

KIPP:WHEATLEY

2nd Annual KIPP Wheatley Writing Contest: Celebrating Excellent KIPPster Writing

First Place Winners

Juan Zambrano, 2nd grade
KIPP Montbello Elementary



Daniel Castillo, 3rd grade
KIPP Explore Academy



Chelsea Davis, 6th grade
KIPP South Fulton Academy



Second Place Winners

Elandra Spears, 1st grade
KIPP Delta Literacy Academy



Kian Dowlatabadi, 5th grade
KIPP Heritage Academy



Chidinma Esiem, 6th grade
KIPP Rise Academy



Third Place Winners

Eriyah Williams, Kindergarten
KIPP Tech Valley Primary



Maiten Le, 5th grade
KIPP Heritage Academy



Becky Jiang, 8th grade
KIPP Bayview Academy



KIPP Wheatley writing contest winner announcement:

We are blown away and overjoyed to announce the second annual KIPP Wheatley writing contest winners!

For the second year, we asked teachers to help us celebrate excellent student writing by sharing work from the KIPP Wheatley focus writing tasks. The writing tasks ask students to showcase their comprehension of texts they're reading, their knowledge of content and literacy concepts, and their ability to write in one of three genres: narrative, informative/informational, and opinion.

We received almost 100 entries from students in grades K-8 from coast to coast. The judges were delighted by their words and drawings and astounded by their knowledge, skills, and craft. After a comprehensive review and judging process, nine winners were selected in three grade level categories (K-2, 3-5, and 6-8). Drumroll, please...



