

Sample writing: Use of sensory detail to increase reader comprehension and aid development. This can be used to show how using the senses gives readers a visceral, not just cerebral, reaction to written word.

Fact: I walked down the hall to visit my grandmother in the nursing home.

Sensory detail version:

As I walked down the dimly lit hall full of open doors, my shoes squeaked on the freshly washed tiles. The smell of some unidentifiable, overcooked vegetable from dinner fought with antiseptic, bleach, and human waste to create an unpleasant lump in my throat. I tried to walk softly; I knew from past experience that the inmates of each room would use the excuse of any noise to call out, "Come and help me," or "I'm in pain," or simply, "Nurse!" As I passed the nurses' station I saw the usual line of anorexic, wasted old ladies strapped to wheelchairs where they could be watched by the attending LPNs as they went about their chores. A radio blaring blatantly cheerful holiday music was drowned out by the beeping of machines and the moans of patients. As I neared my grandmother's room, I saw that her door was blocked off with yellow police tape, the kind used to isolate a crime scene. I could feel the blood pounding through my veins as I walked more quickly, forgetting about being quiet or avoiding the residents. My face was hot, then cold, as I ducked under the tape and rushed to the bed. Nana was sitting up in the bed, the fluorescent light setting off her white hair like a halo. "Come in, come in," she said.