

9th Grade Big Question Anchor Paper – Score of 3

What makes something valuable? People's value for something is not entirely physical, which makes this such an important question. Value can be felt for intangible items as well. I chose this question because the concept of value intrigued me because it is very different for different people. Something's meaning and value to someone determines its value, through separation and sacrifice, value for unseen things, and value for familiar things more than known things.

Value can originate from separation and sacrifice. In the novel *Before We Were Free*, freedom is valued because it must be fought for. Anita and her family value freedom much more than they ever have before because they must sacrifice so much to receive it, including Papi and Tio Toni's lives. If you have to work hard to obtain something, that thing will automatically become more valuable. In Artifact #4, I discovered Patrick Henry's famous liberty speech. In this speech, he states "Give me liberty or give me death," claiming that liberty is more valuable than life. This liberty is so important and valuable to him and his fellow patriots because it was taken away from them when England refused to give them representation in the government. When something is taken away, it becomes rare and valuable to get back. Things become valuable through separation and sacrifice, but they can be unseen as well.

Unseen things can become valuable through many things based on the fact that the thing is visible. For example, in the short story "The Gift of the Magi," love is more valuable than material possessions. In the story, Jim and Della would do anything for one another, including selling their prized possessions, all in the name of love. This love became valuable through time and dedication, which grew feelings towards each other. In Artifact #2, I interviewed my mom about the topic of value. She stated that most valuable things are usually unseen, such as love and diligence. This value for things unseen is completely different for different people. For example, someone might love someone else. Another person might hate that same person. Everything depends on one's morals and situations.

Comment [A1]: The introduction provides some context/background for the question, but could have a more engaging and thought-provoking hook

Comment [A2]: Repetitive wording

Comment [A3]: While the thesis is "succinct and narrowed" and pinpoints the three specific aspects of value that the writer will be analyzing in the essay, it comes across as repetitive and fairly formulaic

Comment [A4]: Clear topic sentence

Comment [A5]: The writer pinpoints a relevant source, but relies primarily on summary and generalization rather than focused, in-depth analysis; there is also no direct evidence from the source

Comment [A6]: The transitions between sources need to be smoother and more sophisticated

Comment [A7]: Vague wording; this piece of analysis is generalized/unclear

Comment [A8]: The transition placement feels choppy and formulaic

Comment [A9]: Vague topic sentence, partially caused by the frequent repetition of the word "things"

Comment [A10]: Awkward wording and vague analysis; again, lacking direct evidence from the artifacts

Comment [A11]: Again, smooth and meaningful transitions within the body paragraphs (between artifacts) are lacking

Things that cannot be seen can become very valuable through time and dedication. Familiar things can also become very valuable.

People value familiar things much more than they value things that they do not understand as well. For example, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Scout and Jem did not value the Radley family. The Radley's were unfamiliar to the children, and they "scared away" the Finch's value and trust. I think that if the Finch's had taken the time to know the Radley's, they would have valued them more. Another example of this value can be found in *To Kill a Mockingbird* again. In the novel, people in the mid-1900s era "unvalued" or degraded black people just because of their race and because they were different. Tom Robinson was murdered just because of his race and because his testimony at the trial was less important and valuable than Bob Ewell's, a white man's version of the event. If Tom Robinson had been white instead of black, I do not think that the Ewell's would have even pressed charges about anything that might not even have happened. Another example of this kind of value for more familiar things is found in *Artifact #2*, where I interviewed my mom. In the interview she states that someone trusts and values something much more if they know it better. This is true because value comes through time, and someone would rather trust something left in the dark. Value takes time and effort to develop.

Through separation and sacrifice, value for unseen things, and value for known things, something's meaning and value can be determined. Value is what something is worth. Value can be high or low. What really makes something valuable? The answer is the item's meaning. Value is so different for different people that it is hard to discover what really makes something valuable. I wonder what life would be like if everyone valued the same things. Life could be very different if people had an altered set of values.

Comment [A12]: While some of these points are thoughtful, the writer relies heavily on generalizations that feel choppy and disconnected from each other

Comment [A13]: Clear and thought-provoking topic sentence

Comment [A14]: Some mechanical issues with punctuation (possession) and verb tense consistency in this section

Comment [A15]: Awkward transition between examples, especially since TKAM is the only source being referenced in this body paragraph

Comment [A16]: Wordiness in this section that comes primarily from repetition of wording and sentence structure ("because of" ...)

Comment [A17]: Use of first person here weakens the writer's claim

Comment [A18]: This analysis feels vague and unclear; the writer also closes the paragraph with a generalized statement that is not relevant to the main focus of this body paragraph (valuing familiar things)

Comment [A19]: Choppy; lacks more sophisticated sentence variety

Comment [A20]: While the writer touches on some thought-provoking angles/sub-questions brought up by the BQ, the closing (especially the final line) feels too vague. Overall, this is a competent, organized essay with few mechanical errors, but it is distinguished from a 4 primarily through its reliance on a formula, lack of evidence, and level of analysis.