

Grade 6 Baseline Annotation– Expository Writing - #611FE

Prompt: Each of us has a favorite book, sport, item, or activity. Think about one of your favorites. Write a multiple-paragraph essay to a teacher explaining why the book, sport, item, or activity is your favorite.

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**. The student is writing about dancing and never diverts or heads down a rabbit trail of any kind. Every reason and piece of elaboration serves to develop the focus.

Reasons: The reasons **fully support the thesis** (e.g. her means of expressing herself “as a fine artist”; dance benefits her health; the friends she has as a result of dance). Each reason is **significant to the thesis**, and is fully supported.

Elaboration: The student **provides a combination of details/examples/facts** to support each reason given. The elaboration is **significant, purposeful and precise** (e.g. “Ballet improves flexibility with all the stretching involved”; “Some of my closest friends I have made through dance, maybe because we share our deepest passion, dancing”; “you have to always keep up with the stretching and muscle memory training because the positions unique to ballet are unnatural and your body will lose the ability to perform them if you are not consistent”).

Message: The message is **distinct**: the student loves dance: from the discipline and health benefits to the opportunity to gain friends with similar ideologies.

(Commentary): Although not necessary at this grade level, the student uses commentary to connect the elaboration, reasons and thesis. The commentary is also used to **clarify**, or explain more in depth, **the importance of the elaboration or reason** (e.g. “The leaping and leg extensions are the hardest for me, but have really helped my ballet because they have strengthened my legs so much”; “Dancing gives me a way to express myself freely in a way that makes me feel right no matter what I do”).

***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 strategy** of presenting a scenario: “Imagine the way an eagle feels as he gracefully prowls the open sky, searching for his next meal. Imagine what a poet feels as she finishes her amazingly beautiful sonnet”. The visual scenario **engages the audience from the start**, and provides a context to give the reader a strong sense of direction through the thesis: “If you know what this feels like, then you know how I feel when I dance”.

Middle: The supporting **ideas/reasons are purposefully arranged, and clearly fit together to present the thesis with completeness**. Each reason is distinct and individual as the student leads the reader through the benefits: health, social and emotional.

Transitions: The student clearly **provides cohesion** through clearly **signaling connections or relationships between ideas** (e.g. “Not that ballet and jazz don’t develop strength, because they do, but most of my muscle strength and tone comes from contemporary dancing”; “What I mean by this is[...]; “Dancing isn’t all swans and sunrises; it also keeps me healthy”;

Conclusion: The conclusion **signals a thought-provoking and insightful wrap up that tightly connects to the thesis and body of the paper**. It uniquely uses two **conclusion strategies**: generalization and echo (“Even though I love dancing, I know it is not for everyone, but I do hope everyone has something they love as much as I love dancing and that helps them stay in shape and make life long friends, if for no other reason than to help you imagine what the eagle or the poet feel”).

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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 intentional use of sentence beginnings, structures and lengths (e.g. “Jazz, on the other hand, is very different. There is a lot of cardio-respiratory endurance developed through all the fast movement. Beats running every day! Not that ballet and jazz don’t develop strength, because they do, but most of my muscle strength and tone comes from contemporary dancing”).

Word Choice: The word choice is **vivid, apt, and natural**. The student uses a mix of strong descriptors, subject specific words, and **active verbs** to create a **memorable** read for the audience (e.g. “free as a bird, fast as the wind, graceful as a swan, beautiful as a morning sunrise”; “muscle memory”; “contemporary dancing”; “flexibility”; “gracefully prowls the open sky”).

Voice: the student uses a tone that **engages the designated audience and takes risks** with her introduction and conclusion as well as in the transitions that bring the swans and sunrises back in. She is present in her writing, but not overdone, as was a potential pitfall had she carried the esoteric nature of the introduction throughout the paper, but it was grounded in solid reasons and elaboration.

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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 intentionally uses grade level and above usage, punctuation, spelling, and paragraph expectations (e.g. “But when I dance, I am free as a bird; as fast as the wind; as graceful as a swan; as beautiful as a morning sunrise”; “Dancing isn’t all swans and sunrises; it also keeps me healthy”; “So, even though my life is busy, I still have time to dance”). Through the variety of punctuation and sentence structure the student **demonstrates good command of conventions**, and any minor error (misspelling of respiratory), is typically only in more advanced words, and does not weaken the writing in any way.

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