

description: sensory details about a scene

Paragraph with weak description

Sometimes at night we would sing songs and dance to the beat of the drum. We'd sing about Africa and our dream to be free.

Paragraph with strong description

In the deep of the night, we'd creep down to the bottoms. Over a little bonfire, we'd cook some meat and listen to my daddy's stories of our ancestors. Let me tell you—if I closed my eyes, I could picture the village in Africa as clearly as I picture you sitting in front of me. The meat would warm our bodies, then my uncle would start to drum and we'd start shaking and moving. My skin tingled. Even the crickets and the breeze in the trees would be in rhythm. But the most moving was my mother's voice, as smooth as the dew-covered morning grass. She'd sing of Moses and freedom, and at least for that moment, my soul could fly as free as the birds of the sky.

details: small facts that, together, show deep understanding of a topic

Paragraph with weak details

Often master would just decide to whip me, and boy—would it hurt. He did it because he felt like it. One time it really hurt because he put salt in my cuts.

Paragraphs with strong details

Usually I would work hard. I had seen what happened to field hands who didn't pick 300 pounds of cotton a day, and the thought of that physical pain made me tremble.

I remember one day in particular, though. My stomach kept growling, my skin itched, my throat was parched, and the sun felt like it was going to burn through my skin. I knew that I couldn't stop working, but I moved really slowly.

The master looked at my bag of cotton at sundown. "There probably is not even 100 pounds in there!" he yelled. In a flash, I was on the ground, feeling that whip rip my flesh from the left, from the right, from straight above. All the while, I heard the master screaming about how much money my laziness was costing him. Of course, I didn't care about how much money that devil was making. But for a long, long time, if I didn't feel well in the field, then the thought of that lash—and the salt he rubbed in the cuts—would give me the strength I needed to endure.