Oakland Unified School District ⬥ Process Writing Assessment
6ᵗʰ Grade Expository Writing:
What's Cool Today: A Fashion Trend

Introduction

Young people are always trying out new fashion ideas. If these ideas become popular, many other people try them too and the new styles become fashion trends. All of us can think of clothing trends, hairdo trends, and hat trends. Usually, trends are really popular but only for a short time. This writing unit asks you to describe a cool fashion trend.

After working through some preliminary activities, you will write an expository essay about a cool fashion trend. **Expository writing explains or describes.** In this kind of writing, it is important to establish a controlling idea (thesis) and support it with details and evidence. As you write, it is important to keep in mind that your readers may not know the trend you are describing, so you need to provide background information and use appropriate language to help them understand your ideas. You'll want to choose lively and specific vocabulary, vary your sentence types, and avoid making too many mistakes.

Getting Started

To get started, reread the title of this year's writing prompt: *What's Cool Today: A Fashion Trend*. Work with a classmate to make a list of three fashion trends you have noticed. Name them, describe them, and/or draw them in the space below:

Three Cool Fashion Trends		
1.	2.	3.

❖ Put a star beside the one fashion trend you can write the best about.

Reading

Now, read about what one writer considers to be a cool fashion trend. In *Close Shaves*, you'll read about a hairstyle. While you read, mark the article using the following number codes:

   1 = where the writer explains what the fashion trend is;
   2 = where the writer describes how the trend developed or became popular;
   3 = where the writer relates how the trend has led to new products and/or new ideas;
   4 = why or how the author believe the new product or ideas are cool.

Close Shaves

Adapted from an article by John Koopman in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 4, 2007

     Cue Ball. Q-Tip. Kojak. Mr. Clean. Chrome Dome. These are some of the creative (and perhaps not so complimentary) names used for bald people. Most guys go through at least one phase growing up where they shave their heads. Maybe it was a dare, a team ritual or a punishment for losing a bet. For some, shaving your head is a religious or spiritual act. Just walking down the street today, you'll see more and more people with shaved heads, both men and women! Baldness has become a cool and popular fashion trend.

     In the 70's, the only public figure who was handsome and bald was Telly Savalas, who played Lt. Theo Kojak on TV. Although people liked his looks, most men were wearing hair to their shoulders then, and would never have considered shaving it. But even though it was not common to be bald in those days, it was always about being cool, even for Kojak. Kojak's character was a smart-aleck cop who sucked on a lollipop. Kojak was cool.

     But then the era of long hair passed into history and head shaving started to appear more and more. Michael Jordan made bald look very cool. Bruce Willis, Forest Whitaker, and Chris Daughtry all made shaved heads look great too. And now lots of men have good-looking shaved heads. They shave because being completely bald looks better than being partially bald, using a wig or having a hair implant. Most importantly, being bald is hassle-free. Imagine: no shampoo to buy, no snarls to untangle and you can always look good. Not only has baldness become cool, it is also convenient.

     The popularity of the shaved head has even created business opportunities. A Southern California company markets a razor called the Headblade. It looks a little like a toy Volkswagen Bug with a triple-blade razor on one end, two spring-loaded wheels to guide the movement and a hook for your finger. The device is cupped in your hand and you glide it over and down your scalp. There are Internet forums about the Headblade and most people love it. It works well for the top and back of the head, but it's a little difficult to maneuver around the ears. A regular hand-held razor does the job if people don't have a Headblade. There are also products to reduce the sheen on a

shiny head and a lotion that moisturizes you scalp without leaving behind a heavy shine. There are even special shaving creams and lotions designed specifically for the head as well. The coolness of head shaving has made a lot of money for companies that make and sell these products.

Though it is more common for men to choose baldness, more and more women are adopting this fashion trend. Britney Spears, Sinead O'Connor and Grace Jones are a few famous women that come to mind. Perhaps by removing their hair, these women are making a statement about and calling into question the assumption that hair is associated with sexiness, beauty, and youth. Baldness is also a hairstyle some people do not choose. People with cancer who are undergoing radiation and chemotherapy treatment most often lose their hair. Some cancer victims choose to embrace their baldness and others use wigs, scarves, and hats to adorn their scalps. Whether it is done by choice, as an experiment, out of a desire to sport a new style, or in honor of a friend who has lost her hair, the look, while unexpected, can easily be seen as elegant and natural.

Sometimes baldness has some consequences that are not so cool like scalp sunburn and the discovery of an oddly shaped head. However, going bald is becoming a more common hairstyle of choice. It works for people of all backgrounds, all ages and all income groups. The bald look is a gleaming new trend.

