



Advanced | Exemplar Essay

You've Got a Friend in Me

That's What Friends are For



Plot and Ideas

The narrative is highly engaging and introduces a clear setting and characters. A topic is clearly introduced ("Deep down inside, though, I knew I needed to practice on my hook shot, and I vowed to practice outside my house as soon as I got home. I knew I would need help").



Development and Elaboration

The narrative uses techniques such as dialogue, description, and pacing to develop the topic and characters. The theme of friendship is evident throughout the narrative ("Cole, that's what friends are for" and "Afterward, I knew from that moment on that I could always count on JJ for help").



Organization and Sequencing

The organization is clear and coherent within this narrative. It effectively incorporates pacing to support the development of the story. A variety of transitions are used ("Afterward," "At last," "Meanwhile," and "At this point") to convey a sequence of events within the narrative.



Language and Style

In this narrative, word choice could be varied a bit more, but the writing showcases skill in sentence variety. The writing is interesting and uses descriptive language that is relevant to the topic ("Immediately, our coach came up to us after the game with tears of happiness").



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



That's What Friends are For

Around a year ago, my basketball team won our playoff game, and that meant that we had made it to finals. Even though I was thrilled, this meant I would have 3 whole days to prepare for the game of a lifetime. I was so proud of my team, the Bulldogs. Immediately, our coach came up to us after the game with tears of happiness. "I am so proud of you guys. Great job team! You really showed them who's boss!" he exclaimed.

In my head, I told myself, "I am ready for the finals." Deep down inside, though, I knew I needed to practice on my hook shot, and I vowed to practice outside my house as soon as I got home. I knew I would need help.

After that thought hit me, I called my best friend on the team, JJ, who was a great shooter. He agreed to come over and help me practice. It would help him out too, since he was on the team. When he arrived, we ran out to my old raggedy driveway ready to practice on my old basketball hoop.

At this point, I wanted JJ to know how much it meant to me. "JJ, I really appreciate you coming over to help," I told him.

"Cole, that's what friends are for," he replied with a friendly smile.

About that time, I realized I was going about my hook shot all wrong.

Seeing my frustration, JJ suggested, "You need to face the basket sideways so that your shooting hand dribbling the ball is facing away from the basket." Knowing his advice made sense, I tried again. The ball flew in the air and I was for sure it would go in. We both looked at the ball in the air for what seemed forever. However, it made its way towards the basket, and then...nothing. The ball hit the backboard

and bounced back to me.

Next, JJ tried coaching me through. "Try bending your arm slightly when you shoot," he instructed me. "Just try again man. You got this," he added. Breathing in deeply, I tried again, and this time bent my arm slightly as he instructed before I thrust the ball into the air. Swoosh, the ball went into the old net.

"Wow!" I exclaimed in response. "I can't believe it," I added.

"Well practice does make perfect. You should keep trying until you have it completely down, then we can call it a day," replied JJ.

First thing the next day, JJ arrived and I was already outside practicing my bank shot. "Hey Cole! How's that hook shot?" he asked.

"It's going great! I've not missed a hook shot since taking your advice," I said.

"But, I seem to be having trouble with my bank shot now, and I'm normally good at those," I added nervously.

"Aw, you're probably just nervous about finals, just focus like you usually do," JJ said.

Right away, I focused on the ball, the net, the motion and technique. I thrust the ball up, took a deep breath, and the ball flew through the air, hit the backboard, and made its way into the net. I knew I had this game in the bag now.

Meanwhile, JJ reassured me, "You got this."

Finally, the following day, game time had arrived. As the game got started, things were going smoothly, and each team had its pros and cons. By the fourth quarter, the other team was up by 2, with 18 seconds left in the game. I knew I had to hustle and make this happen, not only for myself but for my team. As the game continued, I finally got ahold of the ball. After all this time, I knew this was the moment of truth. I dribbled down the court to our side, with thoughts racing through my mind. Just then, JJ's words stood out to me. "You got this," repeated in my mind.

With my heart banging away in my chest, I wanted to make my winning hook

shot, but I was surrounded by the other team, and there wasn't time. Suddenly, I knew I had to go for the 3 pointer to win the game, but I hadn't practiced this with JJ, and I was a little rusty. I dribbled, and then pushed the ball into the air. It started spinning around in the air, and I couldn't breathe. Holding our breath, the crowd was dead quiet...we waited. The next thing I knew, the ball went into the net. In a rush, the crowd roared with cheers from the stands, and I could hear my family chanting my name.

At last, I was so relieved to win this game. Without a doubt, I realized that night that true friends will help you when you need help. Afterward, I knew from that moment on that I could always count on JJ for help.