

MAIN IDEA

1 In some literary works, female characters have widely varying types of statuses. In the story “Before the End of the Summer” Grannie is a strong character. The author shows it. **2**

- 1** The writer is merely copying the opening sentence of the writing prompt rather than providing an original thesis or a creative opening line.
- 2** The main idea is not developed in the first paragraph.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

Dr. Frazier tells her she's going to die. She wants to sort of keep it a secret. Grannie's husband died. Some of Grannie's children died too. Dr. Frazier doesn't tell Grannie's daughter that her mother is sick. Grannie's friend May died. She has been kind of seeing death upclose.

1

Grannie wants her daughter to marry Joe. She wants her family to survive after she is gone. Mr. Mathis says it's going to be an early fall. Grannie is knowing that she's going to die.

2

- 1** This paragraph contains a plot summary rather than examples from the text that might support a thesis.
- 2** These sentences seem unrelated, and they do not support a thesis.

ORGANIZATION

1 Grannie wants her daughter to marry Joe. She wants her family to survive after she is gone. Mr. Mathis says it's going to be an early fall. Grannie is knowing that she's going to die. **2**

- 1** The paragraph lacks a topic sentence.
- 2** Grannie's knowledge of her fatal illness is a main point of the story. This information should be discussed fully, not tacked on to the end of a middle paragraph.

COHERENCE

Dr. Frazier tells her she's going to die. She wants to sort of keep it a secret. Grannie's husband died. Some of Grannie's children died too. Dr. Frazier doesn't tell Grannie's daughter that her mother is sick. Grannie's friend May died. She has been kind of seeing death upclose.

Grannie wants her daughter to marry Joe. She wants her family to survive after she is gone. Mr. Mathis says it's going to be an early fall. Grannie is knowing that she's going to die.

- 1 The underlined words show unclear pronoun references.
- 2 The details are random and unconnected, and they do not connect the paragraph to a main idea.

MAIN IDEA

Readers can determine a female characters strength not only by her actions but also by the power of her status in the community. In the story “Before the End of Summer,” Grannie is a very strong female character. Her strength and the way she can make a strong status in the community is shown by her actions and by the high respect that her community gives her.

- 1 The writer presents a main idea, but there is little development of that main idea.
- 2 The writer’s attempt to mimic the prompt results in an odd, cumbersome, and unclear sentence.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

Grannie asks the doctor for the truth about her illness. She does not want him to tell anyone. She didn't turn into a fraidy cat. She would rather face it alone than bother her daughter or worry her grandson. Lifes hardships have made Grannie strong. The doctor respects Grannies strength and he respects her choice.

1

Grannie's status is strong throughout the community too. She owns her own property. She manages her affairs, even though she is 84. She takes care of May. When she sees her lying in the coffin she knows she will soon die. She faces death courageously.

2

- 1 The writer avoids simple plot summary by discussing details from the story, but the writer does not explain how these details support the main idea.
- 2 The paragraph does not support the idea stated in the first sentence.

ORGANIZATION

1 The theme is strength. Bennie will act like her. She has been a good role model. she didn't want to tell him because she was too strong. He has learned some lessons from Grannie.

2

- 1** The writer attempts to provide a clear concluding statement, but the statement is too brief to complete the logical development of the essay.
- 2** This paragraph does not discuss the theme, and it focuses on Bennie more than on Grannie.

COHERENCE

*Grannie's status is strong throughout the community too. She owns her own property. She manages her affairs, even though she is 84. She takes care of May. **1** When she sees her lying in the coffin she knows she will soon die. She faces death courageously.*

As her death approach, Grannie keeps doing all her tasks. After the death of her friend, Grannie doesn't tell anybody about her illness. During her final attack, she explains to Bennie what is going on and what will happen. She is surprised that he knew all along. She doesn't want him to be frightened. She wants to pass along her strength to her grandson.

- 1** The writer jumps from one idea, Grannie's status in the community, to a different idea, Grannie's private thoughts on death.
- 2** The support is not detailed, and no smooth transitions connect the ideas.

