

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Student Sample AA

All You Need/Want to Know

I know a lot about hotels. You may not think there's lots to know but trust me there is. While going on vacation consider my advice so you will have a place to stay that makes you feel at home. You'll want the place you're staying to fit your needs as well as your wants.

To start your search for the perfect hotel think of some requirements. Maybe you're handicapped and need easy access for getting around. Or, could it be possible that you're traveling with a large group of people and need a big room? Make sure ahead of time that they have rooms that are the right size. I'm sure you need it to be clean and plentiful with things such as shampoo, towels, soap, and conditioner.

After that look for luxuries. If you're on vacation, enjoy it! If you love to swim or bring your kids look for a place with a pool. Maybe you want to work out, find a hotel with a fitness room. Free breakfast or internet connection are also always great options.

Hopefully my knowledge can help you find the best hotel for your next vacation. One that provides necessary things plus includes all your favorite extras.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample AA

Holistic Score: 8 (passing)

When we combine both holistic readers' scores, this essay receives two 4's, which means it passes. This sample is a focused and interesting paper, with relevant details and a satisfactory organizational structure. The lighthearted voice makes it fun to read. Conventions are solid and show the beginning of some stylistic sentence structures. This paper is almost "above average" (a 9 or 10 paper); one more draft with an eye for further idea development and smoother structure may have pushed it to the next level.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=3 O=3 V=4 C=3

Ideas: The author of this piece is an expert on hotel selection and wrote this essay to give readers advice on this topic. There are two main suggestions, to "think of some requirements" and to "look for luxuries." For the first suggestion, the writer gives examples of possible special or basic requirements that people may have. For the second suggestion, the writer lists some "options" that will make the trip more enjoyable. The problem is that the development basically is just a listing of examples and options. Rather than simply saying, "find a hotel with a fitness room," this writer might be coached to go into more detail about this (perhaps painting a picture or sharing a personal experience) and the other components of a great hotel room.

Organization: This piece follows basic essay organization, with an introduction, body, and conclusion. The first sentence definitely does not grab a reader's attention and this writer might benefit from a lesson on essay leads. On the other hand, the strong simplicity of the opening ("I know a lot about hotels.") is functional and clearly establishes the writer's authority. The rest of the introduction supports this while simultaneously informing the audience what the essay will be about. The body paragraph transitions "To start" and "After that" work well with this essay because they show how one must prioritize the hotel search. Within the paragraphs, the writer repeats and varies words such as *maybe* and *if* to share new details. With a little work, this student will become adept at using parallel constructions. The conclusion is not memorable, but does the job of tying things back to the beginning so that the essay feels finished.

Voice: Good writing is often the result of a topic with which a student has personal experience; this student clearly chose to write about something that is both fun and familiar to him/her. This paper reads like a lighthearted guide for travelers. It is engaging and often playful, perhaps because the writer must have had actual readers in mind when writing this piece: "You'll want the place you're staying to fit your needs as well as your wants." Students should not always write in the second person, addressing the audience in this way, but in this case the prompt and the student's chosen focus (on hotels) invited him/her to write lots of imperative sentences (commanding readers to "look for luxuries") and the occasional question ("could it be possible that you're traveling with a large group of people and need a big room?") to keep the reader hooked into the piece and feeling that the author actually cares that the audience learns something by reading it.

Conventions: In the third paragraph, the writer shows promise with sentence variety. There are sentences of different structures (simple, complex, compound), beginning in different ways (or effectively repeating, as in "If you're on vacation" and "If you love to swim"), and building upon one another fluidly. The only out-of-place sentence is "Maybe you want to work out, find a hotel with a fitness room." Creating a better compound sentence here would have made this a model paragraph for varying sentences. There are a few spelling (*luxories*) and usage ("their is") errors that this student may have caught with better editing. The final sentence is a fragment that prevents the conclusion from being as strong as it otherwise might have been.

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Student Sample BB

There are many things that I know about Lusy. One thing that I know is that she is very special in a way that know one would understand. Lusy was trained by me because I wanted to train her my way and knowbody else's. As far as anyone knows she turned out to be a very talented, lovable, and and loyal pet. The many things she loved was banana baby food, yogurt treats, and chicken nuggets. She also has dry food that she has everyday, but she likes chicken better. Her most favorite thing in the world is when I gave her a bath with watermelon shampoo. There also many other things that I know about Lusy like she is a pet rat, but most of it is between Lusy and I as best friends. Thank you Lusy for everything and rest in peace.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample BB

Holistic Score: 5 (not passing)

When we combine both holistic readers' scores, this essay receives a five, which puts it two points from passing. The strongest element in the writing is the voice (because this writer clearly cares about the topic). There is a focus on the pet Lusy, and some of the details are further developed. However, at times there is no structure and the writer seems to be rambling about the topic. Also, although much of the conventions are functional, the tense and usage errors do impede the reader's understanding of the writing.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=2 O=2 V=3 C=2

