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Happy Endings

I'll tell ya something right up front. Endings are hard. Everybody struggles with them. Some writers rewrite their endings 20 times. That's just the way it is. Of course, there are things we can do to make it easier. And that's what we'll talk about here. But make no mistake: endings are, for most of us, the hardest things to write.

When you're trying to come up with a good ending for a piece, there are three things you need to think about. A good ending should:

- **Feel finished.** A good ending has a certain feel to it, and that feeling is one of completeness: there's nothing else the writer needs to say, the piece has been wrapped up, summed up, and tied up so completely that the reader feels completely satisfied.
- **Give the reader something to think about or do.** Readers like to ponder a bit at the end of a piece, they like to have something to consider, something to reflect on, something to take with them for the future. Ideally, your ideas will linger in their mind long after they've read your last sentence. That's the test of truly effective writing.
- **Meet your reader's expectations.** With the beginning and middle of your piece, you've set up certain expectations in the minds of your readers. Your ending has to live up to those expectations, it has to fulfill the promise of everything that has come before.

Too often, readers feel let down by the ending. And that can ruin their entire experience of a piece. It's not that readers are mean people with impossibly high standards. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Your readers want you to have a great ending so badly that they often can't help but disappoint themselves. This is just another reason why endings are so important and why good endings are so hard to write.

Strategies for Good Endings

Learning from other writers. As we did with beginnings, we're going to learn how to write our own endings by studying the endings of other writers just like us. I haven't come across as many different types of endings as I have types of beginnings. In fact, even though I've put many of these endings into different categories, they might all seem very similar to you. I think the reason why there are not as many different types of endings has to do with what readers expect when they get to the end of a piece. At the beginning of a piece, readers have very few expectations and that means writers have more freedom to do whatever they want. But endings are different. When readers get to the end of a piece, they already have an inkling of the kind of ending they want, the words that have come before by way of introduction narrow the writer's choices for words at the conclusion.

1. End with some advice.

If you cannot swallow and your throat is puffy, then you have strep. You should get lots of rest. And get a shot because the shot will make you better faster than the medicine.

If you're thinking about going skydiving, take my advice: stop thinking.

It just seems like part of being human to want to tell other humans what we think they should do. But more importantly, it makes for a good ending. As one of my favorite sayings goes, "Take my advice. I'm not using it."

2. End with your big feeling.

Oh Yeah! Here is some thing really funny. My hair still smells like smoke. I love campfires.

Finally the parade was done. We put the blanket in the trunk. Boom! It slammed again and we drove away as I thought how much fun I had.

When it's time to go, none of us wants to leave. As I say my good-byes, I think of all the fun we had, and what fun we will have next time.

Sometimes, at the end of an important experience, what we're left with is a single overwhelming feeling (hopefully, a good one). But even if we're sad or angry or scared, ending with a big feeling usually works.

More Good Endings

3. End with something you want your readers to remember.

Remember, even though the Mariners are losing doesn't mean they're a bad team.

So always remember to keep an extra key somewhere. You never know when you might need it.

This is similar to the “advice” ending. It works because it gives the reader something specific to think about.

4. End with something you want your readers to do.

There were 300 families with no homes because of the fire. They couldn't put out the fire because they had no sprinklers. I am mad because fires can kill people. Next time buy some sprinklers.

Down with the dolls! Get rid of every store that carries them! Let the revolution for a Barbie-free America begin!

If you care about the lives of your children and the quality of your community, then vote for tomorrow's school levy. It's the best way to guarantee a bright future for everyone.

Make a commitment to getting in shape today. Turn off the television, put down whatever it is you're reading (unless it's this essay, of course), start living a healthy life right now. You'll be glad you did.

This is a very strong type of ending. Telling your readers to go out and do something is a big deal because most of us don't like to do the things that other people tell us to do. But if what you have to say is really important to you, then this type of ending might be just what you're looking for. It is most commonly found in persuasive pieces when people write about important political, social, and community issues.