Thinking and Talking

Work with a partner to fill in the graphic organizer to show what strategies this professional writer used

What is the fashion trend the author describes? (What is it and what does it look like?)		
What is the writer's controlling idea/thesis about the trend?	**Do you think this trend is cool? Why or why not?**	
What does one have to do to keep/maintain this trend?	**How or why did this become a trend?**	**In your opinion, will the trend last? Why or why not?**

Planning On Your Own

Now, think about the fashion trend you have selected to write about. You will use ideas from **a few, not all,** of the boxes to develop your paragraphs in your essay. After you complete the graphic organizer, mark the boxes you plan to use in your essay.

What is the fashion trend you will describe? (What is it and what does it look like?)		
What is your controlling idea/thesis about the trend?	Do you think this trend is cool? Why or why not?	
What does one have to do to keep/maintain the trend?	How or why did this become a trend?	In your opinion, will the trend last? Why or why not?

Organizing Your Ideas

Now, think about the fashion trend you have selected to write about. You will use ideas from **a few, not all,** of the boxes to develop your paragraphs in your essay. After you complete the graphic organizer, mark the boxes you plan to use in your essay.

Introduction
(Lead and controlling idea/thesis)

_____
_____
_____

Main Idea #1_____

Supporting details:

Main Idea #2_____

Supporting details:

Main Idea #3_____

Supporting details:

Conclusion
(Creatively restate main ideas)

_____
_____
_____

Writing
Here's the prompt:

What's Cool Today: A Fashion Trend

Teachers in other cities of the world want to learn about a fashion trend kids in Oakland consider to be cool.

Write an essay about a fashion trend that you think is cool. Be sure to select something that you can write many different things about. Think of a controlling idea (thesis) about this fashion trend. Explain or describe your idea using various strategies to help the reader learn about your topic.

Writing Reminders:

As you write, keep the following points in mind since you won't have time to rewrite.

____ Begin in an interesting way that leads to the controlling idea (thesis) of your essay.

____ Use language and vocabulary that is precise and lively.

____ Support your main idea by including specific information through explanation, experiences and opinions, examples and/or description.

____ Organize the main sections of your essay into paragraphs so that the reader can follow your ideas.

____ End with a confident conclusion that restates your thesis.

After You Write (Editing)
After you write, take time to review the items below. You may make changes right on your paper.

____ Give the essay a title. (You can choose your title before or after you write the essay.)

____ Check your punctuation. Use capital letters, commas, periods, quotation marks where they belong.

____ Check your spelling.

Expository Writing Scoring Guide

Five Features of Expository Writing
- **Ideas & Content:** Clarity of Purpose and Topic
- **Organization:** Organization and Development of Main Ideas
- **Audience Awareness:** Appropriate for Intended Audience
- **Language:** Sentence Structure & Vocabulary
- **Conventions:** Spelling, Grammar, & Punctuation

4 • ADVANCED
- Purpose is clear & controlling idea (thesis) is presented in an engaging or original way
- Beginning engages reader, middle deepens and develops topic by identifying important ideas and providing supporting details; conclusion creatively restates main ideas
- Writing provides background information and shows awareness of audience through appropriate language and other strategies (humor, directly addressing audience, interior monologue, etc.)
- Language is precise and lively; sentences are varied and vocabulary is specific and adds to the effectiveness of the writing
- Writing shows clear control of writing conventions though there may be a few errors that are "first-draft" in nature

3 • PROFICIENT
- Purpose and topic are clearly presented
- Clear beginning, middle and conclusion; important ideas are emphasized and developed with supporting details
- Writing may include background information and shows awareness of audience
- Language is clear; sentence types are varied; vocabulary is specific
- Writing shows control of writing conventions; errors do not interfere with meaning

2 • DEVELOPING
- Purpose and topic are introduced but may be vague or incomplete; reader has many questions
- Ideas are developed incompletely; middle and/or conclusion may be abrupt or missing; main ideas may not be supported with supporting details
- Writing shows little or inconsistent awareness of reader; language may be inappropriate or too informal
- Language is general; sentence types are repeated or mostly simple
- Errors in conventions may interfere with meaning

1 • EMERGING
- Purpose may be missing or unclear; Topic may be brief or difficult to identify
- Brief introduction (or only introduction); limited or no development
- Writing does not show audience awareness
- Language is general and vague or used incorrectly; sentences may be incomplete or run-on
- Errors in conventions interfere with meaning or make writing difficult to understand

OT = Off topic
NR = No response