MAIN IDEA

Some of literature’s most memorable characters are female. In literary settings, there are both strong and weak female characters as well as those who are somewhere in between. Reader’s can determine the degree of a character’s strength not only by her actions that indicate strength of purpose or character but also by the power or status she holds in the community and by the influence that she asserts on others. In the story “Before the End of Summer” by Grant Moss Jr., Grannie is a very strong female character. Her strength and her status in the community are shown by her actions, by the high regard that her community gives her, and by her strong, positive influence over Bennie and his mother.

- 1 The writer clearly introduces a topic and a focus.
- 2 The writer clearly presents a strong three-part thesis that is developed throughout the essay.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

1 Grannie's status throughout the community, too, shows that she is a tower of strength. She owns her own property, manages her own affairs, and functions very well even at the age of 84, which in the early part of the twentieth century was an age that few people reached. She is dependable and competent, as others turn to her in their times of need. She cares for her friend May as she dies, and Grannie stays calm and strong, even when, at the funeral, she sees May lying in the coffin and envisions her own death that is soon to come.

2

- 1** The writer provides a good topic sentence that supports the writer's main idea and introduces the content of the supporting paragraph.
- 2** The specific details support the topic sentence. Each detail highlights an aspect of Grannie's status and strength.

ORGANIZATION

... Grannie is a very strong female character. Her strength and her status in the community are shown by her actions, by the high regard that her community gives her, and by her strong, positive influence over Bennie and his mother.

1

The theme focuses on strength. It is about Grannie's strength in light of her secret, and it is also about the strength and self-sufficiency that Bennie—a child whose sense of responsibility is of concern to his mother and grandmother—has inherited from his grandmother. In her strong demeanor and positive, rational attitude, Grannie sets a model for Bennie to follow. Bennie will surely follow in her footsteps and successfully face life's challenges with calm and strength.

2

- 1 The introduction of the essay clearly previews the organizational pattern of the essay. The thesis is clear.
- 2 The conclusion of the essay reinforces and extends the thesis.

COHERENCE

Even as her death approaches, Grannie keeps going about her tasks. After the death of her friend, May Mathis, Grannie tells no one else about her illness. During her final attack, she is level-headed enough to explain to Bennie what is going on and what will happen, surprised that he has known all along. She doesn't want him to be frightened but to accept death as she has. With her guidance, he does. Thus, she passes her strength along to her grandson, who behaves as she would have in a similar situation. ①

- ① The underlined words show the writer's clear transitions that indicate time sequences in the paragraph.
- ② The writer demonstrates how the details support the topic by showing how Grannie's strength affects others.

MAIN IDEA

1 Scrapbooks are a great way to create wonderful memory pages. In fact, making scrapbooks is one of my favorite hobbies, and I have become something of a minor league expert in scrapbook making. It's not really a complicated skill to learn. The steps for creating a really beautiful scrapbook are fairly simple. **2**

- 1** The writer clearly identifies the subject matter of the essay.
- 2** The writer clearly addresses the prompt.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

Now it's time to begin the real work. You may or may not want to decorate the cover of the book. You'll definitely want to make an introduction page to tell about the subject and the dates that are covered. When I work on my scrapbook, I like to pick out the best

1 photo for my introduction page. Then I use the font that best fits the subject, sometimes tracing with a stencil or using calligraphy, to write the names and the dates. Lots of color makes the page interesting, but don't overdo it! Too much color can take attention away from the scrapbook items. Keep the labels even by using a ruler to center the words.

- 2**
- 1** The writer uses personal experience to explain the steps in the process.
 - 2** The writer elaborates the steps in the process sufficiently.

ORGANIZATION

You'll also need some basic supplies:

- rubber cement
- ruler
- markers or gel pens
- scissors

1

So, scrapbooking is a good way to create a decorative presentation and preserve your memories as you go through school or do something else. Scrapbooks also make great gifts because they're so personalized. They're fun, too?

2

- 1 Making a list is a good way to organize information.
- 2 The writer provides a clear conclusion that brings the essay to a logical ending.

COHERENCE

1 While we're on the subject of supplies, you can get some really interesting things for making your scrapbook different. You can find special scissors for making decorative borders, stencil pages, calligraphy pens, and artists' knives for doing cutouts. You might also want to have some construction paper on hand to add background color.

