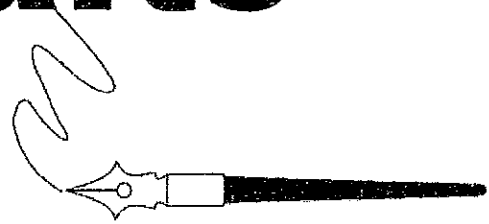


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# Six Traits Live!

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**Presented by Fred Wolff**  
**f.wolff@comcast.net**  
**www.sixtraitslive.com**

Based on the work by Vicki Spandel

# What Teachers Look For:

## Ideas

- clarity
- focus
- quality details that make a reader react “Wow!”
- strong support and documentation
- unique perspective

## Organization

- a strong lead that grabs the reader’s attention
- pacing that moves fluidly through the text
- thoughtful use of transitions beyond “first, next, finally”
- clear connections between ideas
- a logical sequencing of information through the writing
- a conclusion that pulls the writing together in a graceful manner

## Voice

- it’s human!
- enthusiasm and knowledge of the writer is apparent throughout the writing
- a genuine concern for the reader is evident
- the writing is individual



# Word Choice

- dynamic verbs provide energy to the writing
- precise nouns provide clarity
- modifiers used sparingly but effectively
- everyday language used in unique ways
- language that matches the audience and purpose

# Sentence Fluency

- rhythm of language
- varied sentence beginnings
- short, long and medium sentences are intermixed to aid the rhythm
- easy to read without rehearsal

# Conventions

- spelling, punctuation and grammar are attended to
- easy to decode the text
- at times, conventions add to the meaning
- presentation and layout highlight key areas to support ideas





# The Redwoods

Last year, we went on a vacation and we had a wonderful time. The weather was sunny and warm and there was lots to do, so we were never bored.

My parents visited friends and took pictures for their friends back home. My brother and I swam and also hiked in the woods. When we got tired of that, we just ate and had a wonderful time.

It was exciting and fun to be together as a family and to do things together. I love my family, and this is a time that I will remember for a long time. I hope we will go back again next year for more fun and an even better time than we had this year.

Excerpt from *Creating Writers Through 6-Trait Writing Assessment and Instruction*, 4/E by Vicki Spandel. ©2005 Allyn & Bacon, an imprint of Pearson Education, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# MOUSE ALERT

As soon as school was out, we left on vacation. Nothing went the way it was supposed to. Dad backed into a tree on the way out of the driveway, pushing the bike rack through the rear window and nearly scaring my sister to death. She was cranky the rest of the trip. We had to take our other car, which is smaller and you can't hook the bike rack up to it. Now my sister and me were crowded

together so much she kept complaining about me breathing on her and taking up all her air and foot room. Plus now Dad knew a big bill would be waiting for him when he got home. It put everyone in a lovely trip starting mood.



We were supposed to go to Yellowstone Park. Well, actually, we did but just barely. I think we hold the world's record for shortest time spent in the park. This was all due to my mother's new attitude toward animals. The night before Yellowstone we stayed in a cabin on the edge of the park. It had a lot of mice, but most of them had the good sense to stay hidden in the walls. One poor furry guy had a death wish and showed himself. The whole family went into action. My father got a broom, which looked like an oversized weapon for a mouse. My mother hugged her pink flannel nightgown around her knees, jumped up on a wood chair and started shrieking "Kill him! Kill him!" Her eyes were as big as her fists. I had never seen her quite so blood thirsty. My sister spent the whole time dancing on the bed crying her eyes out and yelling, "Don't kill it Dad! Don't kill it!" It was up to Dad and me to trap it. We got it in a pickle jar and took it down to the lake and let it go. It seemed really happy to get away from us. I thought I knew how it felt.

The next day we raced through Yellowstone and then headed home. My Mother said she had enough of animals. For weeks afterwards, this was the big story she told everyone who asked about our vacation. You'd have thought the whole point of our trip was to go on a mouse hunt. Dad said all the money we saved by not staying at Yellowstone could go to pay for the broken car window, so for him the trip worked out perfect. As for me, I'm still planning to get back to Yellowstone one day. I want to see something bigger than a mouse.