Juan Zambrano

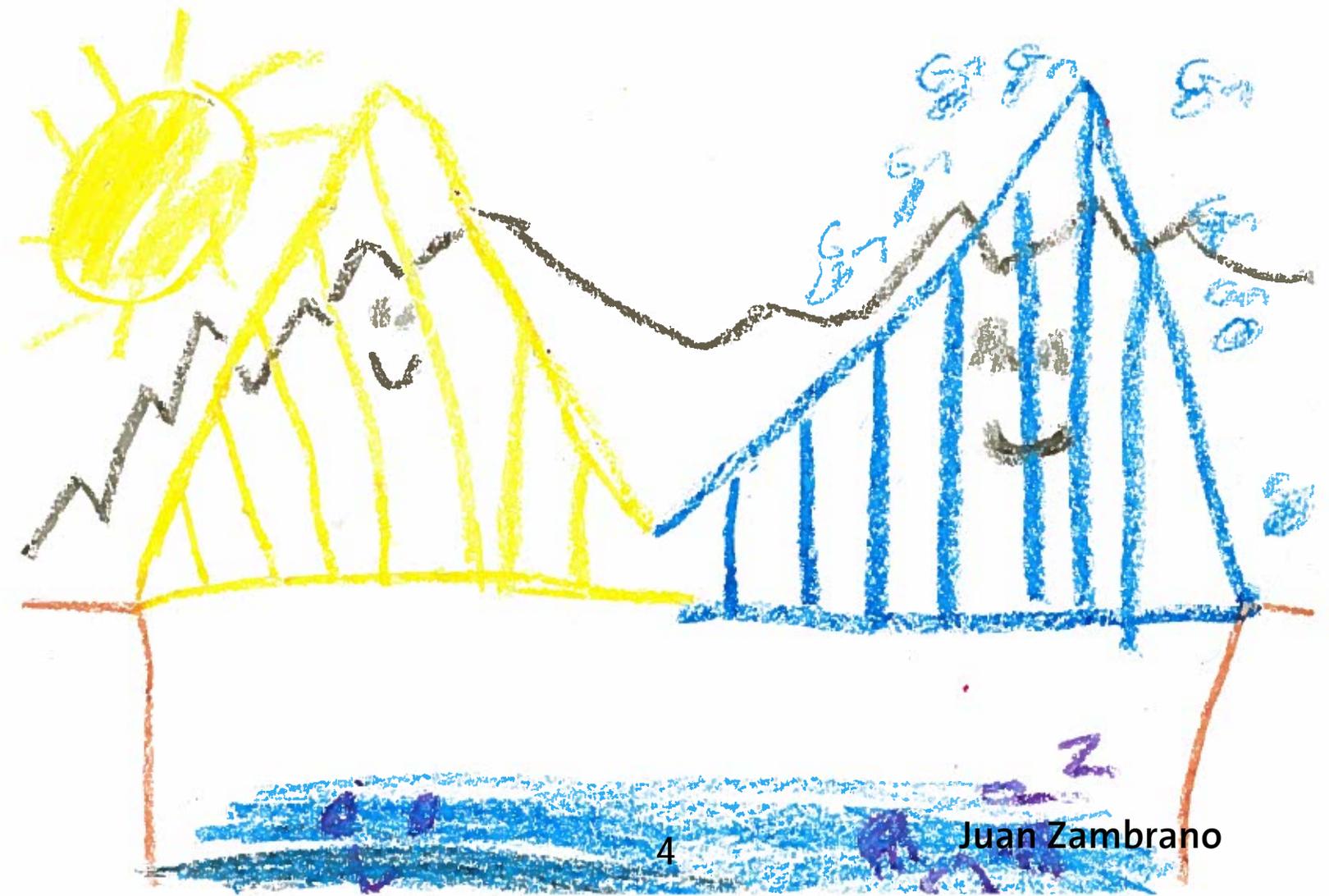
First Place

2nd Grade with Paige Schreckengast

KIPP Montbello Elementary

KIPP Colorado

The golden gate bridge wakes up
ready to shine as gold as coins
as the cars pass the bridge listens
to the wind sing
falls asleep
over the bridge
The bridge starts
saying shine
Good night





Daniel Castillo

First Place

3rd Grade with Ashley Minor

KIPP Explore Academy

KIPP Houston

Prompt: Write a one-paragraph speech to the President of the United States.

- Argue whether or not Marian Anderson should be on the back of the five-dollar bill.
- Explain why using evidence from *When Marian Sang*.

How long has it been since we changed who is honored on our American bill? Mr. President, I think Marian Anderson's achievements have to be recognized by putting her face on the back of the \$5 bill. First, Marian Anderson was invited to perform on well-known stages in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark! What an achievement! Can you believe Arturo Toscanini (a world-famous conductor) said that what he heard was a privilege to hear only once a hundred years? That's pretty much a one in a million compliment. I can only imagine how amazing that would be to hear! Another reason we must place Marian Anderson on the \$5 bill is that our very own president Roosevelt approved and invited Marian to sing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial! That's the monument that is on our \$5 dollar bill right now! What a coincidence! Not just anyone gets that kind of an invitation. Because Marian had so much courage, she was able to sing in front of 75,000 people! After you add Marian's face to the \$5 bill, you will make history too. You can be responsible for putting such a deserving African American woman on our currency. You would always be remembered

For this! Marian Anderson is just as memorable
as all of the other famous figures that are
on our country's money. In my opinion, putting
Marian Anderson on the \$5 bill is a great way
to show that our nation is proud of all
contributions made by both men AND women!!
I trust you will make the right decision
Mr. President. Thank you.



Chelsea Davis

First Place

6th Grade with Lauren VanCamp

KIPP South Fulton Academy

KIPP Metro Atlanta

What I Really Wanted to Say

By: Chelsea Davis

November 4, 2008 was the day Obama became president and was the best day of many people's lives. But for Malaja, it was the worst day of her life. After 20 years of marriage; 10 spent with each other and 10 spent yelling, screaming, and cursing at each other, her parents finally split up. As an only child, a divorce weighs much heavier. As an only child, all you can do is turn the TV up loud enough to mask the cursing, yelling, and screaming.

Malaja's parents split up when she was 13 and stayed "separated" for two years. Now things are changing, changing for the worst.

"Just stay safe, okay. I will call you later; I have to get to the office. My flight leaves at 5:00" Malaja's mom, Marie, said. She had an out of town business trip and would be gone for three weeks. Malaja was going to spend that time with her father, Zeph. "Have fun Mom. I love you!" Malaja said as she hugged her mom goodbye. She was 16 now and spending time with her father wasn't at the top of her priority list. She knew he was an alcoholic and totally incapable of taking care of himself. He lived with his brother in basically a frat house. Malaja locked the door behind her mother and sat on the couch. She opened up her MacBook and skyped her dad. He answered after the fourth ring. He looked a little dazed, his hair in a curly mess and he was wearing a shirt covered in stains. "Hey, Dad." Malaja said dryly, but with a little worry in her voice. "Hey Pumpkin, how are you?" her dad replied.

Malaja felt a wave of warmth at the sound of her father's voice and his Cuban accent. "I'm good dad, I can't wait to see you." "Me neither! Me and Uncle Ben got your room together and cleaned up the house for you." "Thanks Dad, you didn't have to do that." "Yeah, well...anyway, we'll see you in a minute." Zeph smiled before signing off. His smile was always warm and charming, making Malaja secretly miss her dad even more. Malaja closed her computer and went upstairs to pack. When she was done she drove to her dad's house.

