

Expository Eighth-grade Practice Prompt #2: Books, movies, and television can offer opportunities to learn valuable lessons. Write about a lesson learned from a book, movie, or television show that proved to be of value to you.

Student Sample M

My life is alot like Muchahitas. Its about life on lots of drama and letting boy's come in between your friend ship with your bestfriends. Before I sat down to watch Muchahitas I got in a huge arguement with my friend over a guy. So if this might of happen to you listen up!

Muchahitas was letting young girls no its a waste of time letting guys come in between friendships. They say guys come and go but friends never let go. Boys lie and bestfriends stand by.

I learned that it was true letting guys do come in between a great relation Ship. They made me understand that a friendship is very valueable and guys are something that comes and goes. A friend is there catching you when you fall, and whipping the tears when a guy makes you cry. Guys may make you fall in love and you may think its everything you ever wanted because it's the closest thing you got to magic, but ask your self, "am I that in love that I don't care to loose a friend?"

How would you score this sample?	
_____	Idea Development
_____	Organization
_____	Voice
_____	Conventions
What holistic score should it receive?	

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample M

Holistic Score: 6 (not passing)

When we combine both our readers' holistic scores, this paper misses passing by 1 point. This is an inadequate paper that shows an inconsistent understanding of writing. It focuses on the topic, but it lacks coherence. The writer does attempt to involve the audience; however, the consistent violations in conventions tend to overwhelm the reader.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=2.5 O=2.5 V=3 C=2.5

Ideas: The main idea of this paper is clear, but the details need to be developed to give this paper a higher score in ideas. The author clearly has learned a lesson from *Muchachitas* about not letting boys come between friends. The writer also shows some insight in mentioning both the show and her personal experiences, but there is trouble tying these together. Rather than going into detail about her own experience with boys and friendship, or chronicling the events from the show that revealed this lesson, the writer spends most of the paper restating or re-explaining the main point, even using the words "letting guys come in between" friendship (or some very slight variation of these words) three times. The final paragraph does have a bit more development than the first two, insofar as the writer does attempt to redefine what friends do and what guys do; however, it does not really reveal any new insights and again feels repetitive. This repetition may highlight the main idea, but it is unlikely that the reader will walk away having learned anything after reading this piece.

Organization: The introduction ("My life is alot like Muchachitas.") catches the reader's attention and draws us in. The writer then briefly summarizes the premise of the show and the lesson she learned. The rest of the ideas do tie to the overall point of the paper, but the writer spends too much time on the obvious. This student would definitely benefit from some lessons on pacing, on learning when to elaborate and when to move on. Pacing problems lead to a structure that's smooth at times but confusing at others. Furthermore, the paper ends abruptly and has no noticeable closing. One might conclude that the writer added the last few sentences to fill up the paper, or else that this last paragraph had a point but the writer ran out of room. Just as papers much catch a reader's attention at the outset, so must they leave one with the feeling of completion (reminding the reader of the main point), satisfaction (tying things together) or inspiration (pushing the reader to feel or do something after reading the piece) at the end.

Voice: Voice is the strongest trait in this paper and is a combination of two factors. To begin with, the command to "Listen up!" in the first paragraph indicates that the writer is aware of an audience and is attempting to engage the reader in her discussion of boys and friendship. Caring about the reader is a key component of voice. Other sentences like "Boys lie and bestfriends stand by" and "it's the closest thing you got to magic" reveal the writer's attitude and commitment to the topic. Sincerely caring about the topic is another important voice element. Despite these strengths, the voice score is still just a 3, just a passing score. There are some revealing places, but others that are general and tentative, as in the places where the writer repeats herself. Working on avoiding the repetition and sharing more specific personal details may have boosted the voice score.