Ideas: There are two positive elements to this paper's idea development. The first is that it all focused on only one subject, the writer's pet Lusy. The second is that there are some specific details like "watermelon shampoo" that begin to paint a picture. Unfortunately, this piece is just that: a beginning. The author has basically listed a collection of random details about the rat's training, eating, and hygiene. A reader may have many questions while reading the piece. For example, what is the "very special way" that Lusy was special? Why can't others understand this? These questions may pique a reader's interest at the beginning, but leave him/her feeling unsatisfied when they go unanswered at the end. Also, one wonders, until the very end, whether Lusy is alive or dead. Some work with verb tense (see "Conventions" comments) may have helped this problem.

Organization: It is difficult to follow the ideas in this piece because it lacks structure. The writer does begin to organize the ideas; for example, the details about Lusy's favorite foods are placed together, but sometimes one is unsure about whether or not they relate. An example of this would be the second, third, and fourth sentences. Is Lusy special *because of* her training, or is the fact that the writer trained her simply one of many reasons that she is special? Work with transitions (and even paragraphing) would help alleviate confusion. In this paper, the author also does not mention that Lusy is a rat until the second-to-last sentence. Sometimes authors do this sort of unveiling for dramatic effect and that may be what this author was attempting to do. If this was the case, though, this writer needed to work on ordering the details. As it is, couched in between "There also many other things that I know about Lusy" and "most of it is between Lusy and I," it gets lost. It appears that the writer simply forgot to mention this fact sooner so tacked it on at the end.

Voice: Voice is the strongest trait in this paper. Words like *special*, *favorite*, and *love*, and the discussion of secrets "between Lusy and I" could be used to describe the relationship between any two best friends. They demonstrate the author's dedication to Lusy. Judging from the loving tone of this piece, Lusy truly meant (and continues to mean) something to this person. One skill for this writer to work on is audience awareness. While the writer does show dedication to the topic, there does not seem to be a commitment to getting the reader to care as much about Lusy as the writer does.

Conventions: One of the first things that stand out about this paper is that it is one paragraph. Paragraphing work may have also helped this writer's development and organization scores. Another focus for this writer may be on verb tense. Throughout the piece, the writer writes sentences such as "The many things she loved was banana baby food, yogurt treats, and chicken nuggets. She also has dry food that she has everyday, but she likes chicken better." In the first sentence (past tense), it would appear that Lusy is not longer living, but then in the second (present tense), she seems to be around still today. This writer also shifts tense within sentences, as in, "Her most favorite thing in the world is when I gave her a bath with watermelon shampoo." Such switching is confusing to the reader and actually inhibits comprehension.

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Student Sample CC

There are a lot of things I know a lot about. But there are very few things I know the most about. And one of them is an illness. It might be weird knowing a lot about an illness, but I actually have a family member that has it. It's called Muscular Dystrophy.

Muscular Dystrophy is an illness that is very rare and affects 1 child out of every 100,000 births. It usually shows symptoms at an early age, like around 2-5 years old. It normally affects boys, but it doesn't mean that girls can't get a different type of Muscular Dystrophy. There are some types where a girl can get it, and some are what only boys can get.

This illness is where your muscles get weaker and weaker as you grow up. It affects your everyday life big time. How you walk, run, breathe, exercise, and more. You walk with your toes slightly pointed inward, and on your toes. You stand up differently, and you run differently.

As you grow up, you go through stages where you lose the ability to do things. For example, losing the ability to stand up, use a walking cane or stick, using braces, and, eventually, using a wheelchair full time. You could get Physical Therapy to help, but it won't go away.

As far as cures go, there aren't any. Scientists are working on it. There are special medicines that might help, but sometimes it doesn't, and sometimes it does.

That's pretty much all I know about Muscular Dystrophy. I know that's not much, but I do know that there are a lot more for me to learn.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample CC

Holistic Score: 10 (passing)

Both holistic readers gave this essay a score of 5, giving it a combined score of a 10. This paper is “above average” and shows more control than a merely passing paper would. All of the details are clear and relevant; a reader would learn much from reading this piece. The structure is logical (detailing the development of the disease) and delivers details in the right places. The author is, for the most part, confident about and committed to the topic, and the word choices are appropriate. There are few errors in conventions and there is some sentence variety.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=4 O=4 V=3 C=3

Ideas: In the conclusion of this essay, the author states that he/she doesn’t know much about Muscular Dystrophy. In fact, for a one-page piece, this essay is full of information about the condition. This paper is focused and developed with examples, and a reader could learn many things: specific facts about Muscular Dystrophy’s occurrence, the effects and development of the condition, and the outlook for patients. The details about walking in the third paragraph are particularly descriptive.

