

## Model Literary Essay: “Do Something Meaningful”

***The Hope Chest* explores several themes. Write an essay that explains one of the major themes of the book. Use evidence and examples from the text to support your interpretation.**

*The Hope Chest* by Karen Schwabach is a story about a girl called Violet who runs away from home to find her sister, Chloe. Chloe is working on getting women the right to vote in Tennessee. One of the themes of this book is that it is important to “do something meaningful.” In this book, both Chloe and Violet take risks in order to do something meaningful with their lives.

Violet’s sister, Chloe, left home shouting “something about wanting to do something meaningful with her life.” At the beginning of the book in Chapter 1, Violet finds letters from Chloe that have been hidden from her by her mother. In those letters, Chloe tells Violet that she is a public health nurse, working long days looking after people with influenza. This work was dangerous and difficult, but Chloe made a difference in the lives of sick people who needed her. Later in the book, we discover that Chloe has left for Tennessee to fight for women’s right to vote. She works long and tirelessly for this cause. Voting makes a difference, not only for the women who vote, but also for the decisions that voters make, which affect all our lives.

Chloe sets an example for her younger sister, Violet. At the end of the book, after all the adventures she has had with Chloe, Violet realizes that she wants to do something meaningful with her life. It says, “She couldn’t wait to be grown up and allowed to work all day, and into the night if she wanted, on something that mattered. Not taking care of sick people, necessarily, and definitely not digging graves, but some important work that needed doing.” Even as a child, Violet is able to “make a difference” in helping women get the vote by spying on the antis for the suffragists. Violet has been inspired through her experiences in the book to “do something meaningful” with her life.

Both of these examples from *The Hope Chest* show how important it is to “do something meaningful.” Many of the characters in the book are doing something meaningful as well. For example, other characters including Miss Kelley and Mr. Martin also fight for the rights of African Americans. This book shows us how difficult, important, and satisfying it can be to do meaningful work.