"Laja!" Uncle Ben exclaimed as he greeted Malaja at the door. Malaja looked around the house and was fairly surprised at how clean the house actually was. "Hey, Uncle Ben! Where's dad?" she said as she sat her bags in the corridor. "He's in the kitchen..." just before he finished Zeph ran out and embraced his daughter. "Malaja! I missed you so much." he said as he buried his face in the daughter's long curly black hair. Malaja could smell the vodka on her father's breath but decided to look past it and hugged him with all her might. She tried her best to hold the moment in place before everything went south.

Malaja walked upstairs and when she came to her bedroom door at the end of the hall it had her name on it in big gold letters. She smiled at the fact that her dad still remembered her fascination with the color. She walked into a sunlit room with a gold, vintage theme. It made her heart want to do a happy dance; she absolutely loved what her father was capable of when he was sober.

Dinner came around and everyone was in their pajamas sitting on the couch eating nachos and watching Gossip Girl. Zeph drank a beer and Malaja couldn't help but get this pang of anxiety, scared that he might drink too much. Malaja went to go put her plate away when her mom called. She ran upstairs to her room and answered the phone.

"Hey, mom."

"Hello darling how is everything?"

"Fine, we were just eating dinner."

"Oh, what is your father doing?"

"Watching Gossip Girl with Uncle Ben."

"Is he drinking?"

"Just a beer."

"Well you tell that good for nothing alcoholic to throw it away before he does something stupid again."

"Mom!"

"He needs to learn when to be a parent and when to be an alcoholic."

"Mom...I...I have to go." Malaja hung up the phone as she tried her best to swallow the lump in her throat. She hated it when her mom talked about her dad like that, like they never were married and fell in love. She walked back downstairs and plopped on the couch. She felt like she was being held down by guilt.

She hated being the only child, as the only child all you parents want to do is protect you. So they keep you out of the loop and spare you the gory details. Malaja never asked for them either because she already knew. She knew that her mother used to cry herself to sleep, no matter how much she tried to cover it up. She knew how broken down her father was and how scared he was that he might lose her. She knows that both are fighting over custody, but she has the last say.

"Hey you guys! We should go to the football game tomorrow!" Uncle Ben exclaimed. Zeph's face lights up, "We should! That would be so much fun. What do you think Malaja?" he replied. Malaja snapped out of her daze and faced her father, "Yeah Dad, that sounds great."

“Do you have everything, Laja?” Zeph asked his daughter as she came down the stairs. “Yeah, let’s go.” she replied. He stopped in front of her for a moment and stared into her light brown eyes. He saw the worry and loneliness in them; he knew how much she wanted him to be okay. “Okay, let’s go.” the two walked out the door and joined Ben in the Volvo. They drove to the football game as Ben and Malaja cracked jokes about Zeph’s unruly hair and trash talked each other’s favorite football teams. They finally got to the stadium and climbed out of the car. People were swarming everywhere, having tailgate parties and little kids were chasing each other around the parking lot.

They took their seats and Zeph immediately bought a cold beer. Once the game started the whole stadium was excited and cheering. By the third quarter Zeph had his sixth beer. The game was over and everyone was leaving when some guy bumped into Zeph. Zeph suddenly felt this wave of adrenaline. “Hey! Watch where you’re going, man!” he yelled at the random guy’s back. He was slurring his words and waving his arms. He heard Ben calling his name and telling him to calm down, but the guy had already turned around and was walking towards him. “Well next time stay out of my way.” he said. The man started to walk away but Zeph grabbed him by the collar and aimed for his jaw.

The guy was caught off guard and fell to the ground, creating a commotion in the crowd. People started to swarm as Zeph felt his heart race. He started to sweat and pant as he looked for Ben in the ocean of bodies. Ben pulled him out of the crowd. “Where...where’s Malaja?” Zeph asked mostly out of breath.

“She left.”

“What do you mean she “left”? She took the car?”

“No, she took an Uber. She was upset, yet, not surprised.”

“It’s that guy’s fault! He was basically asking for it.”

“NO! It’s you! She left because she knew what was bound to happen after we lost you to the crowd. She knew you were drunk and that you were always going to be—and I quote—

“incapable of taking care of himself”. That’s why she left, because it was your fault.” Zeph stumbled and caught himself against Ben, finally noticing how drunk he really was. “Do you even know why you drink?” Ben asked as they walked to the car.

