INDIANA COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
for

English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Appendix C:

Samples of Student Writing

Samples of Student Writing

Following are writing samples that have been annotated to illustrate the criteria required to meet the Common Core State Standards for particular types of writing—argument, informative/explanatory text, and narrative—in a given grade. Each of the samples exhibits at least the level of quality required to meet the Writing standards for that grade.

The range of accomplishment within each grade reflects differences in individual development as well as in the conditions under which the student writers were expected to work. Some of the samples were written in class or as homework; others were written for on-demand assessments; still others were the result of sustained research projects. Where possible, each sample includes information about the circumstances under which it was produced. The samples come from students in kindergarten through grade 12. The students attended school in a number of states and districts across the country.

At the lower grades, the samples include "opinion" writing, an elementary type of argument in which students give reasons for their opinions and preferences. Because reasons are required, such writing helps prepare students for drafting the arguments they will be expected to create beginning in grade 6.

Acknowledgment

The Standards work group would like to express its appreciation to teachers and students at Monte Vista High School in California and the Randolph Technical Career Center in Vermont; other colleagues in California, Massachusetts, and Washington state; and ACT, Inc., and the *Concord Review*, who helped find and obtain permission for several of the samples included in the set. The group also would like to express its appreciation to the New Standards Project and to the International Reading Association, which allowed the use of several samples from their publications, and to the other student writers who granted permission to reproduce their work here.

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Permissions

The following student writing samples have been reprinted for the Common Core State Standards Initiative with the express permission of the following organizations and individuals.

ACT, Inc.:
Untitled essay on dress codes

California Department of Education:
"Football"; "Miss Sadie"

The *Concord Review*:
"In the Wake of the Spanish Lady: American Economic Resilience in the Aftermath of the Influenza Epidemic of 1918" by Brooke Granowski, *Concord Review*, *20*(1), 203–216 (©2009 Concord Review, Inc.)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:
"Dear Mr. Sandler"; "A Pet Story About My Cat . . . Gus"; "Animal Farm"

Monte Vista High School in California:
"The True Meaning of Friendship"; "Lives on Mango, Rides the Whale"; untitled essay on civil disobedience in India; "Marching to His Own Beat"; "Summary of Key Points"

The National Center on Education and the Economy, on behalf of New Standards:
"My fabit Book is do you Want to be my FRIEND"; "Frags (Frogs)"; "I Went to Disnand"; "My Big Book About Spain"; "I bot a little cotton ball"; "Owl Moon"; "My first tooth is gone"; "Horses"; "When my Puppys Ranaway"; "Zoo Field Trip"; "Author Response: Roald Dahl"; "Getting Shot and Living Through It"; "A Geographical Report"; "The Old Man and the Sea"; "_____ School Bond Levy"

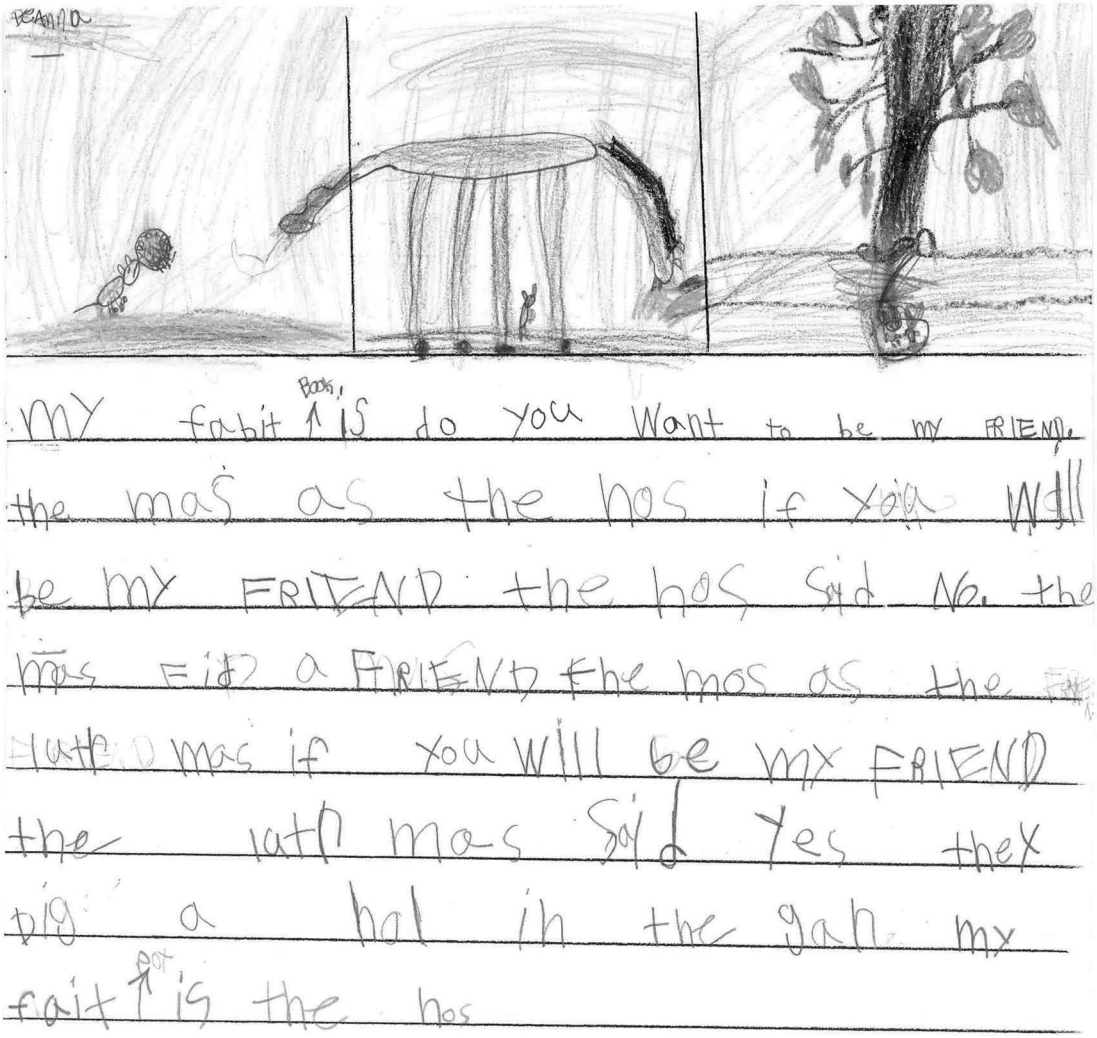
Randolph Technical Career Center in Vermont:
"Wood Joints"; "TIG/GTAW Welding"

Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:
"Glowing Shoes"; "Video Cameras in Classrooms"

Permission to reprint each of the following samples was granted by its author:
"Freedom From Structure"; "Fact vs. Fiction and All the Grey Space in Between"; "The Making of a Human Voice and How to Use It"

Student Sample: K, Argument (Opinion)

This opinion piece about a work of literature was produced in class.



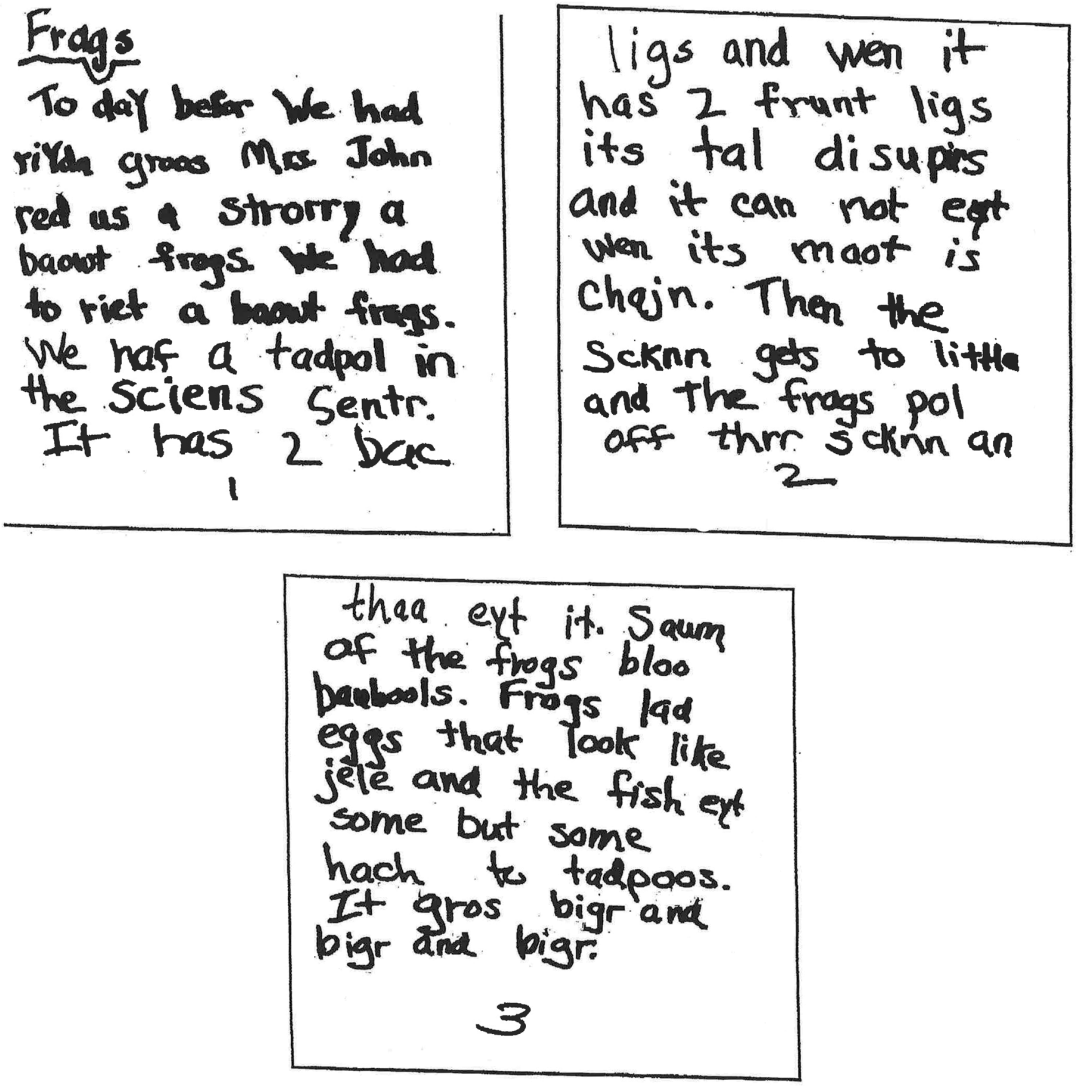
Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **tells the reader the name of the book (in the title of the paper).**
  - *My fabit* (favorite) *Book is do you Want to be my FRIEND*
- **states an opinion or preference about the book.**
  - *. . . my fait* (favorite) *pot* (part) *is the hos* (horse)

Student Sample: K, Informative/Explanatory

This informative report was produced in class, and the writer received support from the teacher.



Frags

To day befor We had riyda groos Mrs. John red us a strorry a baowt frags. We had to riet a baowt frags. We haf a tadpol in the Sciens Sentr. It has 2 bac

1

ligs and wen it has 2 frunt ligs its tal disupirs and it can not eyt wen its maot is chejn. Then the Scknn gets to little and the frags pol off thrr sckinn an

2

thaa eyt it. Saum of the frogs bloo baebools. Frogs lad eggs that look like jele and the fish eyt some but some hach to tadpoos. It gros bigr and bigr and bigr.

3

Annotation

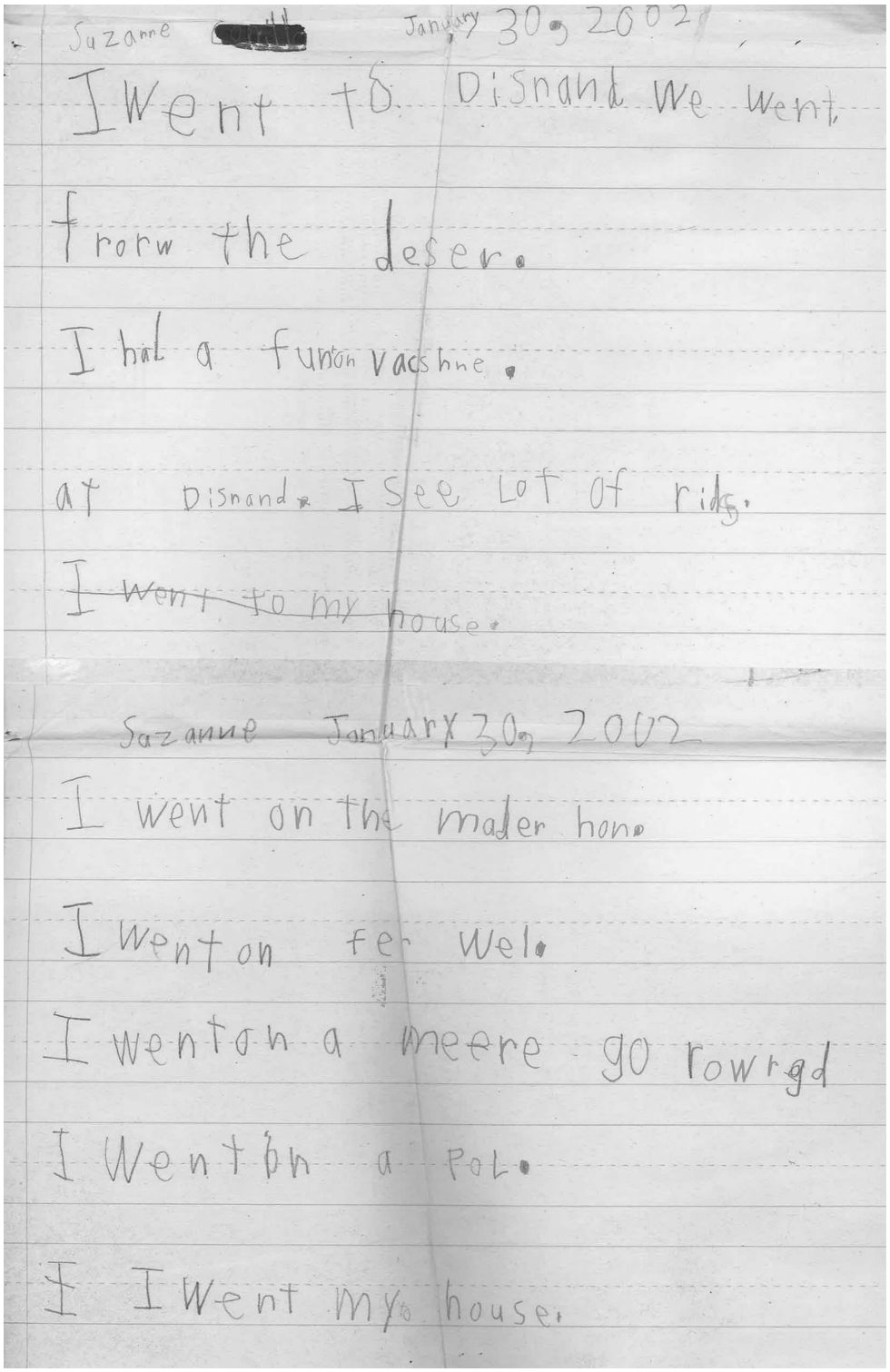
The writer of this piece

- **establishes the topic in a title and goes beyond the title to create a context for writing about frogs.**
  - *To day befor* (before) *We had riyda* (writing) *groos* (groups) *Mrs.* _____ *red* (read) *us a strorry* (story) *a baowt* (about) *frogs*.
- **supplies some information about the topic.**
  - *It has 2 bac* (back) *ligs* (legs) *and wen* (when) *it has 2 frunt* (front) *ligs* (legs) *its tal* (tail) *disupirs* (disappears) . . . *Then the scknn* (skin) *gets to* (too) *little and the frags pol* (pull) *off thrr* (their) *scknn* (skin) . . .
  - *Frogs lad* (laid) *eggs that look like jele* (jelly) . . .

- **uses additive (adversative and temporal) linking words.**
    - *. . . and wen* (when) . . . *Then . . . but . . .*
- **provides a sense of closure.**
    - *It gros* (grows) *bigr* (bigger) *and bigr and bigr.*
- **demonstrates command of some of the conventions of standard written English.**
    - As a kindergartener, the writer demonstrates remarkable control of the conventions of standard written English. As this was a process piece, it is reasonable to assume that the writer received feedback to correct possible errors with capital letters and periods.

Student Sample: K, Narrative

This narrative is a process piece that was produced in class.



Suzanne [redacted] January 30, 2002

I went to Disnand we went

frorw the deser.

I hal a funon vacshne.

at Disnand. I See Lot of rids.

~~I went to my house.~~

Suzanne January 30, 2002

I went on the mader hone

I Wenton fer Wel.

I wenton a meere go rowrgd

I Wenton a Pol.

I I Went my house.

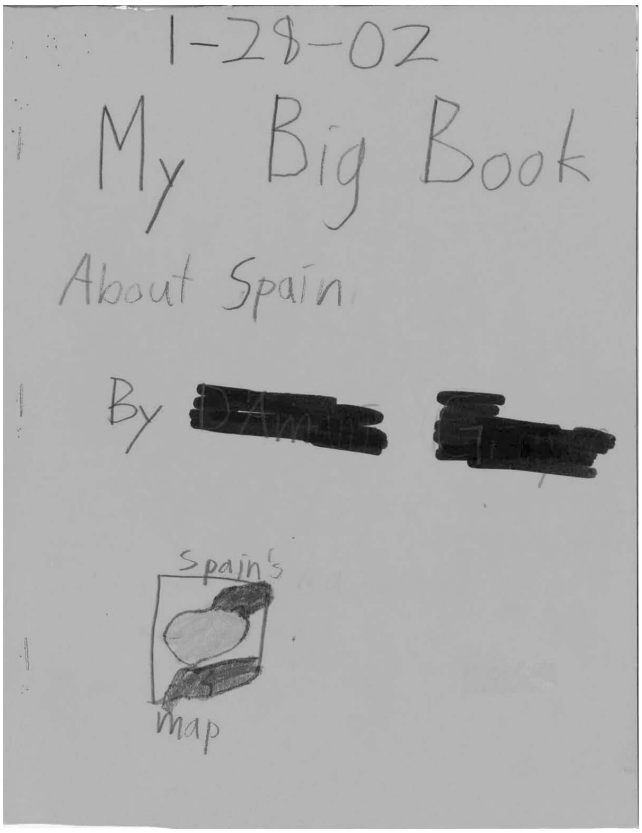
Annotation

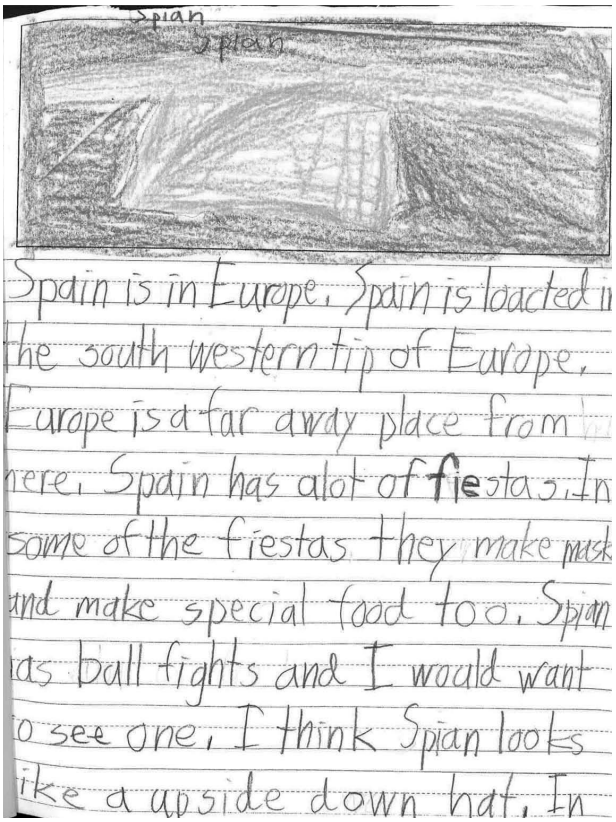
The writer of this piece

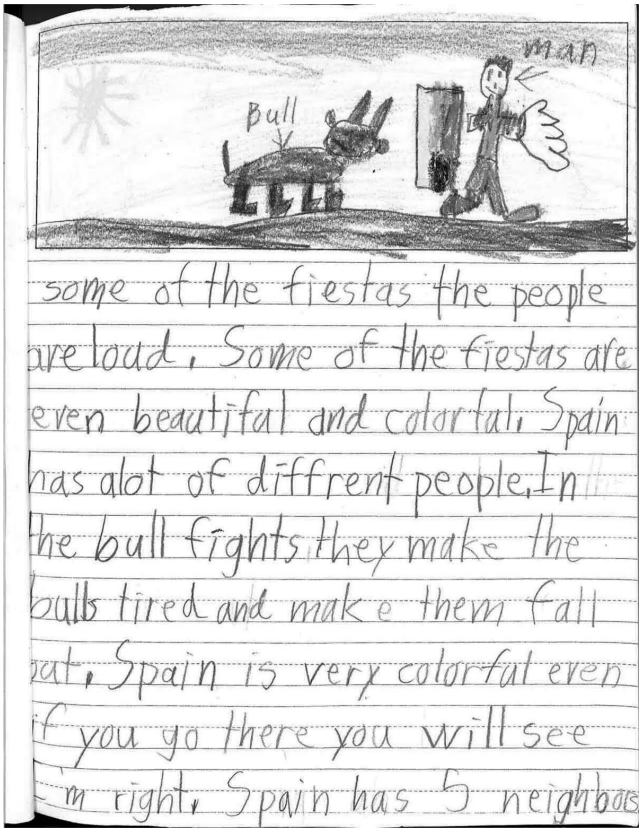
- **establishes a situation by naming a place.**
  - *Disnand* (Disneyland)
- **recounts several loosely linked events and the order in which they occurred.**
  - *I had a fun on vacshne* (vacation). . . . *I see lot* (lots) *of rids* (rides). *I went on the mader hon* (Matterhorn). . . . *I went my house.*
- **provides a reaction to what happened.**
  - *I had a fun on vacshne* (vacation).
- **offers a sense of closure.**
  - *I went my house.*
- **demonstrates command of some of the conventions of standard written English.**
  - This piece illustrates consistent control of beginning-of-sentence capitalization and end-of-sentence punctuation. The writer also uses capital letters appropriately in the title of the piece.

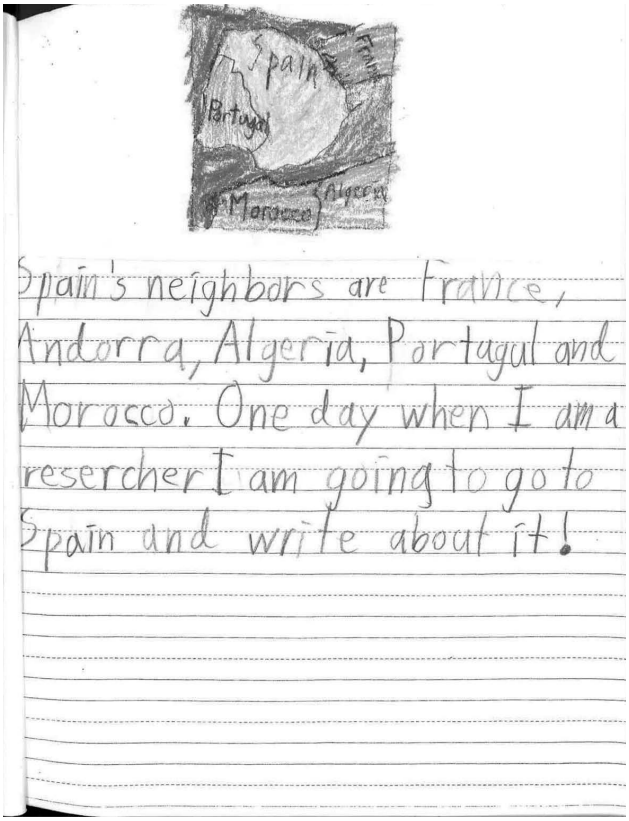
Student Sample: Grade 1, Informative/Explanatory

This informative report was produced in class.









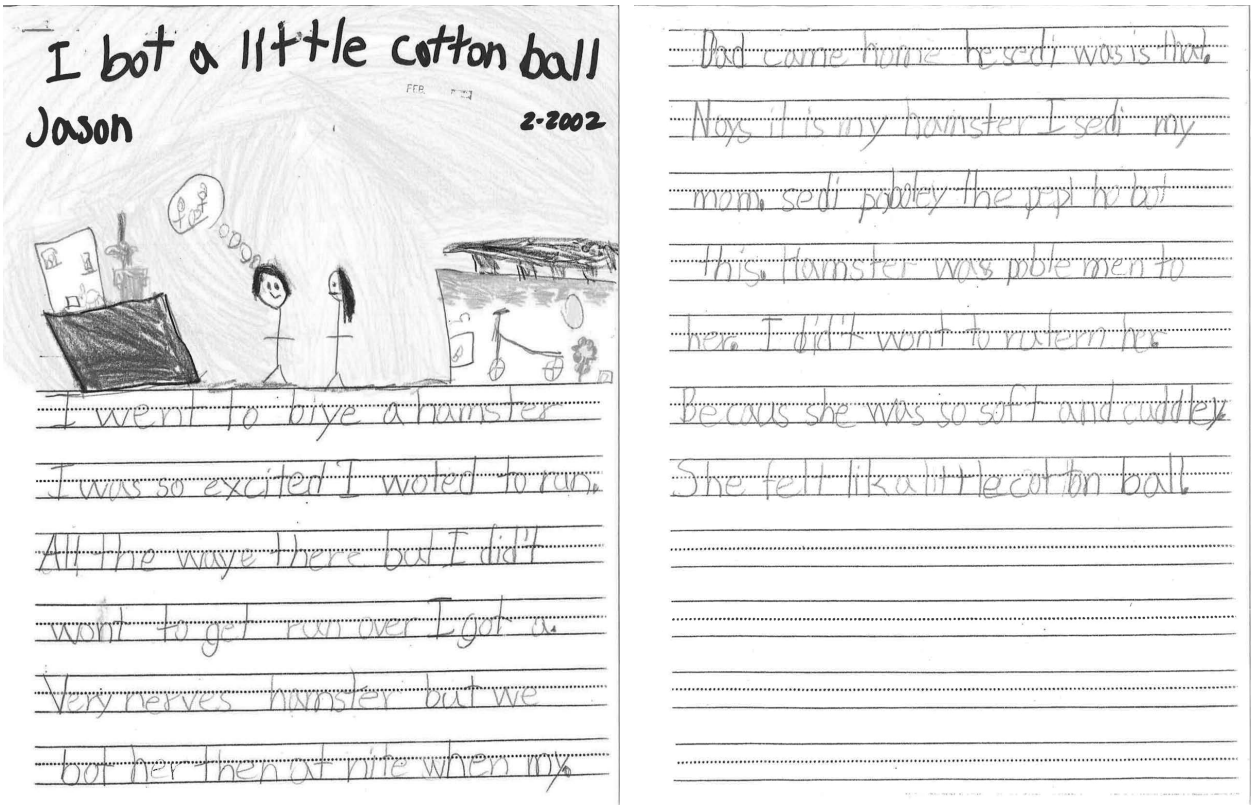
Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **names the topic (in the title).**
  - *My Big Book About Spain*
- **supplies some facts about the topic.**
  - *Spain is loacted* (located) *in the south western tip of Europe.*
  - *Spain has alot of fiestas.*
  - *Spian . . . has bull fights . . .*
  - *Spain's neighbors are France, Andorra, Algeria, Portugal and Morocco.*
- **provides some sense of closure.**
  - *One day when I am a researcher I am going to go to Spain and write about it!*
- **demonstrates command of some of the conventions of standard written English.**
  - This piece illustrates the writer's awareness of beginning-of-sentence capitalization and end-of-sentence punctuation as well as the use of capital letters for proper nouns.

