



English II Writing

Expository Scoring Guide April 2013

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English II Writing Expository Prompt

Read the following quotation.

Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them.
—A. A. Milne

First impressions can sometimes be misleading. Think carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining the importance of getting to know people before forming an opinion about them.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Score Point 1

The essay represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the explanatory task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the thesis statement is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the topic, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is weak. The essay is ineffective because the writer uses details and examples that are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient.
- ❑ The essay is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

I was the new girl in school, it felt like one of those usual first days like in movies when everyone just stares at you! Yeah. That's exactly how I felt. I had just moved here to New York all the way from Houston, Tx. I didn't expect to come to school and everyone look at me like I was some animal or something. They all stared at me up and down. Everyone was looking at the clothes I was wearing. Well, my families always been rich since I was little, so I'm guessing they don't wear the brands I do, which is probably why they're staring. I don't know? They all looked like they hated me though.

Then, this one girl came up to me and asked, "Are you that new girl from Houston?", "yes." I replied. "Hahaha, yeah everyone's been saying you came here and you think your better than everyone else & they're right, you do look like it!" She exclaimed & left. Oh my gosh, that's what everyone thinks of me? I said to myself, but how could they all think that if they don't even know me, or have even tried to at least meet me? I cried. [No one knows her yet, but they are already telling each other there opinion. That's why its better to keep your comments to yourself.

Score Point 1

In this very limited writing performance, the writer presents a story about a girl's first day at her new school in New York. Although the story relates to the prompt, the organizational structure is inappropriate to the purpose and specific demands of the expository task. The development is weak because the details included function only to advance the story line rather than to provide an explanation. In addition, the writer's word choice does not establish an appropriate expository tone.

We all have an opinion on anything we see or do in life. People sometimes get hurt with opinions. That's why getting to know someone before basing an opinion can help them and yourself make new friends. Now, just think about this. How would you want people to think of you? You wouldn't want them thinking you're someone you're not. So, why don't you think of yourself before you start judging the other people in the opposite eye. There has been a lot of bullying in many schools that I believe are mainly off how people judge others and how they live. So talking to that person before talking to others will make a big difference.

Score Point 1

The writer does not include a functional thesis statement. Although the idea that “getting to know someone before basing an opinion can help them and yourself make new friends” is a possible thesis statement, this idea is not addressed in the sentences that follow. In fact, some of the sentences are not completely responsive to the specific demands of the prompt, weakening the organizational structure and causing the essay to lack focus. Additionally, uncontrolled sentences throughout the composition weaken the fluency of the writing. The weak sentence-to-sentence connections and lack of a clear thesis make the essay difficult to follow. This essay represents a very limited writing performance.

First impressions can be very misleading on a person attitude and character. It is always important when you meet some one that you leave a good impression on, someone. Make them want to come around you again make them enjoy your presence.

When you meet some body don't be so quick to judge them by if there fat, skinny, tall, short, not athletic but especially do not judge some body on what you have heard about that one individual. Give them a chance to prove these rumors and misleading information you hear about them wrong.

So what I'm saying... is don't judge a book by its cover just because it's a little biased up take the time to atleast read the first page and give it a chance.

Score Point 1

The writer begins the essay by trying to explain how first impressions can be misleading. The writer attempts to develop this idea by providing a hypothetical example. However, the development is vague, impeding the clarity of the essay. The writer then switches to a discussion about judging others before getting to know them. This abrupt shift in focus weakens the coherence of the essay. In addition, serious and persistent errors in grammar, spelling, and usage create disruptions in the fluency of the writing.

Being Judged on first glance is never fair or fun. But it happens all too often. First impressions can indeed be misleading. It is important to get to know someone, or at least talk to them before making a quick judgement on who they are. At first glance I would've never thought my friends would be like they are, it wasn't until I got to know them did I really understand who they were and how much alike we were. It's important to get to know someone before forming an opinion about them, because it may sound cliché, but it's true. Don't judge a book by its cover.

Score Point 1

The writer establishes a clear thesis in this essay, asserting that being judged on first glance is never fair or fun. The writer remains focused on the thesis and attempts to provide support through personal experience. However, the development is somewhat repetitive because the writer uses such vague language in her attempt to explain. This vague word choice causes the development of ideas to be insubstantial and insufficient, indicating a very limited writing performance.

