

Inspiration, Where Did Mine Come From?

Inspiration sparks the flames of imagination, which later turns to success. When it all boils down, who has inspired you the most in life? For me, the question is easily answered, my father. My father is an aerodynamical engineer who works for Lockheed Martin Aerodynamics Company. He is a genius with his hands and imagination. I believe, even though it is blasphemy, that with his hands and imagination he could have conjured and constructed the world.

Although my life on this earth has been a short one, there is one moment in my vague remembrance of my earlier childhood that fascinated and inspired my life forever more. Our family had a sky blue, battered old Ford Caravan that we, a family of five, crammed into. I remember something my mother once said about how she felt when riding in it, "It feels like we are the sardines being packed into the can, Andy." Many times she asked my father to buy a car, hoping that her devious nagging might "drive" him to the car dealership. My dad, worried about our financial position because General Dynamics was handing their aerodynamics plant over to Lockheed Martin, was determined to keep our spending low in case of financial emergencies. The car, 6 and a half years old now, was starting to turn towards death and problems kept coming back after being fixed. One day, my mother and I were driving home and the car dropped dead. My father came in his nice Chevrolet Cherokee 4X4 truck, which he took such good care of, to pick us up and take us to the mechanics shop, where the truck had been towed. We got to the shop and they, the "trained professionals," said "This car has got less life in it than that wrench over there"! Six other repair shops agreed with the first assessment we received.

My father, the determined genius he is, did not give up on “Old Blue,” as he recently had named it, and spent the one whole weekend working no-stop to find the adversary, to him it was a good book he couldn’t put down. He took off one day of work to complete his “special project” and, amazingly, the sound of an engine roared loud like a lion. The irony of the incident is that my dad spent more money on fixing the car that it would have to buy a new one. Still, as a young boy, he amazed me like wizards, great conjurers of magic, amaze children in Medieval fantasies. My father reminds me of the doctors on ER, reviving those announced dead five minutes before.

He inspired me to choose a profession where hands and brains are particularly important, a neural surgeon. My father also did well in school, working hard to get his education, which led to his job. I see, because of him, that hard work applied will help you achieve what you want.



The Task:

We have recently read several selections about adults whose high expectations for success have influenced students or children. The expectations may have had positive or negative effects on the children/students. As part of your language arts class, each of you has probably discussed an adult who has made a lasting impression on your life. Your final product will be an essay about that influential person. Write an essay of no more than 500 words about that influential person in your life. You should model your essay on the examples of autobiographical writing we have read during this unit. When you write your essay, consider your relationship with the adult, the event or circumstances you wish to relate, and how the event influenced your life, either positively or negatively.

Circumstances of Performance:

The student work is produced under the following conditions:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in a group
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in class	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> as homework
<input type="checkbox"/> with teacher feedback	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> with peer feedback
<input type="checkbox"/> Timed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> extended project
<input type="checkbox"/> no opportunity for revision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> opportunity for revision

What the work shows:

Writing

E2c The student produces a narrative (fictional or autobiographical) account that:

E2c1 engages the reader by establishing the context, creating a point of view, and otherwise developing reader interest **(A)**

E2c2 establishes a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict (for autobiographical, the significance of events and of conclusions that can be drawn from the events) **(B)**

E2c3 creates an organizing structure; **(C)**

E2c4 includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character **(D)**

E2c5 excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies;

E2c6 develops complex characters; **(E)**

E2c7 uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, tension or suspense, naming, pacing, and specific narrative action, e.g.; movement, gestures, expressions; **(G)**

E2c8 provides a sense of closure to the writing. **(F)**

Conventions, Grammar, and Usage of the English Language

E4b The student analyzes and subsequently revises work to clarify it or make it more effective in communicating the intended message or thought. The student’s revisions should be made in light of the purposes, audiences, and contexts that apply to the work.

Strategies for revising include:

E4b1 adding or deleting details

E4b2 adding or deleting explanations

E4b3 clarifying difficult passages

E4b4 rearranging words, sentences, and paragraphs to improve or clarify meaning

E4b5 sharpening the focus

E4b6 reconsidering the organizational structure.

- A. The piece has a strong beginning with a student created platitude. The importance of the platitude and the focus of the narrative are then introduced with two words – my father. The account engages the reader with the metaphor –“Inspiration sparks the flames of imagination”. The narrator’s admiration of his father sets the tone for the narrative.
- B. The second paragraph again begins with the promise of a specific tale to follow. The ideas of imagination and inspiration work as a transition from first to second paragraph. It also provides the reader with an immediate sense of the significance of the piece. This paragraph also restates the significance of the piece “...fascinated and inspired by life forever more.”
- C. The organizing structure effectively moves the reader from the lofty present in paragraph one, “He is a genius with his hands and imagination.” to the past with a real world anecdote. The essay closes back in the present. The use of the word “conjurer” hails back to the first paragraph “conjured.” He also uses humor with his gentle parody of the revival of the dead on ER.
- D. The inclusion of sensory details such as his comparison to God, wizards, and conjurers, enables the reader to envision a character’s power and his significance in the son’s life.
- E. Although the piece does not develop the father as a complex character, it does provide a full picture of the most important characteristics – that of his perseverance and intelligence.
- F. In the final paragraph, the student nicely summarizes the main points of the narrative – inspiration, the father’s character, and the lesson of hard work.
- G. The narrative has several useful strategies in the long, second paragraph. There is dialogue, use of figurative language – the pun on “drive” and the personification – ‘the death of the car’.