



Getting Ready to Read

With a partner or in a small group, answer these questions.

1. Has anyone influenced your life because he or she was different? Describe this person and your feelings about this person.
2. Describe yourself as a teenager. What did you look like? What were your interests?
3. Name an important lesson about life that you learned as a teenager.



Journal Writing

Think about an event in your own childhood that was very important—maybe a party, a trip, or the birth of a brother or sister. Write a few sentences about the event and describe it clearly. What did you see, hear, smell, touch, and taste? Think about how to make readers feel as if they were at the event.

Idioms and Expressions

The following idioms and expressions are from the story. Look for them as you read the story.

- to turn blue—a person's skin turns blue when there is a lack of oxygen
- blend in with the scenery—not noticeable, become part of the background
- walking encyclopedia—someone who knows a lot about a lot of subjects
- in his glory—totally happy
- fan out—separate, spread out over an area
- brought him back—reminded him
- as easy as could be—simple



Meet the Author: Judy Soloway Kay (1950–)

Judy Soloway Kay was born in Brooklyn, New York. She enjoyed writing as a young child, and at one time planned to be a journalist. Instead, she became an English teacher in Pennsylvania, New York, and Florida. Eventually, her career as a teacher led her back to writing.

She has co-written several ESL textbooks with her friend Rosemary Gelshenen and has written stories and short novels for ESL students. Kay has taught ESL in New York City at Marymount Manhattan College and in Florida at Lynn University and Broward Community College. She especially enjoys teaching writing courses.

My Friend Eddie has not appeared in print before being published in this textbook.

THE STORY

My Friend Eddie

by Judy Soloway Kay

“Eddie loved baseball. It was his passion.”

I’ve known Eddie all of my life. We were born in the same hospital on the same day. But Eddie was born under a different star, as my grandmother would say. Eddie wasn’t very lucky. I never thought I was lucky, but at least nobody dropped me on my head.

Some people say Eddie was dropped right after he was born. Others say he stopped breathing and turned blue. The doctor gave him CPR* and brought him back to life. Anyway, after that, Eddie was a little slow.* We all knew it and accepted him the way he was. It’s like that in a small town. He was part of Harmonville. He was part of our life just like Big Billy who was 350 pounds and sat in front of the Post Office all day long (except for lunchtime). His big

*CPR—Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, the activity that revives a heart

*slow—as used here, not smart

belly hung out over his too tight jeans. Billy's face was fat and puffy, and his eyes looked like they were closed, but he could see everything from those two slits. He watched everyone who went in and out of the post office. He also knew everyone's business. I guess people didn't watch what they said when they were near him. It's not as if they couldn't see him. Maybe he just blended in with the scenery. The man was like a walking encyclopedia. If there was anything we wanted to know, we just asked Big Billy.

I should get back to Eddie. Eddie was slow-witted* but like a little child, and we all kind of looked after him. Eddie had straight, red hair that fell in his face. His green eyes stared through you. Freckles* dotted his entire face. He had this constant smile, and he sure seemed happy. I don't know what he was happy about, but maybe that's what it's like when you're slow. I guess he didn't have to worry about anything like the rest of us kids. Nobody expected him to get good grades and go to college someday. All he had to do was go to school and not cause trouble.

What was nice about the whole situation was that nobody teased Eddie. No one was mean to him. When we were out in the baseball field during recess*, he played ball with the other boys. We'd tell him to run, and he'd run like crazy. We'd tell him to catch the ball, and he'd stare at it until it was in his mitt. Eddie loved baseball. It was his passion. When it came to choosing up sides, both teams would always try to get Eddie. He felt really popular, I guess. At the end of recess, Eddie was always the last one to come back into the building. It was the only time I'd see him stop smiling. He bent his head down and dragged his feet. He kept looking back at the field. He looked like my puppy when he tried to stop me from bringing him in the house after throwing him a stick.

Father Conlin, our priest, took a special liking to Eddie especially after Eddie's mother died. It was sad. Eddie was only thirteen. After that, he and his dad were alone. At first, the ladies in the town used

***slow-witted**—not smart

***freckles**—small spots on the skin

***recess**—a break during school for exercise outdoors

to bring them casseroles*, which they did whenever anyone died. The ladies would take turns. Each day another one drove over to Eddie's house and left a casserole dish in front of the door. Eddie thought they came by magic, but I knew the ladies brought them. That was the thing about Eddie. He kept on thinking like a little kid while his body kept growing. He got taller like the rest of us, but he acted like he did when he was five or six.