Organization: Organization is strong for this piece because the details are so well-placed. The author deliberately orders the information beginning with birth details, following with the progression of the condition, and ending with cures and the future. The introduction is clear and starts with the general (“There are a lot of things I know a lot about. But there are very few things I know the most about.”) and then moves into the specific (“And one of them is an illness.”), which is a technique authors frequently employ to draw readers in. The conclusion, however, needs improvement. The first paragraph sets up this author as an expert on the topic of Muscular Dystrophy, and the body of the paper supports this. However, at the end, the writer loses his/her authority. A conclusion should tie things together, rather than detracting from the point. Stating “I know that there are a lot more for me to learn” helps the reader feel somewhat satisfied, but when it follows “I know that’s not much,” one feels incomplete.

Voice: The author of this piece is knowledgeable about the topic and appears to be fairly confident, until the end (with that last tentative sentence, which may be an attempt at humility). Sentences such as “It affects your everyday life big time” are almost conversational, and begin to balance out some of the facts and seriousness of this topic. The writer occasionally captures the frustrating nature of Muscular Dystrophy in describing the progression of and remedies for the condition. One suggestion for improving the overall voice score of this piece is to personalize the essay a bit more. In the beginning, the author discusses having a family member that has it, so the reader might predict that there will be some personal connection to the topic, and yet the writer is more distanced in the rest of the essay.

Conventions: In this paper, there is only one spelling error (*exercise*), and internal punctuation (comma use) is correct. However, there are several sentence fragments. Examples include the sentence, “How you walk, run, breathe, exercise, and more” and sentences that start with *but* or *and*. These errors do not detract from understanding, and in fact may show that this writer is beginning to develop a unique style. The sentence lengths vary within the piece, almost as if the author does so naturally; with a few lessons on sentence variety, the writer would probably do even better.

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Student Sample DD:

Bored students are finding new ways to stay awake in algebra class. The oldest trick in the book is passing notes. Passing notes has been extremely popular for a long time in schools, and even though it could get them in trouble, kids do it anyway. These kids have good reasons to defend; their note-passing mischief, too. They say it lets them communicate even if the teacher won't allow talking. Another student says, "We're not hurting anyone, we just want to talk." Most students claimed that they have NEVER used notes for cheating. They also added that it makes class more fun.

If you want to pass notes, but don't know how, here are some tips to successful note passing. **DO's:** Always act like you're paying attention. That way, you won't get put on the spot for slacking. Fold your notes 3 or 4 times, and toss them to your note partner while the teacher isn't looking, it's faster than handing it to them. Also, be sneaky, not suspicious. Look busy, but don't look around a lot or make it obvious. Use codenames for people in case anyone gets ahold of your notes. Plus, hide your notes when not using them. There is nothing worse than your teacher snatching them right off your desk.

DONT's: Don't let other people steal your notes. Interception usually happens mid-toss, and causes severe embarrassment. Never leave your notes unattended, because other students will steal them out of curiosity. Don't focus only on your notes. Make sure you know what you're doing so you understand your homework. Lastly, try not to draw attention to yourself. Unfold the paper quietly and be discreet.

With all of these tips you could become a note-passing master in no time at all. Remember: Note passing can be fun, but don't do it all the time. School is important so keep your grades up! Happy passings!

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample DD

Holistic Score: 11 (passing)

This paper is not exactly perfect, but it is certainly a superior sample. One holistic reader gave it a 6, the other a 5, which shows the writer's skills were seen as accomplished. In this paper, the author's development can be described as "compelling," and the entire piece is organized to help the reader get the most from the piece. Word choice is a definite strength; each word was selected purposefully and effectively. The convention mistakes are few and there are some sentences that add to the clarity to the topic and personality to the piece. This author is developing control over language and a unique style.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=5 O= 5 V=5 C=4

Ideas: This is a very well-developed and informative essay. Students who read this will definitely walk away experts on the subject of note-passing. Each of the "Do" and "Don't" suggestions is explained or developed. An example of this is the first "Do," which tells students to "act like you're paying attention" and then follows up with a sentence to explain why this is important ("That way, you won't get put on the spot for slacking"). This skill of explaining each detail helps writers address audience needs and answer potential questions; because of this, this paper might serve as a model for students who need work in development. Another strength of the development in this piece is that there is variety in the types of details. There are student opinions, quotes, examples, and explanation.