Conventions: Words like *alot*, *whipping* instead of wiping, *loose* instead of lose, and *no* instead of know, distract the reader. Inaccurate use of apostrophes such as *boy's* instead of boys, missing apostrophes in *Its* and *dont* are also errors that are difficult for the reader to overlook. Misspellings of words like *arguement* and *valueable* show a lack of understanding of some basic spelling rules. Simple mini-lessons that could hopefully be easily learned at this level might address all or most of these spelling and usage errors. Although the writer handles limited conventions well, especially sentence structure, there are also sentence level errors (such as "Its about life on lots of drama") which make the text difficult to read at times.

Expository Eighth-grade Practice Prompt #2: Books, movies, and television can offer opportunities to learn valuable lessons. Write about a lesson learned from a book, movie, or television show that proved to be of value to you.

Student Sample N

A lesson I learned was to never give up or quit cause giving up or quitting could get addictive and it will be tough to get rid of like a disease that can ruin everything you do but if you never give up or even quit that stows a lot of heart And that you would not be a quitter.

Also what I learned was that quitting is just something that people do because there either scared or just don t believe in what there doing, because when I see people quit it's either because they can't do it or just don't even try and that to me is something that I call dumb and ridiculous because I also see people try and try but don't succeed but people still quit and to me that's not fair.

I say quitting is just somethins that no one should do or say they'll do because even though you don't quit but you say you would it still can hurt some people because you may be just kidding or maybe just threatening it cause you maybe wanna scare someone out of their minds.

How would you score this sample?	
_____	Idea Development
_____	Organization
_____	Voice
_____	Conventions
What holistic score should it receive?	

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample N

Holistic Score: 5 (not passing)

When we combine both our readers' holistic scores, this paper falls short of passing by 2 points. Sample N is very weak overall. It attempts to address the topic, but has little focus. There are serious flaws in organization that cause confusion, although the writer does a fair job of trying to involve the reader. The writer also commits consistent violations in Standard English conventions that interfere with meaning.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=2 O=2 V=3 C=2

Ideas: Although this author is clear about the lesson of never quitting, the audience never learns which book, movie, or television show taught the lesson or how he/she came to learn the lesson. The purpose of the paper is not well established, and the reader must make inferences to sift out what is critical. For example, the writer mentions that "giving up or quitting could get addictive and it will be tough to get rid of like a disease." These two points certainly pique reader interest, but the writer fails to elaborate or give examples. The reader is forced to fill in the blanks here. This problem also occurs in the second paragraph: "when I see people quit it's either because they can't do it or just don't even try." Again, this is a very strong point in support of the overall theme of the paper, but the author then abandons it, moving into an explanation about how it's "not fair" when people quit. Many questions may enter the reader's mind at this point: What is the writer's personal experiences? What are the events in the book/movie/television show that teach this lesson? Why is giving up not fair? Who is actually harmed when someone does give up? The topic does show promise, but it may frustrate a reader to have so many strong yet unsupported points.

Organization: The lack of punctuation in this paper (in addition to affecting the convention score) distracts from the organization. This writer may have had a very logical structure in mind; however, it is difficult to know which details go together, since it is really just three long sentences. The paper also tends to ramble and the writer spends too much time repeating the obvious. For example, rather than elaborating on the point about people being afraid (in the second paragraph), the author proceeds to state why quitting is "dumb" and "unfair." All three paragraphs almost read like the writer sat down and (without any prior thinking) began to rant about something irritating. This is especially the case in the last paragraph, when the author seems to be attempting to tie things together ("I say quitting is just somethings that no one should do or say they'll do") but then again gets caught up in his/her strong opinion and starts once again to ramble.

Voice: "I call that dumb and ridiculous," and "I also see people try and try," are phrases that make the writer seem sincere and passionate about the topic. Clearly, he/she has a strong opinion about quitting. This student does appear to be somewhat aware of an audience and to care that the audience never quits. This writer communicates in an earnest manner, but in some places seems tentative because the details are not concrete. It might have been stronger if the writer had shared some more personal connections to the topic. The fact that the book or movie is not stated also detracts from the voice by distancing the reader from the author and his/her ideas.

