



Bathroom Rescue

Heroes come from being in the right place, at the right time, and willing to do the right thing. During the course of one's life, one encounters few opportunities for a heroic act. However, when one does occur, they are memorable. It is not something that is planned. There also has to be some type of risk involved. In the recent events of September 11th, numerous heroic deeds have been performed. Fire fighters and policemen sacrificed their lives, with the faint hope of saving someone else's. Also, not only did those whose jobs put them in harm's way, but ordinary people became heroes. There were those compassionate human beings, who, when tragedy struck, willingly and selflessly offered their aid to those in need.

It just so happens that I had the opportunity to perform a courageous act. My family and I were stationed in Brunssum, The Netherlands. I was in my last year of elementary school. One weekend, I heard a pounding noise coming from the restroom. When I went to see what it was I discovered that it was Moriah, my four-year-old sister.

"What is she up to now," I thought. I tried to open the door, but it was locked. By now she was pounding and crying. It hit me, "Oh no, she is too young to be locking doors."

"Let me out of here," she cried. "Open the door!"

I could sense urgency in her young voice. "Just a minute," I answered. I tried the lock again. "Okay. Moriah, just calm down and turn the key to the left," I tried to soothe her.

"But I can't get it open."

"I know, but you need to try."

She started to cry louder, and my mom appeared. She asked what was going on, and I told her. She tried to calm Moriah, but as time ticked on, she got more and more hysterical.

"Go get your dad," Mom ordered.

I ran and fetched my dad. He couldn't get her to calm down either.

If Moriah couldn't open the door then we would have to. She couldn't even get the key out of the door, so that we could use a spare key. Our whole family, along with my older sister, Tegan, tried various things. We even tried super gluing a stick to the key and then turning it, which was also unsuccessful.

Suddenly, I remembered the skinny window at the top of the bathroom. That was the only other opening.

"That could be the only way," my mom stated after I mentioned it. "Do you think you could fit through it if we boosted you up? You're the smallest one."

"I think so," I answered uneasily.

We all went outside to where the window stood. It seemed forty feet high.

"I have to do this," I said to myself. "I can do this."

We brought out a stool and piled on a few other crates, so I could get to it. Luckily, I was able to get the window open. I used all my strength to hoist myself up and

through the window. I got halfway through and I could see little Moriah sitting in the corner and crying. She looked up and shouted, "Bona!"

"Hi, Moriah. Are you okay?" I squeezed the rest of my body through. It was a tight fit. Then I stepped onto the toilet and jumped down.

"Are you okay Briana?" I could hear voices outside.

"Ya," I called back. "Moriah it's okay, I'm here. Everything is gonna be okay."

I gave her a big hug and opened the door with one simple turn of the key.

Everyone cheered when we stepped out. I felt so rewarded.

That day I became a hero in Moriah's eyes. She was my sister and she needed help. I did what I could to help her. And with the support of my family, I got her out safely. You can call anybody a hero. However, a real hero isn't a cartoon or movie star. A real hero is someone like you and me, that does something for a fellow neighbor, in exchange for nothing but a warm feeling inside.



The Task:

A summary of the task is provided:

Students were asked to read or view accounts of the 9/11 attacks. Then they were asked to interview heroes and analyze this information to formulate a list of the characteristics of heroes. These notes and insights and insights were then used to write an autobiographical account of a time when the student was brave and courageous. The research should be interwoven or at least addressed in the narrative account. These narratives were collected for a book on ninth grade American heroes.

Circumstances of Performance:

The student work is produced under the following conditions:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alone	<input type="checkbox"/> In a group
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In class	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> As homework
<input type="checkbox"/> With teacher feedback	<input 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 autobiographic) account that:
- E2c.1 engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a point of view, and otherwise developing reader interest; **(A)**
 - E2c.2 establishes a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict (and for autobiography, the significance of events and of conclusions that can be drawn from the events.) **(B)**
 - E2c.3 creates an organizing structure
 - E2c.4 includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character
 - E2c5 excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies
 - E2c6 develops complex characters
 - E2c7 uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, tension or suspense, naming, pacing and specific narrative action, e.g. movement, gestures, expressions **(C)**
 - E2c8 provides a sense of closure to the writing **(D)**

Reading

E1c The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that:

E1c.2 relates new information to prior knowledge or experience **(E)**

E1c.3 extends ideas **(E)**

E1c.4 makes a connection to related topics or information **(E)**

A. E The introduction is strong and engaging due to reflection that connects events with belief, the observation that there are “few opportunities for an heroic act,” and the contrast of the events of 9-11 with ordinary human beings. A definition of heroism provides the context for the remainder of the narrative. The depth of the student’s knowledge and specific references to the events of 9/11 attest to the fact that research was conducted.

B. The setting and context is immediately apparent from the title.

B. The student identifies a setting early in the piece by identifying a locality, The Netherlands, and the place, a bathroom. References to the setting remain consistent throughout the work.

B. D. E. Closure is achieved two ways. There is a brief synopsis of events and a return to the initial discussion of heroism, but here with an expanded reflection. The writer extends the idea of heroism even further with a discussion of the hero as “someone like you or me.” The significance of the event is evident in these reflections.

C. The student uses many strategies with a style that is descriptive and rich in detail.

By building the events carefully, the pace of the piece is very engaging and the suspense builds steadily. The tension increases as first the mother and then the father become involved and “time ticked on.” The interior monologue at “Oh, no, she is too young” adds to the tension and suspense.

Details in the writing lead to a sense of being shown and not told. The window seems 40 feet high, all the strength is required, and the window is a tight fit.

When the speaker reaches Moriah, the tension is relieved not only by events but also through the use of everyday speech: “Hi, Moriah. Are you okay?”

Overall, there is a strong voice and many revealing and engaging choices of phrase. One example of word choice that contributes to closure and to the theme of the everyday nature of heroism is “opened the door with one simple turn of the key.”

DODEA Rubric Bank Traits Used: Organization, Analysis, Voice