

***In Common: Effective Writing for All Students***  
**Collection of All Student Work Samples, K-12**

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By The Vermont Writing Collaborative, with Student Achievement Partners and CCSSO

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# Getting Started With *In Common*

***The Story of In Common: Where  
the Standards Meet the  
Students***

## The Story of *In Common*: Where the Standards Meet the Students

A Preface by James P. Patterson

Now that we are a few years removed from the June 2010 release of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, it seems possible, if still daunting, to gain some perspective on this reform-in-progress. The product of a state-initiated effort directed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, the Standards at their inception were both the culmination of the decades-long work of the states in developing high-quality K-12 educational expectations and a broad-based commitment to the bracingly simple yet ambitious goal of getting all students college and career ready by no later than the end of high school. The Standards' impact on policy was immediate, with forty-six states and four territories moving quickly to adoption; the impact on teaching, learning, curriculum, and assessment—inevitably slower to develop but ultimately even more critical to the undertaking's success—has only increased in the time since the final version of the document was issued.

As in the areas of reading, speaking and listening, and language, the Common Core Standards in writing called for sustained, focused attention on a small set of educational priorities empirically linked to readiness for college and workforce training programs:

- Writing effectively and thoughtfully on substantive topics in the core modes of opinion/argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative;
- Developing, organizing, and expressing information and ideas in a manner appropriate to task, audience, and purpose;
- Using various processes and tools, including technology, to produce, improve, and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others;
- Using writing as a tool to conduct research and as a medium to convey findings;

- Making insightful, reciprocal connections between one’s reading and writing, and drawing on an understanding of literary and informational texts to inform and enrich one’s analysis, reflection, and research; and
- Writing frequently over both extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Published under the unassuming title *Samples of Student Writing*, Appendix C -the companion document to the Common Core Writing Standards- presented in its roughly one hundred pages nearly three dozen pieces of student work that had been annotated in an effort to clarify and concretize the Writing Standards’ expectations. Through rich and varied examples drawn from students who had written to various tasks, for various purposes and audiences, in various content areas, and under various conditions, Appendix C sought to illustrate by example what it meant to say that a given piece of writing met the Standards.

As valuable as that resource has turned out to be, those of us on the ELA/Literacy Standards writing team recognized early in the appendix’s design and development that the document would have some important, if necessary, limitations. First, the included works had not been written expressly to the Common Core Standards. While Appendix C’s samples are easily recognizable as successful—often highly successful—efforts on the part of their student authors, they could only indirectly and by implication suggest what writing informed by the priorities of CCSS would look like. Second, the samples, as diverse as they were, nonetheless came from a relatively small number of sources due to the press of deadlines and the team’s inevitably limited capacity to solicit, evaluate, and annotate materials while simultaneously developing the Standards themselves. Finally, the appendix’s usefulness as a guide to instruction has been hampered to a degree by the fact that, for a variety of reasons (not the least being the already prodigious size of the appendix), only the writing samples and annotations, and not the actual tasks that inspired them, were represented.

Enter *In Common*.

Teachers/writers/organizers Joanna Hawkins and Diana Leddy have done the teaching field and the Common Core State Standards Initiative an invaluable service by leading the year-plus-long efforts of two non-profit organizations, the Vermont Writing Collaborative and Student

Achievement Partners, and a host of volunteers to collect, compile, and annotate the vast and vital collection of student writing samples available in this resource.

Far more than just a supplement to a supplement, *In Common* advances the work begun in CCSS Appendix C in a number of important ways. The most obvious is in terms of sheer scope: drawn from over 1,600 submissions, *In Common* comprises more than double the number of annotated samples originally released in 2010. Just as important is the range of the samples, which were gathered from schools across the United States and from teachers united only by their devotion to helping student writers and their interest in infusing practice with the aims and requirements of the Common Core State Standards.

Its breadth and depth would be enough to earn *In Common* high marks, but the resource's real value lies in its methodology and commentary. Not only have Hawkins, Leddy, and their colleagues pulled together a vibrant array of samples planned, drafted, revised, edited, and published by students working over extended periods of time, but have also conducted and shared with us the results of an intriguing real-world "experiment" in on-demand writing. Beginning with generative questions—for example, "What can you do to save water?" (Kindergarten through Grade 5) and "What effect did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it?" (Grades 6 through 12) for informative/explanatory writing—the project leaders crafted grade-specific argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing prompts that were based on source texts and intended to elicit student samples written to nearly uniform tasks across broad grade bands. The result—a stepwise progression of ever-more-sophisticated writing samples with a common baseline—should be required reading for every teacher interested in helping students improve their composition skills. The prompts and source texts have also been included in the collection, allowing readers to analyze how the samples were generated and enabling teachers to replicate the tasks with their own students.

Highly trained and skilled educators, Hawkins and Leddy prove sensitive annotators, as well. Their commentary on the eighty-some pieces in this collection strikes a fine balance between making consistent points directly informed by the language of the Writing Standards and recognizing the unique specifics of individual exemplars. These teachers also appreciate the value of

letting students' words speak for themselves. Every piece of writing comes in versions with and without annotations. In addition, some of the samples from the youngest students include a scan of the student's hand-produced original, sometimes with drawings. Understanding, too, that these writing samples may be instructive to students as well as to teachers, the project leaders have included a version of each K-5 sample in which distracting but superficial errors in the conventions of standard written English have been corrected.

But enough of these preliminaries. It is one thing to read about how fabulous *In Common* is; it is another thing entirely to see for oneself. This I charge you to do posthaste. The experience will leave you not only with a better understanding of the Common Core State Standards in writing and how their expectations can be met by students working in authentic contexts in actual classrooms but also, I suspect, with a renewed appreciation and admiration for the heights that students can reach with and through their writing when teachers expect and nurture their best work.

-- Jim Patterson, PhD  
Member, Lead Writing Team,  
Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts  
& Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects  
June 2013

# *In Common User Guide*

## ***In Common* User Guide**

*In Common* is a collection of K-12 student writing samples gathered from classrooms across the country. We hope that this bank of annotated student work will provide a foundation for analysis and discussions that lead to a deep and nuanced understanding of the Common Core Writing Standards. Below is a short explanation of how *In Common* is organized and some possibilities for using the collection.

### **Three Writing Types, Grades K-12**

At least two samples of student work (and often many more) are provided at each grade level, in each of the three writing types described in the CCSS Writing Standards. Each piece is in a separate, downloadable file, freely available for classroom use and professional development. These files are organized into three sections by writing type (argument/opinion, informative /explanatory and narrative) and by grade cluster (K-2, 3-5 and 6-12).

### **Two Subsections**

*The three writing types in In Common* are further subdivided into two subsections, “**On-Demand Writing**” and “**Range of Writing.**” Pieces from the “On Demand” section are the result of uniform prompts and can be used to highlight developmental progressions in the Standards, as well as to build an understanding of grade-specific goals and expectations. The “Range of Writing” section is designed to illustrate a breadth of student writing aligned to Common Core Standards, and to spark ideas about how writing can be integrated throughout the curriculum.

### **Understanding the File Names**

Each part of the file name contains useful information.

#### 1. First Character: Writing Type

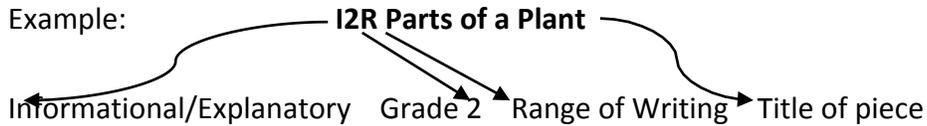
- **O=Opinion**
- **A=Argument**
- **I=Informative/Explanatory**
- **N=Narrative**

#### 2. Second Character: Grade Level (**K-12**)

#### 3. Third Character: Section

- **P=Uniform Prompt**
- **R=Range of Writing**

#### 4. Title of piece



This information appears in the upper left-hand corner of each piece. This coding can be used to help identify pieces in a particular writing type or grade level.

### Different Versions for Different Purposes

Each piece has been transcribed as the student wrote it, with the same errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation as the original. Only CCSS Writing Standards 1, 2, and 3 were considered when choosing these pieces. Mastery of conventions (addressed in the Language Standards) was not evaluated.

There are at least two versions of the same piece in each file. The first is annotated and includes commentary designed to help educators better understand how the features of the piece relate to the descriptors in the Standard. Each file also contains a version of the piece that has been transcribed, but not annotated. This version may be used for a variety of purposes, including professional development.

In addition, some primary grade pieces are accompanied by a scan of the original; this is often the case in Kindergarten where the Standard itself includes drawing, writing, and dictating.

All files in grades K-5 also contain a third version of each piece labeled, "Revised and Edited for Student Use." In this version, major errors in conventions (spelling, capitalization, etc.) have been corrected so that the piece can be used in the classroom as a model for students. Teachers may also want to refer to this edited version if the spelling errors in a transcribed piece make certain words hard to decipher.

### Annotations

Pieces are annotated to show their relationship to CCSS Writing Standards 1-3. Some annotations appear in the sidebars. In the sidebar annotations, **exact wording from the Standard is distinguished by bold font**. Care was taken to use the exact wording of the Standard where possible. More extensive commentary is available in a box at the end of each piece.

The student pieces in the collection were chosen with professional development (and the limited time we all have) in mind. In nearly all cases, the pieces that appear in *In Common* demonstrate every descriptor in a given Standard. This means that even a single sample piece provides ample opportunity to explore all the qualities of effective writing described in a given Standard.

### Ideas for Use

There are many ways to use these pieces, and we would love to hear new ideas on how to use them effectively. Here are some possibilities for getting started:

1. Use the Common Core Standards to annotate one of the un-annotated pieces. Discuss your observations with your colleagues, and compare them to the annotated version in the collection.
2. Analyze a span of on-demand prompted pieces in a single writing type (for example, K-5 opinion pieces) to develop a clearer understanding of the developmental progression across grade levels.
3. Use the “Revised and Edited” version of a piece as a model for students when you are teaching writing. Discuss the elements of effective writing described in the Standards. In what ways is this an effective piece? How might this piece be improved?
4. Look at a set of grade-level pieces in all of the three writing types and note the differences and similarities between the pieces. How, for example, are the argument pieces similar to the informative/explanatory pieces at your grade level? Which skills and techniques can be practiced and reinforced across writing types?
5. Compare the on-demand prompted piece at your grade level with the Range of Writing pieces. What are the similarities and differences in writing independently from a prompt and writing that stems from classroom content and instruction? What does this imply for your practice?
6. Look, across several grade levels, at the Range of Writing pieces in one writing type. Each Common Core Writing type is broad and encompasses many familiar genres. What kinds of pieces (reports, response to text, procedure, etc.) are part of informative/explanatory writing? Argument/opinion? Narrative? What does this imply for your instruction?
7. Examine a collection of Range of Writing pieces at, above, and below the grade you teach. What ideas can you get from these pieces about integrating writing and content in the curriculum?

*In Common* is designed to support educators and students by providing concrete examples of effective, Common Core aligned writing at a range of developmental levels. We hope that exploring and working with this resource in a variety of ways will deepen your understanding of the Standards, of writing, and of your students as writers.

## *In Common FAQ*

## ***In Common Frequently Asked Questions***

### **A Common Core Implementation Resource for Writing Instruction**

The Common Core Writing Standards describe three broad “types” of writing and emphasize the integration of content understanding and writing. Teachers have long believed that learning to write well is important – essential, even. However, what this actually looks like in the classroom, especially for struggling students, has often eluded us. This collection is intended to be the beginning of a resource which can help both students and teachers better understand the qualities of effective writing. We hope this bank of annotated student work will provide a foundation for analysis and discussions that lead to a deep and nuanced understanding of the Common Core Writing Standards.

#### ***What is “In Common”?***

*In Common* is a collection of K-12 student writing samples gathered from classrooms across the country. The resource is organized into three main sections, based on the three types of writing required by the Common Core State Standards for writing: argument/opinion writing, informative/explanatory writing, and narrative writing. Each main section is further subdivided into two subsections, “On-Demand Writing” and “Range of Writing.”

#### ***On-Demand Writing Sections***

These sections contain pieces written in response to a uniform text-based prompt. For each of the three, Common Core writing types, two adaptable assignment templates were designed, one for students in Grades K-5, and another for students in Grades 6-12. Each basic template was then used to create a set of similar, grade-specific prompts within the broader K-5 and 6-12 clusters. The language of the prompt, the text used, and some of the conditions of administration vary, but the question that focuses the writing remains the same across the grade levels within each cluster. For example, in Kindergarten, students listen to a Reader’s Theatre presentation about saving water and then write and illustrate a short informative piece in response. The corresponding fifth grade prompt begins with an article on water conservation, and students respond by writing a full informative essay. Although specific aspects of each prompt have been adapted to meet developmental needs, both prompts present the same focusing question, “What can you do to save water?” Similarly, at grades 6-12, all students read texts about the effects of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Students at grades 9-12 read an additional, more complex text, but all students respond to the same prompt, “What effect did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it?”

**Using one topic for grades K-5 and one for grades 6-12 results in a unified set of student pieces. This makes it easy for teachers to see and understand the developmental spectrum described in the CCSS.** These pieces can be used to highlight developmental progressions in the Standards, as well as to build an understanding of grade-specific goals and expectations.

### ***Range of Writing Sections***

These sections contain a variety of pieces spanning K-12, in each writing type specified by the Common Core State Writing Standards 1-3. These pieces provide examples of writing for “a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences”, over both extended and shorter time frames. **These parts of the collection are designed to illustrate a breadth of student writing aligned to the CCSS, and to spark ideas about how writing can be integrated throughout the curriculum.**

Each piece in the collection is annotated using the words of the Common Core State Standards for a particular grade level and writing type. Using authentic student work to interpret the descriptors in the Standards can help teachers to develop a clearer conception of what writing aligned to the Common Core might look like. A variety of pieces have been included to encourage a broad and flexible understanding of the writing standards.

### ***What is the purpose of the project?***

The Common Core Standards offer a new way of thinking about the role of writing in the classroom. Both teachers and students will need many and varied examples if they are to understand what the Standards are asking and what effective writing might look like at different developmental levels. The purpose of this Common Core instructional resource is to help educators (and students) develop a clearer understanding of the qualities of effective writing as described in the Standards and to provide some examples of how writing can be meaningfully integrated within the curriculum.

A few cautions in using the resource:

- It is important to note that these pieces are **examples** of competent writing at each grade level, **not benchmarks**. While these samples may help teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in a program or in a piece of student work, **they should not be used in scoring**.
- The pieces have been chosen specifically to illustrate the three writing types described in Common Core Writing Standards 1, 2 and 3 (Argument/Opinion, Informative/Explanatory and Narrative). **Mastery of conventions (spelling, punctuation, capitalization) was not evaluated** in choosing and annotating these pieces. While each piece was chosen to be a developmentally appropriate example of the Common Core Writing Standards, the student

work in this collection may or may not reflect the Common Core Language Standards and should not be used to gain a clearer understanding of those Standards.

As a profession, our understanding of the Common Core is evolving and will undoubtedly grow more nuanced as teachers experiment with new ways to teach, as data emerges from large scale assessments, and as our students reap the benefits of a coordinated K-12 progression of English Language Arts standards. The pieces in this collection are meant to be a starting point for inquiry and discussion, not a final destination.

### ***Who created *In Common*?***

*In Common* is an instructional resource created for teachers, by teachers. Over a year in the making, the collection is a joint project of the Vermont Writing Collaborative and Student Achievement Partners.

#### ***The Vermont Writing Collaborative***

The Vermont Writing Collaborative is a non-profit organization, founded by five public school teachers, whose mission is to help all students, K-12, write thoughtfully and effectively. The Vermont Writing Collaborative brings passion, ongoing on-the-ground classroom experience, and expertise in literacy to this project.

#### ***Student Achievement Partners***

Student Achievement Partners is a non-profit organization that assembles educators and researchers to design actions based on evidence that will substantially improve student achievement. Founded by three of the contributing authors of the Common Core State Standards, Student Achievement Partners is devoted to accelerating student achievement for all students by supporting effective and innovative implementation of the Common Core.

### ***How were student papers collected and reviewed?***

Here is a brief overview of the process:

- With the help of the Council of the Great City Schools, Student Achievement Partners and other state and district volunteers too numerous to name reached out to a national network of teachers, requesting student work. Over 1,600 pieces were submitted by more than 80 teachers in nearly a dozen different CCSS-adopting states.
- *In Common* Project Leaders refined their understanding of the Common Core Standards through collective study and discussion, including conversations with two contributing authors of the ELA CCSS and, with their help, used the student work submitted to assemble grade-specific packets for further review and discussion.

- At an intensive two-day retreat, teams of teachers and literacy specialists met to develop a shared understanding of the language of the Standards and to review the student work. Teachers were divided into grade cluster teams (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). Each team was charged with identifying pieces, by a consensus process, that would be useful in helping teachers understand **Common Core Writing Standards 1, 2, and 3** (argument/opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative) at each grade level.
- These pieces were then annotated to reflect the teams' thinking and to connect specific parts of the student work to descriptors in the Common Core Writing Standards.
- A second call for papers requested additional pieces in areas of need, and members of the Vermont Writing Collaborative and Student Achievement Partners began informally testing individual pieces in the field through professional development and focus group sessions.

### ***Where is the project now?***

The Common Core Standards are meant to broaden, not narrow, our understanding of effective writing. This resource has a similar purpose. **It is intended to be a “living document”, which will be added to, revised, and improved as more teachers and students work with the Common Core Standards.**

We welcome your feedback and ideas as we move forward in this process. We hope that *In Common* will be widely used as a growing, flexible, and useful resource for educators working to implement the Common Core State Standards in K-12 classrooms throughout the country.

The Vermont Writing Collaborative

[www.vermontwritingcollaborative.org](http://www.vermontwritingcollaborative.org)

Student Achievement Partners

<http://www.achievethecore.org/>

# **Section I: Argument/Opinion Writing**

***K-5 On-Demand  
Argument/Opinion Samples***

## Grade K, Prompt for Opinion Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Passage should be read aloud by the teacher)

*Bob and his friend Ann don't agree on which pet is best. Listen to find out what they each think.*

### **The Best Pet**

My friend Ann says her pet is better than mine! I have a brown cat named Fluffy. Ann has a black and white dog named Spot. We each think our pet is the best.

I told Ann that cats are better pets because they are clean, quiet and very cute. Cats wash themselves with their tongues. You don't have to walk them. They use a litter box. Also, cats are sweet and quiet. I think dogs are too noisy! They bark a lot. They don't clean themselves or use a litter box. Dogs need someone to give them baths, train them and walk them. Dogs are more work.

Ann says that cats are no fun! She says that dogs are better to play with. Spot always wags his tail when he sees her. He can even do tricks. He barks when she says, "Speak". He knows how to roll over! Ann says dogs are also better because they protect their owners. Spot always barks when there is someone at the door. It makes Ann feel safe. So, Ann thinks dogs are best.

I guess Ann's dog is pretty cool, but so is Fluffy. Maybe different kinds of pets are good for different people.

Teacher Directions to Students (after reading):

- What do you think? Which pet is best—a cat or a dog?

- Turn and talk to a partner about which pet you chose. Be sure to tell your partner WHY you picked that pet.

*Allow about 3 minutes for students to discuss their choices.*

- Now, use this paper to draw a picture of the pet you chose. I will help you write words under your picture to tell more about your choice.

## Kindergarten Opinion Prompt

### Teacher Directions

- Read the story, present the question, and allow a few minutes for discussion with a partner. Give out lined or unlined paper. Then, use your typical classroom writing process to support students in completing the writing prompt. The piece should represent first draft writing (done in a single sitting).
- The response should include a picture and whatever sentences, words, or letters the child can add. An adult may assist with sounding out or spelling words and/or transcribe the child's words if desired.
- Please distinguish the child's independent production from words or letters produced with adult help by **underlining any part of the writing done with teacher support**. The writing sample will be most useful to other teachers if it is easy to tell where help was given.
- We understand that, especially in the fall, most Kindergartners have had limited experience with writing.

**File Name: OKFP The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**The Best Pet**

MKIECYKDBbD

*I like my cat because they are better than dogs.\**

*\*dictated response*

**Tells the reader the topic he or she is writing about and states an opinion or preference about the topic**

In this Kindergarten opinion piece, done in the early fall, the student shows a basic awareness that what we say can be written down. Early in the Kindergarten year, specific letter/sound association has typically not yet developed, yet the above type of experimentation with writing plays a crucial role in the development of written language

**File Name: OKFP The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

**The Best Pet**

I like cats because they are better than dogs.\*

*\*dictated response*

**File Name: OKFP The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**The Best Pet**

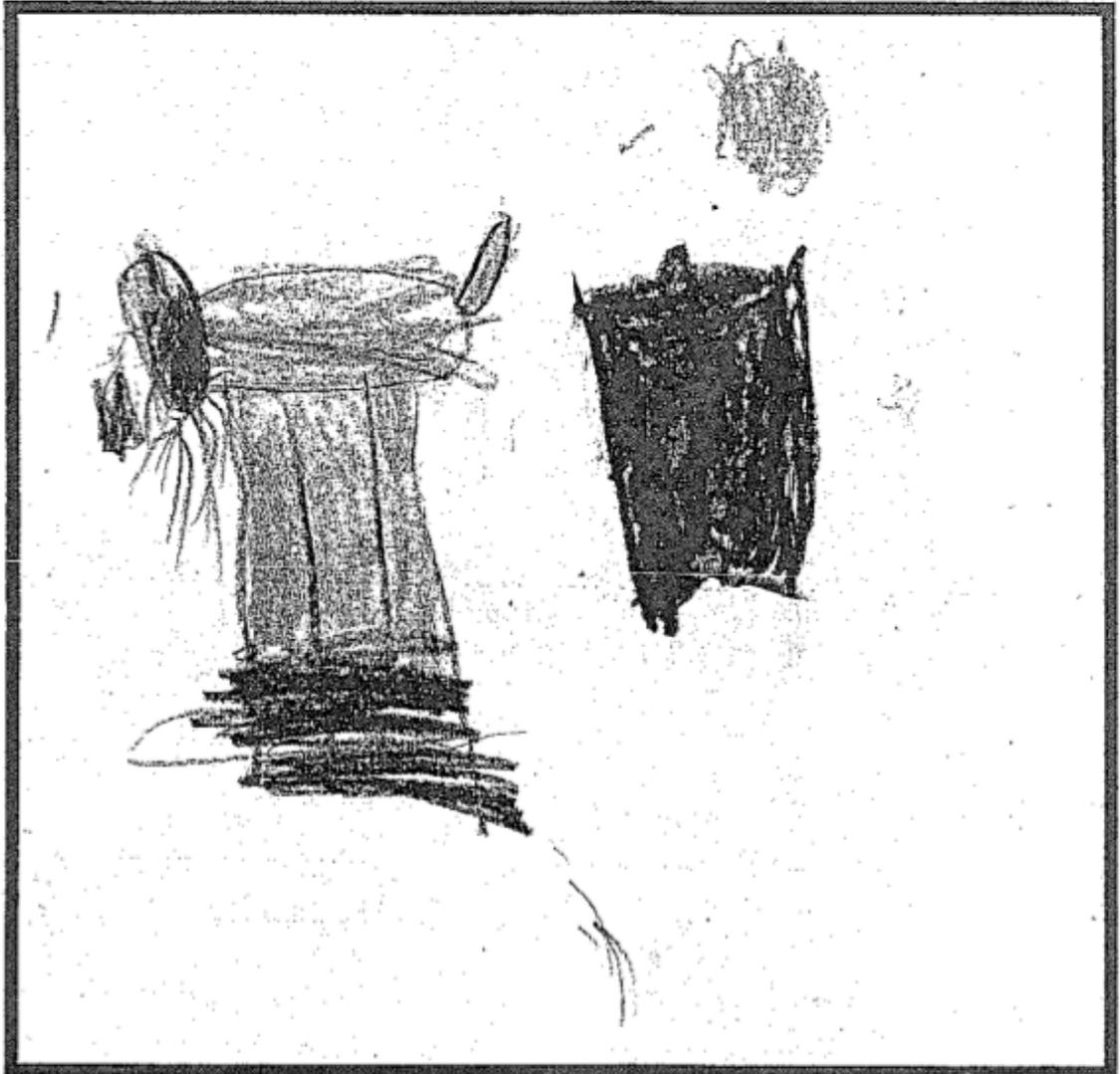
MKIECYKDBbD

*I like my cat because they are better than dogs.\**

*\*dictated response*

AKTECKK DPWD

"I like my cat because they are better than dogs."



**File Name: OKSP The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dog is the Bst Becs thea BuRc.

**Tells the reader the topic he or she is writing about and states an opinion or preference about the topic**

In this Kindergarten piece, done in the spring, the student shows a growing understanding of the sounds in words and the letters that represent those sounds. The writer names a topic and clearly expresses an opinion. Although not required by the standards, this writer also gives a reason for the opinion (*Becs thea BuRc*), laying the foundation for the more complex opinion pieces he will write in first grade.

**File Name: OKSP The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**Revised and Edited for student use**

Dogs are the best because they bark.

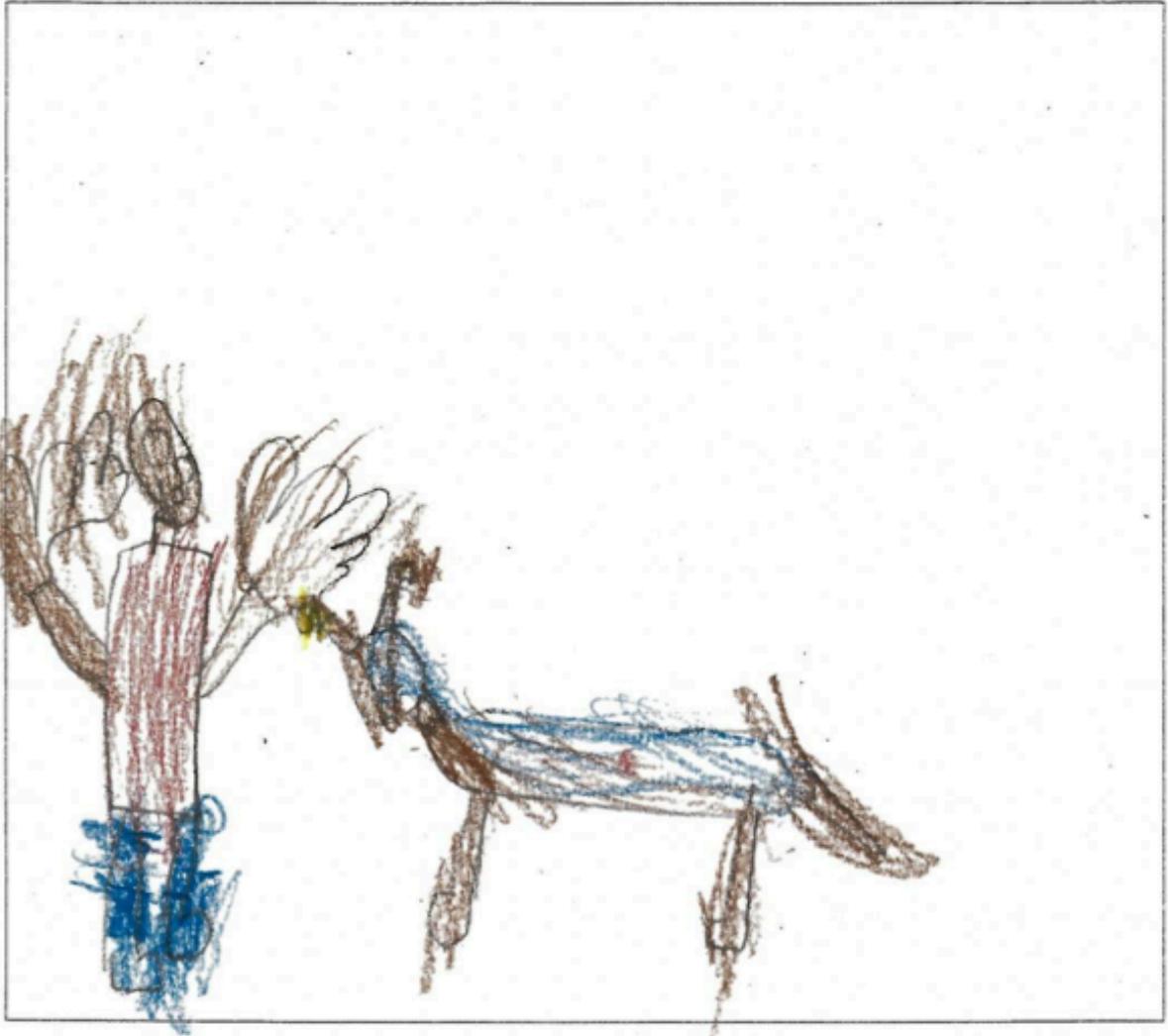
**File Name: OKSP The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dog is the Bst Becs thea BuRc.



Dog is the best because  
 they bark.

Dog is the best because they bark



## Grade 1, Prompt for Opinion Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Passage should be read aloud by the teacher)

### **The Best Pet**

My friend Ann says her pet is better than mine! I have a brown cat named Fluffy. Ann has a black and white dog named Spot. We each think our pet is the best.

I told Ann that cats are better pets because they are clean, quiet and very cute. Cats wash themselves with their tongues. You don't have to walk them. They use a litter box. Also cats are sweet and quiet. I think dogs are too noisy! They bark a lot. They don't clean themselves or use a litter box. Dogs need someone to give them baths, train them and walk them. Dogs are more work.

Ann says that cats are no fun! She says that dogs are better to play with. Spot always wags his tail when he sees her. He can even do tricks. He barks when she says, "Speak". He knows how to roll over! Ann says dogs are also better because they protect their owners. Spot always barks when there is

someone at the door. It makes Ann feel safe. So, Ann thinks dogs are best.

I guess Ann's dog is pretty cool, but so is Fluffy. Maybe different kinds of pets are good for different people.

## The Best Pet

Student Directions, Part 1

15 minutes

Today, you are going to get ready to write an opinion piece that answers this question:

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

**PART 1** To help you think about the question before writing:

- Listen to the story carefully as your teacher reads aloud.
- Listen to the question again. **Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**
- **THINK!** Decide which is the best pet.
- Tell a partner which pet you chose. Then, tell your partner **WHY** you are picking that pet.

## The Best Pet

Student Directions, Part 2

30 minutes

Now, you are going to write an opinion piece that answers this question:

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

**PART 2** Now that you have finished Part 1, you will write your piece.

- Listen to the story again.
- What pet is best for you, a cat or a dog? Why?
- Write your answer. Be sure to **pick either a cat or a dog** and **explain why** this kind of pet is best. You may look back in the story for ideas. Write as much as you can. Use as much paper as you need.

**A good opinion piece will:**

1. **Introduce the topic you are writing about.**
2. **Clearly answer the question.**
3. **Give lots of reasons and explanations.**
4. **"Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence.**
5. **Use capitals, periods and question marks, and spell words correctly.**

When you are finished, check your paper over and fix any mistakes you see.

If you have time, you may add a picture at the bottom or on the back to show why this pet is the best. Have fun!

## Grade 1 Opinion Prompt

### Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for the session. Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the story. Both should be read aloud while students read along silently (if they are able). The teacher should feel comfortable re-reading, explaining, or clarifying directions as needed.
- The story provides information that may be used to address the prompt. The story should be read aloud at least twice before writing. If students choose to refer back to the story while writing, the teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases.
- The prompt may be given in one or two sessions. Allow approximately 10-15 minutes for Part 1 and approximately 30 minutes for Part 2, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should take the time they need to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If desired, unlined paper may be provided for drawing.
- This will be first draft writing, but be sure to encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

**File Name: O1P A Dog is Best**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**A Dog is Best**

**Introduces the topic he  
or she is writing about**

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

I used to have a dog and I think a dog is best.

**States an opinion**

A dog becas its cute and it likes to Play and its snuggly and it likes to choo bones.

**Supplies a  
reason for the  
opinion**

A dog is best because of theese reasons.

**Provides some sense of closure**

This first-grade opinion piece offers a brief introduction (*"I used to have a dog"*) and then states an opinion (*"I thinck a dog is best"*). The writer supplies several reasons for the opinion. However, at this grade level, one reason would have been sufficient. A simple concluding statement provides a sense of closure.

**File Name: O1P A Dog is Best**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

**The Best Pet**

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

I used to have a dog, and I think a dog is best. A dog is best because it is cute, it likes to play, it is snuggly, and it likes to chew bones. A dog is best because of these reasons.

**File Name: O1P A Dog is Best**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**The Best Pet**

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

I used to have a dog and I think a dog is best.

A dog becas its cute and it likes to Play and its snuggly and it likes to choo bones.

A dog is best because of these reasons.

## Grade 2, Prompt for Opinion Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Passage should be read aloud by the teacher)

### **The Best Pet**

My friend Ann says her pet is better than mine! I have a brown cat named Fluffy. Ann has a black and white dog named Spot. We each think our pet is the best.

I told Ann that cats are better pets because they are clean, quiet and very cute. Cats wash themselves with their tongues. You don't have to walk them. They use a litter box. Also cats are sweet and quiet. I think dogs are too noisy! They bark a lot. They don't clean themselves or use a litter box. Dogs need someone to give them baths, train them and walk them. Dogs are more work.

Ann says that cats are no fun! She says that dogs are better to play with. Spot always wags his tail when he sees her. He can even do tricks. He barks when she says, "Speak". He knows how to roll over! Ann says dogs are also better because they protect their owners. Spot always barks when there is

someone at the door. It makes Ann feel safe. So, Ann thinks dogs are best.

I guess Ann's dog is pretty cool, but so is Fluffy. Maybe different kinds of pets are good for different people.

# Cat or Dog?

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be hard. Here are some things to think about.

## **Company**

Dogs make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company. On the other hand, most cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while your family is at school or work.

## **Exercise**

Cats and dogs both need exercise. Dogs need to be walked every day. This can be healthy for both of you. Exercise gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier! A cat needs much less exercise than a dog, but this makes a cat much easier to take care of. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

## **Training**

Dogs need training to live with people. This can take a lot of time, but you can teach your dog great tricks. Your dog can learn to sit, fetch and lie down. Cats need less training. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Which pet is the right one for you?

## The Best Pet

Student Directions, Part 1

30 minutes

Today, you are going to get ready to write an opinion piece that answers this question:

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

**PART 1** To help you think about the question before writing:

- Listen to the story, *The Best Pet* carefully as your teacher reads it aloud.
- Listen to the question again. **Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**
- THINK! Decide which is the best pet.
- Tell a partner which pet you chose. Then, tell your partner **WHY** you picked that pet.
- Now, listen to the article, *Dog or Cat?*.
- Now that you have some more information, think about the question again. **Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**
- Explain your thinking to a partner. Be sure to use facts and reasons when explaining your opinion.

## The Best Pet

Student Directions, Part 2

30 minutes

Now, you are going to write an opinion piece that answers this question:

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

**PART 2** Now that you have finished Part 1, you will write your piece.

- Listen to the story and the article again.
- What pet is best for you, a cat or a dog? Why?
- Write your answer. Be sure to **pick either a cat or a dog** and **explain why** this kind of pet is best. You may look back in the text for ideas. Write as much as you can. Use as much paper as you need.

**A good opinion piece will:**

1. **Introduce the topic you are writing about.**
2. **Clearly answer the question.**
3. **Give lots of reasons and explanations.**
4. **"Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence.**
5. **Use capitals, periods and question marks, and spell words correctly.**

When you are finished, check your paper over and fix any mistakes you see.

If you have time, you may add a picture at the bottom or on the back to show why this pet is the best.

## Grade 2 Opinion Prompt

### Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for the session. Provide each student with a copy of the prompt, the article, and the story. These should be read aloud while students read along silently (if they are able). The teacher should feel comfortable re-reading, explaining, or clarifying directions as needed.
- Both texts provide information that may be used to address the prompt. They should be read aloud at least twice before writing. If students choose to refer back to the text while writing, the teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases.
- The prompt may be given in one or two sessions. Allow approximately 30 minutes for Part 1 and approximately 30 minutes for Part 2, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should take the time they need to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If desired, unlined paper may be provided for drawing.
- This will be first draft writing, but be sure to encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

**File Name: O2P Dogs Rule**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**States an  
opinion**  
Dogs rul

**Uses linking  
words to  
connect opinion  
and reason**

What pet is best for you cat or dog? I like dogs because they exercise a lot. Al  
play fetch with you. They are fun to play with. Thats why I like dogs best.

**Introduces  
the topic he  
or she is  
writing about**

**Provides a concluding statement**

**Supplies reasons  
that support the  
opinion**

This second-grade opinion piece introduces the topic with a question (*“What pet is best for you cat or dog?”*) and states an opinion (*“I like dogs”*). Linking words (*“because”, “Also”*) connect the opinion with several reasons. A concluding statement restates the main idea of the piece (*“Thats why I like dogs best”*).

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**File Name: O2P Dogs Rule**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Dogs Rule

What pet is best for you, a cat or dog? I like dogs because they exercise a lot. Also they play fetch with you. They are fun to play with. That's why I like dogs best.

**File Name: O2P Dogs Rule**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dogs rule

What pet is best for you cat or dog? I like dogs because they exercise a lot. Also they play fetch with you. They are fun to play with. That's why I like dogs best.

## Grade 3, Prompt for Opinion Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher)

Name:

*Before you begin: On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper for writing.*

### **The Best Pet**

There are many reasons why people own pets. A pet can entertain you, keep you company or even protect you! Dogs and cats are the most popular pets in America today. Some people prefer an energetic dog and others, a cuddly kitten. Which do you think is best?

Your teacher is going to read two articles aloud. One is about the benefits of owning a cat and the other is about the benefits of choosing a dog as a pet. As you listen to these texts, think about the advantages of each kind of pet. *Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?* After you have had a chance to hear the articles a second time, you will write an essay that states your opinion and explains your thinking.

For the essay, your focusing question will be:

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

You will explain your thinking with facts and reasons from the articles.

Remember, a good opinion essay:

- *Has an introduction*
- *Clearly states your opinion/claim in a focus statement*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support your opinion and explains your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*
- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

You will have two class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. You may take notes right on the articles or on a separate sheet of paper. You may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. The essay will have a single draft. When you have finished, be sure to proofread your work.