# Ideas

## Defined

Ideas are the heart of a piece of writing. Ideas explore the writer's main message through the use of a focused and narrow topic, quality details, and strong support. Ideas paint pictures in the reader's mind and, in informational writing, make difficult concepts easy to understand. Strong ideas rely on those details that are not well known and beyond the "everyday details" that most people already know.

## How To Help Students . . .

- Model the difference between "everyday" details and quality details
- Read passages from books that show captivating detail and imagery
- Demonstrate how to eliminate unnecessary information
- Teach students to ask questions that elicit more detail in their own and other's writing



*A Snapshot . . .*

# Ideas

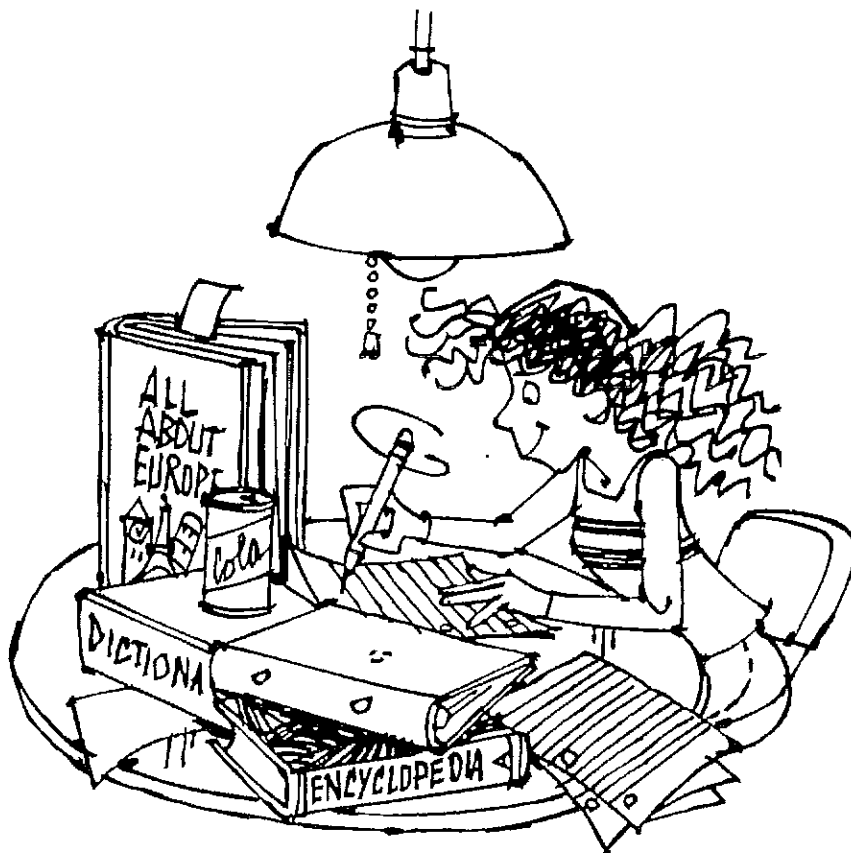
Clarity

Focus

Support

Documentation

Strong Details



## IDEAS

6

- Clear, focused, and compelling—holds reader's attention
- Striking insight, impressive knowledge of topic
- Takes reader on a journey of understanding
- Clear main idea and significant, intriguing details

5

- Clear and focused
- Reflects in-depth knowledge of topic
- Authentic, convincing info from experience, research
- Clear main idea well supported by details

4

- Clear and focused more often than not
- Writer knows topic well enough to write in broad terms
- Some new info, some common knowledge
- Main idea can be easily inferred, quality details outweigh generalities

3

- Clear, focused moments overshadowed by undeveloped, rambling text
- Writer needs greater knowledge of topic—gaps apparent
- Mostly common knowledge and best guesses
- Generalities dominate, writer has a weak grip on the main idea

2

- Writer lacks clear vision—still defining topic, key question
- Writer struggles with insufficient knowledge—writing is strained
- Broad unsupported observations, invented details
- Filler dominates—main idea wanders in and out of focus

1

- Very foggy—no “land in sight” yet
- Main idea never emerges due to writer's lack of knowledge
- Hastily assembled notes, random thoughts
- Bits of info wander in search of a main idea