Student Sample: Grade 1, Narrative

This narrative is a process piece that was produced in class.


I bot a little cotton ball
Jason
2-2002

I went to biye a hamster
I was so excited I woted to run.
All the waye there but I did't
wont to get run over I got a
Very nerves hamster but we
bot her then at nite when my.
Dad came home he sedi was is that.
Noys it is my hamster I sedi my
mom sedi pooley the pet he at
this Hamster was pole men to
her. I did't wont to ratern her
Becaus she was so soft and cuddley
She felt lik a little cotton ball.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **establishes the situation with the opening sentence.**
  - *I went to biye* (buy) *a hamster . . .*
- **recounts two or more appropriately sequenced events.**
  - *I got a. Very nerves* (nervous) *hamster . . . then at nite* (night) *when my. Dad came home*
- **includes some detail regarding what happened.**
  - *I was so excited I woted* (wanted) *to run. All the waye* (way) *there . . .*
- **uses temporal words to signal event order (though the writer does not consistently include them).**
  - ***then*** *at nite* (night) ***when*** *my. Dad came home he sedi* (said) *was* (what) *is that. Noys* (noise) *. . .*
- **provides some sense of closure.**
  - *I Did't (didn't) wont (want) to ratern (return) her. Becaus she was so soft and cuddley (cuddly). She felt lik (like) a little cotton ball.*

- **demonstrates growing command of the conventions of standard written English.**
    - There is some evidence in this piece that the writer understands various uses of capital letters: frequently sentences begin with a capital letter, and the pronoun I is consistently capitalized. (However, with the exception of the pronoun I, there are no capital letters in the title.) Periods end some sentences but not all and are sometimes introduced in unconventional places.

Student Sample: Grade 2, Argument (Opinion)

This opinion piece about a work of literature was produced in class.

Owl Moon

When you go owling
you don't need words, or worm
or any thing, but hope. This
is the book of Owl Moon.
This book is written by
Jane Yolen. I like that
phrase Because The boy
was happy becaus he got
to go owling and hes been
wonted to go owling for a
long time and he finally
got to go.

When other Kids are
happy that makes me
happy. I like it Because
it makes me feel good
Because you don't haf't
to have words to go owling
but you haf't to have
hope to see an owl.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic (with some words from the book) and the title.**
  - *When you go owling you don't need words, or worm* (warm) *or any thing. but hope. This is* (from) *the book of Owl Moon.*
- **states an opinion about the book and supplies reasons to support the opinion.**
  - *I like that phrase Because The boy was happy becaus* (because) *he got to go owling and hes* (he's) *been wonted* (wanting) *to go owling for a long time and he finally got to go. When other kids are happy that makes me happy.*
- **uses linking words to connect opinion and reasons.**
  - *I like it **Because** it makes me feel good **Because** you don't haf't* (have) *to have words to go owling **but** you haf't to have hope to see an owl.*
- **provides a concluding statement.**
  - *I like it Because it makes me feel good Because you don't haf't* (have) *to have words to go owling but you haf't to have hope to see an owl.*
- **demonstrates growing command of the conventions of standard written English.**
  - This piece illustrates the writer's understanding that capital letters are used in a title, that the pronoun *I* should be capitalized, and that sentences should begin with a capital letter. The title of the book is underlined, and most words are spelled correctly. The use of the comma and the apostrophe is not consistent, but all sentences end with periods.

Student Sample: Grade 2, Narrative

This narrative was produced in class, and the writer likely received support from the teacher.

My first tooth is gone

I recall one winter night. I was four. My sister and I were running down the hall and something happend. It was my sister and I had run right into each other. Boy! did we cry. But not only did I cry, my tooth was bleeding. Then it felt funny. Then plop! There it was lying in my hand. So that night I put it under my pillow and in the morning I found something. It was not my tooth it was two dollars. So I ran down the hall, like I wasen't supposed to, and showed my mom and dad. They were suprised because when they lost teeth the only thing they got is 50¢.

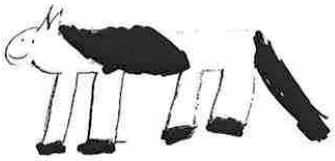
Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **establishes a situation in time and place appropriate for what is to come.**
  - *I recall one winter night. I was four. My sister and I were running down the hall and something happend.*
- **recounts a well-elaborated sequence of events using temporal words to signal event order.**
  - *My sister and I were running down the hall **and** something happend. . . . **But** not only did I cry . . . **Then** it felt funny. **Then** plop! There it was lying in my hand.*
- **includes details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings.**
  - *Boy! did we cry.*
  - *Then it felt funny.*
  - *So I ran down the hall, like I wasen't supposed to, and showed my mom and dad*
- **provides a sense of closure.**
  - *They were suprised because when they lost teeth the only thing they got is 50¢.*
- **demonstrates growing command of the conventions of standard written English.**
  - This piece illustrates the writer's largely consistent use of beginning-of-sentence capitalization and end-of-sentence punctuation (both periods and exclamation points). The pronoun *I* is also capitalized consistently, and almost all the words are spelled correctly. The writer sets off a parenthetical element with commas and uses an apostrophe correctly.

Student Sample: Grade 3, Informative/Explanatory

This informative report is a process piece that was produced in class.



Horses

by Gwen

Why I Chose This Animal

I chose horses because I like to ride them. I also like to pet them. At the camp I go to everybody gets to have horses back riding lessons. Horses are so beautiful and fun to ride.

Horse Families

A mother or female horse is called a mare. A father or male horse is called a stallion. A foal is a baby horse.

Markings

A star is a little white diamond on the forelock. The forelock is a horses forehead. A race is a white line down the middle of the horses face. A blaze is kind of like a race but wider. If the white line on it face spreads out to its eyes it is called a white face. A small amount of white on its muzzle is called a snip. A muzzle is a horses mouth.

Breeds and Color Coats

Icelandic and Shetland ponies are very small when they are full grown. Chestnuts are red-brown and Roans have white hairs on their brown coat. Cream is a rare color. Rare means you don't see the color cream very much. Brown horses are brown all over. Blacks are black all over. Piebalds have black and white spots. Skewbalds are brown and white. Duns are a sandy brown with black manes and tails. Palominos have a yellowish coat and a shiny mane and tail. Grays have black and white hairs that make the color gray. Bays are brown with black manes,tails,and legs. Whites are white all over.

Breeds I Like

I like thoroughbreds because they are such a pretty brown. I like Arabians because their different coats are very beautiful and they're one of the oldest horses. I like Morgans because they have a beautiful reddish-brown coat. I like Lipizzaners because their white coats are so very pretty. I like Icelandic and Shetland ponies because they are so very cute, pretty and small.

Horses from Different Countries

Hocaidos are from Japan, Sumbas are from Indonesia, and Pintos are from America.

Horse Movement

A horse can walk, trot, canter, and gallop. A trot is kind of like a skip. A canter is like a fast skip. And a gallop is like running.

Friendly Horses

Horses can be great friends. Some horses can be dangerous. Most horses are are very lovable.

Foals

Baby horses are called foals. When a foal is ready to be born, the mare(the mother horse) lies down. As soon as the foal is born it struggles to break out of the membrane sack. When the foal breaks out of the sack it breathes on it's own. In about less than a minute the foal tries to get up and walk on it's own. Foals are born with their hooves first and head last. They drink their mother's milk until they're nine to ten months old.

How Long a Horse Lives

They live about 12 to 14 years.

Horses Habitat

You usually find horses in a barn. Some horses are wild. You can find horses on ranches too.

What Horses Eat

Horses eat hay, grass, barley and oats. The best food for a tired horse is oatmeal. Don't give a young horse too much oatmeal, it makes them too hyper. Horses love carrots, apples, molasses and sugar cubes. A block of salt gives the horse important minerals and makes them thirsty so the will drink enough water.

The Most Dangerous Horse

The most dangerous horse is the Percheron. Some people cannot pronounce that so they call them war horses. It is only dangerous if it is a wild horse. If it is wild it can kill you in 7 to 8 minutes. If it is trained it is nice like any other horse.

The Fastest Horse

The fastest horse is the wild stallion. If you thought , like I did that the Wild stallion was really dangerous you were wrong. A wild stallion can kill you but it could take up to one hour.

The First Horses

The first horses were no bigger than a fox and looked like a donkey. They had short tails and small ears. These horses lived millions of years ago, but now they are extinct. The only way we knew there were horses like that was because the first humans (our ancestors) painted these horses on ancient cave walls. These horses lived in North America and over the years they changed into the horses we know now.

Horse Survival

Most horses live on farms or ranches, but some horses are wild. Wild horses can survive hard weather and they graze on hills, marshes and grasslands. These days wild horses are very rare. People work to keep these wild horses free.

My Description of a Horse

A horse is a mammal because it has fur, drinks milk and their babies are born alive. They have four legs and hooves. They have beautiful long manes and tails.

I like horses and I know a lot about them. I like to ride them and they're so beautiful! Their coats are beautiful, I wish I had a horse of my own!

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
  - *I chose horses because I like to ride them. . . . Horses are so beautiful and fun to ride.*
- **creates an organizational structure (using headers) that groups related information together.**
  - *Horse Families; Markings; Breeds and Color Coats; Horses from Different Countries*
- **develops the topic with facts and details.**
  - *Hocaidos are from Japan, Sumbas are from Indonesia, and Pintos are from America.*
  - *A horse can walk, trot, canter, and gallop.*
  - *They* [horses] *live about 12 to 14 years.*
  - *The most dangerous horse is the Percheron.*
- **uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information.**
  - *I like Morgans* ***because*** *they have a beautiful reddish-brown coat.*
  - ***When*** *a foal is ready to be born, the mare (the mother horse) lies down.*

  - *The first horses were no bigger than a fox **and** looked like a donkey.*
  - *Most horses live on farms or ranches, **but** some horses are wild.*
- **provides a concluding section.**
  - *I like horses and I know a lot about them. I like to ride them and they're so beautiful! Their coats are beautiful, I wish I had a horse of my own!*
- **demonstrates growing command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 3, Narrative

This narrative was produced in class, and the writer likely received support from the teacher.

When my Puppys Ranaway

ONE night when the air was warm, my puppys were sleeping on the back porch. Me and my sisters were getting ready for bed. When I was in bed. I read a chapter from my. Nancy Drew book. When I finished the chapter I turned out my lamp. I wuldn't go to sleep.

I went into the living room. I saw my mom geting ready to walk out the door. I asked "where are you going"? "Just for a drive" she replied. She had a worried exspression on her face.

I knew somthing was wrong.

I thought maybe if I went outside and played with my puppys. I would forget about moms worried exspression and go to sleep.

When I opened The back door, I excpected my puppys Maggie and Tucker to jump up on me. They didn't come at all. I called, they still didn't come.

Now I knew somthing was wrong.

I went and woke up my dad, he said moms got it under control I thought mom had taken them to the vet because somthing was really wrong. Dad wouldn't tell me anything else. I went to my room and cried. Thats all I rembered about that

night because I fell asleep.
The next day I still worried.
I worried all through school.
When I got home from me
and my mom made a snack for
sisters.
I asked my mom, "so were are
the puppys"? Her eyes started to
fill with tears as she answered
my question with 3 words, "I don't
know," she burst into tears. So did I.
She hugged me. "If we never find
them I am sure they will have
a good home.
I went outside and sat in moms
rocking chair. I cried some more.
Mom came out I got up. She
sat down and motioned me by waving
her hand to come and sit on her lap.
I went over and cried on her
shoulder.
After dinner that night we went
looking for them, we couldn't find them
at all.
My dad after work each day went
to the pound to see if they had
picked them up. They didn't at all.
I've got over them leaving because
mom says we can get 2 new puppys
very soon.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **establishes a situation and introduces the narrator.**
  - *ONE night when the air was warm, my puppys were sleeping on the back porch. . . . I turned out my lamp. I wuldn't go to sleep. . . . I saw my mom geting ready to walk out the door. . . . She had a worried exspression on her face. I knew somthing was wrong.*
- **organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and uses temporal words and phrases to signal event order.**
  - ***When** I opened The back door I excpected my puppys Maggie and Tucker to jump up on me. They didn't come at all. I called, they **still** didn't come. **Now** I knew something was wrong.*

- **uses dialogue and description of characters' actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.**
    - *I asked "where are you going"? "Just for a drive" she replied. She had a worried exspression on her face.*
    - *I knew somthing was wrong.*
    - *I went to my room and cried.*
    - *The next day I still worried. I worried all through school.*
    - *Her eyes started to fill with tears as she answered my question with 3 words, "I don't know," she burst into tears. So did I. She hugged me.*
    - *I went outside and sat in moms rocking chair. I cried some more.*
    - *I've got over them leaving because mom says we can get 2 new puppys very soon.*
- **provides a sense of closure.**
    - *I've got over them leaving because mom says we can get 2 new puppys very soon.*
- **demonstrates growing command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 4, Argument (Opinion)

This argument was produced in class, and the writer likely received feedback from her teacher and peers.

Zoo Field Trip

Dear Mr. _____ and Mrs. _____,

We have a problem. The wildlife here in _____ is very limited. There is not a lot of opportunity to learn about conservation and wildlife preservation. If we took a field trip to _____ our problem would be solved. _____, _____, _____ and I would like to take our class for a great learning experience. In addition, we will provide a study guide to _____ to identify the animals and provide information about conservation of endangered wildlife.

If we went on a field trip, we will learn about the wildlife from around the world and how _____ provides a natural habitat for them to live and breed. This information would help us to understand the importance of science in our day to day life. We would use math to make a budget and figure out a way to earn money. These skills will be very useful again and again. We will learn how to make a schedule with target dates. This will provide us with a plan that covers the entire project from start to finish. The preparation of the study guide will require lots of research and organization of information.

The first thing to do is research, research, research! Next, we will choose a fund raiser (with your approval, of course). This will earn money for the field trip. The parents will hopefully chip in their time and money, if we don't get enough. We will prepare a plan schedule. This will provide the dates that team members will need to accomplish the steps toward our goal. My competent adult model is the Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World. It shows us step by step how to plan a trip and what to see.

Now, you are asking why should I approve a trip to _____? How does this help _____ and the students? Besides the fact that the project planning, fund raising, budgeting and reporting will provide an excellent learning opportunity, it will provide education. It will also provide awareness of wildlife and the importance of conservation. This project will be evaluated by its successful planning and its ability to involve our class in wildlife conservation. The trip will be evaluated by the student participation on the trip and a plan of conservation that identifies what we can all do to protect and respect wildlife so they will still be around when we have children.

Sincerely,

_____

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic clearly, states an opinion, and creates an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.**
    - *We have a problem. The wildlife here in _____ is very limited. There is not a lot of opportunity to learn about conservation and wildlife preservation. If we took a field trip to _____ our problem would be solved. _____, _____, _____ and I would like to take our class for a great learning experience.*
- **provides reasons that are supported by facts and details.**
    - *If we went on a field trip, we will learn about the wildlife from around the world and how _____ provides a natural habitat for them to live and breed. This information would help us to understand the importance of science in our day to day life. We would use math to make a budget and figure out a way to earn money . . . We will learn how to make a schedule with target dates . . . The preparation of the study guide will require lots of research and organization of information.*

- **links opinion and reasons using words and phrases.**
    - *The first thing to do . . . Next . . . Now, you are asking . . . Besides the fact . . .*
- **provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented.**
    - The final paragraph details possible objections to the field trip and argues against each one:

      Now, you are asking why should I approve a trip to _____?. . . Besides the fact that the project planning, fund raising, budgeting and reporting will provide an excellent learning opportunity, it will provide education. It will also provide awareness of wildlife and the importance of conservation.
- **demonstrates exemplary command of the conventions of standard written English.**
    - This piece has been edited by student response groups as well as by adults, so it is nearly flawless in terms of observing the conventions of standard written English.

Student Sample: Grade 4, Narrative

This narrative was produced for an on-demand assessment. Students were asked to respond to the following prompt: "One morning you wake up and find a strange pair of shoes next to your bed. The shoes are glowing. In several paragraphs, write a story telling what happens."

Glowing Shoes

One quiet, Tuesday morning, I woke up to a pair of bright, dazzling shoes, lying right in front of my bedroom door. The shoes were a nice shade of violet and smelled like catnip. I found that out because my cats, Tigger and Max, were rubbing on my legs, which tickled.

When I started out the door, I noticed that Tigger and Max were following me to school. Other cats joined in as well. They didn't even stop when we reached Main Street!

"Don't you guys have somewhere to be?" I quizzed the cats.

"Meeeeeooooow!" the crowd of cats replied.

As I walked on, I observed many more cats joining the stalking crowd. I moved more swiftly. The crowd of cats' walk turned into a prance. I sped up. I felt like a rollercoaster zooming past the crowded line that was waiting for their turn as I darted down the sidewalk with dashing cats on my tail.

When I reached the school building . . . SLAM! WHACK! "Meeyow!" The door closed and every single cat flew and hit the door.

Whew! Glad that's over! I thought.

I walked upstairs and took my seat in the classroom.

"Mrs. Miller! Something smells like catnip! Could you open the windows so the smell will go away? Pleeeeaase?" Zane whined.

"Oh, sure! We could all use some fresh air right now during class!" Mrs. Miller thoughtfully responded.

"Noooooo!" I screamed.

When the teacher opened the windows, the cats pounced into the building.

"It's a cat attack!" Meisha screamed

Everyone scrambled on top of their desks. Well, everyone except Cade, who was absolutely obsessed with cats.

"Awww! Look at all the fuzzy kitties! They're sooo cute! Mrs. Miller, can I pet them?" Cade asked, adorably.

"Why not! Pet whichever one you want!" she answered.

"Thanks! Okay, kitties, which one of you wants to be petted by Cade Dahlin?" he asked the cats. None of them answered. They were all staring at me.

"Uh, hi?" I stammered.

Rrriiiiinng! The recess bell rang. Everyone, including Mrs. Miller, darted out the door.

Out at recess, Lissa and I played on the swings.

"Hey! Look over there!" Lissa shouted. Formed as an ocean wave, the cats ran toward me.

Luckily, Zane's cat, Buddy, was prancing along with the aroma of catnip surrounding his fur. He ran up to me and rubbed on my legs. The shoes fell off. Why didn't I think of this before? I notioned.

"Hey Cade! Catch!"

Cade grabbed the shoes and slipped them on.

The cats changed directions and headed for Cade.

"I'm in heaven!" he shrieked.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **orients the reader by establishing a situation and introducing the narrator and characters.**
  - *One quiet, Tuesday morning, I woke up to a pair of bright, dazzling shoes, lying right in front of my bedroom door.*
- **organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally.**
  - The teacher opens the window; cats come into the classroom; at recess the cats surge toward the narrator; her shoes fall off; another student (one who loves cats) picks up the narrator's shoes; the cats move toward him; he is delighted.
  - *. . . Tigger and Max were following me to school. Other cats joined in as well. . . . When I reached the school building . . . SLAM! WHACK! "Meeyow!" The door closed and every single cat flew and hit the door.*
- **uses dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.**
  - *I felt like a rollercoaster zooming past the crowded line that was waiting for their turn . . .*
  - *Whew! Glad that's over! I thought.*
  - *"Awww! Look at all the fuzzy kitties! They're sooo cute! Mrs. Miller, can I pet them? Cade asked, adorably.*
- **uses a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.**
  - *When I started out the door . . . As I walked on . . . When I reached the school building . . .*
- **uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.**
  - *The shoes were a nice shade of violet and smelled like catnip. I found that out because my cats, Tigger and Max, were rubbing on my legs, which tickled.*
  - *"Awww! Look at all the fuzzy kitties! They're sooo cute! . . .*
- **provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.**
  - The narrator describes Cade earlier in the piece as a student obsessed with cats. The story concludes logically because such a character would likely be pleased with the effects of wearing catnip-scented shoes.
- **demonstrates exemplary command of the conventions of standard written English.**

Student Sample: Grade 5, Informative/Explanatory

The informative writing that follows was produced in class.

Author Response: Roald Dahl
By:

Roald Dahl is a very interesting author to me. That's because he knows what a kid wants to hear. He has a "kid's mind". He is the only author that I know that makes up interesting words like Inkland, fizz wizard, and gobble funking. All his stories are the same type. I don't mean the same story written again and again. What I mean is that they all have imagination, made up words, and disgusting thoughts. Some of his stories that have those things are Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda, The Witches and Danny the Champion of the World. The Witches is the book that I am reading right now, and it is like The BFG, another book that is by Roald Dahl. They are alike because in The BFG, Sophie and the BFG, (the big friendly giant), are trying to stop other giants from eating human beings. The Witches has the same problem. The Boy, (he has no name), is trying to stop the witches from turning children into small mice, and then killing the mice by stepping on them. Both stories have to stop evil people from doing something horrible. Roald Dahl uses a lot of similes. Some similes that he used that I like are: Up he shot again like a bullet in the barrel of a gun. And my favorite is: They were like a chorus of dentists' drills all grinding away together. In all of Roald Dahl's books, I have noticed that the plot or the main problem of the story is either someone killing someone else, or a kid having a bad life. But it is always about

something terrible. All the characters that Roald Dahl ever made were probably fake characters. A few things that the main characters have in common are that they all are poor. None of them are rich. Another thing that they all have in common is that they either have to save the world, someone else, or themselves.

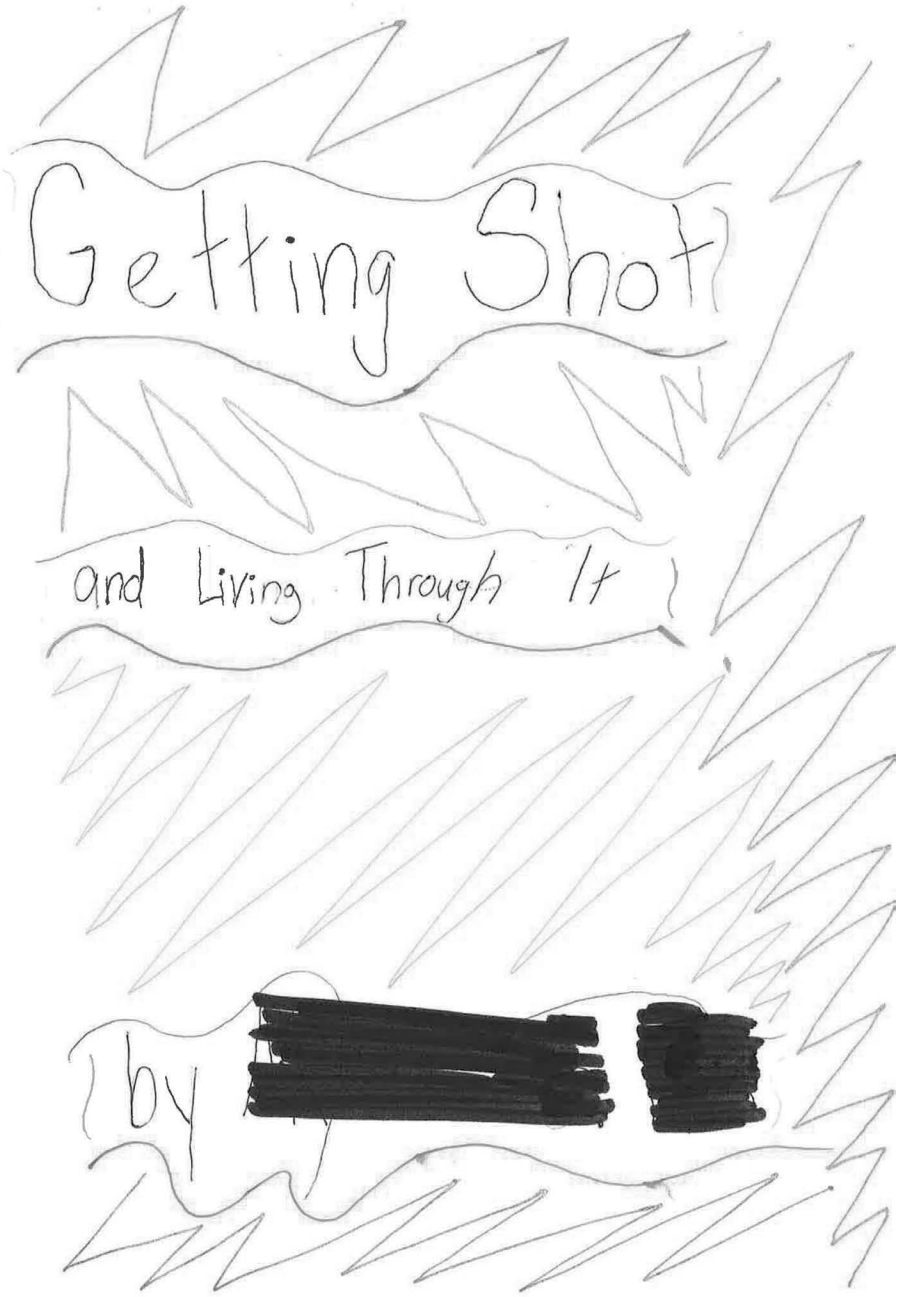
Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic clearly, provides a general observation and focus, and groups related information logically.**
    - *Roald Dahl is a very interesting author to me. That's because he knows what a kid wants to hear.*
- **develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.**
    - *He is the only author that I know that makes up interesting words like Inkland, fizz wizard, and gobble funking.*
    - *Roald Dahl uses a lot of similes. Some similes that he used that I like are: Up he shot again like a bullet in the barrel of a gun. And my favorite is: They were like a chorus of dentists' drills all grinding away together.*
    - *In all of Roald Dahl's books, I have noticed that the plot or the main problem of the story is either someone killing someone else, or a kid having a bad life.*
- **links ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses.**
    - *The Witches is the book that I am reading right now, and it is like The BFG, another book that is by Roald Dahl. They are alike because . . .*
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.**
    - *Roald Dahl uses a lot of similes.*
    - *I have noticed that the plot or the main problem of the story . . .*
    - *All the characters . . .*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 5, Narrative

This narrative was produced in class, and the writer likely received feedback from her teacher and peers.



We were in the darkness filled, mountain-top cold, waiting room. We were preparing for the shots of our lives. Getting shots for malaria and more.

There were many benches all shoved to the right. It was hard to see the color in the murky dark but it seemed to be some sort of faded brown. The room was big, no, huge which gave it all the more reason to be terror bringing. Who knew what would be lurking in the corner! Rats, monsters, anything! There were also doors. Three doors, which were also brown and also faded. One was the way in. Not the way out unfortunately. Another was the way to the other evil places. With the evil hallway and the evil office. The last door was the most evil, The Shot Room.

The rest of the room was filled with families. Including my family of five. My five year old self,

my three year old brother, and my one year old sister. Then there was my mom and dad. Some of the other children were screeching or crying or not knowing what would happen to them. So they would just be playing. I was in the midde of both. I was playing with fear, playing, knowing what would happen, knowing that the worst moment of my life was coming ever closer. It was like knowing you would be put to sleep, sent to the dementors, waiting to take a ride in the Electric Chair.

