**Writing Standards in Action Project**

**Abbreviated Commentary**

Abbreviated Commentary consists of the following:

* A student writing sample that illustrates what performance to grade level standards looks like—in action
* General information about the sample
* Massachusetts learning standards met by the sample
* Highlights that describe how the sample meets standards in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy (2017)* and other content frameworks when applicable

| **Please note:**Student writing samples may contain inaccuracies in wording and content or shortcomings in the use of standard English conventions. |
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**General Information:**

**Writing Sample Title:** High School Artists

**Text Type and Purpose:** Explain/Narrate

**Grade level/Content area:** Grade 10 English language arts

**Type of Assignment­­­­­­­­­:** Explanation by categorization

**Standards Addressed:** (W.9-10.2), (W.9-10.3), (W.9-10.5)

**Highlights from the Sample:**

This sample of student work exceeds grade level standards. It demonstrates the following attributes of effective writing. The sample:

* Establishes an evocative setting and situation in the opening sentence *(Standing in the middle of an art exhibit surrounded by stunning paintings and sculptures, you might wonder how the artists that created them became so successful).*
* Makes a skillful transition at the end of the introduction to state a philosophy of artistic development *(…everyone has potential; it is just our choice to nurture it with enthusiasm and practice that places us among either the doodlers, the experts in stick figures, prodigies with a knack for photorealism, or the artists with a message.)*
* Uses sympathetic observation, vivid description, humor, and narration as means of elaborating types of high school artists *(The “fills up the margin with fancy squiggles and cartoonish people” artist can be found in almost any classroom. Whenever the teacher hands out a worksheet or tells her to take notes, her pen starts to wander from its course to embellish the pages with stars, clouds, and bold lettering.)*
* Establishes unity throughout the essay by
	+ Using a consistent conversational tone to describe each type of artist *(The “do I really have to* draw*, can’t I use clip art” artist on the other hand is less enthused when artistic projects are assigned. She may have been able to avoid the dreaded art room by opting for computer classes for now, but her aversion to drawing will come back to haunt her in other classes.*  …*In the [school] AP art class, an “art master” has recently produced a sketch of a shell so realistic that it’s as if you could feel its texture and see its shine through the paper.*

*…“I chose blue to symbolize sadness and messy brush strokes to represent chaos” artists are mixed in among the “masters” in the AP class.)*

* + Concluding the essay with a reference to ideas in the opening paragraph *(Back in the gallery, our high school artist has come to the conclusion that she has much more in common with the artist whose work she studies than she thought.)*
* Demonstrates the ability to reflect, revise, and learn from critique *(Coming up with the sub categories [of artists] and writing the first draft was the easy part, but this seemed to be the hardest revision so far. I knew that I had to integrate in more examples and change my conclusion drastically after my peer edits but I found the most difficulty in the introduction paragraph. …I like the idea of standing in a gallery that I finally used to pull the reader in and I think it also worked well in the conclusion.)*

**High School Artists**

Standing in the middle of an art exhibit surrounded by stunning paintings and sculptures, you might wonder how the artists that created them became so successful. Perhaps their careers had their roots in kindergarten just like yours, when days were spent making collages out of macaroni or filling countless coloring book pages. Further along the journey of mandatory arts education, you filled the twelve credit requirement by taking the ceramics and silkscreen classes that popped up between English and Chemistry, or even venturing into the secret world of AP. It seemed as if there were two types of artists: those who embraced their skill, happily accepting comments about the beauty they translated through their craft and those who faced inevitable questioning about what their picture was *supposed* to be as they envisioned the fortunate students in TV Media, taunting them with their lack of art supplies. The truth is that despite students’ varying skill levels, everyone has potential; it is just our choice to nurture it with enthusiasm and practice that places us among either the doodlers, the experts in stick figures, prodigies with a knack for photorealism, or the artists with a message.

The “fills the margins up with fancy squiggles and cartoonish people” artist can be found in almost any classroom. Whenever the teacher hands out a worksheet or tells her to take notes, her pen starts to wander from its course to embellish the page with stars, clouds and bold lettering. Every day in freshman health class, she would draw a spiral design on that day’s packet, gradually adding more dashes and zig-zags as the class progressed. The product wasn’t anything worth hanging up in a gallery, but if you caught a glimpse of her complex geometric design or the bouquet of flowers that decorated her corners, you may have wondered why she practices her art in secret, as she could easily climb her way up the fine arts ladder. Simply, art is not her passion, just a harmless hobby that, though distracting and perhaps not the best use of class time, comes in handy when she is asked to put her artistic ability to use.