It’s because being drunk means I’m not expected to think about the divorce, and Marie, and what Malaja thinks about me. Being drunk means numbing myself to the pain. That is what Zeph wanted to say. Instead, he vomited on the side of the car.

For the next week Malaja stayed a certain distance away from her father. She was constantly being held down by guilt. She wanted to tell her dad everything, but she always wondered if that would kill him before the alcohol did. Malaja never called her mom since the first time they talked. She didn't want her mom to know what happened at the stadium. But in all honesty, she didn't want her mom to think any less of her father than she already did. They had five more days left and Malaja had a decision to make. "Malaja, can we talk?" Zeph asked sticking his head in Malaja's room. Malaja nodded and joined her father on the balcony for coffee. "I'm sorry about what happened at the stadium." Zeph started. Malaja saw the sorrow and embarrassment he felt in his face. All Malaja wanted to do was take all of his worries away. "I know." she replied.

"I'm trying my best, Laja."

"I know, dad."

"Please forgive me."

"I forgive you, but that doesn't change what you did. I want you to want to get better."

"I...I'm trying."

"Truth is dad, you're not. I know you're scared but so am I. So are mom and Ben. We're all scared of what's going to happen when I choose. But the future is unavoidable." Malaja felt her throat close and her eyes start to water. "Malaja, I love you with all my heart. You're right; I am scared, but I'm fine with whatever decision you make. I just want you to be happy." Zeph replied, watching the tears fall down Malaja's face. "I'll be happy when you're okay." she said as she got up and walked away.

I just want you to be happy, Dad is what Malaja really wanted to say; but instead she packed her stuff up and called her mom.

"It's been five months since she left and two months since I've been out of jail. I drank to numb the pain, but now I know that it makes it harder for everyone else" Zeph said as he slumped in his chair and finally exhaled. "Well Zeph, thank you for coming to our AA meeting. I hope we can help you make your daughter proud."



Elandra Spears

Second Place

1st Grade with Jessica Walker

KIPP Delta Literacy Academy

KIPP Delta

Elandra Spears

April 12, 2017

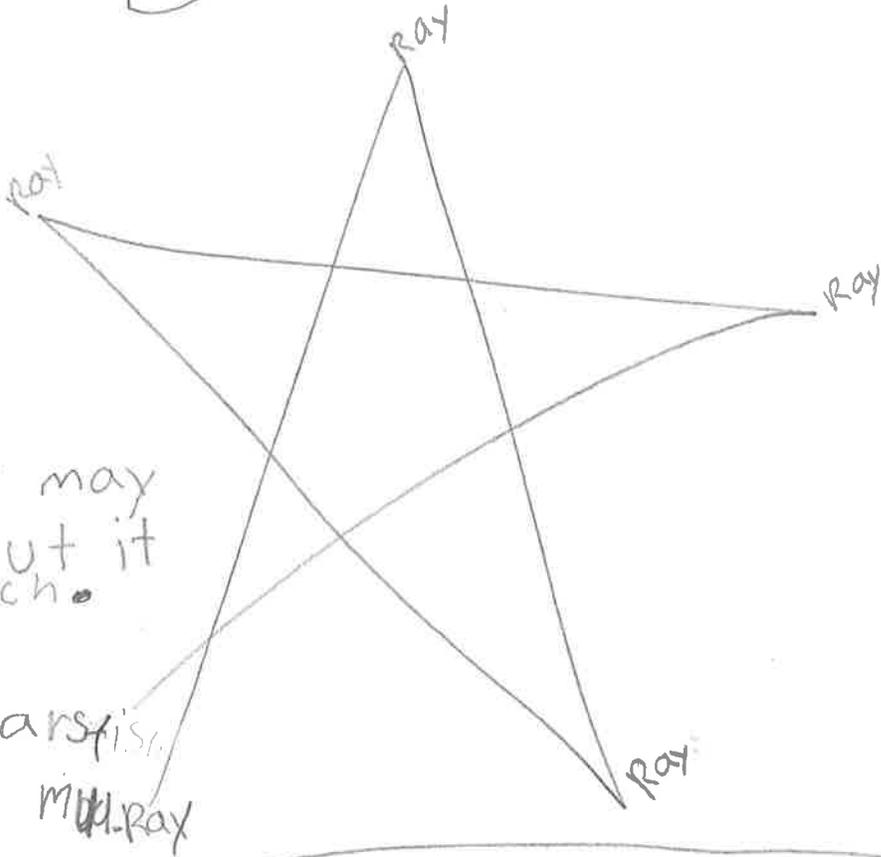
My topic is how seahorses and starfish behave in different ways.

