



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

America Singing

Different Types of Americans



Claim and Focus

Overall, this essay provides a clear and arguable claim for the reader (“He wrote his poem in response to Walt Whitman’s poem and builds on it by talking about the same topic and things but only focusing on one person instead of a lot of people”). Additionally, the essay addresses all parts of the prompt by mentioning topic and word choice.



Analysis and Evidence

The essay addresses a healthy balance of evidence from both texts, and explanations of those pieces of evidence are attempted. Some of the essay does focus on summary of the poems, but there is enough analysis attempted throughout the essay that it balances the summary.



Organization

This essay includes very clear examples of an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The writer of this essay also provides meaningful transitions between paragraphs (“There are other things that show how Langston Hughes’s poem builds on Walt Whitman’s poem”), which help the reader connect ideas within and among paragraphs.



Language and Style

While this essay seems to stray from a strictly formal style, it does maintain a focus on prompt-specific vocabulary and generally addresses the complexity of analyzing the connection between the two poems. The essay exhibits some errors in punctuation throughout the sentences, but those errors do not impede the reader’s understanding.



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.

America Singing



Notes

Different Types of Americans

When Walt Whitman first wrote "I Hear America Singing" he probably didn't think anyone would use it as some inspiration. But Langston Hughes did do that when he made the poem "I, Too, Sing America". He wrote his poem in response to Walt Whitman's poem and builds on it by talking about the same topic and things but only focusing on one person instead of a lot of people.

The two poems have a similar topic, which is people in America working hard. The thing that is different though is that Walt Whitman's poem is about a lot of people and all kinds of different jobs that they are working on, like "mechanic, carpenter, mason, boatman, and shoemaker," (Whitman) to name a few. In Langston Hughes's poem though it's about just one person instead of a lot of people. That one person might be a slave because of the way he mentions some things in the poem. For example, that person says "Tomorrow, I'll be at the table when company comes. Nobody'll dare say to me, 'Eat in the kitchen,' then." This shows that the topics are similar about different people working, but Langston Hughes's poem builds on Walt Whitman's because it focuses in on only one person who says America is about me too!

There are other things that show how Langston Hughes's poem builds on Walt Whitman's poem. Walt Whitman's poem is more joyful in the word choice, which makes it like he is celebrating all of the different people and jobs that they have. He says "I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear," and means that all of the different workers are happy and singing and doing their jobs well. He also talks about how in the day people sing by working but in the night people sing by partying. He says this at the end of the poem when he says "at night the party of

young fellows, robust, friendly, Singing with open mouths their strong melodious song." Langston Hughes's poem builds on this by only focusing on the one person, and he is pointing out that even though he is different from all of the people that Walt Whitman talks about he is still from America and should be singing his own song too. He even says "I, too, sing America". This choice of words shows that this person isn't any different from the other people, except that he was left out of the first poem. He is still a worker and is singing his working song too.

Those things help to show that Langston Hughes wrote his poem about Walt Whitman's poem in a way to add to it. It is about the same topic and talks about the same things but builds more on it to be about just one person in particular.