Next, gather all your photographic and memory items, like ticket stubs, programs, newspaper clippings, awards, and autographs. Set up a workspace. Making a scrapbook can be an ongoing process, so you may want a place where you can leave your materials without interfering with anyone else's space. **2**

- 1** The writer uses transitions such as this one to show the relationship between the steps in the process and to add extra information.
- 2** The sentences in this paragraph are logically connected. Words such as *next* and *so* show how the ideas relate to each other.

MAIN IDEA

1 Losing someone or something close to you is often very hard to accept. Many of us have felt devastated when a friend moves away or when we lose a valued possession. There's a song that Garth Brooks sings, "If Tomorrow Never Comes," and the theme expresses the importance of loving the ones we love while we have the chance. For me, one of the worst things about my loss was not so much the loss itself but the guilt that came with it when I realized that I had missed my chance. **2**

- 1** The writer directly addresses the prompt.
- 2** The writer clearly explains the underlying lesson of the narrative.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

... No one in my family loved or even liked Fang, and they considered her a disposable item. I wasn't any less guilty than they were because I hadn't really loved Fang either. I had paid far less attention to her than to Shadow. I rubbed her tummy sometimes, but

1 I never did it enough. I admit that I hadn't really cared for her as much as Shadow and that she annoyed me when she snapped and growled. But her absence tore at my heart. My guilt about not caring for her was heavier than the boxes, furniture, and appliances, we moved the next day. **2**

- 1** The details evoke the writer's feelings about the events of the narrative.
- 2** The writer clearly relates the details to the main point of the story.

ORGANIZATION

... Fang snarled at strangers coming into the house, showed her teeth to little kids who passed in front of the yard, snapped at my dog Shadow, and tortured the cats (who frequently remained in a tree all night long rather than come down and have to pass by Fang's territory). Fang was generally unpleasant to others, but underneath her facade she could be rather sweet. I **2** remember how she liked to have her tummy rubbed whenever anyone would take the time. Not many of us would. After all, we each had our own pets, and they were much easier to deal with and certainly made us less angry most of the time.

- 1** The writer elaborates on the family's relationship with Fang for an entire paragraph. Understanding their relationship with Fang is important for the narrative to be effective.
- 2** The writer introduces details that will be developed later in the essay.

COHERENCE

① Just then two of the cats ran by the window. Fang was not chasing them. “Where’s Fang?” I asked, although I already ② suspected the answer. It was confirmed when my mother started to explain that she’d given Fang to my cousin.

- ① The writer uses transitions that show how the events in the narrative are related to each other.
- ② Connectives explain how the writer’s thoughts and feelings relate to the experiences described in the narrative.

MAIN IDEA

Legislation is very important in this country, and our elected officials have important work to do. Therefore, I think it is absurd to have a law requiring people to wear helmets every time they ride their bikes or blade down to the basketball court. Legislators should put this proposal aside and concentrate on bigger and more serious issues. ❶

- ❶ The writer clearly states his or her position on the issue.
- ❷ The writer states one important reason for the position taken.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

... A **1**
helmet's safety advantages can quickly disappear on a clear day. With
no ventilation between your head and the plastic foam cushion, sweat
begins to pour out of your scalp. The dripping sweat can slide down the
forehead and into the eyes, stinging and blinding the skater or cyclist. **2**
This creates a danger far more extreme than a bare head.

- 1** The sentence is a clearly stated reason that supports the writer's position.
- 2** The writer uses vivid language to strengthen the point made in the previous sentence.

ORGANIZATION

In conclusion, I believe our government needs to turn its attention to more pressing community issues and away from a helmet law that would be nothing more than another nuisance law. This proposed law would only cause resentment against the lawmakers who passed it.

- 1 The writer provides a clear conclusion which summarizes the main arguments of the essay. The conclusion completes the logical development of the essay.

COHERENCE

To begin with, a government's job is to serve the people, not fill the job of parent. Educating young people to wear a helmet for safety should remain the job of parents and schools. Government should spend its time on issues like pollution and crime. Besides legislative time, there is also the issue of enforcement time.

- 1 The writer explains how the facts and reasons support the position.
- 2 The underlined words are the writer's transitions to connect the ideas to each other and to the position.