# Student Rubric

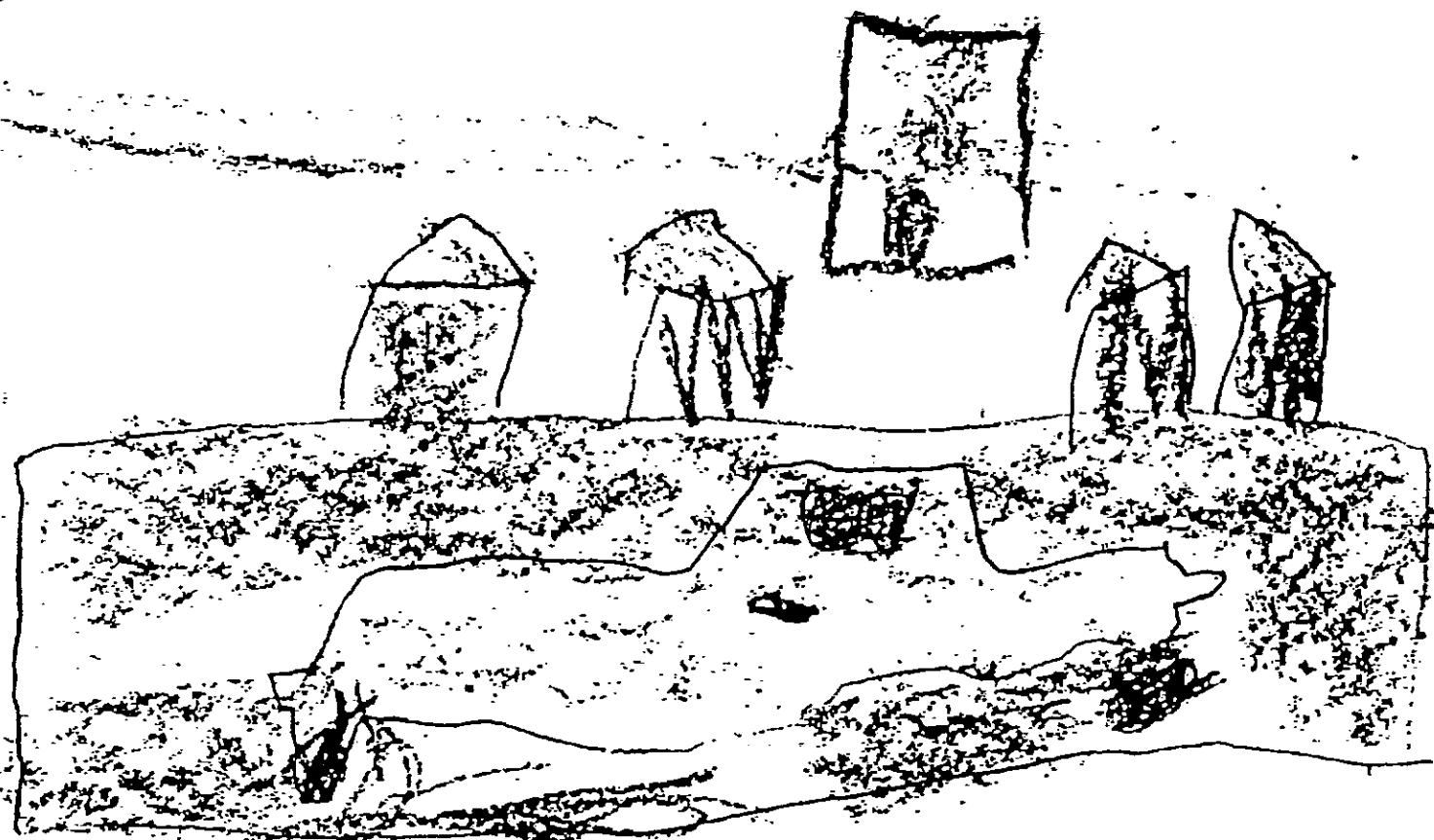
## IDEAS

- 6**
- My writing is clear, focused, and well developed. It will hold your attention.
  - You can tell just what my message is about.
  - I know this topic inside and out.
  - I help readers learn, think, and gain insight.
  - The details I chose will intrigue you – and perhaps teach you something.
- 5**
- My writing is clear and focused. I expand on key points.
  - I think the message is clear.
  - I know a lot about this topic.
  - I share important, interesting information.
  - I chose details that make the message interesting.
- 4**
- This paper is clear and focused most of the time.
  - You can tell what my main message is.
  - I know a few things about this topic.
  - I share *some* new information.
  - I came up with a few details and examples.
- 3**
- I wrote a list of ideas – I didn't really develop any of them.
  - You might figure out my message or you might not.
  - I wish I knew more about this topic.
  - I ran out of things to say – it was hard to think of new information all the time.
  - I scrambled to come up with details.
- 2**
- My writing rambles – not all of it makes sense.
  - I'm still figuring out what my message is.
  - I do NOT know enough about this topic to write.
  - I said some things I could not prove or support.
  - I could not come up with many details. Is it OK to repeat things?
- 1**
- I couldn't figure out what I wanted to say. I don't have a topic or main idea yet.
  - I'm sure I left my reader with a thousand questions.
  - How can I have information? I don't have a topic!
  - These are just random thoughts – whatever came into my head.
  - I just tried to fill up the page.

# Where to Begin with IDEAS

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- 1. Be an observer.**  
Notice the world around you. Learn to see what others miss.
  - 2. Write small.**  
Big topics are unwieldy and lead to boring generalities.
  - 3. Pick your own topics.**  
This is what real writers do. Be original.
  - 4. Get rid of dead wood.**  
Separate the good details from the snoozers.
  - 5. Don't try to tell too much.**  
Think of writing as a kind of home movie on paper.  
