

Characterizing A Neighborhood

Any large city is composed of many different neighborhoods, each of which has a distinctive character fostered by specific attributes, merits, or flaws. The character of the neighborhoods we live in affects the quality of our lives in a variety of ways and may reveal something about our society as a whole. As Wendell Berry observes, "If you don't know where you are, you don't know **WHO** you are."

THE TASK:

Write a well-developed essay in which you **characterize** the neighborhood you live in and **explain** what makes it distinctive. For our purposes in this essay you may extend the definition of neighborhood. Your neighborhood may be a place you lived in the past, or a special place in which you spend a lot of time (job, school, extracurricular activity, such as club, sport, etc.) Once you decide upon a term or phrase that characterizes your neighborhood (for example- industrial, bustling, dangerous, exotic), use lots of details and examples to **show** how your characterization applies. What conditions, kinds of people, typical daily occurrences or other factors give your neighborhood its character? [You may find you need more than one term to accurately characterize your neighborhood. For example- bustling yet comforting, dangerous yet nurturing] Finally explain what's significant about the fact that your neighborhood is like this. (You may want to consider how the character of your neighborhood affects the quality of your life, what it reveals about you, or what the character of your neighborhood reveals about our society.)

YOUR AUDIENCE:

Assume that you are writing to people who don't live in your neighborhood.

YOUR PURPOSE:

You'll need to think about what effect you want to have on your readers. Why might you want to tell people who don't live in your neighborhood about what it's like?

SKILLS WE'RE WORKING ON:

1. Generating a thesis statement and focusing the body of your essay so that it supports that thesis statement.
2. Using specific details and examples to support and illustrate your assertions.
3. Style a) Adding vitality to your sentences: Use concrete nouns and modifiers and strong, active verbs. Try using figurative language.
b) Varying sentence length and structure. (No fragments and run-ons!)