

Five fourth graders share their
“Start with what isn’t there” descriptions:

After brainstorming ideas for setting descriptions, Mrs. Henjum’s fourth graders created paragraphs and poems that all begin by showing what isn’t there.

With a partner, look over each of the pieces of writing below and on the next page. Discuss which of the following five traits shines the strongest in each writer’s piece of writing:

- **Idea development**
- **Organization**
- **Voice**
- **Word Choice**
- **Sentence Fluency**

On the Airplane

by Devin E., fourth grade writer

The airplane is loud when you first take off. There is no one talking on cell phones, not a lot of late-comers, not a lot of talking, no animals, and most of all no one is standing.

There is a little bit of turbulence here and there, and people yawning from the exhausting flight. The flight attendants say the things you need to know to stay safe. There are people squeezing the arms of chairs. “Seatbelts are on,” says the flight attendant. She says one more thing and that last word is “Let’s go to our destination.”



In the Rain Forest

by Konor B., fourth grade writer

Towering trees blocking the sun. No houses, no people,
Nothing to do
Except look at the beautiful glory.
It’s every animal for
Himself out there.

Jaguars glaring from tree to tree.
The prey and predators are lurking.
Snakes are slithering, rats are quivering.
So full of wonder.



The Grave Yard

by Alyssa C., fourth grade writer

This is the grave yard. There would be no birds singing. There would be no happiness. Not even sunlight. No one wears light colors. No one ever goes to the grave yard.

There might be zombies saying hi to you. If you wear light colors, you might have a heart attack in seven days. People would have to wear black or white clothes. When you get there, you might be crying or you might be running for your life.



My Bathroom

by Amber S., fourth grade writer



I'm in my bathroom thinking. No tree has ever grown here, and no bird has ever sung his or her sweet song here. There is no television, telephones, or computers. The bathroom has no desk for work. That is the way I like it. After an evening shower, the bathroom is never clean.

In the bathroom, there are a lot of bath products, such as body butters, conditioners, shampoos, body washes, lotion, and make-up. After a hard day of work and school, nothing feels better than a hot bath with chocolate, candles, and some jazz.

The Beach

by Rachel M., fourth grade writer

No sharks, no boredom, no grumpiness.
No one is doing homework or watching TV.

Just laughter and screaming.
Moms lazing about.
Water lapping the sand.
Birds flying about and dads and children climbing rocks.
People trying to reach the buoy.

This is the beach.