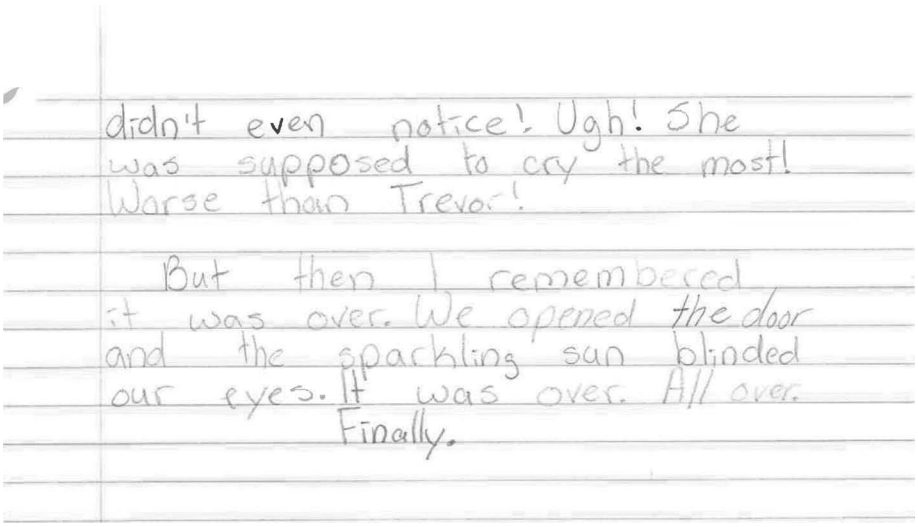
I had had shots before. They were not your best friend. After a long while a nurse said, "Alyssa, Trevor, and Taryn, your turn." It was our turn. I got half dragged and I half walked. The door creaked open. It was the room of no return. The door slammed shut. There was no way out. Grown-ups guarding every outryway, making sure we couldn't escape. Seeing there was no way out we gave up and went for it.

Trevor went first. Before the shot was even touching him he was already howling. When it did hit him he was yelling loud enough to deafen you. He was done. It was my turn (he was still crying so a nurse tried to calm him down).

I was paralyzed with fear, I was death-defyed, I was scared. My mom and dad told me to "just be brave." "Just be brave?!" How could I "just be brave?!" But I had no time to think. It was coming. Just waiting to pounce, just waiting to penetrate my skin! I saw why Trevor had screamed so loud. I couldn't hear anything, I could just see it coming, closer, closer!

It touched, entered my flesh, and fufilled it's job. I started with a whimper then, BOOM! Full Blast cry.

When Taryn had her turn she



didn't even notice! Ugh! She
was supposed to cry the most!
Worse than Trevor!

But then I remembered
it was over. We opened the door
and the sparkling sun blinded
our eyes. It was over. All over.
Finally.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **orients the reader by establishing a situation and introducing the narrator.**
  - *We were in the darkness filled, mountain-top cold, waiting room. We were preparing for the shots of our lives.*
- **organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and uses a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.**
  - *Trevor went first. . . . It was my turn. . . . When Taryn had her turn . . .*
- **uses narrative techniques to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.**
  - Humor through exaggeration: *Before the shot was even touching him he was already howling. When it did hit him he was yelling loud enough to deafen you.*
  - Reporting a character's thoughts: *I was paralyzed with fear, I was death-defyed, I was scared.*
  - Pacing: *It touched, entered my flesh, and fufilled it's job. I started with a whimper the, BOOM! full blast cry.*
- **uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.**
  - *We were in the darkness filled, mountain-top cold, waiting room. We were preparing for the shots of our lives.*
  - *There were also doors. Three doors, which were also brown and also faded. One was the way in. Not the way out unfortunately.*
  - *The rest of the room was filled with families. Including my family of five. My five year old self, my three year old bother, and my one year old sister.*
- **provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events (emphasizing closure by the use of sentence fragments).**
  - *We opened the door and the sparkling sun blinded our eyes. It was over. All over. Finally.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 6, Argument

This argument was written as homework after a class in which grade 6 students viewed a movie titled *Benchwarmers* and discussed how movie writers and producers promote smoking. The letter is addressed to the producer of a film in which smoking appears.

Dear Mr. Sandler,

Did you know that every cigarette a person smokes takes seven minutes off their life? I mentioned this because I just watched the movie, Benchwarmers, and I noticed that Carlos smoked. Why did you feel the need to have one of the characters smoke? Did you think that would make him look cool? Did you think that would make him look older? It did neither of those things. As a matter of fact, I think it made him look stupid and not very cool. Especially when he put out a cigarette on his tongue.

If I were producing a movie, I would want my characters to be strong, healthy and smart. I would not have any smokers in my movies for many reasons. The first reason is it sets a bad example for children. An estimated 450,000 Americans die each year from tobacco related disease. In fact, tobacco use causes many different types of cancers such as lung, throat, mouth, and tongue. Another reason not to promote smoking is it ages and wrinkles your skin. Who wants to look 75 if you are only 60? It turns your teeth yellow and may lead to gum disease and tooth decay. Lastly, smoking is a very expensive habit. A heavy smoker spends thousands of dollars a year on cigarettes. I can think of better things to spend money on.

So Mr. Sandler, I urge you to take smoking out of all future movies you produce. Instead of having your characters smoke have them do healthy things. That will set a positive influence for children instead of poisoning their minds. Thanks for reading my letter. I hope you agree with my opinion.

Sincerely, _____

P.S. I love your Chanukah song.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a claim.**
  - *I would not have any smokers in my movies for many reasons.*
- **organizes the reasons and evidence clearly.**
  - *The first reason is it sets a bad example for children.*
  - *Another reason not to promote smoking is it ages and wrinkles your skin.*
  - *It turns your teeth yellow and may lead to gum disease and tooth decay.*
- **supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the topic.**
  - *Lastly, smoking is a very expensive habit. A heavy smoker spends thousands of dollars a year on cigarettes.*
- **uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationship between the claim and reasons.**
  - *The first reason . . . Another reason . . . Lastly . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style (except for the postscript).**
  - *Dear Mr. Sandler . . . Thanks for reading my letter. I hope you agree with my opinion . . .* Sincerely *. . .*

- **provides a concluding statement that follows from the argument presented.**
    - *Instead of having your characters smoke have them do healthy things. That will set a positive influence for children instead of poisoning their minds.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 6, Argument

This argument (incorrectly labeled a story) is a process piece produced in class.

A Pet Story About My Cat . . . Gus

People get pets so that they will never be lonely, and they will always have a friend to be there for them. Ask your heart, what makes the best pet??? Some people think a best pet is picky, energetic, and sneaky, but I think my pet is the best pet because he is a cuddle bug, he's playful, and he loves me! Gus was about eight weeks old when we got him, now he is 4 1/2 months old, and he is about as big as a size eight sneaker. He is a little gray and white kitten. If you look closely he has a gray tail, but there are darker gray rings around it. He has a little white on his face, and some on his tummy and paws. He has a little stripe on his leg but it is his back left leg only. He's very cute, and he purrs a lot! He also has a cute little gray nose.

One of the reasons why my cat Gus is the best pet is because he is a cuddle bug. When Gus was a baby, he had to be kept in a cage because he wasn't allowed to interact with the other pets until he was older. He couldn't interact with the other pets because when Twister was a baby, the ferrets bit her ear and dragged her under the bed, and bit her in the back of the neck and we didn't want the same thing to happen to Gus. Also because Twister had to be kept in a cage when she was little, too. His cage was in my room so when he meowed, as if to say, "Get me out!" I would have to take him out and sleep with him. All he would do is thank me for doing that by snuggling against my chin! Another example to prove that Gus is a cuddle bug, is that when I'm feeding Gus, I put his and Twister's bowl up on the counter when I do so, and Twister sits there patiently while Gus is snuggling against my legs to show affection toward me. He snuggles my leg even when I'm walking around! Well, at least he tries to, because he follows me, and when I stop walking, he starts to cuddle. Eventually I pick him up and cuddle him back!!! Finally, when I have nothing to do and I'm just sitting on my bed reading, Gus jumps up with me and then he pushes away the covers to get under them, and he sleeps on my chest to keep my company when I'm board. After he slept on my tummy many times, he finally got the nickname _____ Cuddle Buddy. Now I always snuggle with my favorite cuddle buddy . . . Gus!!!

A second reason why Gus is the best pet is because he's playful. Most of the time when Gus is lying on the couch minding his own business, I'll reach out to pet him then he'll start biting my hand and attacking it!!! He does this to be playful, not to hurt anyone but he just wants to have fun. It kind of tickles when he does it, actually. Gus also has a little toy mouse that is attached to a string that I drag around the house so that Gus will follow it. The mouse has a leopard skin pattern on it with balls of fur as hands and feet. The mouse is about the size of the pencil sharpeners in Mrs. _____ classroom. He goes after that mouse so fast that it's hard to see him running by to catch it. When Gus was a baby, I would put him in my bed to sleep with, but before we went to sleep, I would move my feet around underneath the covers, while Gus was on top chasing them around. Eventually, he got tired and lied down near my feet, but before he was completely asleep, I would pick him up and put him near my pillow and we slept together. Gus loves doing that all the time. I love how Gus is so playful!!!

The last reason why Gus is the best pet is because he loves me! He always misses me whenever I'm not there. When I come home from school and I open the door, Gus comes flying around the corner, and starts to climb my pants! When he gets high enough. I grab him in my arms and we start cuddling each other while Gus is happily purring. He does this a lot. Most of the time I'm in my room watching TV, while Gus and Twister are fighting and killing each other, they come dashing around the corner and into my room. I, of course, have to break up the fight. After that, I put them on my bed and hold them down, but they keep squirming. Soon, they get tired and sleep with me, silently, watching TV. Gus is with me as much as possible. Sometimes he's busy playing with Twister, sleeping, or eating. Otherwise, he's playing or sleeping with me. We do so many things together and I'm glad I got him, but technically, he chose me. It was a homeless cat shelter. They were able to catch the kittens, but not there mommy. His brothers and sisters were all playing, but he was sleeping under the table. Soon, he walked out from under the table and slept with me while we cuddled on the couch. That's how I met Gus.

People have feelings for their pets that show that they love them very much. When I had to decide what makes the best pet, I would say that Gus is the best pet because he is a cuddle bug, he's playful, and he loves me. When you think about the examples that I gave you, like when I told you about how Gus snuggles against my chin, you saw that Gus ***IS*** the best pet and if you don't believe me, you have a problem with deciding who the best pet is.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a claim and organizes the reasons and evidence clearly.**
    - *. . . I think my pet is the best pet because he is a cuddle bug, he's playful, and he loves me!*
- **supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the topic.**
    - *One of the reasons why my cat Gus is the best pet is because he is a cuddle bug.* The writer elaborates this point by providing three examples of his cat's affectionate nature: freed from his cage, the cat snuggles against the narrator's chin; the cat rubs against the narrator's legs; and the cat sleeps on the narrator.
    - *A second reason why Gus is the best pet is because he's playful.* The writer elaborates this point with three examples of the cat's playful nature: Gus attacks the narrator's hand; Gus plays with a toy mouse; and Gus attacks the narrator's feet when they are under the covers.
    - *The last reason why Gus is the best pet is because he loves me!* The writer elaborates this point with three examples: Gus runs to greet the narrator when he returns home from school; Gus and the other cat, Twister, scuffle with one another until the narrator separates them, and then they sleep with the narrator as he watches television; and Gus spends as much time as possible in the narrator's company.
- **uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among the claim and reasons.**
    - *One of my reasons . . . A second reason . . . The last reason . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style (except for the last sentence).**
    - The style throughout the document is appropriate for convincing readers about the writer's claim although the last sentence in the three-page-long paper (*. . . if you don't believe me, you have a problem with deciding who the best pet is*) seems inappropriate because it lapses into *ad hominem.*
- **provides a concluding statement that follows from the argument presented.**
    - *When I had to decide what makes the best pet, I would say that Gus is the best pet . . . When you think about the examples that I gave you, like when I told you about how Gus snuggles against my chin, you saw that Gus* ***IS*** *the best pet . . .*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 7, Argument

This argument was produced for an on-demand assessment. Students were asked to a write a letter to their principal about a plan to install video cameras in the classroom for safety reasons. The abbreviated time frame of the assessment (and the consequent lack of opportunity to perform research and revise) explains the absence of information from sources and possibly also the occasional errors.

Video Cameras in Classrooms

You are seated in class as your teacher explains and points things out on the whiteboard. You twitch your hand, accidentally nudging your pencil, which rolls off your desk and clatters to the floor. As you lean over to pick up your pencil, your cell phone falls out of your coat pocket! Luckily you catch it without your teacher seeing, but it is in plain view of the video camera's shiny lens that points straight at you. The classroom phone rings, and after a brief conversation, your teacher walks over to your desk and kneels down beside you. "About that cell phone of yours . . ." How did that get you in trouble? How could it possibly be a good idea to put cameras in classrooms?

When students are in their classrooms, teachers are in the classroom too, usually. But when a teacher goes out of the classroom, what usually happens is either everything goes on as usual, or the students get a little more talkative. Cameras aren't there because people talk a lot. It is the teacher's job to keep people quiet. If something horrible happened, somebody in class would usually report it, or it would just be obvious to the teacher when he came back that something had happened.

If we already have cameras in the halls, why spend the money to get thirty more cameras for all the different classrooms? Our school district already has a low budget, so we would be spending money on something completely unnecessary. There hasn't been camera-worthy trouble in classrooms. Camera-worthy trouble would be bad behavior every time a teacher left the room. There is no reason to install cameras that might just cause trouble, both for the students and for the budget.

Different students react differently when there is a camera in the room. Some students get nervous and flustered, trying hard to stay focused on their work with a camera focused on them. 90% of students claim that they do better work when they are calmer, and cameras are not going to help. Other students look at cameras as a source of entertainment. These students will do things such as wave at the camera, make faces, or say hi to the people watching through the camera. This could be a big distraction for others who are trying to learn and participate in class. Still other students will try to trick the camera. They will find a way to block the lens or do something that the camera will not be likely to catch. All of these different students will be distracted by the cameras in their classrooms.

Instead of solving problems, cameras would cause the problems. That is why I disagree with the idea to put cameras in classrooms. This plan should not be put to action.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a claim (stated late in the essay).**
  - *. . . I disagree with the idea to put cameras in classrooms. This plan should not be put to action.*
- **acknowledges alternate or opposing claims.**
  - *Instead of solving problems, cameras would cause the problems.*
- **supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the topic.**
  - [Cameras are not necessary because] [i]*f something horrible happened, somebody in class would usually report it, or it would just be obvious to the teacher when he came back that something had happened.*
  - *. . . we already have cameras in the halls . . .*

- *Our school district already has a low budget . . .*

- **uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among the claim, reasons, and evidence.**
  - *If . . . already . . . why . . . so . . . Some students . . . Other students . . . These students . . . All of these different students . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style.**
  - *When students are in their classrooms, teachers are in the classroom too, usually. But when a teacher goes out of the classroom, what usually happens is either everything goes on as usual, or the students get a little more talkative.*
  - *Different students react differently when there is a camera in the room.*
- **provides a concluding statement that follows from and supports the argument presented.**
  - *Instead of solving problems, cameras would cause the problems. That is why I disagree with the idea to put cameras in classrooms. This plan should not be put to action.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 7, Informative/Explanatory

The extended project that led to this scientific report required students to review existing research, conduct original research, and produce a report. Although the student who wrote the report was in grade 7, the conceptual understanding the report displays is clearly at an exemplary level.

A Geographical Report

My report is on a very rare and unique wetland that many people do not even know exists. They occur only in a few places around the world.

My topic is created by a specific geographical condition. Vernal pools in San Diego occur only on the local mesas and terraces, where soil conditions allow, but these are the ideal place for much of the city's urban and agricultural development. Is it possible to find a balance between the two conflicting purposes of expansion and preservation?

This raises an interesting question; how can you establish vernal pools being thought of as a geographical asset?

METHODS

To answer my question I had to get information on vernal pools: what they are, where they are, and how they are a sensitive natural habitat. Then I needed to examine how city expansion is affecting vernal pools, and if it is apt to continue. I needed to know what the City thinks about the problem and what they are planning to do.

First I looked for any information available on vernal pools at public libraries, but I couldn't find what I was looking for. The topic is apparently too obscure. Next I went to a university library that had an environmental department to get as much information as possible (University of San Diego).

I also interviewed several authorities in the field: the district representative for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the federal agency responsible for the protection of wetlands; a senior environment planner with the City of San Diego, who wrote the City's Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO); the Station botanist at Miramar Naval Air Station, who is in charge of their vernal pool management plan on the land that has the largest number of pools remaining in the City of San Diego; a biologist working for RECON (Regional Environmental Consultants), a firm which is mapping the vernal pools for the City of Hemet, (another city in San Diego County facing the same issues); and finally a geographer working for SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments), a regional organization that gathers, records, and analyzes data associated with regional planning and environmental issues. They answered many questions and offered their own ideas and information, including additional articles on my subject. I looked at several maps and photos of vernal pools locations, and charts of changing land use.

To decide how much education may be needed about vernal pools, I made a questionnaire, and surveyed two classrooms of elementary students, and a group of forty-two adults, trying to cover most age groups.

WHAT VERNAL POOLS ARE

Vernal pools are a unique and rare form of wetland. Wetlands are areas that are covered or soaked by water enough to support plants that grow only in moist ground. Some examples of wetlands are bogs, swamps, marshes, and edges of lakes and streams. These are what people think of when they hear "wetland". But vernal pools are different than these other types of wetlands. They are located on dry and flat places. No one would expect to find a wetland in such a dry area!

San Diego vernal pools are surrounded by small mounds called "mima mounds". The name mima mounds come from the Mima Prairie near Olympia, Washington. People don't know for sure how mima mounds are formed. Some think that they were formed by gophers piling up the earth. Others think that ice wedges from glaciers caused the upheaval, or maybe the wind pushed loose dirt, catching in clumps of shrubs. Mounds can be found on prairies or terraces with a hardpan or clay layer underneath.

Vernal pools are depressions between the mima mounds. In winter the pools are filled by rain storms. In spring the pools look their best, when plants are in full splendor. By summer the pools are dry and look only like a dry pothole, (See illustration of pool cycles and typical cross section.) A vernal pool does not dry by soaking into the ground; the layer of clay or rock underneath the pool prevents the water from soaking through. Instead they dry out from evaporation, or use by the plants. The mima mounds are not impervious so one pool tends to drain into another. Therefore, the pools have to be on flat land; the pools cannot be on a slope or the water would run off, and the pools would not be filled.

[Illustration here]

Typical Cross Section of Vernal Pool

[Illustration here]

Vernal Pool Cycle

WHY VERNAL POOLS ARE SO IMPORTANT

Vernal pools are a very rare, specific habitat. Hardly any are left, so we don't have many to lose. There used to be vernal pools on many of the mesas and terraces of San Diego County, and the Central Valley of California. Now there are almost no vernal pools in the Central Valley, and an estimated 97% have been lost in San Diego County. An estimated 80% of the remaining pools in San Diego are located on Miramar Naval Air Station. (See map, next page.)

[Illustration here]

Vernal Pool Distribution, San Diego County

It does not take much to disturb a vernal pool. Even grazing or off road vehicle use in the summer, when pool species are dormant and people could think they are just a dry hole, can damage them. Most are disturbed by grading and flattening of their habitat, or by breakup of the impervious layer. With just flat land there would be no depressions for vernal pools to form; what would form would be "vernal mud". With no impervious layer the water would just sink into the ground, and would be there only for a short period of time, not enough for wetland plants.

The mima mounds have to be protected too. If the watershed for the pools is changed, the condition of the pools changes. If there isn't enough water from runoff, then all plant or animal life in them disappears, because they need enough moisture at the right time, to live. If there is too much water, then the pool may turn into another kind of wetland, such as a bog.

Although people have begun to study them, there is still a lot to learn. One thing scientists know is that they are a part of a larger environment. Many animals travel from other areas to feed on plants or animals, or drink from the vernal pools. For example, water fowl from many other places will stop at the pools to eat the fairy shrimp and snack on the plants.

Vernal pools have a large assortment of rare and exotic flora and fauna (plants and animals). Five of them are on the federal list of endangered species, and one more is a candidate for listing. The plants and animals in vernal pools are unusual because they have only developed recently compared to other changes in evolution. As scientists study the pools more intently they are finding more and more unknown species. There are temporary pools in other places around the world, but California's vernal pools are different because of their long drought phase, which causes the plants and animals to adapt to the climate. They go into a dormant phase. For example, fairy shrimp lay eggs before the drought which hatch when it gets moist enough to be active. Some plants, in a short period of time, develop seeds; others appear to die out, but quickly spout again from the rain. Many of these species cannot survive outside vernal pools, and some are "endemic" (species found only in a very restricted geographical area).

PROTECTION TECHNIQUES

The first step is to try to keep development away from vernal pools. But to do this you first need to know where the pools are. Thanks to regional mapping efforts, existing vernal pools have been fairly well identified in San Diego County.

There are already laws against disturbances of vernal pools. You could go to jail or get fined a large sum of money for disturbing a wetland. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protects the listed endangered species present, and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers makes sure you don't fill any kind of wetland habitat, including vernal pools. The local office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has submitted a proposal to Washington for a stricter permit process for vernal pools.

When possible the vernal pools should be part of a large preserve of open space. That way the pools would not be isolated islands, but part of their natural communities, and would be protected by a buffer of distance. Fences should not be put directly around the vernal pools unless it cannot be avoided, because it would keep some animals out, such as rabbits which spread plant seeds around when they eat them.

It is important to educate people about vernal pools so they know how important they are and what they look like, and so they know how to preserve them. To see how much education may be needed in San Diego, I surveyed ninety-two people (forty-two adults and fifty elementary students to try to cover all age groups). I asked them if they had heard of vernal pools, and if they knew what they were. About 21% thought they had heard of them, but only 7% really knew what they were. (See pie chart.) I found that much education is needed.

[Illustration here]

Survey Results

At N.A.S. Miramar the Station botanist has been putting articles dealing with vernal pools in almost every issue of the base newspaper. Now most people on the base know about vernal pools, and know how valuable they are.

RECOGNIZING AN ASSET

Education is a key to preserving vernal pools. Vernal pools are very unique and we do not have many to lose. Making new ones does not work. Studies done at the University of California, Santa Barbara, have shown that after five years their complexity goes down.

First, vernal pools must be protected. There could be different ranges of accessibility, from remote (available to research only), somewhat accessible (good for guided seasonal visits), to readily accessible (which may have to be protected by fencing or supervision). The most accessible ones would be a great educational opportunity for the general public. The pools closer to development could be developed into nature centers, with raised boardwalks to protect the habitat, as is done over the hot springs in Yellowstone. (See illustration.)

[Illustration here]

Cross Section of Possible Nature Center

Interpretive signs and docents could provide information. Being very unique, vernal pools would make interesting learning centers. People would learn how the plants and animals adapt to the seasonal changes. This would teach people the importance of vernal pools, how complex they are, how to identify them, and how to preserve them when wet or dry. A park in the Sacramento area has an adjacent vernal pool with hiking trails around it; and it seems to work there because the people there know how important and delicate it is.

Ecotourism, a popular concept now, would be another idea. San Diego is a place where tourists already come. The very climate and geography that brings people here is what created vernal pools. Ecotourism would be easy to add to the other attractions, and would indirectly benefit the city. A tour company might be authorized to place advertisements to bring people to learn the importance of vernal pools and their ecosystem. With many people outside San Diego knowing about vernal pools and concerned about their well-being, there would be widespread support for vernal pool protection.

CONCLUSION

The problem of endangering vernal pools will not go away, because the City will need more land to develop. However, vernal pools remain a rare and unique wetland, and need protection. Even though there are laws made to protect them, pools are still being lost. Education is needed. Widespread education showing how important vernal pools are, and how easy they are to disturb, will create widespread support for protection.

A balance between expansion and preservation will not come easily, but if the public views vernal pools as a geographical asset, the balance will shift toward long-term vernal pool preservation.

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Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow.**
    - *My report is on a very rare and unique wetland that many people do not even know exists. . . . Vernal pools in San Diego occur only on the local mesas and terraces, where soil conditions allow, but these are the ideal place for much of the city's urban and*

agricultural development. Is it possible to find a balance between the two conflicting purposes of expansion and preservation?

- **organizes ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.**
    - Definition: *Vernal pools are a unique and rare form of wetland. . . . Vernal pools are depressions between the mima mounds. . . . Vernal pools are a very rare, specific habitat.*
    - Comparison/contrast: *Some examples of wetlands are bogs, swamps, marshes, and edges of lakes and streams. . . . But vernal pools are different than these other types of wetlands. They are located on dry and flat places.*
    - If/then and cause/effect: *If the watershed for the pools is changed, the condition of the pools changes. If there isn't enough water from runoff, then all plant or animal life in them disappears, because they need enough moisture at the right time, to live.*
- **includes formatting and graphics when useful to aiding comprehension.**
    - The writer uses a number of headings to help section off the text: *METHODS*, *WHAT VERNAL POOLS ARE*, *WHY VERNAL POOLS ARE SO IMPORTANT*, *PROTECTION TECHNIQUES*, *RECOGNIZING AN ASSET*, and *CONCLUSION*.
    - The writer offers a cross-section of a vernal pool, an illustration of the vernal pool cycle, a map of the distribution of vernal pools in San Diego County, a pie chart of responses to a survey, and a cross-section of a possible nature center.
- **develops the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.**
    - *Vernal pools are a unique and rare form of wetland. Wetlands are areas that are covered or soaked by water enough to support plants that grow only in moist ground. Some examples of wetlands are bogs, swamps, marshes, and edges of lakes and streams.*
    - *San Diego vernal pools are surrounded by small mounds called "mima mounds".*
    - *. . . the layer of clay or rock underneath the pool prevents the water from soaking through. . . . an estimated 97%* [of vernal pools] *have been lost in San Diego County.*
- **uses appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.**
    - *Vernal pools are a very rare, specific habitat. Hardly any are left, so we don't have many to lose.*
    - *First, vernal pools must be protected.*
    - *Ecotourism, a popular concept now, would be another idea*.
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.**
    - *Vernal pools . . . habitat . . . wetland . . . bogs . . . mima mounds . . . pool cycles . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style.**
    - *Vernal pools are a unique and rare form of wetland. Wetlands are areas that are covered or soaked by water enough to support plants that grow only in moist ground.*
    - *Vernal pools have a large assortment of rare and exotic flora and fauna (plants and animals). Five of them are on the federal list of endangered species, and one more is a candidate for listing.*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.**
    - *A balance between expansion and preservation will not come easily, but if the public views vernal pools as a geographical asset, the balance will shift toward long-term vernal pool preservation.*
- **demonstrates exemplary command of the conventions of standard written English.**

Student Sample: Grade 8, Informative/Explanatory

This essay was written about a favorite activity. The writer wrote for one entire class period the first day and revised his essay the second day after discussing ideas for revision with a partner.

Football

What I like doing best is playing football, mainly because it is one of my best sports. One of the greatest things about it, in my opinion, is the anticipation, wondering what the other players are thinking about what you might do. Football is a physical game, of course, but it's the mental aspect that I appreciate the most.

At times football can get grueling, which makes the game even more exciting. The first time you make contact with another player (even with all that equipment) you get very sore. That is true for everyone, but in time you get used to the aches and pains. After awhile, you develop mental discipline, which allows you to ignore some of the pain. The mental discipline then allows you to go all out, to unload everything you have, every play. That's how you win games, everyone going all out, giving 110%.

The game takes concentration, just as much as any other sport, if not more. You develop this aspect in practice. That is why it is so important to have hours and hours of it. Mentally, you have to get over the fear, the fear of eleven madmen waiting for chance to make you eat dirt. And that comes through practice. Once you overcome the fear, you can concentrate on the more important things, like anticipating the other guy's next move. Studying the playbook and talking with other players also helps.

During the game, your mind clears of all thoughts. These thoughts become instinct. You have to react, and react quickly, and you develop reactions and instinct in practice. For example, when you're carrying the ball or about to make a tackle, you want to make sure you have more momentum than the other guy. If you don't you'll be leveled. But, you should react instinctively to that situation by increasing your momentum.

Playing defense, all you want to do is hit the man with the ball, hit him hard. Right when you unload for a stick, all your body tightens. Then you feel the impact. After you regain your thoughts, you wonder if you're all right. You wait for your brain to get the pain signal from the nerves. Even so, if you do get that signal, which is always the case, you keep right on playing. You can't let that experience shake your concentration.

