



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Stand Alone

Standing Up to Friends



Plot and Ideas

The storyline establishes a plausible context and opens with a strong exposition that supports the plot. The narrative provides adequate description that enhances the central idea ("I finally knew what it felt like to stand alone") and builds naturally to a climax and resolution ("I kept going over in my head what I should do. Should I warn Kelsie and risk my friendship?").



Development and Elaboration

The narrative establishes a clear setting ("My heart started to pound as I entered the lunchroom") while developing characters that advance the story. The dialogue is engaging and brings the narrative to life ("Don't bother sitting with us anymore!").



Organization and Sequencing

The sequence of events shows strength and incorporates pacing to develop and support the story. The narrative uses transitions and phrases to signal shifts in time and setting ("to the outside world," "once Claudia found out," and "in the end"). The conclusion includes some reflection ("I knew deep down that they were not true friends"), but additional clarification and development would offer both closure and further reflection.



Language and Style

The narrative uses descriptive words to create imagery and convey the setting and characters. Writing is engaging in a way that builds the voices of characters and the narrator ("Although it hurt to lose what I thought were my friends... I also knew what I did was the right thing to do, even though I had to stand alone").



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.

Stand Alone



Standing Up to Friends

My heart started to pound as I entered the lunchroom. My palms were sweaty, and my mind was swirling with thoughts. All of my friends had turned against me. I finally knew what it felt like to stand alone.

First, let me explain why I felt this way. Normally, my days at school went by without any problems. I did well in all of my classes, had a lot of friends, was social, played sports, and participated in clubs. To the outside world, my life at school seemed great, and to be honest, it truly was. I loved my friends, but that soon changed.

“Hey look over there, it’s that weird girl, Kelsie” my friend Claudia said to me one day.

“Let’s mess with her,” she added.

Every single person in the group thought it was a great idea, except me. I didn’t speak up though. I was afraid of what would happen.

Claudia and the gang went over to Kelsie, the girl they thought was weird in the hallway. Just then Claudia said “Hey Kelsie, do you want to hang out with us at lunch?”

“Really? Yes, I’d love to,” Kelsie said with enthusiasm. I could see the excitement in her eyes. I wanted to tell her it was all a joke. Ultimately, I remained silent and walked away with the group.

The whole rest of the morning Claudia and the rest of my friends talked about how they planned to embarrass Kelsie at lunch.

“So, here’s the plan,” Claudia said quietly in class so no one would hear. “When

Kelsie comes over to the table, we will all pretend we have no idea why she came over to sit down," she said. "Then, I will yell loudly at her," she continued.

I felt uneasy as she explained the plan. I knew deep down this was not right.

"Does this sound good to you Rachel?" she asked me. I gulped and nodded with hesitation.

I spent the rest of the class period quietly panicking about this plan that Claudia had come up with. I didn't pay attention to anything else. I kept going over in my head what I should do. Should I warn Kelsie and risk my friendship? Should I remain quiet and continue on like nothing? This was difficult.

In the end, I decide to tell Kelsie about the plan before lunch came. She was grateful, and that made me happy. Once Claudia found out that I told, she turned the rest of the group against me.

"Don't bother sitting with us anymore!" she screamed at me.

Although it hurt to lose what I thought were my friends, I knew deep down that they were not true friends. I also knew what I did was the right thing to do, even though I had to stand alone.