*GOOD LUCK! WE LOOK FORWARD TO READING YOUR GOOD WORK!*

### *Teacher Directions*

## **Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

### **Day 1 (45 minutes)**

- Give out the assignment sheet.
- Read the assignment sheet aloud together and clarify the task for the students.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs*. Explain that they may want to underline or take notes on the article as you read it aloud.  
Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a cat make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Dogs make Good Pets*. Remind students that they may want to underline or take notes on the article. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a dog make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.

- Explain that tomorrow you will be writing about whether a cat or a dog makes a better pet. Collect the articles and assignment sheets. (Be sure names are on them.)

*Teacher Directions***Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?****Day 2 (45 minutes)**

- Return the articles and reread both aloud.
- Ask students to think about both articles. Which pet would be best? Why? Have students turn and talk to a partner about this. Each student should talk for 3 minutes.
- Return the assignment sheet and reread it aloud.
- Provide lined paper (or a computer if your students are accustomed to composing on a keyboard) and give students the remainder of the period to write. The writing should be completed individually, without help.
- When the period is over, explain that students may finish writing and proofread tomorrow. Collect student work and materials.

**Day 3 (45 minutes)**

- Return student work and materials. Students may be given access to a dictionary, thesaurus, spell check or grammar check.
- Give students the remainder of the period to finish writing and proofreading.

Name:

# Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be difficult. However, cats as pets do have some advantages.

## Grooming

Cats bathe themselves. Most do not even need brushing. Dogs are more likely to need help from their owners in keeping clean.

## Companionship

Cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while you go to school. Dogs, however, need company. A dog needs much more of your time.

## Exercise

Cats and dogs both need daily exercise. However, a cat needs much less exercise than a dog. Most dogs need to be taken for walk at least twice a day, even in the rain. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

## Noise

Dogs can bark at all hours of the day or night. Cats sleep most of the day and are much quieter. They are unlikely to disturb your neighbors.

## Training

Dogs need training to live with people. They need to be taught not to jump on people, how to sit and stay, and many other things. You may even need to teach your dog to lie down so you can have some quiet time. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Each can be affectionate and playful, but cats are much easier to care for. Maybe a cat is the right pet for you!

*This article was adapted for classroom use from "Reasons Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs" by Dee Em, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>*

Used by permission of Dee Em, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>

Name:

# Why Dogs Make Good Pets

Thinking about getting a new pet? One of the most popular pets is a dog. Dogs make great pets for many reasons.

## Companions

Dogs are patient and make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company.

## Friends

Most dogs are curious. They want to meet other people and animals. Owners are likely to meet others while out walking their dogs. Dogs are good conversation starters. They make it easy to meet new people.

## Health

Dogs can make you healthier. Studies show that dog owners are less likely to get sick. When they do get sick, they get well quicker.

## Safety

Most dogs will bark if there is danger. Dogs can scare off intruders or warn their owners of fire. Specially trained dogs can also find missing people, sniff out bombs and drugs and help disabled people.

## Exercise

A dog needs daily exercise. The owner who walks his dog also benefits from this. Daily exercise can help keep you at a healthy weight. It gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier!

Is a dog the right pet for you? Owning a dog is a big responsibility, but there are many benefits. A dog might just be the perfect pet for you!

*This article was adapted for classroom use from "Why Dogs Make Good Pets" by Cecilia McCormick, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>*

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**File Name: 03P The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**Introduces  
the topic**  
by posing a  
question

**The Best Pet**

**States an opinion**

Are you looking for a new Pet? I'd rekoment a cat. For one thing they aren't that egspensev you could find one on your porch and aboped it. Cat's yushely baeth them sellf. Cat's will sleep with you and can help you cawlm down when you'r upset or mad. Cat's allso don't need training and you can's leave cats home for the day. Cat's don't need much exercise. So if you are looking for a pet maebv see some cat's and you mite find your self a great pet!

**Provides reasons  
that support the  
opinion**

**Uses linking words  
and phrases to  
connect opinion and  
reasons**

**Provides a concluding  
statement**

In this third-grade opinion piece, the writer begins with a question, which introduces the topic and provides some context for the reader. The stated opinion ("*I'd rekoment a cat.*") provides a clear focus, which is developed with reasons from the source that accompanies the prompt. The reasons given are additive and do not build upon one another; they could be presented in any order. Linking words ("*and*", "*allso*", "*so*") connect opinion to reasons and help create cohesion. The writer creates an organizational structure that states an opinion, lists reasons, and concludes. Both the introduction and conclusion are designed to engage the reader, and each shows a beginning awareness of purpose and audience.

**File Name: 03P The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **The Best Pet**

Are you looking for a new pet? I'd recommend a cat. For one thing, they aren't that expensive. You could find one on your porch and adopt it. Cats usually bathe themselves. Cats will sleep with you and can help you calm down when you're upset or mad. Cats also don't need training and you can leave cats home for the day. Cats don't need much exercise. So if you are looking for a pet, maybe you can find some cats, and you might find yourself a great pet!

**File Name: 03P The Best Pet**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **The Best Pet**

Are you looking for a new Pet? I'd recommend a cat. For one thing they aren't that expensive you could find one on your porch and adopt it. Cats usually bathe themselves. Cats will sleep with you and can help you calm down when you're upset or mad. Cats also don't need training and you can't leave cats home for the day. Cats don't need much exercise. So if you are looking for a pet maybe see some cats and you might find yourself a great pet!



## Grade 4, Prompt for Opinion Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher.)

Name:

*Before you begin: On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper for writing.*

#### **The Best Pet**

There are many reasons why people own pets. A pet can entertain you, keep you company or even protect you! Dogs and cats are the most popular pets in America today. Some people prefer an energetic dog and others, a cuddly kitten. Which do you think is best?

Your teacher is going to read two articles aloud. One is about the benefits of owning a cat and the other is about the benefits of choosing a dog as a pet. As you listen to these texts, think about the advantages of each kind of pet. *Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?* After you have had a chance to hear the articles a second time, you will write an essay that states your opinion and explains your thinking.

For the essay, your focusing question will be:

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

You will explain your thinking with facts and reasons from the articles.

Remember, a good opinion essay:

- *Has an introduction*
- *Clearly states your opinion/claim in a focus statement*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support your opinion and explains your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*
- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

You will have two class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. You may take notes right on the articles or on a separate sheet of paper. You may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. The essay will have a single draft. When you have finished, be sure to proofread your work.

*GOOD LUCK! WE LOOK FORWARD TO READING YOUR GOOD WORK!*

*Teacher Directions*

### **Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

#### **Day 1 (45 minutes)**

- Give out the assignment sheet.
- Read the assignment sheet aloud together and clarify the task for the students.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs*. Explain that they may want to underline or take notes on the article as you read it aloud.  
Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a cat make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Dogs make Good Pets*. Remind students that they may want to underline or take notes on the article. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a dog make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Explain that tomorrow you will be writing about whether a cat or a dog makes a better pet. Collect the articles and assignment sheets. (Be sure names are on them.)



*Teacher Directions***Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?****Day 2 (45 minutes)**

- Return the articles and re-read both aloud.
- Ask students to think about both articles. Which pet would be best? Why? Have students turn and talk to a partner about this. Each student should talk for 3 minutes.
- Return the assignment sheet and re-read it aloud.
- Provide lined paper (or a computer if your students are accustomed to composing on a keyboard) and give students the remainder of the period to write. The writing should be completed individually, without help.
- When the period is over, explain that students may finish writing and proofread tomorrow. Collect student work and materials.

**Day 3 (45 minutes)**

- Return student work and materials. Students may be given access to a dictionary, thesaurus, spell check, or grammar check.
- Give students the remainder of the period to finish writing and proofreading.

Name:

# Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be difficult. However, cats as pets do have some advantages.

## Grooming

Cats bathe themselves. Most do not even need brushing. Dogs are more likely to need help from their owners in keeping clean.

## Companionship

Cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while you go to school. Dogs, however, need company. A dog needs much more of your time.

## Exercise

Cats and dogs both need daily exercise. However, a cat needs much less exercise than a dog. Most dogs need to be taken for walk at least twice a day, even in the rain. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

## Noise

Dogs can bark at all hours of the day or night. Cats sleep most of the day and are much quieter. They are unlikely to disturb your neighbors.

## Training

Dogs need training to live with people. They need to be taught not to jump on people, how to sit and stay, and many other things. You may even need to teach your dog to lie down so you can have some quiet time. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Each can be affectionate and playful, but cats are much easier to care for. Maybe a cat is the right pet for you!

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Name:

## Why Dogs Make Good Pets

Thinking about getting a new pet? One of the most popular pets is a dog. Dogs make great pets for many reasons.

### Companions

Dogs are patient and make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company.

### Friends

Most dogs are curious. They want to meet other people and animals. Owners are likely to meet others while out walking their dogs. Dogs are good conversation starters. They make it easy to meet new people.

### Health

Dogs can make you healthier. Studies show that dog owners are less likely to get sick. When they do get sick, they get well quicker.

### Safety

Most dogs will bark if there is danger. Dogs can scare off intruders or warn their owners of fire. Specially trained dogs can also find missing people, sniff out bombs and drugs and help disabled people.

### Exercise

A dog needs daily exercise. The owner who walks his dog also benefits from this. Daily exercise can help keep you at a healthy weight. It gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier!

Is a dog the right pet for you? Owning a dog is a big responsibility, but there are many benefits. A dog might just be the perfect pet for you!

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**File Name: O4P Which is Better**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 4**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**Which is Better?**

**Introduces a topic clearly**

Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats. Which is better? I say dog. Maybe you say cat. I just might be able to persuade you in the following.

**States an opinion**

Dogs are great companions for lonely people. They can go for a rousing walk in the park, or a good long nap. Playing games of catch or fetch every day makes good fun. Even a jog on the hottest day could even be enjoyable too. Dogs don't just provide fun though. They can also provide protection.

**Provides reasons that are supported by facts and details**

Dogs are very intelligent. They can be trained to find people or save them. Some don't even need to be trained. For instance, if someone is trying to break in, your dog might bark and scare them off. Dogs are great for many different reasons.

**Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases**

Overall, dogs are awesome pets to have. Have I convinced you though? If you are, then great! If your not then thats okay. It's really up to you. So which one is it going to be?

**Creates an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose**

**Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented**

This fourth-grade opinion piece has a well-developed introduction that establishes some context (*"Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats."*) and states an opinion (*"Wich is better? I say dog."*). The purpose of the piece, to convince the reader that dogs are better as pets than cats, is clearly stated in the last line of the introduction. Although the paragraphs are incorrectly indented, related ideas are grouped together; the writer presents two main reasons that dogs are better: they are great companions, and they can provide protection. Each reason is well-elaborated using supporting facts and details drawn from the source included in the prompt. Transitional sentences (*"Dogs don't just provide fun though."*) and linking words and phrases (*"even", "also", "for instance"*) connect ideas in the piece and provide cohesion. The last paragraph shows the writer's confidence in her reasoning by acknowledging that readers must form their own opinions after considering the opinion she presents.

**File Name: O4P Which is Better**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Which is Better?**

Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats. Which is better? I say dog. Maybe you say cat. I just might be able to persuade you in the following.

Dogs are great companions for lonely people. They can go for a rousing walk in the park or take a good long nap. Playing games of catch or fetch every day makes good fun. Even a jog on the hottest day could be enjoyable, too.

Dogs don't just provide fun, though. They can also provide protection. Dogs are very intelligent. They can be trained to find people or save them. Some don't even need to be trained. For instance, if someone is trying to break in, your dog might bark and scare them off. Dogs are great for many different reasons.

Overall, dogs are awesome pets to have. Have I convinced you, though? If you are convinced, then great! If you're not convinced, then that's okay. It's really up to you. So which one is it going to be?

**File Name: O4P Which is Better**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 4**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Which is Better?**

Many people have a dog for a pet. Some people have cats. Which is better? I say dog. Maybe you say cat. I just might be able to persuade you in the following.

Dogs are great companions for lonely people. They can go for a rousing walk in the park, or a good long nap. Playing games of catch or fetch every day makes good fun. Even a jog on the hottest day could even be enjoyable too. Dogs don't just provide fun though. They can also provide protection.

Dogs are very intelligent. They can be trained to find people or save them. Some don't even need to be trained. For instance, if someone is trying to break in, your dog might bark and scare them off. Dogs are great for many different reasons.

Overall, dogs are awesome pets to have. Have I convinced you though? If you are, then great! If you're not then that's okay. It's really up to you. So which one is it going to be?



## Grade 5, Prompt for Opinion Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

(Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher)

Name:

*Before you begin: On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper for writing.*

#### **The Best Pet**

There are many reasons why people own pets. A pet can entertain you, keep you company, or even protect you! Dogs and cats are the most popular pets in America today. Some people prefer an energetic dog and others, a cuddly kitten. Which pet do you think is best?

Your teacher is going to read two articles aloud. One is about the benefits of owning a cat and the other is about the benefits of choosing a dog as a pet. As you listen to these texts, think about the advantages of each kind of pet. *Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?* After you have had a chance to hear the articles a second time, you will write an essay that states your opinion and explains your thinking.

For the essay, your focusing question will be:

**Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?**

You will explain your thinking with facts and reasons from the articles. Your teacher will also give you a page of "Pet Statistics" which you can use to support your opinion if you would like.

Remember, a good opinion essay:

- *Has an introduction*
- *Clearly states your opinion/claim in a focus statement*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support your opinion and explains your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*

- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

You will have two class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. You may take notes right on the articles or on a separate sheet of paper. You may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. The essay will have a single draft. When you have finished, be sure to proofread your work.

*GOOD LUCK! WE LOOK FORWARD TO READING YOUR GOOD WORK!*

*Teacher Directions***Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?****Day 1** (45 minutes)

- Give out the assignment sheet.
- Read the assignment sheet aloud together and clarify the task for the students.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs*. Explain that they may want to underline or take notes on the article as you read it aloud.  
Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a cat make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Give each student a copy of *Why Dogs make Good Pets*. Remind students that they may want to underline or take notes on the article. Read the article aloud.
- Pose the question, "Why might a dog make a good pet?" Remind students to use the article and their notes when thinking through their response. Have students turn and talk to a partner about this question for 3 minutes.
- Explain that tomorrow you will be writing about whether a cat or a dog makes a better pet. Collect the articles and assignment sheets. (Be sure names are on them.)

*Teacher Directions***Which kind of pet is best, a cat or a dog?****Day 2 (45 minutes)**

- Return the articles and reread both aloud.
- Ask students to think about both articles. Which pet would be best? Why? Have students turn and talk to a partner about this. Each student should talk for 3 minutes.
- Return the assignment sheet and reread it aloud.
- Hand out the sheet of *Pet Statistics*. Explain that students may use this as an additional resource if desired. If students choose to use this resource, the teacher may provide help by reading any difficult words or phrases.
- Provide lined paper (or a computer if your students are accustomed to composing on a keyboard) and give students the remainder of the period to write. The writing should be completed individually, without help, using only the sources provided.
- When the period is over, explain that students may finish writing and proofread tomorrow. Collect student work and materials.

**Day 3 (45 minutes)**

- Return student work and materials. Students may be given access to a dictionary, thesaurus, spell check or grammar check.
- Give students the remainder of the period to finish writing and proofreading.



Name:

# Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs

Should you get that cute little puppy or a cuddly kitten? Deciding between a cat and a dog can be difficult. However, cats as pets do have some advantages.

## Grooming

Cats bathe themselves. Most do not even need brushing. Dogs are more likely to need help from their owners in keeping clean.

## Companionship

Cats enjoy being alone. You can leave them home alone for the day while you go to school. Dogs, however, need company. A dog needs much more of your time.

## Exercise

Cats and dogs both need daily exercise. However, a cat needs much less exercise than a dog. Most dogs need to be taken for walk at least twice a day, even in the rain. Your cat will probably be happy to chase a ball in your living room.

## Noise

Dogs can bark at all hours of the day or night. Cats sleep most of the day and are much quieter. They are unlikely to disturb your neighbors.

## Training

Dogs need training to live with people. They need to be taught not to jump on people, how to sit and stay, and many other things. You may even need to teach your dog to lie down so you can have some quiet time. Cats can be trained to fetch a ball or walk on a leash, but these lessons are just for fun. You don't need to train your cat to have a good pet.

Both cats and dogs can be wonderful family pets. Each can be affectionate and playful, but cats are much easier to care for. Maybe a cat is the right pet for you!

*This article was adapted for classroom use from "Reasons Why Cats Make Better Pets than Dogs" by Dee Em, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>*

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Name:

# Why Dogs Make Good Pets

Thinking about getting a new pet? One of the most popular pets is a dog. Dogs make great pets for many reasons.

## Companions

Dogs are patient and make great listeners. Many people tell dogs things they can't tell anyone else. Dogs are great for someone who lives alone or needs company.

## Friends

Most dogs are curious. They want to meet other people and animals. Owners are likely to meet others while out walking their dogs. Dogs are good conversation starters. They make it easy to meet new people.

## Health

Dogs can make you healthier. Studies show that dog owners are less likely to get sick. When they do get sick, they get well quicker.

## Safety

Most dogs will bark if there is danger. Dogs can scare off intruders or warn their owners of fire. Specially trained dogs can also find missing people, sniff out bombs and drugs and help disabled people.

## Exercise

A dog needs daily exercise. The owner who walks his dog also benefits from this. Daily exercise can help keep you at a healthy weight. It gives you energy. It also strengthens your muscles and bones. Walking and playing with your dog can make you both healthier!

Is a dog the right pet for you? Owning a dog is a big responsibility, but there are many benefits. A dog might just be the perfect pet for you!

*This article was adapted for classroom use from "Why Dogs Make Good Pets" by Cecilia McCormick, eHow Contributor <http://www.ehow.com>*

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Name:

## **Pet Statistics**

According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) 2001-2002 National Pet Owners Survey:

### **Dogs**

#### **In the United States:**

- There are approximately 68 million owned dogs.
- Four in ten (or 40 million) U.S. households own at least one dog.
- Most owners own one dog (63%).
- About one-fourth (24%) of owners own two dogs.
- Thirteen percent of owners own three or more dogs.
- There are an equal number of male and female dogs owned.
- Twenty percent of owned dogs were adopted from an animal shelter.
- On average, dog owners spent \$196 on veterinary related expenses in the past 12 months.

### **Cats**

#### **In the United States:**

- There are approximately 73 million owned cats.
- Three in ten (or 34.7 million) U.S. households own at least one cat.
- One half of cat-owning households (49%) own one cat; the remaining (51%) own two or more.
- There are a similar number of owned female (51%) versus male (49%) cats.
- Twenty percent of owned cats were adopted from an animal shelter.
- Cat owners spent an average of \$104 on veterinary related expenses in the past 12 months.

American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) 2001-2002 National Pet Owners Survey:  
[http://www.americanpetproducts.org/pubs\\_survey.asp](http://www.americanpetproducts.org/pubs_survey.asp)

Used by permission of American Pet Products Manufacturers Association

**File Name: OSP Dogs are Best**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

### **Dogs are Best**

**Introduces  
a topic or  
text clearly**

Cats and dogs can be very entertaining. But when it comes down to the best pet, I would say the dog.

**States an opinion**

One reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because you can talk to them. And they listen to you. You can tell them secrets, and how you feel. Kind of like a personal journal, except they actually hear what your saying.

**Links opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses**

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because dogs can warn you of danger. And sometimes that danger might be life threatening. So with a dog its like you have your own danger alarm.

**Provides logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details**

Also another reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is because they keep you company. They are perfect pets to have if you love company. And with a dog, its almost like you are having your best friends over. And better yet, if you own the dog, and it's a weekday, its like your friends are spending the night on a school night.

**from the sources and personal experience**

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because they need to get excersise. You will have to walk your dog every day. So even if

you don't like to walk, your dog and you will be getting automatic exercise.

Which will make you and your dog healthier.

Cats and dogs are very unique in their own fascinating way. But to choose between the both of them, I would go for the dog. Even though dogs require lots of responsibilities, and need maintenance and training, they are still worth the effort. But most importantly, they are like a best friend.

**Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented**

This fifth-grade opinion piece provides some context (*"Cats and dogs can be very entertaining"*) and then clearly states an opinion. The writer creates an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped in paragraphs to support the writer's purpose. Each paragraph presents a reason and then explains or elaborates on that reason. Transitions used within and between paragraphs (*"but when it comes down to", "one reason", "so", "better yet", "even if", "which will"*) provide cohesion. A range of general academic vocabulary (*"automatic", "fascinating", "maintenance"*) conveys ideas precisely. The well-developed conclusion restates the context and the opinion, briefly acknowledges possible counterarguments, and reflects on the importance of the information presented.

**File Name: OSP Dogs are Best**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Dogs are Best**

Cats and dogs can be very entertaining. But when it comes down to the best pet, I would say the dog.

One reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is because you can talk to them and they listen to you. You can tell them secrets and how you feel. Kind of like a personal journal, except they actually hear what you're saying.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because a dog can warn you of danger, and sometimes that danger might be life threatening. So, with a dog, it's like you have your own danger alarm.

Also another reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is that they keep you company. They are perfect pets to have if you love company. And with dogs, it's almost like you are having your best friends over. And better yet, if you own the dog, and it's a weekday, it's like your friends are spending the night on a school night.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because they need to get exercise. You will have to walk your dog every day. So, even if

you don't like to walk, your dog and you will be getting automatic exercise.

This will make you and your dog healthier.

Cats and dogs are very unique in their own fascinating way. But if I had to choose between the both of them, I would go for the dog. Even though dogs require lots of responsibility and need maintenance and training, they are still worth the effort. Most importantly, a dog is like a best friend.

**File Name: O5P Dogs are Best**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**Dogs are Best**

Cats and dogs can be very entertaining. But when it comes down to the best pet, I would say the dog.

One reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because you can talk to them. And they listen to you. You can tell them secrets, and how you feel. Kind of like a personal journal, except they actually hear what your saying.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have, is because dogs can warn you of danger. And sometimes that danger might be life threatening. So with a dog its like you have your own danger alarm.

Also another reason why I think dogs are the best pets to have is because they keep you company. They are perfect pets to have if you love company. And with a dog, its almost like you are having your best friends over. And better yet, if you own the dog, and it's a weekday, its like your friends are spending the night on a school night.

Another reason why I think a dog is the best pet to have is because they need to get excersise. You will have to walk your dog every day. So even if

you don't like to walk, your dog and you will be getting automatic exercise. Which will make you and your dog healthier.

Cats and dogs are very unique in their own fascinating way. But to choose between the both of them, I would go for the dog. Even though dogs require lots of responsibilities, and need maintenance and training, they are still worth the effort. But most importantly, they are like a best friend.

***6-12 On-Demand  
Argument/Opinion Samples***

## Grades 6-12, Prompt for Argument Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

A group of parents and teachers in your school have made a proposal to the school board. In their proposal, they are suggesting that the school join in a national movement called “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” The parents and teachers in the group believe that not using any electronic media for an entire week would be good for students for many reasons.

They have taken the proposal to a teachers’ meeting, so that teachers can discuss the issue of whether or not to ask their students to participate in the “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” The teachers have decided they would like to hear from the students before they decide.

This is not a simple issue, so you need to think very carefully about it. You have three texts to read relating to the issue: “Social Media as Community,” “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” and “Attached to Technology and Paying a Price.” As you read and re-read these texts, think about what they show you about the issue. Think about what position you will take and what evidence you will use to support your thinking.

Finally, write an essay, in the form of a letter to the teachers, explaining your thinking.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

**Should your school participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week?” Be sure to use evidence from the texts, as well as your own knowledge, to support and develop your thinking.**

Remember, a strong and effective piece of argument writing:

- *Takes the audience into account*
- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/position statement clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the position, and explains that evidence logically*
- *Takes into account what people who disagree with you might think and tries to respond to that*
- *Concludes effectively*
- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

## **Argument Writing**

### **Common Core Standard W.CCR.1**

#### *Teacher Directions*

- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them.
  
- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.
  
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
  - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
  - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If they are using a word processor, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.
  
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## Social Media as Community

By Keith Hampton

[Keith Hampton](#) is an associate professor in the School of Communication and Information at Rutgers, and a past chairman of the American Sociological Association's section on Communication and Information Technologies.

Updated June 18, 2012 *New York Times / Opinion Pages* Excerpt

Neither living alone nor using social media is socially isolating. In 2011, I was lead author of an article in [Information, Communication & Society](#) that found, based on a representative survey of 2,500 Americans, that regardless of whether the participants were married or single, those who used social media had more close confidants.

The constant feed from our online social circles is the modern front porch.

A recent follow-up study, "[Social Networking Sites and Our Lives](#)" (Pew Research Center), found that the average user of a social networking site had more close ties than and was half as likely to be socially isolated as the average American. Additionally, my co-authors and I, in another article published in [New Media & Society](#), found not only that social media users knew people from a greater variety of backgrounds, but also that much of this diversity was a result of people using these technologies who simultaneously spent an impressive amount of time socializing outside of the house.

A number of studies, including my own and those of [Matthew Brashears](#) (a sociologist at Cornell), have found that Americans have fewer intimate relationships today than 20 years ago. However, a loss of close friends does not mean a loss of support. Because of cellphones and social media, those we depend on are more accessible today than at any point since we lived in small, village-like settlements.

Social media has made every relationship persistent and pervasive. We no longer lose social ties over our lives; we have Facebook friends forever. The constant feed of status updates and digital photos from our online social circles is the modern front porch. This is why, in "[Social Networking Sites and Our Lives](#)," there was a clear trend for those who used these technologies to receive more social support than other people.

The data backs it up. There is little evidence that social media is responsible for a trend of isolation, or a loss of intimacy and social support.

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## Is Google Making Us Stupid?

### YES

Who doesn't love Google? In the blink of an eye, the search engine delivers useful information about pretty much any subject imaginable. I use it all the time, and I'm guessing you do too.

But I worry about what Google is doing to our brains. What really makes us intelligent isn't our ability to find lots of information quickly. It's our ability to think deeply about that information. And deep thinking, brain scientists have discovered, happens only when our minds are calm and attentive. The greater our concentration, the richer our thoughts.

If we're distracted, we understand less, remember less, and learn less.

That's the problem with Google—and with the Internet in general. When we use our computers and our cellphones all the time, we're always distracted.

The Net bombards us with messages and other bits of data, and every one of those interruptions breaks our train of thought. We end up scatterbrained. The fact is, you'll never think deeply if you're always Googling, texting, and surfing.

Google doesn't want us to slow down. The faster we zip across the Web, clicking links and skimming words and pictures, the more ads Google is able to show us and the more money it makes. So even as Google is giving us all that useful information, it's also encouraging us to think superficially. It's making us shallow.

If you're really interested in developing your mind, you should turn off your computer and your cellphone—and start thinking. Really thinking. You can Google all the facts you want, but you'll never Google your way to brilliance.

### Nicholas Carr, Author

*The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*

### NO

Any new information technology has both advocates and critics. More than 2,000 years ago, the classical Greek philosopher Socrates complained that the new technology of writing "will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls because they will not use their memories."

Today, Google is the new technology. The Internet contains the world's best writing, images, and ideas; Google lets us find the relevant pieces instantly.

Suppose I'm interested in the guidance computers on Apollo spacecraft in the 1960s. My local library has no books on that specific subject—just 18 books about the Apollo missions in general. I

could hunt through those or turn to Google, which returns 45,000 pages, including a definitive encyclopedia article and instructions for building a unit.

Just as a car allows us to move faster and a telescope lets us see farther, access to the Internet's information lets us think better and faster. By considering a wide range of information, we can arrive at more creative and informed solutions. Internet users are more likely to be exposed to a diversity of ideas. In politics, for example, they are likely to see ideas from left and right, and see how news is reported in other countries.

There's no doubt the Internet can create distractions. But 81 percent of experts polled by the Pew Internet Research Project say the opportunities outweigh the distractions.

Socrates was wrong to fear the coming of the written word: Writing has improved our law, science, arts, culture, and our memory. When the history of our current age is written, it will say that Google has made us smarter—both individually and collectively—because we have ready and free access to information.

**Peter Norvig, Director of Research**  
Google Inc.

Used by permission of (*The New York Times Upfront*, Vol. 143, October 4, 2010)

## Attached to Technology and Paying a Price

By [MATT RICHEL](#) *New York Times* June 6, 2010

SAN FRANCISCO — When one of the most important e-mail messages of his life landed in his in-box a few years ago, Kord Campbell overlooked it. Not just for a day or two, but 12 days. He finally saw it while sifting through old messages: a big company wanted to buy his Internet start-up.

The message had slipped by him amid an electronic flood: two computer screens alive with e-mail, instant messages, online chats, a Web browser and the computer code he was writing. While he managed to salvage the \$1.3 million deal after apologizing to his suitor, Mr. Campbell continues to struggle with the effects of the deluge of data. Even after he unplugs, he craves the stimulation he gets from his electronic gadgets. He forgets things like dinner plans, and he has trouble focusing on his family.

This is your brain on computers.

Scientists say juggling e-mail, phone calls and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. They say our ability to focus is being undermined by bursts of information. These play to a primitive impulse to respond to immediate opportunities and threats. The stimulation provokes excitement — a [dopamine](#) squirt — that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored.

The resulting distractions can have deadly consequences, as when cellphone-wielding drivers and train engineers cause wrecks. And for millions of people like Mr. Campbell, these urges can inflict nicks and cuts on creativity and deep thought, interrupting work and family life.

While many people say multitasking makes them more productive, research shows otherwise. Heavy multitaskers actually have more trouble focusing and shutting out irrelevant information, scientists say, and they experience more stress. And scientists are discovering that even after the multitasking ends, fractured thinking and lack of focus persist. In other words, this is also your brain *off* computers.

“The technology is rewiring our brains,” said Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse and one of the world’s leading brain scientists. She and other researchers compare the lure of digital stimulation less to that of drugs and alcohol than to food and sex, which are essential but counterproductive in excess.

Technology use can benefit the brain in some ways, researchers say. Imaging studies show the brains of Internet users become more efficient at finding information. And players of some video games develop better visual acuity.

More broadly, cellphones and computers have transformed life. They let people escape their cubicles and work anywhere. They shrink distances and handle countless mundane tasks, freeing up time for more exciting pursuits.

For better or worse, the consumption of media, as varied as e-mail and TV, has exploded. In 2008, people consumed three times as much information each day as they did in 1960. And they are constantly shifting their attention. Computer users at work change windows or check e-mail or other programs nearly 37 times an hour, new research shows.

The nonstop interactivity is one of the most significant shifts ever in the human environment, said Adam Gazzaley, a neuroscientist at the [University of California, San Francisco](#).

“We are exposing our brains to an environment and asking them to do things we weren’t necessarily evolved to do,” he said. “We know already there are consequences.”

Mr. Campbell, 43, came of age with the personal computer, and he is a heavier user of technology than most. But researchers say the habits and struggles of Mr. Campbell and his family typify what many experience — and what many more will, if trends continue. For him, the tensions feel increasingly acute, and the effects harder to shake.

### **Always On**

Mr. Campbell, whose given name is Thomas, had an early start with technology in Oklahoma City. When he was in third grade, his parents bought him Pong, a video game. Then came a string of game consoles and PCs, which he learned to program.

Mr. Campbell loves the rush of modern life and keeping up with the latest information. “I want to be the first to hear when the aliens land,” he said, laughing. But other times, he fantasizes about living in pioneer days when things moved more slowly: “I can’t keep everything in my head.”

No wonder. As he came of age, so did a new era of data and communication. At home, people consume 12 hours of media a day on average, when an hour spent with, say, the Internet and TV simultaneously counts as two hours. That compares with five hours in 1960, say researchers at the [University of California, San Diego](#). Computer users visit an average of 40 Web sites a day, according to research by RescueTime, which offers time-management tools.

As computers have changed, so has the understanding of the human brain. Until 15 years ago, scientists thought the brain stopped developing after childhood. Now they understand that its neural networks continue to develop, influenced by things like learning skills.

So not long after Eyal Ophir arrived at Stanford in 2004, he wondered whether heavy multitasking might be leading to changes in a characteristic of the brain long thought immutable: that humans can process only a single stream of information at a time. He was startled by what he discovered.

Used by permission of New York Times

### **The Myth of Multitasking**

The test subjects were divided into two groups: those classified as heavy multitaskers based on their answers to questions about how they used technology, and those who were not.

In a test created by Mr. Ophir and his colleagues, subjects at a computer were briefly shown an image of red rectangles. Then they saw a similar image and were asked whether any of the rectangles had moved. It was a simple task until the addition of a twist: blue rectangles were added, and the subjects were told to ignore them.

The multitaskers then did a significantly worse job than the non-multitaskers at recognizing whether red rectangles had changed position. In other words, they had trouble filtering out the blue ones — the irrelevant information.

So, too, the multitaskers took longer than non-multitaskers to switch among tasks, like differentiating vowels from consonants and then odd from even numbers. The multitaskers were shown to be less efficient at juggling problems. Other tests at Stanford, an important center for research in this fast-growing field, showed multitaskers tended to search for new information rather than accept a reward for putting older, more valuable information to work.

Researchers say these findings point to an interesting dynamic: multitaskers seem more sensitive than non-multitaskers to incoming information.

The results also illustrate an age-old conflict in the brain, one that technology may be intensifying. A portion of the brain acts as a control tower, helping a person focus and set priorities. More primitive parts of the brain, like those that process sight and sound, demand that it pay attention to new information, bombarding the control tower when they are stimulated.

Researchers say there is an evolutionary rationale for the pressure this barrage puts on the brain. The lower-brain functions alert humans to danger, like a nearby lion, overriding goals like building a hut. In the modern world, the chime of incoming e-mail can override the goal of writing a business plan or playing catch with the children.

“Throughout evolutionary history, a big surprise would get everyone’s brain thinking,” said Clifford Nass, a communications professor at Stanford. “But we’ve got a large and growing group of people who think the slightest hint that something interesting might be going on is like catnip. They can’t ignore it.”

Melina Uncapher, a neurobiologist on the Stanford team, said she and other researchers were unsure whether the muddled multitaskers were simply prone to distraction and would have had trouble focusing in any era. But she added that the idea that information overload causes distraction was supported by more and more research.

A study at the [University of California, Irvine](#), found that people interrupted by e-mail reported significantly increased stress compared with those left to focus. Stress hormones have been shown to reduce short-term memory, said Gary Small, a psychiatrist at the [University of California](#), Los Angeles.

Preliminary research shows some people can more easily juggle multiple information streams. These “supertaskers” represent less than 3 percent of the population, according to scientists at the [University of Utah](#).

Other research shows computer use has neurological advantages. In imaging studies, Dr. Small observed that Internet users showed greater brain activity than nonusers, suggesting they were growing their neural circuitry.

At the [University of Rochester](#), researchers found that players of some fast-paced video games can track the movement of a third more objects on a screen than nonplayers. They say the games can improve reaction and the ability to pick out details amid clutter.

“In a sense, those games have a very strong both rehabilitative and educational power,” said the lead researcher, Daphne Bavelier, who is working with others in the field to channel these changes into real-world benefits like safer driving.

There is a vibrant debate among scientists over whether technology’s influence on behavior and the brain is good or bad, and how significant it is. Mr. Ophir is loath to call the cognitive changes bad or good, though the impact on analysis and creativity worries him.

### **The Toll on Children**

The Campbells, father and son, sit in armchairs. Controllers in hand, they engage in a fierce video game battle, displayed on the nearby flat-panel TV, as Lily watches.

They are playing Super Smash Bros. Brawl, a cartoonish animated fight between characters that battle using anvils, explosives and other weapons.

“Kill him, Dad,” Lily screams. To no avail. Connor regularly beats his father, prompting expletives and, once, a thrown pillow. But there is bonding and mutual respect.

Screens big and small are central to the Campbell family’s leisure time. Connor and his mother relax while watching TV shows like “Heroes.” Lily has an [iPod](#) Touch, a portable DVD player and her own laptop, which she uses to watch videos, listen to music and play games.

Lily, a second-grader, is allowed only an hour a day of unstructured time, which she often spends with her devices. The laptop can consume her.

“When she’s on it, you can holler her name all day and she won’t hear,” Mrs. Campbell said.

Researchers worry that constant digital stimulation like this creates attention problems for children with brains that are still developing, who already struggle to set priorities and resist impulses.

Connor's troubles started late last year. He could not focus on homework. No wonder, perhaps. On his bedroom desk sit two monitors, one with his music collection, one with [Facebook](#) and Reddit, a social site with news links that he and his father love. His iPhone availed him to relentless texting with his girlfriend.

When he studied, "a little voice would be saying, 'Look up' at the computer, and I'd look up," Connor said. "Normally, I'd say I want to only read for a few minutes, but I'd search every corner of Reddit and then check Facebook."

His Web browsing informs him. "He's a fact hound," Mr. Campbell brags. "Connor is, other than programming, extremely technical. He's 100 percent Internet savvy."

### **No Vacations**

For spring break, the family rented a cottage in Carmel, Calif. Mrs. Campbell hoped everyone would unplug. But the day before they left, the iPad from [Apple](#) came out, and Mr. Campbell snapped one up. The next night, their first on vacation, "We didn't go out to dinner," Mrs. Campbell mourned. "We just sat there on our devices."

She rallied the troops the next day to the aquarium. Her husband joined them for a bit but then begged out to do e-mail on his phone. Later she found him playing video games.

On Thursday, their fourth day in Carmel, Mr. Campbell spent the day at the beach with his family. They flew a kite and played whiffle ball. Connor unplugged too. "It changes the mood of everything when everybody is present," Mrs. Campbell said. The next day, the family drove home, and Mr. Campbell disappeared into his office.

Mr. Nass at Stanford thinks the ultimate risk of heavy technology use is that it diminishes empathy by limiting how much people engage with one another, even in the same room.

"The way we become more human is by paying attention to each other," he said. "It shows how much you care."

That empathy, Mr. Nass said, is essential to the human condition. "We are at an inflection point," he said. "A significant fraction of people's experiences are now fragmented."

**File Name: A6P Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Board****Opinion/Argument****Grade 6****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Board,

The children in my class have been talking about the proposal that some of you have made which is whether or not our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen” week. I don’t think that if we did that, it would have a positive effect on the children in our school. There are a few reasons that we might want to participate but I weighed it out and I don’t think that we should participate. These are the reasons.

One reason that I don’t think that our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen” week is that when we can use computers, we can get assignments done faster during the school day so that we can move on to other things. For example, when you are given a task to type, if you write it by hand, it will take a much longer time than if we just decided to type it. If we are given an assignment that we have to do research on, we can usually get a lot more useful information from the internet than even from a book sometimes. Also, we will be able to move on to our next subject much faster because our research or typing will be finished.

