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Reflection Piece

## **Reflection Piece: We Want YOU to Join the Beats Army**

I've decided to reflect on my STEM Piece, *We Want YOU to Join the Beats Army*. This story is about a young girl named Cadence who is part of a future, dystopian world. On every citizen's thirteenth birthday, they are gifted a pair of Beats Headphones. Our protagonist learns, almost too late, the diabolical purpose behind the seemingly innocent headphones.

Getting the idea for my choice piece was easy. I tend to read a lot of realistic and dystopian fiction so that's what was the easiest, and most fun, for me to write. I tried really hard to make sure my story was not a rip-off of *The Hunger Games* or *Divergent*, which was actually quite difficult. It was also a challenge to write a dystopian story in 3 1/2 pages. I now understand why many popular dystopian novels are 500 pages long or turned into trilogies!

I used a big potato lead as I thought it would be interesting and grab my reader, right from the start. My lead actually ended up being my expanded moment in which the protagonist, a 13 year old girl named Cadence, opens up her Beats headphones. Here is an excerpt: *"Sitting atop my pillow was a box, medium sized and wrapped in metallic paper. No tag, no bow, no pizzaz. I completely expected it to be there, as it was my 13th birthday, yet I was still shocked by it's presence. My feet moved as if they had a mind of their own and propelled me forward, through my shabby bedroom and toward the ominous silver gift. The room seemed to shrink around me in anticipation of opening the long awaited, government issued Beats by DRE, or the Department of Recreation and Entertainment. I wonder what color I was assigned? Hopefully not white...."* At first, I thought it might be a boring place to expand, but then I realized I really wanted to build up the suspense as well as explain what was going on to the audience really well. Understanding the importance of the headphones is a large part of the plot!

I tried to use dialogue wherever possible, as I felt it enhanced the story. Personally, I think it can get boring when you are reading detail after detail, description after description. Dialogue makes your story come to life and adds so much energy. Here is an exchange between Cadence and her friends. As you can see, it is a moment of conflict and frustration: *"Cadence looked over at Aria and Reed, her large*

*brown eyes shiny with tears. How could they be so ignorant? she thought angrily. I may not have all the answers yet, but I will soon. The Beats have turned them into robots! Mindless drones! Puppets of our twisted government... It was the plan all along. The sadness she felt toward her friends began to abate, rage filling the space in her heart instead.*

*“You’ll understand soon,” she said, blinking back frustrated tears. “Although by then it will probably be too late.”* I really like how this scene turned out! I could have just narrated it and said something like, “And then Cadence got in a big fight with her friends. They wouldn’t believe her story about the Beats so she became frustrated and cried”. Although that doesn’t sound terrible, it is “telling” the audience and not “showing”. I was also able to use characterization and make my characters seem more like real people.

I feel that I am growing as a writer in many ways. First, I am able to think of ideas and jump into writing stories SO much easier than last year. I think this is due in large part to Writer’s Workshop. It is fantastic to write about whatever topic you want! I feel much more confident and never realized that writing can actually be fun when you are passionate or interested in the topic. It’s also neat to see how much you can improve your writing by doing something small like adding a snapshot or expanded moment. I look forward to writing my next choice piece for seventh grade and I know that it will be no sweat!