When a predator comes, the seahorses become camouflaged so its enemy wouldn't see him. Then, seahorses curl up to go up and to drop lower in the ocean. Last, the seahorses twist their tails so they can blend in together.

On the other end, mud
starfish hide in the mud. And
starfish hunts for mussels
to eat. Also, the the starfish
climb on a clam to open it.
In the end, starfish and
seahorses behave in different
ways.

Elandra Spears
April 12, 2017

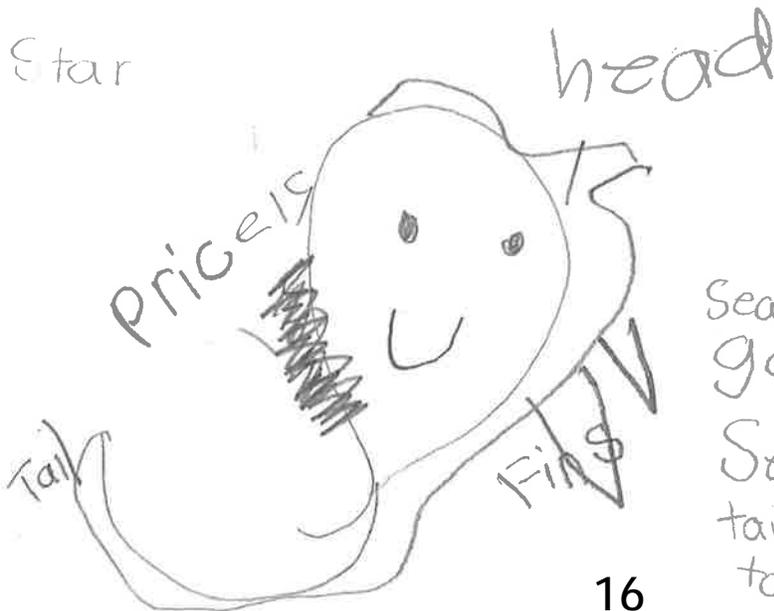
Starfish



A Starfish Ray may come off but it will not hurt much.

A mud starfish hide in the mud ray

Sea Horses



Seahorses curl up to go down or to deeper.
Seahorses twist their tails so they can blend together.

Elandra Spears



Kian Dowlatabadi

Second Place

5th Grade with Krystal Lazaro

KIPP Heritage Academy

KIPP Bay Area



Name: Kian Dowlatabadi
College: UC Davis
April 13, 2017

End of Module Focus Writing Task

What happens to Widge after the conclusion of *The Shakespeare Stealer*? Create the next scene of what happens after the story ends. Your scene/chapter should be a logical extension of the characters' actions and the themes of the book. You may use a first- or third-person narrator.

"*En guard*" Sander said while deflecting Jack's sword. Mr. Pope and I were watching Sander and Jack fencing. I glanced nervously each time Jack or Sander's slashed at each other. If one of them gets injured, who ken's who is going to take over the play performing Tomorrow. Sander came close to Jack and struck him. This time, instead of hitting the protective plate: it hit Jack in the shoulder. He howled in pain and crumpled on to the floor and Mr. Pope and I ran over to him.

"You'll be fine", Mr. Pope assured. But I knew he wouldn't, the gash on his shoulder didn't look good.

"I'm sorry! I didn't mean it!" Sander cried out.

"Look it's okay." Mr. Pope said while struggling to carry Jack. "Just help me carry him"

We carried Jack to his bed. Mr. Pope wrapped a cloth around his shoulder and gave a hand gesture to go away. "Go along boys, this is not your business."

Me and Sander walked away and exited the Globe theater. I could tell on Sander's face that he was worried. So was I, if Jack can't play, then who can? Will we have to cancel the play? We walked down the pathway and I saw a figure standing in the shadows.

"Who is this! Show your face!" I yelled at the figure.

"It that how you greet a lady?" The figure Asked.

"Julia?" Both Sander and I run over to her. Both of us are surprised that she came back after ten years.

"Yes boys. It is nice to meet you too." Julia said while we came to hug her.

"Is anything new today, anything exciting."

"Unfortunately there is." I sigh. "Sander here mistakenly gashed Jack in the shoulder with his sword while practice."

"I was sorry!"

"Poor thing, I hope he is okay." Julia said.

"I hope, that gash looked bad." I said.

"Wait! Julia, you are a great actor right?" Sander asked.

"Yes, why do you ask?"



