



Advanced | Exemplar Essay

A Story About Patience

Patience: The Key to Success



Plot and Ideas

This narrative has an effective storyline that is engaging and built on an exposition that supports the plot. A purposeful conflict is stated (“Learning to wait was its own challenge, but I didn’t fully understand my mother’s wisdom until the summer I turned 10 years old”), and a central idea is present in the narrative. The plot and ideas fully address the demands of the prompt.



Development and Elaboration

The narrative establishes a clear setting while introducing interesting, engaging characters throughout. Significant dialogue and descriptions enhance the narrative fully (“Colby, you are responsible for taking care of Thunder. Puppies require a lot of time and effort to train. Do you think you have the patience for that?”).



Organization and Sequencing

There is a clear sequence of events with a strong beginning, middle, and end. The narrative techniques support the development of the story. Effective transitions are used to further the narrative (“With a scowl on my face” and “Over the next week”). The resolution offers closure to the course of events (“This lesson about patience is one that has helped me in many ways as I grew older, and I’m grateful that my mom (and Thunder) had patience with me as I learned it”).



Language and Style

The narrative uses descriptive language to create imagery throughout the story (“Our living room was an explosion of rainbow-colored shreds of paper and ribbons” and “I walked into the living room like a prisoner on death row, waiting to meet my doom”). The voice of the characters and a consistent point of view are present throughout (“Just when I thought I could relax...”).



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 Story About Patience



Patience: The Key to Success

One of my mother's favorite pieces of wisdom is: "Patience is the key to success." She would find a way to include it almost all of our conversations. As a result, I thought that being patient only meant I had to wait for something. However, learning to wait was its own challenge, but I didn't fully understand my mother's wisdom until the summer I turned 10 years old. That was the summer of Thunder.

For years I had been begging my parents to let me have a pet. "Not yet, Colby," they would always say. "We're not sure you have the patience for it." I was about to give up when my 10th birthday rolled around. Our living room was an explosion of rainbow-colored shreds of paper and ribbons, but after I had opened all of the gifts, there was still no puppy. As I hung my head in disappointment, I heard the clickety-clack sounds of paws on a wooden floor in the hallway! Suddenly, a small, golden beagle with big brown eyes came barreling through the crumbled wrapping paper strewn around the room and tackled me. My face lit up with excitement. I squealed with delight. "Finally! Thank you! I'm gonna call you Thunder, boy!" After a few minutes of rolling around and playing with Thunder, my mom's tone got serious. "Colby, you are responsible for taking care of Thunder. Puppies require a lot of time and effort to train. Do you think you have the patience for that?" I promised my mom that yes, I had patience, and that I was ready to do everything Thunder needed. But truthfully, on the inside, I was a little worried.

Immediately, the trouble started. The next morning, I carefully set out his food and water dish on a mat in the kitchen. Thunder was so excited that he spilled it everywhere, and he peed right on the floor! My mom just smiled and raised her eyebrow in an "I told you so!" kind of way. Remembering what she said about having patience, I knew I had to be the one to clean it up. Once the

kitchen was sparkling clean from Thunder's messes, I took Thunder outside. While we were playing, he ran around and sniffed absolutely everything, and he "piddled" everywhere we went! After an hour of this, I realized I needed to take him outside so he would stop making a mess, but even then, he was preoccupied with everything else, and never actually went to the bathroom.

The next day, things started out well, but my patience was quickly tested. I woke up with Thunder licking my face, his cold, wet nose giving me morning kisses. "Thunder," I said, "time to potty!" I took him directly outside to use the bathroom and he peed in the yard. I was so proud of myself! "Good boy, Thunder!" We went for a walk around the block to celebrate. We came home and ate breakfast (which was still a mess and yes, I cleaned it up), and then I got online to game with friends. I figured that Thunder would come and get me if he needed to go out. After one quick game, I smelled something funny, and when I turned around, there was a big puddle on the floor. "Thunder! NO!" I was so mad, I carried him outside and yelled at him. "If you have to go to the bathroom, you do it out here! You're outside now, so go ahead, go!" He just stared at me.

With a scowl on my face, I stormed back into the house with Thunder. My mom was working on her laptop, but she noticed my expression. "You look frustrated, Colby," she said sincerely, but I could tell she already knew why. "Mom, I love Thunder, and I am trying to take care of him, but he won't use the bathroom outside. I don't know what to do." My mom smiled and said, "Colby, we told you raising a dog would not be easy." She gave me a hug and added, "You must have patience with him. Take him outside often. When you're outside, give him time, and reward him when he does what you want." I exhaled a frustrated sigh and said, "I know, it's just... harder than I thought it would be." As I carried Thunder upstairs to my room, I thought about what she said. "Is this what she meant by 'Patience is a virtue?' Because it doesn't come easy?" I decided I would need to come up with a new approach.

Over the next week, I worked with Thunder constantly. I started each day by taking him outside right away. I waited patiently as he sniffed the flower beds and ran around the yard, and then finally went to the bathroom. As a consequence, I rewarded him

with a treat. Every 30 minutes, I would take him for another walk. In the same way, I waited patiently until he relieved himself. Even if it was just a little piddle, I gave him a treat. This approach took a lot of time and energy, but I was committed, consistent, and patient. With each passing day, I was able to space out our walks, and Thunder was having fewer accidents in the house. Almost three weeks to the day of my birthday party, I noticed another big change in Thunder's behavior. When he woke up in the morning, he ran to the door, then over to me, then back to door. "Do you want to go out, boy?" I exclaimed, jumping out of bed. When outside, he dashed to the big, leafy tree, urinated, and then ran over to me for his treat. Also, I didn't have to take him out every hour for a walk. He was starting to tell ME when he needed to go out. By the end of that first month, he was showing us that he was learning the routine.

Just when I thought I could relax though, I heard my mom yell, "Colby! Get out here!" Uh oh. I walked into the living room like a prisoner on death row, waiting to meet my doom. "Thunder peed on carpet." "What?? Are you serious? But we were doing so well!" I was so frustrated, I felt tears swelling up in my eyes and a lump in my throat. Even though I wanted to scream at Thunder, I knew that wouldn't do any good. I needed to show him patience instead. I firmly told him, "NO!" repeatedly while showing him the the puddle, and then I cleaned up the mess. Afterwards, I took him outside for a long walk, and reinforcing our routine, gave him a treat when he peed. When I got back home, my mom called me into the living room again. "Oh no, what now?" I thought. "Colby, I'm really proud of you," she said. "The way you handled Thunder's accident shows how responsible you are and how much you've grown. You've really proved that you have the patience to care for a pet."

In the end, I realized that my mom was right about Thunder and about life. Patience is a virtue, and having patience is about how you handle yourself, and others, even when you feel like you are so frustrated. It's about committing yourself to a long-term goal, and staying calm and focused on it, no matter what. This lesson about patience is one that has helped me in many ways as I grew older, and I'm grateful that my mom (and Thunder) had patience with me as I learned it.