

Homeward Bound

Walking Home

Walking home from my bus stop is often an adventure. I never know when I am going to encounter a big dog, an angry neighbor, or perhaps even a killer tree.

It was a beautiful day. The sky was blue with only a few lacy clouds, the air was cool and fresh. Crisp leaves were crackling beneath my feet. It would have been a wonderful day to walk slowly, enjoying the weather. Unfortunately, I had forgotten my coat and the otherwise nice weather was chilling me to the bone. To make matters worse, my back was hurting from a ligament I pulled during soccer practice earlier in the week. So despite the pleasant surroundings, I was feeling rather miserable.

Then my mind began to wander, as it often does. I began to think of my science class where we were studying the brain and had just discussed the idea of hypnosis helping with minor pain. I also remembered that hypnosis and meditation were similar. Thinking of this reminded of a talk I'd once had with my step-dad about meditation. I put these thoughts together and came up with my great idea for the day: to relieve my suffering from the cold and my back pain, I would meditate while walking home.

Being the whimsical person I am, I decided that I would try this idea, disregarding the protests of the saner, more logical voice in my head. To begin with, I concentrated on warmth. I thought of fires, of warm houses, of summertime. I slowed my breathing to promote a more relaxed state. It was all going rather well, I was actually feeling warmer and my back wasn't bothering me as much. I smiled.

Then I realized my nose hurt. A few seconds later I figured out the cause: I had run into a tree. Not just any tree, but a big rough-barked tree. I immediately jumped away, hopping in a circle, yelping with pain. Next I sat down and felt my nose to make sure it wasn't flattened (it wasn't). To show the tree my rage, I kicked it, resulting in a hurt foot. I glared at it menacingly, figuring that it couldn't hurt me any more if I just looked at it.

I'm sure the big dogs and angry neighbors were all getting a good laugh by now. And so I continued home: cold, aching back, hurt nose, bruised foot.

Note to self: no more meditating while walking.

Expository Essay

Cheaper Products? But at What Cost?

Right now I want you to pretend you are in a store. As you walk around, you see that some products are much less expensive than others. Now, look at the labels on these cheaper items. You will probably notice that many of these labels say, “Made in China,” or “Made in Honduras.” Have you ever stopped to wonder why products made in these countries are so much more affordable than things manufactured right here on American soil? Well, before you buy another inexpensive article of clothing, pair of shoes, sporting good, carpet, or any other product, you might want to think this through.

Child labor has long been banned in America, but out of sight should not mean out of mind. Over 200 million children world-wide work full time in conditions not fit for an animal. That means that they do not play sports, they do not attend school, and they do not have fun. These children are prisoners.

Take, for example, Pakistan and India. In these countries, a “bonded labor” system forces child laborers, some as young as four years old, to work for a single employer for many years. They are sometimes literally tied to their loom to ensure they are not slacking off. In return for their servitude, they receive a place to sleep and just enough food to sustain them.

In Honduras, 13% of the workforce is between 12 and 15 years old. There are no laws restricting the ages of the employees, nor are there any limits on the hours they can work. It is not uncommon for a 13 year old child to put in a 14 hour day with no break. However, Honduran employers are required to have a night school for their young laborers to attend.

Children put to work weaving carpets, making soap, or any other number of jobs are never paid in full for their toil. Here in the U.S., the minimum wage is over five dollars an hour. In countries that hire minors to do the dirty work there is almost never a minimum pay requirement. In Haiti, children are, on average, paid 28 cents per hour. In Sri Lanka, the median is 18 cents. Vietnamese and Chinese children should not expect their wages to exceed 11 cents.

These numbers are truly tragic. Before you buy something made in a country that condones the labor of young children who work for pennies just so that you can have a more inexpensive item, please think about the situation you are contributing to.

ORGANIZATION

<p>6</p> <p>The organization enhances the central idea(s) and its development. The order and structure are compelling and move the reader through the text easily. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective, perhaps creative, sequencing; the organizational structure fits the topic, and the writing is easy to follow. • a strong, inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a strong satisfying sense of resolution or closure. • smooth, effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, and ideas). • details that fit where placed. 	<p>5</p> <p>The organization enhances the central idea(s) and its development. The order and structure are strong and move the reader through the text. The writing is characterized by.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective sequencing; the organizational structure fits the topic, and the writing is easy to follow. • an inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a satisfying sense of resolution or closure. • smooth, effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, and ideas). • details that fit where placed. 	<p>4</p> <p>Organization is clear and coherent. Order and structure are present, but may seem formulaic. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear sequencing. • an organization that may be predictable. • a recognizable, developed beginning that may not be particularly inviting; a developed conclusion that may lack subtlety. • a body that is easy to follow with details that fit where placed. • transitions that may be stilted or formulaic. • organization which helps the reader, despite some weaknesses.
<p>3</p> <p>An attempt has been made to organize the writing; however, the overall structure is inconsistent or skeletal. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attempts at sequencing, but the order or the relationship among ideas may occasionally be unclear. • a beginning and an ending which, although present, are either undeveloped or too obvious (e.g. "My topic is..."; "These are all the reasons that...") • transitions that sometimes work. The same few transitional devices (e.g., coordinating conjunctions, numbering, etc.) may be overused. • a structure that is skeletal or too rigid. • placement of details that may not always be effective. • organization which lapses in some places, but helps the reader in others. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing lacks a clear organizational structure. An occasional organizational device is discernible; however, the writing is either difficult to follow and the reader has to reread substantial portions, or the piece is simply too short to demonstrate organizational skills. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some attempts at sequencing, but the order or the relationship among ideas is frequently unclear. • a missing or extremely undeveloped beginning, body, and/or ending. • a lack of transitions, or when present, ineffective or overused. • a lack of an effective organizational structure. • details that seem to be randomly placed, leaving the reader frequently confused. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing lacks coherence; organization seems haphazard and disjointed. Even after rereading, the reader remains confused. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a lack of effective sequencing. • a failure to provide an identifiable beginning, body and/or ending. • a lack of transitions. • pacing that is consistently awkward; the reader feels either mired down in trivia or rushed along too rapidly. • a lack of organization which ultimately obscures or distorts the main point.

© Oregon Department of Education. All rights reserved.