

The Prompt:

In order to survive, people have been known to go to great lengths and to do things they would not ordinarily do. Write an essay for your teacher that explains the lengths to which people will go in order to survive. You may use examples from real life, books, movies, or television shows to support your essay.

The Model Essay:

Champs, Survivors, and Ordinary People

In order to survive in this world, people sometimes go to great lengths. Within them they carry a spirit that inspires the will to go on. A girls' soccer team battles its way to the top; a disaster-movie heroine finds the strength to save herself; a struggling couple discover in their love the spirit to go on. All, no matter what, have an instinct or a survival attitude that pushes them to become winners—to overcome the odds they confront.

The will to survive affects even ordinary activities such as high school sports competitions. The girls soccer team at Central High School, for example, learned a lot about survival last year. These girls started out the season, wanting to achieve great things. We all knew that they had the talent to win the state soccer championship, but did they have the determination to do so? The season began with a rocky start, including problems with several team members themselves, not to mention facing tough, higher-ranked competitors. But one game at a time, Central made it to the state competition. It was a harsh battle, and there were plenty of tears along the way, but Central survived the worst the season had to offer and earned the title of state champions.

The will to succeed can train us to survive under extraordinary circumstances, too. Such life-and-death situations are the subject of some of our most successful movies, including *Titanic*, the biggest box-office success of all time. Rose, the movie's glamorous heroine, is in love with Jack, and the two are struggling to stay alive as the ship goes down. In the

Introduction

Direct opener, with three examples to anticipate the body paragraphs

Thesis statement

Body

Point 1

Support: anecdote

Point 2

Support: narrative example

final scenes of the movie, Jack dies and Rose is faced with the challenge of survival. She can stay in the water and risk the freezing temperatures and the diminishing possibility of rescue, or she can use every remaining bit of strength left in her and summon the lifeboat that is many yards away, looking to pick up those alive in the water. As she sees the lifeboat go by, she finds a small whistle, uses it to call the boat's occupants, and is rescued. Someone else might not have found the strength to go on, weak and exhausted in the freezing water, with a true love lost to such enormous disaster. Rose, however, found the will to survive.

The spirit of survival we admire in the heroine of *Titanic* can help us to endure less glamorous but equally difficult struggles. We find such a struggle in the couple Tommy and Gina, from the Bon Jovi song “Living on a Prayer.” In the lyrics, this couple can’t seem to get a break. Tommy works on the docks, but the union has been on strike, and he seems to be out of luck. His misfortune is mirrored by the fact that Gina works in a diner all day, just trying to make ends meet. Exhausted, she cries every night, hoping they will be able to escape from the hardship that plagues their lives. No matter how hard things get, however, Tommy and Gina hold on for love. They believe in what they have together, and when times get rough, they remind each other that the love they have is enough to keep them going. Tommy and Gina have the will to survive; they prove their love for each other by showing how much they can truly take.

Our lives are plagued by loss, disease, and tragedy. Such adversity helps build character, but more important, it shows whether we can step up to the challenges life presents. The will to survive comes from within each one of us. It is the factor that shapes the way we will be remembered.

Point 3

Support:
narrative example

Conclusion

Reflection on the thesis