Organization: This paper has an engaging opening, establishing and hooking the audience (other students) with the very first sentence: "Bored students are finding new ways to stay awake in algebra class." This writer's peers cannot help but be engaged. The introduction then effectively shares some history of note-passing and a defense of this practice. The main focus of the essay, "tips to successful note passing" is also clear. This paper has a very clever structure, sharing suggestions on how to pass notes, with a paragraph on what to do, and a paragraph on what not to do. Transitions like *also* and *plus* help the reader follow the writer's thinking. Another transitioning tactic, using words like *Don't*, *Never*, and *Not* to start the sentences in the "Don't" paragraph, keep the audience focused on what the paragraph is about. The conclusion is extremely satisfying. The writer effectively ties everything together: "With all of these tips you could become a note-passing master in no time at all," but does not end there. He/she then admonishes the reader not to pass all of the time and ends with the inspirational: "Happy passings!" Readers will likely smile as they set down this essay.

Voice: Voice is the best element of this piece. The tone is tongue-in-cheek, but because the details are real and well-supported, the entire essay is both fun and informative. By developing each detail and explaining in relevant and teen-friendly language, the writer shows an awareness of audience and a dedication to meeting audience needs. In the conclusion, when the writer reminds the audience that school is important, it shows concern for the reader's well-being. Word choice is also excellent. Clearly, the author of this essay is aware of word connotations, choosing not just random synonyms for words, but the best, most lively and correct ones, as in the suggestion to "be sneaky, not suspicious." Other excellent and perfect word choices include *mischief*, *snatching*, *interception*, *discreet* and *mischief*.

Conventions: This paper is relatively mistake-free, with strong punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. There are a few mistakes that the author may have caught with a little more careful editing. This includes the misspelling *embarassment* and the verb-tense inconsistency in the first paragraph (when the author states "They say" and "Another student says" but then "students claimed" and "They also added") and an out-of-place semicolon ("These kids have good reasons to defend; their note-passing mischief, too"). Students should always be reminded to take their time in proofreading their work before publishing.

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Student Sample EE

I don't think the world would be where it is at today if there weren't horses. In the past and the present, they have been used for many things such as work and entertainment. Although they are gentle, graceful animals, many people misunderstand them because they are big and powerful and quick.

They're really fun to ride. There are two main types of horseback riding: Western and English. Both riding styles are very different from each other.

English riding has different saddles, bridles, and bits than Western. In English riding, you use more cues with your voice and less physical cues.

In Western riding, you use more physical cues. Western is generally a lot easier than English.

Horses can be very fragile and need specific feeding, grooming and exercising. They are very gentle and graceful.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample EE

Holistic Score: 6 (not passing)

This essay fits many of the bullet points of a 3 paper, and so both holistic readers gave it a 3 as its score. It is focused on horses and, to some extent, on riding styles, but the first and last paragraph have too many irrelevant details, and the sections on riding styles are underdeveloped. Author commitment is inconsistent, displaying knowledge and some passion but little effort to involve the audience in the topic. The conventions are above-average, but this one bullet would be insufficient for passing the paper overall.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=2 O=2 V=2.5 C=3

Ideas: This essay is about horses, but at first glance, the details are all over the place. The body of the essay is mostly a brief comparison of riding styles, but these details are underdeveloped. This writer may need to work on thinking about audience questions. For example, what does he/she mean by *ques*? What is the equipment for? What do the riding styles look like? Trying to paint a picture for the reader and clarifying technical vocabulary are both helpful ways to develop ideas effectively. The information shared in the introduction and conclusion is similarly unclear. These details (like horse impact on the world and horse description) raise questions, piquing (but not satisfying) audience interest, leading the reader to wonder what the essay is about.

Organization: Organization might be the first place that this writer needs to begin work. In the introduction, he/she states that horses have had a great impact on the world, and follows up with a mention of horse uses, yet this is not what the essay is about. Then the author describes horses and states that they are misunderstood, but this is not the focus of the essay either. In the next paragraph, the author begins to discuss riding, and the subsequent paragraphs describe the types of riding. This may indeed be the author's intended focus, but in the conclusion the author ends with a restatement of horse description and brings in a new detail, that they "need specific feeding, grooming and exercising." This writer would benefit from more instruction on and practice with planning organized essays, placing details in the correct spots, and making the introduction lead into the essay and the conclusion tie things together.

Voice: The word choice of this piece is a blend of descriptive adjectives like *gentle*, *graceful*, *powerful*, *quick*, and *fragile* and horse-specific jargon like *bit*, *saddle*, *bridle*, and *ques*. The main problem with these word choices is that the writer does not support them. He/she might work on other types of word choices, like powerful verbs, to help support the description of horses. It also might be helpful to remember that the audience may not be an expert on the topic, and thus jargon should be defined. In terms of voice, the writer is knowledgeable. He/she claims at the beginning that horses have been important to the world. Throughout the essay, horses seem to be personally important to the writer as well.