On offense, while playing receiver, you can actually "hear" the footsteps of the defensive back as you're concentrating on catching the ball. What separates the men from the boys is the one who "hears" the footsteps but doesn't miss the ball. That's mental discipline, concentration.

Football is very physical or else it wouldn't be fun. But it is also a mental game and that is why it's challenging. You can get hurt in football if you screw up and ignore the right way to do things. However, mental discipline and concentration, which you develop during hours of practice, helps you avoid such mistakes.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow.**
  - *What I like doing best is playing football . . . Football is a physical game, of course, but it's the mental aspect that I appreciate the most.*
- **organizes ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories.**
  - Information is organized into three components of the mental aspect of football: discipline, concentration, and instinct.

- **develops the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.**
    - *At times football can get grueling, which makes the game even more exciting. The first time you make contact with another player (even with all that equipment) you get very sore.*
    - *For example, when you're carrying the ball or about to make a tackle, you want to make sure you have more momentum than the other guy. If you don't you'll be leveled.*
- **uses appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.**
    - *At times . . . The first time . . . After awhile . . . During the game . . . For example . . . But . . . Playing defense . . . After . . . However . . .*
    - *On offense, while playing receiver, you can actually "hear" the footsteps of the defensive back . . .*
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.**
    - *. . . playbook . . . defense . . . offense . . . receiver . . . defensive back*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style (with occasional lapses into cliché and undefined terms).**
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.**
    - The conclusion emphasizes the importance of the controlling idea (the mental aspect of football) by putting it in a new light: *You can get hurt in football if you screw up and ignore the right way to do things. However, mental discipline and concentration, which you develop during hours of practice, helps you avoid such mistakes.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with some errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message) and some stylistically effective constructions (e.g.,** *Playing defense, all you want to do is hit the man with the ball, hit him hard***).**

Student Sample: Grade 8, Informative/Explanatory

This analysis of a work of literature was completed as a homework assignment for an English class.

The Old Man and the Sea

In the book The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway tells the story of an old Cuban fisherman named Santiago who, considered by the villagers to be the worst type of unlucky, is still determined to win a battle against a giant Marlin off the coast of Cuba. Santiago succeeds, but his successes do not come without great hardship and struggle. He spends three days being dragged in his skiff by the enormous marlin with minimal food and water, all the while enduring acute physical pain, tiredness, and an unending loneliness due to the absence of his young friend, Manolin. It is only after Santiago's prize fish is completely devoured by sharks that he returns home to the village scorners and the safety of Manolin's trust. As his suffering and loss compound, we can see that Hemingway's quote "a man can be destroyed but not defeated" offers a key insight into Santiago's life.

As the story begins, we learn that Santiago has gone eighty-four days straight without catching a fish. Young Manolin's parents will no longer allow the two to fish together, for they do not want their son being exposed any more to this type of failure. Santiago and Manolin are deeply saddened by this news, but Santiago does not let the loss of his friend or the defeat that others see him suffering keep him off the sea. Rather, with bright and shining eyes he thinks "maybe today. Every day is a new day" (pg. 32), and prepares to catch the biggest fish of his life. This shows that even though almost all of Santiago's acquaintances feel that his fishing career is over, he sees it about to reach its all time high. Though he knows he is physically older and weaker than most of his fellow fisherman, he refuses to let their opinions and stereotypes destroy his confidence and determination.

As the story progresses, Hemingway presents an even more vivid picture of Santiago refusing to be destroyed by the forces that threaten to defeat him. Even after he accomplishes the difficult task of hooking the giant Marlin, he finds his skiff being dragged by the fish for over two days. Living in the small boat is no easy task for Santiago, and soon injury and suffering seem to take over his entire body. His back is sore from sitting so long against the stiff wood, his face is cut from fishing hooks, his shoulders ache, and his eyes have trouble focusing. Most difficult to endure though is the terrible condition in which he finds his hands. The left one is weakened from a period of being tightly cramped, and both are extremely mutilated from the burn of the moving fishing line. It would have been so much easier for Santiago to simply give up and release the fish, yet he knows that if he endures a little longer, victory will be his. Even when it seems he has no effort left, Santiago promises himself "I'll try it again." (pg. 93) This is Santiago's real inner determination coming through. He has encountered so many obstacles during the past few days, yet he will not let them defeat his dream of killing the fish. There is no outside force promising a splendid reward if he succeeds, only those that threaten to ridicule him if he is destroyed. Santiago is working solely on his own desire to fulfill his dream and prove to himself that, although his struggles may cost him his life, he can accomplish even the seemingly impossible.

After three long days and nights, Santiago's determination pays off, and at last he manages to catch and kill the Marlin. It is only a very short time that he has to relish in his triumph though, for a few hours later vicious sharks begin to destroy the carcass of the great fish. For hours, Santiago manages to ward them off, but this time it is not he who wins the final battle. Spirits low and pain at an all time high, Santiago returns to the village, towing behind him only the bare skeleton of a treasure that once was. It seems as though Santiago is ready to just curl up and die, and indeed he has reason to feel this way. Yet as he rests alone and talk with Manolin, we see a hint of Santiago's determination, that has characterized his personality throughout the entire story, begin to shine through. Upon reaching home, he begins to make plans with Manolin about future adventures they will have together. Hemingway tells us that Santiago, in his youth, had loved to watch the majestic lions along his home on a white sand beach in Africa, and he still returns to those dreams when searching for contentment. That night, as Santiago drifts off to sleep, Hemingway tells that he was indeed "dreaming about the lions." (pg. 127) This is perhaps the truest test of how much courage and determination a person has. If even when they have suffered the biggest defeat of their life, they are able to look to the future and realize the wonderful things they still posses. Though the forces of nature and time destroyed Santiago's prize fish, he refuses to let that fact ruin the rest of his life. No one can take away his love for Manolin or memories of what once was, and because of this, no one can ever truly defeat Santiago.

In conclusion, throughout the entire story The Old Man and the Sea, Santiago refuses to surrender to the forces working against him. He ignores the comments of those who think he is unlucky, endures great physical pain, and rises up from the depths of sorrow over the lost Marlin to find happiness in what he does possess. Hemingway's quote "a man can be destroyed but not defeated" truly does display the amount of determination that Santiago shows throughout his life.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow.**
  - The writer provides a brief summary of the plot in the introduction and then uses a quotation to advance the thesis of the essay and preview what is to follow: *As his suffering and loss compound, we can see that Hemingway's quote "a man can be destroyed but not defeated" offers a key insight into Santiago's life.*
- **organizes ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories.**
  - Two key elements of the quotation (*destroyed but not defeated*) help establish the overall structure of the piece.
  - The second, third, and fourth paragraphs each recount extended examples of Santiago's struggle and determination (e.g., *. . . Santiago has gone eighty-four days straight without catching a fish. Young Manolin's parents will no longer allow the two to fish together, for they do not want their son being exposed any more to this type of failure . . . but Santiago does not let the loss of his friend or the defeat that others see him suffering keep him off the sea. Rather, with bright and shining eyes he thinks "maybe today. Every day is a new day"*. . .).
- **develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.**
  - Concrete details: *. . . eighty-four days straight without catching a fish . . .* [hands] *extremely mutilated from the burn of the moving fishing line . . . towing behind him only the bare skeleton of a treasure that once was*.
  - Quotations: *That night, as Santiago drifts off to sleep, Hemingway tells that he was indeed "dreaming about the lions." (pg. 127)*
  - Examples*: . . . injury and suffering . . . His back is sore . . . his face is cut . . . his shoulders ache . . .*
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.**
  - *As his suffering and loss compound . . . As the story progresses . . . Even after . . . After three long days and nights . . . In conclusion, throughout the entire story The Old Man and the Sea . . .*
- **uses precise language to inform about or explain the topic.**
  - *. . . minimal food and water . . . acute physical pain . . . eighty-four days straight without catching a fish . . . only the bare skeleton . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style.**
  - *In the book The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway tells the story of an old Cuban fisherman named Santiago who, considered by the villagers to be the worst type of unlucky, is still determined to win a battle against a giant Marlin off the coast of Cuba.*
  - *As the story begins, we learn . . . In conclusion . . .*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (and returns to the quotation used in the thesis statement).**
  - *In conclusion, throughout the entire story The Old Man and the Sea, Santiago refuses*

to surrender to the forces working against him. He ignores the comments of those who think he is unlucky, endures great physical pain, and rises up from the depths of sorrow over the lost Marlin to find happiness in what he does possess. Hemingway's quote "a man can be destroyed but not defeated" truly does display the amount of determination that Santiago shows throughout his life.

- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 8, Narrative

This narrative was written to fulfill an assignment in which students were asked to introduce a special person to readers who did not know the person. The students were advised to reveal the personal quality of their relationship with the person presented. The student who wrote this piece borrowed ideas from a fictional piece she had read.

Miss Sadie

Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. But I still can see her. The old chair squeaking with every sway of her big, brown body. Her summer dresses stained from cooking in her sweet smelling kitchen. I see her gray hair pulled back in that awful, yellow banana clip. Most of all, I hear that voice. So full of character and wisdom.

I used to bring Miss Johnson cookies every summer day of 1988. I miss the days when I would sit on that shabby old porch and listen to her stories. "Melissa!" she would holler. "What 'chu doin' here? Come see me and my poor self, have ya?"

She once told me of her grandmother who escaped slavery, back when white men could only do anything, she would say. Her grandma ran for miles without food or water. It wasn't too long before her master came looking for her and took her home to whip her. I thought of how Blacks are treated today. I sighed. She would sing in her

soulful, blaring voice, old negro hymns passed down from her mother and grand mother. I would sit there in amazement.

Once, Jimmy Taylor came walking by us yelling, "Melissa! Whattaya want with that old, fat, Black lady, anyways?"

Before I could retaliate, Miss Johnson said to me, "Now you mustn't. We must feel sorry for that terrible child. His mother must have done gone and not taught him no manners!" She actually wanted me to raise my hand and pray for him. (Even though I went to his house and punched him out the next day.)

My friends would tease me for spending the whole summer with Sadie Johnson, "The Cuckoo of Connecticut," they called her. But I'm so very glad I did. She taught me then, to not care what other people thought. I learned that I could be friends with someone generations apart from my own.

My visits became less frequent when school started. I had other things to think about. Boys, clothes, grades. You know, real important stuff.

One day I was thinking, I haven't seen Miss Sadie in a while. So after school I trotted up to her house amidst the twirling, autumn leaves.

I rang her bell. The door cracked open and

the women adjusted her glasses. "May I help you?"

"Miss Sadie, it's me, Melissa."

"I-I," she'd stuttered. "I don't remember," she said and shut the door. I heard crying. I rang the door again and she screamed, "Please leave!" in a scared, confused voice.

I went home bewildered and my mother told me to stop bothering Miss Sadie. I said I wasn't bothering her. Mama said, "Miss Johnson has a disease. Alzheimer's disease. It makes her forget things... people, family even. and so, I don't want you over there anymore, you hear?"

Then, I didn't realize or comprehend, how someone so special to you could forget your own existence when you'd shared a summer so special and vivid in your mind.

That christmas I went to bring Miss Johnson cookies. She wasn't there. I learned from a family member that she was in the hospital and that she'd die very soon. As the woman, a daughter maybe, spoke, my heart broke.

"Well, you make sure she gets these cookies," I said, my voice cracking and tears welling in my eyes.

Today, I've learned to love old people. For their innocence, for their knowledge. I've learne to always treat people with kindness, no matter how cruel they may seem. But mainly I've learned, that you must cherish the time spent with a person. And memories are very valuable. Because Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. I'm glad that I can still see her.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **engages and orients the reader by establishing a context and point of view, and introducing a narrator and characters.**
    - The writer engages the reader by entering immediately into the story line and orients the reader by skillfully backfilling information about the setting (*the old chair squeaking*; *that shabby old porch*) and the narrator's experiences with Miss Sadie (bringing Miss Sadie cookies, listening to her stories, listening to her sing *old negro hymns*).
- **organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.**
    - The writer begins in the present, when *Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair*, then—appropriately for a narrator engaged in reflection—creates an image with specific details of Miss Sadie as she was in the past (*every sway of her big brown body . . . her gray hair pulled back in that awful, yellow banana clip*).
- **uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and characters.**
    - Reflection: *My friends would tease me for spending the whole summer with Sadie Johnson, "The cookoo of Connecticut," they called her. But I'm so very glad I did. She taught me then, to not care what other people thought. I learned that I could be friends with someone generations apart from my own . . . Then, I didn't realize or comprehend, how someone so special to you could forget your own existence when you'd shared a summer so special and vivid in your mind*.
    - Dialogue: *I rang her bell. The door cracked open and the women adjusted her glasses. "May I help you?"*

      "Miss Sadie, it's me, Melissa."

      "I–I," she'd stuttered. "I don't remember," she said and shut the door.
    - Tension: *I heard crying. I rang the door again and she screamed, "Please leave!" in a scared, confused voice*.
    - Reporting internal thoughts and reactions: *"Whattaya want with that old, fat, Black lady, any ways?" . . . As the woman, a daughter maybe, spoke, my heart broke.*
- **uses a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.**
    - *no longer . . . still . . . used to . . . I miss the days . . . once . . . then . . . Today . . .*
- **uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.**
    - *The old chair squeaking with every sway of her big, brown body.*
    - *Her summer dresses stained from cooking. I smell her sweet smelling kitchen.*
    - *. . . her soulful, blaring voice . . .*
    - *. . . the twirling, autumn leaves.*
    - *The door cracked open . . .*
    - *"I–I," she'd stuttered.*
- **provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.**
    - In the conclusion, the writer returns to the image in the beginning of the narrative (*Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. But I still can see her*) to reflect on the importance of memories (*I'm glad that I can still see her*).

- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**
    - Occasional sentence fragments were likely included for stylistic purposes (e.g., *The old chair squeaking with every sway of her big, brown body*; *Her summer dresses stained from cooking*; *Because Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days*).

Student Sample: Grade 9, Argument

This argument was written in response to a classroom assignment. The students were asked to compare a book they read on their own to a movie about the same story and to prove which was better. Students had six weeks to read and one and a half weeks to write, both in and out of class.

The True Meaning of Friendship

John Boyne's story, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, tells the tale of an incredible friendship between two eight-year old boys during the Holocaust. One of the boys is Bruno, the son of an important German commander who is put in charge of Auschwitz Camp, and the other is Shmuel, a Jewish boy inside the camp. Throughout the story their forbidden friendship grows, and the two boys unknowingly break the incredible racial boundaries of the time. They remain best friends until Bruno goes under the fence to help Shmuel find his father when they are both killed in the gas showers of the camp. By comparing and contrasting supporting characters, irony, and the themes in the movie and the book, it is clear that the movie, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (Mark Herman, 2008) is not nearly as good as the novel of the same title.

Characterization is very important to a story and influences how a person interprets the novel or movie, and one important way that the book differs from the movie is how Bruno's mother is characterized. In the movie, she is unrealistically portrayed as an honest woman with good moral values, and is almost as naive as Bruno is about what is going on at Auschwitz. When she discovers what her husband is doing to people at the camp she is deeply disturbed. Mortified by her husband's cruelty, their relationship declines. In contrast, she is a far more sinister character in the book. Though Bruno is too young to understand what his mother is doing, one of the reasons he dislikes Lieutenant Kotler is that, " . . . he was always in the living room with Mother and making jokes with her, and Mother laughed at his jokes more than she laughed at Father's" (162). Bruno's mother is very unhappy in her new situation away from Berlin, and her discontent leads her to cheat on her husband. This also leads her to unknowingly hurt her son, for Bruno is upset that she is paying more attention to Lieutenant Kotler than she is to his father, and the damage she causes could be magnified if she continues to disrupt their family. Further examples of her abysmal character and unfaithfulness are revealed when Bruno's mother finds the young lieutenant and says, "Oh Kurt, precious, you're still here . . . I have a little free time now if—Oh! she said, noticing Bruno standing there. 'Bruno! What are you doing here?'"(166). Her disloyalty further allows the reader to see that her character is far from virtuous, contrary to the opinion of a person who viewed the movie. Throughout the story, it also becomes apparent that Bruno's mother is also an alcoholic, and, "Bruno worried for her health because he'd never known anyone to need quite so many medicinal sherries" (188). Unable to come to terms with her new circumstances and strained relationship with her husband, Bruno's mother tries to drink away her problems, further conveying that she is a weak character. Bruno's extreme innocence about his mother and situation at Auschwitz are magnified by the use of irony in both the movie and the book.

In some ways the book and the movie have similar aspects, and one of these aspects is how irony is used to emphasize Bruno's innocence and to greatly emphasize the tragic mood of the story. In the final climactic scene of the movie—just after Bruno has gone under the fence to help Shmuel find his father—the two boys are led to the gas showers to be killed. Unaware of what is about to happen to them, Bruno tells Shmuel that his father must have ordered this so it must be for a good reason, and that they are going into the air-tight rooms to stay out of the rain and avoid getting sick. This statement is incredibly ironic because, unbeknownst to Bruno, his father has unknowingly commenced his own son's death sentence. In addition to this, the soldiers have no intention of keeping their prisoners healthy. It never occurs to Bruno that anyone would want to destroy another human being or treat them badly, and his innocence makes his premature death all the more tragic. Although the movie may be incredibly ironic in a few specific instances, the book contains a plethora of ironic events that also accentuate Bruno's childishness and naivety. A profound example of this is exhibited when Bruno thinks to himself that, " . . . he did like stripes and he felt increasingly fed up that he had to wear trousers and shirts and ties and shoes that were too tight for him when Shmuel and his friends got to wear striped pajamas all day long" (155). Bruno has no clue that the people in the "striped pajamas" are being cruelly treated and murdered, and is jealous of what he thinks is freedom. Bruno once again reveals his innocence when he asks Pavel, the Jewish man from the camp who cleans him up after a fall, "If you're a doctor, then why are you waiting on tables? Why aren't you working at a hospital somewhere?" (83). It is a mystery to Bruno that a doctor would be reduced to such a state for no transparent reason, and his beliefs should be what all adults think. Though

what he says is naive, it points out the barbarity of the German attitude toward the Jews. If an uneducated child could be puzzled by this, then how could learned adults allow such a thing? Through Bruno's comment, John Boyne conveys the corruptness of the German leaders during the Holocaust, an idea that the movie does not relay to the watcher nearly as well. The book impels the reader to think deeper about the horrors of the Holocaust, and all this ties into the true theme of the story.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas and its movie counterpart both have different themes, but it is the book's theme that accurately states the author's message. The movie ends with a race against time as Bruno's family searches for him in the camp, trying to find him before he is killed. They are too late, and Bruno and Shmuel die together like so many other anonymous children during the Holocaust. The theme of the movie is how so many children died at the ruthless hands of their captors; but the book's theme has a deeper meaning. As Bruno and Shmuel die together in the chamber, " . . . the room went very dark, and in the chaos that followed, Bruno found that he was still holding Shmuel's hand in his own and nothing in the world would have persuaded him to let it go" (242). Bruno loves Schmuel, and he is willing to stay with him no matter what the consequences, even if it means dying with him in the camp that his father controls. They have conquered all boundaries, and this makes the two boys more than just two more individuals who died in Auschwitz. The Boy in the Striped Pajamas is not the story of two children who died in a concentration camp; this story is about an incredible friendship that triumphed over racism and lasted until the very end. It is the story of what should have been between Jews and Germans, a friendship between two groups of people in one nation who used their strengths to help each other.

Based on the analysis of supporting characters, irony, and themes of John Boyne's The Boy in the Striped Pajamas and the movie, it can be concluded that the book is far superior to the movie. Though Bruno's mother is a dishonest woman in the book, her bad character is more realistic for the time when compared to the mother in the movie who is horrified by Auschwitz. John Boyne uses many examples of irony in the book to emphasize Bruno's innocence and to magnify the tragedy of his death. Unlike the movie the irony in the book leads the reader to ponder on the barbarity of the German leaders during the Holocaust. The book's theme of long lasting friendship gives purpose to the story, while the movie's theme of the cruelty of concentration camps does not lead the viewer to delve deeper into the story. It is necessary for the person to read this book in order to understand the true message of friendship and cooperation in the story, a message that a person who had only seen the movie could not even begin to grasp.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a precise claim and distinguishes the claim from (implied) alternate or opposing claims.**
  - *. . . it is clear that the movie, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (Mark Herman, 2008) is not nearly as good as the novel of the same title*.
- **develops the claim and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's need for information about the book.**
  - Reason: *In the movie, she* [the mother] *is unrealistically portrayed as an honest woman with good moral values . . . she is a far more sinister character in the book . . .*
  - Evidence: *. . . one of the reasons he* [Bruno] *dislikes Lieutenant Kotler is that, " . . . he was always in the living room with Mother and making jokes with her, and Mother laughed at his jokes more than she laughed at Father's"* (162) *. . . Bruno's mother finds the young lieutenant and says, "Oh Kurt, precious, you're still here . . . I have a little free time now if—Oh! she said, noticing Bruno standing there. 'Bruno! What are you doing here?'"(166). . . . Bruno's mother is also an alcoholic, and, "Bruno worried for her health because he'd never known anyone to need quite so many medicinal sherries" (188)*
  - Reason: *. . . it is the book's theme that accurately states the author's message . . . the book's theme has a deeper meaning . . . The book's theme of long lasting friendship gives purpose to the story . . .*
  - Evidence: *The movie ends with a race against time as Bruno's family searches for him in*

the camp, trying to find him before he is killed. They are too late, as Bruno and Shmuel die together like so many other anonymous children during the Holocaust . . . [In the book] *As Bruno and Shmuel are standing together in the chamber, " . . . the room went very dark, and in the chaos that followed, Bruno found that he was still holding Shmuel's hand in his own and nothing in the world would have persuaded him to let it go" (242).*

- **uses words, phrases and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claims and (implied) counterclaims.**
    - *In the movie . . . In contrast . . . Though Bruno is too young . . . Further examples of her abysmal character . . . Throughout the story, it also becomes apparent . . . In the final climactic scene . . . because, unbeknownst to Bruno . . . A profound example of this . . . Based on the analysis . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone.**
    - *John Boyne's story, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, tells the tale of an incredible friendship between two eight-year old boys during the Holocaust. . . . Characterization is very important to a story and influences how a person interprets the novel or movie, and one important way that the book differs from the movie is how Bruno's mother is characterized . . . In some ways the book and the movie have similar aspects, and one of these aspects is how irony is used to emphasize Bruno's innocence and to greatly emphasize the tragic mood of the story . . .*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented.**
    - *Based on the analysis of supporting characters, irony, and themes of John Boyne's The Boy in the Striped Pajamas and the movie, it can be concluded that the book is far superior to the movie. Though Bruno's mother is a dishonest woman in the book, her bad character is more realistic for the time when compared to the mother in the movie who is horrified by Auschwitz. John Boyne uses many examples of irony in the book to emphasize Bruno's innocence and to magnify the tragedy of his death. Unlike the movie the irony in the book leads the reader to ponder on the barbarity of the German leaders during the Holocaust. The book's theme of long lasting friendship gives purpose to the story, while the movie's theme of the cruelty of concentration camps does not lead the viewer to delve deeper into the story. It is necessary for the person to read this book in order to understand the true message of friendship and cooperation in the story, a message that a person who had only seen the movie could not even begin to grasp.*
- **demonstrates exemplary command of the conventions of standard written English.**

Student Sample: Grade 9, Informative/Explanatory

This essay was written in response to the following assignment: *Consider The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (1984) and the movie *Whale Rider,* based on the novel by Maori author Witi Ihimaera and directed by Niki Caro (2003). Write a comparison/contrast paper discussing the similarities and differences between these two works. Keeping in mind the main characters Esperanza Cordero and Paikea Apirana, the traditions of the two cultures, Hispanic and Maori, the role of women, religion, and symbolism, compare and contrast how Esperanza and Pai bridge the past and the present for their people.

Lives on Mango, Rides the Whale

More than 8,000 miles of land and sea separate two seemingly contrasting young women. One young girl lives in the urban streets of Chicago, depicted in *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (1984), while the other thrives in the countryside of New Zealand, as shown in *Whale Rider*, directed by Niki Caro (2003)—one an immigrant from a foreign country and the other a native Maori descendent. Both girls struggle for change, fighting their own quiet wars. Despite the vast differences in lifestyle and culture, both Esperanza Cordero of Chicago and Paikea Apirana of New Zealand are destined to be leaders of their generation in spite of the multitude of traditions and expectations that define them as individuals and their role as women in society. These two natural-born leaders are bridging the gap between the ancient customs and modern-day life.

While culture has a huge impact on the Cordero and Apirana families, the protagonists of both groups are affected the most. In Esperanza's world, women are put down and locked inside their husband's houses, having no rights and absolutely no say in their own households. The patriarchal society overwhelms every aspect of life, and Esperanza demands change through rebelling in her own quiet war. "I have decided not to grow up tame like the others who lay their necks on the threshold waiting for the ball and chain" (*The House on Mango Street*). She plans to set her own example, to forge her own path, in the hopes that the oppressed women of Mango Street will realize alternative options. Desperately seeking an opportunity to flee Mango Street, Esperanza dreams of the day when she will leave just another crippled house to seek her own way in the world. However, she states, "They will not know I have gone away to come back. For the ones I left behind. For the ones who cannot get out" (*The House on Mango Street*). Paikea, on the other hand is a native of New Zealand. According to legend, her ancestor and namesake rode on the back of a whale to this land and her family has been there ever since. Because of her rich and influential history, Pai is very proud of her culture. She wants the best for her people and she understands that the village and tribe must modernize and change with the times or else they may lose everything. For example, in the movie *Whale Rider*, Pai walks into her kitchen to find three elder women smoking cigarettes. Hiding the evidence, the conversation dies as soon as she enters the room, but she says to them, "Maori women have got to stop smoking." Pai loves her culture and the significance of the whale, yet she, like Esperanza, demands change, starting with her grandfather Koro accepting the fact that Pai is destined to become the first female chief of the village. Both girls dream of the day where their women will be respected and treated as equals in their patriarchal societies.

Family also plays an important role in both *The House on Mango Street* and *Whale Rider*. The Corderos are one happy group, with lots of strong and inspirational individuals, binding relatives together like a ribbon on a present. Esperanza, the namesake and great-grandmother of the young protagonist, was a strong-willed woman. "My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry" (*The House on Mango Street*). Another prominent man is Esperanza's Uncle Nacho. At a baptism, Uncle Nacho convinces Esperanza to dance; despite her sad brown shoes, she in fact does with her uncle telling her how beautiful she is, making her forget her discomfort and hatred of her shoes. Even though Esperanza may be loved in her family and close community, she is of low social status in general. She, like Geraldo in the vignette "Geraldo No Last Name," is "just another brazer who didn't speak English. Just another wetback. You know the kind. The ones who always look ashamed." Her father is a gardener at rich people's houses, and her mother watches over the four children (Esperanza, Nenny, Carlos, and Kiki). From a typical Mexican family, Esperanza is not poor but also has never really experienced any luxury other than a used car.

On the other hand, Paikea comes from a broken family. Her mother died during childbirth, along with her twin brother. After feeling the depression of loss and loneliness, Pai's father Porourangi left New Zealand to live in Germany, where he sculpted and sold Maori art. Pai was left to be raised by her grandparents Koro, the current chief, and Nanny Flowers. Similar to Esperanza, Pai shares common family members that inspired them and encouraged them through their trials, Nanny Flowers, for example, raised Pai to be the woman she is—independent and tough. Regardless of the criticism from Koro, Nanny Flowers encourages Pai to do what she knows is best, even if that results in harsh consequences. For

example, during the movie, Pai and the young boys of the village attend a school lesson taught by Koro. Pai is last in line, but sits down on the front bench with the others, although Koro tells her to sit in the back, the proper place for a woman. She refuses to move even when her grandfather threatens to send her away, which he does because Pai will not give up her seat. As she walks away from the group, Nanny Flowers has a proud little smile on her lips, for she knows that Pai is ordained to be the next leader. Because Pai is next in line to become the chief, she is of very high status, just below the current chief.