Conventions: This writer has a hard time with run-on sentences, distracting the reader. Each paragraph has just one period at the end. Much more work needs to be done at the sentence level. Errors including the misuse of words like *there* for *they're*, *cause* for *because*, and hyphenating *either* at the end of a line, between the e and r, are very noticeable and the paper would require more than moderate editing to be proficient.

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Student Sample O

I love Money a game show, people compete for a \$75,000 in Mexico. They live in a houes and compete with each other.

They play games and every time Someone loses the challenge they are eliminated off the island. As you know people aren't so nice in the Island, people talk about each other and some players are not that good. And what I leared that Don't talk about other people and Dont be mean to other around you.

From watching this show Im thing to myself why go on a game show to be laught at and you could be hurt while playing for money.

Why just get a job and earn the money.

For myself I think its pretty stupid becaues, whats the point of doing this if your eliminated in the show and Dont have any money to go home with. that's what I leared from this show.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample O

Holistic Score: 4 (not passing)

When we combine both our readers' holistic scores, this paper only halfway shows the skills that would be needed to be a passing essay. This sample is very weak. It reveals serious and persistent problems in communication. It attempts to address the topic with little or no focus and contains serious flaws in structure. This paper struggles to create a connection with the reader. There are also consistent violations in conventions that impede meaning.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=2 O=2 V=2.5 C=2

Ideas: Although this paper shows promise, the writer seems to have no clear focus. This paper fits the bullet "I am zeroing in on my topic," but it seems that the author has not yet determined what, beyond the show *Money*, that topic is. The reader is required to make inferences about the lesson that the writer learned from the television show. For example, even though we read, "I learned that Don't talk about other people" and "Don't be mean to other (people) around you," the support that follows doesn't consistently reflect this lesson. Instead, the author writes about getting a job, not winning, and being laughed at, in addition to people talking about each other and not being nice. The earlier lessons may indeed be important ones, and the details that the author shares for support may in fact be important elements to the show, but these lessons and details should connect. This would have been possible if the writer had chosen simply to go into detail about how the show teaches us not to "talk about other people," or if he/she had decided to focus on getting a job or being laughed at. This writer may need some instruction in narrowing a topic before writing.

Organization: The writer starts by telling us that he loves "Money a game show," and concludes with "that's what I learned from this show." These opening and closing statements show a developing sense of structure, although the first sentence does not draw in the reader and the final one does not leave the reader feeling satisfied. More importantly, however, the lack of clear organization in the rest of the paper makes the connections between ideas confusing. Random thoughts, like "Why (not?) just get a job and earn the money" distract the reader and provide hard-to-follow leaps between points. This student may benefit from instruction in using a graphic organizer to plan out ideas before writing, so that the main point is both showcased and supported because ideas are intentionally placed.

Voice: The writer seems to want to engage the reader but struggles with finding the words to make a connection. At times, the author is revealed tentatively, as when he says, "Why go on a game show to be laughed at and you could be hurt." Statements such as this do show a personal investment in the topic; however, the problems with conventions hurt here, since the audience has to guess at missing words and punctuation to infer the meaning of this and other statements.

Conventions: Although the paper is readable, there are multiple convention problems. There are a few places where the external punctuation is non-existent (as in the first comma-splice sentence) or incorrect (as in the interrogatives that should end with question marks: "Why just get a job and earn the money" is one example). Internal punctuation is also an issue. Contractions are missing their apostrophes (*Im*, *Dont*, and *your*) and the second and third paragraphs would benefit from quotation marks. Additionally, there are words that should be capitalized that are not, and words that should not be capitalized that are. Problems with spelling, such as *laught* and *thing* (for thinking) as well as letter/word omissions, such as *leared* (for learned) "Why just get a job" (leaving out *not*) distract the reader and actually interfere with meaning.

