

SECOND PLACE-JUNIOR ESSAY

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Age 13

FISHING ON THE PIER

We strolled out into the hot summer night in Grand Isle with our rods and boxes of tackle. It was half-past eleven, the air was sticky, and the smell of fish permeated through it. My dad and I came up on the empty spot to set our supplies down on the pier. Baiting out hooks with shrimp through the faint glow of the lamps, I was ready to cast off into the murky waters of the Gulf.

Soaring out a hundred yards or so, I vigilantly watched my cork bob up and down through my tired eyes for what seemed like hours. When I reeled in my line, there was only a fragment of a shrimp left on my hook; sleepily I dragged myself over to the shallow waters right up on the beach.

Once again I lazily dropped my hook in the water and had several of the smaller fish nibble on the already half-eaten shrimp. Many times I baited my line, for the fish were continually stealing the shrimp. As I would reel back in and cast out again, a family on the opposite side of the old pier was catching speckled trout like butterflies in a net. I squeezed into a tiny space next to a lady in a red hat, and I carefully watched my cork.

Still coming up empty handed, I decided to change my hook to an orange jig head. Because it was quite windy, I cast out without any bait and the probability of getting tangled in someone's line. Suddenly, my luck greatly changed, as the brightly colored orange cork I had been watching all night disappeared underwater. Now wide awake, I reeled in my line as fast as I could and slammed the fish down on the pier to stop it from flipping and flopping all around. Hurriedly, I snatched a near towel to pry the scaly trout from my now empty hook, and held it high like a trophy for everyone to see the enormous fish.

With only one fish in the ice chest, and at least four hours of fishing well into the morning, my dad and I packed up our gear into the truck's bed. At a quarter past three, we arrived back at the camp ready to shower up and go to bed. All in all, despite only catching one fish, we were fortunate it was a good fishing trip.