

Sample Student Reflections on Persuasive Piece

Editor's Note: The following student reflections are reproduced exactly as Jack Wilde's students wrote them, including mechanical and grammatical errors. The students wrote these reflections at the end of the school year and shared them during a conference with their parents.

Ray School
Hanover, NH
June 2003

Writing

Name: Conlon P.

Name of piece: Have An Ice Rink

1. Explain, in complete sentences, how you got started writing this piece. (At least four sentences)

We had to write a persuasive essay to try and persuade the principle to change something at our school. I started by thinking about my strengths to decide what to right. I chose trying to get an ice rink because hockey is my favorite sport. I started by thinking of a lot of reasons for my position. I thought about how my idea could benefit the health of everyone. Also, I thought about how my idea could benefit the health of people. I came up with ideas against my position also. I thought about the cost of my idea. Also, I thought about the work of setting up my idea. Then I wrote three leads to my essay. They include reasons for my position. Sometimes I used a vinyet in my leads.

2. Explain, in complete sentences, how you decided to organize the piece (what went first, second, etc.). How do the ideas build on each other? (At least five sentences)

The first thing you read in my persuasive piece was reasons for. If you start with reasons against the principle will maybe just put your persuasive essay down. When you start with reasons for it draws the reader in. So now they keep on reading your persuasive essay. After the reasons for I start to identify some problems. Then I write down the solutions to the problems that I identified. If you do not identify problems it shows the principle you did not work very long on your essay. If you do not identify

solutions we can not solve the problems. After that the ending has more good reasons. Some of the reasons could be repetitive from the beginning. That can make the essay more effective. You should not end with the bad things because that will be the last thing the principle will remember.

3. What changes did you make in the piece in the process of going from “getting started” to your final draft? (At least five sentences)

I changed lots of things for my piece along the course of writing it. One of the things I changed was some repetitive parts of my persuasive piece. There were some parts where I identified a problem twice. If I do that he will remember the problem too strongly. So I took one of the times I identified the problem out. Another big thing I added to my persuasive essay was a diagram to help the principle understand the set up for the ice rink. Also, I made my ending stronger. My vinyet was not very strong because it was repetitive. Now it is not anymore.

4. Are there any changes you would still make to the piece? (At least three sentences)

I would now talk more about how Norwich got an ice rink. It shows that we are in the same school district and we should get an ice rink too. Also, I think I should have talked more about the setting up of the ice rink. I did not talk a lot about setting up the boards. I said enough about flooding. I should have really talked more about how we should set up the boards. Also, I should have talked more about expense of my idea in the persuasive piece.

5. What are two changes you have made as a writer this year? Explain. (At least six sentences)

One of the ways that I have changed as a writer this year is how much I revise. In the beginning of the year I did not revise much. I just looked through it once and made corrections. Now I read through more times and then I make corrections. Another way that I have changed as a writer is how I start my writing pieces. I pay more attention to if the beginning of my writing piece is effective.

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Writing

Name: Julia P.

Name of piece: We Want More Art!

1. Explain, in complete sentences, how you got started writing this piece. (At least four sentences)

The first thing I did in writing this piece was write two leads. One was vignette and the other just gave Mr. Williams a picture of what it was like now. I chose to put them both in by putting the vignette first and then putting the one that gave a picture. I chose to do that because I liked both of them and thought they were both effective. I also thought that they would work together and that either one of them might not work by itself. A third reason I had for putting both in was that I liked it when the other pieces started with vignettes and wanted to do so with my own. However, I am positive that the vignette alone wouldn't have given enough information or have been clear enough about what I wanted. My partner agreed with me in thinking that I should put both in.

2. Explain, in complete sentences, how you decided to organize the piece (what went first, second, etc.). How do the ideas build on each other? (At least five sentences)

I organized the piece based on three things. The first was what we talked about when we were reading the pieces by past fifth graders. Our class talked about organization after reading them and decided what would be a good order for our own. The second thing I organized by was what I thought would really work and be effective if I were the one reading my piece. Also, when I confer with my partner he would tell me if he thought that something needed to be reorganized. One place where I changed based on my partner's opinion was putting the vignette that's at the end before the good things at the end. Before I changed this the good things were before the vignette. It didn't really work like that because it was kind of confusing.