Chidinma Esielem

Second Place

6th Grade with Megan Gassaway Golden

KIPP Rise Academy

KIPP New Jersey

Name: Chidinma Esielem

Date: 12/22/16

Advisory: Rutgers

End of Module Writing Process Piece

Can you imagine losing all your loved ones and practically having to start a completely divergent and new life? Would you still have hope that things would be better? Esperanza from Esperanza Rising, written by Pam Munoz Ryan, surely did. Even though she goes through such horrible tribulations, she manages to grab that little shred of hope and bring it into the light. Esperanza is the epitome of the proverb “He who falls today may rise tomorrow.” This proverb conveys the meaning of failing then trying once again, which will lead to success. Many immigrants experienced this by not being able to bring their loved ones when immigrating, but rose when they created wonderful lives in America.

A myriad of immigrants had difficulty bringing their family to America with them, which to them counted as a significant failure. In “Relive a Boy’s Journey to America,” an article about a young immigrant boy named Seymour Reichtzeit, and how his family faces similar obstacles, he states, “But I faced a new problem... My family could not get permission to come. They were in Poland, and my father and I were in America. How would we be a family again?” This example proves how many immigrants who couldn’t bring their families failed when they came to America. Getting to America was great, but without their whole family to experience it with, the small success seemed to diminish. Another immigrant who experienced this was Sunci Asuncion, a former Cuban, and now United States citizen. In “Sunci’s Story,” an article written by Susan J. Hofetetter, Sunci experiences this same struggle. In the text it says, “Meanwhile life was difficult for Sunci back in Florida... She was enrolled in school, but she spoke little English and had no friends. She was confused about her parent’s absence.” This piece of evidence portrays the idea that when immigrants did not have their family present with them, it was hard for them to adapt. This was why bringing your family to America with was such a great thing; They were able to experience their new life *together*.

Although, immigrants faced many failures, they rose like a phoenix when they were able to create and mold new lives in America. Even though in “Relive a Boy’s Journey to America” Seymour goes through many obstacles, he gets his own share of success. In the text it states, “I kept singing as a young man and became a star of Yiddish theater. I appeared onstage and made many records... I have always been very happy to be in this wonderful country.” This explains how many immigrants overlooked their troubles and worked hard to reach success. Even though Seymour had obstacles working against him in the beginning, he tried hard to rise above them, which led to him having a beautiful life in America. Just like Seymour, Sunci from “Sunci’s Story” gets through her barriers, and also gets a favorable outcome. In the text, Sunci says, “I’ve had the freedom to follow my religion, express myself and under the right of free speech, be educated and attend the university.” This explicates how immigrants rose because Sunci faced hard times, but she was able to overlook them and try again towards a successful life. She ultimately did achieve this and has been given better opportunities because she she was able to push through.

In the novel, Esperanza Rising, Esperanza undergoes a difficult time and her hope starts draining. But she perseveres for herself and soon gets a happy ending, which is why she greatly portrays the proverb “He who falls today may rise tomorrow.” It just goes to show how throughout life

everyone will face tribulations that will push them down, but they have to be able to pick themselves up and finally rise. Just be mindful of the fact that terrible things *will* happen, but only you can shape it into a success.



Eriyah Williams

Third Place

Kindergarten with Meredith Harris

KIPP Tech Valley Primary

KIPP Albany

Martin's Dream

Martin Luther King had a dream.

He wanted to work together

with the people to change

America. He wanted blacks and whites

to be friends and treat each other

like brother and sister. He wanted

people to not be judged by the

color of skin. He wanted all

black and white kids to play

together and be equal. He wanted

all people to be free. This is

Martin Luther King's dream for

the future.





Maiten Le

Third Place

5th Grade with Krystal Lazaro

KIPP Heritage Academy

KIPP Bay Area

Name: Maitien Le
Date: 1/26-30/17
College: UCSB

Focus Writing Task 2: Encyclopedia Article

Module 2, Focus Writing Task 2 Prompt:

Write an encyclopedia article that describes the events of the Nez Perce War.

