

Hope

Title refers to the main idea of the essay.

Engaging beginning that supports the analysis of text and suggests a personal connection to the ideas of the text

→ When you are having a bad day or feeling like you can't do anything right, what do you do to keep on going? Many people try to find something hopeful when things are hard, because hope can often bring you up out of a rut. In the poem "Hope is the Thing with Feathers," the poet Emily Dickinson uses a bird in a storm as a metaphor for hope during a hard time. Dickinson employs a positive, encouraging mood to establish the theme that hope can transform a dreary situation into a great one.

Interpretation is perceptive and convincing, referencing the main metaphor of the text.

First body paragraph supports the assertion that "Dickinson employs a positive, encouraging mood..."

→ Dickinson creates an encouraging mood for this poem. She writes that the bird, "sings the tune.../and never stops at all" (3-4). This means that the bird is always happy because it doesn't ever stop singing its song. This image is meant to inspire the reader to be like the bird, happy and positive even when things are tough. Furthermore, the author uses another metaphor to describes hope, "the little bird/ that kept so many warm" (7-8). We know that a little bird cannot actually keep someone warm, but this quote sets a comforting tone since warmth is generally a comforting feeling.

Direct quotation from poem (with line citations) shows how Dickinson creates a mood using her central metaphor.

Second body paragraph supports the assertion that Dickinson

"establish(es) the theme that hope can transform a dreary situation into a great one."

The theme of this poem is that having hope can turn the worst situation into the best. The quote that made me think this was when the author wrote, "and sweetest in the gale is heard" (5). This line means that hope can help you most during a challenge. The gale or storm that the author refers to is a metaphor for the obstacles that one will come across and must overcome in life. The song that is heard represents hope.

Direct quotation from poem (with line citation) shows how Dickinson demonstrates this theme using her central metaphor.

The third body paragraph revisits the idea that Dickinson uses a central metaphor (the bird) to make a statement about the nature of hope.

A literal reading of this poem would suggest this poem is merely describing a bird during a storm. However, the opening stanza of the poem, "hope is the thing with feathers" (1) clearly indicates that the author is employing an extended metaphor and is comparing hope to something with feathers, like a bird. The metaphor continues throughout the poem; the poet describes the bird singing without stopping, not giving up in the storm, and living in cold and danger. The poem ends, "Yet, never, in extremity, it asked a crumb of me" (11-12). In other words, the bird would not ask for a crumb even in the most severe circumstances. This is just like hope, an emotion given unconditionally.

Vivid and lively language is used throughout the essay; specific literary terms are used correctly.

Sentence structures are varied throughout the essay to sustain the reader's interest.

In this poem, Dickinson establishes an encouraging mood to show that hope can help you out of any predicament. This is an important lesson to learn because without hope, people may give up when things get tough instead of trying their hardest.

Effective conclusion restates the interpretation and summarizes the evidence in a fresh way.

Writing demonstrates proficient use of standard and academic English.

Commentary

This essay is a strong example of an 8th grade response to literature essay. The writing exhibits a great deal of insight and demonstrates a careful, close reading of the poem. The student shows that s/he understands the central literary device of the poem, and s/he is able to analyze this literary device to explicate meaning. The student makes sophisticated inferences about the impact of the text on a reader ("this image is meant to inspire the reader to..."); these inferences are supported with effective quotations, correct line citations, and original analysis of each quoted line (rather than the lines being left to "speak for themselves. The analysis moves beyond summary, attending to the tone, theme, and mood of the poem.