SOPHOMORE EXPOSITORY ESSAY SAMPLE

(Introduction and first body paragraph only)

Pain leads to growth

(Thesis Statement) In the Olive Ann Burns novel Cold Sassy Tree, Will Tweedy grows from a somewhat thoughtless fourteen-year-old boy to a more mature and compassionate person. (SO 1) Initially, Will acts in a capricious manner, often hurting people without really understanding the effect of his actions. (SO 2) However, when Will encounters some hurtful experiences and grows from them, he starts to see situations from a new perspective. (SO 3) Subsequently, Will evolves into someone who cares for others and learns to think for himself. (Concluding or Transitional Sentence) Much growth occurs in Will because he realizes that there will be less hurt if people are more accepting of each other.

(Transition + TS 1/SO 1) Early in his life, Will is somewhat of a prankster, not taking into consideration the feelings of the people he might be hurting. (Trans. + MS 1) In order to release his anger, Will often uses revenge. (C+Q) Grandpa Tweedy provokes such revenge when he does not allow Will to take the fish he catches off of the hook because it is Sunday. In retaliation, Will plans to give his Grandpa a hornet chase. Will recalls "Giving him just long enough to get settled good, [he] let[s] fly a rock and it hit that tin roof like a gunshot. Grandpa burst out of there in a cloud of hornet ["¦] He know I'd done it" (107). (Analysis) Will probably does not even care that his Grandpa Tweedy could get stung. Because he does not like him, his welfare does not matter. Therefore, Will just evens things out. (Trans. + MS 2) Furthermore, Will does not have a problem making up lies about others in order to get out of an uncomfortable situation. When Will goes on a camping trip with his friends, he feels as if he has to change the subject away from the controversial relationship between his Grandpa Blakeslee and his new young wife, Miss Love. Will chooses his Aunt Loma, a rival of his, to humiliate: "I wasn't too worried about Aunt Loma. Those were whacking good stories, if I do say so myself ["¦] Anyhow, it would be worth a whipping to see Aunt Loma's face after she heard" (184). Will not only praises his great ability to lie, but thinks that his punishment will be worth the pleasure he will get from seeing his aunt upset. He does not take into account how he would feel in her place or the embarrassment he may cause. Moreover, Will does not always seem to respect authority. For example, Will gets into a fight at school with a mill boy, Hosie Roach, and his punishment is to chop wood for Mr. Billy Whisnant, a man ailing from rheumatism. Will takes this opportunity to defy authority and to show disrespect for Mr. Whisnant: "What we'd done, haw, and like I say it was my idea we had cut every stick exactly four inches too long for the Whisnant's kitchen stove" (267). Will does not take into account that Mr. Whisnant cannot chop wood for himself. Helping him would have been a kind and charitable thing to do. Instead, he feels that he is acting smart by finding a way to defy his punishment. Will does not try to be cruel; he does not realize the impact that his actions can have on others. When he plays a joke on someone, makes up stories, or acts defiantly, he never looks at the situation from the other person's perspective.