

Grade 10 Unit 1 EA 2 Writing a Synthesis Paper

Score: Exemplary

Ken Robinson, a renowned author once said, "Creativity is putting your imagination to work, and it's produced the most extraordinary results in human culture" (brainyquote.com). Each person's personal identity is shaped from this culture that is built with the contribution of everything in one's surrounding environment. While there are many factors that influence a person's perspective, culture is one of the most important elements in shaping the way he/she views the world because it is the basis on which all opinions, morals, and decisions are first based off of no matter what.

Culture is a person's heritage that has been molded by the atmosphere around them. This atmosphere subsequently influences one's environment, as well as their everyday routines and mindset. From birth, my culture has shaped who I am. My parents and overall family have taught and continue to teach me many ideas and values such as the way to treat and respect people, the importance of family, and the fact that it is essential to give my very best towards school and sports. These teachings were the only things I knew as "right" from a young age, and their reiteration throughout my growth became what I saw as my culture today. This is incredibly influential to how I view the world around me because as I am exposed to different situations my thoughts are based on what I know: my culture.

However, In Paulo Coelho's novel, *The Alchemist*, he demonstrates the changes that can occur in one's views and morals from being exposed to a diversity of cultures. From the start of the book the main character, Santiago, had ambitions to explore the world around him, saying to his father, "Well, I'd like to see their land, and see how they live" (Coelho 16). After traversing the plains of Andalusia for quite a long time, Santiago's dream gives him an incentive to explore the world further, thus introducing the aspect of new cultures and unfamiliar environments. These experiences not only give him an abundance of new knowledge, but they actually change and shape the way he views the world around him by giving him the ability to look far past the surface of nature and its inhabitants. When confronted with the difficult challenge of crossing the desert most would panic or doubt themselves, but Santiago thinks to himself, "I've

learned things from the sheep, and I've learned things from crystal. I can learn something from the desert, too. It seems old and wise" (Coelho 54). Finally, cultural experiences, especially the diversity of them exemplified in this novel can mold one's views into a range of ideals instead of a select few, and an attitude of overall acceptance. Santiago develops these views by the end of the book and learns to give thought to even the most minuscule things. This is due in part to what he is told by the Alchemist near the end of the novel: "No matter what he does, every person on earth plays a central role in the history of the world. And normally he doesn't know it" (Coelho 103). It's not one central view that outlines a person's culture, but the combination of many. It is experiences like these that make the formation of one's culture incredibly in depth, which in turn is the reason culture is the main basis for all views on the surrounding world.

In A Raisin in the Sun, the author Lorraine Hansberry exemplifies how cultural collisions can firstly define and moreover develop one's culture, and demonstrates how this carries over to their perception of the world around them. The conflict of assimilation is first introduced to the reader through George, Beneatha's date, who is heavily opinionated and constantly voices these thoughts. In one instance George mentions to Beneatha, "I want you to cut it out, see—The moody stuff, I mean" (Hansberry 87). At this time Beneatha is still trying to identify "who she is" and define herself as a person, so these opinions cause her great internal stress and questioning. Furthermore, when her other date Asagai joins the play her mind is filled even more with outside views. Although the suggestion could be made that experiences like this one directly impact her view of the world, they actually contribute to the development of her own culture and who she is as a person. This can be viewed as a two-step process where outside experiences mold one's culture and this development of their culture effects their perspective on the world around them. In addition, Harper Lee exhibits how childhood experiences can build one's culture in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. During his observance of the trial, Scout narrates, "We acquired no traumas from watching our father win or lose. I'm sorry that I can't provide and drama in this respect; if I did, it would not be true" (Lee 195). At first one might think that witnessing his father's trial would alter Scout's perception on the world instantly, but because he has been surrounded by her father

since birth, this idea of calmness and tranquility involving extreme situations has been branded into his culture and personal identity for a very long time. As Scout matures her increased wisdom now gives her culture the chance to contribute to more intellectual views on situations around him rather than her simple thoughts as a young child. To finish, it is a culture of one's identity that contributes to their opinion of the world and not the singular experiences themselves.

In conclusion, the world is a place of abundant life experiences to have, but it is one's culture that is the most important influence on their perception of life. I've had many eye opening experiences throughout my past years, and they have molded my culture into what it is now. As people undergo more and more life events, their culture is constructed into an accumulation of all of them, and this is where their perception of life comes from.

Score Exemplary

Annotation:

This Exemplary student essay begins with an effective and engaging hook and tie-in to the importance of culture in human life and prepares for the claim that “culture is one of the most important elements in shaping the way he/she views the world.” The next paragraph presents a personal perspective on the claim asserting that culture defines what is “right” and is the basis for how one views the world. The following paragraphs present ideas that support a broader concept of the influences that define culture and how it influences individual perspectives. Focused topic sentences develop the idea that one’s culture can be molded and broadened by experiences and collisions with alternative manifestations of culture. Multiple sources are marshalled to present textual evidence for the ideas that qualify the influence and experience of culture. The essay is also characterized by a sophisticated insight into the evidence being cited. Whether showing that Santiago is able to embrace “an attitude of overall acceptance” from his experiences of a “range of Ideals instead of a select few,” or that the “conflict of assimilation” in *A Raisin in the Sun* can contribute to one’s cultural perspective, this essay took a difficult challenge and molded it into something fine. Transitions, embedded quotations, varied sentence structure all indicate command of language and establish a formal authoritative voice.