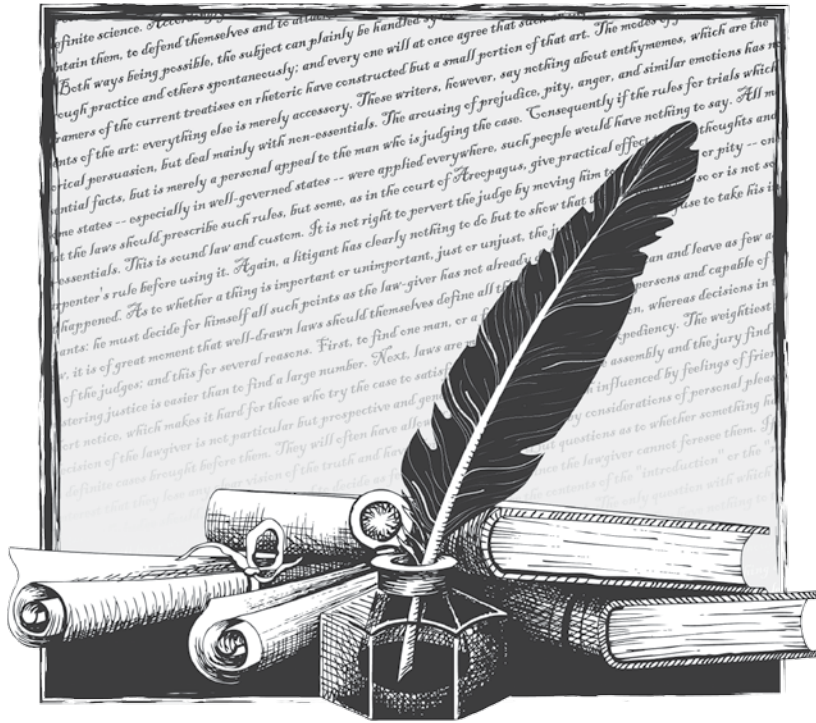


CLASSICAL COMPOSITION

James A. Selby



DESCRIPTION STAGE

Discovering the Skills of Writing

Teacher Guide

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Aphthonius’ Model

1. Read aloud and discuss Aphthonius’ Introduction to Description in the Appendix.
2. Read the title of the lesson and ask: What species of description is it?
 - » Place: a specific place is described according to what surrounds it and what it contains.

1. Introduction

Clearly explain each part of the first paragraph, in which the subject is introduced, in 75-95 words.

HEAD OF PURPOSE

1. Ask: What is a head of purpose?
 - » an argument based on legality, justice, expediency, possibility, honor, or consequence
2. Refer to Aphthonius’ example:
 - » Citadels are established for the common security of cities—for they are the highest point of cities.
3. Ask: Which head of purpose does Aphthonius use? Explain it.
 - » Consequence; citadels are built to protect the city, so as a consequence, they are built on the highest point of the city.
4. Have students brainstorm heads of purpose for their subjects.

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT

1. Ask: What is a head of development?
 - » a narrative or enthymeme based on cause, converse, analogy, or example
2. Refer to Aphthonius’ example:
 - » They are not walled round with buildings, so much as they wall round the cities.
3. Ask: Which head of development does Aphthonius use? Explain it.
 - » Converse; citadels are further described by explaining what is *not* true about them (Converse) and what is true (Cause).
4. Have students brainstorm heads of development for their subjects.

Lesson 2: Description of Place:
A Familiar Place

1. Introduction

This paragraph introduces the subject in 75-95 words.

Head of Purpose

The Cavanaugh home is pleasant and filled with memories. To an unimaginative eye, there is nothing special about the house.

Head of Development

“That boring, vinyl-sided two-story house? What’s so special about it?” some might ask. To which I would reply, “There is nothing altogether special about the house itself.”

Comparison

“It is not grand or majestic like a palace. The beauty is in the life that bustles within it, made evident by the people who dwell there and the loving furnishings they give it.” [dialogismus]

Thesis

In this description I will seek to paint a portrait of this home.

2. What Surrounds It

This paragraph tells what surrounds the subject in 240-275 words.

Head of Purpose/Topic Sentence

In a part of Ohio that was long ago an Indian burial mound, there is now situated a neighborhood.

Develop with Description

Consider: water (rivers, lakes, ponds, oceans, waterfalls, etc.), geography (mountains, hills, plains, valleys, canyons, etc.), man-made structure, plants, animals, atmosphere, wind. With all these consider: sights (shape, size, color, adornments), smell, touch, texture, taste, and sounds.