Another reason that I don’t think we should shut down our screens for a week is because the Internet is the most reliable source for information. In the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid” it said the internet has the world’s best images, writing and ideas. That means that it will have better, more honest and reliable information than even a book. The internet lets us expand our range of thinking and see things in a

**Introduces a claim:**

Introduction gives context for the proposal about “Shut Down Your Screen Week”

States focus / claim

**Organizes the reasons and evidence clearly**

**Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence.**  
Evidence here is from writer's own experience, and **demonstrates an understanding of the topic**

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and reasons**

different way from possibly someone else's perspective. The internet's information lets us think better and faster. Some people say that the internet is not helping us learn and not making us brilliant but I don't believe that is the case. I'm only eleven years old and I have already learned things off the internet like how solar power works and how animals like dolphins survive so that is obviously a myth. Google and the internet gives us ready and free access to information on just about anything.

Acknowledges counterclaims, then rebuts with clear **reasons and relevant, credible evidence** and reasoning from the writer's own experience

The last reason that I think that we shouldn't participate is because overall, calling, emailing, texting, or video chatting is more efficient. It takes less time and we are in the twenty-first century. We live in a time when it is a very normal thing to call or text someone instead of writing to them or just going to visit them. It might seem overwhelming and people might say that it is making us stupid but I find it fun and interesting to explore. I don't think that I could go a week without music or TV! I couldn't do it! I know for certain people this might not be the route that they want to take and that is fine but this world is only going to get more tech-like, it really is.

**Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence.** Evidence here is from writer's own experience and **demonstrates an understanding of the topic**

As you can see, these are the reasons that I believe that we shouldn't participate in the "Shut Down Your Screen" week.

**Provides a concluding statement that follows from the argument presented**

Your friend,

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by offering some context concerning the issue, and then asserts the claim that in her view the school should not participate.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, which she supports with some relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating her understanding of the topic. The evidence in this piece comes from her own experience. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. In addition, she acknowledges a counterclaim and then refutes the counterclaim with support for her own position, even though use of counterclaim is not stated in the Standards for this grade level. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claims, reasons, and evidence, and to create cohesion. The conclusion follows from the argument presented.

The writer maintains a reasonably formal style throughout the piece.

**File Name: A6P Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Board****Opinion/Argument****Grade 6****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dear Teachers, Parents, and School Board,

The children in my class have been talking about the proposal that some of you have made which is whether or not our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen” week. I don’t think that if we did that, it would have a positive effect on the children in our school. There are a few reasons that we might want to participate but I weighed it out and I don’t think that we should participate. These are the reasons.

One reason that I don’t think that our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen” week is that when we can use computers, we can get assignments done faster during the school day so that we can move on to other things. For example, when you are given a task to type, if you write it by hand, it will take a much longer time than if we just decided to type it. If we are given an assignment that we have to do research on, we can usually get a lot more useful information from the internet than even from a book sometimes. Also, we will be able to move on to our next subject much faster because our research or typing will be finished.

Another reason that I don’t think we should shut down our screens for a week is because the Internet is the most reliable source for information. In the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid” it said the internet has the world’s best images, writing and ideas. That means that it will have better, more honest and reliable information than even a book. The internet lets us expand our range of thinking and see things in a different way from possibly someone else’s perspective. The internet’s information lets us think better and faster. Some people say that the internet is not helping us learn and not making us brilliant but I don’t believe that is the case. I’m only eleven years old and I have already learned things off the internet like how solar power works and how animals like dolphins survive so that is obviously a myth. Google and the internet gives us ready and free access to information on just about anything.

The last reason that I think that we shouldn't participate is because overall, calling, emailing, texting, or video chatting is more efficient. It takes less time and we are in the twenty-first century. We live in a time when it is a very normal thing to call or text someone instead of writing to them or just going to visit them. It might seem overwhelming and people might say that it is making us stupid but I find it fun and interesting to explore. I don't think that I could go a week without music or TV! I couldn't do it! I know for certain people this might not be the route that they want to take and that is fine but this world is only going to get more tech-like, it really is.

As you can see, these are the reasons that I believe that we shouldn't participate in the "Shut Down Your Screen" week.

Your friend,

**File Name: A7P Dear Teachers**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dear Teachers,

I have recently begun learning about the “Shut Down Your Screen” week. This is a program where kids in school and out of school don't use any electronics for one week. Everyone in your school would participate. This is a way to save the way we think and try something new. My question is should we participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week?” I think it would be a good idea for many reasons.

First, I think we should participate because using too much technology affects the way we think and behave. In the article Attached to Technology and Paying a Price by Matt Richtel it gives many scientifically proven facts that using technology too much affects the way we think. If you are juggling e-mail, phone calls and other incoming information it can lose people’s focus. Also as the text states, “The stimulation provokes excitement that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored.” This means that people can become addicted and when not using technology become bored with things they used to love to do.

Another reason I think we should participate in this program is because using technology while doing something else (multitasking) really just creates more trouble focusing. Scientists did an experiment where they took someone that multitasks and someone that doesn't. It was proven that even though the multitasker multitasks more, they did a worse job than the other person. Therefore technology and multi-tasking does nothing for you.

**Introduces a claim:**  
Introduction gives context for the proposal “Shut Down Your Screen Week” and states a **claim**

**Organizes the reasons and evidence logically**  
First, I think we should

**Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence,** including direct quotations, from **accurate, credible sources,** thereby **demonstrating understanding of the topic**

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, reasons, and evidence**  
Another reason I think

**Establishes and maintains a formal style**

Another reason I think we should participate is it puts a bad toll on children. Some people may say that playing a video game or watching a movie with your family helps to bond with family. That may be true, but you can get addicted and not want to do anything else. “Lily, a second grader, is allowed only an hour a day of unstructured time, which she often spends with her devices.” This shows that kids are playing on devices and not outside or with friends. If we participate, we, the kids, can do other things and be more social.

Therefore, I think we should participate in the “Shut Down Your Screen Week.”

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

**Acknowledges an opposing claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence**

**Provides a concluding statement that follows from but does not add support to the argument presented**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by offering context concerning the issue and then asserts the claim that, in her view, the school should participate.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, which she supports with some relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating her understanding of the topic and the texts she has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. In addition, she acknowledges a counterclaim and then refutes it with support for her own position, which is not required in the Standards for this grade level and, again, includes evidence from the texts. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument presented but does not significantly support it.

**File Name: A7P Dear Teachers**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dear Teachers,

I have recently begun learning about the “Shut Down Your Screen” week. This is a program where kids in school and out of school don't use any electronics for one week. Everyone in your school would participate. This is a way to save the way we think and try something new. My question is, should we participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week?” I think it would be a good idea for many reasons.

First, I think we should participate because using too much technology affects the way we think and behave. In the article Attached to Technology and Paying a Price by Matt Richtel it gives many scientifically proven facts that using technology too much affects the way we think. If you are juggling e-mail, phone calls and other incoming information it can lose people's focus. Also as the text states, “The stimulation provokes excitement that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored.” This means that people can become addicted and when not using technology become bored with things they used to love to do.

Another reason I think we should participate in this program is because using technology while doing something else (multitasking) really just creates more trouble focusing. Scientists did an experiment where they took someone that multitasks and someone that doesn't. It was proven that even though the multitasker multitasks more, they did a worse job than the other person. Therefore technology and multi-tasking does nothing for you.

Another reason I think we should participate is it puts a bad toll on children. Some people may say that playing a video game or watching a movie with your family helps to bond with family. That may be true, but you can get addicted and not want to do anything else. “Lily, a second grader, is allowed only an hour a day of unstructured time, which she often spends with her devices.” This

shows that kids are playing on devices and not outside or with friends. If we participate, we, the kids, can do other things and be more social.

Therefore, I think we should participate in the “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

**File Name: A8P Shut Down Your Screen**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 8**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Shut Down Your Screen**

Dear Teachers,

I believe that we should participate in shutdown your screen week. I think that everyone in the school should not use any electronics for one week. Since the invention of the computer, cellphone and other electronics, people have been using them more and more and more. These electronics have big upsides, you're never alone if you have cell service and Facebook allows people to talk to multiple friends at once when they're not in the same room, town, state, or country. But they also have their downsides. What makes us truly great is our ability to think deeply and focus, but when we use electronics or the internet we aren't doing either of these things. In fact, using these things makes us think more shallow and focus less. I think that we should participate in shut down your screen week.

One reason is that using electronics and multi-tasking causes focus problems, on and off computers. In *Attached to Technology and Paying a Price* by Matt Richtel, it says, "Scientists say juggling email, phone calls, and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. They say our ability to focus is being undermined by bursts of information." This ability to focus is enormously important, it's one of the things that we depend on almost every day. Like when you're driving a car to work or flying a plane. If you're distracted while doing one of these things it can have dire consequences for yourself and for others. Multi-tasking can also affect creativity, deep thought, causing problems for work and family life. By participating we could give

**Introduces a claim:**

The introduction gives specific context for the proposal about "Shut Down Your Screen Week" and then states a claim

**Organizes the reasons and evidence logically**

**Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence,** including direct quotations, **from accurate, credible sources,** thereby **demonstrating understanding of the topic**

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence**

people a chance to develop new habits of not using their phone or computer all the time.

A second reason that we should participate is that heavy multitaskers have trouble filtering out irrelevant information on and off the computer. In *Attached to Technology and Paying the Price* by Matt Richtel it says the multitaskers “had trouble filtering out the blue ones – the irrelevant information.” If we participated, we could give these people a chance to develop new habits that would help them filter out irrelevant information and only pay attention to the things that are important. For example, if someone’s playing with their daughter, they would check their email every time they received an email instead of focusing on playing with their daughter.

Now, some people say that we shouldn’t participate because technology makes you smarter, why stop doing something that’s helping yourself. In an imaging study by Dr. Small, he found that “Internet users showed greater brain activity than nonusers, suggesting they were growing their neural circuitry.” While they may be growing their neural circuitry, they were also changing a characteristic of the brain that was thought to be unchangeable, the ability to only process one stream of information at a time. This ability allows humans to think deeply, an important characteristic in today’s society. By changing it, they were preventing themselves from having the ability to think deeply.

Technology is a new thing, and it has many advantages and conveniences. But for many it becomes more than a convenience, it becomes an obsession. For this reason I believe that we should participate in shut down your screen week, to give people a chance to make new habits and make technology a convenience again, not a necessity.

**Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including direct quotations, from accurate, credible sources, thereby demonstrating understanding of the topic**

**Acknowledges an opposing claim, which the writer distinguishes from the claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence**

**Establishes and maintains a formal style**

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by offering specific, well-developed context concerning the issue and then asserts the claim that, in his view, the school should participate.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with some relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges a counterclaim, distinguishes it from his own claim, and refutes it with support for his own position, even though this development of a counterclaim is not stated in the Standards at this grade level, and again includes evidence from the texts. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented.

**File Name: A8P Shut Down Your Screen****Opinion/Argument****Grade 8****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

Dear Teachers,

I believe that we should participate in shutdown your screen week. I think that everyone in the school should not use any electronics for one week. Since the invention of the computer, cellphone and other electronics, people have been using them more and more and more. These electronics have big upsides, you're never alone if you have cell service and Facebook allows people to talk to multiple friends at once when they're not in the same room, town, state, or country. But they also have their downsides. What makes us truly great is our ability to think deeply and focus, but when we use electronics or the internet we aren't doing either of these things. In fact, using these things makes us think more shallow and focus less. I think that we should participate in shut down your screen week.

One reason is that using electronics and multi-tasking causes focus problems, on and off computers. In *Attached to Technology and Paying a Price* by Matt Richtel, it says, "Scientists say juggling email, phone calls, and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. They say our ability to focus is being undermined by bursts of information." This ability to focus is enormously important, it's one of the things that we depend on almost every day. Like when you're driving a car to work or flying a plane. If you're distracted while doing one of these things it can have dire consequences for yourself and for others. Multi-tasking can also affect creativity, deep thought, causing problems for work and family life. By participating we could give people a chance to develop new habits of not using their phone or computer all the time.

A second reason that we should participate is that heavy multitaskers have trouble filtering out irrelevant information on and off the computer. In *Attached to Technology and Paying the Price* by Matt Richtel it says the multitaskers "had trouble filtering out the blue ones – the irrelevant

information.” If we participated, we could give these people a chance to develop new habits that would help them filter out irrelevant information and only pay attention to the things that are important. For example, if someone’s playing with their daughter, they would check their email every time they received an email instead of focusing on playing with their daughter.

Now, some people say that we shouldn’t participate because technology makes you smarter, why stop doing something that’s helping yourself. In an imaging study by Dr. Small, he found that “Internet users showed greater brain activity than nonusers, suggesting they were growing their neural circuitry.” While they may be growing their neural circuitry, they were also changing a characteristic of the brain that was thought to be unchangeable, the ability to only process one stream of information at a time. This ability allows humans to think deeply, an important characteristic in today’s society. By changing it, they were preventing themselves from having the ability to think deeply.

Technology is a new thing, and it has many advantages and conveniences. But for many it becomes more than a convenience, it becomes an obsession. For this reason I believe that we should participate in shut down your screen week, to give people a chance to make new habits and make technology a convenience again, not a necessity.

**File Name: A9-10P High School Should Not Participate****Opinion/Argument****Grade 9-10****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt****High School Should Not Participate**

To whom it may concern:

L High School should not participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” Technology can be beneficial, especially to students. A vast majority of students finds it helpful to have access to technology. Technology makes quicker, more efficient work. Without the advancements of technology, we are no farther along than school children in the 1960’s.

The internet and social media, such as Facebook, improve the social lives of those who use it. In the article Information, Communication and Society, a survey found that whether the participants were married or single, people who used social media had more close friends. An average American who uses social media is half as likely to be socially isolated. They also know more diverse people. Also, users of social media never lose ties because of relocating, because you can always keep your friends on social media.

Internet search engines allow us better access to information. In my experience, information is far more accessible and quick than searching through books. That allows for time to complete other class assignments. According to Peter Norvig, director of research for Google, Inc., in an article for the New York Times, “The internet contains the world’s best writing, images, and ideas; Google lets us find the relevant pieces instantly.” Some argue that ads and irrelevant sites may be distracting, but more find that the

**Introduces a precise claim:** The introduction states a claim and then gives context about the subject of technology, acknowledging it as a **substantive topic**

**Creates an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence**

**Develops the claim fairly, supplying evidence** for it, but does not develop the counterclaims or acknowledge significant limitations of the claim

**Distinguishes the claim from an opposing claim**

benefits are worth it. Eighty-one percent of experts polled by the Pew Internet Research Project support this opinion.

The internet also makes a good learning tool. In an article by Matt Richtel for the New York Times, he proves that it helps our brains.

“Imaging studies show the brains of Internet users become more efficient at finding information.” Basically, the more we use online resources to learn, the better our brains become at learning. Also, in the same article, it says, “Internet users showed greater brain activity than non-users...” The internet even develops our brain to think more! Technology is improving our brains.

I have heard it argued that children “rot” their brains with video game systems. In the previously mentioned article by Matt Richtel, he says, “At the University of Rochester, researchers found that players of some fast-paced video games can track the movement of a third more objects on a screen than nonplayers...games can improve reaction time and the ability to pick out details amid clutter.” It seems that the more people play fast-paced video games, the more efficient they become at finding important details. These games may not be so “brain rotting “ after all. They could even be argued as beneficial.

Some also argue that because of new technologies, people limit how much they associate together, even in the same area. Social media disproves this argument. Not only can people associate easily with friends, they can also chat with relatives. They can also show relatives photos, even if they are states away. People who use social media are more likely to know more diverse people, according to the article by Keith Hampton. People still associate with people just as much as before, if not more. They are merely doing it in a different manner than before social media was in use.

Cyber bullying has now become an issue. I would like to bring to attention that all bullying is a big issue. I do not think that technology has caused bullying. It has just allowed for a new way to bully someone. I

**Develops the claim fairly, supplying evidence** for it, but does not develop the counterclaims or acknowledge significant limitations of the claim

**Distinguishes the claim from an opposing claim**

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline**

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims**

**Acknowledges counterclaim, pointing out its limitation, anticipates audience's (other students, parents, teachers, school board) concern.**

have never been cyber-bullied. I personally was bullied in a face-to-face manner. A bully will take any chance to bully a target. Social media has not caused bullying.

Like most tools, technology is useful if used correctly. Work quality on a computer can be better, because people have more time to check over their work and improve it. Unfortunately, some people are lazy, and use that extra time they could use for editing for other things. That is not a problem with the tools, it is a problem with the people. People who use such technology correctly and efficiently should still have access. If our screens are shut down, there is no access. We should not participate in “Shut Down Your Screen Week.”

Sincerely,

**Acknowledges counterclaim, pointing out its limitation, anticipates audience's (other students, parents, teachers, school board) concern.**

NOTE: “people are lazy” is an *ad hominem* approach, and should not be used

**Provides a concluding statement that follows from but does not add support to the argument presented**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by asserting the claim that, in his view, the school should not participate and then discusses technology in a broad and substantive sense to provide context concerning the issue.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient, relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer’s experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges multiple counterclaims, distinguishes them from his own claim, and refutes them with support for his own position, which again includes evidence from the texts. In some cases, the writer introduces counterclaims specifically to anticipate the concerns of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). However, the writer does not develop the counterclaims or acknowledge their strengths, and he resorts to *ad hominem* (“people are lazy”) in the closing paragraph—approaches inconsistent with the Standards at this grade level. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument but does not significantly support it.

**File Name: A 9-10P High School Should Not Participate**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 9-10**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**High School Should Not Participate**

To whom it may concern:

L \_\_\_\_\_ High School should not participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” Technology can be beneficial, especially to students. A vast majority of students finds it helpful to have access to technology. Technology makes quicker, more efficient work. Without the advancements of technology, we are no farther along than school children in the 1960’s.

The internet and social media, such as Facebook, improve the social lives of those who use it. In the article Information, Communication and Society, a survey found that whether the participants were married or single, people who used social media had more close friends. An average American who uses social media is half as likely to be socially isolated. They also know more diverse people. Also, users of social media never lose ties because of relocating, because you can always keep your friends on social media.

Internet search engines allow us better access to information. In my experience, information is far more accessible and quick than searching through books. That allows for time to complete other class assignments. According to Peter Norvig, director of research for Google, Inc., in an article for the New York Times, “The internet contains the world’s best writing, images, and ideas; Google lets us find the relevant pieces instantly.” Some argue that ads and irrelevant sites may be distracting, but more find that the benefits are worth it. Eighty-one percent of experts polled by the Pew Internet Research Project support this opinion.

The internet also makes a good learning tool. In an article by Matt Richtel for the New York Times, he proves that it helps our brains. “Imaging studies show the brains of Internet users become

more efficient at finding information.” Basically, the more we use online resources to learn, the better our brains become at learning. Also, in the same article, it says, “Internet users showed greater brain activity than non-users...” The internet even develops our brain to think more! Technology is improving our brains.

I have heard it argued that children “rot” their brains with video game systems. In the previously mentioned article by Matt Richtel, he says, “At the University of Rochester, researchers found that players of some fast-paced video games can track the movement of a third more objects on a screen than nonplayers...games can improve reaction time and the ability to pick out details amid clutter.” It seems that the more people play fast-paced video games, the more efficient they become at finding important details. These games may not be so “brain rotting “ after all. They could even be argued as beneficial.

Some also argue that because of new technologies, people limit how much they associate together, even in the same area. Social media disproves this argument. Not only can people associate easily with friends, they can also chat with relatives. They can also show relatives photos, even if they are states away. People who use social media are more likely to know more diverse people, according to the article by Keith Hampton. People still associate with people just as much as before, if not more. They are merely doing it in a different manner than before social media was in use.

Cyber bullying has now become an issue. I would like to bring to attention that all bullying is a big issue. I do not think that technology has caused bullying. It has just allowed for a new way to bully someone. I have never been cyber-bullied. I personally was bullied in a face-to-face manner. A bully will take any chance to bully a target. Social media has not caused bullying.

Like most tools, technology is useful if used correctly. Work quality on a computer can be better, because people have more time to check over their work and improve it. Unfortunately, some people are lazy, and use that extra time they could use for editing for other things. That is not a problem with the tools, it is a problem with the people. People who use such technology correctly and efficiently should still have access. If our screens are shut down, there is no access. We should not participate in “Shut Down Your Screen Week.”

Sincerely,

**File Name: A9-10P To Teachers and Whom It May Concern****Opinion/Argument****Grade 9-10****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

To Teachers and Whom It May Concern:

A proposal has been brought to the school board concerning the possibility of participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week,” a movement in which students do not use any electronic media for a seven day duration. Technology and electronic media have been shown to have a variety of negative impacts on people, especially youth. For this reason, I believe that participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week” would benefit our students in a variety of ways.

There are many negative impacts of electronic media upon our students, but among the most severe is its effects on the brain. According to the article, “Attached to Technology and Paying a Price,” technology is “rewiring our brains.” Technology has been proven to have significant effects on the way brains take in and process information. That’s not surprising considering people use an average of 12 hours a day (one half of every day) of media each day. The brain behaves hyperactively while using electronic media, as it is presented with a “deluge of data.” This

hyperactivity transfers into one’s daily life, causing troubles focusing, forgetfulness, and boredom. A break from social media and technology would help students become more focused and attentive, giving their brains a break from technology.

Additionally, students could better obtain information without technology or social media. High-result-yielding search engines are not the most productive way for students to take in information. When a brain is using a computer, it is taking

**Introduces a precise claim:** The introduction gives context about the subject of technology, acknowledging it as a **substantive topic**, and then states a claim

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims**

**Creates an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence**

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline**

**Develops the claim fairly, supplying evidence for it, using valid reasoning in form of text-based evidence**

in a great amount of information quickly. According to the article, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” deep thinking “happens only when our minds are calm and attentive.” With an overload of information, the brain is not at all calm and does not deeply interpret information. Although search engines like Google may present much information, with its use, little information will be internalized, and little knowledge will be gained.

During a week without technology, students could gain and truly internalize knowledge.

I do understand that there are many benefits of technology in education. I understand that technology can help students efficiently find information, and technology has even shown signs of “growing neural circuitry” in brains, according to “Attached to Technology and Paying the Price.” Additionally, according to the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” the efficiency of search engines “outweigh the distractions.” Due to the positive aspects of technology and social media, I would not suggest that the school remove technology or social media for good. I believe that, since technology is so addictive, it would be beneficial to students to experience a week without it. During this time, students would be more focused, attentive, and better internalize information, along with innumerable other benefits.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will consider my proposal.

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims**

**Develops claim and counterclaim fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strength and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's (other students, parents, teachers, school board) knowledge level and concerns**

**Provides a concluding statement that follows from but does not add support to the argument presented**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” To provide context concerning this substantive issue, this writer begins by noting that technology has harmful effects. He then asserts the claim that, in his view, the school should not participate.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient, relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer’s experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges a counterclaim, distinguishes it from his own claim, and acknowledges the limitations this places on his own position. In this case, the writer introduces the counterclaim specifically to anticipate the concerns of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument but does not significantly support it.

**File Name: A 9-10P To Teachers and Whom It May Concern****Opinion/Argument****Grade 9-10****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

To Teachers and Whom It May Concern:

A proposal has been brought to the school board concerning the possibility of participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week,” a movement in which students do not use any electronic media for a seven day duration. Technology and electronic media have been shown to have a variety of negative impacts on people, especially youth. For this reason, I believe that participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week” would benefit our students in a variety of ways.

There are many negative impacts of electronic media upon our students, but among the most severe is its effects on the brain. According to the article, “Attached to Technology and Paying a Price,” technology is “rewiring our brains.” Technology has been proven to have significant effects on the way brains take in and process information. That’s not surprising considering people use an average of 12 hours a day (one half of every day) of media each day. The brain behaves hyperactively while using electronic media, as it is presented with a “deluge of data.” This hyperactivity transfers into one’s daily life, causing troubles focusing, forgetfulness, and boredom. A break from social media and technology would help students become more focused and attentive, giving their brains a break from technology.

Additionally, students could better obtain information without technology or social media. High-result-yielding search engines are not the most productive way for students to take in information. When a brain is using a computer, it is taking in a great amount of information quickly. According to the article, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” deep thinking “happens only when our minds are calm and attentive.” With an overload of information, the brain is not at all calm and does not deeply interpret information. Although search engines like Google may present much

information, with its use, little information will be internalized, and little knowledge will be gained. During a week without technology, students could gain and truly internalize knowledge.

I do understand that there are many benefits of technology in education. I understand that technology can help students efficiently find information, and technology has even shown signs of “growing neural circuitry” in brains, according to “Attached to Technology and Paying the Price.” Additionally, according to the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” the efficiency of search engines “outweigh the distractions.” Due to the positive aspects of technology and social media, I would not suggest that the school remove technology or social media for good. I believe that, since technology is so addictive, it would be beneficial to students to experience a week without it. During this time, students would be more focused, attentive, and better internalize information, along with innumerable other benefits.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will consider my proposal.

**File Name: A11-12P Proposal to Shut Down Screen**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 11-12**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**Proposal to Shut Down Screen**

To whom it may concern:

A group of parents, and some teachers, have made a proposal to the school board. They would like the school to participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” A week without any electronics is what parents believe the school needs. Technology is a big contradiction. It is useful with all the tools it has, yet it can be a distraction, or addicting. Our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week” because of the following issues with technology.

“Based on a representative survey of 2,500 Americans...those who used social media had more close confidants,” says Keith Hampton. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media allow people to connect with each other and have social interactions, but through the web. The web, or a phone, that allows people to be more social is a major issue today. Kids, especially high school students, feel no need to talk to a friend in person. They can just text them. The problem with Facebook, or texting, is that people interact differently than they would in person. Cyberbullying is one of the biggest issues with the web today. People say things on the web that they wouldn’t say to the person’s face. Bullies feel safe when hidden behind a screen. Whether or not the survey of 2,500 people was accurate, it still did not account for the differences in interactions for media and in person. Having no electronics for a week would allow students to see that difference.

Although technology allows students to do research, that research isn’t helping students to do strategic and logical thinking. “What really

**Introduces a knowledgeable claim and establishes its significance:** The introduction gives context about the subject of technology, acknowledging it as a **substantive topic**, and then states a claim, albeit not very precisely

**Develops the claim and a counterclaim fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience** (other students, parents, teachers, school board members)

**Addresses significance of claim and topic**

**Points out limitation on claim**

**Uses words, phrases, and varied syntax to create cohesion, clarify the relationships among claims and reasons**

makes us intelligent isn't our ability to find lots of information quickly. It's our ability to think deeply about that information," says Nicholas Carr, author of the book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. Brain scientists have researched and found out that deep thinking only happens with a calm mind. "The greater our concentration, the richer our thoughts," Nicholas Carr says. The internet is a useful search engine, but does not allow students to go deeply into thought. Google allows people to find anything by the click of a button. This isn't the way students should learn. Nicholas Carr says, "If you're really interested in developing your mind, you should turn off your computer and your cellphone – and start thinking. Really thinking."

Technology can be distracting, but most of all it is addictive. Scientists say that using email, texting, or searching the web can change how someone thinks or behaves. "The stimulation [of technology use] provokes excitement – a dopamine squirt – that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored," says Matt Richtel of the New York Times. Addiction to technology may not compare to the addiction of certain drugs, but being a student who is addicted to something that creates different social interactions, and doesn't allow deep thought, could be very bad. "In 2008, people consumed three times as much [technology] each day as they did in 1960," Matt says. This rate has already increased, and a break from it wouldn't be a bad thing. Researchers worry that constant digital stimulation like this creates attention problems for children with brains that are still developing, who already struggle to set priorities and resist impulses," Matt says. Students in high school, or even in college, have brains that are still developing. A week off from the technology would allow these students to develop skills, with their growing brains, that could be used instead of electronics.

Our school should start participating in the national "Shut Down Your Screen Week." It would allow students to see the difference in social interactions of electronics and in person. The week would allow students

**Acknowledges counterclaims, then distinguishes from claim with reasons and relevant, credible evidence from text, using valid reasoning**

**Creates an organization that logically sequences claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence throughout**

**Develops the claim fairly and thoroughly, supplying evidence for it in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members).**

Uses depth of evidence

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument presented**

to go into deep thought and understand subjects and ideas that Google cannot. Lastly, technology is addictive and a break is what students need to understand the consequences of it being addictive. By our school doing this national movement, we could change the way school is taught to better help each and every student.

Recognizes and appeals to the **audience's concerns**, values, and **possible biases**, coming back to further **establishing the significance of the claim**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether or not his school should participate in the national "Shut Down Your Screen Week." This student gives an introduction about technology in a broad and substantive sense as context on the issue and makes a claim that in his view the school should not participate.

The writer reminds the reader of the significance of his claim by pointing out one of the reasons to support that claim ("*Cyber bullying is one of the biggest issues with the web today*"), then develops the overall claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer's experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges and treats fairly multiple counterclaims, distinguishes them from his own claim, and refutes them with support for his own position, which again includes evidence from the texts. The writer introduces counterclaims specifically to anticipate the concerns, values, and possible biases of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented, reminding the reader of the significance of the topic and claim to this particular audience (other students, teachers, parents, school board members).

**File Name: A 11-12P Proposal to Shut Down Screen****Opinion/Argument****Grade 11-12****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt****Proposal to Shut Down Screen**

To whom it may concern:

A group of parents, and some teachers, have made a proposal to the school board. They would like the school to participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” A week without any electronics is what parents believe the school needs. Technology is a big contradiction. It is useful with all the tools it has, yet it can be a distraction, or addicting. Our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week” because of the following issues with technology.

“Based on a representative survey of 2,500 Americans...those who used social media had more close confidants,” says Keith Hampton. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media allow people to connect with each other and have social interactions, but through the web. The web, or a phone, that allows people to be more social is a major issue today. Kids, especially high school students, feel no need to talk to a friend in person. They can just text them. The problem with Facebook, or texting, is that people interact differently than they would in person. Cyberbullying is one of the biggest issues with the web today. People say things on the web that they wouldn’t say to the person’s face. Bullies feel safe when hidden behind a screen. Whether or not the survey of 2,500 people was accurate, it still did not account for the differences in interactions for media and in person. Having no electronics for a week would allow students to see that difference.

Although technology allows students to do research, that research isn’t helping students to do strategic and logical thinking. “What really makes us intelligent isn’t our ability to find lots of information quickly. It’s our ability to think deeply about that information,” says Nicholas Carr, author of the book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. Brain scientists have researched and found out that deep thinking only happens with a calm mind. “The greater our

concentration, the richer our thoughts,” Nicholas Carr says. The internet is a useful search engine, but does not allow students to go deeply into thought. Google allows people to find anything by the click of a button. This isn’t the way students should learn. Nicholas Carr says, “If you’re really interested in developing your mind, you should turn off your computer and your cellphone – and start thinking. Really thinking.”

Technology can be distracting, but most of all it is addictive. Scientists say that using email, texting, or searching the web can change how someone thinks or behaves. “The stimulation [of technology use] provokes excitement – a dopamine squirt – that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored,” says Matt Richtel of the New York Times. Addiction to technology may not compare to the addiction of certain drugs, but being a student who is addicted to something that creates different social interactions, and doesn’t allow deep thought, could be very bad. “In 2008, people consumed three times as much [technology] each day as they did in 1960,” Matt says. This rate has already increased, and a break from it wouldn’t be a bad thing. Researchers worry that constant digital stimulation like this creates attention problems for children with brains that are still developing, who already struggle to set priorities and resist impulses,” Matt says. Students in high school, or even in college, have brains that are still developing. A week off from the technology would allow these students to develop skills, with their growing brains, that could be used instead of electronics.

Our school should start participating in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” It would allow students to see the difference in social interactions of electronics and in person. The week would allow students to go into deep thought and understand subjects and ideas that Google cannot. Lastly, technology is addictive and a break is what students need to understand the consequences of it being addictive. By our school doing this national movement, we could change the way school is taught to better help each and every student.

***K-5 Range of Writing  
Argument/Opinion Samples***

**File Name: OKR Make Way for Ducklings**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

Make Way for Ducklings

**Tells the reader the name of the  
book he/she is writing about**

I liKe MKe WAY FoR DucKLINGS ThE Best Beycus IT HAS CYowT

**States an opinion  
about the book**

DucLINGS

This Kindergarten opinion piece was written in response to a book read aloud in class. The writer tells the reader the name of the book being written about (“MKe WAY FoR DucKLINGS”) and clearly states an opinion (“I liKe MKe WAY FoR DucKLINGS THE Best”). Although this piece includes a reason for the opinion (“Beycus IT HAS CYowT DucLINGS”), it is not necessary for students to do so at this grade level.

**File Name: OKR Make Way for Ducklings**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

Make Way for Ducklings

I like Make Way for Ducklings the best because it has cute ducklings.

**File Name: OKR Make Way for Ducklings**

**Opinion/Argument**

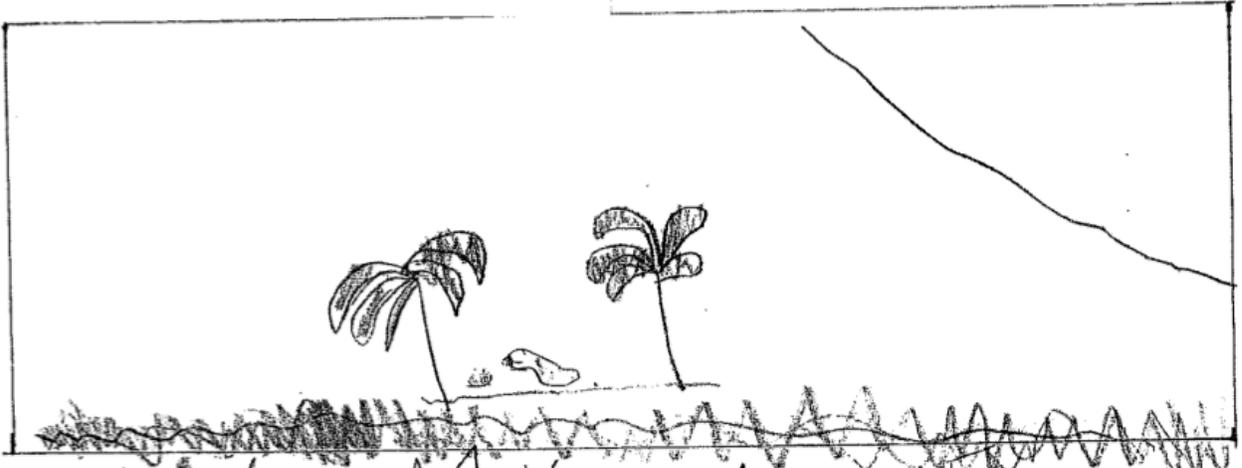
**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

Make Way for Ducklings

I liKe MKe WAY FoR DucKLINGS ThE Best Beycus IT HAS CYowT DucLINGS

4



I I I K E M K E W A Y T O R

D U C K L I N G S T H E

B E S T B E Y C U S I T H A S C Y O W T

D U C L I N G S | ☺

**File Name: OKR A Special Person**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

**Tells the  
reader the  
topic**

**States an  
opinion  
about the  
topic**

**A Special Person**

My mom is speshl becus. she plac wit me.

*Gives a reason for the  
opinion*

In this Kindergarten opinion piece, the writer tells the reader the topic (“*my Mom*”), states an opinion (“*is speshl*”). Although not required by the Standards at this grade level, the writer even provides a reason for the opinion (“*becus she plac wit me*”). In the original, an accompanying illustration adds detail to the writing.

**File Name: OKR A Special Person**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

**A Special Person**

My mom is special because she plays with me.

**File Name: OKR A Special Person**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

**A Special Person**

My mom is speshl becus. she plac wit me.



my mom is special  
because she loves me

**File name: OIR A Special Person**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

### **A Special Person**

**Introduces the topic**

My mommy is my speshl prsin! My mommy is the best because she loves m **States an opinion**

My mommy helps me by helping me bake. mommy and me like to go to the **Supplies a  
reason for the  
opinion**  
park. I Love my mommy.

**Provides some sense  
of closure**

This first-grade opinion piece introduces a topic and states an opinion (“*My mommy is the best*”). Although the Standard calls for only one reason, this writer supplies several reasons for the opinion (she loves me; she helps me bake; we go to the park). The ending sentence (“*I Love my mommy.*”) provides a sense of closure.

**File name: OIR A Special Person**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **A Special Person**

My mommy is my special person! My mommy is the best because she loves me. My mommy helps me by helping me bake. Mommy and I like to go to the park. I love my mommy.

**File name: OIR A Special Person**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

### **A Special Person**

My mommy is my speshl prsin! My mommy is the best because she loves me. My mommy helps me by helping me bake. mommy and me like to go to the park. I Love my mommy.

**File name: O1R Mother Cat**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

Mother Cat

**Names the poem he is writing about**

Hello my name is Derek. I'm going to tell you about how mother cat in the poem kittens is a good mother. When it was stormy outside the mother cat stayed in and kept her babies warm and safe. She also took the smallest one outside on a sunny snowy day, and the dog helped her take the other three kittens. She is teaching the baby's about snow. The kittens mother is a good mother because:

**States an opinion**

- she keeps the babies safe
- she teaches them many things
- she loves her baby's
- she asks for help

**Supplies  
reason(s) for  
the opinion**

and much much more! If the mother cat wasn't a good mother she wouldn't do all that good stuff.

**Provides some sense  
of closure**

In this strong, first-grade opinion piece, the writer names the poem he is writing about ("*kittens*"), states an opinion ("*mother cat...is a good mother.*"), and then provides some evidence from the text ("*When it was stormy outside the mother cat stayed in and kept her babies warm and safe. She also took the smallest one outside on a sunny snowy day*") before listing several reasons for the opinion ("*she keeps the babies safe*", "*she teaches them many things*", "*she loves her baby's*", "*she asks for help*"). Although this writer provides several reasons, one reason would have been sufficient. The ending sentence, "*If the mother cat wasn't a good mother she wouldn't do all that good stuff*" provides a sense of closure.

**File name: O1R Mother Cat**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Mother Cat

Hello my name is Daniel. I'm going to tell you about how Mother Cat in the poem, "Kittens" is a good mother. When it was stormy outside, the Mother Cat stayed in and kept her babies warm and safe. She also took the smallest one outside on a sunny, snowy day, and the dog helped her take the other three kittens out, too. She is teaching the babies about snow. The kittens mother is a good mother because:

- she keeps the babies safe,
- she teaches them many things,
- she loves her babies,
- she asks for help,

and much, much more! If the Mother Cat wasn't a good mother she wouldn't do all that good stuff!

