



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

You've Got a Friend in Me

What is a True Friend?



Plot and Ideas

The narrator introduces a context for the story ("First, it all started when this tall girl named Taylor started to harass me here at school"), which acts as a foundation for the rest of the story. Sufficient description for the conflict is included that builds toward the climax and resolution.



Development and Elaboration

A clear setting (school, bathroom) and developed characters (Molly, Tara, and Taylor) are established. These pieces of the narrative, along with small pieces of descriptive dialogue ("Molly, why are you coming from that way now? Wouldn't it be easier to take the back hallway?") work together to advance the storyline and reveal the central idea ("She is a true friend and is always there when I need her").



Organization and Sequencing

The narrative incorporates transitions ("First," "Over the next few days," and "Just then") to develop a sequence of events that is effectively paced. These transitions and the pacing help to establish an easily understandable beginning, middle, and end for the narrative.



Language and Style

The narrative contains clear sentences and shows some general variety in sentence structure. Descriptive words and sensory language are incorporated to convey the characters and setting of the story ("She didn't listen though and continued to threaten me, backing me up against the wall" and "She ran over to me like a superhero").



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.

You've Got a Friend in Me



What is a True Friend?

Have you ever met someone who changed your life forever? Well, I have. Her name is Tara. Tara and I met in 3rd grade when she moved here from Cincinnati. I was one of the first to make friends with her and we have been inseparable ever since. Tara's always been there for me, but this year, she proved herself to be an even better friend than I thought she was.

First, it all started when this tall girl named Taylor started to mess with me here at school.

It started small with her saying things like "hey ugly girl, why don't you look in the mirror sometime?"

What she said hurt, but I tried to ignore it. It only got worse though. She started cornering me in the bathrooms at school. She scared a lot of people, so the other girls in the bathroom would just turn and walk away without saying anything. It got so bad that I started taking a different route to class just to avoid her.

"Molly, why are you coming from that way now? Wouldn't it be easier to take the back hallway?" Tara asked one day.

I didn't want to tell her what was going on. I was kind of ashamed that I couldn't take care of myself, so I lied about it. "No, this way is quicker," I said.

Over the next few days it all got worse. Taylor started texting me rude things and threatening to beat me up. I even pretended to be sick one day to stay home! Thankfully my mom bought it. But the next day at school Taylor caught me again in the bathroom.

"Oh I see you are back, ugly girl," she yelled right in my face. I was terrified.

"Just let me leave," I said back nervously.

She didn't listen though and continued to threaten me, backing me up against the wall.

I was sure she was going to beat me up so bad. I tried to think of ways to get out, but she had me trapped.

Just then, Tara walked into the bathroom and saw Taylor and me. She ran over to me like a superhero.

She told Taylor off and said "if you ever do something like this again you will be sorry!"

Taylor yelled "Whatever, losers!" and left the bathroom..

After comforting me from that craziness in the bathroom, Tara convinced me to go to the office to talk to the principal. I was scared that Taylor would come back at me for telling on her, but I just had to do it. Tara convinced me that I was strong and I could stand up for myself in better ways. After I talked to the principal, I felt better and knew that I could count on Tara for anything. She helped me stand up to a bully. She is a true friend and is always there when I need her.

Since that day, Taylor has not bothered me anymore, although I do get dirty looks sometimes in the hallway.