



Developing | Exemplar Essay

Expect the Unexpected

Visiting Grandma Lucy



Plot and Ideas

The storyline establishes a somewhat plausible context (“One weekend my parents went away”) and is built on a fairly clear exposition that supports the establishment of the conflict (“and I had to stay with my grandma Lucy”). The plot and ideas attempt to meet the demands of the task, but do not effectively reveal the elements of the plot (climax and resolution).



Development and Elaboration

The narrative attempts to establish a setting, but it isn't completely clear. Characters are introduced (the narrator and Grandma Lucy) but are not developed in a way that enhances the story. The narrative lacks sufficient dialogue to advance the storyline in a meaningful way (“We're gonna have apple pie for dessert she said as I walked in”).



Organization and Sequencing

The story includes a sequence of events that vaguely establishes a beginning, middle, and end. The narrative includes some transitions (“next” and “after awhile”), but they do not clearly signal shifts in time or setting. The narrative includes an attempt at a resolution (“I was not looking forward to a good weekend, but unexpectedly I found my love of cooking that day in grandma's kitchen”), but it does not offer closure to the narrative.



Language and Style

The narrative uses some descriptive words, sensory language, and figurative language to create imagery and convey the setting and characters (“old room” and “homemade mac n' cheese”). Point of view is maintained (the narrator), but the writing lacks a unique voice that fully engages the reader.



Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait 'looks like' in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see “25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays” by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

Expect the Unexpected



Notes

Visiting Grandma Lucy

One weekend my parents went away to visit my uncle Richard in New Hampshire and I had to stay with my grandma Lucy. When I got to her house I sat down on the bed. I looked around the old room and saw books, an old checker set and a sewing machine. There was so much junk and I didn't want to be there at all.

Next I heard my grandma coming up the steps. Why don't you come down and help me with dinner she said. "No I'm okay. I don't like to cook," I said back to her. "Okay, but if you change your mind, come on down Dan," she said back. I layed on the bed and stared at the ceiling for about 20 minutes. I was getting kind of hungry, so I decided to go downstairs after all. Grandma was cooking homemade mac n' cheese, roasted chicken, mashed potatoes, and rolls. We're gonna have apple pie for dessert she said as I walked in. She asked me to help make dinner I didn't know what I was doing, but she showed me all of the steps. After awhile I got the hang of it and she even let me peel the potatoes. It was actually really a lot of fun. At first I was not looking forward to a good weekend, but unexpectedly I found my love of cooking that day in grandma's kitchen.