

Here, five sixth graders, inspired by the first chapter of Farley Mowat's The Snow Walker, wrote about their *fifth elements*. Read each essay, and be prepared to discuss where each essay shows strength through its organization and voice. The lesson that inspired this writing can be found online at the WritingFix website. Direct link to lesson: [http://writingfix.com/Chapter\\_Book\\_Prompts/SnowWalker1.htm](http://writingfix.com/Chapter_Book_Prompts/SnowWalker1.htm)



## My Fifth Element

by Riyah, sixth grade writer

*"When Man was still very young he had already become aware that certain elemental forces dominated the world womb...the Greeks defined these as Fire and Earth and Air and Water. But at first the Greek sphere was small and circumscribed and the Greeks did not recognize the fifth element."*  
—Farley Mowat The Snow Walker

Mowat was right when he said the Greeks missed an element. I believe the fifth element the Greeks missed was books. Books are an essential part of my life because they're important for school, provide creativity and inspiration, and are good alternatives to computers.

A reason for reading books is that it's important in school. Many tests have sections in reading comprehension and writing. It also expands your vocabulary by introducing you to new words in original contexts. Reading also gives you information and facts. By reading different books, you also experience different writing styles. In the professional world, reading is a huge part of the workplace. As I learned from an interview with Tammi Coe, reports, memos, and emails are all things that are used in a career.

Good literature also acquaints one with unfamiliar ideas and thought-provoking concepts. It can make you think and look at something from a different point of view. A book can also take you to new places. For example, a story set in an exotic place like The Jungle Book can take you across the world in a couple of pages. An adventure tale such as Hatchet can send your heart racing with suspense. Often, books can spark your imagination. They can also entertain you and pass time. Inspiration can also be derived from books.

Furthermore, reading is a good alternative to a computer. Books like the encyclopedia and atlas are often good references and have as much information as a website. Generally speaking, they have credible and useful data. Compared to a computer, reading keeps your mind active and engaged. It stimulates your brain and requires your mind to be attentive. For example, when I read Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson, I was captivated by her story. After I read the book, I was not only intrigued by the book, but also the historical elements.

Critics of books say that reading is too hard. I disagree because there are easy solutions to the problem. You could pick a book that's short like The Pearl, and not that hard. You don't have to choose a huge book like Grapes of Wrath that you will never finish. Reading doesn't just have to be for school or homework. Believe it or not, reading can be fun.

Reading is important because of school, imagination, and as a substitute to computers. Pick up a book, and let the words take over. The five elements: Fire, Earth, Air, Water, and Books.



## Skateboarding Is the Best

by Anthony, sixth grade writer

*"All I wanted to do was ride skateboards - I wanted to be a professional skateboarder. But I had this problem. I kept breaking half of my body skateboarding."*  
--Travis Barker

Skateboarding is so important to some people that even though they just healed after a skateboarding injury, they keep on skating. That's pretty much my situation. I broke my arm a month ago on a skateboard. I can't live without skateboarding because it is useful, fun, and becomes part of your lifestyle.

One reason why skateboarding is useful is because it is a mode of transportation for all ages. Say you need to get to a friend's house and you're not old enough to drive. You can take your skateboard and ride over to their house. Another reason why skateboarding is useful is that it creates a lot of jobs, like professional skateboarders and people who work at companies that make skateboards and skateboarding accessories. It is also good exercise. You can have fun and exercise at the same time by pushing the board with your feet and jumping to pop ollies. Skateboarding also inspires ideas for video games and movies.

Another thing that makes skateboarding the best is that it is fun to do. It is very entertaining to watch. It is very extreme and keeps you at the edge of your seat. It is really addicting. Once you learn one trick, you want to learn more to get better and better. Like when I learned my first trick, the ollie, I wanted to keep on learning and learning tricks. I then tried to do a kickflip. I still haven't learned that trick but I am still trying, and that was a year ago.

Lastly, skateboarding becomes a part of your lifestyle. You look at places differently. You see a fire hydrant and it makes you want to jump over it. You see a set of stairs and it makes you want to jump down them. It also makes you start to think differently. Some decisions are influenced by skateboarding. You may skip some homework to go

skateboarding (I wouldn't do that if I were you; it was just an example). Different things start to appeal to you because you like the skate brands. Seeing a pro skater wear something cool makes you want to wear it too.