One wanders and winds throughout this neighborhood until he eventually reaches the back of it that dead ends in a cul-de-sac. The first house of this court is where the Cavaughns live. Their two-story house is a bluish-gray color that sometimes looks more blue and sometimes appears to be indisputably gray depending on how the sun is falling on it during that time of day. At midday and beyond, a person walking down the sidewalk towards the house might notice that the Cavaughns’ side of the street,

COMPARISON

1. Ask: What is the function of comparison?
 - » to juxtapose two like ideas in order to understand their differences
2. Refer to Aphthonius’ example:
 - » The center of Athens held the Athenian acropolis; but the citadel which Alexander established for his own city is in fact what he named it, and it is more accurate to call this an acropolis than that on which the Athenians pride themselves.
3. Ask: How does Aphthonius use comparison in the example?
 - » He juxtaposes two similar places, the Acropolis of Alexandria and the Acropolis of Athens, in order to state that the one in Alexandria is more worthy of the name.
4. Have students brainstorm comparisons of their subject.

THESIS

1. Ask: What is the function of a thesis statement?
 - » to state the purpose of the essay

though snowy, is not nearly as heavily laden with snow as the side across, for the Cavanaughs live on the sunny side of the street and so their snow usually starts melting first. During the spring and summer months, one would find around the house a green, well-kept lawn, brightly colored zenias in the front flowerbed, and several huge, immensely tall oak trees filled with green leaves [**dendrographia**]. But our scene opens at Christmastide; the trees are barren, the flowerbeds are blank except for some boxwood and holly bushes, and the yard is full of snow [**chronographia**]. There is a teenage girl shoveling the driveway as cars sputter by on the white-blanketed road that has not yet been plowed. A bright green boxwood wreath decorates the red front door of the house, and the candles in the windows seem to glow with Christmas warmth and cheer to everyone who passes by.

Transition/Conclusion Sentence

As one approaches the bright red door to enter, he hears strains of Christmas carols playing inside.

3. What It Contains

This paragraph tells what the subject contains, in 240-275 words.

Head of Purpose/Topic Sentence

When one passes from the snowy porch onto the wood floor inside, he is greeted by the mouth-watering smell of Christmas cookies, cinnamon rolls, and bread baking in the oven.

Description of Place: A Familiar Place

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2. Refer to Aphthonius' example:
 - » For it is somewhat as this discourse shall describe.
3. Ask: What is the purpose of Aphthonius' essay?
 - » to describe the Acropolis in Alexandria
4. Have students brainstorm theses for their subjects.

2. What Surrounds It

Clearly explain each part of this paragraph, in which we describe what surrounds the subject, in 240-275 words.

HEAD OF PURPOSE / TOPIC SENTENCE

1. Refer to Aphthonius' example:
 - » A hill juts out of the ground, rising to a great height, and called an acropolis on both accounts, both because it is raised up on high and because it is placed in the high-point of the city.
2. Ask: What head of purpose is used? Explain it.
 - » Consequence; the acropolis rises high and is on the high point of the city, so as a consequence, it is called an acropolis (*acro* means "highest" or "upper," and *polis* means "city").

3. Have students brainstorm heads of purpose or topic sentences for what surrounds their subjects.

DEVELOP WITH DESCRIPTION

1. Ask: What kinds of things can surround a place?
 - » e.g., geography, man-made structure, plants, animals, atmosphere
2. Refer to Aphthonius' example:
 - » roads, flights of steps, a gateway, columns, a building
3. Have students brainstorm particular things surrounding their subjects.

TRANSITION/CONCLUSION SENTENCE

1. Refer to Aphthonius' example:
 - » The building's roof is domed, and round the dome is set a great image of the universe.
2. Ask: How does Aphthonius finish describing what surrounds the Acropolis?
 - » He describes the building's roof.
3. Have students brainstorm ways to conclude or transition.

3. What It Contains

Clearly explain each part of this paragraph, in which we describe what the subject contains, in 240-275 words.

HEAD OF PURPOSE/TOPIC SENTENCE

1. Refer to Aphthonius' example:
 - » As one enters the acropolis itself, a single space is marked out by four sides, the plan of the arrangement is that of a hollow rectangle.
2. Ask: What head of purpose is used? Explain it.
 - » Possibility; when one enters the Acropolis and looks within, it is possible to perceive that it was planned in the arrangement of a hollow rectangle.
3. Have students brainstorm heads of purpose or topic sentences for what their subjects contain.