**File name: O1R Mother Cat**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

### Mother Cat

Hello my name is Daniel. I'm going to tell you about how mother cat in the poem kittens is a good mother. When it was stormy outside the mother cat stayed in and kept her babies warm and safe. She also took the smallest one outside on a sunny snowy day, and the dog helped her take the other three kittens. She is teaching the baby's about snow. The kittens mother is a good mother because:

- she keeps the babies safe
- she teaches them many things
- she loves her baby's
- she asks for help

and much much more! If the mother cat wasn't a good mother she wouldn't do all that good stuff.

**File name: O2R Chocolate Milk**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

**Persuasive Essay**

**Our class is learning about nutrition and what is in our food that our body needs. We've also been looking at nutrition labels to help us make healthy food choices. Our school lunchroom offers students the choice of chocolate milk or white milk.**

**Using what you have learned to support your opinion, should Edmunds Elementary School serve chocolate milk? Write a letter to Mr. Davis, the head of Food Service, to explain your position.**

The assignment **introduces the topic** for writing. The piece could be improved with an introductory sentence that provided some context.

Dear Mr. Davis,

**States an opinion**

you should serve chocolate milk because. It has 0% fat just like 0% fat white milk. Another reason is some kids will only drink chocolate Milk Another reason is. they Both have the same amount of protein (8 grams) and calcium. protein Gives you energy calcium makes your bones stronger. chocolate milk is still really healthy even though it has chocolate in it.

**Uses linking words to connect opinion and reasons**

**Supplies reasons that support the opinion**

**Provides a concluding statement**

In this second-grade opinion piece, the writer uses information learned in a nutrition unit to argue that chocolate milk should be served in the school cafeteria. The writer's opinion is clearly stated and is supported by facts (*"it has 0% fat"*) and reasons (*"some kids will only drink chocolate Milk"*). Linking words and phrases (*"because"*, *"another reason"*) connect the opinion with the reasons given. The concluding statement sums up the opinion piece for the reader. This second grader has not yet learned to use commas, and the attempt to use periods instead can make the piece a bit confusing. This misunderstanding could easily be addressed on a second draft.

**File name: O2R Chocolate Milk**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

**Persuasive Essay**

**Our class is learning about nutrition and what is in our food that our body needs. We've also been looking at nutrition labels to help us make healthy food choices. Our school lunchroom offers students the choice of chocolate milk or white milk.**

**Using what you have learned to support your opinion, should Edmunds Elementary School serve chocolate milk? Write a letter to Mr. Davis, the head of Food Service, to explain your position.**

Dear Mr. Davis:

You should serve chocolate milk because it has 0% fat just like 0% fat white milk. Another reason is some kids will only drink chocolate milk. Another reason is both kinds of milk have the same amount of protein (8 grams) and calcium. Protein gives you energy, and calcium makes your bones stronger. Chocolate milk is still really healthy even though it has chocolate in it.

**File name: O2R Chocolate Milk**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Persuasive Essay**

**Our class is learning about nutrition and what is in our food that our body needs. We've also been looking at nutrition labels to help us make healthy food choices. Our school lunchroom offers students the choice of chocolate milk or white milk.**

**Using what you have learned to support your opinion, should Edmunds Elementary School serve chocolate milk? Write a letter to Mr. Davis, the head of Food Service, to explain your position.**

Dear Mr. Davis,

you should serve chocolate milk because. It has 0% fat just like 0% fat white milk. Another reason is some kids will only drink chocolate Milk Another reason is. they Both have the same amount of protein (8 grams) and calcium. protein Gives you energy calcium makes your bones stronger. chocolate Milk is still really healthy even though it has chocolate in it.

**File name: O2R Thomas Edison**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Response to Literature**

**We've been reading, thinking, and talking about *Biographies*. We've read about many famous scientists, artists, musicians, inventors, leaders, etc. Who do you think is the most important person that we have read about? Be sure to support your opinion using evidence of how this person has made a significant contribution to society and/or changed the world and impacted your life.**

**States an opinion**

Thomas Edison

**Introduces the topic or book he or she is writing about**

I think that Thomas alva Edison is the most inportant preson that we  
 read about because he invented the electrick light bolb. back a long time ago  
 we did not have the electrick light bolb. we had candle's. If we did not have  
 the electrick light bolb we would have more fire's, it would be a lot darcker  
 then it is with the electrick light bolb now would kid's do Home work in the  
 dark how would we ge around at night

**Uses linking words to connect opinion and reasons**

**Supplies reasons that support the opinion**

if thomas alva Edison never lived what do you think it would be like  
 with only candles for light how would it feel what would it be like without the  
 electrick light bolb what would it be live without thomas alva Edison.

**Provides a concluding section**

This second-grade opinion piece was done independently as the culminating activity in a unit on biographies. The writer states an opinion (*“I think that Thomas alva Edison is the most inportant preson”*) and provides needed context (*“that we read about”*) in a single sentence. After stating the main idea of the piece, the writer works to establish the importance of Edison’s invention by providing reasons and examples (*“we would have more fire’s”, “it would be a lot darcker”, “now would kid’s do Home work in the dark”*). The writer uses linking words (*“because”, “if”*) to connect the opinion to reasons. The concluding section very effectively supports the writer’s opinion by inviting the reader to reflect on the effect Edison’s work has had on our lives (*“if thomas alva Edison never lived what do you think it would be like...”*).

**File name: O2R Thomas Edison**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Response to Literature**

**We've been reading, thinking, and talking about *Biographies*. We've read about many famous scientists, artists, musicians, inventors, leaders, etc.**

**Who do you think is the most important person that we have read about?**

**Be sure to support your opinion using evidence of how this person has made a significant contribution to society and/or changed the world and impacted your life.**

Thomas Edison

I think that Thomas Alva Edison is the most important person that we read about because he invented the electric light bulb. Back a long time ago, we did not have the electric light bulb. We had candles. If we did not have the electric light bulb, we would have more fires. It would be a lot darker than it is with the electric light bulb. How would kids do homework in the dark? How would we get around at night?

If Thomas Alva Edison never lived, what do you think it would be like?

With only candles for light, how would it feel? What would it be like without the electric light bulb? What would it be like without Thomas Alva Edison?

**File name: O2R Thomas Edison**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Response to Literature**

**We've been reading, thinking, and talking about *Biographies*. We've read about many famous scientists, artists, musicians, inventors, leaders, etc.**

**Who do you think is the most important person that we have read about?**

**Be sure to support your opinion using evidence of how this person has made a significant contribution to society and/or changed the world and impacted your life.**

Thomas Edison

I think that Thomas alva Edison is the most inportant preson that we read about because he invented the electrick light bolb. back a long time ago we did not have the electrick light bolb. we had candle's. If we did not have the electrick light bolb we would have more fire's, it would be a lot darcker then it is with the electrick light bolb now would kid's do Home work in the dark how would we ge around at night

if thomas alva Edison never lived what do you think it would be like  
with only candles for light how would it feel what would it be like without the  
electrick light bolb what would it be live without thomas alva Edison.



**File Name: O3R School Year Time**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

**States an opinion**

School Year Time

I do not think school should be year round. Do you think school should be year round? Without summer vacation students would not be able to go on family vacations. If a student wanted to go to a sleepaway camp they would not be able to do it. At camp you learn how to do things on your own. If school was year round older siblings would not have time to teach younger siblings how to swing or climb trees. Teachers would also not have time for vacation. Even if you are not at school you can still learn things. Teachers can also learn things outside of school. Kids need to get their energy out. They can get it out by doing big races. In summer it is very hot indoors and children would be thinking about outside and not school. Children usually like warm or hot weather. I know that towards the end of the year I look forwards to summer vacation and I think other children do to. If a student wants to learn more things in the summer, they can take classes about that subject. I do not think school needs to be year round!

**Introduces the topic**

**Provides reasons that support the opinion**

**Uses linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons**

**Creates an organizational structure that lists reasons**

**Provides a concluding statement**

In this third-grade piece, the writer supports a point of view with reasons. The topic is introduced with a question (“*Do you think school should be year round?*”) and a clearly stated opinion (“*I do not think school should be year round.*”). Reasons for the opinion are loosely organized; they could be arranged in any order within the piece. Although the reasoning is “listy”, some points are explained and elaborated upon (“*If a student wanted to go to a sleepaway camp they would not be able to do it. At camp you learn how to do things on your own.*”). The student is beginning to use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reason (“*If school was year round older siblings would not have time to teach younger siblings how to swing or climb trees*”), but the argument would be more effective if linking words and phrases were used more frequently. A concluding statement (“*I do not think school needs to be year round!*”) clearly restates the focus of the piece.

**File Name: O3R School Year Time**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### School Year Time

I do not think school should be year round. Do you think school should be year round?

Without summer vacation, students would not be able to go on family vacations. If a student wanted to go to a sleep away camp, they would not be able to do it. At camp you learn how to do things on your own. If school was year round, older siblings would not have time to teach younger siblings how to swing or climb trees. Teachers would also not have time for vacation. Even if you are not at school, you can still learn things. Teachers can also learn things outside of school.

Kids need to get their energy out. They can get it out by doing big races. In summer it is very hot indoors and children would be thinking about outside, and not school. Children usually like warm or hot weather.

I know that towards the end of the year, I look forward to summer vacation and I think other children do too! If a student wants to learn more things in the summer, they can take classes about that subject. I do not think school needs to be year round!

**File Name: O3R School Year Time**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### School Year Time

I do not think school should be year round. Do you think school should be year round? Without summer vacation students would not be able to go on family vacations. If a student wanted to go to a sleepaway camp they would not be able to do it. At camp you learn how to do things on your own. If school was year round older siblings would not have time to teach younger siblings how to swing or climb trees. Teachers would also not have time for vacation. Even if you are not at school you can still learn things. Teachers can also learn things outside of school. Kids need to get their energy out. They can get it out by doing big races. In summer it is very hot indoors and children would be thinking about outside and not school. Children usually like warm or hot weather. I know that towards the end of the year I look forwards to summer vacation and I think other children do to.

If a student wants to learn more things in the summer they can take classes about that subject. I do not think school needs to be year round!

**File Name: O3R Chuke Cheese's**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Chuke Cheese's

Once a year my family goes to Chuke Cheese's. It's a popular place.

**Introduces the topic**

Chuke Cheese's is a nice place to go because of the tasty food and the awesome arcade.

**States an opinion**

Chuke Cheese's food is excellent! Thier peporoini pizza is mouth watering. The salads are great with diced tomatoes. The selections of veggies are endless and very good. The macoroni has a special ingredient in it. Well it seems it. The food is scrumpshish at Chuke Cheese's.

**Provides reasons and details that support the opinion**

While your waiting for your food, the arcade makes time fly. You have to by coins which each arcade game is only 1 coin. And if you do good you get lots of tickets to buy fun stuff. So it's not wasting your money parents! The motor games such as: The: Snowmobile, four wheeler, motor cycle, car and many more are great. The arcade is great while waiting for your food.

**Creates an organizational structure that lists reasons**

Chuke Cheese's is bad for you but is great. I wish I could go there every day! Oh well it's fun going to Chuke Cheese's because of the extraordinary food and spectacular arcade. I can't wait to win some more prizes next year at Chuke Cheese's.

**Uses linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons, and reasons to details**

**Provides a concluding section**

This third-grade opinion piece, based on personal experience, states an opinion (“*Chuke Cheese's is a nice place to go*”) and supports that opinion with reasons (“*because of the tasty food and the awesome arcade*”) and details (“*Thier peporoini pizza is mouth watering.*”). The writer has created an organizational structure—one paragraph for each reason—that explains each reason with supporting details (“*The selections of veggies are endless*”, “*the arcade makes time fly*”). Linking words and phrases (“*and*”, “*so*”, “*but*”, “*because*”) connect opinion to reasons and reasons to details. Although not required by the Standard, the writer even acknowledges a possible counterclaim (“*Chuke Cheese's is bad for you*”). The piece concludes by clearly restating opinion and reasons.

**File Name: O3R Chuke Cheese's**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Chuck E. Cheese's

Once a year, my family goes to Chuck E. Cheese's. It's a popular place. Chuck E. Cheese's is a nice place to go because of the tasty food and the awesome arcade.

Chuck E. Cheese's food is excellent! Their pepperoni pizza is mouthwatering. The salads are great, with diced tomatoes. The selection of veggies is endless and very good. The macaroni has a special ingredient in it. Well, it seems to. The food is scrumptious at Chuck E. Cheese's.

While you're waiting for your food, the arcade makes time fly. You have to buy coins, and each arcade game is only 1 coin. And if you do well, you get lots of tickets to buy fun stuff. So it's not wasting your money, parents! The motor games, such as the snowmobile, four-wheeler, motorcycle, car, and many more, are great. The arcade is great while waiting for your food.

Chuck E. Cheese's is bad for you but is great. I wish I could go there every day! Oh well. It's fun going to Chuck E. Cheese's because of the extraordinary food and spectacular arcade. I can't wait to win some more prizes next year at Chuck E. Cheese's.

**File Name: O3R Chuke Cheese's**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Chuke Cheese's

Once a year my family goes to Chuke Cheese's. It's a popular place.

Chuke Cheese's is a nice place to go because of the tasty food and the awesome arcade.

Chuke Cheese's food is excellent! Thier peporoini pizza is mouth watering. The salads are great with diced tomatoes. The selections of veggies are endless and very good. The macoroni has a special ingredient in it. Well it seems it. The food is srumpshish at Chuke Cheese's.

While your waiting for your food the arcade makes time fly. You have to by coins which each arcade game is only 1 coin. And if you do good you get lots of tickets to buy fun stuff. So it's not waisting your money parents! The motor games such as: The: Snowmobile, four wheeler, motor cycle, car and many more are great. The arcade is great while waiting for your food.

Chuke Cheese's is bad for you but is great. I wish I could go there every day! Oh well it's fun going to Chuke Cheese's because of the extraordinary food and spectacular arcade. I can't wait to win some more prizes next year at Chuke Cheese's.

**File Name: O4R Wow I am glad we have zoo**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 4**

**Instructional Writing**

Wow I am glad we have zoo

**States an opinion**

There should be zoos because they save animals and help people learn a lot about animals.

Did you know thirty species of animals were saved because of zoos? Zoos give animals don't receive in the wild. I am so glad that there are zoos to save animals without them?

**Introduces the topic clearly** by stating, in general terms, the reasons that will later be discussed in detail

There should be zoos because zookeepers give so much care to the animals. There are no longer cages and the fences are hidden, so the animals feel like they're in the wild. Zoos make sure to hide the animals' food so they can learn to hunt. Sometimes there's a tinted glass so the animals can't see all the chaos going on. I am so glad the zookeepers give their time to care for the animals.

Thanks goodness we have zoos.

**Provides reasons that are supported by facts and details**

Without zoos, a lot of animals could have been extinct. Zoos are trying to prevent animals from going extinct, and they're doing a great job! Animals such as red wolves were saved. Zoos take a male and a female so they can have babies and make more of the animal's kind. When animals mate in zoos their babies won't get diseases from the wild. Zoos are trying to stop extinction and they're doing great.

When visiting a zoo, you can learn so much. you are able to see animals without paying a \$200 plane ticket. zoos are a great way to learn and have fun. No

**Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases**

customers learn at zoos the workers do to about animal behavior to make their habitats better. Thank goodness zoos are here, so we can learn a lot about different animals.

Zoos benefit both people and animals. We could help by going to a zoo and paying a fee to get in. when we do that all the money goes to the zoo and animals. It is impossible to help kids learn while having fun seeing the animals in person. With the help of zoos you will support a lot of animals. So with that said next times you do not know go to a zoo!

**Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented that summarizes the argument and suggests an action to be taken**

In this fourth-grade opinion piece, written in response to an informational article, the writer clearly states an opinion (“*There should be zoos*”) and provides three reasons for the opinion (“*zookeepers give so much care to the animals*”, “*animals could have been extinct*”, “*you can learn so much*”). Related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose. Each reason is discussed in a focused paragraph and is supported with facts (“*red wolves were saved*”) and details (“*zoos take a male and female animal so they can have babies*”). Linking words and phrases (“*because*”, “*so*”) connect ideas within paragraphs. The concluding paragraph summarizes the argument (“*Zoos benefit both people and animals.*”) and suggests an action to be taken (“*go to a zoo*”).

**File Name: O4R Wow I am glad we have zoo**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Wow! I Am Glad We Have Zoos!

There should be zoos because they save animals and help people learn a lot about animals. Did you know thirty species of animals were saved because of zoos? Zoos give great care that most animals don't receive in the wild. I am so glad that there are zoos to save animals. What would we do without them?

There should be zoos because zookeepers give so much care to the animals. There are no longer cages, and the fences are hidden, so the animals feel like they're in the wild. Zoos make sure to hide the animals' food so they can learn to hunt. Sometimes there's tinted glass so the animals can't see all the chaos going on. I am so glad the zookeepers give their time to care for the animals. Thank goodness we have zoos!

Without zoos, a lot of animals could have become extinct. Zoos are trying to solve the problem of extinction, and they're doing a great job! Animals such as red wolves were saved. Zoos take a male and a female so they can have babies. This makes more animals of its kind. When animals mate in zoos, their babies won't get diseases from the wild. Zoos are trying to stop extinction, and they're doing great.

When visiting a zoo, you can learn so much. You are able to see animals from faraway places without paying for a \$200 plane ticket. Zoos are a great way to learn and have fun. Not only do the

customers learn at zoos, but the workers do, too—about animal behavior and how to make animal habitats better. Thank goodness zoos are here so we can learn a lot about different animals.

Zoos benefit both people and animals. We could help by going to a zoo and paying a fee to get in. When we do that, all the money goes to the zoo and animals. It is important that we have zoos to help kids learn while they are having fun and seeing the animals in person. With your help, zoos can support a lot of animals. So, with that said, the next time you do not know what to do, go to a zoo!

**File Name: O4R Wow I am glad we have zoo**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 4**

**Instructional writing**

Wow I am glad we have zoo

There should be zoos because they save animals and help people learn a lot about animals.

Did you know thirty species of animals were saved because of zoos? Zoos give great care that most animals don't receive in the wild. I am so glad that there are zoos to save animals, what would we do without them?

There should be zoos because zookeepers give so much care to the animals. There are no longer cages and the fences are hidden so the animals feels like there in the wild. Zoos make sure to hide the animals food so they can learn to hunt, sometimes theres a tinted glass so the animals cant see all the chaos going on. I am so glad the zookeepers give there time to care for the animals.

Thanks goodness we have zoos.

Without zoos, a lot of animals could have been extinct. Zoos are trying to solve the problem of extinction and there doing a great job! Animals such as red wolves were saved. Zoos take a male and a female so they can have babies and make more of the animals kind. This makes more animals of its kind. when animals mate in zoos their babies wont get diseases from the wild. zoos are trying to stop extinction and they're doing great.

When visiting a zoo you can learn so much.you are able to see animals from far away places without paying a \$200 plane ticket.zoos are a great way to learn and have fun.Not only do the

customers learn at zoos the workers do to about animal behavior to make their habitats better. Thank goodness zoos are here, so we can learn a lot about different animals.

Zoos benefit both people and animals. We could help by going to a zoo and paying a fee to get in. when we do that all the money goes to the zoo and animals. It is important we have zoos to help kids learn while having fun seeing the animals in person. With the help of you going to a zoo, you will support a lot of animals. So with that said next times yon do not know what to do, go to a zoo!

**File Name: O5R Global Warning**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **Global Warning**

*Deep in the Arctic a mother polar is returning from a long, hard day of hunting. But looking ahead she sees the ice floes she uses to get home are much farther apart. It will be a lot harder to make it home. She jumps in and swims for it but pretty soon becomes exhausted. Just when she can't make it any further another ice floe appears. She barely made it.*

**Clearly introduces the topic or text using a narrative lead**

Sadly, not all polar bears are this lucky. The North Polar ice caps are melting rapidly causing all sorts of problems needing grave attention. The cause of this problem I can sum up in two words. Global warming. Global warming is caused by carbon dioxide and other air pollution that's collecting up and trapping the sun's heat. Many of us never dream that little things like driving a car and turning on the lights could be part of the reason this planet is warming up. Scientists believe that U.S. temperatures could be 3 to 9 degrees higher by the end of the century. To make matters worse, global warming doesn't only affect polar bears, but people and places all over the **world**. It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has cause' before it's too late.

**States an opinion**

Global warming is a huge problem most people don't seem to be aware of. And the environment is just one of the things changing around us. Things never hear of before are jeopardizing our planet. In 2002, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon suffered through one of the worst wildfire seasons ever. At the

same time, Montana and Texas endured droughts that were creating dust storms. And to add to all these rugged weather changes, just the next year, 2003, extreme heat waves caused more than 20,000 deaths in Europe and more than 1,500 deaths in India. Talk about changing climate.

And I'm only getting started. Let's go back to the polar bears. As I briefly mentioned before, in the Arctic and Antarctic dramatic changes are happening. Even though the Arctic is a region meant to stay frozen 365 days a year, the ice cap is melting rapidly. Unless we stop releasing greenhouse gases the polar ice cap will completely disappear each year during summertime. In the book An Inconvenient Truth, it clearly states, "This is a dangerous situation for all of us, because the Arctic ice cap plays a very crucial role in cooling the entire planet." We are in a very serious position. **We must stop Global Warming!**

**Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases**

As Al Gore once said, "Each one of us is a cause of global warming, but each of us can become part of the solution..."

It isn't too late to stop global warming, or at least slow it down a bit. And who better than us, the cause of this awful problem, to do just that.

Tell me, how often do you use your car? Don't get me wrong! I don't want you to stop using it completely, but cars are the 2<sup>nd</sup> to largest source of global warming. Cars burn off tons carbon dioxide. This creates a hole in the ozone layer. Very VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole which contributes to global warming.

One quick and easy way to save money and gas is to carpool with your friends and family. That way instead of the pollution from 2 cars, it will be just one! Or even better, buy a hybrid car! These energy efficient cars have gas electric engines and cut global warming pollution by one third or more! Much better than *Hummers* and SUV's. The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution.

**Provides reasons that are supported by facts and details** and includes statistics as supporting evidence

It's hard to believe that something as simple as the light bulb could play a major role in global warming. But there is a way to save energy for everything. Instead of picking incandescent light bulb choose a compact fluorescent one instead. You'll lower your energy bill AND keep nearly 700 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the air. How about that, a way to save money, and the environment! Another way to reduce carbon dioxide pollution is to take a chance and try a refrigerator with the Energy Star label. That indicates it uses at least 15 percent less energy than the federal requirement. Try to make everything you do one more step towards solving global warming. Every little thing counts.

If we want our children to grow up in a carefree, healthy world, we need to start working toward it now. We are not just hurting the earth, but hurting ourselves and the way we live. Some of it we can't help, but most of it we can and **should** try to change. When so much has already been lost to us, think how life might be in a few years. In the words of Al Gore—

**Provides an effective concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.**

**“It is our only home.**

**And we must take care of it.”**

This fifth-grade research project concluded in an opinion piece urging readers to stop global warming. The problem is introduced with a vignette designed to help the reader understand the effect global warming is having on polar bears. This is followed by an introduction which provides some context on the issue and clearly states an opinion (*“It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has caused before it’s too late.”*) The writer creates an organizational structure, which supports her purpose by first explaining the problem and then suggesting possible solutions. Ideas within the piece are linked using words and phrases (*“As I briefly mentioned before”, “unless”, “because”*). The writer’s reasoning is well supported with facts (*“cars are the 2<sup>nd</sup> to largest source of global warming”*), and details (*“Very VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole which contributes to global warming.”*), including statistics (*“The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution.”*) The piece concludes with a call to action and a well-chosen quote. Although this piece is unusually well-crafted, much of its effectiveness comes from a deep understanding of the issue discussed. A key component in writing effective opinion pieces is having a carefully thought out and well-reasoned opinion!

**File Name: O5R Global Warning**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Global Warning**

*Deep in the arctic, a mother polar is returning from a long, hard day of hunting. Looking ahead she sees the ice floes she uses to get home are much farther apart. It will be a lot harder to make it home. She jumps in and swims for it, but pretty soon becomes exhausted. Just when she can't make it any further, another ice floe appears. She barely made it.*

Sadly, not all polar bears are this lucky. The North Polar ice caps are melting rapidly, causing all sorts of problems needing grave attention. The cause of this problem I can sum up in two words. Global warming. Global warming is caused by carbon dioxide and other air pollution that's collecting and trapping the sun's heat. Many of us never dream that little things like driving a car and turning on the lights could be part of the reason this planet is warming up. Scientists believe that U.S. temperatures could be 3 to 9 degrees higher by the end of the century. To make matters worse, global warming doesn't only affect polar bears, but people and places all over the **world**. It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has caused before it's too late.

Global warming is a huge problem most people don't seem to be aware of. And the environment is just one of the things changing around us. Things never heard of before are jeopardizing our planet. In 2002, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon suffered through one of the worst wildfire seasons ever. At the

same time, Montana and Texas endured droughts that were creating dust storms. And to add to all these rugged weather changes, just the next year, 2003, extreme heat waves caused more than 20,000 deaths in Europe and more than 1,500 deaths in India. Talk about changing climate!

And I'm only getting started. Let's go back to the polar bears. As I briefly mentioned before, in the Arctic and Antarctic dramatic changes are happening. Even though the Arctic is a region meant to stay frozen 365 days a year, the ice cap is melting rapidly. Unless we stop releasing greenhouse gases, the polar ice cap will completely disappear each year during summertime. In the book An Inconvenient Truth, it clearly states, "This is a dangerous situation for all of us, because the Arctic ice cap plays a very crucial role in cooling the entire planet." We are in a very serious position. **We must stop Global Warming!**

As Al Gore once said, "Each one of us is a cause of global warming, but each of us can become part of the solution..."

It isn't too late to stop global warming, or at least slow it down a bit. And who better than us, the cause of this awful problem, to do just that?

Tell me, how often do you use your car? Don't get me wrong, I don't want you to stop using it completely, but cars are the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest source of global warming. Cars burn off tons carbon dioxide. This creates a hole in the ozone layer. Very, VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole, which contributes to global warming.

One quick and easy way to save money and gas is to carpool with your friends and family. That way instead of the pollution from 2 cars, it will be just one! Or even better, buy a hybrid car! These energy efficient cars have gas electric engines and cut global warming pollution by one third or more—much better than *Hummers* and SUV's. The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution.

It's hard to believe that something as simple as the light bulb could play a major role in global warming. But there is a way to save energy for everything. Instead of picking an incandescent light bulb, choose a compact fluorescent one instead. You'll lower your energy bill AND keep nearly 700 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the air. How about that, a way to save money, and the environment! Another way to reduce carbon dioxide pollution is to take a chance and try a refrigerator with the Energy Star label. That indicates it uses at least 15 percent less energy than the federal requirement. Try to make everything you do one more step towards solving global warming. Every little thing counts.

If we want our children to grow up in a carefree, healthy world, we need to start working toward it now. We are not just hurting the earth, but hurting ourselves and the way we live. Some of it we can't help, but most of it we can and **should** try to change. When so much has already been lost to us, think how life might be in a few years. In the words of Al Gore—

**“It is our only home.**

**And we must take care of it.”**



**File Name: O5R Global Warning**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **Global Warning**

*Deep in the Arctic a mother polar is returning from a long, hard day of hunting. But looking ahead she sees the ice floes she uses to get home are much farther apart. It will be a lot harder to make it home. She jumps in and swims for it but pretty soon becomes exhausted. Just when she can't make it any further another ice floe appears. She barely made it.*

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Global warming is a huge problem most people don't seem to be aware of. And the environment is just one of the things changing around us. Things never hear of before are jeopardizing our planet. In 2002, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon suffered through one of the worst wildfire seasons ever. At the

same time, Montana and Texas endured droughts that were creating dust storms. And to add to all these rugged weather changes, just the next year, 2003, extreme heat waves caused more than 20,000 deaths in Europe and more than 1,500 deaths in India. Talk about changing climate.

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Tell me, how often do you use your car? Don't get me wrong! I don't want you to stop using it completely, but cars are the 2<sup>nd</sup> to largest source of global warming. Cars burn off tons carbon dioxide. This creates a hole in the ozone layer. Very VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole which contributes to global warming.

One quick and easy way to save money and gas is to carpool with your friends and family. That way instead of the pollution from 2 cars, it will be just one! Or even better, buy a hybrid car! These energy efficient cars have gas electric engines and cut global warming pollution by one third or more! Much better than *Hummers* and SUV's. The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution.

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If we want our children to grow up in a carefree, healthy world, we need to start working toward it now. We are not just hurting the earth, but hurting ourselves and the way we live. Some of it we can't help, but most of it we can and **should** try to change. When so much has already been lost to us think how life might be in a few years. In the words of Al Gore—

**“It is our only home.**

**And we must take care of it.”**

**File Name: O5R Homework**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

**Homework: How much is enough??**

Recently our class read an article in the Time for Kids Magazine. The title was “Too Much Homework!?” and it was about how much homework kids are doing today. It said that 100 years ago, kids never had any homework because they had to work on their farms or do chores for their families.

**Introduces the text clearly**

But in the 1950’s, American kids began to score really low on math and science tests. Other countries were doing better than we were. Teachers thought that since their students were getting low grades, they should do some homework to practice and catch up to the rest of the world. Since then students have been getting more and more homework and it doesn’t look like that is going to change. I think that students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun. So, students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade.

**States an opinion**

One reason to have homework is kids can become more responsible.

**Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases**

For example, if someone usually forgets a due date, he can practice remembering and using an assignment book to help him remember his homework. When kids grow up and get a job, they will have deadlines to meet and homework is good practice for that.

Another reason to have homework is a kid can become faster at doing his work. If he needs to practice multiplication he can do that at home better than at school. Also, some kids who have big projects or posters would rather work where it is quiet and they can concentrate better. Also, long searches on the Internet are done at home easier than at school because you can be comfortable at home and you don't have a schedule to keep.

**Provides logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.**

These are the reasons why I think students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade. If you agree with what I have said you should write a letter to A-----  
 --- School addressed to the Superintendent and Principal so she can show it to the School Board. Thank you for your support.

**Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented.**

This fifth-grade opinion piece was written after reading an article called “Too Much Homework!?”. The writer begins by introducing the text, and then clearly introduces the topic using specific facts from the text (“*But in the 1950’s American kids began to score really low on math and science tests*”). After establishing this context, the writer states an opinion (“*I think students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun.*”), and then provides two reasons for the opinion. Each reason is explained, using supporting facts (“*When kids grow up and get a job they will have deadlines to meet*”) and details (“*he can practice remembering and using an assignment book*”). Related ideas are grouped in paragraphs to support the writer’s purpose, and phrases are used to link reasons to the opinion (“*One reason*”, “*For example*”, “*Another reason*”). The concluding section offers a specific recommendation (students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by sixth grade) and a call to action (“*if you agree with what I have said you should write a letter*”).

**File Name: O5R Homework**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

**Homework: How much is enough??**

Recently our class read an article in the “Time for Kids” Magazine. The title was “Too Much Homework!?” and it was about how much homework kids are doing today. It said that 100 years ago, kids never had any homework because they had to work on their farms or do chores for their families.

But in the 1950’s, American kids began to score really low on math and science tests. Other countries were doing better than we were. Teachers thought that since their students were getting low grades, they should do some homework to practice and catch up to the rest of the world. Since then, students have been getting more and more homework, and it doesn’t look like that is going to change. I think that students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun. So, students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade.

One reason to have homework is that kids can become more

responsible. For example, if someone usually forgets a due date, he can practice remembering and using an assignment book to help him remember his homework. When kids grow up and get jobs, they will have deadlines to meet and homework is good practice for that.

Another reason to have homework is that a kid can become faster at doing his work. If he needs to practice in multiplication, he can do that at home better than at school. Also, some kids who have big projects or posters would rather work where it is quiet and they can concentrate better. Also, long searches on the Internet are more easily done at home than at school because you can be comfortable at home and you don't have a schedule to keep.

These are the reasons why I think students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade. If you agree with what I have said, you should write a letter to A-----  
---- School addressed to the superintendent and principal so she can show it to the School Board. Thank you for your support.

**File Name: O5R Homework**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

**Homework: How much is enough??**

Recently our class read an article in the Time for Kids Magazine. The title was “Too Much Homework!?” and it was about how much homework kids are doing today. It said that 100 years ago, kids never had any homework because they had to work on their farms or do chores for their families.

But in the 1950’s, American kids began to score really low on math and science tests. Other countries were doing better than we were. Teachers thought that since their students were getting low grades, they should do some homework to practice and catch up to the rest of the world. Since then students have been getting more and more homework and it doesn’t look like that is going to change. I think that students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun. So, students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade.

One reason to have homework is kids can become more responsible.

For example, if someone usually forgets a due date, he can practice remembering and using an assignment book to help him remember his homework. When kids grow up and get a job, they will have deadlines to meet and homework is good practice for that.

Another reason to have homework is a kid can become faster at doing his work. If he needs to practice multiplication he can do that at home better than at school. Also, some kids who have big projects or posters would rather work where it is quiet and they can concentrate better. Also, long searches on the Internet are done at home easier than at school because you can be comfortable at home and you don't have a schedule to keep.

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**File Name: O5R Roll of Thunder**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

**Book Response on Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor takes place in Mississippi in the 1930's, a time when segregation was present. Some of the characters in this story are: the Logans (Cassie, Stacey, Little Man, Christophe John, Mama, and Papa), T.J. Avery, and Mr. Morrison. In the book, one of the characters, Mr. Morrison says, "In those years I suppose it was just as hard being free as it was being a slave." In this book response, I am going to use examples from the book to help explain why I agree with that quote.

**Introduces the text clearly** by providing some background information about the time period, as well as the quote on which the response is based

One of the examples to support the quote is Soldiers Bridge. Soldiers Bridge is a bridge on which white men have power over black men. The bridge has only one lane for only one car. If two people with the same skin color meet at the bridge, the person who reached the bridge first gets to go first. If a white and a black meet at the bridge, the white automatically gets to go first, always.

**States an opinion**

**Provides logically ordered reasons** for the opinion **that are supported by details** from the text.

This is true even if the black wagon/car is halfway across the bridge. The blacks would have to back off the bridge, and allow the whites to cross! This makes them feel like slaves obligated to obey their masters' commands.

Another example is Mama losing her job. Mama lost her job as a school teacher because Mr. Granger, who is the school district manager (and who also wants the Logans' land) claimed that Mama was teaching inappropriate information at the school, and should not be teaching anymore. Mr. Granger is white, and he feels strongly that whites are better than blacks. Mama was teaching about slavery and how black women/men were treated unfairly. He wanted a reason to fire her because without her paycheck, the Logans would not have enough money to pay the taxes for their land, and he might be able to get it.

Another example is the Jefferson School Bus (the white school's bus) **Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases** that drives past Cassie, Stacey, Christopher John, and Little Man every mornin as they walk to school. The driver and the children make fun of the Logans and laugh at them. If it has rained the night before, the driver would speed up and splash mud at the Logans. The Logan children felt mad, and humiliated, but they could do nothing to stop the white bus driver from doing this. They were

like slaves, because they had no control over what was happening to them.

Yet another example to support Mr. Morrison's idea, is the Wallace store. The Wallace store is the local store where people shop (and which also sells alcoholic beverages). Most of the white men gather at the Wallace Store to drink, smoke, and play cards. If black skinned people were to enter the Wallace Store, the drinkers and smokers would insult them by calling them names, like "nigger" and they would make fun of them. The blacks would also always be served last. This is like Soldiers Bridge, because even if a black person was already being waited on, if a white person arrived, Mr. Wallace would stop waiting on the black person, and help the white person. This is definitely not fair.

My last example is the textbooks that the students are given in the black school. At first the black students were all excited about the new books, but when Little Man accepts his book, their point of view changes completely. The "new" textbooks are discards from a white school, where they were used until they were in very bad condition. Little Man ( who is very meticulous) refused to use his book because it was old and dirty. Little Man's teacher became mad and used the whip on him.

As you can see from the situations I have explained, life for the Logans during this time was completely unfair. They were treated unfairly, because their skin is black. The black skinned people in this story were treated with almost no respect from the white skinned people in this story. Although slavery had ended, these people were still treated like slaves because the whites would order them around, and they would have to obey, or risk their lives.

**Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented.**

This well-constructed piece was written after reading the novel, "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry". The writer uses events from the text to support the opinion that, for the Logans, it was "just as hard to be free as it was to be a slave." The piece is logically organized; the opinion is clearly stated at the end of the first paragraph, followed by five examples from the text, each explained in a well-elaborated paragraph. Linking words and phrases ("*One of the examples*", "*Another example*", "*As you can see*") connect the writer's opinion with clear examples from the text. The concluding paragraph restates the opinion ("*Although slavery had ended, these people were still treated like slaves*") and summarizes the reasons for it ("*they were treated unfairly...with almost no respect...and they would have to obey or risk their lives.*").

**File Name: O5R Roll of Thunder**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

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**File Name: O5R Roll of Thunder**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

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***6-12 Range of Writing  
Argument/Opinion Samples***

**File Name: A6R Animals are Smart**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Animals are Smart**

Some people think that we are superior to animals but I think that animals are as smart as we are. Pets react to your moods and seem to know just when it's dinner time! Some animals use tools, communicate and think for their own.

If animals can use tools, they must be smart. For instance, a cow named Betty made a hook out of a piece of metal wire. That's obviously pretty smart but she didn't stop there. She then used the hook to get treats out of a glass tube. I think this is smart because Betty figured out how to make a tool to get something she wanted. Another smart animal who used a tool was Fu Manchu the Orangutan. Fu Manchu first traded Food for wire with another orangutan and then he hid it in his mouth until the right time. Then he used the wire as a tool to pick the lock on his cage and escape. I think this shows Fu Manchu was smart because he used a tool and he outsmarted humans by escaping from his cage.

Animals who communicate might be even smarter than animals who use tools. For instance one clever gorilla actually learned sign language! Not only that but she started making her own signs. This showed scientists that she was trying to communicate her thoughts, which takes big brainpower. I think this is smart because when Koko made her own signs it showed that she wasn't just memorizing signs, she was thinking and making her own signs. Another smart animal who could understand communication was Betsy the dog. Betsy understands 340 spoken words! Not only that, but when someone showed her a picture of something she had never seen before she would go and get the item. I think this is really smart because Betsy didn't just

**Introduces claim**, with a bit of context (*some people think we are superior to animals*), which functions as a counterclaim

**Organizes the reasons and evidence clearly**

**Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic**

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify relationships among claim and reasons**

**Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic**

memorize words she could recognize objects and fetch them. Betsy didn't really communicate, but I think she understood so much. It's just as good.

