

Above-average Writing Model

Writing Process in Action: Descriptive Writing (Unit 3, pages 138–141)

Assignment: Write a one-page magazine article describing people, places, and things associated with your favorite hobby.

Stomp n’ Shout, Get it Out!

Once a week, on Saturday afternoon, I shout, stomp my feet, and go a little crazy—but not because I’m upset. It’s part of my African dance class.

My African dance class is not like other dance classes I’ve taken. Instead of wearing shoes and listening to a piano player or a tape, we dance barefoot to music made by live drummers. The drummers improvise and we dance in groups, moving across the floor in lines or around in a circle to the beat. With African dance, you spend a lot of time leaning forward. You move forward with bent knees—which can really hurt your thighs—and use your hands to gesture in front of you or over your head. The hand gestures often tell a story. A lot of dances are ceremonial dances that have been passed on through history. Keisha, our teacher, encourages everybody to breathe heavily and yell and laugh if we want, which is good because that helps us to get caught up in the dancing and stop being self-conscious.

Keisha is a great dancer. She’s very strong and inspiring. No one in the class is as good as Keisha yet, but we still have fun. Both boys and girls are in my class, which is cool because sometimes boys don’t like dance classes. Some of the boys say they signed up for African dance because Keisha shows students how to do flips and split jumps and how to spin on their heads. Those moves can take years of practice to perfect, though.

The dance studio used to be an old gym. The studio has high wooden ceilings and wooden floors. High along the walls, windows border the entire room. On nice days, we use long poles to open the windows and let in fresh air that cools off the hot gym. On a really beautiful day, Keisha lets us go outside and dance on the lawn. That’s the best, but you have to be careful not to step on any sharp rocks and sticks or stinging insects. A bee stung one girl’s foot last summer.

African dance is really hard work, but it helps me let off energy. By halfway through the class, I’m always tired and sweaty. Fortunately, taking turns dancing across the floor in groups gives us quick breaks during class. While we’re waiting for our turn, we shout and cheer for the other groups. In this way, African dance class is like a sport, but dancing is expressive and athletic at the same time, and it’s not competitive. For me, it’s much more fun.

Summary: This article paints a vivid picture of the author’s hobby.

This piece might receive a 4 if evaluated by the holistic scoring method. It might receive a 98 if evaluated by the analytic scoring method—34 points for Focus/Organization, 34 points for Elaboration/Support/Style, and 30 points for Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics.

Opening grabs readers’ attention.

Vivid images and specific word choices bring subject to life.

Describes impressions of people related to hobby

Includes clear spatial description and sensory details

Uses effective transitions to introduce comparisons and other ideas