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Ms. Landor

English 1 College-Prep

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### Overall Comment:

This first draft reflects a solid start with room for improvement. The story is narrated clearly, but more sensory details are needed to bring the events "to life" and to reveal the characters' personalities more vividly.

Tough Enough

"Just lend me ten bucks, John," Jessica begged. "Come on!"

"I'm sure the shirt is very cute and pink and perfect, sis, but I don't have any money.

Now move—I gotta mow the lawn."

"In this heat?" she asked, fanning herself with manicured nails.

"You know, Mom and Dad pay me ten bucks to mow the lawn," John said.

"Oh! So you can lend me the money after you finish?"

He snorted. "Yeah, right. I'll let you *mow the lawn*, though."

"No way! That mower's heavy!" Jessica said, her eyes wide.

"What's that I hear? Oh, it's the sound of a thousand cute tops crying!"

"Shut up and show me how this thing works," she snapped. They went to the garage, and

John pulled out the mower for her.

"So, I just pull the cord?" She pulled tentatively, and the mower let out a brief, unnerving growl. Jessica jumped back and let out an "Eep!"

"It's fine, Jess. Pull as hard as you can," John said. Jessica braced herself and pulled. The mower roared to life. Her confident look amused John.

"Good job!" he hollered. "Go to it!"

"Wait!" she squeaked, but he was gone. She took a deep breath and nudged the mower forward a few inches. It made a hideous *crrrunch* as twigs were chewed and spat out. She

Dialogue and descriptive details create an engaging beginning and reveal the characters' personalities.

The narrative maintains a consistent 3rd-person point of view.

The author uses lively sensory details to show readers how it feels to mow the lawn. However, sensory details like these could be used more consistently throughout.

shrieked, thinking of how "cute" she would look with missing toes. The mower kept roaring, and she realized that she didn't know how to turn it off.

"John!" she shouted, but there was no way he could hear her. She nudged the evil machine forward and watched the grass spew out the side. It was kind of cool. Terrifying, but cool.

She kept pushing all the way to the other side of the lawn. The mower was heavy, but she was strong enough. Turning around was another issue. Still, she was tough, even if she liked pink. She pushed down on the handle, and the mower tilted up surprisingly easy. The sound was much louder. Slowly, she turned, and then she pushed forward to mow the next strip of grass. The grass fell as she mowed. By the time she got to the end of the lawn, she had perfected the turning technique so that it was one fluid motion.

No longer afraid of the mower, she moved her sweaty face closer to examine the controls. She found the switch and cut the engine.

John emerged from inside and surveyed the lawn. "Nice job, Jess."

"Thank you. Excuse me, but I have money to collect, a shower to take, and a top to buy," she said, as she walked past him.

That night, she looked amazing in her new pink top. Her friend Alice said, "You look beautiful! Like a flower or something!"

"Thank you!" Jessica replied, thinking about how much fun it would be to mow right through a field of flowers, petals flying everywhere.

The light-hearted conclusion shows how the character of Jessica has changed. This character change helps suggest the story's theme or message. Overall, the story is brief and needs more development. For example, more well-chosen details, as well as more dialogue, could develop Jess's character AND communicate the theme more powerfully.

The events continue to develop the plot and central conflict.

The author uses the sequence of events to resolve the conflict in a believable way.

