



Developing | Exemplar Essay

Angela's Ashes

Poverty and Perseverance



Claim and Focus

While common themes across both texts are identified in the introduction, they are not tied to a clear claim about the authors' strategies ("The theme of the passages is poverty and perseverance"). The essay maintains focus on details of the texts but does not make clear connections to the techniques used by the authors to develop the common themes.



Analysis and Evidence

Evidence from each text is provided unevenly, as details from McCourt's text receive more attention than Petry's. Though evidence from both texts is included for the theme of perseverance, analysis of the authors' devices is underdeveloped.



Organization

Related ideas are proximal (poverty and perseverance), but minimal transitions make the relationships between ideas difficult to follow. The essay offers a one-sentence introduction and a two-sentence conclusion, but neither are adequately developed.



Language and Style

A formal style is attempted, but vocabulary inconsistently addresses the complexity of the topic ("theme" and "point of view" are the only domain-specific examples; "poverty" and "perseverance" are the only precise word choices). Sentence structure is not particularly varied or complex.



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.

Angela's Ashes



Notes

Poverty and Perseverance

The theme of the passages is poverty and perseverance. In Frank McCourt's "Angela's Ashes" it shows poverty with a sick mother and a poor family. The author has to steal from people to help his family to survive. McCourt was very concerned about food and says "We don't laugh long, there is no more bread and we're hungry, the four of us." The author uses the children and their innocence to show how poverty can drive people to crime. In Ann Petry's "The Street" it shows the struggles of poverty from the mother's point of view. It shows how Lutie has to struggle in the cold to find a new place to live for her family. These characters also show their perseverance because Frank does not live the most comfortable life, but he does not complain. He does whatever it takes to provide for his family and stole on two different occasions. First he stole bread and lemonade from Kathleen then he stole food from another house. Lutie also shows perseverance and determination by doing whatever it took to reach her goal. The harsh wind was blowing very hard, but it did not stop her from finding a place to stay. Two works that show people struggling to survive are Frank McCourt's "Angela's Ashes" and Ann Petry's "The Street." The authors show them facing the challenges of harsh environments and how poverty can require perseverance.