

## Grade 9 Baseline Annotation – Expository Writing - #911KB

**Prompt:** Think about classes you have taken and identify one class that is memorable. Write a multiple-paragraph letter to a teacher explaining what made that class unforgettable. (For confidentiality purposes, please do not name the teacher.)

### Content - 3

#### Level 3: Proficient

- A. Focus **is maintained and consistent throughout the paper centered on a manageable thesis/position.**
- B. Reason(s) **are relevant and support the thesis/position.**
- C. Elaboration **is meaningful, relevant and specific; uses details/examples/facts/anecdotes to support thesis/reasons; explains reasons.**
- D. Message **is present, interesting or important; goes beyond the obvious although may be anticipated.**
- E. Commentary (8th-HS) **connects elaboration, reason(s), and thesis/position.**

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Focus: The focus is **maintained** and **consistent** throughout the paper: **centered on a manageable thesis** of “one class was so enjoyable and interesting that I’m confident it will stand out in my mind forever. The glorious school experience I’m referring to is Ms. G’s eighth grade block class”.

Reasons: The reasons are **relevant and support the thesis** clearly. Each paragraph is a separate reason, stated at the beginning (e.g., “class was a nearly perfect match for my learning style”; “the simply marvelous atmosphere of Ms. G’s class”; “Several of these types of memories were made on Ms. G’s class trips”).

Elaboration: The elaboration is **relevant and specific**; the student uses very specific **details and examples** to clarify statements and claims (e.g., “The atmosphere was also often filled with the inviting scent of the warm, fresh-baked cookies that we made once a month”; “At the end of the year we all took a week-long trip to Olympia, our state capitol, and had the privilege of participating in mock debates in the real legislative buildings!”).

Message: Message is **interesting and important to the audience**; the student takes the opportunity to pass on the message that a teacher’s style and educational philosophy will directly influence the student’s motivation and desire to be in class (e.g. “class was a nearly perfect match for my learning style”; “Another thing I appreciated about this class is that it taught us real life skills”; “The feel of the room took the stress out of countless student’s days, and made this block class one people looked forward to.”

Commentary: The commentary is **present** in some areas (e.g., “which is a program that teaches kids all the basics of our state’s government”; it taught us real life skills – like how to put together a presentation for an office – not just frivolous bites of information that we would forget the next day”), but missing in other areas. The commentary does not always provide additional insight.

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

### Organization - 3

#### Level 3: Proficient

- A. Introduction **presents thesis/position. Effectively uses one or more of the introduction strategies. Engages the reader. Gives a sense of direction.**
- B. Middle **reasons/elaboration are arranged in a unified, cohesive and/or logical pattern to develop the thesis/position; has a sense of completeness.**
- C. Transitions **show, signal, or maintain connections (between/within-paragraphs).**
- D. Conclusion **provides a strong wrap up that effectively connects to the thesis and body of paper, more than a summary. Effectively uses at least one or more of the conclusion strategies.**

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Introduction: The student attempts to use an **introduction strategy**: starting with an overview and narrowing to the more specific class (“Throughout the years, I have rotated through many different teachers, and learned many different subjects [...] But one class was so enjoyable and interesting that I’m confident it will stand out in my mind forever”). The introduction could be stronger through better word choice and sentence organization, but it does **provide the reader with a clear sense of direction.**

Middle: The supporting ideas and reasons are **arranged cohesively/logically**, and develop **the thesis with a sense of completeness**. The student goes from the specifics about the teacher’s instruction style, to the atmosphere created by the teacher, to the more specifics of pushing the students into more realistic learning situations.

Transitions: The student uses a mix of transitions, sometimes **telling** and basic, to showing/signaling transitions **within and between paragraphs** (e.g., “However, the memories from one trip burn so brightly in my mind, that I feel it is necessary to describe it to you”).

Conclusion: The student **provides a wrap up** of the purpose of the essay and uses **two different conclusion strategies**: a generalization from given info (the student makes the generalization that if every teacher teaches the way Ms. G does, all students will learn more), and a call to action to teachers to be more like Ms. G.

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### Style - 3

#### Level 3: Proficient

- A. Sentences create an appropriate cadence for a designated audience/purpose/form through a variety of beginnings, structures and lengths.
- B. Word Choice is specific, precise and persuasive/compelling; **strengthens writing, and shows use of active verbs.**
- C. Voice uses tone that is appropriate for designated audience. **Writing conveys the person behind the words.**

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Sentences: The student creates an **appropriate cadence for the designated audience and purpose through a variety of sentences beginnings, structures and lengths** (e.g., “There are some images, some conversations, that you know will never leave your mind”; “Every Thursday throughout the entire school year, our class would meet with YMCA counselors to do what’s called Youth and Government, which is a program that teaches kids all the basics of our state’s government: the debating process, how to pass a bill, etc.”).

Word Choice: The student makes an attempt to use **precise and compelling word choice that strengthens writing** (e.g., “trek”, “frivolous”; “marvelous atmosphere”; “minimal”; “innovative”). The student does use a mix of **passive and active verbs**, occasionally using passive when active would strengthen the writing (e.g. “There was minimal homework”; “our time was spent”), however, there is enough evidence of Level 3 word choice throughout the essay.

Voice: The student uses a tone that is **appropriate for the audience. It conveys the person behind the words**; the reader can clearly infer the writer’s priorities and beliefs about learning through the words and sentences used.

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### Conventions - 3

#### Level 3: Proficient

**lower grade level expectations must have been met. Accurately applies grade-level usage, spelling, punctuation and paragraph expectations; errors do not interfere with meaning and/or readability; has competent use of conventions.**

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The student uses a mix of **grade-level** conventions (colons: “It was relaxed: not stuffy and strict”, em-dash: “it taught us real life skills – like how to put together a presentation for an office – not just frivolous bits of information”) and lower grade level conventions, showing a **competent use of conventions**. Although there are a few elementary level errors (in some instances “Ms. Gs” does not include an apostrophe to show possession, the student’s use of the apostrophe in later sentences show that the student does have a grasp of those conventions. Any and all spelling, and punctuation errors are rare and do not detract from the meaning/**readability of the writing**).

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