Descriptive Passages for Analysis
Samples & Excerpts from Novels & Short Stories

Excerpt from
Barbara Willard's *The Sprig of Broom*

"It was mid-October, the harvest well-stored. The sun was as hot as if it shone in the first week of September, but a tumbling sky threw great clouds before the wind, and when the sun was obscured then all the promise of winter was in the air. But it was magic weather, a gift to sweeten the sadness of the ending year. There were still blackberries, thick and dripping with juice, but these would remain on the bushes, for by now, as it was said, the Devil had spat on them and they should not be eaten. So birds gorged themselves, and the ground and the leaves of the brambles were strewn with purple droppings. The water, half shadow and half glitter, threw back the colors of beech and bracken tossing them over the boulders like gold and copper coins."

1) Imagine that the topic or writing prompt was "Write a description of your favorite time of year." List the objects and details the author must have had that she wanted to include.

_____
_____
_____

2) Which words or phrases act like transitions between sentences in the passage? Circle them.

3) Copy the words/phrases that contain the best descriptions of the five senses (you may or may not use all five):

Taste:
Touch:
Sight:
Sound:
Smell:

4) What are two or three adjectives you can think of that best explain the author's attitude about this time of year? _____ _____ _____

5) Which words and phrases indicate the author's feelings about this time of year? Copy them here:

_____
_____

Excerpt from
C.S. Lewis's *The Discarded Image*

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket- safe, dark, motionless, airless- it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside of Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love is Hell."

1) Imagine that the topic or writing prompt was "Write a description of the meaning of love." List the images and details the author must have though of that he wanted to include.

_____
_____
_____

2) Which words or phrases act like transitions between sentences in the passage? Circle them.

3) Copy the words/phrases that contain the best descriptions of the five senses (you may or may not use all five):

Taste:
Touch:
Sight:
Sound:
Smell:

4) What are two or three adjectives you can think of that best explain the author's attitude about love? _____ _____ _____

5) Which words and phrases indicate the author's feelings about love? Copy them here:

_____
_____