Get to the point – then stop.
  - 6. Don't generalize.**  
Words like *good*, *exciting*, *fun*, *special* and *nice* say nothing.  
They're *worse* than nothing because they're annoying.  
They make your readers do all the work.
-



im go to the  
Zoo a im gn to  
Se a pyn .

# Best Friend

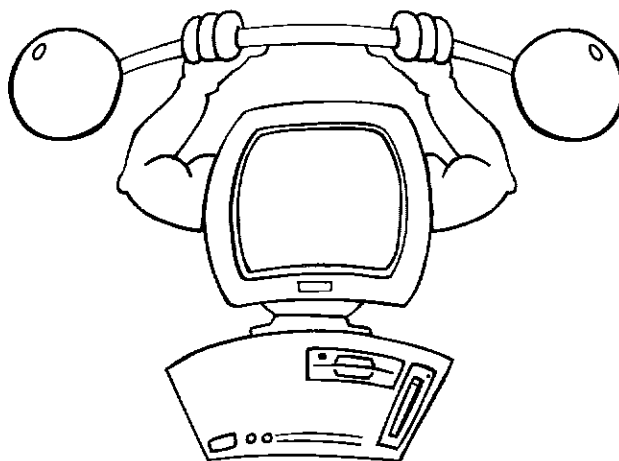
Grade 1

My best friend's name is Kyil she is a very nice girl. I sometimes play with her all day. And she lives by me. And she has a brother his is I can not spell his name I will not say it to you but I will find it out. The End.

# Computers

A lot of computers are selling in stores today. Many people have one. They are very popular in schools, homes, offices, and many other places. They help you with your keyboarding practice. Some disks let you have fun. They can do neat and amazing things. They can also help you learn.

Computers are nice to have around the house for a lot of stuff. One very good thing about it is that it will not harm the earth. They are in fact very helpful to our earth. Many people's lives have been saved by little devices around their necks. Little computerized devices. Some little robots help retard death or help blind people. Some robots can be just to play with. Talking robots moving robots. Some robots can even get you things.



When you go to fairs, you can see robots on display. Robots can do just about anything. I think they will do more in the future. People are getting fired from their jobs because robots can do the job better. But I still think computers are fun.

Grade 5

# BATTING AVERAGES

Math is all around us in almost everything we do. Math is involved in banking, shopping, cooking, grade point averages, the weather, the national economy and just about every part of life. It is hard to think of even one thing that doesn't use math in one way or another.

You wouldn't think math would be such a big part of sports, but it is. Take baseball for example. In baseball people use math for many things. One example is figuring out batting averages. This is important because when players see how well they are doing, they have a way to improve. How would players improve if they didn't know how well they were doing?

