

Name Class Date

Above-average Writing Model

Writing Process in Action: Descriptive Writing (Unit 3, pages 160–163)

Assignment: For the magazine *Vicarious Voyager*, write a one- to two-page descriptive article of an imagined place.

Shipwrecked on the Black Beach

As the warm water lapped against my arms and face, I slowly regained consciousness. The water in my mouth was salty but not unpleasant. I shook my head and blinked my eyes. A tiny crab crawled out of my hair.

I lay half in the water and half out on a glittering black beach. Some sand had gotten under my wet clothes, and it cut at my skin like rough glass. The tide washed gently over my body, bringing with it bits of seaweed, coral, and pink jellyfish that scratched and stung me. An arm's length in front of me, I saw the remains of my yellow life raft. The beach was narrow, sloping gently about fifteen feet from the water to a jungle. Where the jungle started there was a row of low shrubs, evenly spaced about three feet apart. Each shrub was topped by a crown of bright scarlet flowers.

To my left stood a giant rock that marked one edge of the beach. I tilted my head up, exhausted, to see how tall it was. Above it, a flock of huge snow-white birds circled against the dusky sky. Every once in a while, one of the birds would swoop down to the beach and perch on a pile of driftwood. The birds watched me curiously. They didn't seem to be afraid of me at all. They continued their wild squawking.

Looking to my right, I saw what looked like a path almost hidden between two shrubs. This was intriguing, so I took a deep breath and pulled myself upright. My head spun because I was so hungry and tired. I had no idea how long I'd been drifting on the flat, lonely ocean.

I walked cautiously across the beach. The strange black sand pricked my bare feet as I went. Behind me, the sun rested at the horizon, sending rays of hot orange light across the water. I could just see the moon starting to rise over the tops of the trees. In the calm after the storm, a soft breeze carried the scent of rain and hibiscus across the beach. Gratefully, I breathed in the sweet smell and headed toward the jungle.

As I started to step onto the jungle path, I tripped. I had to grab onto a shrub so that I didn't fall. Instantly, a bunch of thorns bloomed on the shrub, like they were trying to protect the flowers from my hand. In the distance, I heard a wild shrieking sound. It could have been an animal, but it sounded like a person in incredible pain. I stepped back and sat down on a large, flat rock. My stomach grumbled. "Where am I?" I thought. "What is this weird place?" I just sat there for a while, rubbing my bleeding hand and peering into the dark, waiting jungle.

Summary: *This piece uses vivid sensory details, specific language, and a consistent organizational strategy—following spatial order from the beach's ocean side to the jungle—to create a strong impression and mood for the reader.*

This piece would probably receive a 4 if evaluated by the holistic scoring method. It might receive a 100 if evaluated by the analytic scoring method—35 points for Focus/Organization, 35 points for Elaboration/Support/Style, and 30 points for Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics.

Title and opening provide vivid clues to place and situation.

Specific words and figurative language make the place and situation seem believable.

Uses a consistent organizational strategy and first-person point of view

Sensory details help readers imagine they are there.

Includes personal impressions and sensations