A prominent figure on Mango Street, Esperanza presents an alternative to the oppression of women in the community. In the outside world, however, she is just another young girl with parents who immigrated to the United States in the hopes of a better life for their children. Esperanza wants to set an example for the women trapped in their houses, to provide an escape for those ensnared in the barbed wire of marriage. Above all, she dreams of the day where she can leave Mango Street, yet she knows that it is her duty to return to free her friends. As told by the Three Sisters, "You will always be Esperanza. You will always be Mango Street. You can't erase what you know. You can't forget who you are." These three women told Esperanza that she was special and was meant to be a strong and leading person, just like Pai and the whales. Because of the rich diversity and influences in her neighborhood, Esperanza learns through her friends and experiences they share. Marin, Rafaela, Lucy, Rachel, Sally, and Alicia all provided a learning experience in one way or another. As all of these young ladies are in a similar age range with Esperanza, they undergo multiple trials side-by-side.

Contrastingly, Paikea has the blood of a leader running through her veins. She is a native, a leader, and a change. Pai, like Esperanza, is a leading figure amongst the women of her community. Always aware of the outer world, Pai knows that her people must adapt to the changing times or they will be swept away by the current of technology. She holds a great love and respect for her culture and people, and she wants what is best for them, even if it involves changing ancient traditions and ways. Pai knows it is her duty to stay, and her desire keeps her rooted in her little village. Once, Pai's father offered to take her to Germany with him to start a new life, and she agreed to go with him. However, in the car ride along the beach, a whale calls from the depths of the ocean and it is then that Pai knows she cannot leave her people. She asks her father to turn around and she returns to the village of her people. Due to having little to no interaction with kids her age, Pai must learn from her elders and through Koro's reactions. The children of the village tease and taunt Pai for her name and her big dreams, yet she pays them no attention. Unlike Esperanza, Pai knew from the beginning that she was destined to be great and is different from others her age.

Finally, the personalities of these two protagonists are exceedingly different. Esperanza, although older than Paikea, has low self-esteem and little self-confidence. She is afraid of adults, and as shown in "A Rice Sandwich," she often cries when confronted by her elders. Throughout the novel, Esperanza is shamed by her actions, other's actions, and other's words. All this young girl wants is to make friends and be loved by others, but she gets in her own way. However, when the world seems against her and she is all alone, Esperanza writes to escape. As directed by her deceased Aunt Lupe, she continues the poetry and short stories that free her from the chokehold of Mango Street. While she finds joy in pencils and paper, she does not in her name. "Esperanza" in Spanish means "hope" and "waiting," two words that describe this girl perfectly. She is the hope for the oppressed but she must wait for her opportunity to leave. In contrast to Pai, she actually did have a childhood, a carefree times of playing and having fun with friends before the burden of responsibility is placed on their shoulders, like the sky on Atlas's.

Paikea, alternatively, is a proud and confident girl. She knows what is best and what her people must do in order to survive. Starting with the women, she tells them to change their ways at the ripe old age of ten. Pai is a serious and mature child, with a grown mannerism and demeanor. Little can shame her, except for her grandfather; all Pail wants is to be loved and accepted by Koro. While everyone in the village can see that Pai is fated to become the next chief, Koro stubbornly refuses to believe until the very end. In her position, she takes her ancestry very seriously. Pai was named after her ancestor who rode the back of a whale to New Zealand, and she is exceedingly proud of her name, unlike Esperanza. And unlike Esperanza, it seems as though Pai has no time for boys or any relationships between them. She considers herself "one of the boys," and shows no interest. Growing up with her situation and the multiple responsibilities that followed left little time for an actual childhood.

In the end, the fate of two different cultures rests in the hands of two different young girls. While they both strive for freedom from oppression and change, Esperanza Cordero and Paikea Apirana have different techniques through which they reach those goals. Esperanza, a quiet and ashamed girl of 13 or 14, chooses a singular path to walk. She chooses the road she must walk alone, unaccompanied but free from patriarchal domination. While fighting to free those sitting at the window, Esperanza finds her own destiny as the change needed on Mango Street. Paikea, a strong and confident girl of 10 or 11, walks the forbidden path, the path of a chief. She chooses to defy her grandfather and all traditions in order to modernize her people. In order to save them, she must change them. Both young women, influential and inspiring, search for the key to free the ones they love.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic.**
    - *More than 8,000 miles of land and sea separate two seemingly contrasting young women. One young girl lives in the urban streets of Chicago, depicted in* The House on Mango Street *by Sandra Cisneros (1984), while the other thrives in the countryside of New Zealand, as shown in* Whale Rider, *directed by Niki Caro (2003)—one an immigrant from a foreign country and the other a native Maori descendent. Both girls struggle for change, fighting their own quiet wars. Despite the vast differences in lifestyle and culture, both Esperanza Cordero of Chicago and Paikea Apirana of New Zealand are destined to be leaders of their generation in spite of the multitude of traditions and expectations that define them as individuals and their role as women in society. These two natural-born leaders are bridging the gap between the ancient customs and modern-day life.*
- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions.**
    - The writer uses a compare/contrast organizing strategy to explain similarities and differences between the two girls' cultures, families, and personalities and in how they go about bridging *the gap between the ancient customs and modern-day life.*
- **develops the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
    - Details: *One young girl lives in the urban streets of Chicago, depicted in* The House on Mango Street *by Sandra Cisneros (1984), while the other thrives in the countryside of New Zealand, as shown in* Whale Rider, *directed by Niki Caro (2003)—one an immigrant from a foreign country and the other a native Maori descendent.*
    - Examples: *. . . Nanny Flowers encourages Pai to do what she knows is best, even if that results in harsh consequences. For example, during the movie, Pai and the young boys of the village attend a school lesson taught by Koro. Pai is last in line, but sits down on the front bench with the others, although Koro tells her to sit in the back, the proper place for a woman. She refuses to move even when her grandfather threatens to send her away, which he does because Pai will not give up her seat. As she walks away from the group, Nanny Flowers has a proud little smile on her lips . . .*
    - Quotations: *. . . and Esperanza demands change through rebelling in her own quiet war. "I have decided not to grow up tame like the others who lay their necks on the threshold waiting for the ball and chain"* (The House on Mango Street).
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
    - *Despite the vast differences in lifestyle and culture, both . . . While culture has a huge impact on the Cordero and Arirana families, the protagonists . . . However, she states . . . According to legend . . . For example . . . yet she, like Esperanza . . . Even though . . . On the other hand . . . Similar to Esperanza . . . Regardless of the criticism from Joro . . . In the outside world, however . . . Above all, she dreams of the day . . . yet she knows . . . Contrastingly . . . Once . . . However . . . Due to having little interaction with kids her age . . . Unlike Esperanza, Pai . . . Finally . . . In contrast to Pai . . . In the end . . . While they both strive for freedom from oppression and change . . .*
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.**
    - *More than 8,000 miles of land and sea separate two seemingly contrasting young women. One young girl lives in the urban streets of Chicago, depicted in* The House on Mango Street *by Sandra Cisneros (1984), while the other thrives in the countryside of New Zealand, as shown in* Whale Rider, *directed by Niki Caro (2003)—one an immigrant*

from a foreign country and the other a native Maori descendent. . . . the personalities of these two protagonists are exceedingly different. . . . In the end, the fate of two different cultures rests in the hands of two different young girls.

- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the student is writing.**
    - *More than 8,000 miles of land and sea separate two seemingly contrasting young women.*
    - *Both young women, influential and inspiring, search for the key to free the ones they love.*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.**
    - *In the end, the fate of two different cultures rests in the hands of two different young girls. While they both strive for freedom from oppression and change, Esperanza Cordero and Paikea Apirana have different techniques through which they reach those goals. Esperanza, a quiet and ashamed girl of 13 or 14, chooses a singular path to walk. She chooses the road she must walk alone, unaccompanied but free from patriarchal domination. While fighting to free those sitting at the window, Esperanza finds her own destiny as the change needed on Mango Street. Paikea, a strong and confident girl of 10 or 11, walks the forbidden path, the path of a chief. She chooses to defy her grandfather and all traditions in order to modernize her people. In order to save them, she must change them. Both young women, influential and inspiring, search for the key to free the ones they love.*
- **demonstrates exemplary command of the conventions of standard written English.**

Student Sample: Grade 9, Informative/Explanatory

This short constructed response was prompted by the following test question: "Explain how civil disobedience was used in the struggle for India's independence." The student had only a portion of a class period to write the response.

Civil disobedience is the refusal to follow an unjust law. Gandhi led India to independence by using civil disobedience and non-violent resistance. His motto was, "will not fight, will not comply." One of Gandhi's first acts of civil disobedience was when he refused to move to 3rd class on the train. He bought a 1st class ticket but they wouldn't let him sit there. He then got kicked off the train. This is just one example of Gandhi's enforcement of non-violent resistance. He has done many things from refusing to get off the sidewalk to being beaten for burning his pass. He figured that if he died, it would be for the right reasons. He said, "They can have my body, not my obedience." Eventually he got all of India going against Britain's unjust laws. While it took the people of India longer to realize, Gandhi proved that civil disobedience and non-violent resistance can be a more effective way of fighting back. Britain finally let India have its independence.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic.**
  - *Civil disobedience is the refusal to follow an unjust law.*
- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions.**
  - The writer presents examples to illustrate civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance.
- **develops the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
  - Details: *. . . 3rd class on the train . . . 1st class ticket . . .*
  - Quotations: *His motto was, "will not fight, will not comply" . . . He said, "They can have my body, not my obedience."*
  - Examples: *One of Gandhi's first acts of civil disobedience was when he refused to move to 3rd class on the train . . . He has done many things from refusing to get off the sidewalk to being beaten for burning his pass.*
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
  - *. . . This is just one example . . . Eventually . . . While it took the people of India longer to realize, Gandhi . . .*
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.**
  - *Civil disobedience is the refusal to follow an unjust law. . . . While it took the people longer to realize, Gandhi proved that civil disobedience and non-violent resistance can be a more effective way of fighting back.*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone (although there are some lapses into overy colloquial language, such as *kicked off* and *figured*).**
  - *Civil disobedience is the refusal to follow an unjust law.*
- **provides a concluding statement that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.**
  - *Eventually he got all of India going against Britain's unjust laws. . . . Britain finally let India have its independence.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 10, Argument

This argument was produced by a student who was asked to write a persuasive essay that required research. The student generated the topic and had an opportunity to revise.

_____ School Bond Levy

The _____ School Board has recently proposed a bond levy to add new facilities as well as conduct some major repairs to the school. The bond includes building a new gymnasium, a new science room and lab, a new Media Center/Library, new Chapter 1 and Special Education classrooms, and other facilities such as more parking space, an increase in storage area, and new locker rooms. Along with new construction, the board is proposing to remodel facilities such as the drama/music areas, the entire roof, the heating system, the school kitchen, and present gym as well. This bond allowing _____ School to add more facilities should be passed in order for young students to be provided with a better education.

Several arguments have been brought up concerning the levy since it failed in the March election. Some say that the school doesn't need to have brand new facilities and better classrooms, but it does. Just this year the school had to shut down for days at a time as a result of a malfunction of the heating system. The roof of the library also had a leaking problem all winter long. The leaking has actually caused the ceiling tiles to rot to the point where they are having to be removed. It isn't safe to sit underneath them because, in fact, they have fallen to tables where students had been working only minutes before.

Another issue that people may be concerned with is the money that taxpayers have to put up for the building. The cost of the project in its entirety will be 2.9 million dollars, meaning that for the next 25 years, taxpayers would pay 40 cents more per thousand dollars in property tax than they do this year. The project does cost a significant amount of money, but the school needs it. If something isn't done now, then the facilities such as the library, the science room and others will continue to grow steadily worse. The construction and remodeling needs to be done eventually, so why not now, when interest rates are low and expenses are also low. Superintendent _____ commented that it would cost the taxpayers much less money now than ten years from now. Another reason that this is a good time to pass this bond is that the results of Ballot Measure 5 are going into effect at the same time as the levy. As it stands now, property tax rates will go down another $2.50 by next year; however, if taxpayers don't mind paying what they do now and can handle a 40 cent increase, then the school can be that much better.

Many other good reasons we exist for funding this construction now. For one, better facilities will be made available to everyone: staff members, students, and community members. The new gym will allow student athletes to have earlier practices and more time for homework. With only one gym in a K–12 school system, the junior high has to practice in the morning before school, starting at 6:30 A.M., meaning that both the girls and boys teams had to practice at the same time, with half of the court for the girls half for the boys. After school, the high school girls would practice from 3:30 to 5:30 P.M. The varsity boys would then start at 5:30 or 6:00 and go until 7:30. After that, the junior varsity boys would come in for an hour and a half. It's absurd to think that student athletes can make good use of their time with a schedule like that. If the bond were to pass, both the new gym and the present gym would be used for practices and athletes wouldn't have to wait so long to practice every day.

Another reason that the gym should be built is that it is no longer adequate. The bleachers are too close to the court and so there is no room to walk by without getting in the way during a game. The gym also poses a problem for the cheerleaders. As it is now, there is no room for them to cheer. They have to stand on one of the ends which, of course, is right in the way of people walking by. If a new gym were built, enough room would be provided surrounding the court that there wouldn't be any of the problems there are now.

Another advantage to the bond proposed is that it would provide more space in the school. The school has always been small, which is in some ways nice, but it needs to expand. The lack of space is a problem because everyone is crammed into one little hallway trying to make it around from class to class. As it is, there isn't enough room for the library to just be a library or the kitchen to just be a kitchen. Students can't even go to the library when they need to because Health, Media, and other classes are held there. The Satellite Learning classroom, which shares a space with the kitchen, usually has a difficult learning atmosphere each day people prepare food for the hot lunch program. Another

problem area is the current science room and lab. Lab facilities are outdated and cannot be replaced for a variety of reasons related to the plumbing and electrical systems. Both science teachers have said publicly that the chemical storage room is inadequate and unsafe. The science curriculum is a core part of students' education and they deserve good facilities.

It is clear then, that _____ School needs significant improvements in which case the bond must be passed. As a community, education is an essential part of the future. In the past, _____ has relied in the timber industry for employment, but times are changing and the younger generations need to be better prepared to meet the challenges that arise. For example, they need to able to take part in a variety of activities and be able to achieve in many different areas. If the school is inadequate, how can the younger generations be provided with the education and training they need to be successful in the future?

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a precise claim, distinguishes it from alternate or opposing claims, and creates an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.**
  - *This bond allowing _____ School to add more facilities should be passed in order for young students to be provided with a better education.*
  - *Some say that the school doesn't need to have brand new facilities and better classrooms, but it does.*
  - *Another issue that people may be concerned with is the money that taxpayers have to put up for the building.*
- **develops the claim and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.**
  - *Just this year the school had to shut down for days.*
  - Details about the malfunction of the heating system and the falling ceiling tiles in the library support the claim that *brand new facilities and better classrooms* are needed.
  - *Another issue that people may be concerned with is the money that taxpayers have to put up for the building. The cost of the project in its entirety will be 2.9 million dollars, meaning that for the next 25 years, taxpayers would pay 40 cents more per thousand dollars in property tax than they do this year.*
  - *Superintendent _____ commented that it would cost the taxpayers much less money now than ten years from now.*
  - *. . .* [The gym] *is no longer adequate.*
  - *The school has always been small . . .* [and] *it needs to expand.*
  - Details about the scheduling of classes in the library support the claim that the school *needs to expand.*
- **uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims.**
  - *The project does cost a significant amount of money, but the school needs it.*
  - *Another issue that people may be concerned with . . . Many other good reasons . . . Another reason . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone.**
  - *Another advantage to the bond proposed is that it would provide more space in the school.*
  - *It is clear then, that . . .*

- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented.**
  - *If the school is inadequate, how can the younger generations be provided with the education and training they need to be successful in the future?*
- **demonstrates exemplary command of the conventions of standard written English.**

Student Sample: Grade 10, Informative/Explanatory

This essay was produced for an on-demand assessment. Students were told to write about a character in a work of literature whose pride or selfishness creates problems. The abbreviated time frame of the assessment situation (and the consequent lack of opportunity to revise) explains the absence of information and quotations from researched sources and perhaps the occasional spelling errors as well.

Animal Farm

In the novel, Animal Farm, by George Orwell, there is one very particular character whose pride and selfishness creates problems. This character had just merely good ideas in the beginning. However, as time went on, his true self-interest began to shine through. This character started a free republic of animals and turned it into a plantation that used animals as slaves. He never did have enough and always wanted more, regardless of the price that others had to pay. This character whose pride and selfishness creates problems, is none other than the great leader of Animal Farm himself, comrade Napolean [Napoleon], the pig.

Comrade Napolean is a powerful authority on Animal Farm. In fact he is the leader of Animal Farm and a high strung leader at that. After Old Major died, Napolean lived upon Old Major's ideas. Napolean lead all the animals to rebellion so that Manor Farm ceized to exist, and Animal Farm was born. In the first year, he even worked the fields and helped bring in their biggest harvest ever. Little did the animals know, but he would soon change. Eventually the animals started receiving less food because Napolean needed more food to power his "large" brain. Later, he goes and runs off his successor, Snowball, so he can have the whole farm to himself. Then he stopped working the fields. He started taking young animals and selling them or using them for his own use. He stopped sleeping in the hay and slept in the farm house instead. Finally, he took away half the grain fields so he could plant barely to make himself beer. This Napolean was a power hungry, selfish individual for sure.

Being power hungry, always causes problems, and boy did Napolean cause problems. The animals had received so little food that many were starving, you could see their bones, and some even died of starvation. Nopoleans's lack of work meant the animals had to work harder, and it wasn't easy on an empty stomach. Many animals would break their legs or hoofs but would continue to work. The lack of new workers due to Napolean's selling them off, meant that nobody could retire, and one old animal even died in the fields. Snowball was a great teacher for the animals, and now that he was gone, they lacked education. Then with finally only half of the fields being productive for food, the animals starved even more and worked harder to make beer that they never saw. Not to mention that they had to sleep on a dirt floor while the lazy Napolean slept in his nice comfortable bed. His selfishness had deffinately created problems.

Napolean's experience had changed the farm drastically. He thought things were getting better while the animals knew they were only getting worse. After the rebellion, many humans disliked Animal Farm and the animals disliked humans. Nopoleans's selfish ways were much like those of a farmer. So eventually as Napolean became more "human," the town's people began to like him. Napolean could care less about his animals, just so long as he was on good terms with the humans. By the novel's end, Napolean is great friends with every human in town. However, his animal slaves are no longer happy as they once were. They still hate humans which means now, they hate Napolean. So due to Napolean's pride, the story has changed its ways from start to finish. He has turned friends into foe and foe into friends, but at great cost.

In the novel, Animal Farm, by George Orwell, Comrade Napolean is a character whose pride and selfishness creates problems. The starving animals have suffered greatly because of their leader's pride. On the other hand, Napolean has gained great success through his selfishness. Unfortunately, that's just the way it is. You can't have pride without problems. Even if they are little problems, it's still due to pride. Now, if Napolean had pride in his farm rather than in himself, well then maybe the humans would've hated him, but he'd still has his true friends of four legs. However, he chose to follow a different path and he burned those bridges along the way. So for now, Comrade Napolean's pride and selfishness has created problems for the animals, but someday, it will create problems for himself.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic.**
  - *In the novel, Animal Farm, by George Orwell, there is one very particular character whose pride and selfishness creates problems. . . . This character whose pride and selfishness creates problems, is none other than the great leader of Animal Farm himself, comrade Napolean [Napoleon], the pig.*
- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions.**
  - The organization of the explanation is mostly chronological. The writer focuses on how Napoleon changes over time, how he becomes *power hungry,* and *selfish,* and eventually *"human."* The writer describes the problems that Napoleon's changing nature creates.
- **develops the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
  - Details: *In the first year, he* [Napoleon] *even worked the fields and helped bring in their* [the animals'] *biggest harvest ever. . . . Not to mention that they had to sleep on a dirt floor while the lazy Napolean slept in his nice comfortable bed.*
  - Examples: *. . . nobody could retire, and one old animal even died in the fields.*
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
  - *In the novel, Animal Farm, by George Orwell, there is one very particular character whose pride and selfishness creates problems. This character had just merely good ideas in the beginning.*
  - *In the novel . . . In fact . . . In the first year . . . Eventually . . . Being power hungry . . . Not to mention . . . On the other hand . . .*
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.**
  - *In the novel, Animal Farm, by George Orwell, there is one very particular character whose pride and selfishness creates problems. . . . This character started a free republic of animals and turned it into a plantation that used animals as slaves.*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone (with the exception of . . . *and boy did Napolean cause problems*).**
  - *In the novel, Animal Farm, by George Orwell, there is one very particular character whose pride and selfishness creates problems. . . . Comrade Napolean's pride and selfishness has created problems for the animals, but someday, it will create problems for himself.*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.**
  - *In the novel, Animal Farm, by George Orwell, Comrade Napolean is a character whose pride and selfishness creates problems. The starving animals have suffered greatly because of their leader's pride. On the other hand, Napolean has gained great success through his selfishness. Unfortunately, that's just the way it is. You can't have pride without problems. Even if they are little problems, it's still due to pride. Now, if Napolean had pride in his farm rather than in himself, well then maybe the humans would've hated him, but he'd still has his true friends of four legs. However, he chose to follow a different path and he burned those bridges along the way. So for now, Comrade Napolean's pride and selfishness has created problems for the animals, but someday, it will create problems for himself*
- **demonstrates command of some aspects of the conventions of standard written English (yet displays several errors in spelling and other mechanics).**

Student Sample: Grade 11, Informative/Explanatory

The essay that follows was written in response to this assignment: "Reflection Topic #3: Pride and Acceptance. Wright struggles to find his 'place' in society. He refuses to forgo his morality and beliefs to conform to the status quo. Examine Wright's pride. Find examples in the text that demonstrate the influence pride has on Wright's actions. How does his pride influence his decisions? Is pride a positive or negative influence in Wright's life? How does Wright's pride affect how his family members treat him?" Students had one week to complete this assignment. The maximum length allowed was three pages.

Marching to His Own Beat

Pride is often criticized by society and habitually seen as a negative characteristic evoking such connotations as conceit, egotism, arrogance, and hubris. In Richard Wright's struggle to find his "place" in society in Black Boy, pride has both negative and positive connotations. Despite the negative consequences, pride allows Wright to maintain his moral compass, oppose conformity, and pursue his passion of writing, thus demonstrating pride's positive influence on Wright's life.

Wright's pride prompts him to make principled decisions and carry out actions that illustrate his morality and inherent beliefs. Wright refuses to neglect his values and chooses right over wrong even when he recognizes that failure to adhere to what is expected of him will ultimately result in negative and often violent consequences. When he receives the title of valedictorian and refuses to read the speech prepared for him by his principal, choosing instead to present his own speech in spite of the threat of being held back, Wright's pride is demonstrated. Although he comprehends the consequences and the gravity of his decision, Wright refuses to compromise his beliefs: "I know that I'm not educated, professor . . . But the people are coming to hear the students, and I won't make a speech that you've written" (174). Though urged by his family members and his classmates to avoid conflict and to comply with the principal's demand, Wright refuses because he does not believe it is the morally correct thing to do. Even though his pride is negatively perceived by his peers and relatives as the source of defiance, they fail to realize that his pride is a positive factor that gives him the self confidence to believe in himself and his decisions. Wright's refusal to acquiesce to his family's ardent religious values is another illustration of his pride. Wright is urged by his family and friends to believe in God and partake in their daily religious routines; however, he is undecided about his belief in God and refuses to participate in practicing his family's religion because "[His] faith, such as it was, was welded to the common realities of life, anchored in the sensations of [his] body and what [his] mind could grasp, and nothing could ever shake this faith, and surely not [his] fear of an invisible power" (115). He cannot put his confidence into something unseen and remains unwavering in his belief. Pride allows Wright to flee from the oppressive boundaries of expectations and to escape to the literary world.

Wright's thirst and desire to learn is prompted by his pride and allows him to excel in school and pursue his dreams of becoming a writer. The reader observes Wright's pride in his writing when he wrote his first story. Pleased with his work, he "decided to read it to a young woman who lived next door . . . [He] looked at her in a cocky manner that said: . . . I write stuff like this all the time. It's easy" (120-121). This attitude of satisfaction permits Wright to continue to push himself to improve and pursue his craft. Pride eventually leads Wright to submit his work to the local newspaper; his obvious pride in his work is clearly portrayed when he impatiently tells the newspaper editor, "But I want you to read it *now*" (165) and asks for his composition book back when he does not immediately show interest in his story. Pride in his academic achievements motivates him to excel in his studies; after Wright advanced to sixth grade in two weeks, he was elated and thrilled at his astonishing accomplishment: "Overjoyed, I ran home and babbled the news . . . I had leaped a grade in two weeks, anything seemed possible, simple, easy" (125). Wright's pride in his intelligence and studies allows him to breeze through school: "I burned at my studies . . . I read my civics and English and geography volumes through and only referred to them in class. I solved all my mathematical problems far in advance" (133). Pride provides him with the self-confidence and contentment that his family and society fail to give him. It removes Wright from both the black culture and the white culture and moves him rather to the "art culture", in which Wright can achieve higher than what is anticipated of him.

Wright's ability to oppose conformity and forego the status quo also stems from his pride. Pride propels him to assert himself even if it defies what is expected of him as a black individual. Upon telling one of his old employers, a white woman, that he wants to be a writer, she indecorously scoffs at him and makes an impudent remark "You'll never be a writer . . . Who on earth put such ideas into your . . .

head?" (147). This remark causes him to almost immediately quit his job; Wright remarks, "The woman had assaulted my ego; she had assumed that she knew my place in life . . . what I ought to be, and I resented it with all my heart" (147). Wright's refusal to simply go along with what is expected of him, thoroughly disappoints and aggravates his family and society, yet his pride has a positive influence on his life; pride allows Wright to not only remove himself from the boundaries of the black vs. white society and the insidious effect of racism but it also sets Wright free from the constraints of acceptance. Pride ultimately frees Wright to pursue his passion and identify himself not as a black or white person but rather as a "writer".

