



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Open Window

How Character Traits Create the Lie



Clarity and Focus

The central idea is mostly clear, but combining the last two sentences of the introduction into one focused thesis statement would move this essay to a 4. The writing purpose and demands of the prompt are fulfilled.



Development

Well-chosen, relevant facts develop the central idea. Additional cited evidence is needed for Framton ("he is a gullible character and hardly asks any questions") and the aunt ("Mrs. Sappleton is chatty"). Further explanation of some points would clarify the writer's ideas ("Mrs. Sappleton and the three men share a similar point of view about everything").



Organization

Various transitions are used ("In the story," "Even though the reader learns," "Point of view is also") and show the relationships between and among ideas. An organizational structure is used with a clear introduction and conclusion.



Language and Style

An established, formal style is maintained throughout. Precise language ("gullible," "categorize," "cluelessness") and domain-specific vocabulary ("perspective," "characterization," "theme") are used to explain the topic.



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.

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The short story, "The Open Window," by Saki (H. H. Munro), is a story of deception. It is about an nervous man named Framton Nuttel, who takes his sister's advice to meet new people when he arrives to the country. He meets Vera and her aunt, Mrs. Sappleton. Vera tells Framton that Mrs. Sappleton's husband and brothers were killed during a hunting trip three years ago and to Framton's surprise, her husband and brothers arrive back from that hunting trip a little while later, making Mr. Nuttel run away in fear. In the story, Saki makes the character's personalities show that they can trick Mr. Nuttel. Point of view is also used to build the theme of deception because each character has a different point of view.

The story says Vera is "self-possessed", which means that she can control her feelings to help her to lie. She tells Mr. Nuttel a believable lie about her aunt's brother, husband and dog all dying and since he doesn't know anyone, he doesn't know it's not true. She fakes she's concerned making her voice loses "its self-possessed note" and become "falteringly human" (Saki). When Mrs. Sappleton's husband and brothers come home from their hunting trip, Vera, "was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes" (Saki). Even though the reader learns that Vera was lying, she manages to trick Mr. Nuttel throughout the story by keeping up her act. He believes the story Vera tells because he is a gullible character and hardly asks questions any questions. Mrs. Sappleton is chatty. She is unaware of his scaredness, so Vera uses Mrs. Sappleton's cluelessness to help her story. When she meets Mr. Nuttel, Mrs. Sappleton says, "my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way" (Saki). Mrs. Sappleton clearly does not know about

Vera's lies. Characterization is used to back up the theme of deception in many ways.

Point of view is important. Vera knows everyone's perspective and is the puppet master who has the strings to her family and Mr. Nuttel. She knows how to mess around with the way that the other people think. Vera knows that he doesn't know the truth because Vera asked him, "Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" (Saki) She guessed that he would be scared if the family returned after she had told him that they died three years before. She also knew that her family would think it was weird when they saw Mr. Nuttel run away for no reason. Mrs. Sappleton and the three men share a similar point of view about everything. They do not know that Vera has told Mr. Nuttel a crazy story, and so when they saw Mr. Nuttel run out the door all of a sudden, they thought that he had a mental issues. Vera also says that Mr. Nuttel has a fear of dogs, so these factors join together to make the family categorize him as a maniac.

People should see a situation from different point of views to make a decision. Each character's point of view was a factor to the theme of deception. The characters have specific traits that play a part in a lie, then they add to how much someone would believe a lie. Mr. Nuttel's nerves, Vera's ability to spin good lies and control her emotions, and Mrs. Sappleton's cluelessness all were an important part of the story, and all of these things helped Saki to write a story that was full of interesting and believable trickery.