3. What changes did you make in the piece in the process of going from “getting started” to your final draft? (At least five sentences)

One thing that I changed was adding the diagram of where the second music room is. The main reason that I added it was because I wasn't sure if Mr. Williams would know what I meant when I talked about the second music room. I also added it because I wanted to have a diagram in my piece and that seemed like the best place to put one.

Another thing that I changed was the vignette at the beginning of my piece. At first it was about the beginning of art. But when I talked about wishing for more art time it didn't make sense having it be the beginning. So I changed the vignette so that it was about the end of art, not the beginning. That way I could have a vignette and still express what I wanted. Changing the beginning vignette also made it easier to do the ending vignette because the part about having half an hour more art time wouldn't have really made sense if it was the beginning.

4. Are there any changes you would still make to the piece? (At least three sentences)

One thing that I would like to change is that I would like to explain more in some places. One of the things that I would like to explain more about is when I say that people wouldn't get confused about the directions. I'm not sure if anyone reading my piece would know why they wouldn't get confused. To make this clearer I would write that people would end up understanding the directions because they could ask Mrs. Haun if they didn't understand at first. Then she would explain and they would get it.

5. What are two changes you have made as a writer this year? Explain. (At least six sentences)

One way I've changed as a writer this year is that I'm better at revising. Before now I didn't want to change my writing because I thought that it was as good as it was going to get. However, when we had to do at least three revisions in the personal experience stories I saw my story getting much better. So I revised as much as I could then. On each piece since then I've tried to revise more and more. I got better and

better at revising. Now I can get about twenty revisions in one hour. I did when revising my persuasive piece.

A second way that I've changed as a reader this year is that I learned that I could write pretty good multi-genre pieces and have fun at the same time. Changing fonts so that each genre had a different one and coming up with a lot of different genres are just two of the fun things. I discovered writing multi-genre pieces when I wrote my paper about loons. I had already read some multi-genre stories and liked them so I decided to try writing one. And once I got started it was so fun, so easy, and was turning out so good that I could (and would) have worked on that alone all through the school day. Writing that made me want to write more like it, so I am. Also, finding it so fun made me want to branch out a little more to see if I could find more fun ways of writing. I did. I am currently writing a diary of someone named Anetka Sabaro and it is pretty good. Also, I am still writing it and I started it in February. That's three months, longer than most stories of mine have lasted. If I hadn't written my loon story as a multi-genre piece I would still be writing terrible stories.

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Writing

Name: Rebecca S.

Name of piece: Drama Class (persuasive piece)

1. Explain, in complete sentences, how you got started writing this piece. (At least four sentences)

I love drama. I want to be an actress when I grow up. I'd do anything to be in a play. So I knew exactly what I wanted to write my persuasive piece about. Having a drama class. I first started by writing the positives and negatives about having a drama class. I found ten positives and five negatives. After that I wrote two beginnings. I liked one so I used that beginning. It was about that the principal was a dumb dumb because we didn't have drama class. Then I started the body of my persuasive piece. I tried to explain everything clearly and completely. Then I wrote two endings for my piece.

2. Explain, in complete sentences, how you decided to organize the piece (what went first, second, etc.). How do the ideas build on each other? (At least five sentences)

I wanted to have positives about having a drama class in the beginning, beginning of the body and the end. I knew that would help my persuasive piece be more persuasive because you would start reading it on a good note and it would leave you on a good note. Having your piece be on a happy note helps because if you didn't have your piece on a happy note they would think it had so many things bad about it that they wouldn't want to do it. I also wanted my piece to have a flow to it. One that doesn't lull you to sleep but it fits together, like a puzzle where all the pieces fit together in their own spots. In addition to that I wanted having drama classes was a good thing for this school. Because if they thought having a drama class was a bad thing Mr. Williams wouldn't want to have a drama class.