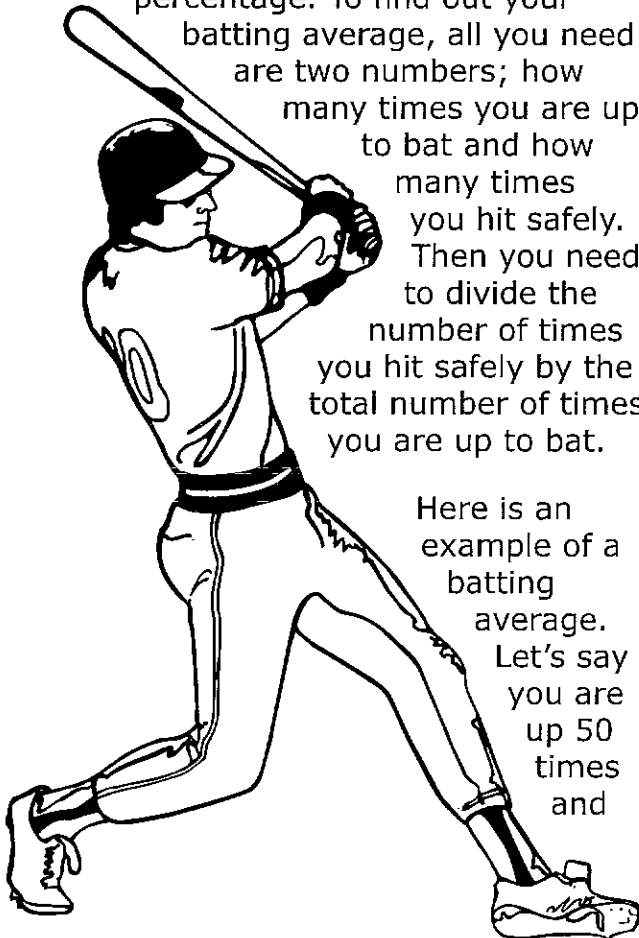
A batting average is really like a percentage. To find out your batting average, all you need are two numbers; how many times you are up to bat and how many times you hit safely. Then you need to divide the number of times you hit safely by the total number of times you are up to bat.

Here is an example of a batting average. Let's say you are up 50 times and

hit *safely* 25 of those times. Your batting average would look like this: 25/50. This means you would have a batting average of .500 (pronounced "five hundred"), which is extremely good. In Little League, people sometimes have batting averages this high, but in Major Leagues, not even the best players hit safely half the time. Suppose you hit safely *every time* you were up. Your batting average would then be 50/50, or 1,000 --- which is pronounced "one thousand." This is where we get the famous saying "batting a thousand." Of course, nobody could ever bat this well in real life.

With the use of batting averages it is easy to set goals for yourself and see how well you are doing. As the charts on the following pages show, a good batting average for a pro ball player is somewhere between .300 ("three hundred") and .400 ("four hundred"). One of the all-time record holders was Ted Williams, who year batted .407 (pronounced "four-oh-seven").

The last chart shows my batting averages for three years: 1992, 1993 and 1994. The chart shows that 1994 was my best year. That season, I hit safely 15 times out of the 44 I was at bat, for a batting average of  $15/44 = .341$  ("three forty-one").



Andrea

Grade 7 Social Studies

### Muhammad

Muhammad was born in 570 C.E. He started trading with his uncle at age 12. He was an orphan. He married Knadijah at age 25.

Muhammad started preaching around 613 C.E. He taught people that they must worship only one god. He improved the status of women. He also preached that the rich should share their wealth. The Makkans rejected his teachings and called him a liar. The weak followers were torched. Then the Makkans started a boycott to make the followers give up Islam. The followers suffered starvation. Qur'ans tell that Muhammad took a winged horse to Jerusalem and prayed with other prophets and met God.

When Abu Talib died Muhammad lost his protector. He moved to the Yathrib to bring peace between feuding tribes. In exchange he got protection. The Yathrib was renamed Madinah. In 624 C.E. the Muslims and Makkans fought. Later the Makkans held siege on Madinah but failed. In 628 C.E. they agreed to take a pilgrimage to their city. In 630 C.E. they broke their promise and marched to Makkan. Makkan surrendered without a battle. The war ended in 632. Most of central and southern Arabia was under Muslim control when Muhammad died. They chose Abu Bakr as a new leader. He used military campaigns to reunite the community if they tried to break apart. He began carrying Islam teaching farther. Umar set up gov't and tax systems. Uthman helped united Muslims. Ali Ibn Abi Talib drew communities into a civil war.