Even More Good Endings

5. End by thinking about the future.

Last year was definitely the hardest, craziest year of my life. And I loved it! Things are going great. I never knew the incredible feeling of accomplishing things that in the past seemed impossible — not only with school, but with my entire life. Every day is another chance to do something great. And now I have the confidence and motivation to conquer anything that is put forth in front of me. I feel I owe this to many things and to many people, but most of all I owe it to myself. Now I think about the consequences of everything I do and say. And this helps me make better decisions, decisions that help me build a better future. The future! For the first time I'm looking forward to it.

Everybody's always talking about adults being good role models for kids, but maybe we should be models for them. Maybe we could teach them a few things about how to have a good time and enjoy life. It's worth a try. I'd hate to think that the way growing up seems to me now is the way it's going to be when I get there.

Kids dealing with the character issue is also good because we need to learn how to build our characters. Then, like Green said, maybe we'll have new kinds of political leaders and we'll see society change.

Most of us think about the future all the time. It's a normal and natural thing. And I think that's why this type of ending feels normal and natural, too.

6. End with something you learned.

I learned that I shouldn't lie because it gets me into worse trouble. In the future I'm not going to lie. If I have a problem, I'm going to tell someone about it, and ask for help.

From the wars in Korea and Vietnam, our country learned painful but valuable lessons that will guide our foreign policy well into the next century and beyond.

This is the classic “moral of the story” ending that most of us remember from when our parents read us stories. But it makes a perfectly good ending for older kids and adults, too.

And Still More Good Endings

7. End with a recommendation.

I recommend this book for readers who like adventures and interesting stories.

Even after all the bad things that happened, it was still a fun trip. If you go there, I can't guarantee you won't have all the problems we did. But I can recommend this vacation to any family who wants something out of the ordinary — and a real challenge.

Even though the food was pretty good and it wasn't too expensive, I'm afraid I can't recommend this restaurant to everyone. It was very noisy and the service was slow. I don't think it would be a good choice for families with small children.

Much like the “advice” ending, the “recommendation” ending also tells the reader to go out and do something (or not do something). But it's a little friendlier, not quite as strong. It feels more like a suggestion or an invitation than a demand.

8. End with your main idea.

Chores aren't the worst but they're definitely not the best!

An actor acts. A hero helps. The actor becomes famous and the hero does not. And that's just it: Heroes don't care about the credit, they just care.

The last thing your readers read is what they'll probably remember best. So why not leave them with the one most important thing you want them to know? Ending with your main idea is almost always a good strategy. The hard part is building up to it slowly and saving it for last.

Good Endings Galore

9. End with your main idea and its implications.

I always used to think of George Washington as a soldier and a politician, and I guess I always will. But he was really just a farmer. He reminds me a little of Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*. All she wanted to do was get back home. And finally the Wizard told her she could just click her red shoes three times and say "There's no place like home." But George Washington and his men didn't have shoes when they went across the Delaware River. Maybe if they did, history would have turned out completely different.

Henry Ford's revolutionary thinking affected the lives of many Americans. The Ford Motor Company became one of the largest industrial companies in the world, and a household name. Opportunity to be mobile in a Ford car gave the open road to the ordinary American. Businesses boomed in the hard times of the Depression because the auto gave the opportunity for work to many. The American dream of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was more possible behind the wheel of a Ford. Americans today still have a love affair with cars thanks to Henry Ford and his revolutionary thinking.

Here's another type of main idea ending. In this case, the writers are starting their final paragraphs with their main idea but then going just a little bit further. This is a great strategy, especially for research papers and other expository writing, because it not only tells readers the one most important thing you want them to know, it tells them why that one thing is so important. I had a college teacher once who called this the "So what?" He would read our papers and then say, "So what? You just told me this big thing. Why is it important to me?" This wasn't really as harsh as it sounds — he was smiling when he said it. Actually, he helped me discover one of the most valuable lessons I've ever learned: Sometimes it isn't enough just to say what you think. You need to tell people why what you think is so important.

