General Feedback notes- provincial synthesis essay

Instructions: In a multi-paragraph (3 or more paragraphs) expository essay of at least 300 words, answer the question. The mark for your answer will be based on the appropriateness of the examples you use as well as the adequacy of your explanation and the quality of your written expression.

Question –Discuss the qualities that Erik Weihenmayer in “Blindly He Goes…Up” and Uncle Jim in “Versabraille” share in facing their challenges. You must refer to both passages in your essay.

1. Read the instructions and make sure you follow them.
   1. It said write 3 or more paragraphs. This means less than 3 is inadequate. Many of you wrote less than 3 paragraphs.
   2. It said write an expository essay. An expository essay needs to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, expound on the idea, and set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear and concise manner.
      1. The idea in this case is that the two characters share qualities that help them face challenges. To do this properly you needed to find evidence of this in the two stories through specific, purposeful examples. Then to expound upon this idea you would need to explain how these examples illustrate the points you are making. You would use this to argue your point throughout your essay and in your conclusion.
   3. It said write an essay. This means it needs all parts of the essay- introduction, body and conclusion. Missing parts means you have not done what you were supposed to do.
      1. Some of you only wrote an introduction.
      2. Some only wrote body paragraphs.
      3. Many of you did not write a conclusion.
      4. Many of you did not have clear topic sentences that related back to your introduction and the qualities you felt the characters shared.
   4. It said your mark is based on the appropriateness of the examples you use. You must be purposeful and specific when choosing and using examples from the stories. They must illustrate your point clearly.
      1. Many of you did not use specific examples. Often you generalized but did not give examples of the quality you were saying the characters had.
      2. Many of you were not purposeful in choosing your examples. Sometimes the quotes used were just part of the story. The evidence you choose needs to be used to illustrate your point. If you are not purposeful in choosing your examples they become filler and just float around with no point to them being there. Remember my analogy about the floatie in the drink.
   5. It said your explanations must be adequate. In other words they must explain how your examples prove your point. Without an explanation your arguments are incomplete.
      1. Many of you did not explain how your examples proved your point.
      2. Many of you generalized but did not explain using your examples. You cannot assume that the reader of your essay would come to the same conclusions you have, so you must explain.
   6. It said you will be marked on the quality of your written expression. This means they expect correct grammar, proper paragraph structure, and a reasonable level of vocabulary. You should always look back and try to fix as many mistakes as you can see, as well as read it over to make sure it makes sense and has answered the question.
      1. Many of you did not go back to try and correct grammar, and structure on your essay.
      2. Many of you did not go back to try and improve wording, and awkward/confusing phrasing on your essay.
      3. Many of you did not read over your essay to see if you had indeed answered the question.
2. Focus on answering the exact question they have asked. This means addressing all relevant aspects that the question asks of you.
   1. In the case of this piece of writing the question said to “discuss the qualities that…[Erik and Jim] share in facing their challenges. This means that you needed to find qualities that the two men had in common that they used to face their challenges.
      1. Many of you found qualities they shared but these qualities were not ones they used in facing their challenges. This meant that you failed to actually answer the question you were asked.
      2. Many of you gave examples that related to qualities the two shared, but failed to identify what those qualities were.
      3. Some of you discussed challenges they both faced but failed to discuss qualities they shared in facing them.
      4. Some of you gave summaries of the challenges both men faced but did not discuss either the qualities they shared or how they used them to face challenges.
      5. Some of you used generalizations about how both men were blind and faced challenges but failed to address the question at all.
3. When asked to write an essay you need to include all parts and make sure they are done correctly. As said earlier many of you did not write introduction or conclusions, and some did not write body paragraphs. Here are some feedback about what needs to be included in these, and how they should be written.
   1. Introduction Paragraph
      1. Needs to include the names of stories, and characters you will be talking about. This can include a very brief summary of what each story is about.
      2. Needs to outline the points you are going to use in your essay to prove your thesis.
      3. Needs to have a thesis statement. In the case of answering this question your thesis would have been something like this. – The characters of Erik, in “Blindly He Goes…Up” and Jim in “Versabraille” share many similar qualities that help them face their challenges in life.
   2. Body Paragraphs
      1. Each one needs to focus on one of the points you are going to use to prove your thesis.
      2. Each one should have a topic sentence that introduces the point you are going to make about your thesis in that paragraph. For example, if you were going to say that both characters shared the quality of determination, as one of your points your topic sentence might look something like this. – One of the shared qualities that both Erik and Jim share in facing the obstacles they have faced in their lives is that of sheer determination.
      3. Each one should have at least 2 specific, purposeful examples to prove your point. In this case, you should have had at least 1 example for Erik, and 1 for Jim in each body paragraph to illustrate the quality they shared.
      4. Each one should explain the examples you chose, and how these examples illustrate the quality you were trying to show, and how this helps prove your thesis.
      5. Each one should have a conclusion sentence that transitions to the next paragraph or summarizes the point of your paragraph.
   3. Conclusion Paragraphs
      1. Needs to restate the points you used in each paragraph to prove your thesis. These should be the same as those used in your introduction.
      2. Needs to draw a final conclusion based on your argument.
      3. Needs to restate your thesis but should be done with new wording.