Conventions: Conventions are the strongest trait of this piece. The only mistakes are the misuse of *ques* – cues? – and the spelling of *exercising*. All capitalization and punctuation are correct, and there are some more advanced conventions. Examples include a comma separating two adjectives ("they are gentle, graceful animals") and a colon to set off information ("There are two main types of horseback riding: Western and English."). There is some sentence variety, but because the essay is relatively short, it is hard to tell to what extent this writer has mastered the skill of varying sentences.

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Student Sample FF

The Riveting Subject of Tuning your Flute.

Most people who don't play flute can't imagine what we go through trying to tune. They assume all a musician has to do is gracefully manouver their fingers across the keys and blow, and a stream of silvery notes sprays into the air – perfectly in tune. Of course, that isn't anywhere near the truth.

Any flutist knows the meticulous, infuriating process of tuning their instrument. The delicate balance of air, head joint position and embouchure that has to be just right. Untold amounts of time spent squinting at an electric tuner perched on a music stand.

Obviously it can be a very frusterating process, but there are several basic steps you can take to remedy the issue. Take daily practice time to develop your tone. Pitch and tone go hand in hand – it's much easier to tune a clear, singing tone than an airy whispery one. When you put the head joint on the body of the instrument, it should be pulled out a hairsbreadth. This can be adjusted later on. The flute should rest in the crook of your chin. As it rests on your lip, the pitch escalates. If your intonation still isn't where it should be, there is a vast amount of ways to adjust it further. "Flat" means yor tone is too low. An obvious solution is to push in your head joint making your pitch higher. Also roll the head joint out. Most likely, you are covering too much of the hole. If you are sharp, the opposite is true. Push your head joint out and roll in to lower the pitch. High notes are notoriously sharp – frustrated flutists tend to pinch their lips, forcing those piercing notes to squeak out. This drastically raises the pitch. The best way to fix this is to loosen your embouchure. Make sure your mouth is relaxed and open and blow with a warm airstream. "Like fogging up a window with your breath," is how my teacher describes it.

Undoubtedly, tuning your flute can be a time-consuming preposterously complicated process. It also happens to be one of the most crucial abilities a flutist must develop in order to grow musically.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

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Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample FF

Holistic Score: 12 (passing)

Here is an example of a superior piece of writing; both holistic readers gave it a solid 6. The sample focuses on and develops insightful ideas and organizes them logically. The writer demonstrates commitment to the topic and commits few, if any errors in conventions. This paper is a delight to read.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I = 5 O = 5 V = 5 C = 4.5

Ideas: Paper FF is clear, focused and interesting. The essay is packed with strong details about how difficult it is to tune a flute and the main idea stands out. *“Most people who don’t play flute can’t imagine what we go through, trying to tune.”* It is also clear to the reader that the writer is writing from experience because the supporting details seem accurate and helpful. *“If your intonation still isn’t where it should be, there is a vast amount of ways to adjust it further.”* This writer definitely seems to be an expert on the subject of flute tuning and it shows in the way they have developed this topic.

Organization: This paper has a strong organizational structure which strengthens and showcases the details given about flute tuning. The introduction sets a purpose for the piece and gives clear clues of what is to come in the essay. The transitions used are effective for linking paragraphs and ideas together. *“Obviously, it can be a very frustrating process, but there are several basic steps you can take to remedy the issue.”* All the ideas connect and flow from beginning to end. *“Undoubtedly, tuning your flute can be a time-consuming, preposterously complicated process.”* In fact, the organizational structure is so smooth throughout this piece, the reader hardly even thinks about it.

Voice: This writer is clearly an expert on tuning the flute, and their confidence about the topic shows. This writing is interesting and informative. The writer is aware of their audience and their tone is appropriate for an expository piece. *“They assume all a musician has to do is gracefully manouver their fingers across the keys and blow, and a stream of silvery notes sprays into the air-perfectly in tune.”* This writer is also a master of word choice, but the reader wishes that some of the more difficult flute terms were defined. *“The delicate balance of air, head, joint position and embouchure that has to be just right.”* This is just something simple that the author could do during revision time to make this piece even better.

Conventions: Paper FF has a few conventional errors that would need to be addressed before this piece is ready for publication. There are a few spelling errors and some sentence fragments that can be easily fixed. Some of those errors are simple due to the fact that the author took some risks by spelling more difficult words and playing with punctuation for style. *“Pitch and tone go hand in hand- it’s much easier to tune a clear, singing tone than an airy, whispering one.”* Capitalization, internal and external punctuation are all mostly correct and that shows the reader that they have a good grasp of standard writing conventions. For the most part, this paper would just need some minor editing to get it ready for publication.

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Student Sample GG

Have you even wanted to know more, or anything at all, about anime? Just listen. This is about a show called Naruto Shippuden.