For animals who don't communicate or use tools there is another category: Animals that think on their own. For example, the poison dart Frog. Aside from protecting themselves with poison, they have AMAZING memories! The mothers hide their pollywogs in individual nests all over the jungle and had to remember where each one is and to come back every couple days to feed them! I think that is amazing how they think for their own because every pollywog (up to 35!) is in a different, camouflaged spot and their mom can still remember where each and every one is. Another example of animals thinking on their own is Alex, the African grey parrot. Alex can figure out alikeness and diference between two objects. For instance, when scientists hold up two objects and ask what the difference is he will answer either shape or color, depending on what it was. This is really smart because not only can Alex tell the difference he can tell what is the same about some objects. I'd say that is a pretty smart bird to be able to figure out what was the same and different in his mind, but he also translated that out into words. I'd say these animals are really smart in thinking on their own.

I know that some of you may think that animals are not smart. Some of you may think that animals are not smart. Some of you may think that most of the animals I talked about were special, that they were bred in a lab. But animals in natural life are smart too. For instance, a girl in my class named Erin has a farm, and every day her dad goes out at 2:30 AM to milk them. The cows line up at 2:25 am without being told. I think that this is smart because the cows know what time it is, AND line up early without being told. I think this is really smart of the cows. Another real life example of smart animals is my friend Mandy's Cockatoo. Now, you all know Cockatoos repeat what is said. This Cockatoo, However takes it a step farther. Instead of just saying things at random times, she actually answers the door when the doorbell is rung. She doesn't open the door, but she does say things like "Hello", and "Come in." I

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify relationships among claims and reasons**  
Writer explains her thinking, relating back to claim

Introduces a counterclaim which writer then refutes

think this is smart because instead of just saying random words, she responds with the right words at right time.

My goal of this essay was to convince you that animals were smart. You may have already known this and reading this essay was a waste of time to you. Or, you might have thought animals were not smart and still think that. If that is the case I have failed in my essay. However If you have changed your mind and now think that animals are smart, I have succeeded! I know that animals are smart, especially ones that use tools, communicate, and think for their own.

**Provides concluding statement** that follows from the argument presented

In this assignment, the student has been working with a study of animals and has read several informational pieces. She appears to be responding to a Focusing Question of “What have you learned about how smart animals are?” The writer makes the claim that animals are smart, in spite of anticipation that some might disagree with her.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, and uses credible and relevant evidence to develop the reasons, showing her understanding of her topic. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. She uses phrases (such as “*this shows*” and “*this is really smart because*”) to clarify the relationship between the claim she makes about animals being smart and the reasons and evidence she gives to support the claim. She even includes a form of counter-claim (“*some of you may think that animals are not smart*”), which she refutes, even though use of the counterclaim is not stated in the Standards for this grade level.

While the writer occasionally adopts a personal tone, (“*my goal of this essay was to convince you...*”), the overall tone of the essay is appropriately formal. The writer concludes by restating the focus / claim about animals being smart.

**File Name: A6R Animals are Smart**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Animals are Smart**

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**File Name: A6R Tom Sawyer**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Tom Sawyer**

Having complicated characters in a book makes the story more interesting, as well as enjoyable to read. Tom Sawyer is one of those kinds of characters that is very complicated and sometimes hard to put into one group, such as likable or dislikable.

**Introduces claim**, by giving some context about complicated characters, and about the setting of the text

The book *Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain, is about a boy, age twelve, named Tom who lives in a small town in Missouri. He lives with his Aunt, Aunt Polly. The Mississippi River, which runs very close to the town is often the center of the excitement. The story is about how Tom grows up in the small town, and the adventures he and his friends have.

I think that even though Tom does do some very brave and admirable things, the author, Mark Twain, wants us to think of Tom as a character to dislike. For example, Tom often gets his friends into trouble. Also, Tom does sometimes steal things. When it is little things he is stealing, like a doughnut from Aunt Polly, it seems okay. But when it is bigger things from somebody else, it is a big deal because whatever he stole could be important to that person, or it could be necessary for them to survive.

**States a focus / claim**

However, Tom is not *only* dislikable. He has done some very good things and it is easy to see why many people would like him. For example, even when Tom runs away to be a pirate, he still feels that he should say his prayers, even though nobody is there to tell him he has to. He can also be very kind to his friends, and help them when they are stuck in difficult situations, or when they are in trouble.

**Distinguishes claim from opposing claim** (that in some ways Tom is likeable). Opposing claim is fully and fairly developed with evidence from the text

One example of Tom being kind to his friends is the time when his friend Becky is in big trouble. She accidentally ripped the school Master's book, that she was not even supposed to open. When the schoolmaster found out that someone had ripped the book, he was furious. He began to ask the students one by one, who had done it. When he came to Becky, Tom knew she would not be able to keep the secret, so he

jumped up and yelled, “I done it!” That is an example of a time when Tom did a very brave thing, by taking the blame for Becky.

**Organizes the reasons and evidence clearly**

Another example of how Tom could be considered a likeable character is when Tom ran off to be a pirate with his friends, Joe Harper and Huckleberry Finn. Even though they had run off so no one could tell them what to do, they found themselves feeling bad about the things they had stolen. They also felt they should still say their prayers, even though nobody was there to tell them to. That shows that even though he had run away to become a pirate, he is still good.

A third example of how Tom could be considered as a good person is the time when he saved Becky in the cave. It really was his fault that they got lost in the first place, because he lead them further and further in the cave. But in the end, he saved her. He left her and let her sleep, and he traveled around the cave and eventually he found an entrance out. He then went back into the cave to find her. Then he makes his way back with her, and they both are able to escape the cave. It was brave of Tom to go back into the cave for Becky.

Distinguishes claim from opposing claim (that in some ways Tom is likeable). Opposing claim is developed fully and fairly with evidence from the text

A last example of Tom acting as the kind of character you would admire is the time when Tom was going to leave a note for Aunt Polly saying that he was not dead, and had only run away. But Tom did not end up leaving the note. However, he did kiss Aunt Polly in her sleep, before leaving. This shows that even though Tom ran away, he still cares about Aunt Polly, and that is good.

**Establishes and maintains a formal style**

However, although Tom does show some examples of being a likeable character, he shows even more examples of being dislikable. One example of this is when Tom and Huck witness Injun Joe murder Dr. Robinson. Huck and Tom swear not ever to tell anyone about the murder. Later, Tom breaks the vow, and confesses in front of everyone. But Huck never broke the vow, and in some ways Tom betrayed him. Also, if Tom and Huck had told earlier, but this time agreed to both tell, Muff Potter would not have been falsely accused of murder. If Muff Potter had been proven innocent by Tom and Huck, he would not be in jail for nearly as long as he was, if at all.

Restates claim, then supports with clear reasons and relevant evidence from the text about why Tom is dislikeable, demonstrating an understanding of the text

Another example of Tom as a dislikeable character is the day he meets the new boy. Almost the minute Tom meets him, they are in a fight. Tom ends up winning, and he beats up the new boy badly. That was a pretty mean thing for Tom to do, especially when it is the new kid.

**Supports claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence** from the text about why Tom is dislikeable, **demonstrating an understanding of the text**

Another time, Tom steals a whole leg of a ham. He and his friends are playing a game, and Tom takes a ham from a family. That much ham is a lot of meat, and for many families back then, that much meat could last the whole winter. It was a really terrible thing to do, because whoever he stole the meat from, might even need it to survive. Tom should never have stolen that meat. His friends too had taken things like fish or bacon from other families.

A third example of Tom doing something that the reader would think of as a dislikeable thing about Tom, is again, the time when Tom, Huck, and Joe run away. Tom knows that Aunt Polly is worried sick, and very sad. But Tom and his friends don't even leave a note to their parents, or anything to let them know that they are okay. That is a very cruel thing to do to them, to keep them waiting, thinking the boys are dead.

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationship among claims and reasons**

But the most dislikable thing about Tom is the way Tom takes advantage of his friends. One example of this is when Tom is given the job of whitewashing the fence. Tom tricks his friends into doing his chore. He makes the job seem important by telling his friends that they would not be able to do a good enough job at it. They beg him and they trade him all sorts of things to do his job, and he knows he is being mean, and tricking them. Then Aunt Polly gives him an apple for the good work, that he didn't even do, but he steals a doughnut from her anyway. Later, when Tom goes to Sunday school, he gives his friends back the things they traded him to whitewash the fence, in exchange for bible tickets. The Sunday School gives out a blue ticket for every two verses memorized. Ten blue tickets equaled one red ticket, ten reds equals one yellow, and for ten yellow tickets you got a copy of the bible. Tom traded his whitewashing earnings for enough tickets for a bible. Then in front of the whole Sunday school Tom receives a bible. I think that is a truly nasty thing to do. He basically cheated to get the bible, and he cheated his friends.

Overall, Tom Sawyer is a complicated character that the author wants us to think of as a dislikeable one. Although Tom does do things that are likeable, the dislikable ones outweigh it. A lot can be learned from Tom about people's characteristics, and about what they are really like.

**Provides concluding section** that follows from the argument presented

In this assignment, the student has read and studied *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. She is responding to a Focusing Question of “Do you think the author wants the reader to think of Tom as a likeable or a dislikeable character?” The writer makes the claim that although Tom is likeable in many ways, the weight of the evidence lies with him being dislikeable.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons. She uses relevant evidence from the text to develop the reasons, showing her understanding of her topic and the text. The writer organizes her ideas clearly and supports her claim with logical reasoning. She uses phrases (such as “*this shows*” and *the “most dislikeable thing about Tom”*) to clarify the relationship between the claim she makes about Tom being dislikeable and the reasons and evidence she gives to support the claim. She even includes substantial use of counter-claim (“*However, Tom is not **only** dislikeable. He has done some very good things and it is easy to see why many people would like him.*”). The writer refutes this by pointing out the weight of the evidence supporting her claim. This use of the counterclaim is not stated in the Standards for this grade level.

The overall tone of the essay is appropriately formal. The writer concludes by restating the focus / claim that Tom is dislikeable and reflects a bit on what can be learned from Tom, which, again, is not required by the Standards at this grade level.

**File Name: A6R Tom Sawyer**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Tom Sawyer**

Having complicated characters in a book makes the story more interesting, as well as enjoyable to read. Tom Sawyer is one of those kinds of characters that is very complicated and sometimes hard to put into one group, such as likable or dislikable.

The book *Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain, is about a boy, age twelve, named Tom who lives in a small town in Missouri. He lives with his Aunt, Aunt Polly. The Mississippi River, which runs very close to the town is often the center of the excitement. The story is about how Tom grows up in the small town, and the adventures he and his friends have.

I think that even though Tom does do some very brave and admirable things, the author, Mark Twain, wants us to think of Tom as a character to dislike. For example, Tom often gets his friends into trouble. Also, Tom does sometimes steal things. When it is little things he is stealing, like a doughnut from Aunt Polly, it seems okay. But when it is bigger things from somebody else, it is a big deal because whatever he stole could be important to that person, or it could be necessary for them to survive.

However, Tom is not *only* dislikable. He has done some very good things and it is easy to see why many people would like him. For example, even when Tom runs away to be a pirate, he still feels that he should say his prayers, even though nobody is there to tell him he has to. He can also be very kind to his friends, and help them when they are stuck in difficult situations, or when they are in trouble.

One example of Tom being kind to his friends is the time when his friend Becky is in big trouble. She accidentally ripped the school Master's book, that she was not even supposed to open. When the schoolmaster found out that someone had ripped the book, he was furious. He began to ask the students one by one, who had done it. When he came to Becky, Tom knew she would not be able to keep the secret, so he jumped up and yelled, "I done it!" That is an example of a time when Tom did a very brave thing, by taking the blame for Becky.

Another example of how Tom could be considered a likeable character is when Tom ran off to be a pirate with his friends, Joe Harper and Huckleberry Finn. Even though they had run off so no one

could tell them what to do, they found themselves feeling bad about the things they had stolen. They also felt they should still say their prayers, even though nobody was there to tell them to. That shows that even though he had run away to become a pirate, he is still good.

A third example of how Tom could be considered as a good person is the time when he saved Becky in the cave. It really was his fault that they got lost in the first place, because he led them further and further in the cave. But in the end, he saved her. He left her and let her sleep, and he traveled around the cave and eventually he found an entrance out. He then went back into the cave to find her. Then he makes his way back with her, and they both are able to escape the cave. It was brave of Tom to go back into the cave for Becky.

A last example of Tom acting as the kind of character you would admire is the time when Tom was going to leave a note for Aunt Polly saying that he was not dead, and had only run away. But Tom did not end up leaving the note. However, he did kiss Aunt Polly in her sleep, before leaving. This shows that even though Tom ran away, he still cares about Aunt Polly, and that is good.

However, although Tom does show some examples of being a likeable character, he shows even more examples of being dislikable. One example of this is when Tom and Huck witness Injun Joe murder Dr. Robinson. Huck and Tom swear not ever to tell anyone about the murder. Later, Tom breaks the vow, and confesses in front of everyone. But Huck never broke the vow, and in some ways Tom betrayed him. Also, if Tom and Huck had told earlier, but this time agreed to both tell, Muff Potter would not have been falsely accused of murder. If Muff Potter had been proven innocent by Tom and Huck, he would not be in jail for nearly as long as he was, if at all.

Another example of Tom as a dislikeable character is the day he meets the new boy. Almost the minute Tom meets him, they are in a fight. Tom ends up winning, and he beats up the new boy badly. That was a pretty mean thing for Tom to do, especially when it is the new kid.

Another time, Tom steals a whole leg of a ham. He and his friends are playing a game, and Tom takes a ham from a family. That much ham is a lot of meat, and for many families back then, that much meat could last the whole winter. It was a really terrible thing to do, because whoever he stole the meat from, might even need it to survive. Tom should never have stolen that meat. His friends too had taken things like fish or bacon from other families.

A third example of Tom doing something that the reader would think of as a dislikeable thing about Tom, is again, the time when Tom, Huck, and Joe run away. Tom knows that Aunt Polly is worried sick, and very sad. But Tom and his friends don't even leave a note to their parents, or

anything to let them know that they are okay. That is a very cruel thing to do to them, to keep them waiting, thinking the boys are dead.

But the most dislikable thing about Tom is the way Tom takes advantage of his friends. One example of this is when Tom is given the job of whitewashing the fence. Tom tricks his friends into doing his chore. He makes the job seem important by telling his friends that they would not be able to do a good enough job at it. They beg him and they trade him all sorts of things to do his job, and he knows he is being mean, and tricking them. Then Aunt Polly gives him an apple for the good work, that he didn't even do, but he steals a doughnut from her anyway. Later, when Tom goes to Sunday school, he gives his friends back the things they traded him to whitewash the fence, in exchange for bible tickets. The Sunday School gives out a blue ticket for every two verses memorized. Ten blue tickets equaled one red ticket, ten reds equals one yellow, and for ten yellow tickets you got a copy of the bible. Tom traded his whitewashing earnings for enough tickets for a bible. Then in front of the whole Sunday school Tom receives a bible. I think that is a truly nasty thing to do. He basically cheated to get the bible, and he cheated his friends.

Overall, Tom Sawyer is a complicated character that the author wants us to think of as a dislikeable one. Although Tom does do things that are likeable, the dislikable ones outweigh it. A lot can be learned from Tom about people's characteristics, and about what they are really like.

**File Name: A7R The Fight for Education****Opinion/Argument****Grade 7****Range of Writing****The Fight for Education**

*I ran as fast as I could. I could see my destination just ahead of me. Just a little further, I kept saying to myself, just a little further and I will have made it to the land of the free and the home of the brave, the land of opportunity.*

*Diego finally got to his destination. He had gotten to America without getting caught. Now he could get the education to become a mechanic.*

Like Diego, many illegal immigrants come to America every day for a better life and a better education. Whether these illegal immigrants should get the education they came for is very controversial in today's economy. Some Americans think that illegal immigrants shouldn't be eligible for instate tuition, but other Americans think that these illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition. I am one who thinks that illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition.

One of the most important arguments is that illegal immigrants pay taxes. By buying goods in America they are paying sales taxes, and in April most files and pay their [income] taxes. In fact, illegals pay about nine billion dollars in [Social Security] taxes every year. Where do these taxes go? They go to lowering the cost of instate tuition, making it so affordable today. So why shouldn't the illegal immigrants be eligible for instate tuition when they are helping to lower the price of the tuition?

Another important argument is one that our forefathers set forth to make a better nation. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are

Narrative lead engages reader, gives context about issue of illegal immigrants.

**Introduces claim:** Like Diego, mar introduction gives context about issue of whether or not illegal immigrants should receive in-state college tuition.

**Acknowledges competing claims**

States focus / claim

**Organizes the reasons and evidence logically** One of the most

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify relationships among claim and reasons**

**Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic** A reasons importa

created equal...and hold unalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” If we are truly equal, then illegal immigrants deserve the same rights as we do for instate tuition.

However, some Americans say that illegal immigrants don’t deserve instate tuition because they are sending money back to their home country and families. But we do not know how much money they are actually sending back, and besides, this helps spread the money around. It may even help a foreign country to get out of poverty. This could actually stop more illegal immigrants from coming to America because they would be stable enough from the money that is being sent to them so that they don’t need to look to the land of opportunity for a job.

In conclusion, illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition so, like Diego, they can follow their dreams. If you ever have to take a side on this issue, I hope you will consider mine.

**Acknowledges** However, some counterclaims, then rebuts with reasons and relevant, accurate, credible evidence and reasoning

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify relationships among claim and reasons**

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports argument presented**

In this assignment from a social studies class, at the end of a unit on immigration, the student was asked to take a position on whether or not illegal immigrants should be eligible for in-state tuition. She gives an introduction of some background / context on the issue and makes a claim that in her view illegal immigrants should be eligible for in-state tuition.

The writer supports her claim with several reasons, which she develops with some relevant, accurate, credible evidence. She supports her claim with logical reasoning, and organizes the reasons logically. In addition, she acknowledges the counterclaims. She then refutes the counterclaim with support for her own position, even though use of counterclaim is not stated in the Standards at this grade level. The writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion ties back to the narrative lead, and follows from and supports the argument presented.

**File Name: A7R The Fight for Education**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 7**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Fight for Education**

*I ran as fast as I could. I could see my destination just ahead of me. Just a little further, I kept saying to myself, just a little further and I will have made it to the land of the free and the home of the brave, the land of opportunity.*

*Diego finally got to his destination. He had gotten to America without getting caught. Now he could get the education to become a mechanic.*

Like Diego, many illegal immigrants come to America every day for a better life and a better education. Whether these illegal immigrants should get the education they came for is very controversial in today's economy. Some Americans think that illegal immigrants shouldn't be eligible for instate tuition, but other Americans think that these illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition. I am one who thinks that illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition.

One of the most important arguments is that illegal immigrants pay taxes. By buying goods in America they are paying sales taxes, and in April most files and pay their [income] taxes. In fact, illegals pay about nine billion dollars in [Social Security] taxes every year. Where do these taxes go? They go to lowering the cost of instate tuition, making it so affordable today. So why shouldn't the illegal immigrants be eligible for instate tuition when they are helping to lower the price of the tuition?

Another important argument is one that our forefathers set forth to make a better nation. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...and hold unalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." If we are truly equal, then illegal immigrants deserve the same rights as we do for instate tuition.

However, some Americans say that illegal immigrants don't deserve instate tuition because they are sending money back to their home country and families. But we do not know how much money they are actually sending back, and besides, this helps spread the money around. It may even

help a foreign country to get out of poverty. This could actually stop more illegal immigrants from coming to America because they would be stable enough from the money that is being sent to them so that they don't need to look to the land of opportunity for a job.

In conclusion, illegal immigrants should be eligible for instate tuition so, like Diego, they can follow their dreams. If you ever have to take a side on this issue, I hope you will consider mine.

**File Name: A8R Years Gone By**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

**Years Gone By;  
The Importance of Great Literature**

“That one day little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

As years have gone by, as we take actions and feel emotions, we embark upon a search for something to describe the indescribable, to understand the most complicated of thoughts, and to ease unrelenting pain. It is in this search that we stumble upon literature, and we have learned that it can be one of the most effective tools to both spiritually and bodily heal the wounds of human nature.

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s message of equality is one that has stayed rooted deep in American history. He speaks of a problem that must not be neglected. In many cases, the key to problems such as these is understanding and awareness. Through literature we find that we benefit through both. Really great literature speaks to you forever, despite years of actions taken and emotions felt.

An example of such literature is the book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain. Through its main character, Huckleberry Finn, a young, boisterous white boy who has recently run away, and his friend Jim, a runaway slave, live the values of America and the values of a very turbulent, but loyal friendship.

Regardless of its message, Mark Twain’s talent and its ability to withstand, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is at risk of being taken off the shelves of schools across the country. As an American student, I firmly believe that we must make a stand against this potentially great loss, and make sure that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is kept in our schools and in our

**Introduces a claim:**

Introduction sets stage for claim to follow, connecting the purpose of great literature with the American ideal of equality

Defines problem / issue at hand (*Huckleberry Finn* being challenged in curriculum)

States focus / **claim**

minds for the sake of describing the indescribable, understanding the most complicated of thoughts and easing pain.

Some may disagree with the message conveyed by Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. With fire in their eyes they say that such a book encourages bad behavior and addresses racism in such a way that it should not be on school shelves.

First, they find that Huck is too unlawful a child to be portrayed as a hero. He steals, lies, and runs away. He has no problem going against the law or his own conscience and takes pride in achievements he has been taught not to strive for, they point out. However, to this point we shake our head. Many, many books have characters that lead lives that today's children are taught against. Among the pages of The Old Testament, Cain, brother of Able, stands clearly as a wrong-doer in order to help us better understand the negative forces of human nature. Though some may believe that Huck is among these undying wrong-doers, he may well be, like Cain, an example of how not to act. Yet you cannot classify Huck as a bad or good person, he is one of the many complicated characters that call the pages of great literature home. When stealing, Huck is actually "borrowing", his lies cause him great stress and come back to haunt him. When he runs away, he is running from an abusive father, taking control of a situation that was headed for disaster. When he goes against his conscience it is for the sake of a friend. In that case, Huck decides that the laws of human nature are more important than the laws that are ignorant, laws that discriminate, laws that could undeservingly take away what is yours. Huck is indeed no criminal, and if anything his values are something to be admired.

Those who still believe that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* should be taken off our schools' shelves say that it addresses racism in a way that is inappropriate for students. But that point, like the other, holds no water. It addresses racism in an appropriate and indeed necessary format. Like Martin Luther King Jr.'s message, it enables us to understand

**Distinguishes claim from opposing claims in a series of counterclaims**

Explains counterclaim thoroughly

**Phrases and clauses clarify relationships within reasons**

**Acknowledges an opposing claim, which the writer distinguishes from the claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, demonstrating a deep understanding of the text and topic**

**Organizes the reasons and evidence logically  
Establishes and maintains a formal style.**

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence**

and at the same time helps us become aware of how poorly African-Americans were treated during the time the book was set, and it does this in a true-to-life and very real layout. Also, Huck and Jim strike a friendship that white people and slaves could not have in the limits of society during the time period and this reminds the reader in many places that everyone deserves the same freedom and equality.

You must also take into account that if there is any place to read a book with possibly risky content it would be inside classrooms, classrooms where the material would certainly be discussed and explained. In class is perhaps the safest place for one to read this book, or any book that could result in conflicting viewpoints. To take it off the shelves of schools would be to take away the ability to help children understand and be aware of the deeper meaning, and therefore they would be worse off than if it were to be in their schools.

In light of the past arguments, we must now press on to show you what an excellent book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain really is. It is a book that contains important illustrations of racism and how to overcome it, as well as many American values.

First, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* illustrates a struggle that has been deeply rooted in our past, and remains deeply rooted in the present. Though we have come a long way, a wall built of racial cloud still stands. Huck and Jim find a way to get past this wall and despite slavery and the examples set in society, treat each other as equals. In Chapter 15, titled “Fooling Poor Old Jim” Huck tries to play a trick on Jim to make fun of him, not thinking about Jim’s feelings. When Jim discovers the truth he is deeply hurt, but is able to express that to Huck. Hearing of his friend’s sadness, Huck in turn apologizes for his actions.

“En when I wake up en fine you back agin, all safe en soun’, de tears come, en I could ‘a’ got down on my knees en kiss yo’ foot, I’s so thankful. En all you wuz thinking’ ‘bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is *trash*; en trash is what people is dat puts

**Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, thereby demonstrating deep understanding of the text and topic, including broader ideas about education**

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence**

**Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including direct quotations, thereby demonstrating deep understanding of the text and topic; uses precise references to text which are thoroughly analyzed and explained**

dirt on de head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed.' Then he got up slow and walked to the wigwam, and went in there without saying anything but that. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed *his* foot to get him to take it back. It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger – but I done it and I warent every sorry for it afterward, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd 'a' knowed it would make him feel that way.”

It is a very important time in this book when Jim is able to express to Huck how being lied to hurt him, especially when he thought of Huck as a friend. After Jim has spoken of feelings and retired for bed, Huck takes time to reflect upon his actions, and how they made Jim feel. Fifteen minutes later, despite what society taught him, Huck apologies to Jim as only a friend would, and takes what Jim says to heart.

Not only does *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* address racism in an appropriate way and remarkably find a way to overcome it, but in many ways it reminds the reader of the important values that can only too often be forgotten in America. One of the biggest is freedom. Both Huck and Jim are searching for freedom, escaping the imprisonment of slavery and an abusive father. Another value that is evident is equality. As expressed in the quote above, Huck and Jim find that equality is an essential in their friendship. Through this understanding, they manage to stay friends despite all that life throws their way.

One clear and significant value shows in this book is perseverance. Both Huck and Jim set a valiant and enduring example of this value throughout the book. Despite Huck's father and slave catchers close on their trail; a rattlesnake skin that constantly brings them bad luck; a wrecked ship that accommodated a murder plot; a tumultuous friendship and a family blinded by bloodshed, Huck and Jim find themselves pushing that much harder to reach the freedom that their hearts desire. They find courage and want within each other, and as a heroic duo conquer all that flows to them upon the river of life.

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence**

**Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, thereby demonstrating deep understanding of the text and topic; uses precise references to text which are thoroughly analyzed and explained**

There are many values evident in this book that are set down in the Declaration of Independence, and values that have stood the test of time. This brings us back to the fact that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* must be taught in schools. As Huck and Jim lead their lives they set the examples that are crucial to students' education. When people learn how to treat each other and learn significant values at a young age, they are given the opportunity to apply those lessons to their future and in turn teach their children. To leave these lessons behind would be doing these students a disservice, for it is lessons like these that teach us who we are, who we need to be.

Great literature is a food that is scarce, but it will always be universal. Do your part to foster its presence in your life, and the life of the youth of America. As years have gone by, as actions are taken and emotions are felt, we all search for something to describe the indescribable, to understand an idea that is conflicting, or to ease unrelenting pain. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain is a possible outcome of that search, teaching the significance of friendship, freedom and equality. Under the nose of a visceral world, two differing runaways find shelter in a friendship banned from society. In this friendship, they teach the world the importance of understanding and the importance of great literature.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented**

In this assignment from a language arts class, the student was asked, after studying *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, to take a position on whether or not the book should continue to be included in the school curriculum. She gives an introduction of some background / context on the issue, and makes a claim that the book should continue to be included.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, which she supports thoroughly and thoughtfully with relevant, accurate evidence from the text, showing deep understanding of both the text and the issue, and even of broader connections to bigger ideas like equality and the purpose of education. In a clearly organized essay, she relies on logical reasoning to develop her claim and persuade her audience of the correctness of her position. In addition, she thoroughly and thoughtfully acknowledges the counterclaim that there are reasons to eliminate the book, then refutes that counterclaim with clear and logical, text-based reasoning.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument presented and synthesizes the key points.

**File Name: A8R Years Gone By**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

**Years Gone By;  
The Importance of Great Literature**

“That one day little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.”

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As years have gone by, as we take actions and feel emotions, we embark upon a search for something to describe the indescribable, to understand the most complicated of thoughts, and to ease unrelenting pain. It is in this search that we stumble upon literature, and we have learned that it can be one of the most effective tools to both spiritually and bodily heal the wounds of human nature.

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s message of equality is one that has stayed rooted deep in American history. He speaks of a problem that must not be neglected. In many cases, the key to problems such as these is understanding and awareness. Through literature we find that we benefit through both. Really great literature speaks to you forever, despite years of actions taken and emotions felt.

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You must also take into account that if there is any place to read a book with possibly risky content it would be inside classrooms, classrooms where the material would certainly be discussed and explained. In class is perhaps the safest place for one to read this book, or any book that could result in conflicting viewpoints. To take it off the shelves of schools would be to take away the ability

to help children understand and be aware of the deeper meaning, and therefore they would be worse off than if it were to be in their schools.

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“‘En when I wake up en fine you back agin, all safe en soun’, de tears come, en I could ‘a’ got down on my knees en kiss yo’ foot, I’s so thankful. En all you wuz thinking’ ‘bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is *trash*; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren’s en makes ‘em ashamed.’ Then he got up slow and walked to the wigwam, and went in there without saying anything but that. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed *his* foot to get him to take it back. It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger – but I done it and I waren’t every sorry for it afterward, neither. I didn’t do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn’t done that one if I’d ‘a’ knowed it would make him feel that way.’”

It is a very important time in this book when Jim is able to express to Huck how being lied to hurt him, especially when he thought of Huck as a friend. After Jim has spoken of feelings and retired for bed, Huck takes time to reflect upon his actions, and how they made Jim feel. Fifteen minutes later, despite what society taught him, Huck apologizes to Jim as only a friend would, and takes what Jim says to heart.

Not only does *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* address racism in an appropriate way and remarkably find a way to overcome it, but in many ways it reminds the reader of the important values that can only too often be forgotten in America. One of the biggest is freedom. Both Huck and Jim are searching for freedom, escaping the imprisonment of slavery and an abusive father. Another value that is evident is equality. As expressed in the quote above, Huck and Jim find that equality is an

essential in their friendship. Through this understanding, they manage to stay friends despite all that life throws their way.

One clear and significant value shows in this book is perseverance. Both Huck and Jim set a valiant and enduring example of this value throughout the book. Despite Huck's father and slave catchers close on their trail; a rattlesnake skin that constantly brings them bad luck; a wrecked ship that accommodated a murder plot; a tumultuous friendship and a family blinded by bloodshed, Huck and Jim find themselves pushing that much harder to reach the freedom that their hearts desire. They find courage and want within each other, and as a heroic duo conquer all that flows to them upon the river of life.

There are many values evident in this book that are set down in the Declaration of Independence, and values that have stood the test of time. This brings us back to the fact that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* must be taught in schools. As Huck and Jim lead their lives they set the examples that are crucial to students' education. When people learn how to treat each other and learn significant values at a young age, they are given the opportunity to apply those lessons to their future and in turn teach their children. To leave these lessons behind would be doing these students a disservice, for it is lessons like these that teach us who we are, who we need to be.

Great literature is a food that is scarce, but it will always be universal. Do your part to foster its presence in your life, and the life of the youth of America. As years have gone by, as actions are taken and emotions are felt, we all search for something to describe the indescribable, to understand an idea that is conflicting, or to ease unrelenting pain. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain is a possible outcome of that search, teaching the significance of friendship, freedom and equality. Under the nose of a visceral world, two differing runaways find shelter in a friendship banned from society. In this friendship, they teach the world the importance of understanding and the importance of great literature.

**File Name: A8R We Need the League**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

### **We Need the League**

Great people of North Dakota,

I, Senator McCumber, [an actual Senator from 1919 in the League of Nations debate], have just participated in a debate regarding whether or not America should sign the Treaty of Versailles, and in doing so, join the League of Nations. The League of Nations is a unified group of nations dedicated to the preservation of peace. The League is designed to deal with international issues, adjudicating differences between countries instead of them going directly to combat.

Now, in the interests of the great state of North Dakota, I voted in favor of the treaty with no reservations. We need a fair treaty to prevent future wars as horrible as the Great War was. After the war, the central powers composed the Treaty of Versailles to create the League of Nations in an attempt to ward off future conflicts. We cannot have another war as horrible as this one. I believe, because of that, that we need a fair treaty, equal to all its members, that will restrict the use of new weapons, and prevent future wars from breaking out.

First, the Treaty and the League will control the use of new weapons. As stated in Article VII, “One of its (the League’s) jobs will be to come up with a plan for reducing the number of weapons around the world (arms reduction).” This means that the League will be in charge of weapons issues. This will cause heavily armed countries to demilitarize and make it less possible for war to break out. This is good because heavily armed countries generally end up using those arms in some way.

Another reason why I believe we need to sign the Treaty with no reservations is we need a treaty that is fair to all its members. Reservations

**Introduces a claim:**

The introduction gives specific context about the issue whether to join the League of Nations in 1919. Writer makes the claim of supporting U.S. entry into League of Nations and **distinguishes it from alternate claims** that the U.S. should not vote to enter League.

**States focus / claim**

Defines problem, reason for debate; gives enough background / context so that a reader can follow writer's thinking.

**Organizes the reasons and evidence logically**

**Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence**, including direct quotations, **from accurate, credible sources**, thereby **demonstrating understanding of the topic**

[proposed by the League's opponents] would give America too much power within the league, thus allowing America to bend the rules of the League to suit its own will. This would cause unrest in the League, possibly causing America to make enemies. This could lead to another war. The treaty should be as fair as possible.

**Establishes and maintains a formal style.**

Yet another reason why I voted for America to sign the treaty is the fact it would prevent future wars from breaking out. The way the League is designed, it would give plenty of time for the League to settle the countries' differences with a fair and equal compromise. If war were to break out, the council members in the League would all help in defending each other, thus ending the war as quickly as possible with as few deaths as possible. The treaty would prevent war from happening or end the fighting as quickly as possible.

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence**

Some people say that we shouldn't join the League because we would be intervening in foreign affairs, that it would cause another war. How can you not intervene when 8 million people died in the last war? How can you stand there with a clear conscience when you know you could have prevented all that carnage from ever happening? The League will help countries settle their differences with plenty of time to talk it over. Six months for the countries to listen to the council's advice, and after that another three months before they can mobilize. If we join the League, we will keep anything like the Great War from happening again.

**Acknowledges an opposing claim, which the writer distinguishes from the claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the topic**

In conclusion, the Treaty of Versailles needs to be signed so the League will be put into affect. The League of Nations will prevent war from breaking out, restrict weapons development and militarism, and keep us from the horrors of another Great War.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from the argument presented**

Thank you.

In this assignment from a social studies class, the student was asked, in the persona of a senator from 1919, to take a position on whether or not the United States should join the League of Nations. He gives an introduction of some background / context on the issue, and makes a claim that in his view the United States should join the League.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he develops with relevant, accurate, credible evidence. In a clearly organized essay, he relies largely on logical reasoning to develop his claim and persuade his audience of the correctness of his position. In addition, he acknowledges the counterclaim that there are reasons to not support the League, then refutes that counterclaim with an argument that is both moral (*eight million people died, so how can we not support the League?*) and practical (*the League will give countries time to talk out their differences instead of going to war*). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion is a basic restatement that follows from the argument presented.

**File Name: A8R We Need the League**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

### **We Need the League**

Great people of North Dakota,

I, Senator McCumber, [an actual Senator from 1919 in the League of Nations debate], have just participated in a debate regarding whether or not America should sign the Treaty of Versailles, and in doing so, join the League of Nations. The League of Nations is a unified group of nations dedicated to the preservation of peace. The League is designed to deal with international issues, adjudicating differences between countries instead of them going directly to combat.

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Another reason why I believe we need to sign the Treaty with no reservations is we need a treaty that is fair to all its members. Reservations [proposed by the League's opponents] would give America too much power within the league, thus allowing America to bend the rules of the League to suit its own will. This would cause unrest in the League, possibly causing America to make enemies. This could lead to another war. The treaty should be as fair as possible.

Yet another reason why I voted for America to sign the treaty is the fact it would prevent future wars from breaking out. The way the League is designed, it would give plenty of time for the League to settle the countries' differences with a fair and equal compromise. If war were to break out, the council members in the League would all help in defending each other, thus ending the war as quickly as possible with as few deaths as possible. The treaty would prevent war from happening or end the fighting as quickly as possible.

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In conclusion, the Treaty of Versailles needs to be signed so the League will be put into affect. The League of Nations will prevent war from breaking out, restrict weapons development and militarism, and keep us from the horrors of another Great War.

Thank you.

**File Name: A9-10R Is It Love?**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 9**

**Range of Writing**

### **Is It Love?**

One of the most misunderstood emotions is love. There are so many different perspectives that it can be interpreted as something completely opposite of its intention. Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird* states that “it’s a love story, plain and simple.” This statement confuses many people because her book is anything but a romance novel. However, that is not the kind of love she is referring to. This is the love among family, friends, neighbors, and enemies. This love is called *agape*, and as Martin Luther King defines it, it is “a disinterested love in which the individual seeks not his own good, but the good of his neighbor...it begins by loving others *for their sakes*...it’s a love seeking to preserve and create community” (King 19-20). In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, love is brought up in many ways. Love is shown throughout the book as different actions by the characters coming together so they can understand each other.

Atticus shows love towards his neighbor Ms. Dubose, even though she is completely disrespectful towards him. Everyday she insults Atticus and his children because he is defending Tom Robinson, but he does nothing to stop her. Instead, he sends Jem over to her house everyday for about a month to read to her. One day, it is Atticus who goes to her house, and he stays for most of the day. When he returns home, he tells Jem that she has died, and the reason he had to read to her was because “ Ms. Dubose was a morphine addict”(147). Atticus knew that she wanted to die free, and he helped her achieve her goal by sending Jem to read to her, so she could get her mind off the drug. “She said she was going to leave this world beholden to nothing and nobody” Atticus tells Jem (148). This is when Atticus and Jem realize her true determination to no longer be a morphine addict, and it’s in this way that they both truly understand her. Even though she was dying, Atticus still sends Jem to read to her everyday to help her become sober. Even when she is dying, Ms. Dubose is still

**Introduces a precise claim:**  
The introduction states a claim and then gives context about the subject, acknowledging it as a **substantive topic** (connecting upcoming claim with Martin Luther King's concept of the *Greek agape*)  
**Distinguishes** upcoming claim from potential competing counterclaims or misunderstanding

States focus / claim

**Supports claim with logical reasoning, accurate and credible evidence and demonstrates understanding of the topic / text;** uses precise references to text, which are thoroughly analyzed and explained

Phrases and clauses  
254  
clarify relationships within  
reasons and evidence.

trying to conquer her addiction, and it's for that reason Atticus says, "She was the bravest person I ever knew" (149). Love is shown here because even though Ms. Dubose is completely disrespectful towards Atticus, he steps up to help her die free. This is an example of agape because instead of fighting hate with hate, Atticus loves Ms. Dubose, and by doing so, he is able to understand her, and therefore love her.

