

Grade 10 Unit 1 EA 2 Writing a Synthesis Paper

Score: Exemplary

Ken Robinson, a renowned author once said, "Creativity is putting your imagination to work, and it's produced the most extraordinary results in human culture" (brainyquote.com). Each person's personal identity is shaped from this culture that is built with the contribution of everything in one's surrounding environment. While there are many factors that influence a person's perspective, culture is one of the most important elements in shaping the way he/she views the world because it is the basis on which all opinions, morals, and decisions are first based off of no matter what.

Culture is a person's heritage that has been molded by the atmosphere around them. This atmosphere subsequently influences one's environment, as well as their everyday routines and mindset. From birth, my culture has shaped who I am. My parents and overall family have taught and continue to teach me many ideas and values such as the way to treat and respect people, the importance of family, and the fact that it is essential to give my very best towards school and sports. These teachings were the only things I knew as "right" from a young age, and their reiteration throughout my growth became what I saw as my culture today. This is incredibly influential to how I view the world around me because as I am exposed to different situations my thoughts are based on what I know: my culture.

However, In Paulo Coelho's novel, *The Alchemist*, he demonstrates the changes that can occur in one's views and morals from being exposed to a diversity of cultures. From the start of the book the main character, Santiago, had ambitions to explore the world around him, saying to his father, "Well, I'd like to see their land, and see how they live" (Coelho 16). After traversing the plains of Andalusia for quite a long time, Santiago's dream gives him an incentive to explore the world further, thus introducing the aspect of new cultures and unfamiliar environments. These experiences not only give him an abundance of new knowledge, but they actually change and shape the way he views the world around him by giving him the ability to look far past the surface of nature and its inhabitants. When confronted with the difficult challenge of crossing the desert most would panic or doubt themselves, but Santiago thinks to himself, "I've

learned things from the sheep, and I've learned things from crystal. I can learn something from the desert, too. It seems old and wise" (Coelho 54). Finally, cultural experiences, especially the diversity of them exemplified in this novel can mold one's views into a range of ideals instead of a select few, and an attitude of overall acceptance. Santiago develops these views by the end of the book and learns to give thought to even the most minuscule things. This is due in part to what he is told by the Alchemist near the end of the novel: "No matter what he does, every person on earth plays a central role in the history of the world. And normally he doesn't know it" (Coelho 103). It's not one central view that outlines a person's culture, but the combination of many. It is experiences like these that make the formation of one's culture incredibly in depth, which in turn is the reason culture is the main basis for all views on the surrounding world.

In A Raisin in the Sun, the author Lorraine Hansberry exemplifies how cultural collisions can firstly define and moreover develop one's culture, and demonstrates how this carries over to their perception of the world around them. The conflict of assimilation is first introduced to the reader through George, Beneatha's date, who is heavily opinionated and constantly voices these thoughts. In one instance George mentions to Beneatha, "I want you to cut it out, see—The moody stuff, I mean" (Hansberry 87). At this time Beneatha is still trying to identify "who she is" and define herself as a person, so these opinions cause her great internal stress and questioning. Furthermore, when her other date Asagai joins the play her mind is filled even more with outside views. Although the suggestion could be made that experiences like this one directly impact her view of the world, they actually contribute to the development of her own culture and who she is as a person. This can be viewed as a two-step process where outside experiences mold one's culture and this development of their culture effects their perspective on the world around them. In addition, Harper Lee exhibits how childhood experiences can build one's culture in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. During his observance of the trial, Scout narrates, "We acquired no traumas from watching our father win or lose. I'm sorry that I can't provide and drama in this respect; if I did, it would not be true" (Lee 195). At first one might think that witnessing his father's trial would alter Scout's perception on the world instantly, but because he has been surrounded by her father

since birth, this idea of calmness and tranquility involving extreme situations has been branded into his culture and personal identity for a very long time. As Scout matures her increased wisdom now gives her culture the chance to contribute to more intellectual views on situations around him rather than her simple thoughts as a young child. To finish, it is a culture of one's identity that contributes to their opinion of the world and not the singular experiences themselves.

In conclusion, the world is a place of abundant life experiences to have, but it is one's culture that is the most important influence on their perception of life. I've had many eye opening experiences throughout my past years, and they have molded my culture into what it is now. As people undergo more and more life events, their culture is constructed into an accumulation of all of them, and this is where their perception of life comes from.

Score Exemplary

Annotation:

This Exemplary student essay begins with an effective and engaging hook and tie-in to the importance of culture in human life and prepares for the claim that “culture is one of the most important elements in shaping the way he/she views the world.” The next paragraph presents a personal perspective on the claim asserting that culture defines what is “right” and is the basis for how one views the world. The following paragraphs present ideas that support a broader concept of the influences that define culture and how it influences individual perspectives. Focused topic sentences develop the idea that one’s culture can be molded and broadened by experiences and collisions with alternative manifestations of culture. Multiple sources are marshalled to present textual evidence for the ideas that qualify the influence and experience of culture. The essay is also characterized by a sophisticated insight into the evidence being cited. Whether showing that Santiago is able to embrace “an attitude of overall acceptance” from his experiences of a “range of Ideals instead of a select few,” or that the “conflict of assimilation” in *A Raisin in the Sun* can contribute to one’s cultural perspective, this essay took a difficult challenge and molded it into something fine. Transitions, embedded quotations, varied sentence structure all indicate command of language and establish a formal authoritative voice.

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Score: Proficient

Everyone has some kind of culture that contributes to their views on the world. This is true in countless stories and in real life. For some, culture can be a large contributor to their information on the world. But ultimately it is how one interprets their culture that affects the way that they view the world.

Frank McCourt, in his memoir *Angela's Ashes*, shows that while someone's cultural experiences help to shape, impact, and influence one's perception of the world, it is ultimately how that person chooses to interpret those experiences that affects their views on the world. When Frank is young his father often comes home late at night singing Kevin Barry songs and he makes Frank and his brothers promise to die for Ireland. As Frank grows older his father continues this behavior but Frank decides that he has had enough and stops going along with his father's drunken requests. These experiences with his father did not shape how Frank perceived the world, but rather it was him deciding on his own that he wanted no more part in his father's antics. Another example of one's perception of the world being influenced by how they perceive experiences is with Frank's religious experiences. All through Frank's childhood and early teen years he is brought up as a Catholic and he is taught that Protestants are evil. But as he gets older he starts to become confused with some of the teachings of the Catholic Church. He does not totally reform his beliefs but his views on religion are more shaped by his interpretations rather than just the cultural experience of it and in the last chapter when he is on the boat to America he chooses his own path rather than listening to the rants of a Catholic priest. In the end he decides that he will not let religion completely control his life. Frank McCourt's story exemplifies the idea that while one's cultural experiences can help shape their perception of the world, how one interprets those experiences is the deciding factor in how they view the world around them.

The short story "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker showcases the idea that while culture does affect one's views on the world it is ultimately how someone interprets their

culture that informs the way they view the world. Mama's eldest daughter Dee was raised just the same as Mama's other daughter Maggie. However she never liked the simple farming life even though it is a major part of her culture. Even with her farm life being the main pain part of her culture she interpreted it in a bad way and this made her change her life drastically. She lives an extravagant life. Mama describes Dee's dress by calling it "a dress so loud it hurts my eyes" (Walker page 61). Mama and Maggie on the other hand, wear simple work clothes and Dee was raised living this way as well. This proves that it is ultimately the way one takes in their culture that affects the way they view the world. Another example in this short story is how differently Mama and Dee view the same culture. Mama just sees the way she lives as her culture, but Dee's view on her culture is much more complicated. She assimilates with white culture but believes she has a more in depth understanding of her African roots. This story has similar attributes to *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry. The whole family lives together in a small apartment. Their culture is a working class black lifestyle. However Beneatha takes in this lifestyle differently. If it were just here culture that informed her views on the world she would also just have a working class lifestyle. Instead she is going to college because, even though she has had one predominant culture throughout her life. On her own she has decided to change her views on the world.

In my own personal life I have not experienced such drastic cultural views. However when I was younger my family went to church every weekend with my family. If it had been just my culture that informed my views on the world, then I would still be religious. However I as grew older I began to interpret religion differently than the rest of my family. I ended up deciding on my own that I did not want to have a religion. Many people around the world have cultures that dominate their views of the world, some may even feel trapped within their culture. But ultimately it is how someone chooses to interpret their culture that has the greatest impact on how they view the world.

Score: Proficient

Annotation:

This Proficient synthesis essay takes the prompt about the extent to which one's culture informs "the way one views others and the world" in a purposeful way to show that cultural influences are strong but an individual ultimately has control. This position sets the essay up to address the prompt using the structure of an argument to provide support for the claim with textual evidence from the reading of the unit. The evidence from the literary texts is detailed and relevant and each support paragraph is introduced and concludes with a statement that connects it effectively and deliberately to the central claim of the essay. Rather than presenting a clear counterclaim, the essay develops a concluding paragraph around a personal experience that mirrors the examples taken from literature. This paragraph begins with a statement that suggests a lack of strong cultural influence as the transition to a claim that is counter to the experiences presented in the literary texts. The formal voice is established and maintained by effective choices of diction and sentence structure and a strong command of the conventions of English usage and punctuation.

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Score: Emerging

A person's culture effects how they view people. The way we view people is based on differences we have with them, and cultural differences effect our views. Knowing other peoples culture also causes us to stereotype without knowledge of who they are as a person. Culture defines who you are, as well as your personality. Even in today's society people are judged on everything about them, especially their cultures.

In the Middle East today, Israel is extremely culturally different to that of its Arab neighbors. Israel is also generally disliked by its surrounding countries. This cultural difference causes nations to dislike each other and, effects the way they and their country view each other.