LESSON 2

DEVELOP WITH DESCRIPTION

- 1. Ask: What kinds of things can a place contain?
 - » e.g., geography, man-made structure, plants, animals, atmosphere
- 2. Refer to Aphthonius’ example:
 - » a court, colonnades, chambers, roofs, capitals, decorations, a column in the middle and its capital, an edifice, obelisks, a fountain
- 3. Have students brainstorm particular things contained in their subjects.

TRANSITION/CONCLUSION SENTENCE

- 1. Refer to Aphthonius’ example:
 - » As one was not sufficient for the making, builders of the whole acropolis were appointed to the number of twelve.
- 2. Ask: How does Aphthonius finish describing what the Acropolis contains?
 - » He describes how many builders were needed to make the Acropolis.
- 3. Have students brainstorm ways to conclude or transition.

4. Leaving the Subject

Clearly explain each part of this paragraph, in which we describe leaving the subject, in 240-275 words.

- 1. Ask: What is described when leaving the subject?
 - » what one sees as he leaves
- 2. Refer to Aphthonius’ example:
 - » As one comes down from the acropolis, here is a flat place resembling a racecourse, which is what the place is called; and here there is another of similar shape, but not equal in size.
- 3. Have students brainstorm particular things one would see as he leaves his subject.

Develop with Description

Consider: water (rivers, lakes, ponds, oceans, waterfalls, etc.), geography (mountains, hills, plains, valleys, canyons, etc.), man-made structure, plants, animals, atmosphere, wind. With all these consider: sights (shape, size, color, adornments), smell, touch, texture, taste, and sounds.

If one was to come to the Cavanaughs’ house on most Saturdays, he would find that the house usually smells of fresh whole wheat bread baking, but at Christmastime, the multitude of sumptuous treats and mouth-watering fragrances multiplies. As a visitor looks around the red-and-white kitchen and the cozy adjoining living room, decorated with an old nativity scene and a fresh green Christmas tree, he realizes that the mistress of the house has a taste for old-fashioned decorations. Though the house is not intolerably stuffed with dusty old junk resembling an antique mall, it is tastefully decorated with old-fashioned photographs, books, and dishes here and there [periphrasis]. The refrigerator is painted with chalkboard paint and has a Christmas Scripture verse written on it in Mrs. Cavanaugh’s attractive calligraphy. Next to the kitchen is the dining room. There is a long wooden harvest table flanked on one side by a very old church pew that has seen the family through many years. Family photos hang on one wall, and a great colored map of Europe and Africa takes up most of another wall. The dining room flows into a room that the family sometimes calls “the parlor” if they are pretending to be fancy. This room holds the computer and piano.

Transition/Conclusion Sentence

Wood floors continue from this room to a staircase, where a visitor looks up and wonders what the rooms look like upstairs, but the description of those must be saved for another day.

4. Leaving the Subject

This paragraph describes leaving the subject in 30-40 words.

As one exits the back sliding glass door, he notes the towering oak trees bestowing a canopy of shade upon the rather small backyard and the big wooden swing set that Mr. Cavanaugh built for his daughter several years ago.

5. Epilogue

This paragraph praises the subject and gives an apology for anything left undescribed, in 30-50 words.

Praise

Time is a river always flowing in one direction; the tide's pattern can only go forward [**metaphor**].

Apology

So I go forward from this description with the apology for not including every detail. I had not space, time, or ability to convey just how dear this home is to my heart.

Final Draft

The Final Draft is a new context for practice in which to use and imitate proper writing mechanics and knowledge. Proofread your answers above and correct errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. On a separate sheet of paper, combine all the corrected answers into a final draft.

Add these figures:

- Dialogismus
- Chronographia
- Metaphor
- Dendrographia
- Periphrasis

5. Epilogue

Clearly explain each part of the last paragraph, in which the subject is praised and an apology is given for anything left undescribed, in 30-50 words.

1. Ask: What are the two parts of the Epilogue?
 - » the praise and the apology
2. Refer to Aphthonius' example:
 - » The beauty is unspeakable. If anything has been omitted, it has been bracketed by amazement; what it was not possible to describe has been omitted.
3. Have students brainstorm a praise and an apology.

6. Final Draft

Require students to:

- » Include their name in the title.
 - Ex) *Description of [Subject Chosen] by [Student's Name]*
- » Indent paragraphs.
- » Write on every other line.
- » Underline required figures.

Preparing for the Next Class

1. Reread Aphthonius' Introduction to Description in the Appendix.
2. Reread Aphthonius' model description.
3. Have students research information on *a dream home*, i.e., what they imagine their ideal home would look like.