



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Question Everything

Questions Help Us Learn



Plot and Ideas

An engaging, plausible context is established in the exposition and helps to develop the plot (“I think that anyone with a question deserves to ask it, no matter how simple the answer may seem to others”). The central idea (“Many people have a fear of asking a simple question”) appropriately leads toward a logical climax (“I was still nervous, but I told him the problem on the worksheet”) and effective resolution.



Development and Elaboration

The setting is clear (high school) and interesting characters are introduced to engage the reader and advance the storyline (“Mr. White ended up changing my life with his words of advice”). Meaningful dialogue reveals the central idea of the narrative (“My teacher walked up to my desk and said, ‘There’s no such thing as a dumb question’”).



Organization and Sequencing

Pacing effectively supports the development of the story and helps to establish a clear beginning, middle, and end. The resolution not only offers closure but also reflects on the course of events (“[Wanting to know more] is what allows us to accomplish all of the amazing things we have today. If people stopped asking questions, we would never know what the future could be”).



Language and Style

First person point of view is well-established and maintained throughout the narrative. Sentences are varied and the writing builds the voices of the characters (“Mr. White ended up changing my life”) and the narrator (“Who cares what other people think?”). The language sets the tone for the story (“I was so afraid of asking questions that my grades started to drop... But that changed my first year in high school”).



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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Notes

Why are we so happy to make fun of others for asking questions? Many people have a fear of asking a simple question or saying the "correct" answer. High school can be scary because they might be made fun of or just have a fear of talking in front of new people. But we all ask ourselves if it's a question that will make us seem like we're not paying attention or that we're dumb. I think that anyone with a question deserves to ask it, no matter how simple the answer may seem to others.

I have had many experiences in the past where I have had to ask a question, but could not bring myself to do it. I didn't want my friends to judge me or laugh for not knowing the correct answer. Or that the teacher did not think I was not paying attention. I was so afraid of asking questions that my grades started to drop more and more. But that changed my first year in high school. I was talking to one of my friends about a math worksheet. He was telling me that he didn't understand that same problem, so we were both stuck on it. I was starting to get sweaty and nervous the way I sometimes got in math. I raised my hand, but then I put my hand down and said never mind because it's a dumb question. My teacher walked up to my desk and said, "There's no such thing as a dumb question." I was still nervous, but I told him the problem on the worksheet and Mr. White showed me step by step of how to do that problem. He was nice and really helped me out. I stayed with him and asked him other questions and he showed me many other, easier ways to do the worksheet. I started understanding the worksheets that year and started getting good grades in math class. I even showed my friends what Mr. White taught me to do and helped them.

Mr. White ended up changing my life with his words of advice. I started to ask

more questions in other classes. Who cares what other people think? Wanting to know more is one of the most important aspects of humankind. It is what allows us to accomplish all of the amazing things we have today. If people stopped asking questions, we would never know what the future could be.



Notes
