**Sample 1:**

Before examining how judgments regarding the quality of the intellectually disabled are rooted in societal prejudices, it is necessary to define the term “quality.” According to the *Collins English Dictionary*, “quality” can mean “the basic character or nature of something” or a “degree or standard of excellence, especially a high standard (“Quality” 2, 4), while *Merriam Webster* further defines it as “a distinguishing attribute” (“Quality” 4a).

Any definition of the word “quality” implies the notion of value or judgment. Like the Rorschach test Charlie takes in *Flowers for Algernon*, interpretations of quality are based on the biases and perceptions of the observer. Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss impose their values when they look at Charlie as an experimental object rather than a person. Applying their high “standard of excellence,” which values I.Q. scores and academic achievement, they decide that the quality of Charlie’s life is substandard (“Quality” 4). Similarly, scientists at Johns Hopkins believe that their treatment will improve the quality of life for individuals with Down Syndrome.

Most people recognize an individual with Down Syndrome by certain “distinguishing attributes,” such as flat facial features or eyes that slant upward (“Quality” 4a, “Understanding Down Syndrome”). These qualities of individuals with Down Syndrome are easily recognizable, but purely superficial. Family members and friends of people with Down Syndrome instead base their interpretation of “the basic character or nature” of such individuals on their personal knowledge and observations. While outsiders may judge the quality of their lives as substandard or “less than,” friends and relatives of people with Down Syndrome know that it is intrinsic to who they are as human beings and is not a disease to be “cured.” Regardless of how “quality” is defined, efforts to judge their quality of life are based on societal prejudices against people who with intellectual disabilities.

**Sample 2:**

As technical definitions don’t necessarily match real-world use, it’s important to define some words and phrases. An “outlet,” as suggested by the word itself, is a method of letting something out. Commonly, that “something” is usually emotions or problems. Sending emails to a cousin across the country might be an outlet; you get to directly write out all of your thoughts and feelings and send them off. She may not care who the guy you like was talking to at lunch the other day, but it helps you let out—and even work out—your emotions. Art, in the form of writing, visuals, or music, functions as a common outlet.

Most reference to outlets will pertain to people who have undergone “mental trauma.” This phrase encompasses everything from particularly emotional experiences, mental conditions (i.e. depression, bipolar disorder), to physical trauma such as strokes and brain tumors such as the one Ginny’s aunt suffered from.

How can one say that art—or any outlet—“serves” a person, regardless of their mental state? According to *Dictionary.com*, two definitions of “serve” are as follows: “to render assistance; to be of use; help,” or “to answer the purpose,” (“serve” Def. 5, 8).

Whether the word “serve” is reminiscent of a waitress or the beginning of a tennis volley, it implies help and providing. Art provides a person with the same things that any outlet would—a way to release emotions and work out feelings. This and other healthy outlets can “render assistance; be of use; help” (“serve” Def. 5) a person. “Help” and “assistance” don’t equate to solving a problem completely, but provide tools that can be used to improve whatever they are applied to.

Art is proven “to answer [it’s] purpose” (“serve” Def. 8). For those who have recently had brain-altering trauma, new mental stressors surface and need a way out. “Art therapy”—both medically and independently—can offer relief. Many people rely on various art forms to fulfil, or “answer,” that “purpose” (“serve” Def. 8)

**Sample 3:**

Percy isn’t the only one to find a place in the world as a person with learning disabilities. The *Oxford English Dictionaries* defines accepted as “regard[ed] favorably” or “welcom[ed]” (“Accept” Def. 1.4). The word “regard” in this context is especially significant because of what it implies about the subject. It is often used when a subject needs to be looked at critically. In this case, one would “regard [someone] favorably,” giving positive attention. Using this definition, it can be said that Percy found acceptance amongst his peers at Camp Half-Blood. After Percy fights the Minotaur, he is quickly “welcomed” and given a spot among the campers.

When someone or something is accepted, it’s not always positive. This claim is supported by the *Oxford English Dictionaries*’ definition: “to receive as adequate, valid, or suitable” (“Accept” Def. 1.3). This definition doesn’t glorify the accepted; rather it implies that they are simply normal or “adequate”. Society has gotten to a point where if someone diagnosed with ADHD or dyslexia behaves differently from their peers, it is “valid” because they are not able to control it. When Percy gets to Camp Half-Blood, he is surprised by how eagerly he is “recieve[d]”. He expects ADHD and dyslexia to be seen as disadvantages, and suddenly they are not significant—just part of life. On top of that, as Annabeth tells him, having these disabilities is “suitable” for a half-blood; it even keeps them alive (“Accept” Def. 1.3”).