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Student Sample P

I learned a valuable lesson from the movie “Honey.” The movie is about a girl, about 17 years old, who teaches hip hop classes for kids who are underprivileged. She helps take these few young boys away from a gang, and keep them from selling drugs. At the end of the movie, she wants to create her own dance studio, but doesn’t have enough money. They have a charity fund raiser to make money and everything works out.

I learned many things from this movie. Never give up, even when times are hard, always believe in yourself, think about others, and always try to make the right choices.

All of this has helped me alot in school and dance. An example is after watching that movie, I didn’t really care what people thought of my decisions, as long as I felt my choice was right. I still feel like that too.

I absolutly love that movie, and I am glad that I learned some lessons from it.

How would you score this sample?	
_____	Idea Development
_____	Organization
_____	Voice
_____	Conventions
What holistic score should it receive?	

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample P

Holistic Score: 8 (passing)

When we combine both our readers' holistic scores, this paper receives an 8, which means both scorers felt it was satisfactory enough to pass, each giving it a 4. It focuses and develops its ideas with mostly relevant examples while organizing these ideas in a satisfactory manner. There is evidence of some commitment to the topic as well. There are some errors in conventions; however, they do not impede meaning.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=3 O=3 V=3 C=4

Ideas: The writer is developing the topic in a reasonably clear and purposeful way. He/she begins with a summary of the plot of the movie and then moves into a discussion of the four lessons learned from it. Unfortunately, the lessons are merely presented as a list. The connection to the plot is not explicit. The writer then moves into a personal connection to the lessons, stating "after watching this movie, I didn't really care what people thought of my decisions, as long as I felt my choice was right" in the school and dance arenas. This detail shows promise, but one wonders what choices or decisions the writer has made, and (perhaps more importantly), how exactly being confident in one's decisions is connected to the movie. In order to earn a higher score in ideas, a writer must remember the focus of the essay, and strive always to include relevant anecdotes that both develop the supporting details and connect to the overall point he/she is trying to make.

Organization: The paper has a very straightforward structure. The introduction and conclusion are certainly recognizable, but very predictable. The author may work on drawing in the reader rather than simply jumping into the topic to improve introductions. The conclusion begins with "I absolutely love that movie" but loses the energy with the mechanical "and I am glad that I learned some lessons from it." This last statement feels formulaic rather than satisfying. The progression of ideas is controlled and the reader can see that this author worked to: 1) introduce the topic, 2) explain what the movie was about, 3) tell what he/she learned, 4) give an example, 5) restate the topic in the conclusion. This is a logical--though not necessarily compelling--organization.

Voice: There is no strong connection with the reader, although the writer seems sincere. The reader can tell that the author loved the movie, but the connections between the movie and the author's life hide as much as they reveal. Although the author says, "I absolutely love that movie," we are left wondering exactly why, since the writing tends to become general, vague, and abstract. In this paper, the 3 in voice is tied to the 3 in ideas, where the audience needs more details, connections, and commitment to genuinely feel the writer's passion for the topic. We know that the author tells us he/she learned many things from this movie, but the connections between what the movie was about and what the writer learned are abstract.

Conventions: The strength of this paper is its conventions. The ending punctuation is correct and the author uses internal punctuation correctly as well. There is some sentence variety; this student uses compound, complex, and simple sentence structures correctly throughout the piece. Misspelling of words like *absolutly* and *alot*; along with a few grammatical mistakes (*She helps ...young boys.. and keep them from...*) do not impede meaning and might have been caught with careful editing.

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Student Sample R

On the show American Idol there are many lessons. The lesson of taking a chance is one I value the most.

First there's the auditions for the show. Those who show up to audition are taking chances that could change their lives. They could be good enough to go to Hollywood. They're even one step closer to possibly becoming famous artists.

Second is when there is the top twelve and a very good majority of them are thinking I'm glad I took this chance at becoming someone I want to be. They also are probably thinking that if I didn't take this chance, I never would have known how far I could actually go.