The “do I really have to *draw*, can’t I use clip art” artist on the other hand is less enthused when artistic projects are assigned. She may have been able to avoid the dreaded art room by opting for computer classes for now, but her aversion to drawing will come back to haunt her in other classes. In World History this year, she was asked to depict a historical event visually. Her response: are we being graded on how good this is? Once she was reassured that her lopsided drawings of people would suffice, she probably pulled out her scarcely used package of markers to get the assignment out of the way. Feeling the need to compare herself to “better” artists, she is also known for making her rounds in an art class she didn’t sign up for to tell her classmates how good their pieces are while jokingly comparing her painting to a second graders. She shouldn’t worry about her seemingly inadequate skill because she probably has a talent that the artists she admires don’t possess.

The aforementioned shower their compliments on the “wow, that is insanely good you must be a fine arts master” artist, who was probably born holding a paintbrush. All throughout elementary and middle school, people stopped to stare at her incredibly accurate self-portraits and sophisticated impressionist landscapes. After being told dozens of times to pursue their hobby, they’ve probably found their way into the rumored AP Art class where each artist is better than the next. In the [school] AP art class, an “art master” has recently produced a sketch of a shell so realistic that it’s as if you could feel its texture and see its shine through the paper. Often times she’ll shrug off the daily accolades like it’s the easiest thing to do (and maybe it is), but someone can’t help but envy her God given gift of creativity, which may not be as supernatural as people think. She just has a penchant for drawing, which she has perfected over the years by constantly sketching in her journal. Her dedication shows.

 “I chose blue to symbolize sadness and messy brush strokes to represent chaos” artists are mixed in among the “masters” in the AP class. When asked to explain her latest abstract work, she dives into an explanation behind the composition, subject and color choice in an effort to make her piece of art sound deep and profound. In reality, it may be a compilation of zig-zag lines that represents “the movement of nature.” Not to discredit her work, perhaps she was thinking of how nature moves when painting, but sometimes lines are just lines. Part of the AP portfolio is the concentration section, where she had the difficult task of choosing a theme for a series of pieces. The beauty of machines, the human body as an object and distorted reality are only some of the themes she has considered. The “symbolizer’s” commitment to art mirrors if not exceeds that of the abovementioned master and her installations will undoubtedly be thought provoking, though people will probably pose the question “what *is* this” most often.

Back in the gallery, our high school artist has come to the conclusion that she has much more in common with the artists whose work she studies than she thought. Knowing that they had similar backgrounds, the doodler might hope that her pastime flourishes into something greater, while the type that shies away from the art world may hold a newfound appreciation for the skill. Meanwhile, the master and symbolizer might compare the piece to something they’d recently created as they imagine the day they have their own exhibit. No matter what they think, they all have some kind of response: a perspective, and an artistic one at that.

**Revision Report**

**Art Critique**

 When this paper was assigned, categorizing artists was one of the first ideas I had. Through taking Honors Art this year, I’ve been able to look into the world of the “master” and “symbolizer” while I develop my own art skills. Coming up with the sub categories and writing the first draft was the easy part, but this seemed to be the hardest revision so far. I knew that I had to integrate in more examples and change my conclusion drastically after my peer edits, but I found the most difficulty in the introduction paragraph. I realized that I had started with the general type, immediately diving into my spiel on kindergarten art. I like the idea of standing in a gallery that I finally chose to pull the reader in and I think it also worked well in the conclusion. I still think the introduction is choppy and could be improved upon (like anything). Pronouns also confused me as I switched between they, her and you in the introduction and conclusion.

As for the positive revisions, I like my idea of saying that everybody has potential, something we discussed in my art class last year. My dad read the first draft and said my second paragraph and the “do I really have to draw” artists sounded a little too harsh. (He probably identified with that group). I changed that paragraph to focus on how they might not care as much about art, so that’s why they aren’t at the same level as the “master.” I also think my body paragraphs have improved greatly from the first draft. Getting comments from my peers as well as reading their papers helped when it came time to revise.