Create your article below:

The History of the Nez Perce War

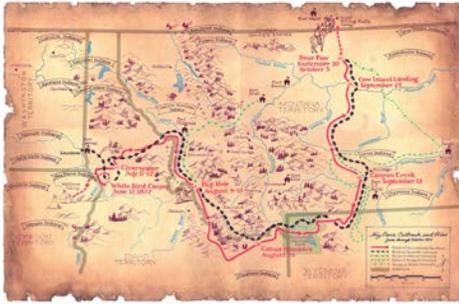


The Native American Nez Perce tribe, mounted on horses

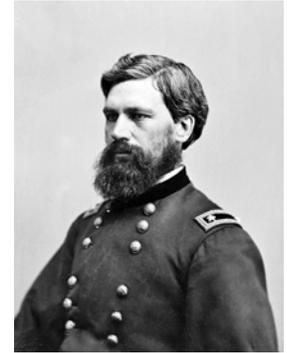
The Nez Perce War took place in 1877, when the Nez Perce's, a Native American tribe, head chiefs commanded the Nez Perce to march from Wallowa Valley to the Idaho Territory. This was caused when Chief Joseph, one of the leaders in the Nez Perce, wanted to keep his tribe protected. They journeyed for more than 1,000 miles, following a route to Canada. The US government attacked with more than 2,000 US soldiers to force the Nez Perce on a reservation. The Native American tribe surrendered to the US Army when they realized they were outnumbered. The Nez Perce surrendered reluctantly, forced onto reservations the US government ordered them to, and were assimilated.

The Beginning

Chief Joseph was a significant part in the Nez Perce tribe. His father, Joseph the Elder, had an unusual relationship with the US government and army. He was born in 1785 and was one of the first Nez Perce to convert into Christianity. He was a supporter of the Nez Perce's peace with the white people. This went on until 1863, while the government was following a gold rush straight into the Nez Perce's territory, they took acres of the tribe's land. When Joseph the Elder knew what was happening to his tribe, he immediately felt betrayed. He then destroyed his bible and his American flag. He refused to move his tribe to the new reservation. When he died in 1871, his son, Chief Joseph, inherited his name. Situations between the US government and the Nez Perce tribe became even more brutal. Later on, Chief Joseph and his tribe was forced to face General Oliver Otis Howard, who threatened to attack his tribe unless Chief Joseph lead his tribe onto the Idaho reservation. On the long journey to



Idaho, almost about twenty unsuspecting Nez Perce members raided a white settlement nearby. The army of white soldiers began to attack the Nez Perce. Chief Joseph then cast the Nez Perce with the war leaders.



Councils and Meetings

In 1877, in between the fights and battles between the US government and the Nez Perce, there were meetings where the US Cavalry and the Nez Perce would discuss their beliefs and decisions, mainly about whether or not the Native American tribe would have to permanently live on the reservation. When the Nez Perce and the US soldiers were in the final council, General Howard offends the Nez Perce with his forceful personality, stating, *“It is my usual manner, proceeding from the kindest of feelings, and from an endeavor to behave as a gentleman to the weakest or most ignorant human being.”* This plainly shows that General Howard imagines the Nez Perce as an uncivilized group of Native Americans. In the Lapwai final council, the Native American tribe, the Nez Perce, also spoke against General Howard’s opinion statement. Toohoolhoolzote, one of the Nez Perce’s most powerful chiefs, spoke, disagreeing with General Howard. In the final council, this is presented when Toohoolhoolzote says, *“You have no right to compare us, grown men, to children. Children do not think for themselves. Grown men do think for themselves. The government at Washington cannot think for us.”* Toohoolhoolzote does not believe that the government should have been able to decide for him and his tribe. The US government thought differently about each other, and both attended the councils in Lapwai to prove each other wrong. *General Oliver Otis Howard*

Made History



The Nez Perce war was an outstanding yet devastating moment in American history. The 1,000 mile march to the Canadian border was astonishing. The Nez Perce faced many hardships during their stride to Canada, regardless of not being able to reach the country. Finally, only 40 miles short of his Canadian goal, Chief Joseph was cornered by the U.S. Army, and his people were forcibly relocated to a nonproductive reservation. The conflict between the U.S. government and the Nez Perce was one of the most tragic of the many Indian wars. Both sides suffered serious casualties. This catastrophic time in the Indian history was disastrous and led to many deaths and injuries.



Becky Jiang

Third Place

8th Grade with Regina Pair

KIPP Bayview Academy

KIPP Bay Area

Ms. Pair: (415) 537-0962	Name: Becky Jiang
Module 1: The Spirit of Chicago (EOM)	Homeroom: Radford
KIPP Bayview Academy, Grade 8	Date: Thursday, October 13, 2016

October 8, 1871

It was certainly nice for my parents to give me a present on Poppy's birthday. Ah yes, I know exactly what to do with a diary as it says so clearly on the slip of paper embossed to the cover.

