

Example Of An Essay

"Wayne Gretzky: A Class Act" is an example of an essay which follows the format outlined on your Essay Planning Sheet and in the instructions on how to write an essay. As you read this essay, look for the thesis statement, the important supporting ideas/topic sentences, and the details that develop those ideas. Notice the way the authors have, among other detailed evidence, cited scoring records and awards won by Gretzky, all of which support the thesis that Wayne Gretzky is a hero who commands attention and respect. Note, also, how the language varies when the same ideas are expressed in the introduction, in the topic sentences, and again in the conclusion.

Wayne Gretzky: A Class Act

Sir John A. McDonald, Louis Riel, Drs. Banting and Best, Terry Fox, Pierre Trudeau, Sandra Schmirler, Katriona LeMay Doan, Karen Kain, and Margaret Atwood -- the list of Canadian heroes goes on and on. In the last century, a Canadian hero emerged who some might say still tops the list. That's right, Mr. Hockey, Wayne Gretzky. If he wasn't shattering N.H.L. records, the humble Mr. Gretzky repeatedly amazed his fans with his display of hockey genius. Although retired from hockey, Wayne Gretzky continues to intrigue us as he not only arouses our attention but also commands our respect.

Since he joined the National Hockey League., Gretzky literally shattered existing scoring records. He owns or shares sixty-one regular season and playoff N.H.L. scoring records. Three of his most triumphant occurred when he was a member of the Edmonton Oilers. In 1981-1982, he eclipsed the single season record for goals. The old mark was seventy-six, set by Phil Esposito. Gretzky's new mark rocketed to ninety-two by the end of the 1981-1982 season (Braver, 2002, p. 79). Gretzky also owns the mark for the most assists in one campaign. This mark is an astounding 163, a record which he set during the 1985-1986 season (Eviston, 2001). It was also during this season that Gretzky set the record for most points in one season. This record stands at 215 (Eviston). One of his most prestigious records occurred in 1989. He became the leading scorer in the history of the N.H.L. In just over ten seasons, Gretzky surpassed Gordie Howe's old record of 1,850 points to become the sole leader in this category (Braver, p.88).

As talented as he was during his playing career, the superstar remained humble. Each time he won an award, for example, he expressed thanks to his teammates, and especially to his fans. His humble nature has been expressed over the years when accepting the Hart trophy as the League's most valuable player. His acceptance speeches are "filled with praise for teammates and management alike" (Garven, 1992, p. 103). The one year he didn't win the award, Gretzky said it was good for hockey that Mario Lemeiux won it (Garven, p. 104). When he broke Gordie Howe's record for most points in a season, Gretzky again showed his humbleness by suggesting that Howe's 1,800 points were a lot different from his own 1,800 points (Whyte, 1996, p.38). His comment put into perspective the difference between his own time and Howe's era, emphasizing the greatness that Howe showed during his time.

Since he was a youngster, Gretzky has displayed his hockey genius. One needs only to review the record books and scoring summaries of the Sioux Greyhounds, Gretzky's junior hockey team.

At a meager six feet, 160 pounds, the sixteen year old led his team while playing among the best seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen year olds. In one game, while playing with the Greyhounds, Gretzky collected five points. He started the game by sending a teammate in on a breakaway and earned an assist. He later set up a teammate with a behind-the-back pass for another assist. In the second period, Gretzky scored two goals, one on a tip from the point and one on a keenly placed wrist shot (Semenoff, 1993, pp 289-290). But the *pièce de résistance* was still to come. Gretzky, while killing a penalty, "took the puck, skated towards the opposition blue line, stopped, skated back around his own net, stopped, avoided a check by going completely around his net then up the boards and back to center where he was thirty seconds before" (Semenoff, p.291). His skill at puck handling frustrated the opposition, and they took a penalty. Gretzky promptly set up a teammate for his third assist. This is hockey genius at its best.

The attention and respect that Gretzky has drawn is well deserved. Like a modern day Merlin, Gretzky combined the elements of ice, speed, and dexterity to realize incredible scoring achievements and, in his own humble way, to write hockey history.

References

- Braver, M. (2002). *Braver's encyclopedia of hockey history*. Toronto: Bookish Press.
- Eviston, J. (2002, May). *Hockey legends: Wayne Gretzky*. Retrieved October 29, 2003, from <http://www.hockeylegends.ca/gretzky.htm>
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