

Grade 9 Baseline Annotation – Expository Writing - #911XE

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 - 2

Level 2: Basic

- A. Focus is general throughout the paper; thesis/position may be vague, unmanageable or simplistic
- B. Reason(s) are generally connected; may not adequately support the thesis/position.
- C. Elaboration is sometimes connected but does not adequately support the thesis/reasons; connection may be implied; may confuse reader.
- D. Message is present; may be simplistic, obvious or may require interpretation to make sense.
- E. Commentary (8th-HS) may connect elaboration, reason(s), and thesis/position in a general way; reader may have to infer the connections.

Focus: The focus is very **general throughout the paper**, due in large part to the **vague** thesis “The class was so unforgettable because of the friends in the class, you were nice, and the work wasn’t hard to do”. Occasionally the student lost focus within the body paragraphs, inserting random pieces of information unconnected to the reason listed (see elaboration).

Reasons: The reasons are **connected** to the thesis as they are in fact listed in the thesis, but they **do not adequately provide enough support**, and occasionally the reader has to infer the reason: in paragraph 3 the reader must infer through the statements that the student is showing the teacher is “nice”.

Elaboration: The elaboration is **sometimes connected but it does not fully support the reasons**. The student uses statements and broad claims as elaboration (e.g., “Anytime my friends and I would talk you would just let us have a warning and not get in trouble”; “Every assignment, or homework was not hard at all”). In a few instances the student veers from the reason listed and gives an elaboration statement unconnected (e.g., in the paragraph about the work not being too hard the student writes, “A lot of times though it was funny that you would even make jokes with the class and I thought it was hilarious”).

Message: The message is **simplistic and requires interpretation to make sense** (the student implies that what makes a class memorable is to be easy and fun).

Commentary: The **connection between the elaboration, reasons and the thesis is either simplistic or the reader must infer the connection** (e.g. “At least you weren’t a strict teacher because that would really suck!”; “that is the main class I would laugh and have a good time in”).

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

Organization - 2

Level 2: Basic

- A. Introduction may only state main points or restate prompt. **Attempts one** or more **of the introduction strategies**. Does not attempt to engage the reader. **Limited sense of direction**.
- B. Middle **reasons/elaboration are loosely arranged or are outline-like (formulaic)**; may lack completeness.
- C. Transitions **are telling/sequencing connections (between/within-paragraphs)**.
- D. Conclusion **is limited to summarizing. Attempts one** or more **of the conclusion strategies**.

Introduction: The introduction is very **limited**, with a simplistic use of the introduction strategy of asking a rhetorical question: “Have you ever had a class that was so fun you remember it forever?”. The student then jumps directly to the thesis, which gives the reader only a **general sense of direction**.

Middle: The body paragraphs are **outline-like and formulaic**, only loosely shaping the thesis. No **cohesion** between the paragraphs, and sometimes cohesion is missing between ideas within the paragraph (e.g. “if i miss something you would tell me to make the assignment up to get the credit. Alot of times though it was funny that you would even make jokes with the class and I thought it was hilarious!”).

Transitions: Transitions are **sequencing**: sticking to the traditional “First, Second, Finally” between paragraphs, and other **telling** transitions are used within the paragraphs: “I am going to tell you”.

Conclusion: The conclusion starts with a basic transition “Those were 3 paragraphs of the good times I had in your class”, followed by a **general restatement of the thesis**. The student ends with an attempt at a **conclusion strategy** (call to action) by calling for the teacher to “keep your class fun so it doesn’t suck for your kids next year”.

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Style - 2

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.

Sentences: The **cadence is very troublesome for the audience and form** due in large part to the awkward **sentences and limited variety in beginning, lengths, and structures** (e.g. “Everyday when I’m in other classes I always want the time to go by so I can be in your class because it is so fun and that is the main class i would laugh and have a good time in”).

Word Choice: The student uses **limited word choice** that does not enhance the writing (e.g., repetitive use of “fun, funny, hard, get in trouble, hung out”). The student also uses **passive verbs** frequently (e.g., “you were also very fun” “I thought you would be mean” “I would laugh”).

Voice: The student uses a tone that is **inconsistent with the relationship to designated audience** (student to teacher). The word choice and sentence structure leaves the reader with the feeling the student is a much younger student.

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Conventions - 2

Level 2: Basic

consistently **applies lower grade-level usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation and/or paragraph expectations; lower grade-level errors do not interfere with meaning and/or readability.**

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.

The student typically follows only low level conventions, showing **no command in conventions higher than grade 5**, as well as showing errors in lower level conventions (e.g. commas were frequently left out of compound sentences connected by a conjunction, inconsistent capitalization of “i”, inconsistency with apostrophes in contractions: werent). The **errors do not interfere with the meaning or readability of the text.**

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