

## Chapter 4: Student Writing -- Anchor Papers

What are anchor papers? **Anchor papers** are essays that demonstrate many of the primary characteristics of a piece of writing that is representative of a particular level, or standard, for writing. So, for example, the first two essays you will read in this section are essays that the portfolio reading committee have determined to be solid examples of the kind of writing and essays that typify, or epitomize, an English 95 essay, with many of the features that often appear in writing that is ultimately evaluated or scored into the English 95 placement or category. There are also two essays that typify English 96 writing, and two additional samples that characterize writing that is most often scored into English 101.

**These anchor papers are here for you to read and consider, so, as a writer, you can begin to develop an internal set of standards for writing in your own mind, and once you have developed these standards, then you are able to look at your own writing and improve it, revise it, based on this set of standards.** Again, these papers were selected by portfolio readers, the people who will ultimately be evaluating your work, so a concrete understanding of the kinds of criteria they are using when grading your work can only help you to improve your own writing through a clear understanding of what your audience is actually looking for within your writing.

**When you're reading these essays, try to think about what features of each set (95, 96, 101) seem to make them fit into those classes/categories.** Why is it that the English 95 essays are rated as such? What features seem to be typical of 96 writing? Is it a quality of purpose, organization, style, or grammar and mechanical proficiency that make these pieces English 95/96/101?

What are the differences between the English 95 essays and the English 96 samples? What has been added or improved with the English 96 essays that make them better, more rhetorically efficient and proficient, than the English 95 samples?

And, likewise, when you review the samples of English 101 work, what features have been added, improved, or clarified that make these essays solid examples of the kinds of work that is characterized by English 101 writing?

**(95) A Galaxy of Art**

Art gives us the ability to express ourselves with no set limitations. It is viewed as an expression of our deepest thoughts, most vivid dreams, and our greatest wishes. You can even say that it gives us the rare opportunity to reflect our very souls in the form of creativity. Think about it, if you set a limit for art you're only setting a limit for your imagination. It would be like saying, "hey, there are only 76 stars in the universe" in which case people would probably look at you as if you were dumb.

Keep in mind that there are hundreds of different and creative ways in which art can be expressed. Be it writing through the form of Poetry, Calligraphy, or Romantic novels, singing in the form of Opera, Country, Rock or R & B or even dancing which includes Latin, Ballet, Tango, or the classical Ballroom Dancing. There is also music, paintings, sculptures, movies, etc . . . the list is endless.

This all of course just depends on who you are and what it is that you would like to express in your work. Even the world most famous historical artists including Michelangelo and Da Vinci were well known for their multiple artistic talents which included math, poetry, geometry, landscaping, and mechanics, plus paintings and sculptures.

Don't forget there are subcategories as well. Take the art of photography (which is my favorite) for example. It is to capture and express beautiful and creative images using a camera. Some of its themes and categories include wild life, oceans, buildings, historical landmarks even simplistic things such as flowers and scenery can be its main focus, just like in writing. Let's take flowers in this case, photography can branch off into different themes including those of color, location, value, species, and so on.

Another example is sculpting, it can branch off into a variety of different styles such as people, places, animals, so on and so forth. Though the beginning of arts history is not dated, its origins date back to when man (or woman) first walked the earth. It is a journey that cannot be completed in a day, month, nor year and gives you no limit on what you would like to express. So feel free to be creative and allow yourself to be fascinated by the wonderful views of such colors, detail, and or creativity so you can see that possibilities are endless!

**(95) Baggage**

This paper is the baggage in my life. The very first kind of baggage in my life is that when I was growing up I never did pay any attention in school, I wasn't bad but I just never wanted to listen and pay attention. One thing that I would always do as a kid in school is I would hum and always be making noise, I always got in trouble for that and would always get sent out into the hallway and I never liked that. I would also be talking in class and never pay any attention to the teacher and I would also get into trouble for that. Some of the ways that I changed from elementary to junior high was that I grew up a little bit and I matured to.

When I got into junior high, I was pretty good, I never got into trouble and I would always behave and be a good student. Some of the things I would never do were never pay any attention to the teacher and I would get into trouble. Some of the ways I changed from junior high to high school was that I grew up more and that I learned a little bit of what my teachers told me and I understood them when I started out in high school, my freshman year went pretty good, but then I hit my sophomore year that is when I started acting up again I would get detention and I also got after school detention. I also still never paid any attention. But things change and I grew up my last two years of high school and I am glad I did. Like I said I never did well in my classes and the last two years in high school I really grew up and got A's B's C's and passed.

