

6A's fantastic Tom Sawyer paper  
4/4/08

Tom Sawyer  
Mark Twain

**What is it?** Descriptive writing vividly portrays a person, place, or thing in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience. It provides details about how something looks, feels, tastes, smells, makes one feel, or sounds. It can also describe what something is, or how something happened. These essays generally use a lot of sensory details.

**When might we have seen this before?** In the beginning of the year we wrote descriptive poetry. In October, we wrote descriptive details in our Chewonki journals. Tuck Everlasting was filled with beautiful description—remember talking about figurative language? Tom Sawyer has a lot of descriptive writing in it, too.

**What are the characteristics of descriptive writing?** The general characteristics of descriptive writing include:

- elaborate use of sensory language
- rich, vivid, and lively detail
- figurative language such as simile, metaphor, symbolism and personification (remember these?)
- *showing*, rather than *telling* through the use of active verbs and precise modifiers (we've talked about this before!!!!)

**Where is this type of writing found?** Descriptive writing appears almost everywhere and is often included in a descriptive introduction of a character in a narrative, such as Tom Sawyer.

***Your mission:***

**In class:**

**First:** We will read a great example of descriptive writing from the New York Times and respond to it as a class. It is a New York Times Article: The Sweet Song of Spring by Jim Andres

**Next:** We will practice this type of writing in our journals.

**Then:** You will choose the part of Tom Sawyer that you would like to write about and brainstorm your own description of it. Imagine that you are transported back in time to Tom Sawyer's world. Describe either the town, the island, the cave, the school, the house with Aunt Polly... You will then choose a place or event from your *own life* that you can describe to contrast the one you chose from Tom Sawyer.

**At home:**

**Due: Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**

-A complete brainstorm and outline for both parts: your place and a place from Tom Sawyer

**Due: Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>**

-A one-page essay for each place or event (two pages total)

**-Double-spaced, font 12, TYPED, PRINTED**

-This will be handed in for a grade

-AS ALWAYS, with anything you do, this should be your BEST work.

**Due Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>**

-A revised draft, if you were asked to revise your essay(s)

Okey dokey, my little Gems...

Let's have an exciting, crazy, amusing, fun time doing this interesting, enriching writing exercise about this creative and enthralling novel!

Love,  
Mrs. Stirling

p.s. Printer EMERGENCIES ONLY! You can email me by 8:30pm the night before and I will print your paper for you. [kstirling@isbos.org](mailto:kstirling@isbos.org) It must be in Microsoft word or I cannot open it.