# Prewriting Step 2 – Story Board

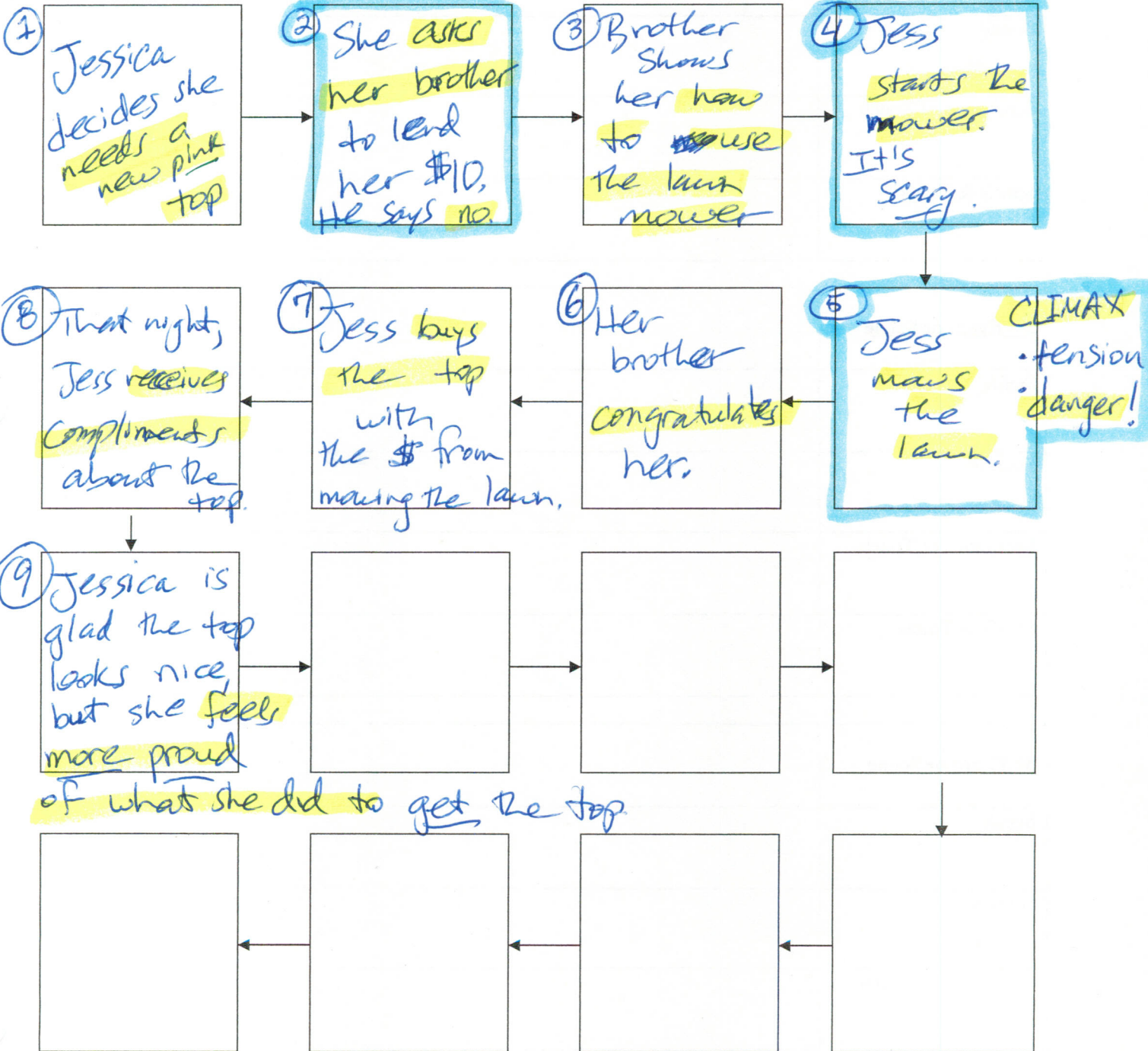
Name: Sarah Yonovich

What interesting events might happen in your story's plot?

Place one event in each of the boxes below.

Note: Use only as many boxes as you need. You might not need all the boxes, OR you might need to add boxes.

- Then decide which events are especially important—events that you'll want to bring to life with sensory detail and dialogue—and which events are less important and can be skimmed or summarized.
- Also decide if you are going to narrate events in a chronological order, or if you want to use flashback or some other nonlinear narration. (Only use nonlinear narration if you can pull off the transitions in time effectively.)



Which events above will you want to “bring to life” for the reader with sensory details? Choose three key events from your story, and complete a “Sensory Chart” for each event on the other side of this page. →

### Prewriting Step 3 – Sensory Charts or “Mental Snapshots” for Key Events

“Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.” – Anton Chekhov

For each key event in your narrative that you want to “bring to life” in detail, **call to mind as many sensory details as you can imagine about it.** Then fill in the chart to make a “mental-snapshot” of it.

<u>1st Event or Scene</u>	Jessica <u>asks</u> her brother for \$10
Sights	Jessica has <u>manicured nails</u>
Sounds	Jessica and John (her brother) <u>arguing</u> about him lending her \$
Sensations of Touch	<u>air is hot</u>
Smells & Tastes	

<u>2nd Event or Scene</u>	Jess <u>starts</u> the mower
Sights	<u>imagines</u> how her feet would look with the <u>toes missing</u>
Sounds	First a <u>growl</u> , then a <u>roar</u> . A loud <u>“crrrunch”</u>
Sensations of Touch	<u>pulls hard</u> on the <u>cord</u> , has to try more than once to start it
Smells & Tastes	

<u>3rd Event or Scene</u>	She <u>mows</u> the lawn
Sights	<u>grass</u> <u>spewing</u> out side of mower
Sounds	• <u>roar</u> of mower – <u>louder</u> when she lifts it • more <u>dialogue</u> with John
Sensations of Touch	• <u>nudges</u> the mower forward <u>slowly</u> • mower is <u>heavy</u> ; she <u>pushes</u> down on handle
<del>Smells &amp; Tastes</del>	• <u>sweat</u> on her <u>face</u> — to <u>lift</u> it