Third is when there is the final two left and no matter what they know that both of them will most likely get a record deal. The whole time they're on stage, they probably feel great because of their fans and their new found confidence.

The whole point is you never know what could happen if you don't take chances. You could go a long way!!

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample R

Holistic Score: 7 (passing)

When we combine both our readers' holistic scores, this paper is just satisfactory enough to pass, with its very straightforward organizational structure and limited (though clear and relevant) development. The writer claims to have learned something valuable from American Idol, but there is little passion evident in the writing. His/her voice peeks through sometimes but is not consistent. Despite the fact that there is little sentence variety, the conventions are strong.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=3 O=3 V=3 C=4

Ideas: This paper is clear and focused on the lesson the author learned from American Idol: the importance of taking a chance. He/she discusses three different points on the show in which people take chances: in the auditions, the top twelve competition, and the finale. Each of these times is then briefly explained, but they do not give the reader insights that are fresh and engaging in a way that would enhance the paper beyond a 3. The writer seems to be writing from experience but needs to go further to expand, clarify, and personalize the paper. The author talks about the participants on the show, referring to "them" or "they," but needs to add relevant anecdotes, examples, and details to bring insight and creativity to the topic. This writer may benefit from lessons on doing more with less; that is, choosing only one or two of the main ideas (times when people take chances) and really going into detail.

Organization: The introduction ("On the show American Idol there are many lessons. The lesson of taking a chance is one I value most.") sets the stage for the paper. The conclusion ("You could go a long way!!") leaves the reader with a sense of completion. Although the introduction and conclusion are not necessarily compelling, they are logical. The sequencing also makes sense, taking the reader chronologically through the progression of the show's season. However, the transitions are basic and obvious (*First... Second... Third*) and somewhat distracting.

Voice: The writer seems sincere, yet not completely committed to the topic. He/she seems to be asking the reader to trust that taking chances is important, without making this personal connection clear. This clarification would have brought more personal involvement to the paper. Word choices are fairly basic, but a few of the phrases (like "new found confidence," and "the whole point") hint at an emerging voice and some commitment. One "voice" highpoint is in the third paragraph, when the writer puts us inside the minds of the American Idol contestants. These statements (such as "I'm glad I took this chance at becoming someone I want to be") show that the writer was trying to inspire the audience.

Conventions: Conventions are the strength of this paper, and the paper is generally correct. The writer doesn't vary sentence structure much. He/she would need use a wider variety of standard writing conventions to improve the score to a 5. This is particularly evident in the third paragraph, when the writer quotes the top twelve competitors. There is also switching between third and first person here that is distracting: "They are also probably thinking that if I didn't take this chance, I never would have known how far I could actually go." A little work on quotation mark rules might actually have solved this problem and improved the overall conventions score at the same time.

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Student Sample S

Learning lessons through books, movies, shows and many other things is extremely important. You can't just keep living life based on what you already know.

I've learned many things from movies I've watched and books I've read. To me, the one thing that stood out was Teens Truth Live, a video 30 minutes long based on bullying. Using school violence as an example of what the outcome of bullying could be. This video allowed me to see that bullying isn't a matter to be taken lightly.

A simple rumor could send someone into a deep state of depression. A lie could cause someone to never trust again, and excluding them could make them lonely. Suicide might be their answer, urges for revenge could overwhelm the person. Phone calls, texts, emails, and chatting are just as bad. Just because everything is all pixelated and in technology, it could hurt like a slap across the face.