Reminds reader of **claim**

Another place love shows up is during the trial. Atticus truly believes that Tom Robinson is not guilty, and he goes out of his way to prove his point in courts. A majority of Maycomb is mad at Atticus for even taking the case, let alone actually trying to set him free. Atticus turns to the jury and tells them, "I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you have heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family"(275). Atticus fights as hard as he can to prove his case, but it just isn't what people want to hear. The jury votes Tom Robinson guilty, and less than a week later he is shot. This upsets Atticus, and especially Jem. But Atticus comforts Jem by telling him it affected somebody on the jury, because one of the Cunninghams wanted to vote 'not guilty'. Confused, Jem says, " One minute they're tryin' to kill him and the next they're tryin' to turn him loose...I'll never understand those folks as long as I live" (298). Jem is too young to really understand, but Atticus knows his case is changing the views and thoughts of racism in their community. After the trial, Atticus is surprised to find that the entire black community gave his family a surplus of food as a thank you. This touches his heart because he starts crying, and he tell Calpurnia to "Tell them I'm very grateful" (86). We again see love in this situation because Atticus got the jury to understand Tom, even though he ends up dead. Also, when Tom's friends and family reach out to thank Atticus for his efforts and his true support in the trial, we can see that there is understanding. One step at a time, Atticus is changing the thoughts of the people in the community to make it stronger by using agape.

**Supports claim with logical reasoning, accurate and credible evidence and demonstrates understanding of the topic / text; uses precise references to text, which are thoroughly analyzed and explained**

Reminds reader of **claim**

**Supports claim with logical reasoning, accurate and credible evidence and demonstrates understanding of the topic / text; uses precise references to text, which are thoroughly analyzed and explained**

One of the places we see the most love is with Boo Radley. He is just a misunderstood man who Jem and Scout torment and talk about throughout the summer. Boo, however, does little things to change their opinion of him. One night when there is a fire, Boo Radley comes out of his

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline**

house and puts a blanket on Scout without knowing- a very loving and caring gesture. When Jem tells Atticus, he says, “Someday, maybe, Scout can thank him for covering her up” (96). After this, the kids start thinking of Boo differently. One night, after the play, Jem and Scout are attacked in the woods by Mr. Ewell when they are walking home. Suddenly, somebody kills their attacker and brings injured Jem home. It’s not until they are home that Scout realizes it was Boo who saved them. “Hey, Boo” she says (362). This is the part of the story that the reader sees how much Boo Radley loves Jem and Scout. When Scout looks out from Boo’s porch, she glimpses his perspective, and summarized the events that took place over the summer, and thinks, “Autumn again, and Boo’s children needed him” (374). Boo cares for these children so much that he considers them his own kids. This is another example of agape, because he’s giving without expecting anything in return. It’s when Jem and Scout finally realize this that they know they love him back, which brings them closer together.

We see countless examples of love throughout the book through the characters actions. Martine Luther states that agape is “understanding” (King 19). The more the characters understand each other, the more they come to care and love each other. This makes them all, as a community, much stronger. “It’s a love story, plain and simple” Harper Lee states. Not a romance, but a book in which agape is shown throughout. This is a book of understanding, and when there’s understanding, there is agape. This love is important because this is what human nature needs in order to become united. King and Lee see this importance, and consider agape a tool used to bring people together to make a stronger community.

**Provides a concluding statement that follows from and supports argument presented; synthesizes arguments to talk about “stronger community”**

#### Works Cited

- King, Martin Luther. “An Experiment in Love.” *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King*. Ed. James M. Washington. San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 199. 16-20.
- Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. New York: Grand Central, 1982. Print.

In this assignment from a language arts class, the student was asked, after studying *To Kill a Mockingbird*, to support the position that the book should be considered a love story. She gives an introduction of some background / context on the concept of love as *agape*, and makes a claim that in her view the book is indeed a love story.

The writer develops her claim with several reasons, which, here, take the form of deep evidence from the text. She develops her thinking thoroughly with relevant, accurate, credible evidence, showing deep understanding of the text and the concept of *agape*. She organizes her ideas clearly and relies on logical reasoning to develop her claim. In this essay, she does not address counterclaims except a bit in the introduction, but here the counterclaim is not needed.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument presented and synthesizes the key points.

**File Name: A 9-10R Is It Love?**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 9**

**Range of Writing**

### **Is It Love?**

One of the most misunderstood emotions is love. There are so many different perspectives that it can be interpreted as something completely opposite of its intention. Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird* states that “it’s a love story, plain and simple.” This statement confuses many people because her book is anything but a romance novel. However, that is not the kind of love she is referring to. This is the love among family, friends, neighbors, and enemies. This love is called *agape*, and as Martin Luther King defines it, it is “a disinterested love in which the individual seeks not his own good, but the good of his neighbor...it begins by loving others *for their sakes*...it’s a love seeking to preserve and create community” (King 19-20). In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, love is brought up in many ways. Love is shown throughout the book as different actions by the characters coming together so they can understand each other.

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fighting hate with hate, Atticus loves Ms. Dubose, and by doing so, he is able to understand her, and therefore love her.

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#### Works Cited

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**File Name: A9-10R Keep On Reading**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 10**

**Range of Writing**

### **Keep On Reading**

On the first day of school, the students walk into the classroom and see a book on every desk. The teachers happily greets them and tells everyone to sit at a desk with a book that seems interesting to them. The pupils tentatively sit down in their seats and look up at their young teacher for instructions, but she sits down and is soon deeply absorbed in her story, eyes shimmering in the light. The pupils gaze in wonder at her and slowly crack open their books. We've grown up reading, but not very often do we see a teacher who exemplifies reading. Reading is recurrently a forced activity. Therefore, people both young and old feel like they HAVE to read, and so it's only something they have to do for school or work. They don't see it as an amazing skill that will not only help with their futures but also a great hobby to enjoy in life. Continuing to silent read for at least the first ten minutes of every class is a very good idea.

The first reason why reading is class is a good idea is because it helps get some of our required silent reading done. Envision Anne, an active, sweet young lady who participates in sports and also plays a big part in the school play. The little time she spends at home every day is reserved for homework assignments and memorizing her lines. Time reading in class at school cuts down on the time Anne has to make in order to read. Reading is important to Anne but she knows she can't possibly read and make good reflections if she doesn't have the time to do so. Some people just don't have the time, so making them read more outside of school is like telling the workers of IBM to go play a football game every day- there's just not enough time outside of work and school.

There are people who say that silent reading doesn't help low level readers, but in reality, it actually helps a lot. James McNair has many

Uses narrative lead to set context and engage reader

**Introduces precise claim:** The introduction states a claim about the value of ten minutes of silent reading; **distinguishes it from alternate claims** that many students do not see the value of silent reading. **Topic is substantive.**

States focus / **precise claim**

**Supports claim with logical and valid reasoning, accurate and credible evidence. Points out strengths of reason by anticipating the knowledge level and concerns of the audience** (teachers, other students, parents).

Names **counterclaim**

techniques to help children better comprehend what they are reading. He says that children can get bored with reading if it has no meaning to them (i.e. when reading as a class, not everyone is on the same level, and therefore, the lower level readers are not as interested). Once a child discovers the wonders of reading, they are sure to come across words they don't know (2). When this happens, silent reading will surely help because they can go over words they do know, and learn as they go. This really helps since classwork reading may be harder for lower level readers and they have many words they don't understand as opposed to learning a couple new words a day. They need practice in order to read better so if students are not surrounded by reading then they will not get better. In a research evaluation by Chow & Chou, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students were allowed 10 minutes each day to silent read and improved their reading skills by the end of the year (4). This is solid proof that having time to read in class is a benefit to everyone.

**Creates an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence**

**Develops claims and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each**

Reminds reader of claim.

Silent reading is not only fun, it paves way for tests – no one is allowed to read out loud or have questions read to them during a test. All tests require you to read at least questions. This doesn't include the rereading you need to do when you write essays for a test, an example being the NECAPs. Based on the National Center for Educational Statistics of 2008, reading is one of the few factors that can be the big change in test scores. The more you practice reading, the more enhanced your vocabulary gets. This helps not only the reading part, but also the writing parts, most importantly on standardized tests. Getting students to read in school ensures at least some practice for the testing that the United States schools have for students.

**Uses clauses to link major sections of text, creating cohesion and clarifying relationships between reasons and claims**

**Supports claim with logical and valid reasoning, accurate and credible evidence. Points out strengths of reason by anticipating the knowledge level and concerns of the audience (teachers, other students, parents).**

Not only is silent reading useful, it allows students to choose what they want to read, which in turn can help their future. Too frequently, class discussions are based on books that the teacher selects for their students to read. Students may get bored of always having their choices made for them and some even take it for granted and can soon forget how to deal with life on their own. KC, an avid reader, agrees: "Picking your own books allows you to be more prepared for real life, not just a classroom where decisions are typically made for you". By having the choice to find

**Establishes and maintains formal style, objective tone**

their own books, students become more independent in the process. School prepares them for life, but their choices prepare them for their future.

Silent reading during school hours has been a widely argued situation in many school districts of the world. We should continue to have silent reading for at least ten minutes every day, especially because of Winooski High School's Tier 1 situation. Our school officials say that our NECAP scores are getting lower and require more structure to help fix it. If that's the case, then silent reading could only help raise the scores reading well is a big part of the NECAPs, not only when we read the essays but also to read the questions that accompany them. Having a good knowledge of reading and reading strategies will help our school and a good start to getting there is through silent reading.

**Distinguishes claim about value of silent reading from counterclaim.**

**Provides a conclusion which follows from and supports arguments presented**

#### Sources

McNair, James. "Helping Children to Comprehend Faster For Better School Achievements". May 22 2009. *Ezine Articles*. March 10 2011 <http://ezinearticles.com/?Helping-Children-to-Comprehend-Faster-For-Better-School-Achievements&id=2381196>.

In this assignment from a language arts class, the student was asked to take a position on whether or not the school should continue its program of ten minutes of daily silent reading. He gives an introduction of some background / context on the issue, and makes a claim that in his view the ten minutes of silent reading should continue.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he develops with relevant, accurate, credible evidence. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning, on which he relies to develop his claim and persuade his audience of the correctness of his position. He also uses credible evidence to support and develop his claim. In addition, he acknowledges the counterclaim that there are reasons to not support the ten minutes of silent reading, then refutes that counterclaim with an argument that anticipates the concerns of his intended audience.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented.

**File Name: A 9-10R Keep On Reading**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 10**

**Range of Writing**

### **Keep On Reading**

On the first day of school, the students walk into the classroom and see a book on every desk. The teachers happily greet them and tell everyone to sit at a desk with a book that seems interesting to them. The pupils tentatively sit down in their seats and look up at their young teacher for instructions, but she sits down and is soon deeply absorbed in her story, eyes shimmering in the light. The pupils gaze in wonder at her and slowly crack open their books. We've grown up reading, but not very often do we see a teacher who exemplifies reading. Reading is recurrently a forced activity. Therefore, people both young and old feel like they HAVE to read, and so it's only something they have to do for school or work. They don't see it as an amazing skill that will not only help with their futures but also a great hobby to enjoy in life. Continuing to silent read for at least the first ten minutes of every class is a very good idea.

The first reason why reading in class is a good idea is because it helps get some of our required silent reading done. Envision Anne, an active, sweet young lady who participates in sports and also plays a big part in the school play. The little time she spends at home every day is reserved for homework assignments and memorizing her lines. Time reading in class at school cuts down on the time Anne has to make in order to read. Reading is important to Anne but she knows she can't possibly read and make good reflections if she doesn't have the time to do so. Some people just don't have the time, so making them read more outside of school is like telling the workers of IBM to go play a football game every day- there's just not enough time outside of work and school.

There are people who say that silent reading doesn't help low level readers, but in reality, it actually helps a lot. James McNair has many techniques to help children better comprehend what they are reading. He says that children can get bored with reading if it has no meaning to them (i.e. when reading as a class, not everyone is on the same level, and therefore, the lower level readers are not as interested). Once a child discovers the wonders of reading, they are sure to come across words

they don't know (2). When this happens, silent reading will surely help because they can go over words they do know, and learn as they go. This really helps since classwork reading may be harder for lower level readers and they have many words they don't understand as opposed to learning a couple new words a day. They need practice in order to read better so if students are not surrounded by reading then they will not get better. In a research evaluation by Chow & Chou, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students were allowed 10 minutes each day to silent read and improved their reading skills by the end of the year (4). This is solid proof that having time to read in class is a benefit to everyone.

Silent reading is not only fun, it paves way for tests – no one is allowed to read out loud or have questions read to them during a test. All tests require you to read at least questions. This doesn't include the rereading you need to do when you write essays for a test, an example being the NECAPs. Based on the National Center for Educational Statistics of 2008, reading is one of the few factors that can be the big change in test scores. The more you practice reading, the more enhanced your vocabulary gets. This helps not only the reading part, but also the writing parts, most importantly on standardized tests. Getting students to read in school ensures at least some practice for the testing that the United States schools have for students.

Not only is silent reading useful, it allows students to choose what they want to read, which in turn can help their future. Too frequently, class discussions are based on books that the teacher selects for their students to read. Students may get bored of always having their choices made for them and some even take it for granted and can soon forget how to deal with life on their own. KC, an avid reader, agrees: "Picking your own books allows you to be more prepared for real life, not just a classroom where decisions are typically made for you". By having the choice to find their own books, students become more independent in the process. School prepares them for life, but their choices prepare them for their future.

Silent reading during school hours has been a widely argued situation in many school districts of the world. We should continue to have silent reading for at least ten minutes every day, especially because of Winooski High School's Tier 1 situation. Our school officials say that our NECAP scores are getting lower and require more structure to help fix it. If that's the case, then silent reading could only help raise the scores reading well is a big part of the NECAPs, not only when we read the essays but also to read the questions that accompany them. Having a good knowledge of reading and reading strategies will help our school and a good start to getting there is through silent reading.

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**File Name: A11-12R The Day Dreamers**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 12**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Day Dreamers**

Have you ever wondered why so many students at \_\_\_\_\_ are sluggish and lethargic? Are they just lazy and unmotivated? No, most of them probably suffer from lack of sleep, caused by biological clocks that are set to a different schedule than their classes. Teenagers have a physiological need to stay up later and sleep longer than pre-adolescents, yet the daily schedule of the school runs oblivious to this.

\_\_\_\_\_ students usually have to get up a little before 6:30, yet it is only natural for teenagers to get up later in the mornings. According to Mark Mahowald, MD, director of the Minnesota Regional Sleep Disorders Center, “(Adolescents’) biological clocks program them to go to sleep late—too late to get an adequate amount of sleep before the next school day begins” (qtd. in Lamberg). Because he believes that most high schools open too early, he is leading a campaign to move the start of high school to 9 a.m. in Minneapolis. Puberty causes teenagers to go to sleep an hour later than when they were younger, according to Dr. Mary Caraskadon, director of chronobiology

Introduces issue / **topic** of whether or not <sup>high school</sup> students need a different schedule due to sleep needs. **Topic is substantive.**

At

Uses precise evidence to describe the problem, leading to **claim** made later in the essay that the schedule needs to be changed. Writer quotes experts in the field who have researched the issue and think the schedule needs to be changed for high school students.

and sleep research at Bradlet Hospital in Rhode Island (Lamberg). In contrast to this law of nature, \_\_\_\_\_ students have to go to school about an hour earlier than elementary school students in the same school district. Because of her research, Dr. Caraskadon agrees with Dr. Mahowald's opinions: "The practice of ringing the opening bell earlier in high school than in...elementary school may run precisely counter to children's biological needs" (qtd. In "Sleeping until...").

**Establishes and maintains formal style, objective tone**

Dr.

Caraskadon supports her argument to change the starting time of schools with studies showing that "adolescents need an hour more sleep every day to achieve the same level of alertness they experienced when younger, although they rarely get it: (Lamberg). Most teenagers need about nine hours of sleep every night, but only get about seven (Gofen 6). Because teenagers need to go to sleep later, but are forced to get up earlier, they don't get nearly as much sleep as they should. This could be remedied by holding school later, which would allow many students to get much closer to the amount of sleep they need.

**States focus / precise knowledgeable claim**

U-

32's early start every morning causes students to suffer academically. Students are so tired in school that many of them drift off during class, falling into a semi-conscious state. "I fell asleep once in my first band class for twenty minutes. I didn't wake up until the band ended," says Nathan, who is

**First reason supports claim with logical and valid reasoning, accurate and credible evidence. Points out strengths of reason by anticipating the knowledge level, concerns, and values of the**

one of the top students in the junior class (Bowles interview). Teenagers' lack of sleep causes them to be cranky and prevents them from thinking as well as they could if they weren't tired. According to Dr. William Dement, sleep expert from Stanford University, the effects of sleep loss are loss of initiative, loss of energy, lapse of attention, distractibility, and that overwhelming agony of wanting to go to sleep no matter what you're doing" (qtd. in Gofen 8). If they got an extra hour of sleep in the morning, students would be much more capable of learning and have a much more enthusiastic attitude towards learning. "Most adolescents are sub-optimally alert in the morning," says Dr. Mahowald. "If we as a society are sending our kids to school to learn, it would be wise to send them in a condition that fosters learning" (qtd. in Lamberg).

Sometimes students

Sometimes students skip school, and often come in late, because they dread waking up so early in the morning. "It's just too hard to get up early in the morning," says Tom, a junior. "I've been late to school so many times this year because I couldn't force myself to get up that early with such a small amount of sleep" (White interview). This is another way \_\_\_\_'s early start lowers grades. Less motivated students find it challenging to go to school anyway, and the early start is another reason not to.

**Uses clauses to link major sections of text, creating cohesion and clarifying relationships between reasons.**

In addition to damaging students' academic performance, waking up early

also harms students physically. Many students try to sleep as late as possible in the mornings and skip breakfast to get in another ten minutes of sleep. Lack of sleep also causes fatigue, especially because many teenagers are so busy with sports and other activities that require them to get a good night of sleep. Extended loss of sleep harms the immune system, hampering its ability to fight sickness and repair injuries (Gofen 8). Teenagers would get sick much less often if they slept enough, which would not only improve their health, but prevent them from missing more days of school.

**Uses clauses and varied syntax to link major sections of text, creating cohesion and clarifying relationships between reasons.**

p deprivation caused by an early schedule is not only academically harmful, but also dangerous. Sixteen to twenty-five year-olds cause 55% of sleep-related automobile accidents, according to a 1990-92 North Carolina study (Lamberg). Many \_\_\_\_\_ students drive to school in the morning, and administrators should consider how many lives are jeopardized by holding school so early.

Slee

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline**

ng the start of school back as little as an hour could help students get a lot  
 Moving the start of school back as little as an hour could help students get a lot more sleep. Students get so tired on weekdays that they sleep in extra late on the weekends to catch up on sleep. While this works, by the time Sunday night rolls around they are well rested and can't get to sleep until after midnight. This causes them to be extra tired Monday morning and for the rest of the week.

Movi

**Reason supports claim with logical and valid reasoning, accurate and credible evidence. Points out strengths of reason by anticipating the knowledge level and concerns of the audience (teachers, other students, parents).**

When people go to sleep and wake up at around the same time every day, they get used to this sleeping pattern. Once this healthy sleeping pattern is established, they do not have to catch up on their sleep or go without enough rest because they can't get to sleep. If teenagers were able to get up later on week days, they would get up earlier on weekends and form better sleeping habits. This would allow them to get more than an extra hour of sleep, even though school would start only an hour later.

Othe

r than the reasons, teenagers need to get up later than elementary school students because they stay up later. Play practice, athletic competitions, newspaper production night, and concerts all run until after nine o'clock, which is close to when students should be going to sleep. Often, though, teenagers have to do homework after these activities, and stay up much too late. "Homework, extracurricular activities...and sports all steal time from teens' sleep," according to Dr. Mahowald (Lamberg). The television shows and movies teenagers like to see also run well into the hours when they should be sleeping. Some high school students also work late into the night. Younger children hardly ever have a reason to stay up after nine o'clock, yet they have from then until seven-thirty in the morning to sleep, whereas high school students go to sleep much later and get up an hour earlier.

**Creates an organization that logically sequences claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence throughout**

Hold

ing school an hour later would be easy for our school to do. Currently,

buses pick up high school students and drop them off early in the morning and then take elementary school students to school. Although the bus schedule could be reversed, allowing high school students to go to school an hour later, \_\_\_\_\_'s principal J\_\_\_\_\_ says administrators would probably be against this. He says there is a concern that parents would not be awake to feed elementary school students and help them get ready for school if the students had to get up an hour earlier. He offered the solution that hiring a different bus company to transport the elementary school students would allow them to go to school at the regular time, while high school students could use the current bus company and go to school later. However, this would probably cost more money than the school district is currently paying for busing.

**Develops the claim and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience** (other students, parents, teachers, possibly school board members)

\_\_\_\_\_’s main concern with delaying the start of school is that if school started and ended an hour later, practices and games would run an hour later also. He thought that many teams would not have enough light after school to make a long road trip and then play a whole game. These students would have to get out of school early for many games, and this would cause them to miss a lot of school. He also feared that sometimes teams would not have enough light to practice. However, the only team this would really affect would be the cross country skiing.

J\_\_\_\_\_

There are solutio

**Acknowledges limits of claim; offers solutions to the problem so that all parties are satisfied.**

rescheduling of practice and games. Sports teams could save their long road trips for Saturdays, and play nearby teams on weekdays. The only team at \_\_\_\_\_ that couldn't do this would be the track team, because track meets have to start early. However, there are just two away meets this year which would require the team to leave school early, so these athletes wouldn't miss many classes. The ski team could deal with a later schedule by training immediately after school ends. This would give them at least an hour of outdoor training, and any skiers wanting more training could do it in the morning before school.

ng \_\_\_\_\_'s start back an hour would be beneficial to the school. Students would be healthier and do better academically, and, as surprising as it seems, there would be no major draw-backs. Administrators should ask themselves why this isn't happening already.

Movi

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument presented**

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- Bowles, Nathan. Personal interview on sleeping in school. East Montpelier, Vermont, 26 March 1995.
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- Gofen, Ethel. "Sleep, More Than Meets the (Shut-) Eye." Current Health 2. Jan. 1991: 5 – 11.
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White, Tom. Personal interview on school starting time. East Montpelier, Vermont, 26 March 1995.

In this assignment from a language arts class, the student was asked to research and take a position on an issue of his choice. He gives an introduction of some researched background / context on the issue of how much sleep teenagers need, and makes a claim that, in his view, the school should change the schedule so that high school students start later.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he develops with relevant, accurate, credible evidence. Although there is an occasional poor reason (*high school students stay up later watching television*), he relies largely on logical and valid reasoning, within a clear organizational structure, to develop his claim and persuade his audience of the correctness of his position. In addition, he acknowledges the counterclaim that there are reasons to not support the changed schedule, and takes pains to fully and fairly develop that position. Instead of refuting this counterclaim, he acknowledges its validity, approaches it as a problem, and offers solutions so that all parties could be satisfied. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains an objective throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument presented.



**File Name: A 11-12R The Day Dreamers**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 12**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Day Dreamers**

Have you ever wondered why so many students at \_\_\_\_\_ are sluggish and lethargic? Are they just lazy and unmotivated? No, most of them probably suffer from lack of sleep, caused by biological clocks that are set to a different schedule than their classes. Teenagers have a physiological need to stay up later and sleep longer than pre-adolescents, yet the daily schedule of the school runs oblivious to this.

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Moving the start of school back as little as an hour could help students get a lot more sleep. Students get so tired on weekdays that they sleep in extra late on the weekends to catch up on sleep. While this works, by the time Sunday night rolls around they are well rested and can't get to sleep until after midnight. This causes them to be extra tired Monday morning and for the rest of the week. When people go to sleep and wake up at around the same time every day, they get used to this sleeping pattern. Once this healthy sleeping pattern is establish, they do not have to catch up on their sleep or go without enough rest because they can't get to sleep. If teenagers were able to get up later on week days, they would get up earlier on weekends and form better sleeping habits. This would allow them to get more than an extra hour of sleep, even though school would start only an hour later.

Other than the reasons, teenagers need to get up later than elementary school students because they stay up later. Play practice, athletic competitions, newspaper production night, and concerts all run until after nine o'clock, which is close to when students should be going to sleep. Often, though, teenagers have to do homework after these activities, and stay up much too late. "Homework, extracurricular activities...and sports all steal time from teens' sleep," according to Dr. Mahowald (Lamberg). The television shows and movies teenagers like to see also run well into the hours when they should be sleeping. Some high school students also work late into the night. Younger children hardly ever have a reason to stay up after nine o'clock, yet they have from then until seven-thirty in the morning to sleep, whereas high school students go to sleep much later and get up an hour earlier.

Holding school an hour later would be easy for our school to do. Currently, buses pick up high school students and drop them off early in the morning and then take elementary school students to school. Although the bus schedule could be reversed, allowing high school students to go to school an hour later, \_\_\_\_\_'s principal J\_\_\_\_\_ says administrators would probably be against this. He says there is a concern that parents would not be awake to feed elementary school students and help them get ready for school if the students had to get up an hour earlier. He offered the solution that hiring a different bus company to transport the elementary school students would allow them to go to

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There are solutions to these problems, even though they would require some rescheduling of practice and games. Sports teams could save their long road trips for Saturdays, and play nearby teams on weekdays. The only team at \_\_\_\_\_ that couldn't do this would be the track team, because track meets have to start early. However, there are just two away meets this year which would require the team to leave school early, so these athletes wouldn't miss many classes. The ski team could deal with a later schedule by training immediately after school ends. This would give them at least an hour of outdoor training, and any skiers wanting more training could do it in the morning before school.

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**File Name: A11-12R Macduff True Hero**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 12**

**Range of Writing**

### **Macduff: A True Hero**

Though many refer to the titular character of William Shakespeare's Macbeth as a tragic hero, another character stands out as a much greater protagonist. While Macbeth is driven towards madness and to committing atrocities through his tragic flaw of ambition, Macduff lacks such a flaw and remains uncorrupted and heroic throughout the play. As Macbeth strives to gain power and prestige at the expense of the lives of his king, his friends, and his countrymen, Macduff meanwhile endures great personal loss in his attempts to stop Macbeth's tyrannical rule and to restore justice and freedom to Scotland. With a name so similar to Macbeth's, it is ironic yet fitting that Macduff acts so much more nobly than his king (Piotr 20). Throughout the tragic, events of William Shakespeare's Macbeth, Macduff serves as a heroic figure through his demonstrations of intelligence, loyalty, and righteousness.

Macduff's prevalence is minimal early in the play, though his intelligence can first be noted in his actions that follow King Duncan's death. While many Scottish nobles prepare to welcome Macbeth to the throne and accept him as their king, Macduff shows his skepticism of the story surrounding the king's demise. Though Macduff at first accepts the verdict that Malcolm and Donalbain are the most likely suspects in the murder of their father, he does so reluctantly and only because the evidence points to them given that they have fled the scene. When asked if he will attend Macbeth's inaugural ceremonies, Macduff responds, "No, cousin, I'll to Fife" (2.4.36). Macduff is less convinced than the others that the mystery of the king's death has been solved, and he wisely distances himself from Macbeth, in whose home the murder occurred, rather than simply accept

Begins by **acknowledging counterclaim, then distinguishes from own**

**Introduces a knowledgeable claim about a substantive topic and establishes its significance:** gives context about the play itself by contrasting Macbeth and Macduff, and then states a precise claim

States focus, **precise claim**

**Creates an organization that logically sequences, develops, and supports the claim**

**Uses words, phrases, and varied syntax to create cohesion, clarify the relationships among claims and reasons**

Macbeth as his new king. When news spreads that Banquo too has been murdered in Macbeth's castle, Macduff is again the first to act, as noted when Lennox states, "Thither Macduff/ is gone to pray the holy King, upon his aid/ To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward" (3.6 29-31). Macduff demonstrates his intelligence in astutely connecting Macbeth to the murders of King Duncan and Banquo before any other nobles come to such a realization. Macduff's intelligence and willingness to act on what information he has gathered demonstrate his heroism and help to save Scotland from destruction.

**Uses words, phrases, and varied syntax to create cohesion, clarify the relationships among claims and reasons**

In all of Macduff's actions, he remains loyal to his country and acts solely in the interest of Scotland. When Macduff travels to England to raise an army against Macbeth, he must leave his family behind. As noted by literary critic Piotr Sadowski, "...once Macduff has chosen to serve the political cause all qualms about abandoning his family became suppressed" (21). Though a loving family-man with devotion towards his "pretty chickens and their dam," or his children and his wife, Macduff's other loyalties are stronger (4.3.218). Macduff selflessly puts his country before those he loves, leaving his family vulnerable to attack from Macbeth so that he may raise an army to defeat him and end the tyranny that plagues his country. It becomes clear that Macduff is sincere in his displays of loyalty when he is tested by the young Malcolm, who will inherit the throne if Macduff succeeds in overthrowing Macbeth. After Malcolm proudly asserts his sinful nature in his "voluptuousness" (4.3.61), his "stanchless avarice" (4.3.78), and his complete disregard for virtues, Macduff's loyalty to Scotland goes unbroken in his response to Malcolm, who asks if he is fit to govern. Macduff states, "Fit to govern/ No, not to live. O nation miserable! /...When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again..." (4.3.102-105). Macduff's display of loyalty towards his country over its potential ruler suffices to prove to Malcolm his loyal nature and lack of selfish motives. Malcolm agrees to lead the forces against Macbeth in a move that ultimately saves Scotland.

**Develops the claim fairly and thoroughly, supplying evidence for it in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience** (other members of the scholarly community)

Uses depth of evidence, from both text (the play) and scholars, showing deep understanding of the text

**Develops the claim fairly and thoroughly, supplying evidence for it in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience** (other members of the scholarly community)

Uses depth of evidence, from both text (the play) and scholars

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone, while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline**

In all events of the play, Macduff acts to combat tyranny and all that is evil, making him a truly righteous character. From serving King Duncan to protecting Scotland and taking the throne back from Macbeth, Macduff acts in service of what is morally just and does not boast in his deeds or in any way act for himself. After learning that his family has died at the command of Macbeth, Macduff weeps for them and expresses first his anger and regret, showing his human side, but he then accepts what has occurred and begins to ponder his next action. Realizing that he serves no one by weeping over his loss or boasting about how he will avenge his family's death, Macduff simply states, "Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself; / Within my sword's length set him. If he 'scape, / Heaven forgive him too" (4.3.233-235). Macduff believes that it is right and just to kill Macbeth, not only for what the tyrant has done to his family, but for how he has brought pain and suffering to an entire nation. In stating his hope that Macbeth's sins be forgiven if he fails to kill him, Macduff further reflects his righteous, almost biblical qualities in his ability to not hold a grudge against the man who has killed his family. In the end, Macduff seems destined to kill Macbeth given that the former was "from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped" (5.8.15-16), and that, "In folklore, the child born through what later became the Caesarian section was said to possess great strength and the power to find hidden treasure and to see spirits" (Piotr 20). Not only do the witches' prophecies point to Macduff as the one who has the power to dethrone Macbeth, but Shakespeare also uses a common supernatural theme of his day to portray Macduff as a character of a higher power who seems the only one fit to take down a powerful military ruler as Macbeth. When Macbeth emerges from battle victorious in the final scene and holds Macbeth's severed head, the image created is one of good finally triumphing over evil.

Regardless of the events and fortunes surrounding Macduff's character in William Shakespeare's Macbeth, he serves as a heroic figure for his qualities of intelligence, loyalty, and righteousness. As the first to recognize the mystery and guilt surrounding Macbeth and the murders that seem to line his path on his rise to power, Macduff displays an inquisitiveness and prudence

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument presented**

**Writer reflects, again, on the significance of the claim**

that his fellow nobles seem to lack. Using his knowledge for the good of his country, Macduff balks at opportunities for personal gain and acts solely in the interest of his beloved nation, to which he demonstrates supreme loyalty. This loyalty runs so deep in Macduff that not even the murder of his family can deter him on his righteous quest of vanquishing from the Scottish throne the evil that has befallen it. In his heroic qualities, Macduff emerges as the true hero of Macbeth, far more so than the titular character whose flaw of ambition drives him to the point of being a plague upon the nation he so desires to govern. In the words of politician Edmund Burke, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” Macduff’s role as a good man in Macbeth is not simply to bring about justice to an oppressed nation. Rather, his character reminds readers that justice cannot be done without the vigilance and actions of ever wise, virtuous men and women who loyally devote their efforts to upholding what is righteous.

#### Works Cited

- Sadowski, Piotr. “Macbeth.” *Fofweb.com*. Bloom’s Literary Reference Online. 2010. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. [http://www/fofweb.com/Lit/LowerFrame.asp?ItemID=WE54\\$SID=5&iPin=+MCIMAC10&SingleRecord-True](http://www/fofweb.com/Lit/LowerFrame.asp?ItemID=WE54$SID=5&iPin=+MCIMAC10&SingleRecord-True).
- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. New York: Signet Classics, 1998. Print.

In this literary analysis from an English language arts class, the student has taken a position on who the hero of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is. In anticipation of his claim that Macduff is the true hero of the play, he begins by acknowledging the counterclaim that Macbeth is often described as the "tragic hero" of the play, then states his own claim that the hero is in fact Macduff.

Throughout the essay, the writer organizes his ideas clearly. He develops the claim logically, fairly, and thoroughly with several reasons, which he supports with in-depth relevant, credible evidence, both from the text itself and from scholarly sources. He thoroughly demonstrates his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The writer supplies evidence for his claim in a manner that anticipates the concerns, values, and possible biases of the audience (other members of the scholarly community). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses, as well as varied syntax, to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented, reminding the reader of the significance of the topic and claim.

**File Name: A 11-12R Macduff: A True Hero**

**Opinion/Argument**

**Grade 12**

**Range of Writing**

### **Macduff: A True Hero**

Though many refer to the titular character of William Shakespeare's Macbeth as a tragic hero, another character stands out as a much greater protagonist. While Macbeth is driven towards madness and to committing atrocities through his tragic flaw of ambition, Macduff lacks such a flaw and remains uncorrupted and heroic throughout the play. As Macbeth strives to gain power and prestige at the expense of the lives of his king, his friends, and his countrymen, Macduff meanwhile endures great personal loss in his attempts to stop Macbeth's tyrannical rule and to restore justice and freedom to Scotland. With a name so similar to Macbeth's, it is ironic yet fitting that Macduff acts so much more nobly than his king (Piotr 20). Throughout the tragic events of William Shakespeare's Macbeth, Macduff serves as a heroic figure through his demonstrations of intelligence, loyalty, and righteousness.

Macduff's prevalence is minimal early in the play, though his intelligence can first be noted in his actions that follow King Duncan's death. While many Scottish nobles prepare to welcome Macbeth to the throne and accept him as their king, Macduff shows his skepticism of the story surrounding the king's demise. Though Macduff at first accepts the verdict that Malcolm and Donalbain are the most likely suspects in the murder of their father, he does so reluctantly and only because the evidence points to them given that they have fled the scene. When asked if he will attend Macbeth's inaugural ceremonies, Macduff responds, "No, cousin, I'll to Fife" (2.4.36). Macduff is less convinced than the others that the mystery of the king's death has been solved, and he wisely distances himself from Macbeth, in whose home the murder occurred, rather than simply accept Macbeth as his new king. When news spreads that Banquo too has been murdered in Macbeth's castle, Macduff is again the first to act, as noted when Lennox states, "Thither Macduff/ is gone to pray the holy King, upon his aid/ To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward" (3.6 29-31). Macduff demonstrates his intelligence in astutely connecting Macbeth to the murders of King Duncan

and Banquo before any other nobles come to such a realization. Macduff's intelligence and willingness to act on what information he has gathered demonstrate his heroism and help to save Scotland from destruction.

In all of Macduff's actions, he remains loyal to his country and acts solely in the interest of Scotland. When Macduff travels to England to raise an army against Macbeth, he must leave his family behind. As noted by literary critic Piotr Sadowski, "...once Macduff has chosen to serve the political cause all qualms about abandoning his family became suppressed" (21). Though a loving family-man with devotion towards his "pretty chickens and their dam," or his children and his wife, Macduff's other loyalties are stronger (4.3.218). Macduff selflessly puts his country before those he loves, leaving his family vulnerable to attack from Macbeth so that he may raise an army to defeat him and end the tyranny that plagues his country. It becomes clear that Macduff is sincere in his displays of loyalty when he is tested by the young Malcolm, who will inherit the throne if Macduff succeeds in overthrowing Macbeth. After Malcolm proudly asserts his sinful nature in his "voluptuousness" (4.3.61), his "stanchless avarice" (4.3.78), and his complete disregard for virtues, Macduff's loyalty to Scotland goes unbroken in his response to Malcolm, who asks if he is fit to govern. Macduff states, "Fit to govern/ No, not to live. O nation miserable! /...When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again..." (4.3.102-105). Macduff's display of loyalty towards his country over its potential ruler suffices to prove to Malcolm his loyal nature and lack of selfish motives. Malcolm agrees to lead the forces against Macbeth in a move that ultimately saves Scotland.