The previous two definitions are from the perspective of those accepting. However, there are two sides to every story—those accepting, and those accepted. When one “consent[s] to receive (a thing [])” (“Accept” Def. 1), they take ownership of what they are receiving. In this case, one accepts or “consents to receive” the diagnosis of ADHD or dyslexia, resigning themselves to these disabilities. Many people believe ADHD and dyslexia are just disadvantages that don’t have any benefit. Thomas Edison, a notable dyslexic, would say, “I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward.” He didn’t let his dyslexia discourage him; he used it as a reason to push himself further.

**Sample 4:**

“Illustrate” describes the relationship between A and actual cases of demonic possession. The connotation of the word is associated with art or artistic impression and implies a visual aspect. Yet, *Oxford Dictionaries* supplies the meanings “to explain or make clear by using examples” ("illustrate” Def. 1.1) and “serves as an example of” ("illustrate” Def. 1.2). Additionally, according to *FreeDictionary.com*, it can mean “to clarify by serving as an example of” ("illustrate" Def. 1a).

All of the definitions of "illustrate" use it as a way of showing an example (“illustrate” Def. 1.1,1.2,1a). In *Everyday,* Levithan exemplifies demonic possession in the novel by using A as a way to "serve as an example of" demonic possession ("illustrate" Def. 1.2). To fully develop a character, you must define their traits and personality and A’s demonic actions is define him, allowing him to “serve as an example” ("illustrate" Def. 1a) of demonic possession. Along with exemplifying demonic possession, he is also an “example” of the people that he inhabits ("illustrate" Def. 1.1, 1.2, 1a). He uses aspects of the host’s lives, such as their surroundings and interactions with peers, to develop his interpretation of them and serve as a placeholder. However, he becomes less of an example of the person and more of an example of a demon as the storyline progresses. This progression “clari[fies] by serving as an example of ” A’s transition of straying away from the personalities of the host in order to become himself ("illustrate" Def. 1.2).

Illustrate can be used “to explain or make clear by using examples” ("illustrate" Def. 1.1). A clarifies characteristics of demonic possession. He acts like a demon, thus,serving as an example of a demon. While the story continues he becomes more of an example of himself by fulfilling his own characteristics as opposed to the host’s, providing a different outlook on “explain[ing] or make clear by using examples” (“illustrate” Def. 1.1).

**Sample 5:**

Demonstrate can mean many different things. In this instance, demonstrate means to “display openly and publicly,” (“Demonstrate” Def. 1) “prove the value,” (“Demonstrate” Def. 2) and to “show or express a feeling or one’s actions” (“Demonstrate” Def. 3). All these definitions contain an element of publicity, and making your thoughts or ideas known.

To “display openly and publicly” (“Demonstrate” Def. 1) in this instance insures that the relationship is known. Relationships like those between celebrities make an impact by being public. Down to earth relationships that don’t flaunt their status would have less of a following and would not impact others’ judgments and expectations.

To “prove the value” (“Demonstrate” Def. 2) of something describes going out of your way to make a point, and by doing that, only showing the things that helped you prove the point. If Johnny Nolan was talking to his friends at the Waiter’s Union, and was explaining the wonderful relationship he had with his wife and children, he would leave out the parts about him coming home drunk, and disappointing his family, in order to prove his point.

“Showing and expressing a feeling by one’s actions” (“Demonstrate” Def. 3) gives the impression of inflicting your opinion on others, causing difficulty to believe anything otherwise without going against popular belief and seeming different. “Demonstration” is placing an idea or thought on others, and making it a social norm that must be respected, even if it originated as the belief of a singular person or a small group, just as factors have altered the majority of people’s views on what healthy relationships are.

Animal relationships are not only described as mating. They refer to the social interactions between, and within, a species. There are three main types of relationships (called symbiotic relationships in science), mutualism, commensalism, and parasitism. Mutualism is a relationship where both organisms benefit, commensalism is where one benefits and the other is unaffected, and parasitism is where one organism benefits and the other is harmed. Most interactions between animals can be described using these three terms, and since humans are animals, these terms can be used to describe human relationships as well.

Relationships are very important to Francie’s life in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Katie and Johnny, her mother and father, had a relationship that can be described as parasitism. Katie works hard to raise money for the family, while Johnny is a negative influence on their lifestyle, and doesn’t help with finances. Eventually, Katie and Mr. McShane marry after Johnny’s death. Their relationship is perceived to be much healthier by the public, and is a mutual relationship. Katie secures her children a financially stable future, and McShane receives a healthy family and a baby he can be proud of. Katie’s sister, Sissy, has many relationships throughout the novel, calling all of her husbands “John”. Sissy’s relationships can be described as commensalism, because the Johns enjoy her company, but she is indifferent to who they are, as she doesn’t even accept their real names. When Sissy adopts a baby with “John,” she finally is engaged in a mutual relationship, and begins to call the former “John,” by his real name, Steve.