Score Point 2

The essay represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the expository task.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the writer's thesis statement is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of an effective thesis or the writer's inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is minimal. The essay is superficial because the writer uses details and examples that are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented.
- ❑ The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the expository purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

First impressions are one of the most important things in the world. Its important of getting to know people before forming an opinion about them. Have you ever heard of the saying, "Never Judge a book by its cover?" It means to never Judge people before you get to know them. My mother would always tell me that saying.

Its very bad to Judge before you get to know somebody because you don't know what they do or who they are. And im pretty sure you wouldn't want anyone to Judge you. God will never, ever, Judge you so why should you?

Nobody's perfect, but that doesn't give you a right to state your opinion about them. So think before you speak because the person you don't know, might be suffering. Get the chance to know them a little better. Who knows, you might become the best of friends with them.

Score Point 2

The writer offers the general thesis that it is important to get to know someone before forming an opinion. The writer provides a few general ideas and minimally develops them to support this thesis. The essay is superficial because the writer's examples are only briefly presented. In addition, the progression of ideas is not always controlled since sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory to show the relationships among ideas. This response represents a basic writing performance.

First impressions are a big thing when it comes to the real world. An example, would be if you see someone with a lot of tattoos, you would think they're part of some rock band or a biker. When you end up talking to this person they're the exact opposite. When negative first impressions are passed on, they can also create negative stereotypes.

When I first moved to Houston, I was excited because I would be closer to my family there. Then I started thinking: New school, New People, New Teachers, and no one knows me. My first day of school was actually fun. I made a new friend each period.

The most interesting period for me, was 7th. There were two loud girls in there. I was sure we weren't going to become friends anytime soon. Besides, I really didn't like them. As soon as the teacher sat one of them next to me, we started talking. Now these two loud girls are one of my closest friends. I felt a little bad for judging them so quickly, because they were actually pretty nice. Everyone shouldn't judge so quickly when it comes to first impressions. You never know what you might get out of someone.

Score Point 2

In the last two sentences of this essay, the writer provides a thesis that you should not judge others so quickly because you may miss out on a good friendship. However, the progression of ideas is not always controlled from the beginning to the end of the essay. The writer first offers the hypothetical example of talking to someone with tattoos and discovering that everything is not what it seems. This example is minimally developed. The writer then shifts the focus of the composition to a personal anecdote. This anecdote contains details that are not always appropriate to the specific demands of the prompt because she includes irrelevant information in the second paragraph (an overview of her first day at her new school) that does not contribute to the development of her explanation. Overall, the writer presents an organizational structure that is only somewhat suited to the expository task.

Most people say first impressions are everything. I'm here to tell you that statement is a little somewhat true, but not really. First impressions can be stereotyping. It is best that you do make your first impressions something special. Based on that first impression, people know what kind of person you are. If your impression is bad, it might be the last time you talk or converse with them.

For example, when you apply for a job, it's the first impression that counts. You have to look intelligent and not like you can make a difference in their company before they hire you. Talk well-mannered so that they know you are intelligent. Having respect is the #1 task to do.

My other point was just because others don't look intelligent doesn't mean that they aren't. On that you can't just judge them off their first impression either. Some people can be less fortunate. That's why they dress how they do. But you'll never know until you get to know the person. Everything isn't what it seems.

Score Point 2

In this response, the writer offers the weak thesis that sometimes first impressions are very important and sometimes they are misleading. The inclusion of a weak thesis makes it difficult for the writer to communicate his ideas. Although he attempts to explain this thesis in paragraphs 2 and 3, they are not connected to each other. Paragraph 2 explains that it's important to make a good first impression when applying for a job, while paragraph 3 illustrates how first impressions may be deceptive. Because the relationships between these ideas are unclear, the writer cannot build his development from one paragraph to the next, so the development remains at a superficial level. However, the explanation is specific enough overall for this essay to be considered a basic writing performance.

It's always important to get to know people before you go and form an opinion about them. Say you saw a girl and was just like "omg, no. I don't like her" just by the way she looked and months flew by and you realized she was a very nice girl and you two became friends. All those months that flew by and you were just sitting there judging her.

"Never judge a book by its cover," is a very true quote. Just because they may be unattractive or weird looking to you doesn't mean you should just go judging them and not giving them a chance.

You never know the kind of person they might really be on the inside. Always give someone a chance. Don't judge right off the bat. Plus you wouldn't like it if somebody went and judged you.