I grew up, I changed about school I loved doing the homework and hanging out with my friends and I am glad that I paid attention. After I graduated high school I realized that I was really growing up

**(96) Significant?**

What is it that makes a moment significant to us? And, when those moments come, do we recognize them right away, or do we not realize their significance until after they have passed? I believe that some significant moments are ones that we don't see coming, and ones we don't notice until they have already passed us by, but have impacted our lives and the lives of those around us, both good and bad. They may not be life-changing moments, but significant moments do impact our lives. Whether they change how we feel about someone or something, or how we perceive and tolerate things around us, these moments do affect us and help shape us into the people we are to become. With this in mind, I have begun to think about significant moments that I feel have had an impact of my self and others around me. One small, significant moment that I think has impacted many is the release of an animated comedy TV show called "South Park."

For those not familiar with it, South Park was released in the mid-90's, and is an animated comedy show about the adventures of four young friends in a small mountain town in Colorado. This show is a satire, and makes fun of important people and events. This fictional animated show is full of some very controversial content and adult humor, but at the same time provides viewers with a moral lesson or a humble point of view on current media and world events. I feel that this bizarre mix of moderately inappropriate television and teaching of values and morals is a very unique, interesting, and overall funny way to reach many different generations.

Over the years, this show has been a very entertaining show for me and in some ways has affected my life. With its open topics, and edgy humor, it makes me laugh, and at

the same time has helped to open my eyes to different points of view, and has made me more aware and tolerant of the different people around me, like Muslims, homosexuals, and Jews, among many more.

The release of this show has also been significant to other generations of viewers as well. It has helped open the doorway to more edgy comedy dealing with issues that were once considered taboo on television, and has helped bring comedy into the next generation by taking many fragile issues and basing comical, fictional stories around them to help prove a valuable point and show a relationship between different cultures and generations of people.

Though this may not be what some people consider significant, I feel that the release of this show has been memorable for me and others in my generation. This show, though raunchy and unethical, has impacted my life in a significant way and continues to this day. South Park has shown me different views on life and has helped me see the real positive and negative aspects of today's world.

**(96) Brown Eyed Girl**

The little girl with long brown hair and big brown eyes jumped with joy off the white wooden chair, grabbed her Daddy by the hand, and started dancing when she heard this song blaring from the huge black speakers:

Laughin' and a-runnin'

Hey hey, skippin' and a-

jumpin' In the misty

momin' fog

With our, our hearts a-

thumpin' And you, my

brown eyed girl You my

brown eyed girl.

She was so happy to hear the song and dance specifically to this song with her Dad. The little girl and her father had a special bond, and this song was a significant part of their bond.

I was that little girl. My father and I have a special bond, so I am definitely a "Daddy's girl." "Brown Eyed Girl" has unquestionably been my dad 's and my song since I was a little girl, and it still has so much meaning to both of us. I will never forget this song, and the feeling that I had when I was that little girl out on the dance floor with my Dad. It was the best feeling in the world. I got to dance to my favorite song with the most important man in my world, my Dad.

This song is such an upbeat song and gets everyone up and dancing. You may ask, what

made a girl my age care so much for a song from the 1960's? Well, every time I hear it, I think about my dad and me, and how close we are with one another. I'm his brown eyed girl. I will have that memory forever and I am so thankful for this song because it gave me so many great memories that I can cherish for the rest of my life.

We have done so many things together since I was little. He learned how to braid my hair; we also watched our favorite shows together like The Simpsons, King of the Hill, and Malcolm in the Middle.

He bought and taught me how to ride a four-wheeler, and my very first one was a yellow and blue Yamaha Suzuki. You may say that it's more of a male thing, but that's what made it so special because my dad got to share it with me, his only daughter. I thought I was so cool driving it. I loved that awesome feeling of my hair blowing in the wind, I always closed my eyes for only a short period of time of course, but when I did I felt like I was flying. My four-wheeler was awesome it even had a horn; everyone on the street knew when I was riding because they would hear the horn. As I was riding my dad would patiently stand there watching me, with a smile on his face but still being a great father watching and worrying about me.

This song shows a significant meaning in my life. Whenever I am upset about something, I listen to this song and I realize that everything is going to be alright, and I will always have my dad right by my side. My dad is still very protective of me, and acts like I'm still that same little girl. I am not that little girl. He doesn't want me to grow up, because he is scared once I grow up, I'll move out and start a family of my own. And that we won't have that same connection that we have had, but no matter what happens I will

always care for my dad as much as I do now if not more, and we will always have that special bond no matter how far away that we are from each other. When in doubt we can listen to this song and we will be reassured that I'll always be his brown eyed girl.

**(“Proficiency”) Old Yellow House**

Imagine, "Mercy, Mercy by Marvin Gaye" and the faded sound of the ice cream truck passing through the next block over. Laughter and screams filled the yard, and the oblivious warnings from the other side of the groaning screen door voicing "Either come in or stay out!" The sounds of feet punching into the damaged alley way, as if they are running from night fall and once the street lights flickered on; another day of childhood would disappear in the moment of wiping the dried dirt off and sweat that trickled down the forehead of today's memories. The freedom the sunlight offered for the day had lost the battle to the afternoon mid-day rise. It was time to head home, and the living room light was on as "Golden Girls" theme song sang through the windows. The chipped yellow paint glistened in the night fall, as the voice called time to come inside.

Childhood is the most impactful album, from knee scrapes, to ice cream truck chases, chalked sidewalks, and finally grass stains. The place where summer nights were disappointing because adulthood was getting closer and the fear of knowing that daylight approaching would create another memory. Growing up, the aged and crusted concrete and groaning gray porch had become a religious tradition every Saturday afternoon as the sun started to create the salted sweat on the forehead of the youth, the smell of burnt newspaper, and old charcoal from Friday night's barbeque was planted within one of the senses. While the sirens of last night's mistakes gave the sidewalk another secret to lock away. Screen doors screamed throughout the night startling the restless dogs. The description of the scenery within a scene has lead up to the breakdown of the home of a childhood.

The Yellow House was not only a place where a family rested and being neighbors with the hot stuff of the block. The yellow house is important because it was the place mistakes and

troubled times build the pain of the processing future. The childhood home is the stepping stone of who youth become. The game of identity has not been developed because every child is going through the motions of ageing. It was the place that gave humbleness to the wealth so anytime pride creeps up, it is reminded that it could all be arrested and sentenced to life. The house allowed the mind to pretend it was nothing to become a cook, doctor, or lawyer.

The Yellow House did not chain the youth down when it rained, but it allowed the memories to be created indoors, and once the rainbow shined over the damaged trees, it did not matter that it was muddy and droopy outside but that only pushes the chance to dance in the puddles. Losing the days of youth is a fear of the ones who refuse to create memories of scabbed knees, and ashy knuckles caps. The Yellow House broke barriers, because everyone was the same, regardless of the extra or very little pigment; race, gender, or belief. Regardless of the lemon chipped paint, and the smiling wooden steps; the house was built on the foundation of healing the broken. The tears stained the dusty porch of shattered hearts, and weighted apologies that released itself once the broken stepped inside the four walls.

Laughter had become the addiction of the midnight walkers, and the early risers found their sunbaked skin as the melody of the morning. The wisdom that rested on the front porch rocking side to side lifted the spirits of the overwhelmed. The house symbolized more than just living space for an adolescent growing up, growing up in the impoverished part of Illinois, it might have been controversy because of how many viewed East Saint Louis; when many have found their purpose on the very soil our ancestors rested. The Yellow House left mystery filled dirt stains, imagination of endless possibilities, and the damaged souls bandaged.

The house stood for balance and if the time will ever come where success blinds where the beginning started; the child resting within will reflect and before she drowns in pride,

another level of humbleness will lead her back. The Yellow House is the bridge that revealed there is more to a world of disappointments. In conclusion, the yellow house should be a place where it will allow others to reflect and remember that we were all children once before; and just because childhood ceased does not mean the youthfulness we have left should die because of another journey ahead. It has always been a rush to reach the finish line, young people have started to allow other people to mature them and take away memories for example the yellow house, causing them to miss out on the chance to fill the void of feeling as if they are always missing something. The yellow house stood in the middle of the timeline for some, and today it still remains smiling at the bystanders.