

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INCIDENT
DoDEA Scoring Rubric
Grades 7 and 9

Score Point 6 – Exceptional Achievement

Incident. The writer narrates a coherent and engaging story that moves the narrative toward the central moment. The narrative tells readers what they need to know to understand what happened and to infer its significance to the writer.

The writer of a six-point essay will use some of the following strategies:

- Naming (specific names of people or objects, quantities, numbers)
- Describing visual details of scenes, objects, or people (size, colors, shapes, features, dress).
- Describing sounds or smells of the scene.
- Narrating specific actions (movements, gestures, postures, expressions).
- Creating dialogues, interior monologues, or expressing remembered feelings or insights at the time of the incident.
- Slowing the pace to elaborate the central moment of the incident.
- Creating suspense or tension.
- Including the element of surprise.
- Comparing or contrasting other scenes or people.

Rather than minimizing events, the writer of a six-point essay dramatizes the incident, using strategies like those above.

Context. Writer locates the incident in a particular setting and orients the reader to scene, people, and events. The writer goes beyond simply identifying or pointing to the scene or people by using carefully chosen details relevant to the incident. The writer may devote considerable space in the essay to orienting readers, describing the scene and people, and providing background or context for the incident – but not at the expense of a well-told incident. In a six-point essay, there is balance between static context and dramatic, narrated incident.

Significance. The essay reveals why the incident was important to the writer. This significance can be either implied or stated. If the significance is implied, the reader can infer it confidently. The significance may be apparent in the writer's insights at the time of the incident or in reflections from the writer's present perspective. Those insights and reflections may appear integrated into the narration or in the conclusion to the essay. The reflections may be humorous.

Voice and Style. In a six-point essay we hear an authentic voice that reveals the writer's attitude toward the incident. A six-point essay includes well-chosen details, apt words, and graceful, varied sentences.

It often includes word plan and imagery. A six-point essay engages the reader from the start and moves to a satisfying closure.

Score Point 5 – Commendable Achievement

Incident. As in a six-point essay, the incident is coherent and engaging. The essay moves toward a central moment but with less drama than a six-point essay. A five-point essay relies on a narrower range of narrative strategies. A five-point essay may be structurally more predictable than a six-point essay, and it may be less focused than an essay graded six-points, especially toward the end. Still, a five-point essay tells a clear, engaging story.

Context. The five-point essay has an appropriate and adequate context as in a six-point essay. Context does not dominate the essay at the expense of the incident.

Significance. Significance can be either implied or stated but will be clear, either through remembered or present reflections. The reflections may be less well integrated into the essay than in a six-point essay, but they will not be superficial. The reflections will be insightful but not as probing as those in a six-point essay.

Voice and Style. As in a six-point essay, we hear authentic voice in a five-point essay. The essay is competent stylistically but may not have the grace, surprise, or

sparkle of a six-point essay. Like a six-point essay, a five-point essay begins engagingly and closes in a satisfying way.

Score Point 4 – Adequate Achievement

Incident. Incident is well told but may lack the coherence of a five-point essay. There may be digressions, but the story comes back on track quickly. Some four-point essays are smoothly told yet unrealized dramatically. There is limited use of strategies.

Context. Context will be adequate to orient readers to the incident.

Significance. Significance is either implied or stated. Reflection is not as insightful as those in a five-point essay and may be only tacked on at the end.

Voice and Style. We usually hear the voice of an earnest storyteller. We find predictable sentences and word choice.

Score Point 3 – Some Evidence of Achievement

Incident. The essay may fail to focus on an incident, or it may tell an incident without orienting context or significance. Essay is usually quite brief. If longer, it may be rambling, fragmentary, or may not include details. The writer attempts to construct the incident but fails to do so because of omissions, erratic jumps in time or place, or breakdowns in cohesion.

Context. The writer of a three-point essay may either devote too much space to context while neglecting the narrative or begin abruptly without necessary orientation.

Significance. Significance is implied to some degree or briefly stated. We have an idea why the incident was memorable, although reflections may not be especially insightful.

Voice and Style. The writer does not seem to be seeing the incident as it happened. The writer relates the incident in uninvolved way. Predictable sentences and word choice are used.

Score Point 2 – Limited Evidence of Achievement

Incident. The essay may fail to focus on an incident, or it may tell an incident without orienting context or significance. Essay is usually quite brief. If longer, it may be rambling, fragmentary, or may not include details. The writer attempts to construct the incident but fails to do so because of omissions, erratic jumps in time or place, or breakdowns in cohesion.

Context. The context may be limited or even missing.

Significance. The writer of a two-point essay includes few reflections, if any. Reflections may seem superficial.

Voice and Style. The writer does not seem to be relating specific details about the incident. Evidence of personal involvement in incident is minimal. Sentences may be too short or long in a disorderly way.

Score Point 1 – Minimal Evidence of Achievement

The writer responds to the prompt but usually only briefly.

Incident. The writer of a one-point essay may refer to an incident without identifying it specifically or may only imply the incident in the context. The writer may point to an incident without developing it conclusively. The reader may need to infer the incident. In the essay, the writer may focus on others instead of himself or herself.

Context. In the one-point essay, context is limited or even missing.

Significance. Little or no significance is implied or stated.

Voice and Style. The writer of this essay communicates little or no evidence of personal involvement in incident. Lapses in sentence control or diction interfere significantly with the sense of the paper.

Score Point 0 – Inappropriate Response

Off Topic.

