

Student Sample # **911WS**
Grade 9 Baseline Expository

Grade 9 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.)

1 Dear Mrs. M_____,

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3 As a drama teacher, you know just how important theatre is. How through words
4 and song, art comes to life, bringing joy to all those around. Or how when you get under
5 those blindingly bright lights and perform a piece, you feel like there's nothing holding
6 you back – you can do anything. However, there is more to theatre than being a
7 performer. Who writes that stellar material for the world's enjoyment? The writers. I
8 wanted so much to learn how I could be a playwright as well as an actor. Henceforth, I
9 signed up for Village Theatre KIDSTAGE's Class called Company Originals. Filling me
10 with knowledge, giving me the chance to make new influential friends, and introducing
11 the amazing Christian Duhamel as my mentor, Company Originals changed my life.

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13 A question that might have crossed your mind is, "who is this Christian Duhamel
14 guy?" Professionally, he is a very talented actor, an award-winning composer, an artistic
15 director, and of course, my teacher. That's all lovely, but it just doesn't seem to do his
16 character justice. Creative, witty, and inspiring, Christian's the kind of guy that makes
17 you strive to be better. With learning tools like "Roses and Thorns" (giving someone
18 feedback on something they did well and something they can improve), Viewpoints (a
19 perspective of how an actor moves and works) and Morning Pages (writing down two
20 pages of uncensored thought when you wake up), you know there's never a dull moment.
21 Insightful describes him well, as he always knows what is going on and interprets it well.
22 Christian's one of those teachers who presence commands respect, but still seems to
23 understand the minds of you and your peers. Part of the reason this class was so
24 unforgettable is because this gifted man was sharing his knowledge with us.

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26 As much as I learned from Christian, the teaching doesn't stop there. The people
27 I met in this class changed me. In fact, a couple of them are now some of my best
28 friends. Shannon, one who excels in drama, taught me to put my feelings into my work.
29 Headstrong and daring, I followed her lead, with risks I'd never had the courage to take
30 before. A smart, well-directed classmate, Dylan, taught me that strength and wisdom in
31 art come from within (wow, I sound like Yoda), and that you have to seek them, not wait
32 around until they find you. With Lindsay's help, I learned to view life like a kalidescope
33 – different colors and different angels, but all one beautiful picture. Joey showed the way
34 from seeing something bland and creating art. Last, but not least, is Coleman. Just a
35 sweet guy who made me remember not to lose all the innocence of being young. These
36 people, these friends, showed me a different kind of family. They gave me a new
37 perspective. How in the world could I forget them?

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39 True, this discovery of self and others was a huge portion of it being so
40 memorable, but I learned actual academic stuff, too! Our objective was to write a ten
41 minute play of our very own. Yikes. Never having been the best writer, the prospect of
42 writing a play to share with my classmates was pretty intimidating. Through tears, sweat,
43 and blood, my mind raged coming up with plots, themes, and characters. With
44 perserverance and determination (and the support of Christian and my friends), I did it. I
45 created a ten-minute work of art. My skills improved, and I began to finally understand
46 how the process of writing supplements the theatre.

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48 Life is made up of the many experiences each person has. Without this one, I
49 would be a completely different person at this time. Who knows what essay I would
50 have written here? What changes would have happened? Although I decided that
51 writing wasn't the path for me, it gave me a deeper understanding of the story in a show.
52 It made me a better actor, and a better person. My only hope now is that I can learn more,
53 meet more interesting people, and have more mentors who inspire me. I loved taking
54 Company Originals and can't wait to have more unforgettable experiences just like it.
55 Maybe it's just around the bend in a class here at J__ High School.