One of the things I encourage kids to do in their endings is to go just a bit farther than they think they can. I know that sounds weird. I mean, the end should be the end, right? But it's not. You can get to the end of something that happened to you and find that there's still a lot more to talk about. And here's where you'll discover a wonderful opportunity. You see, if someone has followed your story all the way to the end, that means they're really interested in what you have to say. And when people are interested in what you have to say, you shouldn't waste the opportunity to tell them something really important. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, I often use my endings to tell people why I think the ideas I've been writing about might be important to them. You can tell your readers what's important to you.

Good Endings Ad Infinitum

10. End with the effect on you or others.

While all this happened, another close neighbor had witnessed the incident and called 911. It was decided afterward that the dog had contracted rabies and he was soon put to sleep. I was given a series of shots and a few stitches only, and after a couple of years, my leg healed, but the scars remain on both the inside and out.

The internment of the Japanese Americans was one of the lowest points in United States history. We did it out of revenge and out of hate. The fear that we felt after the attack at Pearl Harbor was well founded, but the internment was not the way to overcome it. The internment hurt so many people so deeply and really accomplished nothing in the short run. In the long run, it brought nothing but shame upon us.

This is another style of ending that tries to answer the “So what?” question. This type of ending always seems very serious and profound to me. And I guess that’s why I like it so much. Often, when writers do this, they try to make the case, as these two writers have, that the consequences of a particular action or event are permanent and significant.

11. End with a question.

As this miracle Mariner season comes to a close, the one thought on every fan’s mind is this: Can they do it again next year?

Will the human race ever see the irony in destroying the planet that is its only home? How much more evidence do we need before we take global warming seriously?

I guess what still bothers me is how confused I am about what happened. If I was ever in that same situation again, would I act the same way, or would I do something different?

If you can start a piece with questions, can you end a piece with questions, too? Why do writers use questions so often? Why are questions so effective in writing? Would it be possible to create a piece entirely out of questions? Does this paragraph give you any hints about that?

Good Endings Etc.

12. End by mentioning a sequel.

As soon as I walked in the dining room I smelled trouble. I looked down at my plate and saw what I smelled! Brussels sprouts! I gave a loud tragic moan and knew there was going to be another story written by Alex Carter. But for now, I would feed my brussels sprouts to the fish.

And so ends another after school adventure, or misadventure, I should say. Stay tuned for the further misadventures of a kid with not enough homework to keep him out of trouble and way too many crazy ideas.

If you liked the original, you'll probably like the sequel, too. At least that's the thinking behind this type of ending. Writers love to be read. And some are not merely content with the fact that you're reading their current piece. They want you to read their next piece, too. So they put a little advertisement for it right in the ending.

13. End with a reflective evaluation.

So I guess that I lived happily ever after except that I couldn't walk for the rest of the trip. Maybe that day hike wasn't so cool after all.

From that point on my life has been good. Except for the chores. I think my mom got the better end of the deal on that one.

BRRRIIINNNGGG! The bell rang! I pulled on my backpack, tore out of the room, sprinted down the stairs, sped down the hallway, and bounded out the door. I dashed home and grabbed a snack. I popped a video into the VCR, turned on the TV, and relaxed. Ahhhhhh! What a glorious day!

Often, when we find ourselves at the end of something, we want to make a judgment about it. We look back over the entire experience and ask ourselves: Was it good? Was it bad? How did things turn out for me? What's the bottom line? And then we try to sum things up as best we can.

Good Endings Cont.

14. End with a wish or a hope or a dream.

Now I'm looking at John, over the mess on the kitchen table, wondering if he's all right, because he's only eight years old, and that was a lot of throwing up to do. Then he gets to go out and play with his friend just like he wanted. I feel a little cheated. Would I have gotten to go back out if that was me? I really wish he could have the experience of a younger sibling just so he would know how I feel.

