

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION ESSAY

Life's Work
By Jessica McClure

The day started like any other -- quiet, but with an underlying vibration waiting to explode. Freshly brewed coffee and the sharp smell of disinfectant mixed in the air like a foreign perfume. Uniformed staff busied themselves with paperwork while waiting for the moment we all knew would come with the lunch hour approaching. It was a typical morning in the emergency room of Presby Plano.

We were all standing around, relaxed, discussing our previous weekend adventures. As the call came over the radio we swiftly took our places in expectation of what was to come. A construction worker was hit in the head with a 500-pound slab of granite swinging from a crane. The crane operator didn't see him as he moved that solid piece of rock from one point to the next.

The soft rustle of protective gear being put on over scrubs filled the room as we methodically dressed for the trauma that was about to roll through the door. We tied masks with eye shields around our heads as carts wheeled past into the room in which we would perform our heroic duties.

"ETA, one minute," the radio crackled. We calmly looked at each other with the look of serious determination running across our faces, we shot each other glances that said, "We can make this right." Lights swirled in the courtyard as we shuffled toward the rough sound of the ambulance's motor. Doors swung open as patient history supplied by the EMT resonated over the sound of the truck. We parted like the waves of the Red Sea to let the gurney wheel by into the trauma room.

A calmness floated in the air as if giving cognitive reasoning a resounding voice. We assembled quickly and stood in our positions. I was only a volunteer, only there to observe, yet I was thrown quickly into the swift dance of saving a life.

Latex gloves flew onto my hands as I grabbed wads of gauze to soak up the fluids running from the patient's wounded head. As I stood there applying just enough pressure to keep the blood from spurting everywhere, I could feel everything sink in; adrenaline pumping, the brightness of the lights, the smell of fresh blood, the rushed haze around me. What was I doing in the middle of this chaos? At that moment in time I was the only one in the room with hands on the patient. Everyone else was scurrying around, moving things from this room to the next.

Even though I didn't speak a word of Spanish and the patient didn't speak a word of English, his moans were clear enough. He was in agony and all I could do was try and hold his massive gash closed long enough for someone to inject pain medication. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." I kept reassuring, not knowing if he understood what I was saying. After what seemed like an eternity that went by in a flash, more people filled the room and the man was wheeled under the surgical light reserved for those with serious injuries. A doctor turned to me and said, "Can you please take off my watch?" I jumped to the command like a seasoned pro and changed my gloves to help with the next procedure.

A technician beside me peeled open a plastic container and mixed a pungent concoction of antibiotics to adorn the patient's head before any further action was taken. With a syringe filled with numbing medicine, a nurse injected small doses into and around the patient's head. Next came a small, disposable drill-like apparatus that was filled with clear saline solution to

irrigate the wound. Rat-tat-tat-tat! As the physician irrigated the laceration harsh noise rang out in the quiet room like a jack hammer, catching a few of us off guard. Sterile water spewed from the spout of the irrigation device onto the skull of the hurt man. After a few minutes, the wound was clean and the bleeding controlled. Staples were clamped onto his head, closing the once gaping hole.

The doctor left the trauma room, leaving us to pick the bits of tissue from the hair that remained on the man's head. The two of us remaining gathered around his head and proceeded to snag the soft gobs of pink flesh from his hair as gently as possible, so as not to disturb our newly finished work. He was taken to another room to recover as we left the scene of the previous mayhem. Staff congratulated me on a job well done, as this was my first trauma. I felt proud and alive. I knew this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I will never forget the moment that realization hit home.

<http://ftp.ccccd.edu/andrade/1301/descexample2.htm>