

**Unit: Literary Essay**  
**Grade: 5**  
**Task: Student Work Sample**  
**Title: Two Against the Mississippi**

The following student artifact has been retyped; please see a copy of the original student work at the end of this document. Comments about student work can be found in the box on the right.

**Two Against the Mississippi**

Joseph Brennan’s “Two Against the Mississippi” teaches us that when you work together you can accomplish almost anything. Lastings and Emma wanted to save their cow Queenie from the flood. But their personalities were very different and they didn’t know how they could work together. Even so, they worked together and they saved the cow from drowning in the flooded Mississippi River. In the end, Lastings and Emma saved Queenie by working together even if they thought they were different. Readers learn that when you work together you can accomplish almost anything! When I first read this story, I thought that they wouldn’t cooperate because of their different work habits but, now I realize that after they worked together they saved a cow from drowning and they made everything better!

Early in the story, the siblings didn’t work together because they thought they were so different from each other. For example, Lastings worked slowly but he did everything perfect. On the other hand, Emma worked quickly but didn’t care about everything being perfect. The author wrote, “Emma could rake up the leaves on the front lawn in two hours by herself. Lastings raked the leaves in the side yard which was only half as big as the front lawn. It took Lastings all afternoon but he got every last leaf, while Emma would miss many leaves on the front lawn.” This shows that their work habits were opposite so working together was hard. If they could solve that problem it would have been easier.

Later in the story, Lastings and Emma worked together and they accomplished some hard tasks. For example, Lastings and Emma rounded up the cows by tricking the cows into thinking it was milking time so all the

**Annotations**

**Overall:** The writer made a claim about the text and supported it with reasons and some evidence from the story.

**Lead:** The writer wrote a beginning that clearly stated her claim and included her opinion about why this is important in life to persuade readers. She let readers know these reasons would be developed later.

**Transitions:** The writer used phrases such as, *early in the story and later in the story*, to show how the characters change impacted her claim. The writer used transition phrases to connect back to her claim and evidence such as, *now I think and for example*.

**Ending:** The writer worked to create an ending that connected back to the claim and highlighted a connection to a real life experience.

cows got into the pen. Even if they saw they were different they still accomplished their goal! Also, the siblings worked together to save Queenie the cow after she fell into a ditch when the river was about to flood. In the story it said, “Emma and Lastings looked at each other and they too, smiled. Miss Ipulse and Master Thought had found a way to work together to save the day.” This shows that Emma and Lastings could work together even if they had different work habits and they managed to save the day!

Now as I think about my idea that when you work together you can accomplish almost anything, I realize that people do things better when they work together. For example, when I have a soccer game I need to work with my team mates to win the game. We should try to work together because it will make everything easier.

### Annotations

**Organization:** The writer used paragraphs to group similar reasons in order of increasing importance.

**Elaboration:** The writer used reasons with examples and quotes from the text to support her claim.

**Craft:** The writer made choices about how to use her evidence to support her reasons. The writer choice precise details and facts to help make her points.

**Spelling:** The writer used what she knew about word patterns and rules to spell correctly and used the text to check for accuracy of specific words.

**Punctuation/Sentence Structure:** The writer used commas to write longer more complex sentences correctly and commas to set off beginning phrases. The writer used quotation marks correctly and end punctuation.