I hope someday that I can be a good parent just like my mom. But until then, I'll just work on being a good kid.

Even now, years later, I still dream of what my life might have been like.

I think that Jay Buhner is a true hero. The Seattle Mariners would be lacking an excellent right fielder without him. I hope he stays in Seattle for the rest of his baseball career.

This is similar to the “future” ending but it's a bit more subtle and, to my way of thinking, a bit more effective, too. I guess I can't help but identify with someone else's hopes and dreams.

15. End with a tribute.

I salute you, Lieutenant John Olson. May your bravery and courage be passed on so that someone else may look up to you and yours, and honor them as I do.

Tricia was the best companion I've ever known. She talked to me when I needed it, and listened when all I wanted was a friendly ear. It was an honor for me to have known her. It's too bad I couldn't have taken her with us when we moved. I'll never forget her.

This is a great type of ending when you're writing about a person or a place you want to honor with words.

One Last Really Good Ending

I saved the best one for last. One of my favorite kinds of endings is, in my humble opinion, so cool that it deserves a bit of an introduction. Reading a piece of writing is like taking a little trip. The writer picks you up at the beginning and carts you off to different places with each new idea. Finally, you arrive at your destination. With luck, you not only enjoy the ride, you appreciate where you've been dropped off at the end. But wouldn't it be nice if the writer could get you all the way back home to where you started in the first place? That's what a "wrap-around" ending does. It manages to finish off the piece by using the beginning again at the end.

16. End with what you started with. (A "wrap-around" ending.)

Here's an example of a wrap-around ending from a very clever second grader. Her story is a simple one about watching a parade. But the way she works the beginning and the end belies her age in its sophistication.

Boom! The trunk slammed. Bang! The car door slammed as we got out of the van. Buses lined up on the sidewalk. The screeches of the buses got annoying. Screech! Screech! We walked and walked until we found a place to sit for the parade. I saw a Grease van and someone threw me a daffodil. The daffodil petals were soft, and it smelled pretty. A Titanic float sailed by. All schools had cheers. One school's band was Star Wars. A dummy was shot out of a cannon. It made me jump! We ate snacks at the parade like sandwiches and juice and carrots. They were good. The parade was two hours. We sat on a blanket. Things blew everywhere when the float went by whew-clunk. Finally the parade was done. We put the blanket in the trunk. Boom! It slammed again and we drove away as I thought how much fun I had.

Not too shabby for a seven-year old, eh? (I corrected some of the spelling here, but the words are all hers.) Actually, her teacher and I had been doing some ending lessons in her class and the wrap-around ending was one of the ones we spent time on. Still, I think she was the only student who tried it.

Another wrap-around example. On the next page you'll see another example of a wrap-around, this time in a research paper by a sixth grade writer. In this case, the end doesn't mirror the beginning quite as literally as was the case in the "parade" piece. Here, the writer brings back just one small but memorable part of the first paragraph and uses it to end his paper on a playful note.

Another Example

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

On a dark December night in 1776, as he led a barefoot brigade of ragged revolutionaries across the icy Delaware River, George Washington said, "Shift your fat behind, Harry. But slowly or you'll swamp the darn boat." He was talking to General Henry Knox (they called him "Dx" for short). There's a painting of George Washington where he's standing up in a boat scanning the riverbank for Redcoats. I always thought he just wanted a good view. But I guess the reason he was standing was because he didn't have a place to sit down.

Finding a seat in his own boat was hardly the worst of General Washington's problems. It was cold and wet and icy, and his men were tired and didn't have warm clothes to wear or even enough food to eat. The Revolutionary War was hard on everyone, but it was hard on Washington most of all because he wanted to be home with his wife and children.

From 1759, until he was called to fight in 1775, Washington lived with his wife, Martha, and her two children. Washington loved his big farm in Mt. Vernon, Virginia, and although he was one of our country's most brilliant generals, he was really just a farmer at heart. In a letter he wrote to a friend in England, he said, "I can nowhere find such great satisfaction as in working on my plantation." He didn't even want to be President. He said he would feel like a criminal going to his death if he took office. But after everyone voted for him, he felt it was his duty to accept.

