

Name Class Date

Above-average Writing Model

Writing Process in Action: Personal Writing (Unit 1, pages 28–31)

Assignment: For a class journal, write a one- to two-page account of an incident or experience that caused you to change.

The Fiddler Crab’s Second Chance

One Saturday last summer, my friend Mike came with us to the beach. Mike’s parents don’t like the beach, and he has only been there a few times in his life. I was looking forward to showing him the majesty of the ocean and the beautiful, polished artifacts that the sea creates. When we arrived, Mike and I jumped out of the car and sprinted down the beach.

“Let’s race to the breakwater,” I shouted.

After running for a while, we got tired and started walking. I pointed out different kinds of shells to Mike. However, he was more interested in racing again and in throwing the football back and forth.

The tide was out and the tide pools on the other side of the breakwater were empty of water. I saw a fiddler crab with an egg sack attached to her. She had been left behind when the water retreated. She sat without moving on a rock. I explained to Mike that the crab and her babies probably wouldn’t make it.

“Tough luck,” he said. “Nature’s law of survival.”

Then Mike jumped up and threw the football to me. Even though I caught the football easily, I felt like all the air went out of me. We started running down the beach again, tossing the football back and forth. I couldn’t enjoy myself, though. I kept thinking about that fiddler crab and its babies. Mike was right—there *is* a natural law of survival. But does this prevent humans from helping to preserve life—whatever form that life may take—when we can?

“Wait a minute,” I said, “I have to do something!” I ran back to the tidal pools. The fiddler crab remained clinging to the same rock. I could feel that there was still a little life left in her. I picked her up and ran along the wet, exposed sand out to the gentle breakers. When I was up to my hips in the water, I let the little crab fall from my hand. I knew that she might end up washed back onto the shore, but I also knew I had given her and her babies another chance. This was a decisive moment for me. It made me understand that we all make small choices every day that affect our environment. I realized that I believe humans have a responsibility to use our abilities to give other animals a chance to survive.

Engages the reader through the use of precise, vivid language

Uses dialogue to draw the reader into the story

Describes the author’s emotional state during key moments

Uses details that help the reader picture the scene

Explains how the experience was important to the author

Summary: *This piece is a strong example of personal writing in the narrative form. The concrete details and vivid language bring the incident to life and allow the reader to understand the emotional impact of the writer’s experience.*

This piece would probably receive a 4 if evaluated by the holistic scoring method. It might receive a 100 if evaluated by the analytic method—35 points for Focus/Organization, 35 points for Elaboration/Support/Style, and 30 points for Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics.