

Grade 8 Baseline Annotation – Expository Writing - #811SE

Prompt: Life can be full of surprises that have an effect on our lives. Identify a time when you experienced this type of surprise. Write a multiple-paragraph essay to a teacher explaining how the surprise affected your life in either a positive or negative way.

Content - 1

Level 1: Below Basic

- A. Focus is lost or **wanders throughout paper; no thesis/position evident.**
- B. Reason(s) **do not support the thesis/position or are missing.**
- C. Elaboration **does not support thesis/reasons; is missing.**
- D. Message **is missing severely flawed or random thoughts that make no discernable point.**
- E. Commentary (8th-HS) **is missing or does not connect elaboration, reason(s), and thesis/position.**

Focus: The focus **wanders throughout paper; no clear thesis**, which makes the paper difficult to follow; it leaves the reader confused as to what the actual surprise was and why it was a surprise, and how it affected the student.

Reasons: The reasons **are missing**; there are no clear reasons/main points about why the trip was a surprise, or how it affected the student's life; it is simply a story about a trip and how they traveled.

Elaboration: Evidence and elaboration **does not support the thesis**; rather, it is just a list of travel logistics, albeit brief and scattered: the type of transportation and length of travel (e.g. "That's 13 hours of travel time, plus a motel in Florida for a night").

Message: The message **is missing**. There is no **discernable point**.

Commentary: The commentary is **missing or does not connect elaboration, reasons, and thesis**; the student uses sentences in an attempt to connect back to thesis (e.g. "I was so surprised"; "I was surprised when we got there without fainting"), but they are repetitive and do not make a true connection between the elaboration, reasons and thesis.

***Bold** text in descriptions indicates language from the rubric.

Organization - 1

L Level 1: Below Basic

- A. Introduction **is missing**. Introduction strategy is not attempted. **Leaves reader with no direction.**
- B. Middle **reasons/elaboration are randomly or illogically ordered; may lack completeness**
- C. Transitions are incorrectly used, **omitted, or repetitive in use (between/within-paragraphs).**
- D. Conclusion is missing or **restates topic/thesis** or the text abruptly ends. **Conclusion strategy is not attempted.**

Introduction: Introduction is **limited**: student does make an attempt at an Intro Strategy (anecdote: "'What!' I exclaimed when I heard about our 'adventure'. I literally jumped out of my chair when I was told that we had a 4 hour plane ride [...]), however, the story does not lead to a clear thesis, so the introduction leaves the reader with **no sense of direction**.

Middle: The **events do not shape the thesis**; even though student does attempt to tell the story chronologically, the ideas and comments seem very **random**.

Transitions: Transitions are omitted between paragraphs, and within the paragraphs there were repetitive transitions "then, but, plus" used.

Conclusion: The beginning of the conclusion begins to **restate the topic**, but then brings in a random comment "next to the beach". The text abruptly ends with **no attempt at using a conclusion strategy** ("That was one of the greatest surprises ever, next to the beautiful beach. All in all it was fun").

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Style - 1

Level 2: Basic

- A. Sentences a cadence that is troublesome for audience/purpose/form due to limited variety of beginnings, structures and lengths.
- B. Word Choice is limited, does not enhance writing, **may show thesaurus overload**, and/or mostly uses passive verbs.
- C. Voice uses tone that is inconsistent with relationship to designated audience.

Level 1: Below Basic

- A. Sentences **a cadence that is awkward for audience/purpose/form with minimal variety of beginnings, structures and lengths.**
- B. Word Choice **shows redundancy**, is incorrect/has omissions, or **confuses and weakens the writing.**
- C. Voice **uses tone that does not address the designated audience.**

Sentences: the cadence **is awkward for purpose**, with many run-ons, fragments and difficult wording. The student's thought processes are lost in the awkward wording.

Word Choice: The student does make an attempt at better word choice (e.g. "excruciating, mind-blowing"), however, the words do not fit the topic of the sentence, and seem **overdone** and superficial: **thesaurus overload**. The word choice often confuses and **weakens the writing**. The use of pronouns instead of nouns weakens other areas of the essay "I didn't know if this was good or bad though": without a previous sentence, the reader is left confused as to what "this" is.

Voice: Voice is present in some areas of the essay- "WHAT!" I exclaimed when I heard about our "adventure". I literally jumped out of my chair when I was told that ..."- but it **does not address the directed audience** or the purpose of the essay; although the reader can gain a general view of the individual behind the words, the student does not make the necessary connection between him/herself and the purpose and audience of the paper.

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Conventions - 1

- Level 1: Below Basic **inconsistently applies lower grade-level usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or paragraph expectations; lower grade-level errors interfere with meaning and/or readability.**

Due to the lack of density within the paper, there is not enough evidence to demonstrate and understanding or command of conventions. Within the short text, the student **inconsistently applies lower grade-level punctuation, paragraph expectation, usage, and capitalization**. Although the student attempts to use some grade level words like "exclaimed" and "excruciating", the usage for some of these words is incorrect, or the word is misspelled. The errors occasionally **interfere with the meaning**.

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