

File Name: I4R Best Friends

Informative/Explanatory

Grade 4

Range of Writing

Best Friends

“It’s not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.”

Charlotte’s Web (p. 184)

The book Charlotte’s Web by E. B. White is a story about an endearing pig named Wilbur. He is desperately trying not to die. He meets a nice friend named Charlotte. She is a spider that weaves words into her web to save Wilbur from dying. She keeps weaving to make the Zuckermans believe that Wilbur is “Some Pig”, “Terrific”, “Radiant”, and “Humble”.

Charlotte the spider proves to be both a good writer and a true friend to Wilbur.

The focus of the piece is made clear both here and in the opening quotation.

When Charlotte writes she focuses day and night to make it right. For example, on Fair night down in the barn cellar all the animals were asleep except Charlotte. She was busy writing the word “Humble” in her web

Introduces the topic clearly: includes the title and author of the book and provides a brief introduction to its main characters and central problem.

Groups related information in paragraphs

because it described Wilbur perfectly. Wilbur is low to the ground and not proud of himself.

Charlotte was a good writer, no doubt about it but she was also a true friend to the little pig. Charlotte was one of the most caring friends you could have for a long time. One way she was caring was when Wilbur was tired of being terrific all day. Charlotte sang him a lullaby. Another example is that she calmed Wilbur down when he was scared. Wilbur was devastated when he found out he was going to die and Charlotte said, “You shall not die I shall save you”. She was so caring to Wilbur forever.

Uses precise language to inform about the topic

Charlotte was also a true friend, helping Wilbur when he was in trouble. For example in her web, “She neatly wrote the word Terrific.” She doubled the letters so that they would have the best effect. Another example of how Charlotte helped Wilbur is that “Charlotte wrote the word Radiant”. She knew it would make people think that Wilbur was radiant. One day “Neatly woven in block letters was the word “Some Pig”. Charlotte had woven it into her web. This was Charlotte’s plan to convince the Zuckermans that they did not want to kill Wilbur. Charlotte helped Wilbur alot when he was in trouble.

Links ideas within categories of information using words and phrases

Develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic

Charlotte was the best friend Wilbur ever had. Charlotte was both a true friend to Wilbur and a good writer. She made Wilbur the best known pig in the state!

Provides a concluding section related to the information presented, restating the focus and reflecting on its significance.

In this assignment, students were asked to explain the quotation repeated at the top of the essay. This student used the quotation to introduce the writing and clarify the focus of the piece. The introduction does not assume that the reader knows the assignment or has read the book; it provides some background information to help orient the reader and establish the purpose for the piece. The writer thereby shows a high level of audience awareness.

The essay is well-organized into an introduction, body, and conclusion, with related information grouped into paragraphs. Linking words and phrases (“also”, “for example”, “another”) connect ideas within each paragraph, and precise words (“devastated”, “desperately”) help the reader better understand the information and ideas presented.

The focus is well-maintained, and points are developed with evidence from the text. Specific examples of things Charlotte does to show she is a true friend and a good writer are provided throughout the piece. These examples are not just listed: the examples are elaborated on and clarified with explanations, quotations, and definitions. The writer overuses quotations a bit and sometimes awkwardly integrates them into the essay, but this is typical of students experimenting with a new skill.

This fourth-grade informative/explanatory piece is a good example of how students can both build and communicate a deep understanding of a text through writing.

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Revised and Edited for Student Use

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When Charlotte writes, she focuses day and night to make it right. For example, on fair night, down in the barn cellar, all the animals were asleep except Charlotte. She was busy writing the word “Humble” in her web because it described Wilbur perfectly. Wilbur is low to the ground and not proud of himself.

Charlotte was a good writer, no doubt about it, but she was also a true friend to the little pig. Charlotte was one of the most caring friends you could have for a long time. One way she was caring was when Wilbur was tired of being terrific all day. Charlotte sang him a lullaby. Another example is that she calmed Wilbur down when he was scared. Wilbur was devastated when he found out he was going to die and Charlotte said, “You shall not die. I shall save you.” She was so caring to Wilbur forever.

Charlotte was also a true friend, helping Wilbur when he was in trouble. For example, in her web, “she neatly wrote the word Terrific.” She doubled the letters so that they would have the best effect. Another example of how Charlotte helped Wilbur is that “Charlotte wrote the word Radiant.” She knew it would make people think that Wilbur was radiant. One day, “Neatly woven in block letters was the word ‘Some Pig.’” Charlotte had woven it into her web. This was Charlotte’s plan to convince the Zuckermans that they did not want to kill Wilbur. Charlotte helped Wilbur a lot when he was in trouble.

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