



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

A Rough Road Ahead

A Rough Road to Bike



Clarity and Focus

There is a clear, focused, and effective central idea that addresses the demands of the prompt (“The setting affects him in a variety of ways, as the rough journey tests the cyclist’s strength and stamina”). The essay engages the audience, and the details throughout appropriately relate to the central idea (“The author uses descriptive language to share how challenging the setting was for the cyclist”).



Development

The essay uses well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient quoted evidence that directly supports the thesis (“Over one, long, crippling hill, a building came into view! This particular passage talks about how brutal the cyclist’s journey is”). The audience’s understanding of the topic is addressed with concrete examples and purposeful explanations of how the quotes connect to the central idea (“In this passage, the theme was worrisome”).



Organization

The clear organizational structure and transitions convey the ideas effectively (“in the beginning,” “in conclusion”). While proficient, the resolution could benefit from additional, more precise details to connect the setting to the cyclist’s journey in a deeper way (“All of the pieces of evidence show great detail of the setting and invite the reader to take the place of the cyclist and live in his shoes for the moment”).



Language and Style

The essay has an established, formal style that is maintained throughout, with some examples of a creative voice (“the old codgers”). Varied sentence structure and domain-specific vocabulary address the complexity of the topic (“The author shows us details of the setting and he adds quotes like ‘Sandblasted,’ ‘Rolling Hills,’ and ‘Ghost town’ as he lets the reader imagine the details to the story”).



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.

A Rough Road Ahead



Notes

A Rough Road to Bike

Cyclists face many obstacles and challenges on any road they ride on. Some being really challenging and others being pretty easy, but all of them they have to take on with determination. In the story "A Rough Road Ahead" by Joe Kurmaskie, the cyclist listens to a group of old men that tell him about a short cut. The cyclist ends up lost and finds himself with no water and running into many challenging obstacles. The setting affects him in a variety of ways, as the rough journey tests the cyclist's strength and stamina.

In the beginning of the story the cyclist decided to get advice on how to get to Yosemite quicker. The old codgers who gave the cyclist his advice were very detailed and sure about themselves. When they were explaining the short cut they told the cyclist about the breezy jaunts and the beautiful towns and historic landmarks from when they were young. The setting they are telling the cyclist about is very graceful and beautiful which caused the cyclist to want to go there for himself. When the cyclist heard about this beautiful setting/environment, he was affected by it because it caused him to choose that path, which was the beginning of all of his troubles.

The author uses descriptive language to share how challenging the setting was for the cyclist. The second example is when the article states "Over one, long, crippling hill, a building came into view." This particular passage talks about how brutal the cyclist's journey is. With this textual information, the reader can really see the poor cyclist, struggling on a hot summer day with a grueling long hill leading to desolation.

About twenty miles up the road, the cyclist came to a fork of sorts. All that remained there was a ramshackle shed, rusty pumps, and a corral. To the cyclist,



this was absolutely horrific. By this point, he knew that he could be in trouble. He was officially desperate in the desert. "This sight was troubling. I had been hitting my water bottles pretty regularly, and I was traveling through the high deserts of California in June." In this passage, the theme was worrisome. The author shows us details of the setting and he adds quotes like "Sandblasted," "Rolling Hills," and "Ghost town" as he lets the reader imagine the details to the story. The cyclist knows that at the pace he was going mixed with the beaming summer sun of the Golden State, a recipe for disaster was brewing. If he was going to survive, something needed to make a turn for the best and quickly.

Almost giving up on life as he mentions that "the birds would pick me clean", he finally sees something. Almost like a gift from a higher spirit the biker rounded the bend and found himself at Gary and Wilber's Fish Camp. This setting, with a modern bathroom and water, was heaven on earth to the cyclist. He was so happy he wanted to "kiss them, and buy some bait - any bait, even though I didn't own a rod or reel." The biker learned from his bad decisions, but made a great story on his journey to Yosemite. He went through dehydration, fatigue, and learns to be grateful to others and not take anything for granted. In conclusion, this article is very interesting and provides an almost picture perfect description of the different settings (the heat, the hills, the loneliness, the final ending place). All of the pieces of evidence show great detail of the setting and invite the reader to take the place of the cyclist and live in his shoes for the moment.