Score Point 2

The writer provides a thesis asserting that it is important to get to know people because you never know what kind of person they might be on the inside. The essay's development is superficial because the examples and details are appropriate but not very specific. This lack of specificity is due in part to the writer's general word choice. The writer's progression of ideas is weak due to repetition that causes some disruptions in the flow of the essay. For example, several times in this brief essay the writer repeats the idea that people should give others a chance. In addition, sentences are only somewhat controlled. This essay represents a basic writing performance.

Score Point 3

The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear thesis statement. Most ideas are related to the thesis and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is sufficient because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and appropriate, adding some substance to the essay.
- ❑ The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the expository purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.

Some times looks can be misleading. If you were to go to the library and you look at the books that "look" interesting by the cover, you may be missing out on an amazing book who's cover is plain and not very interesting looking. In order to know if the book is good or not you would have to read the summary, maybe the first two pages. That way you know something about the book. Then knowing what the book is about, that not so interesting book may actually be very interesting. It is the same way with people. Looks can be deciving, but if you take a close look they are not at all. You may look at a person and say "oh she looks weird, he dresses funny!", but we're just judging on their looks. We're not going up to them saying hi! and getting to know the person! People are like books, you have to get to know them first and then see how or what kind of person they are. Like they say "don't judge a person before you have walked a mile in their shoes."

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory writing performance, the writer uses an analogy to explain that "people are like books; you have to get to know them" before passing judgment. Using details that are appropriate and specific, the writer explains how reading the first few pages of a book is similar to getting to know a person. The writer develops the essay in a manner that is original rather than formulaic, using a meaningful transition ("It is the same way with people") to connect her discussion of books with her discussion of people. This connection allows her to build her development, adding substance and thoughtfulness to the essay. The writer's word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific, reflecting an awareness of the expository purpose and contributing to the clarity of the essay.

Judging a person by their first impression on you is never the right thing to do. When you first meet a person, they will most likely not be acting themselves. A lot of people may just be shy at first, but there is a whole lot of things that could go wrong when you first meet somebody. You could easily think somebody was "weird" or just mean if you caught them on a bad day, even if the person is really a good person. Worst of all, you can miss on the chance of what may become a lasting friendship.

Unfortunately, because of the way people dress, the color of their skin, the type of music they listen to, and other factors, cliques often form at schools. People often stereotype these groups, even though all people in the group may be like them. This keeps people from meeting people in other groups because they think they know how they are and they may not like the stereotypes. But all people are different, and shouldn't be judged because of who they hang around. These cliques also form barriers that stop people from meeting others.

Just like how you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, it is never a good idea to judge a person by how they look or who they hang around. Give everybody a chance and who knows, you may meet someone who may become very important in your life.

Score Point 3

In this response the writer presents the thesis that people should not rely on first impressions because these impressions could be wrong. The writer provides some thoughtful philosophical observations about the reasons why first impressions are not always accurate. He sufficiently explains how the development of high school cliques works to keep people on superficial terms and perpetuates misleading stereotypes. Sentence-to-sentence connections show the relationships among ideas: that relying on first impressions causes stereotyping, which in turn creates barriers between people. Although the word choice could be more specific, the writer demonstrates a good understanding of the expository writing task. The writer's control of sentences and conventions also strengthens the effectiveness of the essay.

People are instinctively trained to make judgements about something as soon as we see it, and the same goes for seeing other people; we can't help but to judge a book by its cover. However it is important to get to know someone before forming a real opinion about them.

People can be surprising. For example, in *Fahrenheit 451*, Guy Montag meets a seventeen year old girl who he immediately decides is rather odd. However through talking to her, Montag finds that she makes him think about life, and whether burning books really is the right thing to do. By the end of the story Montag finds himself thinking the same way as this girl and he realizes she was right all along. People are rarely what they seem, and sometimes they can be surprising.

People are typically defined by what they've been through, experiences shape us into who we are, and it is impossible to tell at first glance exactly what someone has been through. This vital information, the building blocks of personality, can only be obtained after getting to know someone, and they often don't show through to the outside at all. After talking to a person and hearing their story, the reason behind who they are, then it is possible to form a reasonable and accurate opinion on someone.

Even though humans naturally make judgments before we really get to know people, first impressions can be deceiving. It is important to get to know someone before forming an opinion about them.