In "An Indian Father's Plea", Wind Wolf is troubled with racism in school from the other children. The children who bully him are white and his age. They are very young and do not have reason to hate him, other than the fact that they know he's different, culturally different. This causes them to exclude him and dislike him. He is also not given much of a chance in school, and his different intelligence is completely overlooked by his teacher. He is marked as a slow learner immediately, and not as good as the other children. This is caused by his cultural differences with the teacher, the way everyone in that classroom views him is caused by his Indian heritage.

In *The Kite Runner*, Amir is a Sunni Muslim while Hassan is a Shi'a Muslim. Shi'a Muslims are looked down upon by most of Afghanistan, the Sunni Muslims. Hassan is treated poorly by many people because of this, and is treated as lesser. People even go to the extent of trying to hurt him, or even wanting to kill him, because he is culturally unlike. Amir is a Pashtun, an Afghani, meaning in his home country he is the same as most everyone. In America, however Amir is treated as less, and does not have as many opportunities as everyone else.

When the family in *A Raisin in the Sun* wants to move to a new house, they are nearly persuaded to move elsewhere by a white man. He doesn't want them to move in

because they are black. They are different culturally this causes the white people to overlook who they are and just not like them nor want to allow them to be neighbors. Beneatha's friend George also dislikes her new personality that she took on after meeting Asagai. This personality change was brought on by her wanting to celebrate her heritage, and it is her culture.

Culture defines who we are as an individual. This can cause culture to affect how we view other people, we judge them based on their culture. We allow certain privileges to some people and then to others, we don't even give a chance. People judge individuals based on stereotyping and past knowledge or experiences of other's cultures. Culture effects our views on everyone.

Score: Emerging

Annotation:

The main difficulty of this essay that defines it as a high Emerging Exemplar is its lack of focus on addressing the prompt. The prompt asks students to create a synthesis argument in which they must argue “the extent to which culture informs the way one views others and the world.” The essay could have worked as an argument if it had been organized around a claim that culture affects the way we view the world when we accept cultural hatreds without thought. In this case, the essay misses the mark and is organized more like an expository literary analysis than an argument as is required by the descriptors in the scoring guide. The evidence then is organized by author and work rather than reasoning that supports a claim. Each paragraph presents support for the same idea, rather than developing the argument with new reasoning. Discussion of one text becomes the organizing principle which is not consistent with an argument. This organization also does not allow for a discussion of possible counterclaims. The generally competent (except for the repeated misuse of “effect”) command of language and command of supportive textual evidence from multiple sources indicates that this emerging argumentative essay could with focused revision move into the Proficient band.

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Score: Incomplete

In the short story “two kinds” by Amy Tan, Jing-Mei is influenced to love the American culture because her mother’s love for the strict Chinese culture. For example when Jing-Mei mom wants her to be a Chinese Shirley Temple and Jing-Mei doesn’t want to be that she wants to be a free American and be whatever she wants to be. “Why don’t you like me the way I am? I’m not a genius!” proving her mother is forcing the Chinese culture on Jing-Mei by forcing her to be what she didn’t want to be. Some might say it’s not the Chinese culture that influences her to love the American culture but rather the society. For example, when Jing-Mei wanted to live like the Americans and live in their society and not like the people in the harsh Chinese culture.” I won’t let her change me, I promised myself. I won’t be what I’m not.” proving that it’s not society but it is family and Jing-Mei’s hate for her mother’s love for the Chinese culture.

Two girls have different though on life after being the same way for so many years. Their perspective on life were too live with their family and do play’s together. They were influenced to finish school, have the same religion. “ Two Kinds “ and “Everyday Use“ both present one’s culture constantly influenced one’s views of the world and others .

In the short story “everyday use” by Alice Walker, two sisters are influenced by their family. Maggie likes to do stuff her family does because it’s very usual. Her opinion on things are plain and regular. Some people might say it’s not Maggie, its Dee that isn’t influenced by her family. Dee likes to do her things with other people, and have fun at the same time. She really do likes to be opposite of her family she went and changed her name and said “No,mama,” she say . “Not Dee , ‘ Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo .”

In the stories “two kinds “ and “everyday use “ they both make a good example of family making an influence on one’s perspective of their culture. Overall in “two kinds” the mother is forcing her culture on Jing-Mei and in “everyday use“ the sisters have different views on their culture and how they live their life.

Score Incomplete

Annotation:

The clearest indicator of an Incomplete score for this exemplar is the lack of a coherent organization to develop an argument. Without an introductory paragraph, the essay lacks focus, and the reader is forced to do the work of organizing the thinking. This lack of coherence keeps the essay from moving into the Emerging proficiency band. No clear claim addresses the prompt about the extent to which “culture informs the way one views others and the world,” so the organization and evidence are not presented or developed appropriately for an argument; there is no claim, no counterclaim. The essay reads like a literary exposition. Though the essay indicates familiarity with the texts and presents some textual evidence to make a point about the major ideas of the stories, the point is not connected to the prompt. Use of language is characterized by vague and imprecise diction, and a lack of command of sentence structure and conventions.