The Sunnis followed Muhammad and they believed in acceptance. The Shi'as followed Muawiyah and they believed only people directly related to Muhammad through his son-in-law Ali should be caliph.

Savannah  
9/16/02

Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote the "Four Freedom" Speech in 1941. He talked about the four essential human freedoms in his speech. Has the world realized Roosevelt's Four Freedoms? The first freedom is freedom of speech and expression- everywhere in the world. I feel that this does not take place everywhere in the world. Although, I think that this does take place in the United States. Freedom of speech and expression is allowed in this country. People have the right to speak and express their feelings at anytime they wish. In other countries in the world freedom of speech and expression is not allowed. They don't have the chance to express feelings and speak when they feel to. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way- everywhere in the world. This second freedom is in all free countries in the world that aren't ruled and told exactly what to do. The countries that aren't open cannot have their own religion. The United States is a free country and people are allowed to have their own religion. The third freedom is freedom from want-which translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peace time life



for its inhabitants- everywhere in the world. No, I feel that this third freedom is not in any country in the world. Most countries would like to have this; they would like to have peace. Countries that live in peace people are much comfortable and not afraid, but there's not guarantee. Not all countries want peace though. The United States wants this freedom. On September 11 many people were killed, many innocent people. There are people in the United States without jobs and people that are very poor, also in other countries too. The fourth freedom is freedom from fear- which translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor- anywhere in the world. Yes, the world has realized it, it would be the ideal way for the world to live but not all countries live by it. Weapons are abused and most of the time used in the wrong way.

I feel that we are very lucky to live in a nation of world where there are so many freedoms.

# How to be a Heart

(by 1<sup>st</sup> graders studying the heart)

Pump blood.

Be the strongest muscle in the body.

Don't stop.

Have love in you.

Beat fast in rats and slow in elephants.

Don't stop...

Don't stop...

Don't stop...

# How to be a Firefly

Eat slugs and worms.

Light up at night.

Glow greenish-yellow.

Live in woods and grass.

Feel and smell with antennae.

Fly and be free.

Light up...

Light up...

Light up...

By: Ms. Simpson's Fireflies  
Kindergarten  
Woodman Park School  
Dover, NH

# How to be a Gentle Giant Octopus

By Abbi (grade 3)

**HATCH!** The baby octopus hatches  
and the mother dies.

**SQUIRT!** The octopus squirts its ink  
to get away from its pray.

**BITE!** The vicious killer whale rips  
off a tentacle. Luckily, it will grow back.

**SLIP!** The octopus is an invertebrate.  
It can fit in small places.

**"WOW!"** A mother octopus lays up to 60,000 eggs!!!

# How to be a Fraction

Be  $\frac{1}{2}$  of what you are.  
Realize your lifespan will never be greater than one.  
When trying to be equal,  
Treat your top half the same as your bottom.  
Multiply with other fractions.  
Spend  $\frac{1}{3}$  of your time being improper.  
Simplify.  
Only be mixed if you are of the proper religion.  
Be careful when you cross multiply!  
Convert to decimalism.  
Know that if you've had  $\frac{1}{2}$  as much fun as I've had,  
I've had twice as much fun as you.

Frank Youngman

## How to be Thomas Jefferson

Write like an angel.

Live in your mind.

Have your heart broken many times.

Declare all men equal,

and never release your 200 slaves.

Buys lots of real estate from Frenchmen

without looking at it.

Live beyond your means

and owe lots of money.

Never finish the house

that years later will appear

on the back side of a nickel.

# How to be a Supernova

Exist as a star for about 10 billion years,

Enlarge rapidly,  
becoming the big guy you always wanted to be.

Explode causing about 20 times your own light.

Evolve into the most spectacular color show anyone has  
ever seen.

Annihilate anything within 20 light years.

Commence a gigantic hole in the middle of space,  
that will disintegrate everything that comes near.

Brett