Naruto Shippuden is about a boy named Naruto who has a huge appetite and a bad hunger for ramen. Before Naruto was born, a nine-tailed beast attacked the hidden leaf village, other wise known as Konoha. When Naruto was born, the day after the attack, his father sealed the demon inside, Naruto and died along with Naruto's mother. 13 years later, Naruto trains hard to become a ninja. When he does, he trains harder to to become the ultimate ninja, the Hokage, other known as the village leader, but many challenges stand in his way, including the akatsuki (a-cott-skill).

The akatsuki is an organization of shinobi from the different villages who are in search of the tailed beasts and to crush and destroy the villages and end the war between them.

Well now you know about Naruto Shippuden. You can go tell your friend how cool it is, if you think so.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample GG

Holistic Score: 6 (not passing)

Paper GG received a 3 from both holistic scorers, keeping it just one point away from being a passing essay. The paper remains inadequate in some areas. It focuses on the topic, but includes some irrelevant examples. The paper displays some organization, but digresses about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through. The writer does communicate some commitment to the topic and uses adequate word choice. There are some errors in conventions, but they do not overwhelm the reader.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I=2.5 O=2.5 V=3 C=3

Ideas: Paper GG states that the main idea of the paper is to tell the reader about Naruto Shippuden. The paper is filled with general information about this television show. *“Naruto Shippuden is about a boy named Naruto who has a huge appetite and a bad hunger for ramen.”* The reader is forced to infer many details about the character’s looks and motivations because they are not even mentioned. This adds to the reader’s confusion and makes this essay almost seem like a weak retelling of the show. The writer does attempt to answer a question about what the akatsuki does in paragraph three, but it also seems to get the writer off the topic of Naruto a bit. *“The akatsuki is an organization of Shinobi from the different villages who are in search of the tailed beasts and to crush and destroy the villages and end the war between them.”* This long sentence only serves to confuse the reader even more. This author needs help prioritizing which details are the most important about this character. Perhaps this would help them figure out which ones to include and which to omit.

Organization: Paper GG has a recognizable organizational structure, but it is weak. The introduction and conclusion are both quite short. The introduction is quite common, but does attempt to set up the purpose of the paper. *“This is about a show called Naruto Shippuden.”* The conclusion is very general but tries to sum up the essay. *“Well now you now about Naruto Shippuden.”* The body of the paper is missing transitions and has hard to follow leaps both of time and topic. *“13 years later, Naruto trains hard to become a ninja.”* This author needs help organizing their ideas. Perhaps an outline or character graphic organizer could help them improve.

Voice: This writer seems to be writing from experience about the television show Naruto Shippuden, and there are glimmers of voice throughout this paper that reveal the author’s enthusiasm about this topic. *“You can go tell your friend how cool it is, if you think so.”* The writer also spent some time on word choice, and the reader can tell that they took steps to pick strong verbs. *“...to crush and destroy the villages and end the war between them.”* The reader just wishes that the voice and strong word choice was consistent throughout the piece, instead of just popping up here and there. A teacher could help this student by showing them examples of good voice and word choice in their paper, and encouraging them to add more during revision. This student would also benefit from seeing other peer writer’s papers that excel at this trait, and being asked to identify and explain exciting or interesting moments in their partner’s paper.

Conventions: This writer has a fair grasp of standard eighth grade writing conventions. The errors in this paper could be the result of some careless editing, rather than a lack of knowing the correct rules. The reader notices that capitalization, spelling and end punctuation are mostly correct. However, some pesky run-on sentences pop up a few times, which slow the reader down. (See third paragraph, for example.) This writer could benefit from a mini lesson on sentence structure and run-on sentence avoidance. Those errors aside, the paper would need some moderate editing in order to be ready for publication.

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Student Sample HH

I know myself the best, I am always by my side and I know everything about myself. I guess that would make me an expert on myself. I like music and I like to dance. I have two sisters and one brother. I live in Nevada and I was born in Los Angeles, I am about 5'4, dark brown hair, tan, carmel skin, and light brown eyes. I enjoy a lot of sports like basketball, foot ball and soccer.

I've lived in a lot of different state like California, Virginia, Chicago, New Mexico, Texas, and Nevada. I've moved a lot because my mom and dad got a divorce so I lived with my mom until I was seven years old and then I lived with my dad until I was 13 years old. My dad had a lot of different jobs so we had to moved constantly. I liked moved frequently because I got to meet new people but also it was hard to make new friend when you were just getting used to your old ones.