**Hilarious and Strange (and Innovatively Awesome) Sample 1:**

According to *Dictionary.com* the definition of “experience” is “a particular instance of personally encountering or undergoing something” (Def. 1*);* “the observing, encountering, or undergoing of things that generally occur in the course of time” (Def. 3)*.* The definition “personally encountered” refers to a “person,” implying that animals do not experience emotions. This is clearly a very old yet commonly misused definition, because as of today most people understand that animals experience emotions (“Do animals have feelings?”). Animals and humans both learn by “observing”, having “encounters” or “under goings.” Animals and humans tell “time” by the nights and days.

According to *Longmans dictionary*, “experience” means “knowledge that you gain from doing a job or an activity” (Def. 1a*)* The usage of the word “you,” implies humans, because animals cannot read. Going back to the fact that “experience” is misinterpreted. Animals do experience emotions and actually do gain knowledge, which is overlooked because humans rarely pay any *real* attention to other animals.

A dog rips up a pillow while the owner is gone, and as soon as the owner comes home he or she will try to “play good” because they are experiencing fear, knowing that there are consequences because they had similar “experiences” before. When Leisel doesn’t obtain money from a client [for doing their washing] she experiences fear because expects Rosa will hit her [with a wooden spoon]. In both cases they feared because in previous similar situations they experienced consequences, which leads to a gain of knowledge, because they are “undergoing” a situation.

*Merriam Webster Dictionary* states that “experience” means “the events that make up the conscious past of a community or nation, or mankind” *(*Def. 3b*).* This is *mostly* inferring that only humans have emotions. Although, it mentions “community” which can refer to different species of living together, thus animals are included.

Most dictionary definitions for “experience” have a side that supports that animals “experience” emotions and a side that doesn’t. These two sided definitions may reflect the public opinion. How the majority of people understand that animals experience emotions similar to humans, but only a rare few do not understand that animals experience emotions, despite the endless research done over the past decades.

**Hilarious and Strange (and Innovatively Awesome) Sample 2:**

It is important to say that race is a volatile factor of success. This is why it is essential that it is grasped as to what "Volatile" means when it is in relation to race and success. Typically one normally makes out volatile to mean easily changeable. However, the *Oxford English Dictionaries* provide a more systematic definition "Computers. Of a memory: retaining data only as long as there is a power supply to it" (“Volatile" Def. 5.b). "Memory” is related to history which race and racism tend to revolve around. "Computers" are also mentioned which has a more literal connotation to race in today's society as the internet media has often been used to spread racial messages and racist entertainment to people in many forms. "Retaining data only as long as there is a power supply to it." relates to the fact that "data" being common thoughts on race, can only be "retain[ed]" if there is enough "power", being society's perception of race.

There are many relations of speed to "volatile." This can be seen in the *Oxford English Dictionaries* definition: "Moving or flitting from one place to another, esp. with some degree of rapidity" (“Volatile" Def. 2.b). This particular definition attributes to modern day applications of race as well as the book. Stating that volatile is" Moving or flitting from one place to another" implies that when calling race a "volatile factor" it is something that varies from location to location. Furthermore, in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* Junior goes on a journey "from one place to another" to find hope along with success. On the other hand, what proves to be a very significant definition of "Volatile" as stated by the *Oxford English Dictionaries* is: "Readily changing from one interest or mood to another; changeable, fickle; marked or characterized by levity or flightiness Of the mind, disposition, etc." ("Volatile" Def. 4.a)

Race does not provide the same circumstances for everyone as everybody is born diversely and of course there are a wide variety of different races, but yet is still a factor of success. Even if there are people born into the same race, big differences still arise making it "fickle." For example let it be said that there is a black child born into a lower class home with a single parent, in contrast to a Black child that is born into an upper-class home with two parents. Same race different circumstances. This inconsistency is addressed in the definition of "Volatile." "Characterizing the level of flightiness, of the mind"("Volatile" Def. 4.a) can relate to people letting themselves get subjected to racist comments and stereo types which hinders success. This implies control over racial perception.

Lastly, for an enriched understanding, it is necessary to define what is "success." Dictionary.com gives a definition of success as "the attainment of wealth, position, honors, or the like." ("Success" Def. 1.a) According to this definition of success, the Native Americans in the *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* were not successful at all. This does not go to show that all Native Americans or minorities are not capable of success, but it demonstrates how race is a volatile factor of success.

**Hilarious and Strange (and Innovatively Awesome) Sample 3:**



 