Eddie's dad really liked baseball, and he and Eddie used to watch the games on TV. One day a minor league team came to our town to do an exhibition to raise money for some charity. This was a big deal in Harmonville. There were real professionals playing on our field. We welcomed them with a colorful, noisy parade, and the whole town came out to cheer them on. It was probably the most exciting day in Eddie's life. There he was with his dad in the stands. He wore his faded blue baseball cap turned backward and had his old leather catcher's mitt on his left hand. During the third inning a pop fly came into the stands, and Eddie caught that ball as easy as could be. We all stood up trying to get it, of course, but it seemed to sail right over us and into Eddie's mitt. Eddie was in his glory. His smile broadened as everybody congratulated him and patted him on the back. His dad seemed pleased, too. Eddie kept repeating, "I got it. I got it." He jumped up and down for a long time, and then his father gently coaxed* him into sitting down and watching the rest of the game.

A few years later, when we were seniors in high school, Eddie's father died of a stroke, and Eddie went to live with Father Conlin at the Parish House of our church. A few of us boys helped pack up and move Eddie's stuff into the bedroom he had on the second floor. He had boxes and boxes of old baseball cards, magazines, and other things having to do with baseball. It was nice of Father Conlin to let him keep all this stuff. I guess he figured Eddie had enough to deal with after losing his mom and dad and all.

Senior year in high school was a busy time for all of us. Eddie was in a special class, and I didn't get to see him very often. I only

***casseroles**—food cooked in the same pot

***coaxed**—encouraged

saw him on the baseball field occasionally because I was working every day after school at the supermarket and didn't have much time to play ball with the guys. We were all growing up, and I was getting ready to leave for college in the fall. It was a strange time of my life. Part of me wanted to stay in Harmonville forever and keep everything the same as it was. Another part of me was excited to see the world and learn new things. I knew I'd miss my family and the comfortable feeling I'd always felt in our town. But there was also this aching feeling of wanting to try something new and being on my own.

We said our goodbyes that August. I played catch with Eddie on the baseball field, and we went for a Coke® and some fries at McDonald's®. He kept talking about the time he caught the fly ball at the game when he was twelve. It was like that moment had frozen in his mind, and he relived it every day.

I really didn't think much about Eddie during my first semester at college. I worked hard and got good grades. My folks were really proud of me, and I felt good. I was excited about going home for Christmas vacation. I couldn't wait to sleep in my old bed and have my own bathroom instead of the one down the hall in my dormitory.

It was cold that December. It snowed almost every day. We went to church for Christmas Eve services, and I saw all my old friends. They looked a little different—a little more mature—but Eddie looked the same. He still had that smile, and he was really glad to see me. I said we'd get together while I was home. Maybe we'd hit some baseballs.

One night when it turned very cold, Father Conlin called me at about 10 o'clock and asked if I had seen Eddie. He said he wasn't anywhere in the church or parish house. Father Conlin was concerned especially because it was so cold, and they were predicting temperatures below zero. I said I'd help him look for Eddie, and I called some of my friends. We fanned out to cover the town. We each had our own cars and said we'd check in at the church as soon as we found him.

I went to the west part of town where the big Christmas tree in front of the town hall was decorated with lights. They kept it lit all

night, and I thought Eddie might have gone there. Then I went to the ice skating pond nearby. Some people were skating, but no one had seen Eddie. I started to get a little anxious. It was really cold. Every time I got out of the car to walk around, I felt the biting cold. Even my wool-lined leather gloves didn't keep my fingers warm, and my nose was hurting from the cold. I worried about Eddie being outside. I could see why Father Conlin had been so upset.

Then I remembered the baseball field. I bet he went there. I drove over and ran out of my car. There he was; he was sitting in the very same seat he had been in when he caught that fly ball. He was wearing his blue baseball cap and carrying his old leather mitt. He didn't seem to feel the cold. He was sitting there and muttering* something. When I got closer I heard him say, "They're not gonna play anymore. They're not coming back." I realized he was talking about the minor league team that had played that day years ago. "No, Eddie," I said. "They're not coming back." He looked at me with tears in his eyes and asked, "My Dad isn't coming back either, is he?"

"No," I said softly. Maybe I should have lied to him. Maybe I should have given him some hope, but I didn't. I couldn't lie to him.

"Come on, Eddie," I said. "It's too cold to sit out here." I put my jacket over him and led him to my car. "Everybody goes away, Danny," he said, "and they don't come back."

"I know," I said. "Things change, Eddie."

"I don't like when things change," Eddie said.

"Neither do I," I heard myself saying.