Score Point 3

The writer establishes the clear thesis that although people are “instinctively trained to make judgments...it is important to get to know someone before forming an opinion about them.” The first paragraph is sufficiently developed with appropriate details from the novel *Fahrenheit 451*. This example is effective because the described experience of the main character, Guy Montag, strongly relates to the ideas presented in the introduction. The writer then explores the idea that a person’s experiences are the “building blocks of personality.” Although the observations discussed in this paragraph are related to the prompt and thesis, it is unclear how this philosophical example connects to the literary example from the previous paragraph. Therefore, the essay is coherent but not always unified. Overall, this essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

People. Tall, short, fat, skinny, light or dark skinned, athlete, band player, gamer, whatever the case may be, who are we to judge them by what they do or how they look?

In the early 1600s, white men thought they were over African American people because of the color of their skin. Today, the year 2013, football players see themselves as over the band players or gamer kids. People since the beginning of time judges people on how much money they had. How can you judge a person and think you really know them by how they dress or how much money their parents have? That in no way tells you what a person is like. My friend Don is nothing like me. We don't dress the same or act the same. I play football while he long braids and plays video games, yet we are always hanging out together and having a good time. If I were to have judged Don before I actually talked to him, I would have missed out on a great friend. If people always judged someone by what they see, they would miss out on friends, girl friends, or maybe a wife one day.

People today don't realize that by judging people on what they see can hurt them and others. What would society be like if we chose our presidents by what we saw and not what kind of person he/she is. People's appearance has nothing to do with how that person acts or feels. Your opinion is your own, but until you get to know a person, you should not form one.

Score Point 3

The writer of this satisfactory essay states his thesis at the end of the response: don't judge others until you get to know them. The student begins his discussion by stating that "white men judged African American people by the color of their skin" in the 1600s and then abruptly shifts to an explanation of how this same type of shallow, unfair judgment can still be seen today in the attitudes of football players and people with money. Although all these ideas are connected to the thesis, the writer has included too many ideas and does not develop any of them sufficiently. However, the next section of the essay—the description of the friendship the writer has with a boy who seems completely different from him—contains details that are appropriate to the explanatory task and add some substance to the essay. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to make this essay more coherent.

Score Point 4

The essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is clearly appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is skillfully crafted because the writer uses organizational strategies that are particularly well suited to the expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear thesis statement. All ideas are strongly related to the thesis and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. By sustaining this focus, the writer is able to create an essay that is unified and coherent.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is logical and well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is effective because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and well chosen, adding substance to the essay.
- ❑ The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing or to connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the essay. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.

She has bleach blonde hair, an extraordinary personality, head cheerleader, and is dating the captain of the football team. She seems to have it all, but almost everyone's, probably even yours, first assumption about her is that she is dumb. Before she even opens her mouth you've probably assumed that whatever it is that she's going to say isn't going to be very intelligent. The reality is though that she's third in her class, and far more intelligent than you.

Everyone does this whether it is about the cheerleader in high school or your next door neighbor. We create stereotypical assumptions about someone's character without even bothering to get the full story first. We all should make an effort to actually get to know someone first. The smart cheerleader that keeps getting called dumb probably has her feelings hurt more than anyone can imagine.

It is important, and we owe it to the people we come in contact with to get to know them first. You can kill a reputation by making assumptions about someone based on what you see and what you hear.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer establishes the clear thesis that “we owe it to the people we come in contact with to get to know them first.” In the first paragraph, the writer uses a hypothetical cheerleader example to support her thesis. The writer then widens the scope of her observations to the world outside of high school and reminds the reader that on some level everyone makes assumptions based on stereotypes. Word choice is purposeful and precise, and a strong expository tone is evident throughout the essay. The writer’s perceptive insights add to the depth and effectiveness of the response. Because every sentence contributes to the development of the writer’s explanation, the essay is tightly focused, making it both unified and coherent.

Her face displayed an annoyed, sarcastic expression more often than not. She seemed taciturn and unsociable. Nevertheless when a group project forced us to work together, I began to know and appreciate a girl whom I could well understand and enjoy. Although she maintained her disparaging pessimism to this day, the uncertain intimidation dissolved into friendship as I began to know her better. Like in my case, truly knowing people before forming opinions about them offers an individual a much more accurate understanding of the person.

Insightfully, Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird presents the difference in actually understanding people rather than forming pre-conceived opinions in a conversation between Atticus Finch and his daughter, Scout. For the first time, Scout has met a man known as Boo Radley, commonly rumored to be evil and scary. After meeting a kind and timid Boo, however, Scout tells her father of how nice Boo had been. Wisely, Atticus responds to his daughter that "most people are [nice] ... when [a person] gets to know them." Atticus understands the importance of knowing people before establishing pre-conceived notions, and Scout learns of the difference in a first impression formed by rumor versus a more accurate, informed opinion. Thus, father and daughter see the importance of assessing people honestly rather than relying on rumor.

