

**HIGH SCHOOL SAMPLE**

This ninth-grade student created a three-paragraph story from a single image. She used the Norman Rockwell picture below for the last paragraph and invented the images that would have come before.

This composition also illustrates that the use of the full checklist does not spoil a student's writing.

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[1] Miss Jones **gazed despondently** around at the shabby **apartment** – its dingy gray walls seeming to reflect her melancholy mood. [4] Setting her worn coat, hat, and bags down on the thread-bare bed cover, she flung herself into her antique rocker. [6] She sighed. [3] Aimlessly, her mind wandered back over her life. [4] Orphaned at fifteen years of age, Amelia Jones had spent most of her life providing for her five younger siblings. [2] Several years later, she had moved to a humble quiet town in Illinois where she lived as an old maid teaching children in a cramped one-room schoolhouse. [5] Although she earned only a tiny stipend, she had **scrimped** enough to rent a **decrepit** apartment, **which** she kept orderly and clean, despite its weathered furniture. [5] As she **looked** around at the **dismal apartment where** she resided, she regretfully realized that her impoverished condition had not changed.

[2] Meanwhile, at the schoolhouse, twenty-two **students exuberantly decorated** the room. [4] Leader of the children, Peter Clark had unintentionally discovered top-secret information – Miss Jones' birthday, **which** happened to be Friday, February 13th. [4] Noticing Miss Jones' doleful and weary expressions during school, Peter, along with the rest of the the class, had racked their brains to come up with an idea to lift the spirits of their endearing teacher. [3] Finally, Peter had hit upon a grandiose idea. [1] They would **adorn** the schoolhouse for Miss Jones' birthday, then only three days away! [5] Now as Peter glanced around at the **ebullient children**, he smiled **as he decorated**. [6] Everything looked perfect.

[2] The next day, Miss Jones **stood** at the front of the **classroom** astonished and **beaming** with joy. [2] That morning, she had walked to the schoolhouse **oblivious** of the children's surprise. [5] As she had unlocked the door and stepped into the room, she had stared with amazement. [3] Immediately realizing what the children had done, she had smiled. [6] Tears filled her eyes. [4] Surprised beyond words, Miss Jones examined the room **where** she beheld "Happy Birthday, Miss Jones" **scrawled** in childish writing on the board and the small homemade presents **that** littered her desk. [4] Clearing her voice, she thanked the children **profusely** for their thoughtfulness. [5] As she walked home that afternoon, she thought back to how **astounded** she had been **standing** in the **classroom** and realized that even if she did live in poverty, she had friends that loved her – and that was worth all the riches in the world.