I put my arm around Eddie, and he smiled up at me. "You're still my friend, Danny, but you're going away, too."

"Yeah," I said, "but I'll be back. I promise." And I did. I came back to my hometown every Christmas vacation and every summer. I hung out with my friends, and we played ball with Eddie. When we were home, we were those kids all over again. We may have thought we were doing it for Eddie, but actually, he was doing something special for us.

***muttering**—speaking in unclear tones

I often think back to that night when I found Eddie at the baseball field. Eddie learned to accept the changes in his life, and it must have been hard for him. He grew up in a way. To me, he'll always be that little kid who loved baseball and gloried in the moment he caught a fly ball. Eddie will be that part of me that stays young and hopeful.



Talking about the Story

Discuss these questions with a partner or in a small group.

1. Describe Eddie. What does he look like? What else do we learn about him?
2. What caused Eddie to be different from other kids?
3. Describe Big Billy. What does he look like? What else do we learn about him?
4. What was the memorable event in Eddie's life?
5. Why did Eddie go to live with Father Conlin?
6. How does the narrator show he is a good friend to Eddie?



Increase Your Vocabulary

The following words occur in the story. Write the correct letter from the list of meanings on the blank.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. ___ puffy | a. nervous, worried |
| 2. ___ slit | b. look at for a long time |
| 3. ___ tease | c. foretell, see ahead into the future |
| 4. ___ situation | d. compliment |
| 5. ___ stare | e. suffering pain |
| 6. ___ passion | f. pull slowly, move slowly |
| 7. ___ drag | g. make fun of, annoy |
| 8. ___ exhibition | h. swollen, fat |
| 9. ___ congratulate | i. narrow opening |
| 10. ___ aching | j. conditon |
| 11. ___ predict | k. strong feeling, love |
| 12. ___ anxious | l. a showing, a public display |

Word Forms

Fill in each blank box of the chart with a word form. Two of the words here have more than one form for one part of speech. An X means that no word form or no common and frequent word form exists. Use your dictionary if you need help. Note: The same form may be used for more than one part of speech.

Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
		aching	
	congratulate		X
	drag		X
exhibition		X	X
passion	X		
	predict		
		puffy	X
situation			
slit		X	X
	stare		X
	tease		



Reviewing the Plot

Put the following sentences in the correct order according to the events of the story. Write the numbers 1–10 to show the order. The first one has been done for you.

1. ___ Danny finds Eddie sitting in the empty ball park.
2. ___ Eddie catches a fly ball in the ball park.
3. ___ Eddie's father takes him to an exhibition game.
4. ___ Eddie goes to live with Father Conlin.
5. ___ Danny goes off to college.
6. 1 Eddie has brain damage when he's born.
7. ___ Eddie disappears one night during Christmas vacation.
8. ___ Danny promises to come back to visit Eddie.
9. ___ Eddie's mother dies when he's eight
10. ___ Danny and Eddie play ball and go to McDonald's.

Summarizing

Write a summary of the story in your own words.



Writing Basics

The Order of Adjectives

Adjectives describe nouns and pronouns. Sometimes we use several adjectives to describe a noun or pronoun. In English, we list these adjectives in a special order *before the noun they describe*. If a pronoun is being described, the adjectives occur after the verb. See Sentences 4 and 5 at the top of page 75.

Example:

He wore his *faded blue* baseball cap and had his *old leather* catcher's mitt on his *left* hand.

This is the order we use for multiple adjectives.

Size–Age–Color–Origin–Material–NOUN

If we use an adjective of opinion (*smart, beautiful, happy*), it precedes an adjective of fact (*old, metal, wooden, tall*).

Example:

The beautiful, tall young woman was wearing an ugly old red woolen hat.
 opinion fact fact noun opinion fact fact fact noun

When multiple adjectives are used, there are commas between the adjectives but not between the last adjective and the noun. **Note:** All numbers and colors are adjectives in English. Sometimes a noun is used to describe another noun as in *baseball cap* or *catcher's mitt*.

Using Adjectives to Describe Nouns

Complete the description of the noun or pronoun by adding these adjectives: *taller, older, serious, kind, happy, friendly, old, new, wet, snowy, peaceful, popular, dark, light, red, beautiful, sparkling, strange, hot, cold, small, large.*

1. Eddie and Danny live in a _____ town.
2. Eddie had a _____ smile on his face all the time.
3. The other boys in town treated Eddie in a _____ way, and he felt _____ when they chose him for their teams.
4. It was _____, _____, and _____ in the winter.
5. We had all changed after starting college. We were _____, _____, and more _____ about school.
6. The Christmas tree was decorated with _____ lights.

