***Sample Student Work (self-reflective essay)***

Romanticism is the belief that exists within an individual in the power of nature and how that belief can transform one’s perception one’s existence. My definition of romanticism is demonstrated throughout the tale of “Bobbie and the Butterfly.” Nature is a prominent theme within Bobbie’s existence. Nature is portrayed as the catalyst that transforms Bobbie’s inner beauty and enables Bobbie to relate to his surroundings. Nature is society’s teacher and the guide to all our innocence. Romanticism is the basis for three ideal traits: belief in the individual, belief that nature is the prominent feature in society, and the belief that dreams are achieved through one’s imagination.

With this story I wanted to depict the outdoors as a place to get away from the world and society. In romanticism, society and man are like pieces in a puzzle. Yet nature is more defined and concrete, so I created the character of Bobbie to symbolize the child-like innocence that nature embodies. At the beginning of this tale young Bobbie decides he wants to venture out to explore his world and catch a few fish for dinner. His desire to overcome the physical obstacles in his life, such age and height, give him the individual freedom to strive for the unknown and in this case, to catch a few fish. In romanticism the individual is but a small part of society’s landscape, but his belief in nature and his belief in himself is the soil in which he is planted. In this story the obvious absence of society plays a key role in linking it to romanticism. In the past, society was the center of all of man’s mistakes and corruptions. In this tale young Bobbie does not have to encounter any problems originating from outer interference as he is depicted as a lone participant enjoying nature around him.

I wanted to explain how imagination plays a strong role in how we as individuals deal with reality. Without imagination the world would seem very plain and dull. Bobbie expresses his emotions and his thoughts of nature through day-dreaming, thereby providing a mechanism by which Bobbie can deal with the realities of life and the perceived shortcomings of his own life.

Romanticism depicts a romantic spirit, it depicts an idealistic outlook on life that is fanciful and fictitious yet serves a useful purpose in life. In “Bobbie and the Butterfly,” Bobbie’s dream of fishing while sitting in the classroom symbolizes the visionary aspects of Romanticism and the usefulness that romanticism serves in everyday life. Imagination can be the key that unlocks the frustration that one may feel when dealing with life’s realities.

***Sample Student Work (task and standards)***

**The Course**

12th Grade, British Literature

**The Task**

Each student will create 2-3 well-crafted poems, a children’s story, or a work of two- or three-dimensional art to exhibit in a Museum of Romantic Ideals. Each student will compose a reflective, expository essay to accompany his/her artifact in the museum display. In this essay the student will demonstrate understanding of Romanticism by explaining how the created artifactrepresents the characteristics of Romanticism.

**Circumstances of the Assignment**

Student worked alone to create the product.

Product was created outside of class.

**Relevant Standards**

**ELABLRL3 The student deepens understanding of literary works by relating them to their contemporary context or historical background, as well as to works from other time periods.**

b. Relates a literary work to the characteristics of the literary time period that it represents.

v. Romantic Period

**ELABLRL4 The student employs a variety of writing genres to demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of significant ideas in sophisticated literary works. The student composes essays, narratives, poems, or technical documents. The student**

b. Analyze the use of imagery, language, and other particular aspects of a text that contribute to theme or underlying meaning.

c. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and/or to other relevant works.

**ELABLRC3 The student acquires new vocabulary in each content area and uses it correctly. The student**

b. Uses content vocabulary in writing and speaking.

*Matt,*

* *Your children’s story and your reflective, expository essay clearly demonstrate your understanding of the characteristics of Romanticism.*
* *You have clearly identified three Romantic ideals in your thesis in the first paragraph and you have developed these points in the subsequent paragraphs through your analysis of your short story, which is very well supported by specific and detailed references to the children’s story itself, and through your explanation of your rationale for including certain details and ideas in the story.*
* *In addition, your reflective, expository essay correctly employs content vocabulary related to our study of Romanticism.*

**ELA12W1 The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and signals a satisfying closure. The student**

a. Establishes a clear, distinctive, and coherent thesis or perspective and maintains a consistent tone and focus throughout.

b. Selects a focus, structure, and point of view relevant to the purpose, genre expectations, audience, length, and format requirements.

c. Constructs arguable topic sentences, when applicable, to guide unified paragraphs.

d. Uses precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and active rather than passive voice.

e. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.

* *In terms of organization and context, your thesis (the final sentence of your first paragraph) clearly establishes a focus for your essay that you maintain throughout, a focus that is appropriate for a reflective essay, the purpose of which is to explain your understanding of the characteristics of Romanticism as represented in your children’s story.*
* *However, while all of the points introduced in your thesis are developed in the essay, I did have trouble following the paragraph organization. The three points in your thesis led me to believe you would develop each point separately in a paragraph. Instead, you developed the first two points in one paragraph and the third point in a separate paragraph.*
* *As a reader, I’d like to see you revise this to make your intentions more clear and to enable the reader to follow your organizational pattern more easily.*
* *I have one other suggestion related to organization and structure. While your concluding paragraph achieves closure and brings your essay to a satisfactory end, your introduction could be improved if you would add an attention-getting device, something catchy in the first sentence.*
* *Both your children’s story and your essay are engaging.*
* *Your use of language and language devices in the essay caught my attention. Your comparison of society and man to “pieces in a puzzle,” and your sentence, “In romanticism the individual is but a small part of society’s landscape, but his belief in nature and his belief in himself is[sic] the soil in which he is planted,” are excellent examples of the kind of language devices that keep readers reading.*

**ELA12C1 The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats. The student**

1. Demonstrates an understanding of proper English usage and control of grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, diction, and syntax.

* *Overall, your reflective, expository essay follows the conventions of Standard English.*
* *I’d suggest, however, reviewing your use of “be” verbs, especially “is,” to see whether you might be able to incorporate stronger verbs in some of these instances.*

*In your children’s story, you switch back and forth between present and past tense. For example, on page one, you use “decides,” “loads,” and “heads”; but on page two, you use “arrived” and “found.” Reread your story to determine the more effective tense and make your verb tense consistent.*