Washington was our President for the next eight years, but during that time he just wanted to get back home. He would spend weekends there whenever he could, and he made sure he got reports on the condition of his farm. He also liked getting letters from his family.

Then, in March of 1797, Washington finally got to go home for good. There were no more wars to fight, and John Adams was going to be President. Washington had been a good President, but he was tired of it. Even his granddaughter noticed how happy he was to be home. In a letter to a friend she wrote, "Grandpa is much pleased with being once more Farmer Washington."

I always used to think of George Washington as a soldier and a politician, and I guess I always will. But he was really just a farmer. He reminds me a little of Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*. All she wanted to do was get back home. And finally the Wizard told her she could just click her red shoes three times and say "There's no place like home." But George Washington and his men didn't have shoes when they went across the Delaware River. Maybe if they did, history would have turned out completely different.

Endings That Should Not Be Used

Some endings are worse than others. Having already told you how hard I think endings are, I certainly won't be too grumpy if you occasionally write a bad one. I have — more than once. That being said, however, there are certain endings we should probably all try to avoid.

1. The “The End” ending.

The End

This not a real ending, merely the announcement of one. It's fine for children's stories where your audience might be too young to realize that you're done, but for mature readers it's a let down.

2. The “I hope you liked my story” ending.

Well, that's all I have to say. I hope you liked my story!

If I did like the story, this ending would quickly help to change my opinion of it. And if I didn't like it, I doubt I'll like it any better just because the writer hopes I will.

3. The “Tell ‘em what ya told ‘em” ending.

In this paper, I have just discussed blah, blah, blah...

I don't know who started this but I sure wish they'd stop. Somewhere, a long time ago, somebody started telling kids that their papers should look like this: (Introduction) “Tell ‘em what you're gonna tell ‘em.” (Body) “Tell ‘em.” (Conclusion) “Tell ‘em what ya told ‘em.” Now, by my count that means you have to write everything three times and your poor reader has to read everything three times. This seems excessive if not pointless. If you've already told me something, and if I'm any kind of a reader at all, I certainly don't want to hear about it again, let alone two more times.

4. The “It was only a dream” ending.

I was just about to... when I woke up. It was only a dream.

I know it's tempting to use this ending when you're writing a really long story that you don't know how to finish. But readers usually hate it when stories end this way.

Tips for Good Endings

Start slow and build. The first endings that we usually write are a single sentence long. That's about all we can do to begin with and that's fine. It's enough just to get the feeling of an ending when you're starting out. After you're comfortable with one-sentence endings, try a one-paragraph ending. This is not as hard as it seems: you just take your one-sentence ending and add a few details to it. Most of the time, when you're writing for school, you should be writing fairly short pieces (500 words or less). In this case, a one-paragraph ending is really all you need. When you're working with longer pieces, your ending can become an entire section unto itself. This means that several paragraphs may be involved.

In general, kids' endings are too short. Because endings are so hard, most kids don't like to write them. And because most kids don't like to write them, they tend to write them too short. Whenever I read an ending that is too short, I feel like the writer couldn't wait to get finished. I can almost sense the discomfort of a kid struggling to eek out a sentence where a full paragraph would be better. It's as though I can feel the writer's anxiety and discomfort, and this makes me feel anxious and uncomfortable, too.

Write your ending before you get there. One thing I do often is write my ending ahead of time. I'll get into my piece, maybe a third of the way through, just enough to understand my topic, then I'll think about where I'm going to go with it, and then I'll just stop and write the ending. I try to figure out what I want my readers to think and/or do when they finish reading and I just write that down. Even if it's not perfect — and it usually isn't — I still have something I can work with. Then I go back and write from wherever I was and head toward my new ending.

