

# Description of a Place

Attention-getting statement

Hint of a dominant impression

Sensory details—sight, sound, and touch

Figurative detail—simile

Factual detail

Sensory details—sight

Factual details

Sensory details—sight and sound

## A Slice of Heaven

Some people call it a pizza place; I call it a little corner of paradise. When I was just two years old, my grandfather walked me down to Angela's Pizza Palace for my first taste of pizza. Since that day, whenever I want pizza, I always think of Angela's pizza. In fact, pizza just isn't pizza for me unless I'm eating it amid the sights and smells of Angela's Pizza Palace.

Angela's looks as though it's been here forever. On the outside, there's an ancient neon sign that buzzes and flickers against the peeling white paint on the rough brick wall. Inside, an antique espresso machine sits like a brass robot guarding the front door. The walls are covered with murals depicting Italian street scenes that Angela's brother painted more than fifty years ago when he was an art student. Angela's tables are topped with red and white linoleum patterned to look like old-fashioned checkered tablecloths. Some are so worn that all the red checks have been rubbed off around the tables' edges by the bellies of happy customers. Imitation Tiffany lamps hang over each table and send multicolored flecks of light dancing across the room and along the painted Italian street scenes.

Angela's has lots of "regulars" for whom the restaurant is a part of life. Like many of our neighbors, my family often gathers there on Friday nights for pizza. Little League teams go in to celebrate victories or to ease defeats. A group of white-haired men meet at Angela's every

## Description of a Place *continued*

Sensory details—  
touch and smell

Sensory details—sight

Restatement of  
dominant impression

Sensory details—taste

afternoon. They sip their espresso and talk about politics and sports in a mixture of Italian and English. High school students stop in for a snack after school. Young couples usually occupy the quiet corner tables for two, and, on Saturdays, grandfathers bring in their grandchildren to introduce the next generation to great-tasting pizza.

Of course, looks aren't everything in a pizza parlor. Each time I turn the slightly greasy doorknob to open Angela's front door, the first thing that greets me is a wonderful warm cloud of enticing pizza scents. My mouth starts to water as the aromas of cheese, garlic, onions, tomatoes, and roasting peppers embrace me. While I wait for my order, I usually watch the chef in the kitchen, tossing dough, pouring sauces, putting pies in the smoldering brick oven, and cutting slices.

As entertaining as the airborne saucers of dough are, though, and as inviting as the atmosphere is, no one comes to Angela's for the sights or smells alone. My first bite of hot melted cheese and perfectly seasoned sauce over a slightly crispy crust always reminds me of exactly why I come here.

# Description of a Place

## Definition

A **description of a place** is a short narrative that conveys a writer's thoughts and feelings about a specific place. A good description uses details, facts, and figures of speech to create a word picture that makes a place seem real to the reader.

Many descriptions use the structure illustrated in the framework below. Print this framework and use it as a guide when you write your own description of a place.

## Framework

## Directions and Explanations

### Introduction

- Clearly identify the place you are describing.
- Include a statement that hints at a dominant impression.

**Prepare your readers** Start with an interesting impression or piece of information that will make readers want to learn more about the place you are describing.

**Present a dominant impression** This helps to organize your essay into something more than a random, unrelated set of impressions.

### Body

- Use a variety of details (sensory, factual, and figurative).
- Include thoughts and feelings.
- Use either spatial order or order of importance.

**Pile on the details** Bring your place to life by engaging all of the senses—not just sight—in your essay. Tell how things smell, taste, sound, and feel. Remember that factual details such as size or age can help paint a picture for your readers.

**Reflect** Telling why a place is special to you also helps your readers bring the place into focus.

**Move your readers along** The order in which you present your description helps your readers visualize the place you are describing. Use either spatial order or order of importance to organize your details.

### Conclusion

- End with a statement that wraps up your description.

**Close with a flourish** To remind your readers why the place you are describing is important, restate your dominant impression.