



Developing | Exemplar Essay

Trophies for Everyone

Trophies for All!



Claim and Focus

The essay introduces a stance based on the topic ("If I was the principle, I would make sure that everyone gets a participation trophy for sports"), but the writer's focus on purpose and task is not established or maintained. It is unclear if the writer is attempting to address a counterclaim ("that doesn't mean that they are pointless to everyone").



Support and Evidence

Attempts are made to provide anecdotal evidence ("I feel really strongly about participation trophies because of my little brother"), but the writer doesn't clearly make connections between the brother's experience and their own ("Even though I don't care at all about the participation trophies I received"). Ideas are introduced, but not explained or supported ("they can also apply that to other circumstances in life").



Organization

The essay moves from beginning to end without transitions to help maintain a flow of ideas. An introduction is attempted, but it doesn't set up the points to be addressed in the body paragraphs of the essay. The conclusion is weak without clearly restating the claim ("All children should be given the opportunity to feel that way").



Language and Style

A consistent voice and formal tone are not established ("they may just end up getting better at it because they keep trying"). Word choice is not consistently formal or objective ("kids," "happy," "pointless," and "valued"). Sentence structure tends to be similar throughout the essay. Any errors in conventions are minor and do not impede understanding ("principle" instead of "principal").



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.

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Notes

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If I was the principle, I would make sure that everyone gets a participation trophy for sports. It makes the student feel like the school cares about what they did in the sport and how they did in school. If children learn at a young age that if you try hard at something you will gain a reward, they will continue to try to excel and they can also apply that to other circumstances in life.

Students should play sports to have fun or to meet challenges. Lots of times kids aren't very good at something at first but they may keep trying if they know that they will get a reward at the end of it. If they keep on practicing, even if it's only to get a participation trophy, they may just end up getting better at it because they keep trying. Besides, kids nowadays are so used to them that their self-esteem will go down if they don't get their reward for effort. Kids have enough stress in their lives so giving them a participation trophy is a great way to build them up.

I feel really strongly about participation trophies because of my little brother. It always makes me smile to think how excited and happy he would be when he received a participation trophy from his Little League. Even though I don't care at all about the participation trophies I received, that doesn't mean that they are pointless to everyone. My little brother wasn't the best baseball player, but he kept on playing and at the end of the season he was always happy that he tried his best. All children should be given the opportunity to feel that way. These participation trophies show kids that their effort is important and valued.