In all events of the play, Macduff acts to combat tyranny and all that is evil, making him a truly righteous character. From serving King Duncan to protecting Scotland and taking the throne back from Macbeth, Macduff acts in service of what is morally just and does not boast in his deeds or in any way act for himself. After learning that his family has died at the command of Macbeth, Macduff weeps for them and expresses first his anger and regret, showing his human side, but he then accepts what has occurred and begins to ponder his next action. Realizing that he serves no one by weeping over his loss or boasting about how he will avenge his family's death, Macduff simply states, "Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself; / Within my sword's length set him. If he 'scape, / Heaven forgive him too" (4.3.233-235). Macduff believes that it is right and just to kill Macbeth, not only for what the tyrant has done to his family, but for how he has brought pain and suffering to an entire nation. In stating his hope that Macbeth's sins be forgiven if he fails to kill him, Macduff further reflects his righteous, almost biblical qualities in his ability to not hold a grudge

against the man who has killed his family. In the end, Macduff seems destined to kill Macbeth given that the former was “from his mother’s womb / Untimely ripped” (5.8.15-16), and that, “In folklore, the child born through what later became the Caesarian section was said to possess great strength and the power to find hidden treasure and to see spirits” (Piotr 20). Not only do the witches’ prophecies point to Macduff as the one who has the power to dethrone Macbeth, but Shakespeare also uses a common supernatural theme of his day to portray Macduff as a character of a higher power who seems the only one fit to take down a powerful military ruler as Macbeth. When Macbeth emerges from battle victorious in the final scene and holds Macbeth’s severed head, the image created is one of good finally triumphing over evil.

Regardless of the events and fortunes surrounding Macduff’s character in William Shakespeare’s Macbeth, he serves as a heroic figure for his qualities of intelligence, loyalty, and righteousness. As the first to recognize the mystery and guilt surrounding Macbeth and the murders that seem to line his path on his rise to power, Macduff displays an inquisitiveness and prudence that his fellow nobles seem to lack. Using his knowledge for the good of his country, Macduff balks at opportunities for personal gain and acts solely in the interest of his beloved nation, to which he demonstrates supreme loyalty. This loyalty runs so deep in Macduff that not even the murder of his family can deter him on his righteous quest of vanquishing from the Scottish throne the evil that has befallen it. In his heroic qualities, Macduff emerges as the true hero of Macbeth, far more so than the titular character whose flaw of ambition drives him to the point of being a plague upon the nation he so desires to govern. In the words of politician Edmund Burke, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” Macduff’s role as a good man in Macbeth is not simply to bring about justice to an oppressed nation. Rather, his character reminds readers that justice cannot be done without the vigilance and actions of ever wise, virtuous men and women who loyally devote their efforts to upholding what is righteous.

## Works Cited

Sadowski, Piotr. "Macbeth." *Fofweb.com*. Bloom's Literary Reference Online. 2010. Web. 13 Dec. 2011.

[http://www.fofweb.com/Lit/LowerFrame.asp?ItemID=WE54\\$SID=5&iPin=+MCIMAC10&SingleRecord-True](http://www.fofweb.com/Lit/LowerFrame.asp?ItemID=WE54$SID=5&iPin=+MCIMAC10&SingleRecord-True).

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. New York: Signet Classics, 1998. Print.

# **Section II: Informative/ Explanatory Writing**

***K-5 On-Demand  
Informative/Explanatory  
Samples***

## Grade K, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Task directions

### Water Conservation

#### **What can you do to save water?**

Optional Introduction:

- Watch the short video on water conservation on YouTube:  
*The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1 - EcoWater Canada*  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ex1ZuKFW64](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ex1ZuKFW64)
- Discuss this question briefly with your class: *Why is it important to save water?*

The Prompt:

- Use puppets or recruit some older students to perform the Reader's Theatre:  
*Water Wise - All About Water Conservation.*
- After listening to the Reader's Theatre, lead a short class discussion on the question: "What can you do to save water?" Use the discussion to build a basic understanding of at least a few of the ways the students could save water.
- Pose the focusing question again and give the following directions:
  1. "What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do." *Allow about 3 minutes for students to discuss their choices.*
  2. "Now use this paper to draw a picture of some things you could do to save water. I will help you write words under your picture to tell more about your choices."



### **Additional Instructions/Clarifications**

- Paper may be lined or unlined. Use your typical classroom writing process to support students in completing the writing prompt. The piece should represent first draft writing (done in a single sitting).
- The response should include a picture and whatever sentences, words, or letters the child can add. An adult may assist with sounding out or spelling words and/or transcribe the child's words if desired. Dictation is permitted.
- Please distinguish the child's independent production from words or letters produced with adult help by **underlining any part of the writing done with teacher support**. The writing sample will be most useful to other teachers if it is easy to tell where help was given.
- We understand that, especially in the fall, most Kindergartners have had limited experience with writing.

**Water Wise**  
*All About Water Conservation*  
A Super Science Script  
Written and Developed by Lisa Blau

Water Expert #1 - Good morning! We are here to tell you all about the earth's most precious resource...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - Every form of life needs water in order to live.

Water Expert #4 - A tiny fish needs water...

Water Expert #5 - A tall tree needs water...

Water Expert #3 - Everyone needs...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - People need water to drink because our bodies need water to stay healthy.

Water Expert #3 - We also need water to make the crops grow so that we have food to eat.

Water Expert #4 - People use water for taking baths, brushing their teeth, and washing their clothes.

Water Expert #1 - Yes, everyone needs water.

Water Expert #2 - We know that water is precious so we must find ways to save all the water that we can.

Water Expert #3 - Now, you might be thinking...

Water Expert #5 - But, I'm just a kid. What can I do to save water?

Water Expert #4 - Well, we're here to tell you...

All - PLENTY!

Water Expert #1 - If you turn off the running water when you brush your teeth...

All - You can save 35 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - If you take a shorter shower...

All - You can save 75 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - You can help Mom or Dad fix leaky faucets and put water savers in your toilets.

Water Expert #5 - A plastic bottle filled with pebbles will do the job!

Water Expert #4 - Never play in sprinklers if your town is having a water shortage.

Water Expert #1 - Sure, it's tons of fun...

Water Expert #2 - You will use over 10 gallons of water in only one minute!

Water Expert #3 - By trying some of these tricks, you and your family can help save lots of water.

Water Expert #4 - Water is precious. What can you do to help save water?

Water Expert #1 - Make sure that the faucet is turned off all the way. Don't leave it dripping...

Water Expert #2 - Every drop counts you know!

Water Expert #3 - Don't use more water than you really need. You really don't need to fill your bathtub up all the way when you take a bath.

Water Expert #4 - You should use a broom...not the hose, to clean a driveway or sidewalk.

Water Expert #5 - And how many of you like to help out by washing the car? Well, be sure to save water when you wash the car.

Water Expert #2 - It's easy...just use a bucket to wash the car, and only use the hose to rinse it off.

All - We hope that you will be water wise and save lots of water. We know you can do it!

Water Expert #1 - The End.

From Super Science, by Lisa Blau  
Publisher: Bellevue, WA: **One from the Heart Educational Resources**, c1994  
Used by permission of Lisa Blau

**File Name: IKFP Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Water**

I WOT US AS WODR MUC WODR

**Names what he/she is  
writing about**

In this Kindergarten piece, written in the fall, the student uses a combination of drawing and writing to inform the reader about a topic explored through a Reader’s Theatre presentation and a short video. The topic of the student piece (*“I WOT US AS WODR MUC WODR”*) is stated in writing. The repeated word (*“WODR”*) is not an unusual error at this grade level and could be revised if the piece went through the full writing process. **The drawing** that accompanies the original text **supplies** detailed **information** on how to save water. The illustrations show the student saving water in many ways, such as taking shorter showers and saving excess water for pets and plants. Kindergarteners may use phonetic spelling, drawing, and dictation to express their thoughts in writing. This student’s piece clearly draws on the sources provided to inform the reader about the topic. This developmentally appropriate “combination writing” provides a valuable foundation for the thought process that underlies this text type and can be built upon in later years.

**File Name: IKFP Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

**Water**

I won't use as much water.

**File Name: IKFP Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

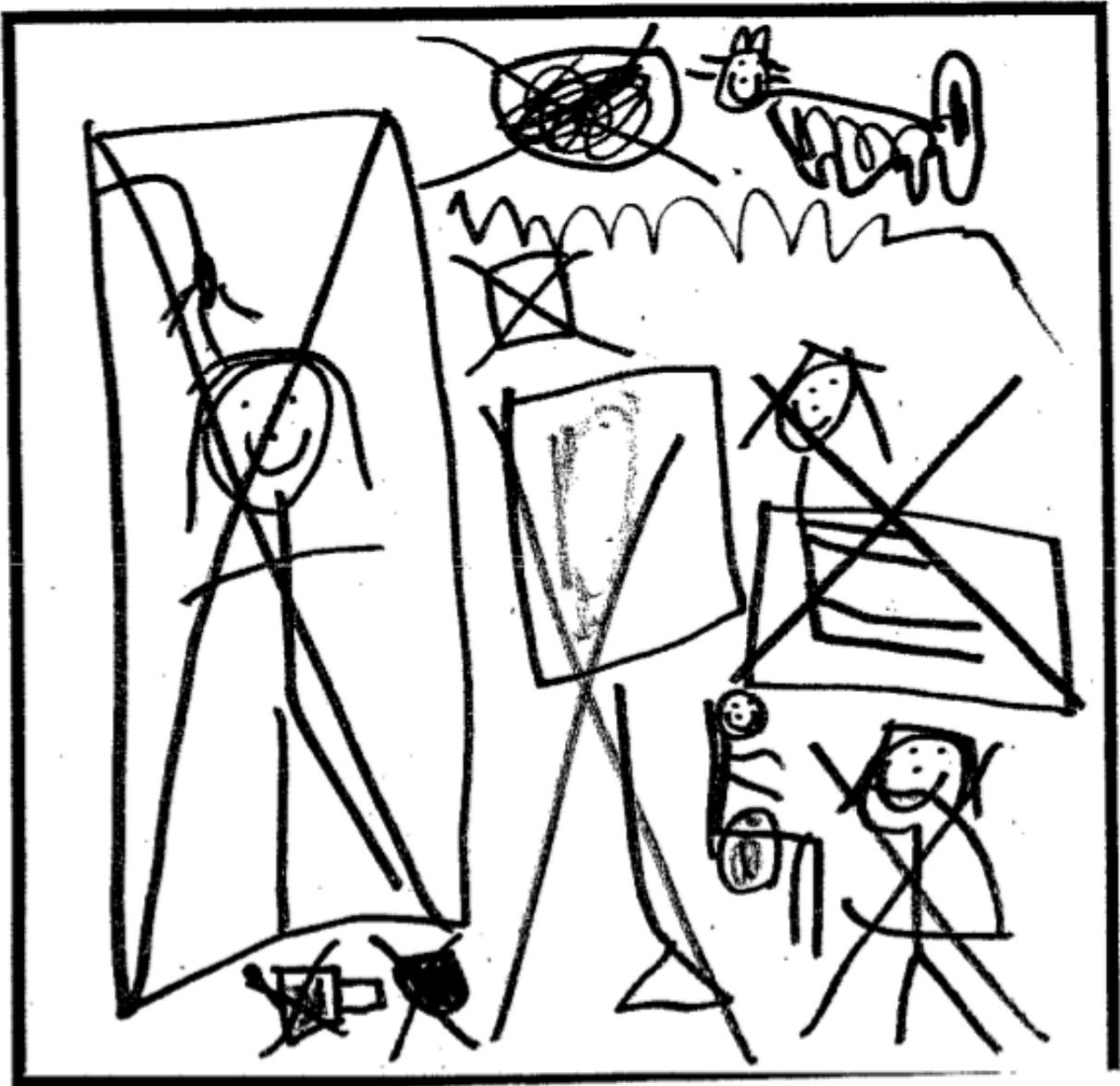
**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**Water**

I WOT US AS WODR MUC WODR

WVOT US AS WODR MUC

WODR



**File Name: IKSP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Saving Water**

*What can you do to save water?*

I am taking a baf Not all faLL.

I amshuting off the wotr

I am filing the bucit up Not too Hiy

Although this piece would have been stronger had the student named the topic herself, the question posed clearly introduces the topic.

**Supplies some information  
about the topic**

In this Kindergarten piece, written in the spring, the topic (*What can you do to save water?*) is made clear by the question the teacher has posed, and the student uses words and pictures to supply some information about the topic. Although the information is personalized ("*I am...*"), the student has clearly drawn three specific details from the sources provided to inform the reader about how she will save water. Both words and illustrations show a solid understanding of the content

**File Name: IKSP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Saving Water**

*What can you do to save water?*

I am taking a bath. It is not all full.

I am shutting off the water.

I am filling the bucket up, not too high.

**File Name: IKSP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Saving Water**

*What can you do to save water?*

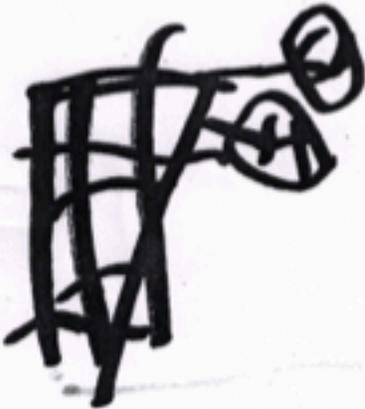
I am taking a baf Not all faLL.

I amsHuting off the wotr

I am filing the bucit up Not too Hiy

What can you do to save water?

I am taking a bath not all full.



I am taking a bath not all full.



I am shutting off the water.

I am shutting off the water

I am filling the  
bucket up not too  
high.



I am filling the b  
ucket up ~~not~~ too  
high

## Grade 1, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative piece to answer  
this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

**Day 1**     *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video, *The Adventures of EcoRilla*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your classmates: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the Reader's Theatre: *Water Wise-All About Water Conservation* carefully.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do.
- Fold a piece of paper into quarters. Pick at least four things that you could do to save water. Draw a picture of each to show what you chose.



## Water Conservation

### Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative piece to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to *Water Wise* again. Read along if you can.
  - What can you do to save water? Use the pictures you drew yesterday. Turn to a partner, point to a picture. Tell what you might do and **why** that would be a good choice.
- When you have finished, write a piece explaining what you can do to save water.
  - **What can you do to save water?**
  - Be sure to give lots of examples and explain how each would save water. Look back at *Water Wise* for ideas. Write as much as you can.

**A good informative piece will:**

1. **Clearly answer the question.**
2. **Give lots of examples.**
3. **"Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence.**

#### **4. Use capitals, periods and question marks, and spell words correctly.**

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes. If you like, you may add pictures to show what you wrote.

Have fun!

### **Grade 1 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt**

#### **Teacher Directions**

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Help the Environment - The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1 - EcoWater Canada [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ex1ZuKFW64](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ex1ZuKFW64). The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the Reader's Theatre. The Reader's Theatre can be read aloud by the teacher or "performed" by older students or very competent readers. The teacher should feel comfortable re-reading, explaining or clarifying directions as needed.
- The Reader's Theatre provides information that may be used to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing. The teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases as needed.
- The prompt should be given two sessions. Allow approximately 30 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that

they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. Unlined paper may be provided for drawing.

This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## **Water Wise**

*All About Water Conservation*

A Super Science Script

Written and Developed by Lisa Blau

Water Expert #1 - Good morning! We are here to tell you all about the earth's most precious resource...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - Every form of life needs water in order to live.

Water Expert #4 - A tiny fish needs water...

Water Expert #5 - A tall tree needs water...

Water Expert #3 - Everyone needs...

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Water Expert #3 - We also need water to make the crops grow so that we have food to eat.

Water Expert #4 - People use water for taking baths, brushing their teeth, and washing their clothes.

Water Expert #1 - Yes, everyone needs water.

Water Expert #2 - We know that water is precious so we must find ways to save all the water that we can.

Water Expert #3 - Now, you might be thinking...

Water Expert #5 - But, I'm just a kid. What can I do to save water?

Water Expert #4 - Well, we're here to tell you...

All - PLENTY!

Water Expert #1 - If you turn off the running water when you brush your teeth...

All - You can save 35 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - If you take a shorter shower...

All - You can save 75 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - You can help Mom or Dad fix leaky faucets and put water savers in your toilets.

Water Expert #5 - A plastic bottle filled with pebbles will do the job!

Water Expert #4 - Never play in sprinklers if your town is having a water shortage.

Water Expert #1 - Sure, it's tons of fun...

Water Expert #2 - You will use over 10 gallons of water in only one minute!

Water Expert #3 - By trying some of these tricks, you and your family can help save lots of water.

Water Expert #4 - Water is precious. What can you do to help save water?

Water Expert #1 - Make sure that the faucet is turned off all the way. Don't leave it dripping...

Water Expert #2 - Every drop counts you know!

Water Expert #3 - Don't use more water than you really need. You really don't need to fill your bathtub up all the way when you take a bath.

Water Expert #4 - You should use a broom...not the hose, to clean a driveway or sidewalk.

Water Expert #5 - And how many of you like to help out by washing the car? Well, be sure to save water when you wash the car.

Water Expert #2 - It's easy...just use a bucket to wash the car, and only use the hose to rinse it off.

All - We hope that you will be water wise and save lots of water. We know you can do it!

Water Expert #1 - The End.



**File Name: I1P Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Saving Water**

**What can you do to save water?**

we need to save water! To save water do not fill up the tub all the way. if your fawsit

is leking turn it of. if we didnt save water we woldent have any.

**Supplies some facts about the topic**

**Names a topic**

**Provides some sense of closure**

In this first-grade on-demand informative/explanatory piece, the student clearly states a topic (“*we need to save water!*”) and supplies two facts about the topic drawn from the Reader’s Theatre on water conservation that the students read together. The piece ends with a reflective concluding sentence about why it is important to save water, information given in the short video that accompanies the prompt.

**File Name: I1P Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Saving Water**

**What can you do to save water?**

We need to save water! To save water, do not fill up the tub all the way. If your faucet is leaking, turn it off. If we didn't save water, we wouldn't have any.

**File Name: I1P Saving Water**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Saving Water**

**What can you do to save water?**

we need to save water! To save water do not fill up the tub all the way. if your fawsit is leking turn it of. if we didnt save water we woldent have any.

Grade 2, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing  
Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative piece to answer  
this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

**Day 1**     *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video, *The Adventures of EcoRilla*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your classmates: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the Reader's Theatre: *Water Wise-All About Water Conservation* carefully.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do.

- Fold a piece of paper into quarters. Pick at least four things that you could do to save water. Draw a picture of each to show what you chose.

## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative piece to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to *Water Wise* again. Read along if you can.
  - What can you do to save water? Use the pictures you drew yesterday. Turn to a partner, point to a picture. Tell what you might do and **why** that would be a good choice.
- When you have finished, write a piece explaining what you can do to save water.
  - **What can you do to save water?**
  - Be sure to give lots of examples and explain how each would save water. Look back at *Water Wise* for ideas. Write as much as you can.

**A good informative piece will:**

- 5. Introduce the topic you are writing about**
- 6. Clearly answer the question.**
- 7. Give lots of examples.**
- 8. "Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence.**

**9. Use capitals, periods and question marks, and spell words correctly.**

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes.

If you like, you may add pictures to show what you wrote. Have fun!

## **Grade 2 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt**

### **Teacher Directions**

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Help the Environment -The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1 - EcoWater Canada [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ex1ZuKfw64](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ex1ZuKfw64). The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the Reader's Theatre. The Reader's Theatre can be read aloud by the teacher or "performed" by older students or very competent readers. The teacher should feel comfortable rereading, explaining or clarifying directions as needed.
- The Reader's Theatre provides information that may be used to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing. The teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases as needed.
- The prompt should be given two sessions. Allow approximately 30 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.

- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. Unlined paper may be provided for drawing.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## **Water Wise**

*All About Water Conservation*

*A Super Science Script*

Written and Developed by Lisa Blau

Water Expert #1 - Good morning! We are here to tell you all about the earth's most precious resource...

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Water Expert #5 - A tall tree needs water...

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Water Expert #4 - People use water for taking baths, brushing their teeth, and washing their clothes.

Water Expert #1 - Yes, everyone needs water.

Water Expert #2 - We know that water is precious so we must find ways to save all the water that we can.

Water Expert #3 - Now, you might be thinking...

Water Expert #5 - But, I'm just a kid. What can I do to save water?

Water Expert #4 - Well, we're here to tell you...

All - PLENTY!

Water Expert #1 - If you turn off the running water when you brush your teeth...

All - You can save 35 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - If you take a shorter shower...

- All - You can save 75 gallons of water in one week!
- Water Expert #3 - You can help Mom or Dad fix leaky faucets and put water savers in your toilets.
- Water Expert #5 - A plastic bottle filled with pebbles will do the job!
- Water Expert #4 - Never play in sprinklers if your town is having a water shortage.
- Water Expert #1 - Sure, it's tons of fun...
- Water Expert #2 - You will use over 10 gallons of water in only one minute!
- Water Expert #3 - By trying some of these tricks, you and your family can help save lots of water.
- Water Expert #4 - Water is precious. What can you do to help save water?
- Water Expert #1 - Make sure that the faucet is turned off all the way. Don't leave it dripping...
- Water Expert #2 - Every drop counts you know!
- Water Expert #3 - Don't use more water than you really need. You really don't need to fill your bathtub up all the way when you take a bath.
- Water Expert #4 - You should use a broom...not the hose, to clean a driveway or sidewalk.

Water Expert #5 - And how many of you like to help out by washing the car? Well, be sure to save water when you wash the car.

Water Expert #2 - It's easy...just use a bucket to wash the car, and only use the hose to rinse it off.

All - We hope that you will be water wise and save lots of water. We know you can do it!

Water Expert #1 - The End.

From Super Science, by Lisa Blau  
Publisher: Bellevue, WA: **One from the Heart Educational Resources**, c1994  
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**File Name: I2P Water is Important**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Water is Important**

Water is important You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how. 1 way is TuRN OFF The SINK AFTER YOu BRuSH Your TEETH! Another way is ONLY FILL YOuR BATHTuB UP HALF WAY! Also water is important so you should TAKE A SHORT SHOWer. Also WHEN YOU WASH YOUR HANDS DON'T LEAVE THE WATER RUNNING! These are the ways why you should help save water

**Introduces the topic and states a focus for the piece**

**Uses facts to develop points**

**Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas**

**Provides a concluding statement that restates the focus**

This second-grade informative/explanatory paragraph begins with an introductory sentence and then states the focus of the piece (*"You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how."*). Four facts, from provided sources, develop the piece and are linked to each other and to the main idea by transitional words and phrases (*"1 way", "Another way", "also"*). The piece concludes by restating the focus (*"These are the ways why you should help save water"*). At this grade level, sentences may be a bit "clunky," particularly as students experiment with unfamiliar academic constructions. If this were an instructional piece, *"These are the ways why..."* could be revised during the writing process.

**File Name: I2P Water is Important**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Water is Important**

Water is important. You should help save water, and I am going to tell you how. One way is to turn off the sink after you brush your teeth! Another way is to only fill your bathtub up halfway! Also, water is important, so you should take a short shower. Also, when you wash your hands, don't leave the water running! These are the ways you can help save water.

**File Name: I2P Water is Important**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Water is Important**

Water is important You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how. 1 way is TuRN OFF The SINK AFTER YOu BRuSH Your TEETH! Another way is ONLY FILL YOuR BATHTuB UP HALF WAY! Also water is important so you should TAKE A SHORT SHOWer. Also WHEN YOU WASH YOUR HANDS DON'T LEAVE THE WATER RUNNING! These are the ways why you should help save water

## Grade 3, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

#### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative essay to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

#### **Day 1** *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video, *The Adventures of EcoRilla*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your class: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the article: *Save Our Water!* carefully.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do.
- Fold a piece of paper into quarters. Pick at least four things that you could do to save water. Use words and pictures to show what you chose.
- On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper tomorrow for writing.

## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative essay to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

Listen to *Water Wise* again. Read along as you listen.

- What can you do to save water? Use the notes you created yesterday. Turn to a partner, point to a box on your note sheet. Explain what you might do and how it would save water.
- When you have finished, write an informative essay explaining what you can do to save water.

Your focusing question for this assignment is: **What can you do to save water?**

Be sure to use facts and examples from the article.

Explain how doing these things will save water.

### **Remember, a good informative essay:**

- **Has an introduction**
- **Has a clear focus/thesis statement**
- **Uses specific facts and examples from the text (s) to support the focus and explains your thinking**
- **Has a conclusion**
- **Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas**
- **Has correct spelling, capitalization and punctuation**

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes you find.

We look forward to reading your good writing and thinking!

**Grade 3 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt**  
**Teacher Directions**

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Help the Environment -*The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1* - EcoWater Canada <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ex1ZuKFW64>. The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the article. The teacher should feel comfortable re-reading, explaining or clarifying directions as needed. The article should be read aloud while students read along silently.
- The article provides information needed to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the article while writing.
- The prompt should be given in two sessions. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. Unlined paper may be provided for drawing and note taking.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Name:

## Save Our Water!

Did you know that kids can make a very important difference in saving the earth's water? They can! But first off, why do we even need to save water?

Water is a natural resource that we get from the Earth. Without it, we would not be able to live! Imagine a world with no water at all. You wouldn't be able to drink it, bathe, or swim! Without clean water, plants, animals, birds and ocean life would also be unable to live. Kids can help protect this resource. You make a huge difference simply by starting at home. To get an idea of how much water we could save if we all made a small effort, think about this. What if every person across the nation flushed their toilets one time less every day? Together they could save enough water to fill a lake as large as a mile wide and long and four feet in depth!

Now you know how important it is to help save water. Try some of the ideas below. Start doing your part to change our world!

### Some Ways Kids Can Help to Save Water:

- When you wash your hands, don't leave the water running. Wet your hands and turn the water off. Use soap and lather your hands well. Then turn the water on to rinse. Turn off the water and make sure it is off completely. Then dry your hands.
- Do the same when you brush your teeth. Turn the faucet on to get your toothbrush and toothpaste wet. Turn it on again to rinse your mouth and toothbrush. Don't leave the water running while you're brushing.
- Baths use a lot of water (about 37 gallons on average). Take short showers and use only about 20 gallons of water, instead.
- Do you have plants in your house? When vegetables or other fresh produce are washed, collect that water and use it to water the plants.
- Do you like a drink of cold water now and then? Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator. That way you don't have to run the water to get it cold.
- Put a barrel outdoors to catch rain water. Then use that water for things like watering plants or flushing toilets. You can save hundreds of gallons of water a year!
- In the summertime, it's fun to play under the lawn sprinkler. When you do, make sure it's only when the lawn is being watered.
- Remind the others in your home, and your friends, not to leave any faucet running. Only use what is truly needed!
- Is there a leaky faucet or toilet in the bathroom at school? Be sure to let someone know so that it can be repaired.

Even if you do just one thing each day to contribute to your home's water conservation, you're doing the right thing!

Adapted from *Water Conservation for Kids*

TheWaterPage.com

<http://www.thewaterpage.com/water-conservation-kids.htm>

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**File Name: I3P Water Use**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Water Use**

What can I do to save water? Lots of people waste gallons of water a day. Some people don't even have 5-2 gallons of water a day. We need water to drink, wash clothes, bath, and much more so we need to save water. One good way to save is to leave buckets outside to fill up with rain. Take quick showers. Bathes take at least 5 gallons of water. Remind people to turn off the water when not in use. Lots of people wait for the water from the sink to get hot and cold. If you put a bucket in your bathtub when the bucket is full you can use that water for lots of things. When it's winter you can fill buckets of snow and melt it then you have buckets of water to use. When it's summer you have a squirt gun use water from a toy that has water in it. If there's anything leaking water make sure to get it fixed right away. Don't buy water in a plastic container because plastic pollutes the earth. Please Save Water.

**Introduces the topic with a question and some context about why it might be important to save water**

**Develops the topic with facts and details**

**Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas**

**Organizes information into paragraphs, related information is grouped together and organized into an introduction, body, and conclusion.**

**Provides a concluding statement**

This third-grade piece introduces the topic with a question and some context, explaining why we need to save water. Although still a bit “list-y,” the piece uses facts from the source (“*bathes take at least 37 gallons of water*”) and conveys ideas and information clearly, sometimes adding context or elaboration to clarify or to develop points. For example, rather than just instructing the reader to put a bucket in the sink, the writer explains that people often waste water waiting for it to get hot or cold and that, if saved, this water could be used “*for lots of things.*” Linking words and phrases (“*so*”, “*one good way*”, “*if*”, “*when*”) connect ideas within the piece. The conclusion, in the form of a request for action, is appropriate to purpose and audience. The slight digression toward the end (“*Don’t buy water in a plastic container*”) could be addressed through revision if this piece were taken to a final draft.

Although both the introduction and conclusion urge us to save water, this is an informative/explanatory piece. The purpose of the writing is to explain how we can save water, not to try to convince us to do so. This topic is developed with facts and details about things we can do to save water, rather than with the reasons why we should do so. Effective pieces often combine elements from more than one genre.

**File Name: I3P Water Use**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Water Use**

What can I do to save water? Lots of people waste gallons of water a day. Some people don't even have 5–2 gallons of water a day. We need water to drink, wash clothes, bathe, and much more, so we need to save water. One good way to save water is to leave buckets outside to fill up with rain. Take quick showers. Baths take at least 37 gallons of water. Remind people to turn off the water when not in use. Lots of people wait for the water from their sinks to get hot and cold. Put a bucket in your sink. When the bucket is full, you can use that water for lots of things. When it's winter, take buckets of snow and melt it. Then you have buckets of water to use. When it's summer, if you have a squirt gun, use water from a toy that has water in it. If there's anything leaking water, make sure to get it fixed right away. Don't buy water in a plastic container because plastic pollutes the Earth. Please save water.

**File Name: I3P Water Use**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Water Use**

What can I do to save water? Lots of people waste gallons of water a day. Some people don't even have 5-2 gallons of water a day. We need water to drink, wash clothes, bath, and much more so we need to save water. One good way to save water is leave buckets outside to fill up with rain. Take quick showers. Bathes take at least 37 gallons of water. Remind people to turn off the water when not in use. Lots of people wait for the water from their sink to get hot and cold. If you put a bucket in your sink when the bucket is full you can use that water for lots of things. When it's winter take buckets of snow and melt it then you have buckets of water to use. When it's summer if you have a squirt gun use water from a toy that has water in it. If there's anything leaking water make sure to get it fixed right away. Don't buy water in a plastic container because plastic pollutes the earth. Please Save Water.

## Grade 4, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

#### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative essay to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

#### **Day 1** *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video, *Water Conservation Tips*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your class: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the article: *Save our Water!* carefully. You may want to take notes for your essay on the article as you read.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do. You each have three minutes to explain what you would do and why.
- On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper tomorrow for writing.

## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative essay to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to *Save our Water!* again. Read along as you listen.
- When you have finished, write an informative essay explaining what you can do to save water.
- Your focusing question for this assignment is
  - **What can you do to save water?**
  - Be sure to use facts and examples from the article. Explain how doing these things will save water.

### **Remember, a good informative essay:**

- *Has an introduction*
- *Has a clear focus/topic*
- *Uses specific facts and examples from the text(s) to support the focus and explain your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*
- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes you find.

We look forward to reading your good writing and thinking!

## Grade 4 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt

### Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Water conservation tips-How to conserve water at home <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MDLpVHY8LE>. The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the article. The article should be read aloud while students read along silently. The teacher should feel comfortable rereading, explaining or clarifying as needed.
- The article provides information needed to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the article while writing and to take notes.
- The prompt should be given in two sessions. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Name:

### **Save Our Water!**

Did you know that kids can make a very important difference in saving the earth's water? They can! But first off, why do we even need to save water?

Water is a natural resource that we get from the Earth. Without it, we would not be able to live! Imagine a world with no water at all. You wouldn't be able to drink it, bathe, or swim! Without clean water, plants, animals, birds and ocean life would also be unable to live. Kids can help protect this resource. You make a huge difference simply by starting at home. To get an idea of how much water we could save if we all made a small effort, think about this. What if every person across the nation flushed their toilets one time less every day? Together they could save enough water to fill a lake as large as a mile wide and long and four feet in depth!

Now you know how important it is to help save water. Try some of the ideas below. Start doing your part to change our world!

#### **Some Ways Kids Can Help to Save Water:**

- When you wash your hands, don't leave the water running. Wet your hands and turn the water off. Use soap and lather your hands well. Then turn the water on to rinse. Turn off the water and make sure it is off completely. Then dry your hands.
- Do the same when you brush your teeth. Turn the faucet on to get your toothbrush and toothpaste wet. Turn it on again to rinse your mouth and toothbrush. Don't leave the water running while you're brushing.
- Baths use a lot of water (about 37 gallons on average). Take short showers, and use only about 20 gallons of water, instead.
- Do you have plants in your house? When vegetables or other fresh produce are washed, collect that water and use it to water the plants.
- Do you like a drink of cold water now and then? Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator. That way you don't have to run the water to get it cold.
- Put a barrel outdoors to catch rain water. Then use that water for things like watering plants or flushing toilets. You can save hundreds of gallons of water a year!
- In the summertime, it's fun to play under the lawn sprinkler. When you do, make sure it's only when the lawn is being watered.
- Remind the others in your home, and your friends, not to leave any faucet running. Only use what is truly needed!
- Is there a leaky faucet or toilet in the bathroom at school? Be sure to let someone know so that it can be repaired.

Even if you do just one thing each day to contribute to your home's water conservation, you're doing the right thing!

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**File Name: I4P Conserving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Conserving Water**

Conserving water is a great way to help the earth. Without our water, plants, humans, and animals, would not be able to live. We need to save water because we will eventually run out of it. Then we will have to use and drink saltwater. It is extremely expensive to filter salt water. This why we need save water. What can you do to save water?

**Introduces the topic by clearly explaining**

the importance of water and posing a focusing question

One way you can save water is by getting a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect water so that you can water your plants with recycled water. Recycled water is better for plants because it is more natural. Recycled water also have good nutrients.

**Links ideas within categories of information using words and phrases**

Another way you can save water is by getting an airrating facet and shower head. These items use less water but make it feels the same because of more pressure. One more way you can save water is when you go in the sprinklers in the summer, make sure it is in a spot where it is watering the lawn.

**Develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, and examples related to the topic**

One ways my family saves water is by turning off the water when you brush your teeth. Water is the most important natural resource of all with out water, we would die. If we ran out of water, as I said, we would die. So if you think dieing is bad, try to conserve water as best you can.

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain the topic**

**Provides a concluding section related to the explanation presented**

This fourth-grade piece begins with an introduction that provides important context by explaining the importance of water to living things and the danger of running out. The focus of the piece is clearly established with a question: *“What can you do to save water?”*

Related information is organized into well-developed paragraphs. The second paragraph, for example, is about the benefits of collecting water in rain barrels. This idea is elaborated upon with concrete details from the source (*“you can water your plants”*) and explanation (*“recycled water is better for plants because it is more natural”*). Linking words and phrases (*“one way”, “so”, “because”, “also”*) knit together the related ideas in this paragraph.

Throughout the piece, precise words (*“eventually”, “extremely”, “pressure”*) and domain-specific vocabulary (*“nutrients”, “airrating”, “conserve”, “natural resource”*) convey ideas effectively.

Although worded a bit clumsily, the conclusion presents a logical and connected sequence of thought that leads the reader back to the focus of the piece (water is important; without it we would die; therefore, you should *“try to conserve water as best you can”*).

**File Name: I4P Conserving Water**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Conserving Water**

Conserving water is a great way to help the Earth. Plants, humans, and animals would not be able to live without our water. We need to save water because we will eventually run out of it. Then we will have to use and drink salt water. It is extremely expensive to filter salt water. This is why we need save water. What can you do to save water?

One way you can save water is by getting a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect water so that you can water your plants with recycled water. Recycled water is better for plants because it is more natural. Recycled water also has good nutrients.

Another way you can save water is by getting an aerating faucet and showerhead. These items use less water but make it feel the same because they have more pressure. One more way you can save water is to make sure sprinklers are placed where they are watering the lawn in the summer.

One way my family saves water is by turning off the water when we brush our teeth. Water is the most important natural resource of all. Without water, we would die. If we ran out of water, as I said, we would die. So if you think dying is bad, try to conserve water as best you can.

**File Name: I4P Conserving Water**

**Informational/Explanatory****Grade 4****On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt****Conserving Water**

Conserving water is a great way to help the earth. Without our water, plants, humans, and animals, would not be able to live. We need to save water because we will eventually run out of it. Then we will have to use and drink saltwater. It is extremely expensive to filter salt water. This why we need save water. What can you do to save water?

One way you can save water is by getting a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect water so that you can water your plants with recycled water. Recycled water is better for plants because it is more naturail. Recycled water also have good nutrients.

Another way you can save water is by getting an airrating facet and shower head. These items use less water but make it feels the same because of more pressure. One more way you can save water is when you go in the sprinkelers in the summer, make sure it is in a spot where it is watering the lawn.

One ways my family saves water is by turning off the water when you brush your teeth. Water is the most important natural resorce of all with out water, we would die. If we ran out of water, as I said, we would die. So if you think dieing is bad, try to conserve water as best you can.

**Grade 5, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing**

## Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative essay to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

#### **Day 1** *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video: *Water Conservation Tips*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your class: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the article: *Save our Water!* carefully. You may want to take notes for your essay as you read.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do. You each have three minutes to explain what you would do and why.
- On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper tomorrow for writing.

## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative essay to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to *Save our Water!* again. Read along as you listen.
- When you have finished, write an informative essay explaining what you can do to save water.
- Your focusing question for this assignment is
  - **What can you do to save water?**
  - Be sure to use facts and examples from the article. Explain how doing these things will save water.

### **Remember, a good informative essay:**

- *Has an effective introduction*
- *Has a clear focus/topic*
- *Uses specific facts, statistics, and examples from the text(s) to support the focus and explain your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a satisfying conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*
- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes you find.

We look forward to reading your good writing and thinking!

## Grade 5 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt

### Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: *Water conservation tips-How to Conserve Water at Home*  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MDLpVHY8LE>. The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the article. The article should be read aloud while students read along silently.
- The article provides the information needed to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes.
- The prompt should be given in two sessions. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Name:

## Save Our Water!

Did you know that kids can make a very important difference in saving the earth's water? They can! But first off, why do we even need to save water?

Water is a natural resource that we get from the Earth. Without it, we would not be able to live! Imagine a world with no water at all. You wouldn't be able to drink it, bathe, or swim! Without clean water, plants, animals, birds and ocean life would also be unable to live. Kids can help protect this resource. You make a huge difference simply by starting at home. To get an idea of how much water we could save if we all made a small effort, think about this. What if every person across the nation flushed their toilets one time less every day? Together they could save enough water to fill a lake as large as a mile wide and long and four feet in depth!

Now you know how important it is to help save water. Try some of the ideas below. Start doing your part to change our world!