Now I'm 14 years old and I'm in the 8th grade and I enjoy school. My favorite subject is social studies. Soon I will be in high school and my goal is to get into a good college.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample HH

Holistic Score: 6 (not passing)

Paper HH received a 3 from both holistic scorers, keeping it just one point away from being a passing essay. It is an inadequate sample, according to the Holistic rubric. It focuses on the topic but displays just basic information. The paper has some organization, but it lacks coherence. It demonstrates inconsistent commitment to the topic and uses simplistic words. There are also many careless errors in conventions which slow down the reader.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I = 2 O = 2 V = 2.5 C = 2

Ideas: Paper HH almost seems like a list of details about the author, rather than an expository essay. It is filled with simple, surface details that never truly engage the reader. *“I have two sisters and one brother. I live in Nevada and was born in Los Angeles.”* This sort of “just the facts” writing continues throughout the entire paper and the details given are never expanded or explained. *“Soon I will be in high school and my goal is to get into a good college.”* This writer could benefit from prioritizing their brainstorm of ideas. Perhaps this would help them to choose only the most important details to include in their essay. After that, they could work on expanding those ideas by adding unique descriptions to idea and perhaps share them with a peer.

Organization: This paper has a weak organizational structure. There is a weak and somewhat confusing introduction. *“I know myself the best, I am always by my side and I know everything about myself.”* No real transitions link ideas together. It is almost as if the author has no plan for the writing and just puts down whatever comes to mind at the time. There is also no real conclusion to this essay. It just seems to end and fails to link back to the introduction. This author could benefit from using an outline or graphic organizer to help them organize their piece. They should also compare and contrast their paper with strong expository essays from their peers so that they can see what a strong organizational structure looks like. Then they should try to emulate one that fits their style.

Voice: The author of Paper HH seems aware of an audience, but stands at a distance. Even by the end of the paper, the reader still doesn't feel like they have a sense for who this person truly is. The listing of ideas flattens the potential for voice in this paper. *“I've lived in a lot of different state like California, Virginia, Chicago, New Mexico, texas, and Nevada.”* The word choice is mostly ordinary, although there is one sentence with a couple of well-chosen words. *“I am about 5'4, dark brown hair, tan, carmel skin, and light brown eyes.”* To improve this score, this writer should have lots of exposure to mentor texts that showcase voice and word choice. (Picture books would work well for this student because they are short and there is not a lot of text to wade through.)

Conventions: The conventions in this paper seem to fall apart about half way through. There are errors in capitalization, spelling, grammar and punctuation that can distract the reader. *“I like moved frequently because I got to meet new people but also it was hard to make new friend when you were just getting used to your old ones.”* The biggest problem is with sentence structure. Run-on sentences abound in this paper. *“I've moved a lot because my mom and dad got a divorce so I lived with my mom until I was seven years old and then I lived with my dad until I was 13 years old.”* This author needs some instruction on how to spot run-on sentences, and what to do to fix them properly.

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Student Sample JJ

What I know a lot about is my dog Copper. He is a yellow lab, and he has been with my family and I sense I was six years old.

He loves going for walks and fetching anything you through. He would play fetch 24/7 if we let him. Copper is almost nine, so we have to watch him when he runs to much because he is arthritic.

If there is one think copper loves to do the most it is to eat. He will eat anything and everything. He eats so fast sometimes, that I wonder if he really tastes his food.

Copper is a great dog, and is fantastic with kids. He is always happy, and loves meeting new people. I know a lot about Copper from growing up with him and am glad.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample JJ

Holistic Score: 7 (passing)

Paper JJ is just barely satisfactory, according to the Holistic Rubric, and the careless errors in conventions almost kept it from reaching the necessary 7 points it takes to pass. Ultimately, one scorer felt the conventions were competent enough to pass the essay, but the other scorer disagreed. This makes it an interesting example of the importance of solid editing. The essay focuses on and develops ideas with mostly relevant information and organizes them coherently. There is some commitment to the topic, and adequate word choice is used.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I = 3 O = 3 V = 3 C = 2.5

Ideas: Paper JJ is clear and focused on the subject Copper the dog. The basic details in this paper are based on personal experience, but the reader for more explicit details. *“He is a yellow lab, and he has been with my family and I sense I was six years old.”* There is some support included, but the reader is left wishing for more. The writer still seems to be developing the topic and could use one more draft after getting feedback from peers or the teacher.

Organization: This paper has a rudimentary organizational structure which is just strong enough to move the reader from point to point. There is a basic introduction, but it does not create a strong sense of anticipation for the essay that follows. *“What I know a lot about is my dog Copper.”* No transitions are present between ideas, so the reader must leap from idea to idea without much direction. The conclusion is a simple summary about Copper, and no real insights are shared. *“Copper is a great dog and is fantastic with kids.”* This writer could benefit from some lessons that showcase powerful introductions and conclusions. Graphic organizers could also help this student plan out their essay better and would help them to fit their ideas into a stronger structure.