In Wright's struggle to overcome the overwhelming expectations he is faced with by society, pride puts him at odds with his family and society but ultimately serves as a positive influence, allowing him to withstand conformity and escape the status quo. This attitude allows Wright to maintain his moral compass, believe in his self worth, and pursue his passion. Pride is more than pure arrogance and haughtiness. To Wright, pride is something far greater; pride is the characteristic that gives him the strength to march to his own beat; to the beat of the literary world.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
    - *Pride is often criticized by society and habitually seen as a negative characteristic evoking such connotations as conceit, egotism, arrogance, and hubris. In Richard Wright's struggle to find his "place" in society in Black Boy, pride has both negative and positive connotations. Despite the negative consequences, pride allows Wright to maintain his moral compass, oppose conformity, and pursue his passion of writing, thus demonstrating pride's positive influence on Wright's life.*
- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole.**
    - In separate paragraphs, the writer organizes the body of his text to provide examples of the ways in which Wright's pride allows him *to maintain his moral compass, oppose conformity, and pursue his passion of writing.*
- **develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
    - Examples: *When he receives the title of valedictorian and refuses to read the speech prepared for him by his principal, choosing instead to present his own speech in spite of the threat of being held back, Wright's pride is demonstrated.*
    - Quotations: *Although he comprehends the consequences and the gravity of his decision, Wright refuses to compromise his beliefs: "I know that I'm not educated, professor . . . But the people are coming to hear the students, and I won't make a speech that you've written" (174).*
    - Details: . . . *after Wright advanced to sixth grade in two weeks, he was elated and thrilled at his astonishing accomplishment . . . Upon telling one of his old employers, a white woman, that he wants to be a writer, she indecorously scoffs at him and makes an impudent remark . . .*
- **integrates selected information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.**
    - Using a standard format, the writer uses quotations selectively to illustrate examples of pride's positive influence on Wright's life: (e.g., *The reader observes Wright's pride in his writing when he wrote his first story. Pleased with his work, he "decided to read it to a young woman who lived next door . . . [He] looked at her in a cocky manner that said: . . . I write stuff like this all the time. It's easy" (120-121).*

- **uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
    - *. . . In Richard Wright's struggle . . . When he receives the title of valedictorian . . . Although . . . Though urged by his family members . . . Even though . . . however . . . The reader observes . . . This attitude of satisfaction . . . Upon telling one of his old employers . . . This remark causes him . . . In Wright's struggle to overcome the overwhelming expectations he is faced with by society . . .*
- **uses precise language and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.**
    - *. . . moral compass . . . principled decisions . . . valedictorians . . . the consequences and gravity of his decision . . . obvious pride . . . excel in his studies . . . thoroughly disappoints and aggravates . . .*
    - *. . . march to his own beat; to the beat of the literary world.*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the student is writing.**
    - *Pride is often criticized by society and habitually seen as a negative characteristic evoking such connotations as conceit, egotism, arrogance, and hubris . . . To Wright, pride is something far greater: pride is the characteristic that gives him the strength to march to his own beat; to the beat of the literary world.*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).**
    - *In Wright's struggle to overcome the overwhelming expectations he is faced with by society, pride puts him at odds with his family and society but ultimately serves as a positive influence, allowing him to withstand conformity and escape the status quo. This attitude allows Wright to maintain his moral compass, believe in his self worth, and pursue his passion. Pride is more than pure arrogance and haughtiness. To Wright, pride is something far greater: pride is the characteristic that gives him the strength to march to his own beat; to the beat of the literary world.*
- **demonstrates exemplary command of the conventions of standard written English.**

Student Sample: Grade 11, Informative/Explanatory

The essay that follows was written in response to an extra credit assignment in an anatomy and physiology class. Students were asked to summarize key points about a topic from given information and from their own research on the Internet and to explain how the topic was relevant to their future. A list of sources was not required in the assignment.

Summary of Key Points

For many years, scientists and researchers weren't able to examine normal, healthy brains. They only got brain data from autopsies and surgeries. Even so, they were able to learn a lot about how the brain functioned because when people suffered brain damage to parts of the brain, they could see what functions were impaired and know the parts of the brain that were responsible for that function. MRI technology has changed that because now scientists can examine healthy brains at all stages of development, including getting functional results that show areas of the brain that "light up" while performing tasks. Therefore, scientists are now able to measure how the brain works.

95% of the brain has been formed by age 6, but through MRI studies researchers now know that changes in the brain structure continue to occur late in child development. The prefrontal cortex has a growth spurt just before puberty and then prunes back in adolescence. This part of the brain is responsible for reasoning, controlling impulses, and making judgments. The growth and pruning is a very important stage of brain development, so when this second wave is happening teen's activities can affect how their brain responds for the rest of their lives.

Researchers have found waves of growth and change in other parts of the brain as well, including the corpus callosum and the cerebellum. The corpus callosum influences language learning, and the cerebellum helps physical coordination and is also used to process mental tasks and higher thought such as math, philosophy, decision-making, etc.

This recent research has confirmed what scientists have known for many years . . . that different parts of the brain mature at different times. However, the brain is much more changeable than previously thought, with structural changes taking place into adolescence and beyond. Knowing more about the brain's structure is only one piece of the puzzle. Much more research is needed to draw conclusions about how the brain structure and function directly cause behavior.

Conclusion:

MRI technology has enabled researchers to learn much more about the brain's growth and development. They have learned that parts of the brain, such as the pre-frontal cortex, an area of the brain that controls reasoning and judgment, goes through a second growth spurt just before puberty, and that this helps to explain why teenagers begin to have more control over their impulses and are able to make better judgments. Additionally, scientists have been able to confirm that some brain characteristics are genetic, and others are affected by environmental factors. Confirming that different parts of the brain mature at different times and that the brain has structural changes through adolescence is very important, but there is a great deal more research that needs to be done to learn about how brain structure and function relate to behavior.

How is this article relevant to my future?

Knowing more about the brain and how it influences behavior will have a major impact on how children and teenagers are raised and educated. For example, one of the researchers, Giedd believed that the growth and pruning can happen at a time of brain development when the actions of teenagers can affect them the rest of their lives, his "use it or lose it principle." This is the time when music or academic development could be "hardwired." This theory puts more emphasis on parents to make sure their teens have the right focus and guidance. Most parents already believe in a basic approach to raising and educating their children, but this research could lead to a very specific timetable and a do and don't guide to child development, making sure that their child is exposed to the appropriate factors at the right time.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
    - *For many years, scientists and researchers weren't able to examine normal, healthy brains. They only got brain data from autopsies and surgeries. Even so, they were able to learn a lot about how the brain functioned because when people suffered brain damage to parts of the brain, they could see what functions were impaired and know the parts of the brain that were responsible for that function. MRI technology has changed that because now scientists can examine healthy brains at all stages of development, including getting functional results that show areas of the brain that "light up" while performing tasks. Therefore, scientists are now able to measure how the brain works.*
- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole.**
    - *95% of the brain has been formed by age 6, but through MRI studies researchers now know that changes in the brain structure continue to occur late in child development. The prefrontal cortex has a growth spurt just before puberty and then prunes back in adolescence . . . Researchers have found waves of growth and change in other parts of the brain as well, . . . This recent research has confirmed what scientists have known for many years . . . that different parts of the brain mature at different times.*
- **develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
    - Details: *95% of the brain has been formed by age 6 . . .*
    - Facts: *The corpus callosum influences language learning, and the cerebellum helps physical coordination and is also used to process mental tasks and higher thought . . .*
    - Examples: *They have learned that parts of the brain, such as the pre-frontal cortex, . . .*
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
    - *For many years . . . Even so . . . Therefore . . . other parts of the brain as well . . . This recent research . . . However, . . . Knowing more about the brain's structure . . . Additionally, . . . Confirming that different parts of the brain mature at different times and that the brain has structural changes through adolescence is very important, but . . . .For example . . . This theory . . .*
- **uses precise language, domain-specific vocabulary (when appropriate), and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic (though sometimes important concepts, notably *pruning*, go undefined).**
    - *. . . data . . . autopsies . . . surgeries . . . MRI technology . . . prefrontal cortex . . . growth spurt . . . corpus callosum . . . cerebellum . . . puberty . . .*
    - *This is the time when music or academic development could be "hardwired."*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the student is writing.**
    - *For many years, scientists and researchers weren't able to examine normal, healthy brains . . . Most parents already believe in a basic approach to raising and educating their children, but this research could lead to a very specific timetable and a do and don't guide to child development, making sure that their child is exposed to the appropriate factors at the right time.*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanations presented (e.g., articulating implications or the signifigance of the topic).**
    - *Knowing more about the brain and how it influences behavior will have a major impact*

on how children and teenagers are raised and educated. For example, one of the researchers, Giedd believed that the growth and pruning can happen at a time of brain development when the actions of teenagers can affect them the rest of their lives, his "use it or lose it principle." This is the time when music or academic development could be "hardwired." This theory puts more emphasis on parents to make sure their teens have the right focus and guidance. Most parents already believe in a basic approach to raising and educating their children, but this research could lead to a very specific timetable and a do and don't guide to child development, making sure that their child is exposed to the appropriate factors at the right time.

- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English.**

Student Sample: Grade 12, Argument

This essay on dress codes was written for a university/college placement assessment. Two different perspectives on an issue (whether or not dress codes should be adopted in school) were provided in the prompt, and students were advised to either support one of the two points of view given or present a different point of view on the issue. The students were allowed thirty minutes to write.

I believe that it would be beneficial for our schools to adopt dress codes. Although some may argue that this action would restrict the individual student's freedom of expression, I do not agree. Our right to express ourselves is important, but in our society none of us has unrestricted freedom to do as we like at all times. We must all learn discipline, respect the feelings of others, and learn how to operate in the real world in order to be successful. Dress codes would not only create a better learning environment, but would also help prepare students for their futures.

Perhaps the most important benefit of adopting dress codes would be creating a better learning environment. Inappropriate clothing can be distracting to fellow students who are trying to concentrate. Short skirts, skimpy tops, and low pants are fine for after school, but not for the classroom. T-shirts with risky images or profanity may be offensive to certain groups. Students should espress themselves through art or creative writing, not clothing. With fewer distractions, students can concentrate on getting a good education which can help them later on.

Another benefit of having a dress code is that it will prepare students to dress properly for different places. When you go to a party you do not wear the same clothes you wear to church. Likewise, when you dress for work you do not wear the same clothes you wear at the beach. Many professions even require uniforms. Having a dress code in high school will help students adjust to the real world.

Lastly, with all the peer pressure in school, many students worry about fitting in. If a dress code (or even uniforms) were required, there would be less emphasis on how you look, and more emphasis on learning.

In conclusion, there are many important reasons our schools should adopt dress codes. Getting an education is hard enough without being distracted by inappropriate t-shirts or tight pants. Learning to dress for particular occasions prepares us for the real world. And teens have enough pressure already without having to worry about what they are wearing.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a precise, knowledgeable claim.**
  - *I believe that it would be beneficial for our schools to adopt dress codes.*
- **establishes the significance of the claim, distinguishing the claim from alternate or opposing claims.**
  - *Although some may argue that this action would restrict the individual student's freedom of expression, I do not agree. Our right to express ourselves is important, but in our society none of us has unrestricted freedom to do as we like at all times. We must all learn discipline, respect the feelings of others, and learn how to operate in the real world in order to be successful.*
- **creates an organization that logically sequences claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.**
  - *I believe that it would be beneficial for our schools to adopt dress codes. Although some may argue . . . Perhaps the most important benefit . . . Another benefit . . . Lastly . . . In conclusion . . .*
- **develops the claim and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both (though the evidence provided is limited by the constraints of an on-demand assessment).**
  - *Perhaps the most important benefit of adopting dress codes would be creating a better learning environment. Inappropriate clothing can be distracting to fellow students who are trying to concentrate.*

- *Another benefit of having a dress code is that it will prepare students to dress properly for different places. When you go to a party you do not wear the same clothes you wear to church.*
- *If a dress code (or even uniforms) were required, there would be less emphasis on how you look, and more emphasis on learning.*

- **develops the claim in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.**
  - The writer addresses an unknown adult audience likely to appreciate values such as *discipline*, *respect* [for] *the feelings of others*, and *the creation of a better learning environment*.
- **uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims.**
  - *Although some may argue . . . Perhaps the most important benefit . . . With fewer distractions . . . Another benefit . . . When . . . Likewise . . . If a dress code (or even uniforms) were required . . . Lastly . . . In conclusion . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone.**
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 12, Argument

This essay was produced in a two-hour-long college placement exam. Students first read a passage of approximately a thousand words titled "In Praise of Boredom." The passage was adapted from an essay published by Ellen Ruppel Shell in 2000. Students were then asked to respond to Shell's views, drawing on anything else they had previously read, their observations, and/or their experiences.

Freedom From Structure

Children are blank slates that are subject to the environment around them. Allowing a child to interact with their surroundings is difficult for adults because it leaves each decision, and each consequence of that decision, up to them. Ellen Ruppel Shell believes that children miss out on experimenting and discovering aspects of the world that cannot be taught in a classroom or read about in a book. I agree that children can learn many important lessons about social interaction and the products of creativity by playing on their own, or with other children, in a free and open environment.

To relieve the inevitable boredom that every child eventually encounters, they can nourish their creative minds by playing alone. As a child, I was content to sometimes play by myself in a land of make-believe. If it was cold and rainy outside, I would pretend it was the middle of summer. Night became day, my bedroom became a kingdom, my bed was a castle, my floor was a mote, and I was a princess. Playing "let's pretend" allowed me to imagine and create my own world when reality seemed too mundane. "Boredom leads to exploration, which leads to creativity," and nothing is more creative than a world that exists in the mind of a child.

There are endless opportunities for parents to stimulate and teach their kids that come with instructions and rules and boundaries, but I agree with Shell when she declares that "the best play is spontaneous and unpredictable." Plain and simple freedom is invaluable, and we are only so free as children. As we grow up, our minds become molded around society's rules and we learn to conform to a certain way of thinking and creating. If adults see a soccer ball, they will only think of how to play soccer. If children see a soccer ball they will immediately create their own rules and proceed with an entirely different game. The ability to be spontaneous and imaginative is strongest in children because they know nothing else. Adults and parents that bombard their kids with structured activities are wasting the unique and innate ability of children to create; however, a parent's reasoning for such structure is not unsupported.

There are many life lessons that can be difficult to learn on your own, so adults establish controlled environments for their children to learn about the world. For example, making new friends can be an awkward and terrifying process for kids, so parents will try to make friends for their children. What most adults don't realize is that they are robbing their child of a chance to open up and reach out to another person. The kid they meet on the jungle gym will be more beneficial to them than the kid their parent forced them to play with. "We don't believe that they can navigate the world, so we try to navigate it for them." Shell believes that adults need to trust their kids to discover the world for themselves and that it's just as important for them to fail as it is for them to succeed.

For children, it's not about the final product, it's how they get there. When forced to follow rules and obey boundaries, kids are not given the opportunity to use their imagination. I agree with Shell and I believe that it is more beneficial for children to make believe, be spontaneous, and discover as much as they can about the world for themselves.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a precise, knowledgeable claim.**
    - *I agree that children can learn many important lessons about social interaction and the products of creativity by playing on their own, or with other children, in a free and open environment.*

- **establishes the significance of the claim, distinguishing the claim from alternate or opposing claims.**
    - *Allowing a child to interact with their surroundings is difficult for adults because it leaves each decision, and each consequence of that decision, up to them.*
- **creates an organization that logically sequences claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.**
    - *I agree that children . . . they can nourish their creative minds by playing alone. . . . As a child, I was . . . but I agree with Shell when she declares . . . As we grow up . . . There are many life lessons that can be difficult to learn on your own . . . What most adults don't realize . . . For children, it's not about the final product . . . I agree with Shell and I believe . . .*
- **develops the claim and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.**
    - *Allowing a child to interact with their surroundings . . . leaves each decision, and each consequence of that decision, up to them.*
    - *Ellen Ruppel Shell believes that children miss out on experimenting and discovering aspects of the world that cannot be taught in a classroom or read about in a book.*
    - *. . . they can nourish their creative minds by playing alone.*
    - *There are many life lessons that can be difficult to learn on your own, so adults establish controlled environments for their children to learn about the world.*
    - *When forced to follow rules and obey boundaries, kids are not given the opportunity to use their imagination.*
- **develops the claim in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.**
    - *. . . making new friends can be an awkward and terrifying process for kids, so parents will try to make friends for their children. What most adults don't realize is that they are robbing their child of a chance to open up and reach out to another person.*
- **uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims.**
    - *As a child . . . As we grow up . . . For example . . .*
    - *To relieve the inevitable boredom that every child eventually encounters, they can nourish their creative minds by playing alone. As a child, I was content to sometimes play by myself in a land of make-believe. . . . "Boredom leads to exploration, which leads to creativity," and nothing is more creative than a world that exists in the mind of a child.*
    - *There are endless opportunities for parents to stimulate and teach their kids that come with instructions and rules and boundaries, but I agree with Shell when she declares that "the best play is spontaneous and unpredictable."*
- **provides a concluding statement that follows from and supports the argument presented.**
    - *I agree with Shell and I believe that it is more beneficial for children to make believe, be spontaneous, and discover as much as they can about the world for themselves.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 12, Informative/Explanatory

The essay that follows was written for an Advanced Placement U.S. history class. The student had unlimited time to write and likely received feedback and instructional support while creating the essay. (Essay ©2009 by The Concord Review, Inc. Reprinted with permission.)

In the Wake of the Spanish Lady:
American Economic Resilience in the Aftermath of the Influenza Epidemic of 1918

Whatever does not kill me makes me stronger.[1]
—Friedrich Nietzsche

America in the years leading up to 1918 was as confident in its medical ability as it had ever been. In only one century, it had seen the successful vaccination, containment, or cure for the notorious menaces of smallpox, anthrax, rabies, meningitis, typhoid, malaria, yellow fever, diphtheria, cholera, and tetanus.[2] Due to the new strides in bacteriology, germ theory, and sanitation, as well as new methods devised to control food-, water-, and insect-borne diseases, Americans were experiencing an era of unprecedented health. Whereas in all previous wars, more American soldiers were lost to disease than in action, American troops in World War I saw an all-time low in the number of deaths due to disease. Army camp inspections, carried out by William Henry Welch, the respected doctor and assistant to the Army Surgeon General, revealed that, though camps were overcrowded, "the health of the army proved to be as good as any reasonable doctor could expect."[3] Unfortunately, the new light that had been shed on disease control did not apply to air-borne viruses. Because neither antibiotics nor a way to control the spread of air-borne diseases had been invented yet, America was as vulnerable to the deadly grip of influenza that would befall it in 1918 as Medieval Europe had been to the Bubonic Plague of the 14th century.

More people died of the Spanish Flu in the 10 months that it devastated the world than had died of any other disease or war in history. A commonly cited estimate of deaths is 21 million worldwide, yet prominent demographer Kingsley Davis estimates that the disease killed approximately 20 million in the Indian subcontinent alone.[4] The actual number of deaths will never be known, but the modern estimate is somewhere between 50 and 100 million.[5] If an equal percentage of the world population died today, that would be close to 2 billion victims.[6] A bare minimum of 550,000 Americans, or .5 percent of the American population, died in the apocalyptic pandemic.[7] Yet, due to some historical and demographic particulars of the 1918 flu, the American economy—which nearly collapsed in some areas during the outbreak—was not crippled in any lasting way.

The flu is not generally thought of as a killer. Instead, it is perceived as a pesky annual virus, slightly more troublesome than the common cold, but nothing serious. In reality, the average yearly flu is an extremely virulent disease, infecting anywhere from 30 to 60 million Americans annually, of whom about 36,000 die (usually the very old or the very young.)[8] It mutates so frequently that humans are never fully immune to it, so a yearly vaccine must be produced to counteract it, whereas most viruses require only one vaccination in a lifetime.[9] The killer flu of 1918, dubbed the Spanish Flu or the Spanish Lady, was a particularly deadly mutation of this influenza virus.[10] In comparison to the .1 percent of infected who die of the annual flu, it killed 2.5 percent of those who contracted it.[11] This mutation had a propensity to cause pneumonia, untreatable at the time, and clogged its victims' lungs with bloody sputum until their faces turned dark purple and they died of suffocation.[12]

The origins of the Spanish Flu are uncertain, but most experts believe that the first wave in the U.S. emerged in Fort Riley, Kansas, on March 11, 1918, when one of the men came down with a milder form of the mysterious illness.[13] As of the next day, 414 soldiers had contracted the virus, and by the end of the week at least 500 were sick.[14] In total, 48 men died from the first influenza-pneumonia strain by the time it had run its course in the camp—too low a number to merit any concern in the medical community in 1918.[15] Even though the virus struck at least 13 other military camps, there was sparse evidence that civilians were similarly affected, and, besides, disease was a fact of life in any military camp.[16] So, little attention was directed to the budding pandemic. America instead focused on the new draft calls, the war in Europe, the suffragette movement, and the Bolshevik tumult in Russia, while ignoring the mild outbreak of a hard-to-identify flu.[17]

As expected, the flu subsided quickly with a forgettable number of casualties. Unforeseen, however, was the deadlier second wave that would emerge that August to explode in September with

unprecedented virulence. Influenza viruses thrive in cold, dry weather, which is why flu season tends to be during the winter.[18] The fact that it exploded like it did in August, which is neither cold nor dry, makes this flu remarkable. The epidemic first struck Camp Devens, an overcrowded military camp thirty miles from Boston, on September 8 after brewing in Europe for about a month.[19] From there, it spread to the rest of the United States in an unsettlingly erratic manner, hitting most of the East coast, then some of the Midwest and the Gulf Coast region, then the West coast, and ultimately striking the interior.[20] Although at times slow in reaching certain regions, the Spanish Flu was horrifyingly thorough in its damages.

Nearly every city in the United States was affected economically by the flu in the short-term. In many places, the workforce was paralyzed because 21-to-29-year-olds suffered the greatest casualties.[21] So many people died at uncommonly young ages that the average life expectancy dropped 12 years, from 51 in 1917 to 39 in 1918.[22] Whether or not the infected had been young, healthy, and robust prior to contracting the flu was of little consequence. The military, which consisted of a particularly young, healthy, and robust demographic, was hit the hardest of any social group in America: 40 percent of the Navy and 36 percent of the Army developed the flu in 1918.[23] With victims' average age being 33, the volume of death claims by flu victims blind-sided the life insurance companies.[24] One life insurance company handled $24 million worth of unanticipated death claims for 68,000 deaths.[25] The fact that the majority of victims were in the prime of their lives defied actuarial projections, confusing insurance companies, destroying families, and disrupting the economy at large.

In the most severe stages of the flu, the "essential services" of cities verged on collapse as policemen, firemen, garbage collectors, telephone operators, and even the doctors, nurses, and social workers who were struggling to fight the flu, were absent from work.[26] The Bureau of Child Hygiene strove to handle an overwhelming population of orphans as the fathers and mothers of America, those in the most vulnerable age-range, were decimated by influenza.[27] Employment standards plummeted, the only requirement in some places being "two hands and willingness to work."[28] Worst off of any "essential service" were the processors of the dead. As morgues filled up, in some places with bodies stacked three and four high, corpses accumulated in the streets, spreading bacteria and the residual influenza virus.[29] In some situations, the dead were left untended, festering in their homes for days.[30] The primary emergency during the flu was in these "essential services," which could not have held out much longer than they did. While those services continued functioning, even at a minimal level, the rest of the economy was able to rebound to normal capacity within three years, the "Roaring Twenties" as evidence of this resilience. Despite the chaos, the nation persisted.

In *The Review of Economic Statistics* of December 1919, the year 1919 was deemed a "year of readjustment," one in which the United States was healing from the tensions of 1918.[31] According to the article, in 1918, "industries were straining their energies to meet the unusual demands occasioned by the war," yet it should be noted that the strain was also partially due to the Spanish Flu.[32] In one county in West Virginia, during the fall of 1918, the three months of flu had left 6,000 ill, of whom 500 died.[33] This sapped the county economy to near-collapse as 80 percent of the labor force fell ill.[34] Coupled with the large population overseas for the war, situations like this compromised cities across the nation, especially with Surgeon General of the Army William Crawford Gorgas shipping thousands of America's fittest young doctors and nurses to Europe, where he believed they were most necessary.[35] The doctors and nurses who continued to serve at home, like many of the civilians who remained, were generally too old, or too young, or too disabled to adequately respond to the Spanish Flu.[36]

When the epidemic reached cities with a deficient work force and incompetent, sparse medical care, the critical damage to the economy was compounded by restrictive public health ordinances. In an effort to restrict exposure to the virus, the Surgeon General had issued public health ordinances that prohibited most public gatherings and required gauze masks to be worn at all times.[37] In Philadelphia alone, it is estimated that theaters, cinemas, and hotels lost $2 million to the flu from the ordinances, while saloons lost $350,000.[38] These ordinances turned out to be fairly pointless: even in places that strictly adhered to the recommendations of the Surgeon General the case and death rates were no lower than those in lenient cities.[39] On a smaller scale, tobacco sales dropped off about 50 percent in places that strictly required cotton face masks because men could not smoke while wearing masks.[40] These masks turned out to be completely ineffective, because the weave of the gauze proved too porous to stop a virus, usually a tiny sphere with a diameter of about 1/10,000 of a millimeter.[41] The futile public health ordinances and gauze masks temporarily damaged business during the flu crisis, yet the economy rebounded.

When contagious diseases attack a society, it tends to hit the poorest sector of economy the hardest. One of the reasons for this is that they are more prone to infect people who have cramped

living quarters, poor hygiene, inadequate water and food supplies, and exposure to parasites—some of the consequences of poverty.[42] Because the working class would be disproportionately affected by disease, the work force would be disproportionately affected by disease, the work force would be disproportionately diminished in the lowest-paying, most essential jobs during an epidemic. By contrast, the Spanish Flu, being an air-borne disease (and thus not preventable through good hygiene and health), affected all sectors of the economy equally. It killed vast numbers of people, but, as noted by historian Alfred W. Crosby, it "ignored the differences between rural and urban, patrician and peasant, capitalist and proletarian, and struck them all down in similar proportions."[43] Because it was so unbiased in its selection, no social hierarchies were overturned, nor were any particular divisions of employment gutted of laborers. Influenza's only prejudice was that it ravaged the young, healthy age-range—something fairly irrelevant to economic status—and thus the only long-term economic imbalance was proportional: there were fewer people to work and fewer people sharing in the wealth.

Although the Spanish Flu killed a lower percentage of the population than it affected and lasted for a shorter period of time, the economic benefits of the epidemic can be compared to those of the Black Death. One of the peculiar positive effects of the Black Death, according to historian Norman Davies, was that it marked "the decisive point in the decline of the feudal system in Western Europe."[44] Although social upheaval may have already been gaining momentum, the deadly epidemic that killed approximately one-third of Europe allowed formerly impoverished and powerless serfs to assert their independence.[45] With an absence of competition in the work force and a high demand for menial labor, serfs were able to gain comparative economic freedom with rising pay.[46] This escalation of the price of labor and goods during the plague is echoed in the aftermath of the Spanish Flu epidemic. *The Review of Economic Statistics* of December 1919 observes the post-influenza wage inflation, noting that the "efficiency of labor, unfortunately, has not materially improved and is still generally below the pre-war level," yet "rates of wages have remained high during 1919 and have continued to rise rather than decline."[47] *The Review* also remarks on the oddity that "unemployment has not developed, in spite of the demobilization of the army; and in many sections labor is still reported to be scarce."[48] The unusually high wages and low labor supply despite the re-absorption of troops into the work force could be attributed to the fact that so many people had succumbed to the pandemic on the home front that the re-entry of troops had normalized, rather than overwhelmed, the labor market.

In the years following 1918, the influenza pandemic, though surely seared in the memories of those it personally affected, quickly subsided from national consciousness.[49] Even during the epidemic, the flu was rarely mentioned in the papers or truly noticed on a national level. As noted by Crosby, "*The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, 1919-1921 has 13 inches of column space devoted to citations of articles about baseball, 20 inches to Bolshevism, 47 to Prohibition, and 8 inches to the flu."[50] As the United States emerged victorious from the devastations of World War I, the brief but deadly nightmare of the Spanish Flu was lost to the national memory. The war had put pressure on Americans to sacrifice as much as possible: the government urging people to grow what food they could, eat less meat and fewer luxury foods, buy war bonds, and serve in the army as required by the draft. Wartime America was dealing with death on a regular basis as the war casualties continued to grow, ultimately reaching approximately 117,000 deaths—about 53,000 in battle, the remainder due to disease.[51] With such a high proportion of war losses due to disease and the influenza deaths accompanying the hardships on the home front, the flu must have seemed so intricately enmeshed in the reality of war that it became unremarkable.

After the war had ended and the flu had essentially run its course in most places, the thrifty attitudes about consumption enforced by the war effort and the strict public health ordinances were immediately discarded. Americans had a brief attention span for such restrictions—they were only heeded during the war for patriotic reasons or in the midst of a deadly, dramatic pandemic. *The Review of Economic Statistics* of December 1919 remarked that "extravagant expenditure, both public and private, is found on every hand."[52] San Franciscans—who endured the worst hit of the Spanish Flu on the West Coast—had complied with the October-November 1918 masking ordinance that had required gauze masks be worn at all times.[53] Yet, a mid-December masking recommendation of that same year met the fierce opposition of 90 percent of the city and was struck down by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.[54] The intolerance for what were thought at the time to be potentially life-saving health measures reflects the prevalent mood at the time of impatience with inconvenience that trumped even fear of death.