Some people think that you can hurt yourself skateboarding. Of course you can, but your body will heal. Even though hurting yourself is a pain and inconvenient, you can heal with time. Like in my case, I broke my arm skateboarding. Even though I am out of commission, I am still living, breathing, and eating (not literally) skateboarding. Most of the time when you hurt yourself skateboarding, you are doing something epic. Once you heal, you want to try the same exact trick that you crashed on to be able to say "I can do it." No matter how many times you hurt yourself, you keep coming back for more because you love the rush of skateboarding. I just can't wait until I get this terrible cast off and get back on the path of skateboarding!

Now you should agree with me that no one can live without skateboarding because it is useful, fun, and becomes part of your lifestyle. You should go out and buy a skateboard or at least try one. Trust me, you'll become as hooked as I am now.



## Why Everyone Needs an iPod

by Kelly, sixth grade writer

Did you know that over 100 million iPods have been sold? Think of all of the people that have an iPod, if that many have already been purchased. Did you know that more are being sold this very minute? Soon, 200 million people will walk the streets wearing earphones. Clearly iPods are very popular, but do you know why? I know I couldn't live without an iPod; they are very entertaining, lightweight, and easy to use.

An iPod is a great way to keep yourself entertained in almost any situation. You can download all of your favorite songs and keep them in your pocket. But that's not all you can store on an iPod. You can also download movies, TV shows, internet podcasts, music videos, photos, and even games! I recently downloaded a season of the TV show Chuck, and one of my favorite movies, Stick It! I also put on a game on my iPod called "Bejeweled," which is used constantly. There's no way you can get tired of this, and they're great for long car rides or flying across the country. They can keep you entertained through just about anything.

Walkmans and portable DVD players are nice, but you have to carry so many extra discs with you. With all the extra weight you have to carry around, it makes it much less enjoyable. With an iPod, the only extra weight you have is your headphones! It's all right there. The information is condensed and put into the iPod's memory. Then you can watch the videos or listen to music wherever you want and while on the go.

In addition to being great entertainment and light weight, it's also easily navigated. You'd think with all this complex technology the iPod itself would be complex, too. But as it turns out, it's simple! All you have to do is scroll and select. In my opinion, working the internet or Microsoft word is more difficult than working an iPod because of all those gizmos and special features.

Many people may say an iPod is much too expensive and complain about the cost. I do agree that some types have a price that goes a little overboard, but you don't have to go all out. iPod shuffles only cost about \$50.00 from the Apple Store. Depending on where you purchase them, you can get it for even less! They also last a long time and are great for any situation.

See? Now you know why iPods are first-class technology, and why so many people love them. No wonder so many people purchase them! So what's stopping you? Go out and get yourself an iPod today!



## The Internet

by Griffin, sixth grade writer

Seven hundred eighty-five million people use the Internet every day. Just imagine if all those people couldn't use the Internet for just one week. There would be global confusion. Personally, I can't imagine life without the Internet because it makes everything more convenient, makes small businesses possible, and it gives people something to do in their free time.

My first reason you should use the Internet is convenience. The Internet saves time if you need to get a lot of stuff at the same time or just one big thing. Think about when you go to the store and you want to buy this really cool chair, but it's really high up. You flag down someone who works there and asks for help. They reply, "Sure, one second. Let me get a ladder." You wait for a long time and they finally get there with a ladder five minutes later. You get the chair down and put it in the cart. You push it out to your car but it won't fit. You then call your friend and wait 20 minutes for them to show up with a bigger truck and load it up there. Now, think about if you bought the same chair for a cheaper price online. It would be shipped straight to your house and you wouldn't need to do anything.

Second of all, it makes small businesses much easier to manage. Imagine how many businesses wouldn't be here without the Internet. If you're planning to start a new business and you already have the idea and everything, what would the first thing you would do be? Create a website, right? Think of the cost of a store location. Include electricity, employees, decoration, advertisement, the location, and the store itself. Now think of the cost of a website: the domain

name fees, advertisement, and maybe operators. The website is much cheaper, isn't it? This would help small businesses begin by saving them money.

