



Advanced | Exemplar Essay

The Making of a Scientist

Living with Eyes Wide Open



Clarity and Focus

The essay provides an effective and clear central idea in the introduction and maintains focus on developing that idea throughout (“He learned many life lessons throughout his life from his father, some about science in particular, but mostly about learning to live life with open eyes”). The writing thoroughly addresses the demands of the prompt and fulfills the writing purpose.



Development

Relevant, concrete examples from the source thoughtfully support the topic (“Everything he read to me he would translate as best he could into some reality”). The writing provides additional explanations in the body paragraphs to enhance the reader’s understanding of the central idea (“Clearly, Richard Feynman could see things that were not often visible because he was taught to notice things”).



Organization

The organizational structure of the essay provides an engaging introduction, detailed middle, and conclusive end. A variety of transitions help to connect ideas and paragraphs (“to put it differently,” “clearly,” and “as you have seen”). The conclusion offers closure and reflection (“And just like me, Richard lived his life with his eyes wide open, ready to see the world and learn about it all”).



Language and Style

The essay offers a formal style, accentuated with a unique voice, that engages the reader and is maintained throughout (“As a young girl, I always dreamed of becoming a scientist and exploring the world”). Word choice and sentence structures are varied and interesting (“exclaimed,” “in particular,” “inertia and estimation”), addressing the complexity of the topic in an advanced and dynamic way.



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.

The Making of a Scientist



Living with Eyes Wide Open

As a young girl, I always dreamed of becoming a scientist and exploring the world. For some reason, I tended to observe and ask questions. My father told me that I was a very curious girl. I would often stare up at the stars and wonder. In comparison, I am actually very similar to Richard Feynman. Richard Feynman is a famous physicist and scientist. As a child, he enjoyed science as much as I did. He learned many life lessons throughout his life from his father, some about science in particular, but mostly about learning to live life with open eyes.

Richard's life education started in his highchair. When he was just a little kid, his father was setting up bathroom tiles, which Richard wanted to help with. His father purposely put the tiles in patterns, red then white then blue. The activity could have just been a father and son playing with tiles, but his father said "I want to show him what patterns are like and how interesting they are. It's a kind of elementary mathematics." Richard later realized that those early moments were life lessons, where he learned to be thoughtful and look around more carefully. He said his father "started very early to tell me about the world and how interesting it is," which helped Richard in his childhood.

Some lessons Richard Feynman learned from his father were about small, unimportant things. Then again, every life lesson is important, and every one counts in one way or another. When he and his father were reading about dinosaurs in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, his father told him that one dinosaur, a Tyrannosaurus Rex, was as tall as their two story window. "Everything he read to me he would translate as best he could into some reality," said Richard in his essay. Just another moment that

was a father and son reading together, but in reality, that was how Richard learned the important life lesson of estimation.

Richard Feynman also learned to notice things. To put it differently, he learned to see things that were usually not apparent or evident to the eye. For instance, in the essay it explains how he was pulling a ball and observing it move. He said to his dad "Say, Pop, I noticed something. When I pull the wagon, the ball rolls to the back of the wagon. And when I'm pulling it along and I suddenly stop, the ball rolls to the front of the wagon. Why is that?" They had a discussion about inertia and the science of objects, which was a very advanced conversation for a child. Clearly, Richard Feynman could see things that were not often visible because he was taught to notice things.

The last and maybe most important life lesson, is when Richard learned that "there is quite a difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something." It happened because they were in the Catskill mountains and another boy asked Richard the name of a bird. When Richard didn't know, the boy exclaimed, "It's a brown-throated thrush. Your father doesn't teach you anything!" When he talked to his father about it, his father taught him that you can know the name of a bird in all languages in the world, but when you finish you will not know anything about the bird, and so you will learn nothing, except the fact that you know what humans in different places call that bird. So, instead they started to observe the birds around them and asking questions and learning about the birds themselves, not just opening a book and memorizing the names.

As you have seen, Richard Feynman learned many important life lessons from his educated father. Life lessons were very important in his life, everything from science and inertia and estimation, to how to observe and draw conclusions. These lessons led him to be a great scientist and Richard Feynman has much to thank his father for, especially for his intriguing way of thinking. And just like me, Richard lived his life with his eyes wide open, ready to see the world and learn about it all.