Perhaps the Spanish Flu would have drawn more attention if only it had left the scar of a long depression in its wake. Yet, after the crippling 10 months of the flu, the American economy was not only

undamaged, but booming. Following the "year of readjustment" of 1919, the United States experienced a sunny era of unprecedented prosperity.[55] The national income, which had remained stagnant from 1890 to 1918, rose more than $200 per capita and laborers enjoyed a workday diminished from 12 to eight hours, as well as a paid annual vacation.[56] With the advent of mass-production due to the innovations of the assembly line and expanded industrial exploitation of electricity, productivity soared to unheard-of levels.[57] In the mere 30 years between 1899 and 1929, industrial production expanded by 264 percent.[58] All of this was accomplished by a manufacturing labor pool that, according to historian William E. Leuchtenburg in his book *The Perils of Prosperity*, contained "precisely the same number of men in 1929 as it had in 1919."[59] The workforce to attain these new heights was the same workforce that been described in 1919 as generally sufficient, yet which was in many sectors "still reported to be scarce."[60] In the same way that the Renaissance thrived in the wake of the Black Plague by benefiting from capital redistribution to a greater demographic, the destruction of the Spanish Flu had opened up a decade of culture and materialism to a population that benefited from the resulting availability of jobs and higher wages.

With thousands of the fittest soldiers, doctors, and nurses overseas and the stress of coping with wartime and its strict economic regulations, a flu epidemic was the last thing that Americans of 1918 needed, or expected. It was especially traumatic when even the enormous strides that had been made in recent years in the medical community were insufficient to control this epidemic of a traditionally unobtrusive disease. Disturbingly, young, healthy adults were the most likely to succumb to the virus and die of a violent, delirious pneumonia. With the backbone of the economy debilitated and inept medical care, U.S. society could have collapsed. However, the flu lasted for a short enough time that it did not permanently disable the workforce. Also, because the primary target was an age-group rather than a class, the virus infected different socioeconomic sectors evenly. As a consequence, though in many places the workforce was reduced to the point of near-collapse, the population retained its socioeconomic balance. Finally, because the flu took place for 10 months during and after World War I, the most devastated demographic was replaced by the return of soldiers who could then be reabsorbed easily into society, thereby alleviating the labor-pool crisis. From the perspective of its victims and their loved ones, the 1918 influenza was a tragedy; however, viewed within an economic paradigm, the Spanish Lady smoothed the transition from the turbulence of the 19th and early 20th centuries into the prosperity of the 1920s.

Endnotes

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche Twilight of the Idols, or, How to Philosophize with a Hammer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 5, http://books.google.com/books?id-oH4q25gwkOgC&pg=PR3&dq=twilight+of+the+idols&sig=6sr5p PhV2ST 4tHWj_CbRqJ-5Ty4#PPA5,M1

[2] Alfred W. Crosby. America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 10; The American Experience: Influenza 1918, Program Transcript, PBS, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/influenza/filmmore/transcript/transcript1.html

[3] Crosby, p. 3

[4] Ibid., pp. 206, 207

[5] Svenn-Erik Mamelund, "Can the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918 Explain the Baby Boom of 1920 in Neutral Norway? Population English Edition, 2002) Vol 59, No. 2 (March-April, 2004) p. 232, http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1634-2941%28200403%2F04%2959%3A2%3C229%3ACTSIPO %3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z

[6] John M. Barry, Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History (New York: Penguin Group, 2004) p. 238

[7] Ibid., p. 238

[8] Tim Appenzeller, "Tracking the Next Killer Flu," National Geographic (October 2005) p. 12

[9] Ibid., p. 12

[10] It is generally thought that the Spanish flu got its name because Spain, being a neutral country in the World War I, did not censor its newspapers, so the mortality rates were exposed to the world. It is certain that the flu did not originate in Spain, though it is not certain where it did originate. Most experts agree that it probably began in America. Ibid., p. 12

[11] Gina Kolata, Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus That Caused It (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999) p. 7

[12] Barry, p. 243

[13] Mary Ellen Snodgrass, World Epidemics: A Cultural Chronology of Disease from Prehistory to the Era of SARS (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Incorporated, 2003) p. 272

[14] Ibid., p. 272

[15] Crosby, p. 19

[16] The flu was not made a reportable disease in many cities until the second wave of the epidemic was already in full swing because the medical community was reluctant to accept that influenza had reached such proportions. This partially accounts for the incomplete civilian records concerning the flu, in contrast to the records of controlled populations, like the military and prisons, which kept strict medical records of any and all diseases in the community. Kolata, Flu, p. 10

[17] Crosby, pp. 17, 18

[18] Gina Kolata, "Why winter for the flu? A virus has its reasons; [4 edition]," International Herald Tribune (December 6, 2007) p. 5 http://proquest.umi.com pqdweb?index=1&did=1393874091&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS =1197252984&clientId=14764

[19] Ibid., p. 4

[20] The American Experience: Influenza 1918, Maps, PBS, http://www.pbs.ory/wgbh/amex/influenza/maps/index.htm

[21] Crosby, p. 21

[22] Laura B. Shrestha, "CRS Report for Congress: Life Expectancy in the United States," (Domestic Social Policy Division, 2006) p. 31, http://www.ncseonline.org/NLE/CRSreports/06Sep/RL32792.pdf

[23] Kolata, Flu, pp. 6, 7

[24] Crosby, p. 312

[25] Ibid., p. 312

[26] Ibid., p. 75

[27] Ibid., p. 75

[28] Ibid., p. 75

[29] Ibid., p. 76

[30] Ibid., p. 76

[31] Joseph S. Davis, "Economic Conditions Since the Armistice," The Review of Economic Statistics Vol 1, Monthly Supplement (December 1919) p. 9, http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=00346535%28191912%291%3C9% 3AIROTY %3E2.0.CO%3B2-0

[32] Ibid., p. 9

[33] Snodgrass, p. 276

[34] Ibid., p. 276

[35] Barry, pp. 142, 143

[36] Ibid., p. 143

[37] Crosby, p. 74

[38] Ibid., p. 87

[39] Ibid., p. 74

[40] Ibid., p. 104

[41] Barry, pp. 359, 103

[42] Kolata, Flu, p. 47

[43] Crosby, p. 323

[44] Norman Davies, Europe: A History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 412

[45] Ibid., p. 412

[46] Ibid., p. 412

[47] Ibid., p. 412; Davis, p. 10

[48] Davis, p. 10

[49] Crosby, p. 314

[50] Ibid., p. 314

[51] The Great War: Resources, WWI Casualty and Death Tables, PBS, http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html

[52] Davis, p. 9

[53] Crosby, pp. 70, 108-110

[54] Ibid., pp. 70, 108-110

[55] Davis, p. 10; William E. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity: 1914-32 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958) p. 178

[56] Leuchtenburg, pp. 178-179

[57] Ibid., p. 179

[58] Ibid., p. 180

[59] Ibid., p. 179

[60] Davis, p. 10

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Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
  - *More people died of the Spanish Flu in the 10 months that it devastated the world than had died of any other disease or war in history. . . . Yet, due to some historical and demographic particulars of the 1918 flu, the American economy—which nearly collapsed in some areas during the outbreak—was not crippled in any lasting way.*
- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole.**
  - The information is organized logically (and, in places, chronologically). The introduction previews the content and then moves through several carefully sequenced categories of information, ending with a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the explanation.
- **develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
  - Details: *In only one century, it had seen the successful vaccination, containment, or cure for the notorious menaces of smallpox, anthrax, rabies, meningitis, typhoid, malaria, yellow fever, diphtheria, cholera, and tetanus.*[2] *. . . The war had put pressure on Americans to sacrifice as much as possible: the government urging people to grow what food they could, eat less meat and fewer luxury foods, buy war bonds, and serve in the army as required by the draft.*
  - Examples: *It mutates so frequently that humans are never fully immune to it . . . The killer flu of 1918, dubbed the Spanish Flu or the Spanish Lady, was a particularly deadly mutation of this influenza virus.*[10]
  - Facts: *Following the "year of readjustment" of 1919, the United States experienced a sunny era of unprecedented prosperity.*[55] *The national income, which had remained stagnant from 1890 to 1918, rose more than $200 per capita and laborers enjoyed a workday diminished from 12 to eight hours, as well as a paid annual vacation.* [56]
  - Quotations: *As noted by Crosby,* "The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, *1919-1921 has 13 inches of column space devoted to citations of articles about baseball, 20 inches to Bolshevism, 47 to Prohibition, and 8 inches to the flu."*[50] *. . . All of this was accomplished by a manufacturing labor pool that, according to historian William E. Leuchtenburg in his book* The Perils of Prosperity, *contained "precisely the same number of men in 1929 as it had in 1919."*[59]
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
  - *Because neither antibiotics nor a way to control the spread of air-borne diseases . . . had been invented yet . . . Yet, due to . . . Instead, it . . . In reality . . . As of the next day . . . In total . . . Even though . . . So . . . As expected . . . However . . . From there . . . Although at times slow . . . Whether or not . . . In the most severe stages . . . As morgues filled up . . . In some situations . . . By contrast . . . But . . . Because it was so unbiased in its selection . . . This escalation . . . In the years following 1918 . . . As the United States emerged . . . After the war had ended . . . Yet . . . From the perspective of . . .*
  - *. . . there was sparse evidence that civilians were similarly affected, and, besides, disease was a fact of life in any military camp.*[16] *So, little attention was directed to the budding pandemic . . . With an absence of competition in the work force and a high demand for menial labor, serfs were able to gain comparative economic freedom with rising pay.*[46]
- **uses precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.**
  - *. . . bacteriology . . . diphtheria . . . sanitation . . . suffragette movement . . . pandemic . . . virulent disease . . . influenza viruses . . .*

- *. . . as a killer . . . As a pesky annual virus, slightly more troublesome than the common cold . . . if only it had left the scar of a long depression . . . budding pandemic . . . In the same way that the Renaissance thrived in the wake of the Black Plague . . .*

- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the student is writing.**
  - *. . . there was sparse evidence that civilians were similarly affected, and, besides, disease was a fact of life in any military camp.[16] So, little attention was directed to the budding pandemic . . . With an absence of competition in the work force and a high demand for menial labor, serfs were able to gain comparative economic freedom with rising pay.[45]*
  - *When contagious diseases attack a society, it tends to hit the poorest sector of the economy the hardest. . . . By contrast, the Spanish Flu, being an air-borne disease (and thus not preventable through good hygiene and health) affected all sectors of the economy equally.*

- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).**
  - *From the perspective of its victims and their loved ones, the 1918 influenza was a tragedy; however, viewed within an economic paradigm, the Spanish Lady smoothed the transition from the turbulence of the 19th and early 20th centuries into the prosperity of the 1920s.*

- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English.**

Student Sample: Grade 12, Informative/Explanatory

This essay was one of a portfolio of four essays submitted by a high school student for placement in a college composition course sequence. The student had unlimited time to write and likely received feedback and instructional support while creating the portfolio.

Fact vs. Fiction and All the Grey Space in Between

The modern world is full of problems and issues—disagreements between peoples that stem from today's wide array of perceptions, ideas, and values. Issues that could never have been foreseen are often identified and made known today because of technology. Once, there were scatterings of people who had the same idea, yet never took any action because none knew of the others; now, given our complex forms of modern communication, there are millions who have been connected. Today, when a new and arguable idea surfaces, the debate spreads across the global community like wildfire. Topics that the general public might never have become aware of are instantly made into news that can be discussed at the evening dinner table. One such matter, which has sparked the curiosity of millions, is the recent interest in the classification of literature as fiction or nonfiction.

A number of questions have arisen: What sparked the booming interest? Where exactly is the line that separates fiction from nonfiction, and how far can the line be stretched until one becomes the other? Are there intermediaries between the two, or must we classify each piece of literature as one or the other? Do authors do this purposefully, or with no intent? The answers to these questions are often circular and simply lead to further dispute. In modern times, the line between the classification of literature as either fiction or nonfiction has become blurred and unclear; the outdated definitions and qualifications have sparked the development of new genres and challenged the world's idea on the differences between the two.

The Spark Which Lit the Fire

Though it had been a fairly relevant and known topic to members of the literary world, the idea that a book is not always completely fiction or nonfiction seemed to be an obscure and unnecessary subject for the public to ponder. However, the average Monday morning watercooler conversation was forever changed when what has become known as the "Million Little Lies Scandal" broke out in early 2006. It started on October 26, 2005 when author James Frey appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. He was the only guest of the day, there to promote and discuss his book entitled *A Million Little Pieces*. The book, a nonfiction memoir, recounts Frey's experience as an alcoholic, drug addict, and criminal, and the heroic story of his overcoming of every obstacle in his path to getting clean. After his appearance on the show and addition into Oprah's highly esteemed and publicized book club, the novel skyrocketed to the top of the charts, eventually becoming a number one best seller. But his success was short lived; in the months that followed, *The Smoking Gun*, a Web site that posts legal documents, arrest records, and investigates celebrity police dealings, unearthed some discrepancies between Frey's story and the police documents that should have supported his claims.

Though the Web site had originally only been searching for Frey's mugshot, one small inconsistency soon led to another, and after a six-week investigation, the site released its findings. Investigators had taken any parts of Frey's story that could be verified by a police record, matched it with his actual records, and were shocked by what they found; nearly all of Frey's memoir was either highly embellished or flat out fabricated. Huge discrepancies between the truth and what was stated in Frey's book became headline news; instances like Frey claiming to be in jail for eighty-seven days when in reality he was incarcerated for a mere four hours, or the serious drug charges that he claimed were filed against him that were never found on any record.

Frey was caught, and on January 8, 2006, *The Smoking Gun* published an article called "A Million Little Lies," which took an in-depth look at every provable inconsistency in the novel. By comparing direct quotes from the book to police records—or rather, the lack of police records—Frey's entire novel was pieced apart until there was nothing remaining. Completely discredited, yet still somehow maintaining the entire situation was a misunderstanding, Frey attempted to salvage his namesake by reappearing on *Oprah*; in the end, this proved to be more damaging than helpful. He had his reasons for what he'd done, he tried to explain.

Reasons that were valid and legitimate according to him, as he stated that he would not have been able to get the book signed unless he was willing to sell it as nonfiction. Details had been slightly exaggerated, he conceded, but this was only to allow the novel to fluctuate and flow in a way that would not have been possible had he stuck to the bare facts.

Regardless, in the end, it was proved beyond anyone's reasonable doubt that James Frey's novel landed dead center in the proverbial grey area between black and white—his novel was partially fiction and partially nonfiction. And so started the media frenzy; the scandal covered newsstands for weeks, people took sides with either Frey or his critics, and similarly themed novels were called into question. Suddenly the world *cared* about a novel's validity; they no longer assumed that the words fiction and nonfiction could themselves define the amount of fact that stood behind a piece of literature. People also realized, simultaneously, that they might not exactly know what defined and separated fiction and nonfiction, or if, in more modern times, the two might mesh together a bit more than in the literature of old.

With Difficulty, the Line is Drawn

Fiction and nonfiction: they're two words that are surprisingly hard to define. It's difficult to ascertain what the words have meant in the past, what they each encompass today, and how past and present definitions have been molded and shaped by the literature of the time. Traditionally, fiction is 'a tale drawn from the imagination' and nonfiction is 'a statement of fact'; however, the two are so much more complex than that. For many, the word 'fiction' is associable with the word 'story,' as if the two are equal or interchangeable. Subgenres of fiction often contribute to this perception; novels, short stories, fairy tales, comics, films, animation, and even video games help the mind classify fiction as a substance completely fabricated in the mind. Fiction is largely assumed to be a form of art or entertainment, and in many cases this is true—science fiction and romance novels are two examples of how we are entertained by a good book. But frequently, stories are told to educate—to raise awareness regarding a certain topic about which the author is concerned.

Stories like Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, George Orwell's *1984*, and Ayn Rand's *Anthem* all warn us about terrible futures that may arise as the result of the choices of humanity. Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation* is a short work of fiction based entirely around fact; while it tells the tale of a fictional little African boy thrown into a bloody civil uprising, his story of being a recruited child soldier is happening to hundreds of similar boys to this very day. Fables and parables are other, more subliminal examples of educational, moral-based fiction.

In the same way, nonfiction is surrounded by many presumptions; people assume that anything read in a nonfiction book is true, otherwise the literature would be labeled as fiction. Nonfiction literature *is* factual literature, but there is one important note to make. Nonfiction is literature that is *presented* as fact. This presentation may be accurate or inaccurate; in other words, the author is presumed to be writing what he or she believes to be the truth, or what he or she has been led to believe is the truth. Examples of nonfiction include essays, documentaries, scientific papers, textbooks, and journals. Nonfiction differs from fiction, however, in the areas regarding how the literature is presented and used. Directness, simplicity, and clarity are all aims of nonfiction literature.

Providing straight, accessible, understandable information to the reader is the purpose of nonfiction, and the ability to communicate well to the audience is what defines a skilled writer of the field. And despite the truth behind nonfiction writing, it is often necessary to persuade the reader to agree with the ideas being presented; therefore, a balanced, coherent and informed argument is also vital.

More Than Simply Black or White

The line between fiction and nonfiction starts to blur, however, when one considers genres that seem to mesh the two; historical fiction, new journalism, and biographies/autobiographies. These are only three of the defined new genres encompassed by what has become the intermediary between fiction and nonfiction— literary nonfiction. When one explores these three genres, it becomes blaringly obvious how easily fiction and nonfiction can blur into one.

Historical fiction is the product when an author takes real people and real events and tells the story of what actually happened to them, but inserts characters of their own creation and a plot line that they invent in order to tie the entire novel together. This idea is perfectly exampled in Ann Rinaldi's *An Acquaintance with Darkness*. This novel takes real historical aspects (the assassination of President

Lincoln; the trial of the only woman associated with his murder; the society of Washington, D.C., at the time of his death; the history behind the practice of grave robbing) and inserts the character of a young girl and her dying mother who, between the two of them, manage to tell the historical side of the story along with their own imagined one. All the pieces of history are told completely as they happened; so on some level, this novel *is* nonfiction. Yet it is also blatantly fiction—it has *characters*.

New journalism, biographies, and autobiographies, however, blur the lines in a slightly different way; they call into question people's ability to relay information truthfully and with no bias. New journalism is the term coined in the 1960s to describe the then unconventional journalism techniques that brought the reader inside the life and mind of the story. It's a practice very common today; just watch any network investigation series. The journalist attempts to get inside the mind of whomever is being investigated; he or she digs up information regarding that person's past, present, and potential future. The author then takes all the factual background information they've collected and pairs it with the emotions, memories, and feelings described to them by the person, and writes the complete story. If the complete work is to be published as a book rather than a news article or made into a television script, it often ends up being sold as a fiction novel. Yet is this the correct classification, given that all the information is true?

One excellent example of new journalism is Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*. When asked about it, Capote himself even called it "unclassifiable." Capote traveled to Kansas to investigate the murder of a family of four; he ended up staying there for years, befriending the people of the town, discovering what he could about the murders from them, and piecing together his book from interviews and information he gained during his stay. When it was published, the novel became a best seller and also one of the first highly noted pieces of literature to border the line between fiction and nonfiction; it was the first of its kind to bring the idea of the blurring line to households across the United States.

Biographies and autobiographies are often questioned in the same way. Though not always thought of as controversial and previously considered nonfiction, biographies and autobiographies don't appear to fit into today's definition of fiction or nonfiction. The authors of both are simply telling the story of their own life or of someone else's life, but that begs an obvious question; is a highly detailed, written record of a person's feelings and perceptions able to be considered nonfiction? How can we classify people's emotions and memories as fact? An outstanding example of an autobiographical piece that cannot be defined is Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. His self-proclaimed 'nonfiction novel' is a collection of stories stemming from both his imagination and his personal experience in Vietnam during the war. O'Brien feels that the idea of creating a story that is technically false yet truthfully portrays a situation—as opposed to just stating the facts and stirring no emotion within the reader—is the correct way to educate the public in a meaningful, everlasting way. He, like many others, believes that biographies and autobiographies should be left as their own separate being; a genre where the reader may classify for himself or herself what truth and what fiction might lie within the literature. All of the issues mentioned above are shrouded in debate; there are no straightforward answers.

Fiction and nonfiction are two polar opposites on a scale that today offers little to no gradient. In years past, these two words have been definition enough and have managed to encompass all types of written word. Times change, however, and in the modern day, authors have begun to push the boundaries and discover the furthest extent of where literature can take us. Since they feel as if their literature does not fit into the classifications of fiction or nonfiction, authors are creating *new* genres where their novels and books can be properly sorted and defined. An update is long overdue—both an update to the definitions currently used to classify books, and an update in which we create new areas into which books can be classified.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
    - *In modern times, the line between the classification of literature as either fiction or nonfiction has become blurred and unclear; the outdated definitions and qualifications have sparked the development of new genres and challenged the world's idea on the differences between the two.*

- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole, and includes formatting when useful to aiding comprehension.**
    - The writer uses headers to help organize sections and uses cohesion devices to link sentences (*The Spark Which Lit the Fire; With Difficulty, the Line is Drawn; More Than Simply Black or White*).
    - *However, the average Monday morning watercooler conversation was forever changed when what has become known as the "Million Little Lies Scandal" broke out in early 2006.*
    - *Regardless, in the end, it was proved beyond anyone's reasonable doubt that James Frey's novel landed dead center in the proverbial grey area between black and white—his novel was partially fiction and partially nonfiction.*
    - *Fiction and nonfiction: they're two words that are surprisingly hard to define. It's difficult to ascertain what the words have meant in the past, what they each encompass today, and how past and present definitions have been molded and shaped by the literature of the time.*
    - *Fiction and nonfiction are two polar opposites on a scale that today offers little to no gradient.*
- **develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
    - *Frey was caught, and on January 8, 2006,* The Smoking Gun *published an article called "A Million Little Lies," which took an in-depth look at every provable inconsistency in the novel. By comparing direct quotes from the book to police records—or rather, the lack of police records—Frey's entire novel was pieced apart until there was nothing remaining.*
    - *Stories like Cormac McCarthy's* The Road*, George Orwell's* 1984*, and Ayn Rand's* Anthem *all warn us about terrible futures that may arise as the result of the choices of humanity.*
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
    - *. . . the debate spreads across the global community like wildfire.*
    - *Where exactly is the line that separates fiction from nonfiction, and how far can the line be stretched until one becomes the other? Are there intermediaries between the two, or must we classify each piece of literature as one or the other?*
    - *All the pieces of history are told completely as they happened; so on some level, this novel* is *nonfiction. Yet it is also blatantly fiction—it has* characters.
- **uses precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.**
    - *Uzodinma Iweala's* Beasts of No Nation *is a short work of fiction based entirely around fact . . .*
    - *The line between fiction and nonfiction starts to blur, however, when one considers genres that seem to mesh the two; historical fiction, new journalism, and biographies/autobiographies.*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the specific discipline in which the student is writing.**
    - *One such matter . . .*
    - *Though it had been a fairly relevant and known topic to members of the literary world, the idea that a book is not always completely fiction or nonfiction seemed to be an obscure and unnecessary subject for the public to ponder.*
    - *Historical fiction is the product when . . .*

- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).**
    - *Since they feel as if their literature does not fit into the classifications of fiction or nonfiction, authors are creating new genres where their novels and books can be properly sorted and defined.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 12, Informative/Explanatory

The essay that follows was one of a portfolio of four essays submitted by a high school student for placement in a college composition course sequence. The student had unlimited time to write and likely received feedback and instructional support while creating the portfolio.

The Making of a Human Voice and How to Use It

The violin is arguably the most cherished and well-known orchestral instrument in the world. Many are moved by its unique quality of sound; it is known as the only instrument close to the sound of a human voice. Maybe the violin is so revered because "humans in all times and places are powerfully moved, or threatened, by the possibility that with our hands and minds we can create something that is perfect" (Ebert). But the sound of this instrument was not magically created overnight; the creation of the very first violin took many years and has been a product of much experimentation. This is the reason that every beginning violinist should learn to appreciate the art of making a violin and the process of holding and bowing his instrument so that he will have the knowledge to play it well.

The process of constructing a violin is an age-old tradition that has been developed and refined for centuries. Each step is crucial to the quality of the instrument's sound. The violin's body consists of a rib structure, which is made from six thin maple ribs that are bent to shape by applying dry heat. The ribs are reinforced at the joints by wood blocks that are located in each of the four outward curving corners, one at the top rib, and one at the lower rib. To reinforce the glue-joints between the ribs and the table and back of the violin, strips of willow or pine are glued along the inside edges of the ribs to create the lining. The back plate of the violin is made from either one or two matched pieces of maple. The wood chosen for these pieces is very important and affects the sound production of the violin. The outline of the plate is drawn onto the maple and sawn out, and the arching (the outward bulge) is then painstakingly carved to a thickness of about five millimeters. The front plate of the violin, or table, has two soundholes carved from it on either side of the bridge. These soundholes are [shaped like the letter f] and are made to project the sound. Purfling is done by inlaying thin strips of wood around the top and back of the violin a short distance from the rim. Purfling strengthens the delicate edgework and produces a beautiful frame around the instrument's outline (Gusset).

The bridge is cut from a thin sliver of maple. Intricate shapes are carved from it, known as the "heart," "ears," and the two "feet" that allow it to stand on the violin table. The bridge is placed directly between the small nicks cut in the middle of each [soundhole]. The top of the bridge is curved to conform to the arch of the violin table, which allows the player to play each string individually (Skinner). The bridge is held onto the instrument by as much as seventeen pounds of pressure exerted from the four strings, which makes it a very delicate piece that must be checked periodically for leaning or warping. A bass-bar is fitted to the underside of the table underneath the left foot of the bridge. Underneath the right foot of the bridge, a soundpost is wedged between the front and back panel. The soundpost is made of spruce or pine and resists the downward pressure of the strings and improves the sound.

A neck is fitted to the top rib and is made to hold the fingerboard above the table. The fingerboard is a piece of ebony that extends beyond the neck and gradually widens towards the bridge. At the top of the neck is a pegbox that has holes drilled into each side in which the pegs are held. The pegs are used for a wide range of tuning. The pegbox slopes slightly backwards, which tensions the strings across the ebony nut at the top of the fingerboard and keeps them raised above the fingerboard. At the top of the pegbox is a scroll, added during the baroque period as an artistic flourish to provide an aesthetic touch to its already pleasing appearance (Vienna Online Magazine). The strings are wrapped around the pegs, stretched across the bridge, and held by an ebony or boxwood tailpiece. Anywhere from one to four fine tuners can be attached to the tailpiece; these are used to tighten or loosen the string to change its pitch for fine-tuning. The tailpiece is held into place by a loop of gut or nylon that is wrapped around an ebony end button located in the middle of the bottom rib.

After gluing is done, the violin must be exposed to air and sun for several days to a few weeks to darken the wood through the process of oxidation (Gusset). A protective varnish is brushed onto the surface of the violin, which has a slight dampening effect to the sound, but it is primarily used to protect the wood from perspiration, dust, dirt, and humidity (Kolneder 21). "The classical Italian makers appear to have used different formulations for the ground coat, which seals and protects the wood and does much to bring out its natural beauty, and the top coats, which were tinted with rich red, yellow and golden-brown

colours . . . Recent research suggests that walnut or linseed oil may have been an important constituent of the finest old Italian varnish, later supplanted by recipes based on shellac and alcohol" (Stowell 5).

