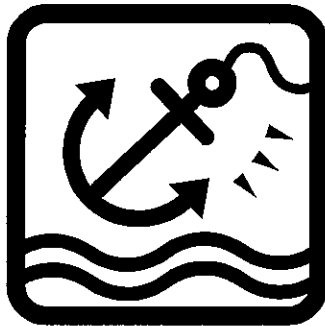


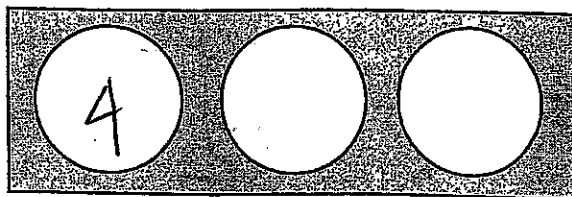
Oakland Unified School District Writing Proficiency Project



8th Grade Response to Literature Anchor Papers Reginald Lockett Prompt

Note: Please do not use the anchor papers with students prior to the administration of the Process Writing Assessment

Writing Sample



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START ESSAY HERE

"At the age of fourteen I was 'going for bad.'"
That is how the main character in "How I Started Writing Poetry" can be described at the beginning of the essay. By the end, Reginald says, "I stopped fighting too. I was reading books by just about every poet and writer..." Obviously there was some character change that took place within the story. In the essay, the change in character is caused by his creative writing class and teacher. I believe the message that is trying to be told by this story is: Having a passion about something can give you focus and direction. This theme is evident in the essay, in many cases in real life, and in characters in novels and movies.

Reginald starts out the story as a typical delinquent. He is trying to be cool in mannerisms, in clothing, and by getting in fights. He likes to learn and is quite smart, he just doesn't have any motivation. When he is put in a creative writing class, he finds his passion and becomes less of a "thug." After taking the class a couple of times, Reginald

"I wasn't running up and down the streets with the fellas anymore. ... I spent all my time writing in a manilla notebook." He enjoys writing poetry so he spends his spare time doing that as opposed to being in the streets and creating trouble.

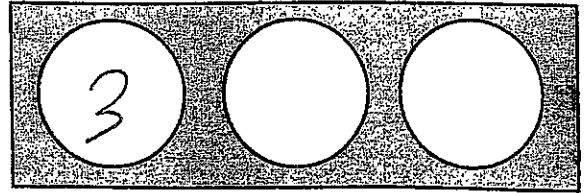
The teachers who started the creative writing class at his middle school wanted as many students as possible to feel inspired by the class. They put "some of the roughest, toughest kids that went to Hoover" in the class for a reason. They wanted them to have a creative outlet and a passion. If people enjoyed the class they would have a purpose that would help to keep them off the street. In Oakland today, there are many activity and sports centers. These have a function similar to the creative writing class. They keep kids away from the streets or just sitting in front of a television. Children don't need to go there to pursue their passion, but to discover what it is. In-mates in prisons also have things they can do to give them purpose and directions. All people need to do is figure out what it is they enjoy doing.

Many characters in novels and movies have a purpose based on an activity that they enjoy. Fonny in the novel "If Beale Street Could Talk"

discovers sculpting. He, like Reginald, is on the path to becoming a problem, "a thug", but pulls away from that lifestyle after learning an art. Fonny was placed in a workshop, not a classroom, but his story mirrors Reginald. In the novel "Blind Sighted" Kirk starts reading books to a blind woman and through that becomes a better person, gradually over time. He learns about new things not always related to books, like cooking, and that changes his activities like it does to Reginald. Having a passion for an art and activity is present in many books and movies.

Having a passion is not limited to fiction. There are real life people whose purpose is based on passion. Figures like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Simon Wiesenthal, and Gandhi all fought for things they thought important. Whether that was civil rights or bringing Nazi war criminals to trial is not important, they all followed their passion. Reginald's story, along with many others, reinforces the same theme. Having a passion about something can give you purpose and direction.

