly painted . . . before”; “planted . . . husband”; “purchased . . . road”; “who look . . . puffballs”

Ex 13.3

Answers will vary, but if students have trouble thinking of topics, animals could include an exotic animal they’ve seen at the zoo or in the wild. Ask for volunteers to read their paragraphs aloud. Discuss the vividness of the descriptions and the senses to which they appeal. Can their classmates visualize the animal as vividly as the writer saw it?

Ex 13.4



Possible Answers for “Heatstroke with a Side of Burn Cream,” Ted Sawchuck

Analyzing the Writer’s Technique

1. Sawchuck portrays the dominant impression that the kitchen radiates chaos, danger, and pressure — all difficult working conditions. The dominant impression that the staff works “maniacally” is stated outright in par. 2; elsewhere, it is strongly implied.
2. Strong examples of sensory language include active verbs such as “turn sideways, nearly falling” and “I . . . bellow . . . and spin” (1); comparisons such as “prison cell” (3); visual imagery such as, “My bandana frequently restrains ice cubes” (4); and longer passages, such as the description of the slippery, grimy floors (6). Ask students which passages they consider weak in description and why.
3. Not hearing orders is compared to playing tennis with a disappearing ball (5); moving is like skating (6); restaurant work is “like speaking a foreign language” (8); getting behind is “being in the weeds” (9). Each comparison is strong, but Sawchuck develops the “weeds” comparison.
4. Other patterns of development include process, definition, and illustration. These patterns help convey a full and vivid picture of kitchen work.

Thinking Critically about Description

1. The restaurant name and workers’ names are omitted, but Sawchuck gives enough detail for readers to feel they are there.
2. Sawchuck’s tone is sarcastic and darkly humorous; note the hyperbolic, tongue-in-cheek comparisons.
3. “Gushing sweat” is colloquial language, so its impact is more direct than formal language would be. Sawchuck is consistent in using slang — “suck it up” (par. 9) and “futzes” (8); more formal word choices would squelch the casual and humorous tone.
4. Answers will vary.

Responding to the Reading

- 1-4. Answers will vary.

“Eating Chili Peppers,” Jeremy MacClancy

Examining the Reading

1. One purpose that men (and women) eat chili peppers in rural Mexico is for entertainment — to see who can stand to eat the most.
2. Chili peppers have been used as stimulants and as folk medicine to treat a variety of ailments.
3. MacClancy admires people who like chili peppers, revealed by sentences such as, “They play with fire and just ride the burn, like experienced surfers.”
4. It is benign masochism because the pleasure derived from the pain of the peppers is not dangerous.
5. MacClancy’s thesis is implied and can be stated as, “Chili peppers have culinary, health, and cultural benefits.”
6. *Gastronomic*: having to do with food and cooking; *palate*: the roof of the mouth; *benign*: good, kind; *masochism*: pleasure, often sexual, derived from pain; *aficionados*: fans.

Analyzing the Writer’s Technique

1. One dominant impression might be, “Chili peppers make eating more exciting.”
2. As MacClancy describes it, the comparison is that “biting” (pepper) and “aiming” (flame-thrower) do not at first elicit a response but that the “burn” then happens quickly.
3. The conclusion would be less effective without par. 7, which adds a humorous twist to the matter-of-fact par. 6.

4. Although we know from the bio that MacClancy usually writes scholarly articles, this selection is from a book written for the general public. As popular science, it would be written for educated readers who are interested in culture and science.
5. Answers will vary.

Thinking Critically about Description

1. This short essay excludes many details, including the specific health benefits of peppers, the chemistry of peppers, the significance of peppers in a variety of cultures, and the culinary uses of peppers.
2. "Chilli mush" could connote that chewing is a form of processing peppers into chili sauce or chili paste.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Answers will vary.

Responding to the Reading

- 1-4. Answers will vary.

"Speaking Quiché in the Heart of Dixie," Gabriel Thompson

Examining the Reading

1. The posters illustrate the difference between the corporation's expectations for its workers and the workers' practical, immediate interests. The flyer listing the menu item "taco soup" could be meant to illustrate the corporation's presumption that its migrant workers eat tacos or to emphasize that the workers are more interested in eating than in being inspired by corporate jargon.
2. Thompson mentions being moved from one department to another, so he must have worked the day before stacking lettuce.
3. The IQF is considered the best place to work because the machines there frequently break down, allowing the workers a break.
4. Thompson assumes the woman speaks Spanish because she is near a group of immigrant workers.
5. *Deranged*: insane; *clandestine*: secret; *lair*: a wild animal's den; *gaunt face*: a face that is thin because of age or illness; *pronouncement*: a formal or official announcement.

Analyzing the Writer's Technique

1. The implied dominant impression is that low-paid manual labor is exhausting and dehumanizing.
2. The use of another language as a primary language in a U.S. factory underscores the use of immigrant labor.
3. Thompson uses dialogue to let us picture how the workers interact with each other and with their tasks, and he takes readers through the space, describing the areas as he moves into them.
4. Thompson uses *narration* (so readers can empathize with the workers) and *definition* (so readers can understand the work).

Visualizing the Reading

Descriptive Characteristic	Examples
Active verbs	1. “workers scurry around” (par. 2) 2. “I’ve pushed through a swinging door” (14)
Sensory details (sound, smell, touch, sight, taste)	3. When Thompson takes out his earplugs (end of par. 2)
Varied sentences	4. Kyle’s story about working in deboning (10)
Comparisons	5. Comparison of cutting lettuce with cutting chicken (11)
Connotative language	6. “breakthrough” (11), “mold” (16–20), “work release” (24)

Thinking Critically about Description

1. *Lair* suggests that the workers are treated like animals.
2. Most readers would be familiar with workers at Wal-Mart, so Wal-Mart is a useful baseline for the comparison.
3. Quotes around words often indicate that the word is used ironically, as is the case with *breakthrough*, which reveals the author’s sarcastic view of managers.
4. Much of the description is objective, but the essay as a whole is subjective since it is a narrative of the author’s experiences and since he has an investigative purpose for working at the plant.
5. Thompson’s tone is generally neutral when describing the work and respectful when describing the workers.

Responding to the Reading

- 1-4. Answers will vary.