To start with, I certainly don't plan on calling this a diary. It's just my journal, my reporter's journal. For practice. I may not actually have a job yet, but I know what I'll be in the future. The greatest reporter to come out of Chicago, and after announcing my presence, I'll travel the world. Of course all that's rather far in the future, I'm still only 14 right now. And the most amusing news I can report so far is that my sister has turned 8 today and another part of Chicago has caught on fire. Again. It's all so boring around here.

But I guess it's better than nothing, so I might as well talk about that. The fire isn't close to my house at all, but I'll find a way to get closer for sure. A reporter needs to get on the scene as fast as possible so they can get the whole story with all the juicy details. And according to my mother

~~and her gossiping friends she invites over anonymous information source, Mrs. O'Leary's cow is to blame...~~

oh, looks like this is all I can write for now. I've been scrunched up in the corner of my room behind my bed so there wouldn't be any interruptions or distractions but I can smell something burning downstairs.

~~Maybe the fire was closer than I thought?~~

I didn't expect it to reach us. The fire was blocks away, our house was blocks away. But then the flames raced with the winds on the same team against the street of inanimate houses we lived on and embers soon claimed our roof as their food. Red and orange tongues that charred and scorched the land spun out in blazing trails along the perilous sidewalks. ~~It reached us so fast, it was hypnotizing to watch, I barely heard the screams and yelling in the background.~~

we had to leave immediately of course. I barely managed to grab you and my pencil, you know. Little Poppy - I've spoken to you about my sister, haven't I? - had to leave behind most of her birthday presents, namely the more useless ones. ~~No Poppy dearest, your new ragdoll with her pretty dress won't save you from the fire.~~

we have enough clothes for a few more days while we stay with mom's sister. Aunt and her husband have no kids, so the matter of space and rooms hasn't proved to be a problem. I'm actually sitting with my back pressed up to the wall right now, knees tucked in to avoid rocking the bed Poppy's napping on.

Still... it shouldn't have been like this . ~~no matter how exciting it feels and how fun this all seems but I shouldn't feel this way, right?~~

I thought the fire was safe, in a strange and twisted way. I knew it wasn't really safe, fires burn things and humans are things. I thought it was safe in the way I wouldn't get burned, the house wouldn't be eaten up in a glorious blaze, and my dreams wouldn't echo with the screams of our old neighbors who got trapped in their house. I suppose 'nightmares' is a more accurate term now though.

Here's to ending another entry. Poppy's awake from her nap and there are still tears in her system. Just a guess, but telling her to get over Miss Pretty-Doll won't help. Especially since Miss Pretty-Doll is now Miss Ashes-and-Gone-Forever.

After comforting her, it'll be me who needs to nap. I still feel sore from running earlier. We just packed up and... ran. It's still kind of difficult to believe. I grew up in that house, and if I look at it now, I'll only see a ghost of my memories and the reality of a burnt lot with cinders and ashes.

It shouldn't have happened like this. ~~So why was I smiling when I wrote this entry?~~

It had all ended in rain and tears. It's over. ~~No of course I don't feel sad. This can't be sadness, right?~~

It's strange going back to where the house used to be and finding only ashes and cinders as my last entry predicted. It won't be like this for long now though, they'll start rebuilding soon, I'm sure of it.

why does this feel so ~~unnatural~~ wrong?

I grew up in there, in that house with the creaking floorboard two steps in the front door and the crack in my bedroom wall that needed a rag stuffed in every winter to keep the warmth in. The house with a permanent spider web in the top corner of the kitchen no one could reach to clean. There was a pattern in the wooden floor of Poppy's room that looked like a map of England if you squinted just right.

~~why does this feel so wrong~~

You know those 'life-changing-events' people talk about? I expect the fire to have seriously screwed up and flipped a lot of lives around and upside down, but it doesn't feel like that to me. I wonder if the fire was still my life changing event, but I just don't know how my life has changed

yet. I still feel the same. I don't think that anything of importance has changed since that fire, at least to me. Even if I talk about the house, I have memories, and that's enough.

And besides it was ~~worth~~ it a beautiful fire. I snuck out to watch it the day it died. Orange and red against smoky skies, the crackling and hissing as wood was burned, the silence tortured by screams of despair. But the noise faded into the background the more I stared. It really is hypnotizing.

No, I don't think things have changed at all. Not that I'd be an expert on this, but... it feels all too normal now. All so boring. The fire was exciting in its ways of introducing a situation not easily escaped. It was fun in its ways of letting you start over, starting your life over if needed. As long as your life wasn't ended before that of course.

~~So is it wrong for me to wish for another fire?~~

~~The shooting star I saw just when the fire ended looked promising.~~