From this video I've learned that including is important. Try to be nice to everyone, even if you don't like them. Violence isn't the answer, talk it out. I'll admit I'm the type of person to throw harsh words around carelessly without even stopping to think about how someone else feels about it. Because of this video, I'm trying to use nicer words, give a compliment or two, not joke with someone so rudely, accept someone for who they are and not try to change them nor discriminate. That is my lesson learned from a video called Teen Truth Live.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample S

Holistic Score: 9 (passing)

When we combine both our readers' holistic scores, this paper goes beyond being just satisfactory. Sample S is focused (with relevant examples) and has a coherent structure (although better pacing might help make things clearer and perhaps even improve the writer's voice). The fact that this writer shares insights that he/she personally gained from the video brings out this person's personality and helps the reader connect with the information. Conventions are definitely not perfect, but the errors do not hinder understanding.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=4 O=3.5 V=4 C=4

Ideas: This paper shares the lessons that the writer learned from the *Teens Truth Live* video. From reading this essay, a reader would very clearly understand both the point of the video and the student's personal connections to it. The details provide insight and interest, especially as he/she relates to *technology*, *suicide*, *harsh words*, and *rumours*. There is no doubt that the writer learned important lessons from the video. One weakness is that two of the details, the mention of "urges for revenge" and that "violence isn't the answer" should be more clearly connected to the overall point or effectively explained so that the reader is not left with questions. Students should always be reminded to anticipate audience questions.

Organization: The introduction is clear. Although the thesis ("To me, the one that stood out was Teens Truth Live") does not even appear until partway through the second paragraph, a reader would probably be engaged and have no confusion about what this paper is about. The writer then guides the reader through the text in a logical and effective way, but sometimes spurts ahead too quickly or spends too much time on the obvious. For example, in the final paragraph, he/she states, "Try to be nice to everyone, even if you don't like them. Violence isn't the answer, talk it out." The writer then goes into a personal example of the power of language. The violence detail seems out of place (or else is merely underdeveloped, which may have affected the ideas score). Perhaps it would fit better with the "urges for revenge" detail.

This detail-placement or sequencing problem keeps the paper from getting a higher score in organization. For the most part, though, the organization moves the reader through the text. The conclusion ("That is my lesson learned from a video called Teens Truth Live") is tacked on and doesn't necessarily give the reader a sense of closure to this paper.

Voice: The writer uses word choice that makes this paper come alive: "It could hurt like a slap across the face." and "I'll admit, I'm the type of person to..." The paper is individualistic and clear about the author's attitude towards the video. Most of the paper would be engaging to a reader. It takes awhile for the author to get to the meat of the topic; however, the expressive and engaging language moves the reader through the text, allowing a connection to the writer that is very compelling.

Conventions: This paper has several comma splices ("Suicide might be their answer, urges for revenge could overwhelm the person.") and the writer should work with semicolons and other options for compound-sentence structure. There is also a fragment ("Using school violence as an example of what the outcome of bullying could be.") that to a small extent affects the reader's understanding of the video. These mistakes keep this paper from a 5 in conventions. Underlining the title of the video would also demonstrate a stronger grasp of writing conventions. However, it is clear from the spelling, capitalization, and most of the punctuation that this writer has more than a reasonable control over most standard writing conventions and (because there is some variety in the types of sentences) a sense of sentence fluency.

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Student Sample T

Valuable lessons can be awarded to you through television. The following story is about a show/episode I learned a lesson from.

Hannah Montana is the name of my totally fave tv show, but it also taught me a lesson. This episode's main idea was: it's Miley's b-day and her dad was looking to buy the perfect gift for her. Now Miley's bestfriend Lily thought Miley was really lucky until she saw the closet full of the clothes Miley had gotten on previous birthdays from her dad.

All the dresses, shirts, sweaters, etc. were absolutely hideous. Miley loved her dad just not the clothes and she didn't tell him to keep him happy, so she would find any way possible not to wear them by spilling food on them and things of that nature. Miley had a great idea, Lily would go shopping with Miley's dad and pick out something Miley would like. The following day Lily picked out the perfect jacket for Miley.

It was the day of her birthday, and Miley was opening presents. Feeling confident she opened her dad's gift only to see a kitty sweater with a pop-out tail and face that sang. By now she thought if no one saw it she would be fine; to her surprise her dad had thrown her a surprise party. Everyone saw it and she was humiliated.

