**Fitz’s Personal Essay Rubric**

Below is a rubric designed to help tell a narrative story. It is essentially the same as a “Fitz-Style” journal entry. Please read my essay, “How to Tell a Good Story” before starting your own narrative essay. In this rubric, the directions are in the left column. In the right column I inserted a narrative essay written by Chris Ruedigger, an 8th grade student of mine in 2013 reflecting about his time at The Fenn School. If you notice: his two body paragraphs are excellent examples of using the narrative paragraph rubric to help him write the body paragraphs of this narrative essay.

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| **Title*** The title is the first thing you readers will see, so take the time to think of a title that is interesting and compelling to your audience and relates to what your story is going to be about.
 | Nothing Gold Can Stay[Use size 18 font centered on the page] |
| **Image*** Adding an interesting image is another way of reinforcing the theme and tone of your essay.
 | Format your image in the left side of your opening paragraph. Try not to let the size of the image overwhelm the size of the paragraph. |
| **Guiding Quote*** Find a really cool quote to put above your story that captures the major theme of your story. A good source for quotes is <http://brainyquotes.com> but you can use a quote from anywhere if it works [Use size 12 font centered on the page. Quote in italics; author’s name in regular font]
 | *"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."*-Lao Tzu |
| **Opening Paragraph** **Opening Line:*** Open your first paragraph with a real hook of a sentence that grabs your reader’s attention and prepares your readers for what is coming.
* Sometimes a single word is all you need!
 | The dreary dark skies shone over the baseball field as I dug my foot into the soft and chunky dirt on the mound. |
| **Opening Paragraph****Opening Scene:*** Drop your readers into a scene.
* Show us what is happening by describing in vivid detail a single scene from the experience you are retelling.
* Use plenty images and actions (and dialogue if you can) to paint with words a complete picture of the action taking place.
* Remember that your readers were not with you, so be sure to include who was there; what was happening; when it was happening; where it was happening, and why it was happening.
 | I wiped off the rubber, and stared down my last opponent. I took the signal and wound up from the stretch. I fired in a blazing fastball for strike one. Cheers came from the infield, cheering me (Rudy) on for the next pitch. This time a snapped off a curveball that dropped into the zone, and the batter swung. I weak ground ball came right to our shortstop, who cleanly made the play. In the moment, it seemed like an ordinary out, but after, I realized that was the last pitch I will ever throw at Fenn.  |
| **Opening Paragraph****State the Theme:*** There should always be a reason why you are telling this story. This is often called the main theme of a story, though a story can always include other themes.
* Put this right at the end of the first paragraph.
 | As I walked off the field ,I nearly started to cry. It wasn't the last pitch that struck me, it was the sign that this was my last ride and time here at Fenn. For the past five years Fenn has been a crazy ride, but one that I will never forget. Fenn has been so special to me because of the numerous opportunities and warm and caring teachers that support me. |
| **Tell the Whole Story** **Body Paragraphs:*** Now *tell the whole story* using as many paragraphs as you need.
* Be sure to include images and actions AND your thoughts and feelings about what is happening as you go along.
* Dialogue is always good to include.
* Remember that whenever a new person is speaking you need to create a new paragraph.
 | "Nobody ever made a mistake if they never tried something new." Albert Einstein once said. As I went through my time at Fenn, opportunities for growth were pounded all over campus. Over these years, I have grown so much from all of the opportunities, but the most memorable one was Acapella. I came to Fenn as a somewhat shy, timid fourth grader who didn't have a strong passion for music. In seventh grade I finally decided I would a try. I had played piano and guitar, but never felt comfortable with signing. After a quick audition I came to the first rehearsal. Ever since that day, I have loved Acapella and become so much more confident on stage. I can really put on a solid performance. Acapella has been a unique and distinct group I will never forget; however, theres plenty more opportunities that I have been apart off. Not many places can say they ofter a broad range of activities for kids to grow and learn from. Sure, I made some mistakes, but I am just like everyone, as Albert Einstein says. I have grown way more than I ever expected, thanks to the opportunities Fenn has provided. It's not just the opportunities tough, it is the warm and supportive teachers that I also remember. Everyone needs care and support. During my days at Fenn, it has been from all the faculty that care so deeply about me. I can trust and feel comfortable around any teacher now; however, it is no more evident than with Mr. Sanborn, my sixth and eighth grade math teacher. As I found myself in his class in sixth grade, I often understood the math work we were doing. Except, one day, I completely zoned out and couldn't learn any of the material. Nervous and scared, I approached Mr. Sanborn to ask for extra help. Despite my fear, I knew it was the right thing to do: to get caught up. After quietly asking to check some problems, he patted me on the back and sat me down. There, for the next forty-five minutes, we discussed the work and the best way to approach it. It is rare that a teacher can give each student that kind of care and warmth, and I am every so grateful to have had this. It hasn't just been Mr. Sanborn tough, it is all the loving and supportive teachers that make Fenn the amazing community it is. The care and support that I received is something that I will never forget as I depart from Fenn. |
| **Tell the Lesson** * In the next to last paragraph, reflect upon what you learned from this experience and why it was an important experience in your life.
 | It is still bittersweet emotions, and I know I will miss Fenn deeply, especially the opportunities and respect from teachers. As I walked off that rubber, it was walking away from Fenn. Moving on is difficult, but I will take my growth and apply it to my next school. There is no way that you can go through Fenn without accomplishing or trying some new thing. That is special. There is no way that you can go through Fenn without connecting to some teacher. That is special. Acapella and Mr. Sanborn are just two examples of many, but two that will certainly stick with me. |
| **Conclusion****Parting Words:*** Your final words should read like a quotable quote or a piece of advice from a wise and experienced person—like you!
 | It is important to cherish all the moments you get at Fenn, and never take them for granted; because someday when you step off the rubber, you will see what I mean. |

**Post Completed Story Below:**

*Nothing Gold Can Stay*

*"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."*

-Lao Tzu

 The dreary dark skies shone over the baseball field as I dug my foot into the soft and chunky dirt on the mound. I wiped off the rubber, and stared down my last opponent. I took the signal and wound up from the stretch. I fired in a blazing fastball for strike one. Cheers came from the infield, cheering me (Rudy) on for the next pitch. This time a snapped off a curveball that dropped into the zone, and the batter swung. I weak ground ball came right to our shortstop, who cleanly made the play. In the moment, it seemed like an ordinary out, but after, I realized that was the last pitch I will ever throw at Fenn. As I walked off the field,I nearly started to cry. It wasn't the last pitch that struck me, it was the sign that this was my last ride and time here at Fenn. For the past five year Fenn has been a crazy ride, but one that I will never forget. Fenn has been so special to me because of the numerous opportunities and warm and caring teachers that support me.

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*~Chris Ruedigger*

 *June, 2013*