The ending is the last thing your audience will read. As we've talked about before, you have a lot of responsibility when it comes to ending your piece effectively. After all, the ending is the last thing your readers will read and that means they're quite likely to remember it better than other parts of your piece. But this means you have an opportunity, too. You can use your ending to say something very important with the knowledge that your readers will be listening closely to your every word. There are only two places where you can count on having your reader's full attention. One is at the beginning, the other is at the end.

Don't forget the "So what?" Try to always keep in mind that in order to read your writing, readers have to expend a certain amount of time and energy. They also have to give up things. Instead of reading your piece, for example, they could be watching Comedy Central, or downloading MP3 files, or day-trading on the stock market through their parents' brokerage account. Who knows what fun, excitement, and potential profit they have chosen to forego simply to read your writing. As such, they have a right to expect some return on their investment. Specifically, they have a right to ask, "So what? What does this piece have to do with me? Why should I care about it?" And that's exactly the question you need to answer in your ending.

A Glossary of Happy Endings

- 1. Advice. (A)** If you cannot swallow and your throat is puffy, then you have strep. You should get lots of rest. And get a shot because the shot will make you better faster than the medicine. **(B)** If you're thinking about going skydiving, take my advice: stop thinking.
- 2. Big feeling. (A)** Oh Yeah! Here is some thing really funny. My hair still smells like smoke. I love campfires. **(B)** Finally the parade was done. We put the blanket in the trunk. Boom! It slammed again and we drove away as I thought how much fun I had. **(C)** When it's time to go, none of us wants to leave. As I say my good-byes, I think of all the fun we had, and what fun we will have next time.
- 3. Remember. (A)** Remember, even though the Mariners are losing doesn't mean they're a bad team. **(B)** So always remember to keep an extra key somewhere. You never know when you might need it.
- 4. Do. (A)** There were 300 families with no homes because of the fire. They couldn't put out the fire because they had no sprinklers. I am mad because fires can kill people. Next time buy some sprinklers. **(B)** Down with the dolls! Get rid of every store that carries them! Let the revolution for a Barbie-free America begin! **(C)** If you care about the lives of your children and the quality of your community, then vote for tomorrow's school levy. It's the best way to guarantee a bright future for everyone. **(D)** Make a commitment to getting in shape today. Turn off the television, put down whatever it is you're reading (unless it's this essay, of course), start living a healthy life today. You'll be glad you did.
- 5. Future. (A)** Last year was definitely the hardest, craziest year of my life. And I loved it! Things are going great. I never knew the incredible feeling of accomplishing things that in the past seemed impossible—not only with school, but with my entire life. Every day is another chance to do something great. And now I have the confidence and motivation to conquer anything that is put forth in front of me. I feel I owe this to many things and to many people, but most of all I owe it to myself. Now I think about the consequences of everything I do and say. And this helps me make better decisions, decisions that help me build a better future. The future! For the first time I'm looking forward to it. **(B)** Everybody's always talking about adults being good role models for kids, but maybe we should be models for them. Maybe we could teach them a few things about how to have a good time and enjoy life. It's worth a try. I'd hate to think that the way growing up seems to me now is the way it's going to be when I get there.
- 6. Lesson. (A)** I learned that I shouldn't lie because it gets me into worse trouble. In the future I'm not going to lie. If I have a problem, I'm going to tell someone about it, and ask for help. **(B)** From the wars in Korea and Vietnam, our country learned painful but valuable lessons that will guide our foreign policy well into the next century and beyond.
- 7. Recommendation. (A)** I recommend this book for readers who like adventures and interesting stories. **(B)** Even after all the bad things that happened, it was still a fun trip. If you go there, I can't guarantee you won't have all the problems we did. But I can recommend this vacation to any family who wants a real challenge. **(C)** Even though the food was pretty good and it wasn't too expensive, I'm afraid I can't recommend this restaurant to everyone. It was very noisy and the service was slow. I don't think it would be a good choice for families with small children.