At the end of the show Miley overcame it all and let her dad know she didn't like it. This taught me to be honest if I don't like something; I used to be the same way.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample T

Holistic Score: 8 (passing)

This paper received a satisfactory score (4) from both holistic scorers, and it passes. The author of this paper is beginning to develop control and demonstrates it with this piece. It is not yet perfect, as evidenced by the rushed conclusion (as though the writer remembered too late what the point of the essay was). The ideas are interesting, but there may be a few unanswered questions. The word choice and obvious interest in the topic contribute to voice. Convention errors are few and there is some sentence variety.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=4 O=3 V=4 C=4

Ideas: The writer develops and shapes ideas in a creative and refreshing manner; an example is the description of the birthday gift: “a kitty sweater with a pop-out tail and face that sang.” The reader can zip through the retelling of the episode because everything is well-described and possible to picture. The paper is clear and focused on the lesson learned from Hannah Montana, but there are two places where a reader might be left with questions. They occur in the last two paragraphs. One is in the description of Miley’s birthday party, when there is no mention of the jacket gift and little detail about this seemingly important event. The second point of confusion is at the end, where the author suddenly brings up the lesson of the episode and his/her own life. This student would need to do more work in making a connection between the episode and the lesson for this paper to get a 5 in ideas.

Organization: The paper spends a long time telling the story of the Hannah Montana episode, and the narrative organization is smooth, logical, and controlled. The writer retells the episode in a way that moves the reader through the paper. For the most part, the details seem to fit where they are placed. However, there are a few exceptions (see “Ideas” description above). This student may benefit overall from some work with pacing; one mistake student writers often make is spending too much time on details at the beginning and running out of room or energy for the ideas toward the end.

Additionally, the introduction is obvious and not engaging, and the conclusion is not completely satisfying. The writer decided to save the lesson he/she learned until the very last sentence, and it seems rushed. The author quickly ends the episode synopsis with “she...let her dad know she didn’t like it” and then attempts to mention the lesson of this event as well as his/her personal connection in just one sentence: “This taught me to be honest if I don’t like something; I used to be the same way.” If the author had made this personal connection apparent earlier in the piece it might have made sense; now one almost wishes that it had been left out.

Voice: The word choice in this paper brings it to life. Words like *hideous*, *confident*, and *humiliated*, along with phrases such as “things of that nature,” and “totally fave,” help establish a strong connection with the reader and convince the reader of the writer’s commitment to the topic. The writer does a nice job of inviting the reader to share in the details of the experience in a way that is appropriate to the purpose and audience.

Conventions: The spelling in this paper is perfect, even on difficult words. This writer attempts many difficult grammatical techniques with sentences, including using two perfect semicolons, and paragraphing is excellent. The only problems the author has are with ending sentences with prepositions and with internal punctuation. This latter issue is most present in the third paragraph, where there is a run-on (“Miley loved her dad just not the clothes and she didn’t tell him to keep him happy, so she would find any way possible not to wear them by spilling food on them and things of that nature.”) and comma splice (“Miley had a great idea, Lily would go shopping with Miley’s dad and pick out something Miley would like.”). These mistakes are distracting enough to keep the paper from getting a higher score in conventions.

Expository Eighth-grade Practice Prompt #2: Books, movies, and television can offer opportunities to learn valuable lessons. Write about a lesson learned from a book, movie, or television show that proved to be of value to you.

Student Sample U

There is a show on Oxygen called Janice Dickensons Modeling Agency. As you may have guessed, it is about modeling. Janice Dickenson is a highly trained Supermodel, so she knows a lot about modeling. I love watching shows about beauty, fashion, glamour, clothing, etc. When I first found out about the JDMA, I knew I was going to fall in love. Let me tell you about what I have learned about modeling.

Janice Dickenson pushes her models to do their best. At the agency, Janice makes her models eat really healthy & makes them exercise a lot. Janice always brings one of her professional trainers to work out with her & her models & they work out for 1-2 hours. She also makes her models get the sleep they need, but not too much.

