

Grade 9 Baseline Annotation – Expository Writing - #911WS

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 - 4

Level 4: Advanced

- A. Focus **is narrow and concentrated throughout the paper and centered on a substantive thesis/position.**
- B. Reason(s) **are significant; fully support the thesis/position.**
- C. Elaboration **is significant, purposeful, specific and precise, uses combination of details/examples/facts/anecdotes to fully support thesis/reasons; clarifies.**
- D. Message **is insightful, distinct and/or anticipates questions.**
- E. Commentary (8th-HS) **tightly connects elaboration, reason(s), and thesis/position to help the reader understand**

- Focus:** The focus is **narrow and concentrated** throughout the paper: centered on the unforgettable acting class the student took, and the changes it made in her life.
- Reasons:** The student uses **significant reasons that fully support the thesis** (e.g., amazing mentor, gaining influential friends, and learning experiences). Each reason builds on and connects with the other reasons.
- Elaboration:** The student provides a multitude of **precise and significant elaboration:** using a **combination of details, examples and anecdotes** (e.g., “With learning tools like “Roses and Thorns” (giving someone feedback on something they did well and something they can improve), Viewpoints (a perspective of how an actor moves and works), and Morning Pages (writing down two pages of uncensored thought when you wake up), you know there’s never a dull moment”; “Shannon, one who excels in drama, taught me to put my feelings into my work. Headstrong and daring, I followed her lead, with risks I’d never had the courage to take before”).
- Message:** **Insightful and distinct.** Writer **anticipates questions** and answers them (e.g. “True, this discovery of self and others was a huge portion of it being so memorable, but I learned actual academic stuff, too!”; “A question that might have crossed your mind is, “who is this Christian Duhamel guy?””).
- Commentary:** The student uses commentary to **tightly connect the elaboration, reasons and thesis**, in order to explain and clarify what made the class memorable (e.g., “My skills improved, and I began to finally understand how the process of writing supplements the theatre”; “I learned to view life like a kalidescope – different colors and different angles, but all one beautiful picture”; “These people, these friends, showed me a different kind of family. They gave me a new perspective. How in the world could I ever forget them?”).

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

Organization - 4

Level 4: Advanced

- A. Introduction **uniquely presents thesis/position. Uses one or more of the introduction strategies. Creatively engages the reader. Gives a strong sense of direction.**
- B. Middle **reasons/elaboration are tightly and purposefully arranged in a unified, cohesive and/or logical pattern to develop the thesis/position; has a sense of completeness.**
- C. Transitions **intentionally signal/imply connections throughout the text; clearly provide a sense of cohesion (between/within-paragraphs).**
- D. Conclusion **signals a thought-provoking and insightful wrap up that tightly connects to the thesis and body of the paper. Uniquely uses one or more conclusion strategies.**

- Introduction:** The student uses the introduction to immediately connect with the intended audience: “As a drama teacher, you know just how important theatre is. How through words and song, art comes to life, bringing joy to all those around”. The student uses this connection and overview (intro strategy) of the world of theatre to **uniquely present the thesis and give the reader a clear sense of direction.**
- Middle:** The supporting ideas are **purposefully arranged**, clearly fitting together to form the foundation of the thesis. Each reason highlights a particular aspect of the acting class, and gives insight into not only why it made the class memorable, but also what he/she drew from the experience.
- Transitions:** The transitions clearly **provide cohesion that covers the bulk of the text.** In many instances it goes beyond to actually **signal an emphasis on the relationship connections** (e.g., “I wanted so much to learn how I could be a playwright as well as an actor. Henceforth, I signed up for Village Theatre KIDSTAGE’s class called Company Originals”; “True, this discovery of self and others was a huge portion of it being so memorable, but I learned actual academic stuff too!”)
- Conclusion:** The conclusion signals **a thought-provoking and insightful wrap up that connects the reasons/elaboration with the thesis.** The student gives a wrap up of the main message of the piece, and looks outside that experience to show the reader the skills/knowledge gained (“it gave me a deeper understanding of the story in a show. It made me a better actor, and a better person”), as well as give a prediction of future knowledge/ experiences (“My only hope now is that I can learn more, meet more interesting people, and have more mentors who inspire me”).

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Style - 4

Level 4: Advanced

A. Sentences

create a suitable cadence to address a designated audience/purpose/form through an intentional use of beginnings, structures and lengths.

B. Word Choice

is vivid, apt, memorable; is natural and never overdone; uses various active verbs.

C. Voice

uses tone that engages designated audience; may take risks.

Sentences: The student **creates a suitable cadence to address a designated audience through a variety of sentence structures, beginnings and lengths**, very clearly intentional and for effect (“Or how when you get under those blinding bright lights and perform a piece, you feel like there’s nothing holding you back – you can do anything”). The purposeful variety of sentences are throughout the entirety of the paper, and examples can be found in every sentence.

Word Choice: The student uses **vivid, apt and memorable** words throughout the entire essay; the word choice is almost poetic in that it flows seamlessly throughout the whole paper creating a connection with the writer’s experiences (e.g., “perseverance”; “determination”; “supplements”; “kalidescope [sp]”; “Insightful describes him well, as he always knows what is going on and interprets it well”; “A smart, well-directed classmate”) The word choice goes beyond just being memorable and hits the level of precise: the student’s use of the word “theatre” instead of “theater” shows precision and accuracy in terms of the world of theatre (“how the process of writing supplements the theatre”), as does the use of “playwright” instead of play writer, or script writer.

Voice: The student’s tone is **engaging and pulls the reader into** the life of an aspiring performer, while also keeping the tone light and relaxed: “A smart, well-directed classmate, Dylan, taught me that strength, strength and wisdom in art come from within (wow, I sound like Yoda), and that you have to seek them, not wait around until they find you”. The student’s writing strongly conveys the person behind the essay, and allows the reader to connect with him/her.

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Conventions - 4

Level 4: Advanced

intentionally applies usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation and paragraphs to enhance meaning; may break rules for style purposes; demonstrates good command of conventions.

The student show a **clear command of conventions**, both lower level and grade-level. The student experiments with more complex sentence structures and word choice, and any errors are within the higher level conventions, or are obviously “typos”. The student uses stylistic conventions (parentheses are used to insert additional information necessary). Some examples of grade-level punctuation are, Em-dash: “like a kalidescope [sp] – different colors and different angles, but all one beautiful picture, commas to set off nonrestrictive clauses: “Shannon, one who excels in drama, taught me to put my feelings into my work”. Student **breaks rules for style purposes:** student uses sentence fragments to emphasize a thought, “How through words and song, art comes to life, bringing joy to all those around”).

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