Anne Fellows Johnson's book The Little Colonel's House Party shows the similar wrong of judging people based on appearance. When Betty, an orphan who lives on a poor farm, arrives at Lloyd's house, Lloyd forms a bleak outlook on her guest based on the girl's countenanced appearance in Lloyd's affluent, late nineteenth century town. As Lloyd begins to witness Betty's simple, gentle sweetness, however, she grows to love and respect her unaffected guest. By opening her mind to look past her friend's unusual appearance, Lloyd realizes the true value of her new friend.

Although people generally form first impressions, a more complete understanding comes from truly getting to know a person.

Score Point 4

This thoughtful, engaging response begins with the portrait of a girl who seems "taciturn and unsociable" but becomes the writer's friend after his first impressions are set aside. This personal anecdote supports the thesis that getting to know and understand a person yields the most accurate impression. The writer adds substance to the response with well-chosen examples and specific details from novels. The transition the writer uses in the first sentence of paragraph 3 provides a meaningful connection between Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Lloyd in *The Little Colonel's House Party*, both of whom learn that there is a difference between initial impressions and "a more accurate, informed opinion." In addition, the writer's word choice reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task.

First impressions can often be misleading, and one should get to know people before forming an opinion about them because it may change over time.

People do not show their true self when they meet a person for the first time, because they are unsure of what the other person is like. They often act more politely and maturely, with some tension. After people get to know each other, they tend to relax more and reveal themselves little by little. They may reveal a great characteristic, such as great humor or outgoingness, or they may reveal some flaws, such as dishonesty. These things can't be seen from the outside, so they can't be judged right away.

An example of this is food. If you've never tried a type of food before, you judge it by color, ingredients, texture, and overall appearance. You may think that fish are disgusting, but once you try it, you may find that it actually tastes good. There might be a large, red, delicious looking strawberry, but once you take a bite, you may realize that it is sour and unappetizing.

Every thing has many layers to it, and humans have more layers than other things. They are far more sophisticated than food, or sports. It takes longer to peel back the layers to get to the truth, which may be completely different from their facades. It may take months, or maybe years to get there, so first impressions can't always be taken for the whole, because you only see the thick outer layer at first.

Score Point 4

This accomplished writing performance is centered on the thesis that hasty conclusions about a person are misleading and “may change over time.” The development is effective because specific, well-chosen examples explain how initial meetings are marked by uncertainty, but as people gradually get to know one another, true personalities are revealed. The writer connects ideas in an unusual, but interesting, way by comparing this process to trying new food or unpeeling the layers of something “to get to the truth.” Meaningful sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer’s train of thought easy to follow. In addition, the sentences are varied and purposeful. Overall, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

In sixth grade, I had a class with a boy named Joseph. He had glasses, and his voice sounded funny, so at first I steered clear of him. Then it occurred to me that I have my own shortcomings, and that judging Joseph based on a hazy glance was unfair. Today, the two of us are best friends, all because I decided to be open-minded. Often times when people judge a book by its cover, they end up ruining a potential opportunity for an infinity of profit, just because of close-mindedness. Therefore, it is imperative that people put away their inclinations and interact with others before convicting them.

A first impression is just that—a first impression. It doesn't reveal any definitive qualities of a person, aside from a few superficial ones. People who use first impressions to discern between favorable and unfavorable relationships are only limiting themselves. They close doors that could lead to multitudinous opportunities for positive spheres of influence and happiness. Only when one is enlightened on the benefits of open-mindedness will he or she begin to take a closer look at people. Such benefits include lifelong friendship, helpful information, and chances to advance society through the connections shared with people. All this can be unlocked just by unlocking one's mind and allowing it to be independent of all prejudice.

That book that is judged by its cover and left on the shelf could have been the answer to that naive person's problems. I don't know where I would be at what state I would be in if I had decided to leave Joseph the "weirdo" be. Don't knock it until you try it, they say, because you never know the gain you can attain just by opening that book.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer skillfully crafts the essay by framing a philosophical discussion with a personal anecdote. The development of the essay is focused on a thesis asserting that first impressions do not reveal a person's true self. The writer is able to connect his ideas in interesting ways because he uses his view of the world as a basis for writing. The writer's purposeful and concrete word choice is specific and reflects a thorough understanding of the expository writing task. In addition, the overall strength of the conventions strongly contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.