

**Sample Paper 16****Score for Word Choice \_\_\_\_\_****To the Bat House!**

If you're having problems with comic book criminals like the Joker, then the crime fighting superhero Batman is just the guy you need to save the day. Light up the Gotham City sky with the Bat Signal, and he'll appear. But what if you don't happen to live in Gotham? Let's say you have a backyard insect problem, like hordes of buzzing mosquitoes keeping you penned up in your house every night of the summer. Batman is not the answer, but real bats *are*. You won't need the Bat Signal to attract them—they probably wouldn't respond anyway. What *will* get their attention is a specially designed bat house.

The idea of attracting bats *on purpose* makes a lot of people downright nervous. Bats are dirty, like rats with wings, right? Wrong! Bats are actually very clean mammals, like humans or dogs. Hold on a minute, though. Even if they're immaculate, they'll *still* suck your blood and give you rabies, right? Wrong! Only three out of over 1,000 bat species are vampire bats, and they live in Central and South America or in Mexico. Less than one percent of bats even *have* rabies and those that do rarely transmit the disease to humans. Are you warming to the idea of having bats move into your back yard? Well, before you decide, just realize that you haven't even heard the best part yet.

Remember the hypothetical mosquito problem? By welcoming bats to your yard with a bat house (you'll find hundreds of easy designs online, by the way), you are solving your buzzing bug problem without a single dangerous chemical. Bats are capable of consuming up to 1,000 mosquitoes in an hour and about half their body weight in bugs each night. They're more efficient than tiny, self-propelled vacuums, and unlike vacuums, they're silent. You won't hear them coming—and neither will the insects.

What's more, bats are very undemanding. All they need is a water supply and a place to rest after each insect feast. The best part is that it's all *natural* pest control—no noisy zappers or poisonous pesticides. Your garden, if you have one, can now be chemical free! Oh—and in case you were wondering, they will *not* dive bomb you as you stroll through the back yard, or attempt to nest in your hair. Those too are myths. Bats only target what they eat—and that does not include humans. Their aim is incredibly precise (a bat can easily nail a mosquito that's twenty yards away), so they don't bump into things as large as humans by accident.

By building a bat house you are maintaining balance in your yard's ecosystem while saving the money you would have spent on toxic products to kill insects. You are also helping others to understand and appreciate bats rather than fear them. Bats have been eating insects for thousands of years. That's an impressive resume. Why not put all that experience to work for you?

### Sources

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