Both the construction of the violin and the way it is played are equally important to its sound production. This is very critical to learn early so that a bad habit does not need correcting later on. The modern violin is held between the chin and the left shoulder, with the scroll angling towards the left. Violin teachers will have varying ideas of the correct position to hold a violin, but many great violinists have held their instruments in different ways and have been successful. Some will hold a violin directly under the chin, and others believe that the highest position on the shoulder is best. A chinrest is usually attached to the left side of the tailpiece to make it more comfortable for the violinist to hold. Sometimes a shoulder rest can be attached to the back of the violin which can be taken off after playing. The shoulder rest can be made of various materials and provides height and padding to the violinist's shoulder.

The left hand gently moves along the neck and fingerboard of the violin. The left fingers press down upon the string, shortening its length, which creates a higher pitch. The right hand holds the bow, which consists of a long stick of wood and a gathering of horsehair stretched from one end of the bow to the other. "In the bowing area, two C-shaped indentations (the waist) accommodate the bow's motion across the strings" (Kolneder 13). The four strings can be bowed with the horsehair, plucked, or bounced with the stick of the bow to produce vastly different colors of sound. "Bowing across the string is the normal manner of tone production, but the process is actually extremely complicated and in its most minute details not yet entirely understood . . . The strings' basic pitch depends on its length, thickness, material . . . and tension. These factors determine the frequency, that is, the number of vibrations . . . per second" (Kolneder 16). The bow must be rosined frequently to allow the strings to vibrate to create the fullest sound.

Even if a luthier, or stringed instrument maker, takes years to complete a violin, it can only produce its best sound if every step of its construction and every piece is made with is of the best quality. The same is true of the time needed for a musician to play the violin well. A player must learn that what counts is not how much time is spent practicing, but the quality of practice. A private teacher is also required, so proper instruction will be given. A musician must also fully understand and appreciate the skill required for constructing a violin. Not until then will a violinist be able to use his knowledge to bring forth their instrument's fullest and most beautiful sound.

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Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
    - *The violin is arguably the most cherished and well-known orchestral instrument in the world. Many are moved by its unique quality of sound; it is known as the only instrument*

close to the sound of a human voice. . . . the sound of this instrument was not magically created overnight; the creation of the very first violin took many years and has been a product of much experimentation. This is the reason that every beginning violinist should learn to appreciate the art of making a violin and the process of holding and bowing his instrument so that he will have the knowledge to play it well.

- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole.**
    - The information is sequenced logically. The writer provides a carefully sequenced explanation of how a violin is made through detailed descriptions of the various parts of a violin and their purposes and steps in the process of building a violin.
- **develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
    - Facts: *. . . the creation of the very first violin took many years and has been a product of much experimentation.*
    - Examples: *. . . many great violinists have held their instruments in different ways and have been successful. Some will hold a violin directly under the chin, and others believe that the highest position on the shoulder is best.*
    - Details: *The four strings can be bowed with the horsehair, plucked, or bounced with the stick of the bow to produce vastly different colors of sound.*
    - Quotations: *"Bowing across the string is the normal manner of tone production, but the process is actually extremely complicated and in its most minute details not yet entirely understood . . . The strings' basic pitch depends on its length, thickness, material . . . and tension. These factors determine the frequency, that is, the number of vibrations . . . per second" (Kolneder 16).*
- **integrates information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation**.
    - *At the top of the pegbox is a scroll, added during the baroque period as an artistic flourish to provide an aesthetic touch to its already pleasing appearance (Vienna Online Magazine).*
    - *"The classical Italian makers appear to have used different formulations for the ground coat, which seals and protects the wood and does much to bring out its natural beauty, and the top coats, which were tinted with rich red, yellow and golden-brown colours . . . Recent research suggests that walnut or linseed oil may have been an important constituent of the finest old Italian varnish, later supplanted by recipes based on shellac and alcohol" (Stowell 5).*
    - *Stowell, Robin, ed.* The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*. New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1992.*
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
    - *But the sound of this instrument . . . This is the reason . . . To reinforce the glue joints . . .*
    - *These soundholes . . . The top of the bridge . . . Underneath the right foot . . . At the top of the pegbox . . . After gluing is done . . .*
    - *Both the construction of the violin and the way it is played are equally important to its sound production. This is very critical to learn early so that a bad habit does not need correcting later on. . . . Even if a luthier, or stringed instrument maker, takes years to complete a violin, it can only produce its best sound if every step of its construction and every piece is made with is of the best quality.*

- **uses precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.**
    - *. . . a rib structure . . . glue-joints . . . back plate . . . soundholes . . . tuning . . .*
    - *. . . known as the only instrument close to the sound of a human voice . . .*
    - *Purfling is done by inlaying thin strips of wood around the top and back of the violin a short distance from the rim. . . . a luthier, or stringed instrument maker . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the student is writing.**
    - *The violin is arguably the most cherished and well-known orchestral instrument in the world. . . . A musician must also fully understand and appreciate the skill required for constructing a violin. Not until then will a violinist be able to use his knowledge to bring forth their instrument's fullest and most beautiful sound.*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).**
    - *Even if a luthier, or stringed instrument maker, takes years to complete a violin, it can only produce its best sound if every step of its construction and every piece is made with is of the best quality. The same is true of the time needed for a musician to play the violin well. A player must learn that what counts is not how much time is spent practicing, but the quality of practice. A private teacher is also required, so proper instruction will be given. A musician must also fully understand and appreciate the skill required for constructing a violin. Not until then will a violinist be able to use his knowledge to bring forth their instrument's fullest and most beautiful sound.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 12, Informative/Explanatory

A high school senior wrote the essay that follows for a career and technical class. The student had unlimited time to research and write this paper.

Wood Joints

Have you ever wondered how to design complex wood joinery? The types of wood joinery have been around for thousands of years. There are only twelve different main types of joints but there are many that combine more than one for aesthetics or strength. The first step in designing joints is understanding the different types and what their uses are. After you understand the strengths and weaknesses of the different joints you can compare and contrast the joints for aesthetics. This and a lot of practice are what make excellent wood joinery.

The first step in designing joints is to figure out what way the wood will move so it won't destroy the joint. Then figure in the stresses that will be put on the joint. The three types of stresses on joints are compression, tension, and shear. Compression is the weight pushing down on another piece and making it crush down. Tension is things being pulled apart. Shear is when a piece breaks off when overloaded.

There are two categories of joints there are sawed joints and shaped joints. A sawed joint is one that can be cut in one pass with a saw. The shaped joints can be complicated and take multiple cuts. Joints are either made to lock together which are the shaped ones or to make glue surfaces to glue together which are the sawed ones. The twelve types of joints are the butt joints, miter joints, rebate joints, dado joints, groove joints, and lap joints are sawed joints. Scarf joints, finger joints, dovetails, mortise and tenon, dowel joints, and spline joints are shaped joints.

To lay out good joints there are a few tools necessary. You need a good square that is accurate, a steel ruler for measuring, a miter square, a sliding bevel, a protractor, and a caliper. The square is to draw perfect ninety-degree lines. The miter square is so you can check your miters for accuracy. The sliding bevel and protractor is to draw angles other than forty-five degrees. The caliper is to make sure the pieces getting joined are the right thickness.

For a good joint the fit should be tight. But if it is too tight it is not good because the wood joint could crack or break. It should be tight enough that you can either push it together or give it a light tap with a hammer to seat it. Another reason it can't be too tight is because when the glue is applied the wood will expand. Then it may not fit. The reason the wood expands is because putting the glue on is like putting water on it.

The way to make a tight joint is in the layout. A marking knife is a lot more accurate than a pencil. Also make sure you use the same ruler throughout the project because there could be slight variations in different ones. Always mark the waste side of the line and make sure you follow on the right side of the line. If you cut on the wrong side of the line it will not be tight enough.

Now that you know what tools to use the next thing in tight joinery is to make sure all the pieces are the same thickness or the thickness needed. Boards should be cut to a rough length so they are easier to run through the machines. This will leave less room for error because the pieces won't be so bulky. Also make sure that the plywood is the thickness it's claimed to be because it could be off 1/64 of an inch. Whenever possible trace the mate for the joint to ensure a good fit.

If the joint is cut too small there are four different repairs. You can fill small gaps with a mixture of sawdust of the same species of wood and glue. For loose parts you can add shims and sand or file to fit. You could also make a design feature for loose parts. A slot cut in the end of a loose tenon with a wedge put in it makes a nice design feature. But if it is real noticeable you should just replace it. When buying lumber, always make sure you buy a couple of extra boards for mistakes or defects you didn't notice when you bought it.

Out of the twelve different joints, I'll start with the ones easiest to make. Butt joints are the easiest joints to make. A butt joint is wood joined face to edge or edge to end. There are several ways to attach the two pieces. They can be nailed or screwed together but should have a pilot hole drilled or the pieces may split. Corrugated or metal fasteners can be used. Also you can make wooden triangles or blocks to

strengthen up corners. The pieces can also be doweled together, which is one of the stronger ways to attach the two pieces. The two pieces can also be biscuit jointed together which is another fairly strong way to attach them.

Another fairly simple joint is the lap joint. The lap joint is where the two pieces of wood to be joined are cut so only half the thickness of each piece is left. They are then glued, nailed, or screwed together. The lap joint is mostly used for frames that will have plywood on them. The joint is also used in latticework, which is used for decoration in different pieces of furniture. The downside to this joint is that it isn't very strong but it does look nice in some applications.

The next joint is a little more complicated but still fairly simple. The only thing complicated about the miter joint is figuring out the angles for different shapes. A square is simple but you have to make sure the saw is exactly square or the joints won't fit tight. But as you get into different sided shapes the angles are harder to figure out, especially if they have to be a compound miter. That is where it is cut on an angle in two different directions. The miter joint looks good because there is no end grain but it isn't very strong. But biscuits can be added for some extra strength.

The next joint is the dado joint. Dados are slots cut across the grain. They are cut using a dado blade in the table saw, on a router, or hand chiseled. The uses of a dado are for putting shelves in the sideboards of a bookcase or other piece of furniture. The dado can be stopped short of the edge of the board to form a stopped dado. This is useful when you don't want the joint to be seen.

A joint similar to the dado is a groove. A groove runs with the grain instead of against it. There are several ways to cut a groove. You can use a dado blade, router, molder, or shaper. A groove is usually used in making raised panels. It is what holds the pane in between the rails and stiles.

A joint similar to a groove is the spline. The spline joint can either be a solid spline like tongue and groove. That is where one board has a groove and another one has a piece with both edges are cut off leaving the middle. A loose spline is a board with two grooves cut and then apiece of wood inserted in the tow grooves and glued. The uses good for the spline is siding and paneling. It also works fairly well in making large panels because the tongue helps to keep the boards aligned. You can dress up the spline joint by putting a chamfer or bead on the edge of the boards.

A good joint for joining backs to furniture is the rebate joint. It also works well for joining the tops and bottoms of furniture. A rebate joint is a dado at the end or edge of a board and usually has a piece of wood in it the same thickness as the dado. The wood is usually nailed or screwed into place. Another version of the rebate joint is one that is stopped. The stopped rebates are used when you don't want the joint to show.

A joint that can be quite complicated is the scarf joint. The scarf joint is used to make two boards into a a longer one. This joint is mostly used in timber frames. The joint came around in Europe when they had cut all the long big trees down and had to find a way to make the long beams needed for their buildings (Ramuz, 279). Then when the settlers came to America, they didn't need it for another hundred years or so until they did the same thing over here. The joint is usually about eight times longer than the width of the board or beam. It is made to have a lot of glue surface to make it a fairly strong joint. But it is not as strong as a full-length board or beam.

Another joint that can be quite complicated until you have the jig made for it is the finger joint. The finger joint is easy once the jig is made you just have to stand at the table saw and keep running the boards over the dado bade. The finger joint is several grooves on the end of a board with the other board cut to mate. They are very strong because it really increases the glue surface. The joint can also be used as a hinge if the corners are rounded and a dowel put all the way through the joint.

The last two joints left are some of the most complicated ones to design and cut. These joints are the real give away of quality joinery. If these joints are done properly they can last for hundreds of years and will really make your work look professional. The two joints are the mortise and tenon and dovetails. You can either cut these by hand or machine. If cut by machine, they aren't as complicated to make as they are when you cut them by hand. The joints aren't cut by hand as much anymore, but when they are you can take more pride in your work.

I will start with the mortise and tenon. The mortise and tenon has been around for hundreds and hundreds

of years. There are many uses including timber frame, attaching aprons to the legs on tables, and attaching rails and stiles on doorframes. Mortise and tenon are very strong joints. The timber frame barns and buildings are still standing after hundreds of years. The only reason they fall is because of decay and neglect. The mortise is a square hold cut to a certain depth and size. A through mortise is a square hole that is cut all the way through the board or beam. The tenon is the mate to a mortise. It is a square cut on the end of a board or beam. They are usually in the center of the board but can be offset if there is going to be more than one joint in the same spot. It also could be offset if it was going to be close to the edge of the other post or leg. A through tenon can look good with a wedge, or you can peg the tenon for strength. Mortises can be cut with a mortise, router, or drilled out and squared up with a chisel. Tenons can be cut by router, table saw, or by hand. But whatever way you do it they still mean good quality work.

The other hallmark of quality wood joinery is the dovetail. Dovetails can either be cut by a router and template or by hand with a lot of practice. A dovetail is similar to a finger joint except that it has angles. The dovetail has been around for thousands of years and there is a reason why. It is very aesthetically pleasing and strong enough to last for a very long time. Dovetails are very strong because it is made to pull apart in only one direction so from any other direction it can handle extreme loads.

Now to make dovetails by hand you need to take your time and be patient. They aren't as hard as you may think but does take practice. When the joint is completely cut it should fit together with a light push and should be very stiff. Dovetails are used in making drawer frames and the main box in cabinets. There are two types of dovetails and they are through dovetails and half-blind dovetails. Through dovetails are the ones where both boards go all the way through each other leaving the joint exposed. Half-blind dovetails are usually used to attach drawer fronts to the rest of the frame. On those, only half of the joint is visible because the other half ends short by 1/8 inch or more.

Now that you know the basics, here are a few more things you should know to make strong dovetails. If creating dovetails out of softwood, you should have a slope of 1 to 6 on the dovetails. If making them out of hardwood, the angle should be 1 to 8 (AM-wood.com). The reason for this is because softwood splits easier, this way the dovetail won't spread the wood as much when pulled on. If you are making multiple joints it is better to make a pattern so they are all the same. Plus it won't take as long because you won't have to lay them out every time. Dovetails are made up of two parts and they are pins and tails. It doesn't matter which ones you choose to cut first but you should always trace its mate to get a perfect fit.

That is all twelve woodworking joints. Now lets talk about beefing them up a little. Sure there are nails, screws, and other mechanical fasteners, but I'm talking about shop made ones. Dowels and biscuits are excellent ways to strengthen joints unnoticeably. But wedges, pegs, and wooden blocks are good ways and could even add some decoration. On through tenons, you can cut slots in the end of the tenon and add some wedges as a design and a way to keep it from pulling out. On mortise and tenons you can drill a hole and insert a peg for strength and looks.

To sum it all up there is a lot of information on the twelve different wood joints. Some of them can be quite complicated but with practice you could become an amateur woodworker. I have learned a lot about the different joints and techniques behind them. This research helped a lot in deciding what joints to use and how to construct them for my tech project. My tech project is designing and building a gun cabinet. In my gun cabinet I'm going to use rebates, grooves, dados, lock miters, dovetails, mortise and tenon and lap joints. I hope you have learned as much as I have about choosing and creating joints in wood. There is still more to be learned but this is a very good start in becoming a professional woodworker.

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Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
  - *Have you ever wondered how to design complex wood joinery?*
- **organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole.**
  - *The first step in designing joints is to figure out what way the wood will move so it won't destroy the joint.*
  - *There are two categories of joints . . .*
  - *To lay out good joints there are a few tools necessary.*
  - *The way to make a tight joint is in the layout . . .*
- **develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
  - *If the joint is cut too small, there are four different repairs. You can fill small gaps with a mixture of sawdust of the same species of wood and glue. For loose parts, you can add shims and sand or file to fit. You could also make a design feature for loose parts. A slot cut in the end of a loose tenon with a wedge put in it makes a nice design feature. But if it is real noticeable you should jut replace it.*
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
  - *Out of the twelve different joints, I'll start with the ons easiest to make.*
  - *Another fairly simple joint is the lap joint.*
  - *A joint similar to a groove is the spline.*
  - *To sum it all up . . .*
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.**
  - *Dados are slots cut across the grain.*
  - *A groove runs with the grain instead of against it.*
  - *A rebate joint is a dado at the end or edge of a board and usually has a piece of wood in it the same thickness as the dado.*

- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the specific discipline in which the student is writing.**
    - *The other hallmark of quality wood joinery is the dovetail.*
    - *My tech project is designing and building a gun cabinet. In my gun cabinet I'm going to use rebates, grooves, dados, lock miters, dovetails, mortise and tenon and lap joints.*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).**
    - *To sum it all up . . . with practice you could become an amateur woodworker . . . There is still more to be learned but this is a very good start in becoming a professional woodworker.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 12, Informative/Explanatory

A high school senior wrote the essay that follows for a career and technical class. The student had unlimited time to research and write this paper.

TIG/GTAW Welding

Welding is a highly demanded trade across the US. There are many types of welding such as wire feed, stick, TIG (Tungsten Inert Gas), and oxy acetylene welding. I will explain the most perfected and efficient welding process of them all, TIG welding. I will take you through shielding gases, tungsten materials, tungsten shapes and shaping, heat and warp age, welding flaws, and some recommendations to prevent welding flaws.

There are many purposes for shielding gases in the welding industry. In general, shielding gases are one of the many variables throughout the TIG welding processes. There are four types of gases and they all have their own characteristics. Shielding gases protect the molten metal and the tungsten from the impurities in the air during welding. Shielding gases also have an effect on the temperature the arc produces and the physical appearance of the weld bead. Flow rates in the TIG welding processes can also affect the shielding aspects of your weld.

The four types of shielding gases throughout the TIG welding processes are: argon (Ar), helium (He), hydrogen (H), and nitrogen (N). Any of those four gases can be mixed together.

Argon is a by-product of oxygen and nitrogen. Before it was produced on a huge scale, argon was a rare gas. Since argon is denser than air, argon can shield welds in deep grooves and tight places. But since argon is denser than air, when overhead welding is necessary, flow rates need to be increased because the argon will fall from the weld. Argon is fairly easy to ionize so it makes it convenient for AC (Alternating Current) welding.

Helium is a by-product of natural gas. Helium increases your weld penetration. Helium is great for welding aged aluminum and is also great for tube mills since helium allows you to weld at higher speeds. Helium is usually mixed with argon to help the shielding aspects since helium is lighter than air. Helium is not used with the AC since it doesn't have the cleaning aspects that argon has.

Hydrogen is not used so much as a shielding gas as much as an additive to other shielding gases. Hydrogen is used when weld penetration and speed is needed. Hydrogen is not used when welding stainless steel since hydrogen is the number one cause of porosity and cracking in mild and stainless steel.

Similar to hydrogen, nitrogen is used as an additive to argon. It also can cause porosity in some ferritic steels. Ferritic steels are defined as a group of stainless steels with a chromium content range of 12-18o. Such steels do not respond well to heat treatment or temperament.

Nitrogen is used to increase penetration when welding copper alloys. Nitrogen is also a stabilizer when welding alloys. When it comes to shielding gases it makes a big difference in your welds. There are many characteristics to consider when you weld different materials.

Tungsten is a base material the electrode is made of. The electrode is the part of the welding torch that transfers the electrical arc to the weld material. Tungsten materials are another huge variable when it comes to TIG welding. Tungsten materials can affect your weld in similar ways as shielding gases. There are many characteristics of each material and depending upon what you are welding you may have to make some choices. Each tungsten is labeled by a color to make choosing easier.

There are five common types of tungstens including: pure tungsten (green), 1 % thorium (yellow) and 2 % thorium (red), 1/4to 1/2 % zirconium (brown), 2 % cerium (orange), 1 % lanthanum (black).

Pure tungsten has limited use for AC welding, and has the poorest heat resistance and electron flow, since there is no other material mixed with pure tungsten, it doesn't have any of there characteristics including electron flow rates or heat resistance. Pure tungsten is mostly used for aluminum and magnesium.

Thoriated tungsten improves current flow, but to maintain an arc with thoriated tungsten requires more voltage. Thorium increases service life of the tungsten and makes arc starting easier. Thoriated tungstens do not work well with AC welding since it is hard to maintain a ball end shape, which is required for AC welding.

Zirconium tungstens help emit electrons more freely and can be used with AC and DC (Direct Current) welding processes, unlike thoriated tungstens. Unlike thoriated tungstens zirconium tungstens are not radioactive. So they have less contamination aspects than thoriated tungstens.

Cerium tungstens have many of the same characteristics as thoriated tungstens, they were actually made to replace thoriated tungstens since they are not radioactive, which makes them safer. Lithium tungstens are also non-radioactive like cerium. They are similar to thoriated tungstens, except they have a higher arc voltage.

Tungsten shaping and heat penetration are directly related to each other. When you change the thickness of the materials you are welding, you need to maybe consider changing shielding gases or tungeten types but you also need to think about the shape on the end of the tungsten especially since it changes weld penetration.

There are three basic shapes to choose from You can modify each as you learn more about all the variables you can choose from The three basic shapes are: pointed end, rounded end, and tapered with ball end (FIGURE 1).

There are special ways to grind and shape your tungstens. When you grind your tungsten, you need to make sure you use a grinding wheel that you have never grinded with before. If you use a used grinding wheel, the tungsten may become contaminated, and eventually contaminate the metal you are welding. You also need to make sure when you grind a point on your tungsten, to grind the tungsten parallel to the grinding wheel. Grinding your tungsten parallel to the grinding wheel allows electrons to flow easier, and prevents further contamination to the tungsten. You need to make sure when grinding a pointed end tungsten that the length of the tapered part of the tungsten is twice as long as the diameter of the tungsten. Tungsten shape and shaping is another large element of TIG welding that needs to be considered to make your welds most efficient.

(figure not reprinted here)

Heat is the main reason for warpage in the welding industry. Warpage needs to be considered when welding since the shape of the material will change after applying heat. There are different ways metals warp depending on where the heat is applied and how much heat is applied. Many professional welders know through experience how much a project will warp with different settings on the welder. They can also predict and correct warpage before it happens. Warpage can also depend on tungsten shape, tungsten material, amperage, shielding gases, weld angles and weld distances. There are also different ways metal warps depending on the weld joint.

(figure not reprinted here)

As shown in FIGURE 2, once the heat from the welding process is applied to the objects, the two arrows show which way the metal is warped. The two dots represent the weld. There are many different ways metal can warp and this shows just an idea of how the weld warps the metal.

There are many TIG welding flaws you can run into when you are not fully experienced. These flaws must be looked at, especially when people's lives depend on it, such as in constructing bridges and buildings.

Many common welding failures are caused by welding flaws such as porosity, inclusions, inadequate penetration, and cracks, just to name a few. All of these problems can cause your weld to be weaker than you intended.

Porosity is caused when gases are dissolved in the weld, forming air bubbles in and on the weld. The result of porosity is caused by improper shielding gases or pressure settings. The shielding gases are what protect the molten metal when welding and eliminates porosity.

Inclusions are when non-metallic metals such as slag enters the molten metal. This can be caused by multiple weld starts. It can be fixed by welding one continuous bead.

Inadequate penetration can weaken the weld severely along with inclusions and porosity. When you don't get the right amount of penetration you don't allow the full amount of materials to fuse together. The main cause of improper penetration are a misdirected arc and not enough amperage. Simply, the weld bead is too small for the job.

Cracks are another flaw that can have drastic effects. Cracks are caused during the solidifying stages of welding. When the metals drastically drop temperature, the weld materials are vulnerable to cracking. Slowing your weld speed is one of the main corrections to cracking. When welding it is most important to ask questions if you need to since someone's life could depend on it.

TIG welding processes can weld many more materials than wire feed of stick welding. TIG welding processes are capable of welding many types of materials such as: copper, aluminum, mild and low carbon steels, stainless steel, and magnesium. This is what makes TIG welding so different than any other welding process. You can weld so many different materials. This is where TIG welding becomes the most perfected welding process in the welding industry. The TIG welding process can weld the most materials of all the welding processes.

Some recommendations will help you perform better welds, these fall into categories like welding angles, arc distance control, tungsten types, and shielding gas considerations. TIG welding can be a lot to take in when it comes to an essay, but if you can remember different recommendations such as these you will increase your abilities to weld with a TIG welder. The first recommendation is to consider all your variables throughout the whole process, ask questions when needed and take your time. Speed will eventually come as time goes on. To clear up how the TIG welding process works check out the illustration below.

(illustration from online source not reprinted here)

Now that you know about some recommendations on how to improve your weld abilities, I will explain how to protect yourself during welding. Safety is a huge deal when it comes to welding in general. You need the proper protective equipment to make your job or experience as safe as it can be. You need to protect your eyes, skin, and lungs. You need a proper welding helmet to protect your eyes and face from the bright arc and spatter. You will also need thick gloves and a long sleeve cotton shirt to protect your skin from burning from the bright light. You should leave no skin uncovered or unprotected. Burns can lead to blindness and skin cancer. You should also have pants and steel toe boots to protect against further burns or falling objects. A respirator should be used when welding specific metals to protect your respiratory system from cancer and other damage.

Learning about TIG welding has been a very helpful experience for me since it will help me in my college career, and in my job after school. I am going to be a certified welder. This learning experience has helped me greatly. TIG welding is something that needs to be learned not only by textbook or paper but also by hands on learning. And thankfully, I have gotten that experience to weld hands on. It makes learning so much easier

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Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
  - *There are many types of welding . . . I will explain . . . I will take you through . . .*
- **organizes ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; includes graphics when useful to aiding comprehension.**
  - *I will explain the most perfected and efficient welding process of them all, TIG welding. I will take you through shielding gases, tungsten materials, tungsten shapes and shaping, heat and warp age, welding flaws, and some recommendations to prevent welding flaws.*
  - *There are many purposes for shielding gases in the welding industry.*
  - *The four types of shielding gases throughout the TIG welding process are: argon (Ar) . . .*
  - *Argon is a by-product of oxygen and nitrogen.*
- **develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
  - *Hydrogen is not used so much as a shielding gas as much as an additive to other shielding gases. Hydrogen is used when weld penetration and speed is needed. Hydrogen is not used when welding stainless steel since hydrogen is the number one cause of porosity and cracking in mild and stainless steel.*
  - *If you use a used grinding wheel, the tungsten may become contaminated, and eventually contaminate the metal you are welding.*
  - *When welding it is most important to ask questions if you need to since someone's life could depend on it.*
- **uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.**
  - *There are special ways to grind and shape your tungstens. When you grind your tungsten, you need to make sure . . .*
  - *As shown in FIGURE 2, once the heat from the welding process is applied to the objects . . .*
  - *Inadequate penetration can weaken the weld severely along with inclusions and porosity. . . . Cracks are another flaw that can have drastic effects.*
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.**
  - *Similar to hydrogen, nitrogen is used as an additive to argon. It also can cause porosity in some ferritic steels. Ferritic steels are defined as a group of stainless steels with a chromium content range of 12-180.*
  - *Zirconium tungstens help emit electrons more freely and can be used with AC and DC (Direct Current) welding processes, unlike thoriated tungstens.*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the student is writing.**
  - *Now that you know about some recommendations on how to improve your weld abilities, I will explain how to protect yourself during welding.*
  - *Learning about TIG welding has been a very helpful experience for me since it will help me in my college career, and in my job after school. I am going to be a certified welder.*
- **provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).**
  - *Learning about TIG welding has been a very helpful experience . . . I am going to be a certified welder. . . . TIG welding is something that needs to be learned not only by*

textbook or paper but also by hands on learning. And thankfully, I have gotten that experience to weld hands on. It makes learning so much easier.

- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**