Voice: This writer seems confident about the subject of her dog, but does not show much enthusiasm. The writing is pleasant to read, but not exceptionally interesting. *“He would play fetch 24/7 if we let him.”* The reader longs for better word choice to describe and enliven the piece, but finds only simple words in the text. *“He will eat anything and everything.”* Encourage this student to find a page from a book from their favorite author and see if they can imitate the voice the author used. Once they have done this, see if they can transfer some of what they learned from that author’s voice to this piece of writing. (Some examples: Their favorite author might use great vivid verbs or very descriptive adjectives to really describe a scene. They could also try to emulate their author’s more persuasive tone or enthusiastic mood.)

Conventions: Paper JJ has a few careless errors throughout, but they do not impede the meaning of the essay. The errors in spelling and usage stand out the most. *“He loves going for walks and fetching anything you through.”* Most of the sentences written in this paper are simple in structure. This writer could use some instruction on how to correctly combine sentences to make it less choppy to read. Having a good mixture of both long and short sentences will make this paper flow, as well as make it easier to read aloud. Based on the aforementioned errors, this paper would need some moderate editing to make it ready for publishing.

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Student Sample KK

My Best friend has a lot of facts about him. The first one I know is his name is Trystan. I know a lot about Trystan.

Trystan has medium length brownish hair with a little wave to it. He wears black glasses with black and white checkered prints on the sides. He is slender, about average height maybe 5' 1, and has a perfect tan.

Some facts about Trystan; he is in love with the band Owl City and knows every song by them. He loves the color orange and eating Hot Pockets (meatball mazzarella is his favorite). Trystan is an optimistic person and most of the time zen. He is halarious and can make anybody laugh no matter what the situation is. Trystan is super fun to be around and can always entertain you. If you ever need advice for anything or just somebody to listen, Trystan is the person you want to go to.

Trystan gives anyone an equal chance and doesn't judge anyone. Trystan is an all around good friend to everyone he meets. Give him a chance and get to know him, you might be surprised.

How would you score this sample?

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

What holistic score should it receive?

Expository Practice Prompt #3 for Eighth Grade: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write a paper that explains what you know a lot about. Be sure to organize your thoughts into paragraphs.

Scores and Analytic Annotations for Student Sample KK

Holistic Score: 8 (passing)

Paper KK is satisfactory, according to the Holistic rubric and the combined scores of our two holistic readers. The essay focuses on and develops ideas with mostly relevant information. It also organizes these ideas in a satisfactory manner. The paper communicates some commitment to the topic and uses adequate word choice. There are some errors in conventions, but they do not impede meaning.

Analytic Scores (with trait-specific annotations): I = 3 O = 3 V = 3 C = 3.5

Ideas: Paper KK focuses on Trystan, the best friend. The main idea of the essay is stated in the beginning paragraph, so the reader has a basic road map for the essay. *"I know a lot about Trystan."* Relevant details are added about his appearance and personality which support the author's claim that they know a lot about him. *"Trystan has medium length brownish hair with a little wave to it."* Unfortunately, the detailed descriptions are inconsistent, and mixed with often very general facts. *"Trystan is super fun to be around and can always entertain you."* These general statements don't do much to move the essay along and call for inferences on the part of the reader. This student should be encouraged to add more descriptive ("showing") sentences to this essay. Perhaps a peer could help the writer find the showing sentences and even revise some of the more basic ("telling") sentences.

Organization: Paper KK has a basic organizational structure that is strong enough to move the reader through the piece. The paper has a weak introduction that does not create a strong sense of anticipation for the essay that follows. *"My Best friend has a lot of facts about him."* There are no transitions present to help guide the reader from thought to thought but this does not cause undo confusion on the part of the reader. There is a weak conclusion present, but it does not leave the reader with a satisfying sense of completion. *"Give him a chance and get to know him, you might be surprised."* This writer could use some practice on how to write good introductions and conclusions. Some great lessons for these are on the Writing Fix Organization page.

Voice: The writer of Paper KK seems sincere when talking about their best friend Trystan. The writer is aware of an audience and adjusts their voice accordingly in the concluding sentence. *"Give him a chance and get to know him, you might be surprised."* The word choice is satisfactory with not much repetition, but the reader sometimes wishes that the author would have experimented with some strong verbs. *"Trystan is a good friend to everyone he meets."* The reader wishes that some funny or even sad anecdotes were included in the piece that would better describe the writer's relationship with the best friend. The writer could also try to add in some figurative language to help improve this score.

Conventions: This writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard eighth grade writing conventions, however, there are a few careless errors in the paper. *"My Best friend has a lot of facts about him."* There are also some errors in sentence structure. *"Some facts about Trystan; he is in love with the band Owl City."* Many of these errors could have been caught by the author with a careful re-reading of the piece. *"He is slender, about average hieght maybe 5'1, and has a perfect tan."* Overall, the errors in this paper are so minor, that they do not slow down the reader or impair meaning.