



Classmate Critics:

“You’re not breathing from your diaphragm.”

“Look in the mirror and make sure your jaw doesn’t move.”

“Your register drops when you sing lower notes.”

These are just a few of the hundreds of critiques from my vocal instructor in just one of our lessons. Going into my first voice lesson, I was terrified to actually sing in front of someone else and have them critique every aspect of what I was doing. I wasn’t confident in my ability already, and I didn’t think I would be able to handle it. However, with a mix of both positive and critical feedback, I was able to improve without getting completely discouraged. Without instruction, I would not have been aware of these issues and would have continued on with bad habits. Because of his help, I have become aware of these mistakes and will actively try to break them. I now know that peer review is absolutely necessary for singing. As I’ve mentioned before, it is nearly impossible to hear your voice the same way an outside party does. Peer review is a way to receive criticism without the pressure of a large audience.

I try to follow the same logic in writing. My peer review of a classmate’s first draft of an essay is shown below. Purple highlight signifies a selection that I think is very thoughtful and makes a nice point. Dark green denotes proofreading errors. Blue highlight refers to a confusing sentence or awkward diction. Neon green indicates a lack of support or evidence. I insert comments into the essay itself when I think it is necessary, but save most of my comments for the end. In the final comment section, I address the strengths and weaknesses of the work. Because grammar issues are mostly easy to resolve, I don’t feel the need to expand on many of those notations. Especially in an early draft like this, I like to ask questions that will provoke thought and make the argument stronger. Instead of simply providing an answer, I feel that asking questions preserves the author’s originality.

“Girl”

Take the fish out to defrost. Take the beans and have **the** boil on the stove to cook. Take the chicken and clean it for me. Do not **over boil** the beans. Do not “chakee” the chicken. Do not just sit around the house all day. Do not let me come home to what I left. Do not disrespect me or your father. Do not go the day without eating. You are a lady you must learn to be one. Get up each morning and brush your teeth. Get up and get ready for the day. Now the work begins. Dishes must be washed. Kitchen must be swept. Beds must be made. And food must be cooked. What are you wearing? Cover yourself **look proper**. Nothing too tight, your hips will call attention. **Your face will cause more.** Remember you are pretty but do not let it take over you. Remember where you came from. Remember you are Haitian first before all. Remember you are black. Remember people are not always your friend. Remember people will look down upon you because of your skin. Know that you are strong. Know that you are powerful. Know that you are intelligent. Know that you will achieve great things in life. Know all good can go away in a blink of an eye. Know to keep yourself pure. Know to not always believe the lies that are told to you **to catch your heart.** Know that you will be played. Know you will be heart broken. Know you will also be loved. Life will not be easy a lot of times. Life will throw the hardest obstacles. Life will try to control you, but you are the only one in control of your life. So, you must read. So, you must learn. So, you must be leader not a follower. So, you must be strong. So, you must be soft. So, you must be loving. So, you must also be strict.



So, you must be fun. So, you must be serious. You must be the one everyone wants to take home. You must be the one few get their hands on. You must be pure on the night of your wedding. You must have a career of your own. You must learn from your mistakes. You must love yourself to wits end. You must know that not everyone is on your side. You will attend school. You will attend church. You will attend prayer. You will attend bible study. You will become a wife. You will become a mother. You will become the profession you are working so hard towards. Because you are my daughter and I will guide you through it all. I will aid you in your journey. I will shelter you when the storms are rough and I will comfort you when the days are blue. I am your mother. You are my daughter. You are my everything. You are my child. You are Haitian. You will greet everyone with a kiss on the cheek. You will respect every elder in the room. You will serve each elder in the room. You will offer your seat to any other who may need it. You will offer your services to anyone who needs it. You will speak Kreole. You will speak French. You will dance Kompa. You will celebrate Carnival. You will represent your country well. People will soon love your country and culture as much as you do. By the way you represent yourself. By the way you journey through life. By the man you marry. By the way you have lived your life. You will not fall into drugs. You will not drop out of school. You will not become a slut. You will not lose your morals. You will not lose your values. You will not lose your sweet heart just to gain one of pure evil. You are currently a girl who will soon become a woman if you follow my advice. My Daughter. My Girl.

Analysis

In the following poem, I mimicked the poem "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid. [Summarize the](#)

[original here.](#) I chose this poem because I felt a personal connection with the information given and the author herself. The constant correction and advice given from a mother figure, and me and my mother every day. Also, Kincaid being of Caribbean descent was also a connection I made with her. I was able to fully understand the poem from the eyes of the girl being spoken to, because I have been spoken to like this multiple times. It was fairly simple for me to take my own approach towards the poem. It mirrors a lot that was in the original poem, that is mostly due to the fact that we were able to connect on various levels.

[This paragraph feels a little repetitive. Maybe expand on why you feel so connected to the author \(Ex: Caribbean culture\). What makes being of Caribbean descent different than others?](#)

[I kept the title for obvious reason for it still pertains to a girl being spoken to by her mother. This isn't obvious!](#) But I wanted the world girl to have a bigger impact than it did in the original. In the original poem, it focused on the duties of a girl, but the actual term was not introduced in the poem itself. [The underlying meaning was left for the reader to find.](#) In the rewrite, I wanted to really highlight the word "girl" and [show how all the corrections all the advice is given to me are addressed](#) because I live in a bubble named "girl." To be a female you must look and act a certain way and that is what both I and Kincaid [understandingly](#) discussed in our poems. [Expand on this!](#)

[Difference between the meaning of "girl" in Kincaid's vs. yours?](#)

[I really like the changes you've made to the original poem. It really feels like a "snapshot" of all the lessons your mother taught you- some feel outdated, but others still ring true. I also like how you took a bit of a positive spin on the original. While there are some strict lessons, some are very uplifting and empowering. In your analysis, maybe you could talk about why you made these changes. What does it mean in today's society? Do you feel like your mother's advice really did help you to become the "girl" you want to be? In addition, yours is a little longer than the original \(I think\). Do you feel like all of this advice is overwhelming at times?](#)