Janice has people from fashion, cosmetics, clothing etc. companies come & pick models to show off their line. When a client is coming to pick models, Janice has the models primped & perfect. Whenever a client comes, her models are primped, perfect & healthy.

At first, I didn't think I was going to like the show because of how she treated her models, but now I know it was only helpful critisizm.

I love Janice Dickenson's Modeling Agency because I have learned to be more confident in yourself because confidence is key.

<p>How would you score this sample?</p> <p>_____ Idea Development</p> <p>_____ Organization</p> <p>_____ Voice</p> <p>_____ Conventions</p> <p>What holistic score should it receive?</p> <p>_____</p>
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Expository Eighth-grade Practice Prompt #2: Books, movies, and television can offer opportunities to learn valuable lessons. Write about a lesson learned from a book, movie, or television show that proved to be of value to you.

Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample U

Holistic Score: 8 (passing)

Paper U is an example of a high 8 that almost made it to the score of 9. The details are all relevant, but they should be more developed to connect to the lesson more clearly. The organization is satisfactory but does not have the purposeful structure that a 5 paper would demonstrate. Although the word choices are merely adequate (and sometimes repetitive), the voice for the most part demonstrates a genuine interest in the topic and an awareness of audience. Conventions are solid and there is sentence variety.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=3.5 O=3 V=4 C=4

Ideas: Paper U is focused on the topic of the writer's favorite television show. The author is obviously writing from experience and shares some key details of the show. Unfortunately, these details still leave several questions in the reader's mind. For example, in the fourth paragraph the writer claims that he/she didn't know about the show at first "because of how she treated her models, but now I know it was only helpful criticism." This seems to be a key point, yet throughout the rest of the essay, there was little mention of any negative treatment; in fact, the only hint of this is that Janice Dickenson pushes her models to exercise, eat right, and get sleep. Perhaps further development of the criticism, including perhaps an example, would have made this point more clear. Finally, this author spends so much time explaining the show that the connections to the lesson are not as explicit or personalized as they would need to be for a higher score. Some work with the organization of the piece would probably have resolved this problem.

Organization: The organization in this paper flows smoothly, and although sometimes the writer spends too much time on some details, he or she is in control of the ideas. This control earns the writer a passing score, but there are some serious problems with the introduction and conclusion that indicate this writer didn't spend much time planning the piece before writing.

The introduction does not sparkle, but it is recognizable. The choice to begin with a brief description of the show's premise before explaining the point of the paper is a solid one. The author then says, "Let me tell you what I have learned about modeling." A reader is now prepared to read an essay about the ins and outs of the industry. However, that is not what the essay is about. The conclusion is structured in such a way that it might tie things together and inspire the audience, yet it does not match the essay, either. It states that after watching the show, the writer has "learned to be more confident in yourself because confidence is key." The body of the essay is a detailed summary of the show, but where is the connection to confidence? It's as though the writer remembered at the end that the prompt asked about a lesson learned, and so he/she quickly mentioned it at the end. This lesson should have been explicitly supported (or at least implied) throughout the essay.

Voice: The writing is appropriate for the audience and after reading sentences such as "I knew I was going to fall in love," the reader is convinced of the writer's commitment to the topic. Word choices like *primped*, *perfect*, and *glamour* show this writer's enthusiasm and expertise. There is some repetition, however, with the words *primped* and *love*. These are strong words that, if used sparingly, can bring the topic to life and enhance voice. When they are overused, they detract from it.

Conventions: The author demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions. The errors are few, and the paper would require only light editing. The only spelling mistake is *critisizm*. There is a usage error with "I have learned to be more confident in yourself because confidence is key," when the student switches points of view mid-sentence. Both of these mistakes can be easily fixed and don't distract greatly from the flow of the paper. Sentence variety is one of this paper's strengths. The writer uses multiple constructions with appropriate internal punctuation.