Now think about what you would do on those rainy days. We all love the rain, don't we? But even if you do like the rain, like me, you don't want to stay out there in the rain too long. First of all, it's COLD. Second, if you stay out too long you'll just end up with a cold, and we can all agree colds aren't fun. If you're like me, you probably just sit around and watch TV with a cup of hot chocolate. But what if nothing is on TV and you have nothing recorded. Then what? Get on the Internet! On the Internet there are lots of games that you can play. If you don't feel like playing games, you can even watch videos, episodes of a TV show, or listen to music. You can find just about any episode of lots of popular TV shows on Hulu. Now, think of what else you can do on rainy days over the Internet.

We can all agree the Internet can be frustrating at times when it's running slow. But even when it is slow there's still some good in it. First, because even if it is running slow, you'll still get where you want to go eventually. It will still save time even if it is running slow, and it will also save you a lot of work from doing everything I mentioned in the first paragraph. Obviously, the Internet doesn't have everything so you'll still have to go out sometimes, but that's not bad. The fresh air is good too.

Think about life without the Internet: not as much to do in one's free time, not as many businesses, and not as much convenience. With the Internet, this is all made possible. Go out and explore everything about the Internet. Join the 785 million who are using the Internet.



## A Big Step in Childhood

by Monika, sixth grade writer

"Childhood is a short season." --Helen Hayes

I agree with Helen Hayes that childhood is a short, happy, time of your life, and one of the items that has made my childhood better is my cell phone. I can't live without my cell phone because of its efficiency, convenience, and its ability to communicate.

A cell phone can help a person become more responsible and can also help save money. For instance, whenever a child goes out to the mall or to a movie with their friends, they always have to make sure that they have quarters to insert in a pay phone so that they could call home when they wanted to be picked up. With cell phone, the child doesn't have to constantly pay twenty-five cents for just a two minute phone call. Cell phones also build up more responsibility because once a child gets a cell phone it feels like a big step in their childhood. Once they have a cell phone, they feel that they have to be more responsible to take care of the cell phone and to not lose their privileges of texting and calling people. If a parent is worried about their child feeling that they are allowed to do whatever they like with their cell phone, they can ask their companies about parental control. Most parents know when their children are ready for a cell phone. If their child really shows that they want one and proves that they care about getting one, then the parent can probably trust their child. Once a child gets a cell phone, they need to demonstrate they can be careful and take care of it so it is not taken away.

Next, cell phones are an excellent way to communicate with people. With a cell phone, people can communicate in many different ways. If they have email on their phone, they can communicate that way. If they have texting they can communicate that way, and last but not least they can just call people. This is also an excellent way to keep in touch with friends and family. If your family lives across the country, a way to keep updated with them is to just call on your cell phone. This device is also a portable communication tool. While at the movies with friends, a cell phone can make it easy to call parents to tell them that you're ready to be picked up. One of the most important reasons to have a cell phone is for emergencies. Cell phones come in use for emergencies such as car crashes, fires, getting lost in the mall or at a big gathering, or any other dangerous situation. Safety is important for a child, and to ensure that a child is always safe, a cell phone can help.

Lastly, cell phones can help kids manage their time better. Cell phones are both entertaining and useful. Cell phones have tools that come in handy and also have tools that are just for entertainment. Kids can manage their time better by using tools like calendars, notes, alarms, and planners. Calendars and planners can help kids manage their day better. Notes can help kids make reminders for themselves. Alarms can make one's day better by waking up rested and ready for the day. All of these tools can come in handy for managing one's day. On this device, there are also the fun tools that entertain kids such as cameras and video cameras. If a child has internet access granted on their phone, this is also a way to entertain them. All of these tools, both the entertaining and useful, come in handy in a child's life.

Parents who don't agree with me might think that their kids won't take care of their phone and will be irresponsible with it, but to kids, cell phones are so important that they will always make sure that they have it and will take care of it. Kids will also be responsible and make wise decisions when using their phone because they don't want it to be taken away. Cell phones can actually help kids become more responsible. Kids feel that their cell phones are so important that they always make sure to keep track of it and be careful not to lose it.

These are the reasons why I can't live without my cell phone, because of its efficiency, convenience, and its ability to communicate. I think it's very important to have a cell phone when traveling without an adult. With a cell phone your childhood can be better, just like mine.