Writing Sample



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START ESSAY HERE

Most people think that once someone 'goes bad', they'll stay bad forever and they won't amount to anything. Reginald Lockett proved all these people wrong because he ended up becoming a poet; a career that neither he or his family thought was for him.

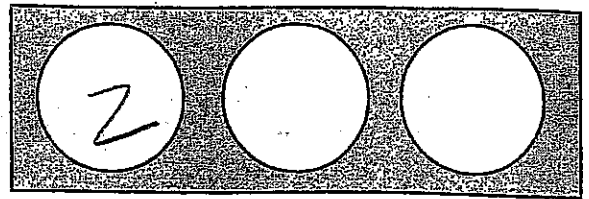
In his mini-autobiography, Mr. Lockett writes "All I wanted to do was project that image of being forever cool like Billy Bob..." I believe that in Reginald's "thug" phase, he wasn't trying to be disobedient or mean. He was simply trying to be cool so he could be accepted by his peers.

When Lockett was asked to write a poem in his creative writing class, he states, "I loved the sea so much that I would sometimes walk from my house on Market and West MacArthur all the way to the Berkeley Pier or take a bus to Ocean Beach in San Francisco whenever I wasn't up to no good." Stereotypically, "thuggish" people are only supposed to think about beating people up and other violent things, but apparently that isn't what Lockett was thinking about.

After writing a couple more poems in creative writing class, Lockett explains, "Shortly after this, I wasn't running up and down the streets with the fellas much anymore." Lockett had turned his life around, and he had proved everyone who thought he would never amount to anything wrong.

People think that once you go bad, you never go back, but Lockett showed that even the worst people have some good in them. It's important not to give up on someone who is "going for bad." This story shows that everybody has the ability to change.

Writing Sample



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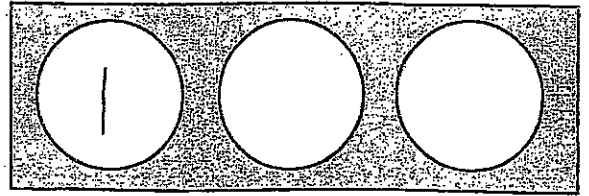
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This essay is about how a young 14 year old boy gets out of the streets and writes poetry instead of being out ^{on} the streets doing irresponsible things. The story starts of saying that in school we do much reading & writting that this things are good for us blah blah blah. The story is about Reginald Lockett a 14 year old boy that lives in West Oakland, To begin at age 14 he was really bad he behaved such as people would say "Bad ass". He says he used to wear 3 t-shirts to make himself look buff and tuff. He attended Hoover Junior High, at his time Hoover was one of the three toughest school in Oakland. It was dirty, gray, forbidding looking place were many fights broke ~~lasse~~ loose. His last year at hoover got him thinking what he wanted to be physician, plastic surgeon wich he usually wonderd about he was so into thinking he didnt hear

The teacher calling him up to the front desk he had thought in his head "wonder what i did this time"

He was sent to a classroom downstairs hes ~~is~~ was in the creative writing class he thought he was in a class for bad kids but he was sent he was in creative writing class so after that he look forward to coming to her class 2 days a week he turned from bad to good and all thanks to coming to the class writing poetry know one of his toughest subjects in school and has grown in to loving poetry and doing what he believes is right. The lesson he learn was you never know what your good at if you dont try.

Writing Sample



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At first Reginald was going for bad he was always fighting and getting in trouble every day. He said several fights broke out every day. He attended Herbert Hoover High school it was considered one of the three toughest schools. During his 7th grade year he had constant referrals sent to the principal. He was living in a tough neighborhood called west Oakland. Though his behavior left a lot to be desired, when he managed to earn some decent grades he thought to his self I have good grades. He started to write poetry. When he was done he gave it to the teacher even though he got a referral his teacher liked it. He loved history and English art.

