



## Sample Paper 6

Score for Organization \_\_\_\_\_

# Camping

What is the most overrated activity, outdoor or indoor, in all of America? If you said, “camping,” or even thought the word, you win the big prize. Don’t get me wrong. I like being outdoors, and I even like hiking for short distances (with plenty of water). I just don’t want to live outdoors, not even for a weekend. If you are one of those people who really enjoy camping, that’s OK. I say, go for it! Just don’t invite me.

The problem with camping starts with the packing. My dad, of course, loves to camp (obviously, it’s not genetic). He always says, “Bring only what you need.” Is he kidding? As if it’s that simple. Everything I need is right here at home! What he really means is, “Bring only what fits into one small backpack,” and it’s a pack that *I* will be carrying over miles and miles of primitive, rough trails. If I had a pack mule to haul my television, computer, and my bed with all my pillows and blankets (or at least a sleeping bag long enough to let me unbend my knees), I would be much happier. As it is, I can only squeeze in two T-shirts, some socks, an old toothbrush, and a deck of cards—at least these things don’t weigh much.

The trouble continues once we hit the trail. This is the part where we hike to our campsite. Other people *drive* to campsites where they pitch tents in shady spots near a beautiful river. (Even in TV advertisements you see people drive their cars to campsites.) As we approach the trailhead, I see people already parked and enjoying life, and it always makes me jealous. They are sitting in chairs cooking their hot dogs, laughing as though camping is the greatest thing ever. That’s not for us. They’re wimps. We’re pioneers. Everyone knows the best



campsites are in the remote wilderness. That's what we set out to find—the more remote the better. If your compass is still working, it's not remote enough yet. You have to arrive at your campsite scratched and bleeding from hiking through prickly underbrush, so dehydrated and exhausted you can barely pitch your tent.

But later . . . when we are finally around our own campfire roasting marshmallows (actually, setting them on fire) and listening to the wind in the trees (wondering if it's a cougar), I *almost*, repeat *almost* like camping. I know that I won't see a real bathroom for days, every muscle in my body will ache, my hair and teeth will get grittier by the hour, and I'll have to endure being tortured by 10,000 mosquitoes. But seeing the smile on my dad's face makes me feel good. (Don't tell him I said this. I'll just deny it.)