Using Verbs to Create Word Pictures

Each sentence from the story contains verbs that are used descriptively, which means they create strong visual images. Underline the verbs that help create descriptions. The first one has been done for you.

1. Some people say Eddie was dropped right after he was born.
2. Others say he stopped breathing and turned blue.
3. Big Billy's eyes looked as if they were closed.
4. He would bend his head down and drag his feet.
5. His body kept growing.
6. His smile broadened as everybody congratulated him and patted him on the back.
7. Every time I got out of the car, I felt the cold biting.

Parallelism

Words and phrases in a sentence should follow the rules of **parallelism**. A parallel structure creates a better sounding and correct grammatical sentence. Sentences need to be parallel in terms of singular and plural and in verb form. Be especially careful about keeping your verbs in the same form.

Example:

Wrong: Eddie liked to play baseball, and he was collecting baseball cards.

Correct: Eddie liked to play baseball and collect baseball cards.

Play baseball and *collect baseball cards* are parallel phrases because they use the same verb structure.

Practicing Parallelism

Correct the unparallel sentences by rewriting them correctly on the lines. The first one has been done for you.

1. Eddie wasn't very lucky, but he can play baseball well.

Eddie wasn't very lucky, but he plays baseball well.

2. He was dragging his feet and bent his head down because he wanted to stay outside.

3. Nobody expected him to get good grades and going to college.

4. Playing baseball and to collect baseball cards were Eddie's passions.

5. Everyone was kind to Eddie and wanting him on the team.

6. Danny couldn't lie to Eddie and to tell him the truth.

Descriptive Writing Techniques

Refer to these techniques when you write a description.

1. Use sensory details to help the reader visualize your subject.
 - a. What do you see?
 - b. What do you hear?
 - c. What do you feel?
 - d. What do you smell?
 - e. What do you taste?
2. What makes the subject unusual or unique?
3. Use adjectives and adverbs.
 - a. Pay attention to the order of adjectives.
4. Use strong verbs.
5. Use sentence variety.
6. Include a topic sentence to state the idea of your essay.
7. Write a title that reflects the theme.
8. Write a concluding sentence that restates ideas in the topic sentence.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1

Describe someone whose friendship means a lot to you. Read the student model to see how one writer described a good friend.

Student Model

Pedro, My Best Friend

My best friend has always been there for me. We **grew** up together in Lima and **played** on the same soccer team in high school. He **is** a short, handsome, dark-haired Peruvian who **loves** to play ball, dance, and travel. One time I went on a trip with him across my country. We **went** in my car, and I **drove** most of the time. We **climbed** the Inca trail and **arrived** in Macchu Picchu. It **was** early morning, and we were **amazed** by the beautiful, old, enormous green mountains and the ruins of the ancient, mysterious Inca city. I almost **fell** during our climb up the steep mountain, but Pedro **grabbed** me by the leg and **saved** me from falling off the mountain. He has always been there for me.

Notice: All verbs (in bold) in the same sentence have parallel structure.

1. Did the writer use sensory details? List some.
2. What makes the subject unique?
3. Were adjectives in proper order?
4. Were the verbs strong? List some.
5. Were there good topic and concluding sentences?
6. Does the title reflect the theme?

Brainstorm details about your friend, and then write a description of him or her. Add details about personality and behavior. Exchange papers with a partner, and ask your partner to draw a picture based on your description of the person. Use the Editing Checklist on page 19.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2

Imagine you are interviewing a famous person (real or not). To brainstorm, write ten questions you would ask this person. Then interview a partner who will pretend to be the famous person. Write your partner's answers, and then write a paragraph describing the person you have interviewed. Use the guidelines in the descriptive writing techniques on page 77.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3

Describe a difficult situation. Think about a time you were frightened.

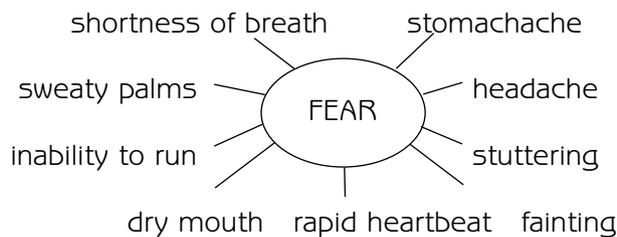
Describe the situation.

Describe your physical feelings created by fear.

What did you do?

What happened afterward?

Brainstorm:



Use the Peer Evaluation Form on page 22 to edit your partner's writing. Did your partner use all the descriptive writing techniques from page 77? Did you? Revise your paper.