- 8. Main idea. (A)** Chores aren't the worst but they're definitely not the best! **(B)** An actor acts. A hero helps. The actor becomes famous and the hero does not. And that's just it: Heroes don't care about the credit, they just care.
- 9. Main idea and implications. (A)** Henry Ford's revolutionary thinking affected the lives of many Americans. The Ford Motor Company became one of the largest industrial companies in the world, and a household name. Opportunity to be mobile in a Ford automobile gave the open road to the ordinary American. Businesses boomed in the hard times of the Depression because the auto gave the opportunity for work to many. The American dream of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was more possible in the auto. Americans today still have a love affair with cars thanks to Henry Ford and his revolutionary thinking.
- 10. Effect. (A)** While all this happened, another close neighbor had witnessed the incident and called 911. It was decided afterward that the dog had contracted rabies and he was soon put to sleep. I was given a series of shots and a few stitches only, and after a couple of years, my leg healed, but the scars remain on both the inside and out. **(B)** The internment of the Japanese Americans was one of the lowest points in United States history. We did it out of revenge and out of hate. The fear that we felt after the attack at Pearl Harbor was well founded, but the internment was not the way to overcome it. The internment hurt so many people so deeply and really accomplished nothing in the short run. In the long run, it brought nothing but shame upon us.
- 11. Question. (A)** As this miracle season comes to a close, the one thing on every fan's mind is this: "Can they do it again next year?" **(B)** Will the human race ever see the irony in destroying the planet that is their only home? How much more evidence do we need before we take global warming seriously? **(C)** I guess what still bothers me is how confused I am about what happened. If I was ever in that same situation again, would I act the same way, or would I do something different?
- 12. Sequel. (A)** As soon as I walked in the dining room I smelled trouble. I looked down at my plate and saw what I smelled! Brussels sprouts! I gave a loud tragic moan and knew there was going to be another story written by Alex Carter. But for now, I would feed my Brussels sprouts to the fish. **(B)** And so ends another after school adventure, or misadventure, I should say. Stay tuned for the further misadventures of a kid with not enough homework to keep him out of trouble and way too many wild ideas.
- 13. Reflective evaluation. (A)** So I guess that I lived happily ever after except that I couldn't walk for the rest of the trip. Maybe that camp ground wasn't so cool after all. **(B)** From that point on my life has been good. Except for the chores. I think my mom got the better end of the deal on that one. **(C)** BRRRIINNNNGGG! The bell rang! I pulled on my backpack, tore out of the room, sprinted down the stairs, sped down the hallway, and bounded out the door. I dashed home and grabbed a snack. I popped a video into the VCR, turned on the TV, and relaxed. Ah-hhhhh! What a glorious day!
- 14. Wish, hope, dream. (A)** Now, I'm looking at John, over the mess on the kitchen table, wondering if he's all right, because he's only eight years old, and that was a lot of throwing up to do. Then he gets to go out and play with his friend, just like he wanted. I feel a little cheated. Would I have gotten to go back out if that was me? I really wish he could have the experience of a younger sibling, just so he would know how I feel. **(B)** I hope someday that I can be a good parent just like my mom. But until then, I'll just work on being a good kid. **(C)** Even now, years later, I still dream of what my life might have been like. **(D)** I think that Jay Buhner is a true hero. The Seattle Mariners would be lacking an excellent right fielder without him. I hope he stays in Seattle for the rest of his baseball career.
- 15. Tribute. (A)** I salute you, Lieutenant John Olson. May your bravery and courage be passed on so that someone else may look up to you and yours, and honor them as I do. **(B)** Tricia was the best companion I've ever known. She talked to me when I needed it, and listened when all I wanted was a friendly ear. It was an honor for me to have known her. It's too bad I couldn't have taken her with us when we moved. I'll never forget her.
- 16. Wrap-around. (A)** Boom! The trunk slammed. Bang! The car door slammed as we got out of the van. . . . We put the blanket in the trunk. Boom! It slammed again and we drove away as I thought how much fun I had.