3. What changes did you make in the piece in the process of going from “getting started” to your final draft? (At least five sentences)

I made a lot of changes. After I wrote the body I realized that my beginning sounded too mean so I wrote a new beginning. It was a vignette. It was two people talking about how great it would be to have drama class. Another change I made was my ending had no life to it. So I added a small vignette. It had two parents watching a performance and what they thought about it. In addition to that I had tons of spelling errors. I went through and found most of the spelling errors. I changed them all.

4. Are there any changes you would still make to the piece? (At least three sentences)

Yes there are. On the front page I spelled the word “these” wrong. I would also like to add more positives and negatives to my piece. I think if I explained everything about it, it might have more of a chance of coming true. And if it came true a lot more kids would be happy. And having kids be happy would be one of my goals when I leave this school. To know I’ve made a change here. (A good change.) That some kids would be grateful for. And maybe, just maybe my piece could do that. When I found out that my piece was going to the principal I realized that there was this one part where it was a little bland. So I changed that part to have a little more life in it.

5. What are two changes you have made as a writer this year? Explain. (At least six sentences)

One of the changes I’ve made as a writer is I love to write realistic fiction. So much. I guess reading a lot of realistic fiction got me loving that genre. Then I really never wrote or read fantasy again. (I used to read and write about fantasy topics.) I got hooked. I think writers try to write the genres of books they like. Each genre is like a world. Some people like some worlds and others like other worlds.

Another change I’ve made is: using a computer for me only works for revisions and final draft. I like writing my first draft by hand. Then I like to type it. Then revise. Why I like revising on a typed draft is you can see where you revised more clearly. Also

there is more space for the revisions and editing. And for final drafts I like it typed because for me it takes a really long time to write a paper neatly.

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Writing

Name: Martin L.

Name of piece: Persuasive Piece

1. Explain, in complete sentences, how you got started writing this piece. (At least four sentences)

I got started writing this piece because I thought there was something wrong with the school. I wanted the soccer field to be changed. So I wanted to write a persuasive piece in hopes of my dream coming true. I chose my ideas for my piece from what I like and I like soccer, king of the hill and when I have a runny nose the kleenex's aren't soft. And I knew there was a problem with the soccer field and that's how I chose that topic.

2. Explain, in complete sentences, how you decided to organize the piece (what went first, second, etc.). How do the ideas build on each other? (At least five sentences)

I decided that I should start with a vignette and end with a vignette for drama. Then I decided that I should put two good reasons. So he would be thinking positive. Then I added in some of the bad so he doesn't think I'm trying to hide stuff that could be bad. Then I end it with the strongest good things so when he's done reading it he'll only be thinking good.

3. What changes did you make in the piece in the process of going from "getting started" to your final draft? (At least five sentences)

In one part of my persuasive piece I didn't explain how the rules would work. It used to be like just being more careful. And I changed it to the student having to look 180 degrees if they wanted to roll down the hill. I also made another change to make it better by giving the principal an option. I wrote that instead of making a new hill he could just let kids go to the one we already have and just fix it up.

4. Are there any changes you would still make to the piece? (At least three sentences)

I would once again try to make one part more clear to the reader. It went like this “kids would do their homework so they could go outside and play on the hill.” I don’t get why so many people find that confusing. If they do their homework then they won’t stay inside for recess. Or if they aren’t bored they’ll go outside instead of staying inside to do work, and going outside is what recess is about. And I know a lot of kids stay inside.

5. What are two changes you have made as a writer this year? Explain. (At least six sentences)

I think that working on the computer helps me work better because it motivates me to write more. It does that because typing doesn’t hurt my hands but writing manually does. It also helps me type more because when it’s printed I know it’ll look professional and that makes me want to write more.

This year my editing skills also improved. On those spell checking sheets that we had for homework I used to get two wrong, but last time I did one I found all of the corrections that you had to make.