

Writing Assessment and Evaluation Rubrics

Name Class Date

Above-average Writing Model

Writing Process in Action: Personal Writing (Unit 1, pages 36–39)

Assignment: Write a one- to two-page essay about a particularly meaningful personal experience—something you had a strong reaction to or that affected your values.

Simple Pleasures

All I could think about on my way to Appalachia last summer was how much I might teach the people who lived there. However, on my way home, I thought instead about everything I had learned from them.

I went to Appalachia to work as a day-camp counselor for underprivileged children. My job was to teach a photography class every afternoon. When I arrived, most kids had never snapped a single picture. But by the time I left six weeks later, they had learned to take well-focused shots. Meanwhile, I was quickly learning even more than I was teaching anyone else.

At first, I didn't see this, though. I was too worried about how I would get used to my host family's tiny, four-room house. Every room had a view of hickory trees, and the Jenkins had planted a large garden in their backyard. But their home lacked many of the conveniences I was used to. There was no television, no computer, and no CD player. What would I do with my free time, I wondered? A lot, I found out! Most evenings, the family sat on the porch or at the kitchen table, talking or working on chores. I soon learned the joy of storytelling from Mr. Jenkins. He entertained me for hours. Before the first two weeks were over, I had learned how to be happy just doing simple things: sitting on the lawn watching the stars, catching fireflies with the kids, or savoring juicy tomatoes picked fresh from the garden.

The children at camp taught me things, too. From them I learned about loyalty, both to friends and family. I will never forget one eight-year-old boy named Davey. He had sandy brown hair and wore the same denim shorts every day. For weeks he talked eagerly about an upcoming canoe trip. However, the day before the trip, he discovered that his younger cousin hadn't passed the required safety test. After class that day, Davey told me that he had decided to keep his cousin company at camp.

I think back often on my summer in Appalachia and the people, such as Davey and the Jenkins, that I met there. Sometimes when I'm feeling overwhelmed or self-centered, I try to imagine the sweet smell of Mrs. Jenkins' rhubarb pies or the sound of kids laughing at camp. Suddenly, I feel better and remember what's important again. Living for a summer in Appalachia taught me that the age-old saying is still true: The best things in life really are simple and free.

Summary: This essay creates a vivid impression of an experience and clearly relates how it affected the writer. The essay is effectively organized, maintains an appropriate tone, and includes specific sensory details to bring the people, events, and place to life.

This piece might receive a 4 if evaluated by the holistic scoring method. It might receive a 100 if evaluated by the analytic scoring method—35 points for Focus/Organization, 35 points for Elaboration/Support/Style, and 30 points for Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics.

Opening clearly identifies the significant personal experience.

Establishes and maintains a warm and reflective tone

Includes vivid sensory details to describe people, place, and events

Thoughtfully explores the meaning of the experience

Describes a specific example to make people and events real

Clearly indicates the emotional impact of the experience