# Seven-Year-Old Anaya Ellick Proves "Disability Is Not Inability"

**Article of the Week (AoW) Directions**

1. Mark your confusion – either highlighting or underlining.

2. Mark up the text. Annotate the article with comments, questions, inferences, etc. You can use a variety of sentences, phrases, and symbols to show your thinking.

3. Write a developed paragraph response to one of the prompts below.

By Meera Dolasia on May 14, 2016

To win a national award for handwriting, especially in this digital age, is an achievement in itself. But what makes Anaya Ellick’s**accolade** extra special is that the seven-year-old accomplished the feat despite having no hands. Even more amazing? The first-grader from Chesapeake, Virginia, who won the **prestigious** Nicholas Maxim Special Award for Excellence in Manuscript Penmanship, on April 11, does not use **prosthetics**. The young girl produces her perfect **penmanship** by standing close to her desk with her pencil firmly gripped between her **forearms**.

While the impeccable handwriting may surprise the world, Tracy Cox, principal of Greenbrier Christian Academy where Anaya goes to school, is not. In fact, it was Cox who entered the 1st grader in the annual national handwriting competition organized by educational company Zaner-Bloser. The young girl who competed in the category for students with special needs had to **outshine**50 contestants to win the award. But there was little to worry about. Contest director Kathleen Wright said the judges, many of who are occupational**therapists**, were "just **stunned**" by the quality of Anaya's printing. Wright says, "Her writing sample was comparable to someone who had hands."

The award which comes with a Zaner-Bloser gift certificate for Greenbrier Christian Academy and $1,000 USD cash prize and trophy for Anaya, is named after Nicholas Maxim, a fifth grader from Readfield, Maine. In 2011, the young boy who is born without his lower arms, submitted a **cursive** entry so impressive that Zaner-Bloser decided to create a new category to honor physically challenged kids.

Anaya’s proud parents, Bianca Middleton and Gary Ellick say the young girl’s **determination** and desire to be independent became apparent when she was just an infant. Unable to hold on to her pacifier with her hands, she figured out how to do it by cupping her arms. As a toddler, she learned to eat with a fork and build with blocks. At 5, she managed to perch a crayon or marker between her hands and draw. Though Anaya was fitted with prosthetic arms for a short time, the young girl decided she was better off with her natural ones and **discarded** them. As it turns out, she was right! Though winning the handwriting award was thrilling, Anaya has already moved on to her next goal — She now wants to master karate!

**Respond to one of the following prompts. Use a separate sheet of paper.**

1. What award did Anaya Ellick win? Why is her achievement so remarkable?
2. How has Anaya’s story changed your **perception** about people with disabilities?
3. Pick a passage from the article and respond to it.