CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY

Purpose

- Portrays people, places, or things with vivid details to help the reader create a mental picture of what is being described
- Involves the reader so that he or she can visualize what or who is being described
- Creates or conveys a dominant impression of what is being described through sensory details
- Can be objective or subjective

Organizational Pattern

- Introduction/Beginning
  - ✓ Establishes the purpose
  - ✓ Sets the tone for the overall impression
  - ✓ May begin with a general statement followed by more specific statements related to the purpose

- Body/Middle
  - ✓ Specific details, examples or reasons
  - ✓ Anecdotes or "narrative chunks" may serve as details or examples
  - ✓ Transitions connect the ideas in a logical way
  - ✓ Transitions assist the flow from paragraph to paragraph
  - ✓ No prescribed number of paragraphs

- Conclusion/End
  - ✓ Gracefully ends the essay
  - ✓ May include a restatement of the writer's opinion or the main idea
  - ✓ May summarize the information given in the body
  - ✓ Reader should have a sense that things are "wrapped up."