End Stage 4 English student work sample – Grade C

My Favourite Things

Photo albums: “My photo albums are so important to me”, Shannon, a typical 13-year-old student reveals. “They hold all my memories in them, both good and bad.” She opens another phot album, saying, “I like to reflect on the things I’ve done so far, you know, see all the things I’ve accomplished and learn from my mistakes, that sorta thing.” She holds onto one photo with such pride “of my grandfather. He was in WWII. He was actually shot in the leg. That’s why he always had this kind of waddle. I use to call him Penguin.” Shannon laughs. She then sees a photo, and suddenly stops her laughing and becomes very serious. Seen in the background is a younger Shannon, with everyone clad in black and in Fijian clothing. “This is a photo of my Uncle’s funeral. I was only in Kindergarten when he passed away, but I have so many memories of him. Whenever we went to Fiji and visited him, Uncle Fred would always buy me chocolate. My parents would get so mad, but he didn’t care.” She remembers him with such fondness, a smile reaches her face. “He was just the kind of guy who loved computers and spending time with family.”

Grandmother’s night gown – When Shannon turned 11, her mother handed her a piece of clothing. “I thought it was a rag”, she laughs. The light-pink, slightly brown night gown with delicate lace around the neckline was her grandmother’s. “I never got the opportunity to meet her. Mum always says she was a loving person, and that she would have always made tea and buns for dinner.” She holds the night gown and takes in the lavender scent, whilst quietly meditating on the passed down thoughts from her mother. “I think I would have gotten on well with her.” She pauses again, going deeper into her thoughts. “We seem as though we’ve got a lot in common. It’s strange to think about it. You try to imagine what it’s like to be around her, to try and feel her warmth, and you do at times.” Shannon says, almost regrettably, “I just wish I could spend one day with her.”

Great-Grandmothers Jewellery Box- A quiet and reflective night for Shannon is a night where she rummages through her small yet meaningful jewellery box. “This is actually my great grandmother’s.” Shannon’s starts to ponder, as she gently picks up an antique necklace of her great-grandmother. “She was such a darling.” Neni, as she affectionately called her great grandmother “had 11 kids. I don’t know how she managed, especially back then, but she did.” She clutches the jewellery box; a white dove with tiny encrusted jewels, as though it gives strength. “She was the backbone of the family, all of us miss her so much, but I guess the only comforting thing to me is that she’s resting in peace now.” She continues, “This is the only memory I truly have of Neni, so whenever I need comfort, I just look through the jewellery box.”
**Reflection**

The piece of writing that I have chosen to submit for my English Assessment is “My favourite Things”. In this piece, I have selected three items that hold some sort of significance in my life, and tried to give the audience a bit of insight as to what my values are.

The purpose of the favourite things was to give the audience an understanding of who I am, what my culture is and what I believe is important in my life, through short snippets of writing. I wrote in first and second person; first for the quotes and second for the surrounding parts of the story. In saying that, when I was writing, I made sure that I wrote in colloquial language when writing the quotes, and formal language when writing the descriptions. I believe that the piece benefitted from that certain technique of jumping from first to second person. For example “Neni, as she affectionally called her great-grandmother “had 11 kids…” This gives the reader a more intimate feeling whilst reading the article.

In the process of writing my piece, I wanted to use a nostalgic tone, so it would give the effect that I was reflecting on certain aspects in my life. I think this was achieved throughout the writing, eg “whilst quietly meditating on the passed down thoughts from her mother.” and “as though it gives her strength.”

Whilst writing my Favourite Things, I think I could have extended by vocabulary, as some of the words used in the article were repeated constantly, especially in my first few drafts. And whilst in the area of correcting myself, I think I need to watch for grammar mistakes, such as putting commas in the correct place and the structure of sentences. Despite these common errors, I believe I have developed as a writer. At the beginning of the year, I wasn’t as confident as I am now with writing original pieces. I still find it a bit daunting to write a lifewriting piece, just because it’s harder to string a couple of words together to make a sentence than it is to say.

I attempted to mimic the format of the favourite things handout, where they would put descriptions of the certain items the person had chosen, and then selected quotes to decorate the story. I believe I have succeeded in doing that with my Favourite Things however, in certain areas, the descriptions became a bit too melodramatic and became almost theatrical.

I think that my strengths definitely lie in this piece of writing. I found it very easy as it was a personal recount, and I could tell this properly as it is my story.

I have some weaknesses in my writing, and the main ones being too melodramatic with my writing and not getting to the point. I tend to ‘over decorate’ my stories and beat around the bush, instead of getting right to the point, which I will need to improve on.

Overall, I believe that this a well-structured piece that gives insight to what my culture is, what I stand for and who I am.

| Sound understanding of choices, however, incorrectly states second person – should be third person |
| Reflections would benefit from being supported by examples |
| Competent use of modality |

**Grade Commentary**

Shannon has demonstrated an adequate level of competence in composing and evaluating a personal reflection. There is some awareness of audience and purpose but a lack of specific evidence to support the ideas. The analysis is coherent but lacks sustained development. A sound understanding of the way that literary devices can impact on audience engagement with texts and an awareness of personal influences on writing is evident. There are some errors in spelling and punctuation.

Shannon’s response demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at grade C standard at the end of Stage 4.