



## Sample Paper 1: The Turning Point

Focus Trait: IDEAS

Focus Genre: Informational

### Scores

Share with students *AFTER* discussion —

- 5 (6-point scale)
- 5 (5-point scale)

### Objective

Students will learn that a clear thesis backed by evidence makes an informational piece strong in the trait of ideas.

### Materials

- Rubric for **Ideas** (*Notebook*, page XX)
- Copies of **Sample Paper 1: *The Turning Point***

### Scoring the Paper

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Distribute copies of the sample paper and the rubric for IDEAS (if your students do not already have copies). Use the rubric to focus students' attention on the key features of the trait of IDEAS:

- Clear, focused, concise message
- Easy to summarize
- Identifiable thesis
- Strong support or expansion
- Beyond-the-obvious details
- Answers to readers' questions

Ask students to think about these key features as they listen to you **read the paper aloud**.

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**Ask students to score the paper individually, and to mark their scores in writing.** They should then check with a partner, and take a minute or two to compare and discuss their scores.

When all students have done this, **tally scores for the class as a whole**, and open the discussion, beginning with a comparison of scores, but expanding to any comments your student reviewers wish to make. In particular, ask **what lessons can be learned** from this paper that will be useful in their own writing.

## Discussing the Paper

Discuss the paper with the class as a whole. Ask students to justify their scores with specific references to the rubric or to the paper. Keep in mind that this is an informational piece; the primary purpose is to educate or inform the reader. Use the following questions to encourage discussion:

- Can you identify this writer's **thesis**?
- What is it?
- Could you **summarize** this paper in a few words? Try it.
- Does the writer provide a **convincing** case for the notion that this change was a significant one?

## Rationale for the Score

(Share with students AFTER class discussion.)

Most students should see this paper as **strong**. It received a score of 5 on the 6-point scale. It is clear, focused, and concise. The thesis is easy to recognize, though not stated in one line: *Humans switch from hunting to herding has significant implications for our history and lifestyle.* The thesis is well-supported, first with evidence from *Discover Magazine* in paragraph one. Then, the writer supports the idea that this was a significant change, outlining three clear reasons in paragraph two. The concluding paragraph expands this notion of significance, suggesting that the shift has implications for modern society.

## Extensions

Ask students to look at a piece of their own writing. Is the thesis clear? Is it stated outright? Discuss the importance of stating the thesis in one coherent line right at the beginning of a piece.