



Developing | Exemplar Essay

## Just Because

### Learning to Cook



#### Plot and Ideas

The storyline establishes a plausible context (“She started off with easy lessons like how to cook eggs”) that supports the establishment of the plot (“It’s not like I need to know how to cook”). Additional details situate the conflict (“My abuela got sick then and my mom had to go stay with her”) and build toward a climax and resolution. The plot and ideas attempt to address the demands of the task.



#### Development and Elaboration

The narrative works to establish a setting (“Summer is a time for sleeping”), but it is not completely clear. Characters are introduced but not clearly developed in a way that advances the story (“my younger brothers and sister weren’t too impressed”). Dialogue and descriptions are minimal and do not advance the ideas (“my mom is relentless” and “I’m the oldest so I had to take care of the younger kids”).



#### Organization and Sequencing

The sequence of events attempts to establish a beginning (“She started off”), middle (“My abuela got sick then”), and end (“I took my time this time”). The story does not clearly signal shifts in time or setting with appropriate transitions. A resolution is present, but it does not successfully offer closure (“I should actually give my attention to learn new things that could benefit me later on”).



#### Language and Style

The narrative uses some descriptive words (“runny scrambled eggs” and “half raw pancakes”) to create imagery and convey the setting. The writer attempts to engage readers and build the narrator’s voice (“my mom won’t stop until she gets what she wants” and “I didn’t much care what they said though because they’re brats”), but the attempts are not wholly effective. The point of view, however, is consistent.



#### 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.

## Just Because



### Learning to Cook

Just a few months ago, I learned something that I thought I wouldn't just yet. Summer is a time for sleeping, but my mom is relentless. "Julio! Julio, it's time for you to learn how to cook," she said. I complained but my mom won't stop until she gets what she wants so I got out of bed and walked into the kitchen. I already knew this wasn't going to be good.

She started off with easy lessons like how to cook eggs and pancakes. I didn't think it would be that hard but my younger brothers and sister weren't too impressed with my runny scrambled eggs and my half raw pancakes. They told me it was nasty. I didn't much care what they said though because they're brats and spoiled and who cares anyway. It's not like I need to know how to cook.

My abuela got sick then and my mom had to go stay with her. I'm the oldest so I had to take care of the younger kids, which means I had to make the meals. I took my time and this time the food was better. It maybe wasn't as good as moms is, but it was cooked food at least.

So that's how learning to cook actually helped me. I was pretty surprised. Maybe next time I should actually give my attention to learn new things that could benefit me later on.