### Some Ways Kids Can Help to Save Water:

- When you wash your hands, don't leave the water running. Wet your hands and turn the water off. Use soap and lather your hands well. Then turn the water on to rinse. Turn off the water and make sure it is off completely. Then dry your hands.
- Do the same when you brush your teeth. Turn the faucet on to get your toothbrush and toothpaste wet. Turn it on again to rinse your mouth and toothbrush. Don't leave the water running while you're brushing.
- Baths use a lot of water (about 37 gallons on average). Take short showers, and use only about 20 gallons of water, instead.
- Do you have plants in your house? When vegetables or other fresh produce are washed, collect that water and use it to water the plants.
- Do you like a drink of cold water now and then? Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator. That way you don't have to run the water to get it cold.
- Put a barrel outdoors to catch rain water. Then use that water for things like watering plants or flushing toilets. You can save hundreds of gallons of water a year!
- In the summertime, it's fun to play under the lawn sprinkler. When you do, make sure it's only when the lawn is being watered.
- Remind the others in your home, and your friends, not to leave any faucet running. Only use what is truly needed!
- Is there a leaky faucet or toilet in the bathroom at school? Be sure to let someone know so that it can be repaired.

Even if you do just one thing each day to contribute to your home's water conservation, you're doing the right thing!

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**File Name: ISP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Saving Water**

Did you know that you can save your homes water by just by doing things each day? You can put a bucket outside to catch rainwater or use wipes to wash tables instead of water. There are many ways to save water, you can do things outside and inside to help save water. Here are some ideas.

**Introduces the topic clearly**

**Provides a general observation and focus**

There are many things to do inside your house to help save water. You can change your toilet, facet, and shower head to low flow. Also, you can take small, short showers instead of baths. you can turn off the facet when brushing your teeth and when lathering soap in your hands. When waiting for water to warm up save the water and reuse. over all there are alot of things you can do inside to save your homes water.

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain the topic**

There are many things to do outside your house to help save water. First you can go to an automated carwash or use a waterless car wash. When you do a car wash at home you waste more water. Also you can dump out your water bottle on plants and grass insted of dumping it down the drain. Reuse water outside as much as possible. You can also put a bucket of water outside to catch rainwater and use for watering plants or grass. Over all there are alot of ways to save water outside of your house.

**Develops the topic with facts, concrete details, and other**

**information and examples related to the topic**

**Links ideas within categories of information using words and phrases**

There are many ways to save your homes water outside and inside. Kids and adults can make a big difference to save water. Imagine if everyone in the cantry

**Provides a concluding section related**

**to the explanation presented**

turned of the facet when brushing thier teeth, we could save enogh water to refill a lake! Over all it is important to save water inside and outside your house.

This fifth-grade piece introduces the topic clearly by providing a general observation and focus. The writer shows a developing awareness of purpose and audience, beginning with a question (*“Did you know...?”*) and concluding with a precise and striking image (*“we could save enogh water to refill a lake!”*) that serves to encourage the reader to take action. The clear sentence structure and familiar vocabulary is appropriate for a general audience.

The piece is well-organized. Facts and concrete details from the source have been regrouped logically into two broad categories: things you can do inside to save water and things you can do outside. Linking words and phrases (*“also”, “instead of”, “when”, “first”, “overall”*) show the relationship between ideas and allow the writer to smoothly elaborate using examples and concrete details. The structure of the essay (introduction, body, conclusion), as well as the structure within each paragraph (topic sentence, details, concluding sentence), create cohesion and make the thinking in the piece easy to follow.

**File Name: I5P Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Saving Water**

Did you know that you can save your home's water just by doing things each day? You can put a bucket outside to catch rainwater or use wipes to wash tables instead of water. There are many ways to save water. You can do things outside and inside to help save water. Here are some ideas.

There are many things to do inside your house to help save water. You can change your toilet, faucet, and showerhead to low flow. Also, you can take small, short showers instead of baths. You can turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth and when lathering soap in your hands. When waiting for water to warm up, save the water and reuse. Over all, there are a lot of things you can do inside to save your home's water.

There are many things to do outside your house to help save water. First you can go to an automated carwash or use a waterless car wash. When you do a car wash at home, you waste more water. Also you can dump out your water bottle on plants and grass instead of dumping it down the drain. Reuse water outside as much as possible. You can also put a bucket of water outside to catch rainwater and use for watering plants or grass. Overall, there are a lot of ways to save water outside of your house.

There are many ways to save your home's water outside and inside. Kids and adults can make a big difference in saving water. Imagine if everyone in the country turned off the faucet when brushing their teeth. We could save enough water to refill a lake! Overall, it is important to save water inside and outside your house.

**File Name: ISP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Saving Water**

Did you know that you can save your homes water by just by doing things each day? You can put a bucket outside to catch rainwater or use wipes to wash tables instead of water. There are many ways to save water, you can do things outside and inside to help save water. Here are some ideas.

There are many things to do inside your house to help save water. You can change your toilet, facet, and shower head to low flow. Also, you can take small, short showers instead of baths. you can turn off the facet when brushing your teeth and when lathering soap in your hands. When waiting for water to warm up save the water and reuse. over all there are alot of things you can do inside to save your homes water.

There are many things to do outside your house to help save water. First you can go to an automated carwash or use a waterless car wash. When you do a car wash at home you waste more water. Also you can dump out your water bottle on plants and grass insted of dumping it down the drain. Reuse water outside as much as possible. You can also put a bucket of water outside to catch rainwater and use for watering plants or grass. Over all there are alot of ways to save water outside of your house.

There are many ways to save your homes water outside and inside. Kids and adults can make a big difference to save water. Imagine if everyone in the cantry

turned of the facet when brushing thier teeth, we could save enogh water to refill a lake! Over all it is important to save water inside and outside your house.

***6-12 On-Demand  
Informative/Explanatory  
Samples***

## Grades 6-8, Prompt for Informative / Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Great historical events often have deep effects upon the people who live through them. Depending on the person and the situation, those effects can be very different – or not.

The Great Depression of the 1930s, in the United States, was one of these events. Lasting for nearly ten years, the Great Depression closed thousands of banks, put millions of people out of work, and seared itself into the memory of those who lived through it.

The President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, responded by creating new government programs to help Americans, known as the New Deal.

You are going to read three texts about the Great Depression: a memoir called *Digging In* by Robert Hastings, a poem, “Debts” by Karen Hesse, and a short text about the programs of the New Deal of President Roosevelt. As you read and re-read these texts, think about what the texts show you about how the Great Depression seems to have affected the individual people who lived through it.

Finally, using these texts, you will write an essay, explaining your thinking.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

**According to these texts, what effect did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it? Be sure to use evidence from the texts to support and develop your thinking.**

Remember, a good informative essay:

- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/topic clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the topic and explains that evidence*
- *Concludes effectively*

- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

## Informative / Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

#### 6-8

#### *Teacher Directions*

- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them.
- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
  - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
  - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If they are using a word processor, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.



## Digging In

By Robert J. Hastings

The closing of Old West Side Mine meant the end of anything resembling a steady job for the next eight years. From 1930 on, it was a day's work here and a day's work there, a coal order from the welfare office, a few days on WPA, a garden in the back yard, and a few chickens and eggs.

We weathered the storm because of Dad's willingness to take any job and Mom's ability to stretch every available dollar. It was not so much a matter of finding a job as of filling in with odd jobs wherever and whenever you could, and most of the "jobs" were those you made for yourself.

My diary shows that Dad sold iron cords door to door, "worked a day in the hay," bought a horse to break gardens, rented an extra lot for a garden on the shares, picked peaches, raised sweet potato slips, traded an occasional dozen of eggs at the grocery, hung wallpaper, "painted Don Albright's house for \$5," picked up a day or two's work at the strip mines, guarded the fence at the county fairgrounds, cut hair for boys in the neighborhood, sold coal orders, and when he had to and could, worked intermittently on WPA.

With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible. We stopped the evening paper, turned off the city water and cleaned out our well, sold our four-door Model T touring car with the snap-on side curtains and isinglass, stopped ice and milk delivery, and disconnected our gas range for all but the three hot summer months. There was no telephone to disconnect, as we didn't have one to start with!

We did keep up regular payments on two Metropolitan Life Insurance policies. Page after page of old receipt books show entries of 10 cents per week on one policy and 69 cents a month on another. As long as we could, we made house payments to the Marion Building and Loan, but a day came when we had to let those go, too.

Fortunately, we were able to save our house from foreclosure. When so many borrowers defaulted, the Marion Building and Loan went bankrupt. Creditors were allowed to pay just about any amount to satisfy the receivers. But that was the catch – who had "just about any amount" to pay? A house behind ours sold for \$25. Many good houses in Marion sold for \$5 to \$100 and were torn down and moved to nearby towns. We settled with the loan company for \$125, or ten cents on the dollar for our \$1250 mortgage. I'll never forget the day Dad cleared it all up, making two or three trips to town to bring papers home for Mom to sign. He was able to borrow the \$125 from his aunt, Dialtha James, who as the widow of a Spanish-American war veteran had a small pension.

Looking back, I find it amazing what we did without. A partial list would include toothpaste (we used soda), toilet paper (we used the catalog), newspaper or magazine subscriptions, soft drinks, potato chips and snacks, bakery goods except bread and an occasional dozen of doughnuts, paper clips, rubber bands and restaurant meals. We had no water bill, sewer bill, telephone bill, no car expenses – gasoline, tires, batteries, licenses, insurance, repairs – no laundry service, no dry cleaning (we pressed woolens up with a hot iron and wet cloth), no bank service charge (no bank account), no sales or income tax. We sent no greeting cards except maybe half a dozen at Christmas...

Typical of the simple economies Mom practiced was keeping the electric bill to \$1 a month and the gas bill to \$1 a month in June, July, and August....Since our only appliance was an electric iron, the chief use of electricity was for lighting. With only a single bulb suspended by a cord from the ceiling of each room, there weren't many lights to burn...On winter evenings, Mom would turn on the kitchen light while she cooked supper. If I had lessons I brought them to the kitchen table or sprawled on the floor between the kitchen and dining room.

After supper we "turned off the light in the kitchen" and moved to the dining-sitting room, where another light was switched on. If we wanted to read on winter afternoons, we sat as near a window as possible, with the curtains pinned back, to save the lights until it was nearly dark...

Dad had some old-fashioned shoe lasts, and he would buy stick-'em-on soles at the dime store to patch our shoes in winter. With simple barber tools he cut my hair and that of other kids in the neighborhood, for maybe ten cents a head. In cold, wet weather, when he worked outdoors on WPA, he often cut strips of cardboard to stuff in the soles of his shoes and keep his feet warm.

We took care of what we had. Every cotton cloth was used over as a dish cloth, wash cloth, dust cloth, shoe-shining cloth, window-washing cloth, to scrub and wax floors, make bandages, make quilt pieces, make kite tails, or to tie boxes and papers together. The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels. Some neighbors made curtains or even dresses from feed sacks. Every paper bag was saved for lunches or cut and used for wrapping paper. String was wound into balls for later use.

Each August Mom would find someone who was a year ahead of me in school, and buy his used books. One exception was a spelling book used in all eight grades. Since it was to be used for eight years, we decided it would be a wise investment to buy a new one when I started first grade. In the seventh grade, I dropped that speller in the snow. I thought Mom was unfair when she sent me all the way back to school, retracing my steps to look for the book...

Before the Depression, we hung a four-cornered black-and-white cardboard sign in the front window each morning. The figures in the corners told the iceman how many pounds to bring – 25, 50, 75, or 100. But ice was one of the casualties of the Depression, although we managed a small

piece two or three times a week for iced tea. About eleven in the morning I would pull a little wagon, filled with a gunny sack and assorted old quilts and tarpaulins, down to the neighborhood ice house to buy a “nickel’s worth of ice,” which was half of a 25-pound chunk. By wrapping it carefully and storing it in a cool, damp spot under the house, we could stretch that piece of ice for two or three days. In rainy, cool weather, maybe four days! It was our glistening prize, and any left over from tea was emptied back into a pitcher of ice water, or used for lemonade that afternoon. So as not to waste any, we chipped only what was needed, with much of the same care used by a diamond cutter.

Whatever was free was our recreation. This may have included playing records on our wind-up victrola or listening to the radio. You might watch a parachute jump at the airport or a free ball game at the city park, with perhaps a free band concert afterwards...the band concerts survived only the first two years of the Depression...

We liked music, and one of my earliest memories is of Dad singing to me:

Two arms that hold me tight,

Two lips that kiss goodnight;

To me he’ll always be,

That little boy of mine.

No one can ever know,

Just what his coming has meant:

He’s something heaven has sent,

That little boy of mine.

At one point in the Depression, the cupboard was literally bare of money. We weren’t hungry, but we were penniless. Then Dad went back in the pantry and came out with a jar in which he had saved a few nickels and dimes for such an emergency.

Later, Mom said to me, “I’ve learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere...”

Excerpted from "Digging In", 1986. Found in *Dark Days*, Perfection Learning, 2006

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## Debts

By Karen Hesse

Daddy is thinking  
of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men,  
to get some new wheat planted  
where the winter crop has spindled out and died.

Mr. Roosevelt promises  
Daddy won't have to pay a dime  
till the crop comes in.

Daddy says,  
"I can turn the fields over,  
start again.

It's sure to rain soon.  
Wheat's sure to grow."

Ma says, "What if it doesn't?"

Daddy takes off his hat,  
roughs up his hair,  
puts the hat back on.  
“Course it’ll rain,” he says.

Ma says, “Bay,  
it hasn’t rained enough to grow wheat in  
three years.”

Daddy looks like a fight brewing.  
He takes that red face of his out to the barn,  
To keep from feuding with my pregnant ma.  
I ask Ma  
how, after all this time,  
Daddy still believes in rain.

“Well, it rains enough,” Ma says,  
“now and again,  
to keep a person hoping.  
But even if it didn’t

your daddy would have to believe.

It's coming on spring,

and he's a farmer."

March 1934

## The New Deal

In 1932 [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) was elected overwhelmingly on a campaign promising a New Deal for the American people. Roosevelt worked quickly upon his election to deliver the New Deal, an unprecedented number of reforms addressing the catastrophic effects of the Great Depression. Unlike his predecessor, [Herbert Hoover](#), who felt that the public should support the government and not the other way around, Roosevelt felt it was the federal government's duty to help the American people weather these bad times.

Together with his "brain trust," a group of university scholars and liberal theorists, Roosevelt sought the best course of action for the struggling nation. A desperate Congress gave him carte blanche and rubber-stamped his proposals in order to expedite the reforms. During the first 100 days of his presidency, a never-ending stream of bills was passed, to relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery.

His first act as president was to declare a four-day bank holiday, during which time Congress drafted the Emergency Banking Bill of 1933, which stabilized the banking system and restored the public's faith in the banking industry by putting the federal government behind it. Three months later, he signed the Glass-Steagall Act which created the FDIC, federally insuring deposits

The [Civil Conservation Corps](#) was one of the New Deal's most successful programs. It addressed the pressing problem of unemployment by sending 3 million single men from age 17 to 23 to the nations' forests to work. Living in camps in the forests, the men dug ditches, built reservoirs and planted trees. The men, all volunteers, were paid \$30 a month, with two thirds being sent home.

The [Works Progress Administration](#), Roosevelt's major work relief program, would employ more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports.

The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA) were designed to address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week and banning child labor. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created in 1933, gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. The Agricultural Adjustment Act subsidized farmers for reducing crops and provided loans for farmers facing bankruptcy. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) helped people save their homes from foreclosure.

While they did not end the Depression, the New Deal's experimental programs helped the American people immeasurably by taking care of their basic needs and giving them the dignity of work and hope.

from Public Broadcasting Service [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

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**File Name: I6P Effects of The Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Effects of The Great Depression**

The Great Depression affected the people that lived through it in many ways. The things at I am going to explain are some of the things that affected the people who lived through the Great Depression. Having barely any money was one of the things that affected them. Also having less supplies affected them too. Having to take care of kids too also might have affected the people during the Great Depression.

First, I am going to talk about how having almost no money affected the people. It affected them because they were getting their money by working. Then their jobs were shutting down so their amount of money was shrinking and shrinking. They would do neighborhood favors and jobs but the amount of money they would get was five dollars. They also had to pay a bill for electricity every month. They had to pay for gas if you had a car and their house. That is why having almost no money affected them a lot.

Focus / **topic** of the piece is clearly stated

**Introduces the topic clearly:** The writer gives no context, but does lay out the ideas she will discuss in the essay to follow

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information** by category, within an overall cause-effect structure.

Here, writer discusses the effect of no money. **Develops the topic with relevant, accurate facts and concrete details using domain-specific vocabulary to explain** the effects of a lack of money during the Great Depression.

**Uses appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts**

Another reason the Great Depression affected the people was they were having less of the supplies they had. Like some of the people stopped delivery for several things such as milk and ice. They were also using less electricity and selling their cars.

Those are some of supplies they had a shortage or had to not use as much.

**Develops the topic with relevant, facts and concrete details about the effect of the Great Depression on childcare**

Also if they had kids they would need to do extra work and be able to care for them. They also had to pay more money if they had kids because they have to feed them too. They also had to take care of them. The parents have to care for them. If they are sick they can not just leave them at home they have to take care of them. They also might worry about them. If you had kids during the Great Depression not only would you worry about your kids and family.

**Analyzes evidence**

That is why if you had kids during the Great Depression it might be more difficult.

Now you can see how living through the Great Depression was very difficult and affected many people who lived through it. It affected people in many ways like having no money or having a very little amount of it. Also if you had kids it might have been a little more difficult. They also had to live with less supplies. That is why I think the Great Depression affected the people who lived through it.

**Establishes and maintains a reasonably formal style**

**Provides a concluding section that restates and follows from the explanation presented**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer gives no background about the Great Depression in the introduction (a weakness), but does state her topic / focus that the Great Depression affected people who lived through it in many ways and lays out what she will discuss in the writing to follow.

The writer organizes the evidence clearly by category (various effects of the Great Depression) to support the topic, and uses basic but appropriate transitions to clarify relationships between ideas and concepts. Within each chunk of text, the writer uses some domain-specific vocabulary ("*neighborhood favors and jobs*", "*stopped delivery for...milk and ice*") to name and explain / analyze the evidence about the effects, which she has taken from the texts she has read. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

While the language is sometimes basic and informal ("*I am going to tell you*"), the bulk of the essay has an appropriately formal style for this grade level. The conclusion, while a bit repetitious, follows from the information presented.

**File Name: I7P Living Through The Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Living Through The Great Depression**

The Great Depression affected many people especially those who lived through it. With that said the main point of this essay is how people who lived through the Depression were affected during it.

During The Great Depression people had things to deal with that made them struggle. Some people didn't have an abundant amount of money not a decent amount. Instead they had little or none at all. It was a struggle to earn money with the lack of jobs, people ended up doing side jobs to earn money. In "Digging In" the family of four had to find ways to obtain money. They ended up cutting back on a lot of things like the water system and starting using their well. The father did his best to get some type of income by doing side jobs, like cutting the boys hair for \_\_\_\_\_. People also looked to

Roosevelt for help or farming for a decent or better income. For instance in the

poem "Debts The family owned land that they used for farming. The father

**Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer gives little context but does state a main idea/focus

**Organizes ideas and information** using categories: The writer organizes text-by-text within an overall cause-effect structure

**Develops topic with appropriate, relevant facts and concrete details, uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in evidence** from the text to inform about the topic

**Continues to develop topic with appropriate accurate, facts and concrete details, uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in evidence** from the text

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

**Develops topic with appropriate accurate, facts and concrete details, uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in evidence** from the text

**Analyzes  
evidence**

grew wheat three years ago and hasn't been able to since. With scarce rain no wheat grew, without wheat to harvest no money would flow in. Bay, the father, even thought about getting a loan from Mr. Roosevelt, and he promised he didn't have to pay a dime 'till the crop came in. All he could do was hope things got better. Not only did people have things to worry about the President did too. In the article "The New Deal" Roosevelt wanted to find a way to help the people suffering from the Great Depression. He created several ways to help with some of the issues. He made the NIRA and NRA, these systems banned child labor and address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week. The FERA gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. In the end these systems only helped people take care of their basic needs.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented**

The people who lived through the Great Depression had to find ways to obtain income, work and help. The Government did their best to support the people through this time but have you ever thought that this might happen again.

**Establishes and maintains a reasonably formal style**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer gives no context about the Great Depression in the introduction but does state the main point (the Great Depression affected people who lived through it in many ways), which serves to preview the essay that follows.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly using the texts as categories, and supplies textual evidence to support the main point. She uses appropriate transitions. For example, she writes, *“Not only did people have things to worry about, the President did too.”* (Note: this would be easier to see if the writer had started a new paragraph with each transition.)

Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and explain the effects, which she has identified from the texts she has read. This makes the writer’s thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The essay has an appropriately formal style. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented.

**File Name: I7P Living Through The Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Living Through The Great Depression**

The Great Depression affected many people especially those who lived through it. With that said the main point of this essay is how people who lived through the Depression were affected during it.

During The Great Depression people had things to deal with that made them struggle. Some people didn't have an abundant amount of money not a decent amount. Instead they had little or none at all. It was a struggle to earn money with the lack of jobs, people ended up doing side jobs to earn money. In "Digging In" the family of four had to find ways to obtain money. They ended up cutting back on a lot of things like the water system and starting using their well. The father did his best to get some type of income by doing side jobs, like cutting the boys hair for \_\_\_\_\_. People also looked to Roosevelt for help or farming for a decent or better income. For instance in the poem "Debts The family owned land that they used for farming. The father grew wheat three years ago and hasn't been able to since. With scarce rain no wheat grew, without wheat to harvest no money would flow in. Bay, the father, even thought about getting a loan from Mr. Roosevelt, and he promised he didn't have to pay a dime 'till the crop came in. All he could do was hope things got better. Not only did people have

things to worry about the President did too. In the article "The New Deal" Roosevelt wanted to find a way to help the people suffering from the Great Depression. He created several ways to help with some of the issues. He made the NIRA and NRA, these systems banned child labor and address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week. The FERA gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. In the end these systems only helped people take care of their basic needs.

The people who lived through the Great Depression had to find ways to obtain income, work and help. The Government did their best to support the people through this time but have you ever thought that this might happen again.

**File Name: I8P Dignity and Hope**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Dignity and Hope**

The Great Depression. This notorious event put Americas hope to the test. Leaving Americans economically and metally drained. The Great Depression devistated America and will never be forgotten. If not for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his beneficial "New Deal" who knows what horride ruins would remain as a result of The Great Depression.

"With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible." This excerpt from the story "Digging in" by Robert J. Hastings shows the situation that each and every American faced. In the story, it is said that the family substituted toothpaste and toilet paper, for soda and catalog pages. Even common nessecities had to be sacrificed during The Great Depression.

Along with their wallets, Americans spirits were also crushed. In the poem

"Debts" by Karen Hesse, the father of the family is facing a serious drought but still

believes in rain. When reality sets in that rain is not likely to come, he is filled with rage and leaves to \*\*\* to the farm to avoid feuding with his pregnant wife.

This man was a farmer, and had to rely on the most unreliable thing for a source

**Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer gives a bit of context and indicates the focus /main ideas that will be developed

**Organizes ideas and information using categories:** The writer organizes text-by-text within an overall cause-effect structure

**Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts and concrete details**

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts**

**Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts and concrete details**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in well-chosen evidence from the poem to explain the topic**

**Analyzes evidence**

of income, mother nature. This man, and every other Americans spirits were tested during The Great Depression, and the number of those who still had hope was diminishing. With America facing an economic doom, Americans turned to one man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With the promise of a New Deal to help end The Great Depression Roosevelt won the election by a landslide. He created jobs for three-million single men between seventeen and twenty-three years of age. Roosevelt's work relief program put 8.5 million Americans to work building roads, bridges, airports and more. Although Roosevelt did not end The Great Depression, he provided Americans with work and hope.

**Establishes and maintains a formal style, a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented**

The Great Depression left Americans mentally as well as economically depleted. This event tested the will of the American people, and left

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer gives a bit of context about the Great Depression in the introduction and then states his main points (the Great Depression devastated people who lived through it; Roosevelt's intervention was critical), which serve to preview what follows.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly by category, building his essay text-by-text and using textual evidence to support the main points. He uses appropriate, varied, and strong transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas. For example, he writes, "*Along with their wallets, Americans spirits were also crushed.*" Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and explain the effects, which he has identified from the texts he has read. While he does not give a great deal of evidence, what he does include is precise and well-chosen, with some analysis ("*When reality sets in...*") This makes the writer's thinking easy to follow.

The essay has an appropriately formal style. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented.

some citizens without any hope. With the help of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America was able to get through The Great Depression with dignity and hope.

**File Name: I8P Dignity and Hope**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Dignity and Hope**

The Great Depression. This notorious event put Americas hope to the test. Leaving Americans economically and metally drained. The Great Depression devistated America and will never be forgotten. If not for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his beneficial "New Deal" who knows what horride ruins would remain as a result of The Great Depression.

"With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible." This excerpt from the story "Digging in" by Robert J. Hastings shows the situation that each and every American faced. In the story, it is said that the family substituted toothpaste and toilet paper, for soda and catalog pages. Even common nessecities had to be sacrificed during The Great Depression.

Along with their wallets, Americans spirits were also crushed. In the poem "Debts" by Karen Hesse, the father of the family is facing a serious drought but still believes in rain. When reality sets in that rain is not likely to come, he is filled with rage and leaves to \*\*\* to the farm to avoid feuding with his pregnant wife. This man was a farmer, and had to rely on the most unreliable thing for a source of income,

mother nature. This man, and every other Americans spirits were tested during The Great Depression, and the number of those who still had hope was diminishing. With America facing an economic doom, Americans turned to one man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With the promise of a New Deal to help end The Great Depression Roosevelt won the election by a landslide. He created jobs for three-million single men between seventeen and twenty-three years of age. Roosevelts work relief program put 8.5 million Americans to work building roads, bridges, airports and more. Although Roosevelt did not end The Great Depression, he provided Americans with work and hope.

The Great Depression left Americans mentally as well as economically depleted. This event tested the will of the American people, and left some citizens without any hope. With the help of Franklin Delano Roosevelts, America was able to get through The Great Depression with dignity and hope.

## Grades 9-12, Prompt for Informative / Explanatory Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Great historical events often have deep effects upon the people who live through them. Depending on the person and the situation, those effects can be very different – or not.

The Great Depression of the 1930s, in the United States, was one of these events. Lasting for nearly ten years, the Great Depression closed thousands of banks, put millions of people out of work, and seared itself into the memory of those who lived through it.

The President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, responded by creating new government programs to help Americans, known as the New Deal.

You are going to read four texts about the Great Depression: a memoir called *Digging In* by Robert Hastings, a poem “Debt” by Karen Hesse, a short text about the programs of the New Deal of President Roosevelt, and President Roosevelt’s second inaugural address to the nation in 1937. As you read and re-read these texts, think about what the texts show you about how the Great Depression seems to have affected the individual people who lived through it.

Finally, using these texts, you will write an essay, explaining your thinking.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

**According to these texts, what effect did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it? Be sure to use evidence from the texts to support and develop your thinking.**

Remember, a good informational essay:

- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/topic clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the topic and explains that evidence*
- *Concludes effectively*
- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

**Informative / Explanatory Writing**  
**Common Core Standard W.CCR.2**  
**9-12**

*Teacher Directions*

- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them.
- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
  - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
  - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If they are using a word processor, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## Digging In

By Robert J. Hastings

The closing of Old West Side Mine meant the end of anything resembling a steady job for the next eight years. From 1930 on, it was a day's work here and a day's work there, a coal order from the welfare office, a few days on WPA, a garden in the back yard, and a few chickens and eggs.

We weathered the storm because of Dad's willingness to take any job and Mom's ability to stretch every available dollar. It was not so much a matter of finding a job as of filling in with odd jobs wherever and whenever you could, and most of the "jobs" were those you made for yourself.

My diary shows that Dad sold iron cords door to door, "worked a day in the hay," bought a horse to break gardens, rented an extra lot for a garden on the shares, picked peaches, raised sweet potato slips, traded an occasional dozen of eggs at the grocery, hung wallpaper, "painted Don Albright's house for \$5," picked up a day or two's work at the strip mines, guarded the fence at the county fairgrounds, cut hair for boys in the neighborhood, sold coal orders, and when he had to and could, worked intermittently on WPA.

With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible. We stopped the evening paper, turned off the city water and cleaned out our well, sold our four-door Model T touring car with the snap-on side curtains and isinglass, stopped ice and milk delivery, and disconnected our gas range for all but the three hot summer months. There was no telephone to disconnect, as we didn't have one to start with!

We did keep up regular payments on two Metropolitan Life Insurance policies. Page after page of old receipt books show entries of 10 cents per week on one policy and 69 cents a month on another. As long as we could, we made house payments to the Marion Building and Loan, but a day came when we had to let those go, too.

Fortunately, we were able to save our house from foreclosure. When so many borrowers defaulted, the Marion Building and Loan went bankrupt. Creditors were allowed to pay just about any amount to satisfy the receivers. But that was the catch – who had "just about any amount" to pay? A house behind ours sold for \$25. Many good houses in Marion sold for \$5 to \$100 and were torn down and moved to nearby towns. We settled with the loan company for \$125, or ten cents on the dollar for our \$1250 mortgage. I'll never forget the day Dad cleared it all up, making two or three trips to town to bring papers home for Mom to sign. He was able to borrow the \$125 from his aunt, Dialtha James, who as the widow of a Spanish-American war veteran had a small pension.

Looking back, I find it amazing what we did without. A partial list would include toothpaste (we used soda), toilet paper (we used the catalog), newspaper or magazine subscriptions, soft drinks, potato chips and snacks, bakery goods except bread and an occasional dozen of doughnuts, paper clips, rubber bands and restaurant meals. We had no water bill, sewer bill, telephone bill, no car expenses – gasoline, tires, batteries, licenses, insurance, repairs – no laundry service, no dry

cleaning (we pressed woolens up with a hot iron and wet cloth), no bank service charge (no bank account), no sales or income tax. We sent no greeting cards except maybe half a dozen at Christmas...

Typical of the simple economies Mom practiced was keeping the electric bill to \$1 a month and the gas bill to \$1 a month in June, July, and August....Since our only appliance was an electric iron, the chief use of electricity was for lighting. With only a single bulb suspended by a cord from the ceiling of each room, there weren't many lights to burn...On winter evenings, Mom would turn on the kitchen light while she cooked supper. If I had lessons I brought them to the kitchen table or sprawled on the floor between the kitchen and dining room.

After supper we "turned off the light in the kitchen" and moved to the dining-sitting room, where another light was switched on. If we wanted to read on winter afternoons, we sat as near a window as possible, with the curtains pinned back, to save the lights until it was nearly dark...

Dad had some old-fashioned shoe lasts, and he would buy stick-'em-on soles at the dime store to patch our shoes in winter. With simple barber tools he cut my hair and that of other kids in the neighborhood, for maybe ten cents a head. In cold, wet weather, when he worked outdoors on WPA, he often cut strips of cardboard to stuff in the soles of his shoes and keep his feet warm.

We took care of what we had. Every cotton cloth was used over as a dish cloth, wash cloth, dust cloth, shoe-shining cloth, window-washing cloth, to scrub and wax floors, make bandages, make quilt pieces, make kite tails, or to tie boxes and papers together. The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels. Some neighbors made curtains or even dresses from feed sacks. Every paper bag was saved for lunches or cut and used for wrapping paper. String was wound into balls for later use.

Each August Mom would find someone who was a year ahead of me in school, and buy his used books. One exception was a spelling book used in all eight grades. Since it was to be used for eight years, we decided it would be a wise investment to buy a new one when I started first grade. In the seventh grade, I dropped that speller in the snow. I thought Mom was unfair when she sent me all the way back to school, retracing my steps to look for the book...

Before the Depression, we hung a four-cornered black-and-white cardboard sign in the front window each morning. The figures in the corners told the iceman how many pounds to bring – 25, 50, 75, or 100. But ice was one of the casualties of the Depression, although we managed a small piece two or three times a week for iced tea. About eleven in the morning I would pull a little wagon, filled with a gunny sack and assorted old quilts and tarpaulins, down to the neighborhood ice house to buy a "nickel's worth of ice," which was half of a 25-pound chunk. By wrapping it carefully and storing it in a cool, damp spot under the house, we could stretch that piece of ice for two or three days. In rainy, cool weather, maybe four days! It was our glistening prize, and any left over from tea was emptied back into a pitcher of ice water, or used for lemonade that afternoon. So as not to waste any, we chipped only what was needed, with much of the same care used by a diamond cutter.

Whatever was free was our recreation. This may have included playing records on our wind-up victrola or listening to the radio. You might watch a parachute jump at the airport or a free ball game at the city park, with perhaps a free band concert afterwards...the band concerts survived only the first two years of the Depression...

We liked music, and one of my earliest memories is of Dad singing to me:

Two arms that hold me tight,  
Two lips that kiss goodnight;  
To me he'll always be,  
That little boy of mine.

No one can ever know,  
Just what his coming has meant:  
He's something heaven has sent,  
That little boy of mine.

At one point in the Depression, the cupboard was literally bare of money. We weren't hungry, but we were penniless. Then Dad went back in the pantry and came out with a jar in which he had saved a few nickels and dimes for such an emergency.

Later, Mom said to me, "I've learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere..."

Excerpted from "Digging In", 1986. Found in *Dark Days*, Perfection Learning, 2006  
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## Debts

By Karen Hesse

Daddy is thinking  
of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men,  
to get some new wheat planted  
where the winter crop has spindled out and died.  
Mr. Roosevelt promises  
Daddy won't have to pay a dime  
till the crop comes in.

Daddy says,  
"I can turn the fields over,  
start again.  
It's sure to rain soon.  
Wheat's sure to grow."

Ma says, "What if it doesn't?"

Daddy takes off his hat,  
roughs up his hair,  
puts the hat back on.  
"Course it'll rain," he says.

Ma says, "Bay,  
it hasn't rained enough to grow wheat in  
three years."

Daddy looks like a fight brewing.

He takes that red face of his out to the barn,  
To keep from feuding with my pregnant ma.

I ask Ma

how, after all this time,

Daddy still believes in rain.

“Well, it rains enough,” Ma says,

“now and again,

to keep a person hoping.

But even if it didn’t

your daddy would have to believe.

It’s coming on spring,

and he’s a farmer.”

March 1934

## The New Deal

In 1932 [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) was elected overwhelmingly on a campaign promising a New Deal for the American people. Roosevelt worked quickly upon his election to deliver the New Deal, an unprecedented number of reforms addressing the catastrophic effects of the Great Depression. Unlike his predecessor, [Herbert Hoover](#), who felt that the public should support the government and not the other way around, Roosevelt felt it was the federal government's duty to help the American people weather these bad times.

Together with his "brain trust," a group of university scholars and liberal theorists, Roosevelt sought the best course of action for the struggling nation. A desperate Congress gave him carte blanche and rubber-stamped his proposals in order to expedite the reforms. During the first 100 days of his presidency, a never-ending stream of bills was passed, to relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery.

His first act as president was to declare a four-day bank holiday, during which time Congress drafted the Emergency Banking Bill of 1933, which stabilized the banking system and restored the public's faith in the banking industry by putting the federal government behind it. Three months later, he signed the Glass-Steagall Act which created the FDIC, federally insuring deposits

The [Civil Conservation Corps](#) was one of the New Deal's most successful programs. It addressed the pressing problem of unemployment by sending 3 million single men from age 17 to 23 to the nations' forests to work. Living in camps in the forests, the men dug ditches, built reservoirs and planted trees. The men, all volunteers, were paid \$30 a month, with two thirds being sent home. The [Works Progress Administration](#), Roosevelt's major work relief program, would employ more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports.

The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA) were designed to address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week and banning child labor. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created in 1933, gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. The Agricultural Adjustment Act subsidized farmers for reducing crops and provided loans for farmers facing bankruptcy. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) helped people save their homes from foreclosure.

While they did not end the Depression, the New Deal's experimental programs helped the American people immeasurably by taking care of their basic needs and giving them the dignity of work and hope.

from Public Broadcasting Service [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

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*President Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1932, during the worst depression American had ever known. The stock market had crashed in 1929, thousands of banks had failed, millions of people were unemployed. Until 1932, there was no safety net for the country, with no government help, so people were on their own.*

*During his first term of office, Roosevelt created a program called the New Deal, in which government took a huge role in putting people back to work, creating Social Security, and creating many types of government assistance for people.*

*Roosevelt was overwhelmingly re-elected in 1936. What follows is the speech he made at the inauguration for his second term.*

## **Second Inaugural Address, President Franklin D. Roosevelt**

**January 20, 1937**

My fellow countrymen. When four years ago we met to inaugurate a President, the Republic, single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. We dedicated ourselves to the fulfillment of a vision—to speed the time when there would be for all the people that security and peace essential to the pursuit of happiness. We of the Republic pledged ourselves to drive from the temple of our ancient faith those who had profaned it; to end by action, tireless and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day. We did those first things first.

Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need—the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Repeated attempts at their solution without the aid of government had left us baffled and bewildered...

We of the Republic sensed the truth that democratic government has innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable. We would not admit that we could not find a way to master economic epidemics just as, after centuries of fatalistic suffering, we had found a way to master epidemics of disease. We refused to leave the problems of our common welfare to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster.

In this we Americans were discovering no wholly new truth; we were writing a new chapter in our book of self-government.

This year marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Constitutional Convention which made us a nation. At that Convention our forefathers found the way out of the chaos which followed the Revolutionary War; they created a strong government with powers of united action sufficient then and now to solve problems utterly beyond individual or local solution. A century and a half ago they established the Federal Government in order to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to the American people.

Today we invoke those same powers of government to achieve the same objectives.

Four years of new experience have not belied our historic instinct. They hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within the separate States, and government of the United States can do the things the times require, without yielding its democracy. Our tasks in the last four years did not force democracy to take a holiday.

Nearly all of us recognize that as intricacies of human relationships increase, so power to govern them also must increase—power to stop evil; power to do good. The essential democracy of our nation and the safety of our people depend not upon the absence of power, but upon lodging it with those whom the people can change or continue at stated intervals through an honest and free system of elections. The Constitution of 1787 did not make our democracy impotent.

Our progress out of the depression is obvious. But that is not all that you and I mean by the new order of things. Our pledge was not merely to do a patchwork job with secondhand materials. By using the new materials of social justice we have undertaken to erect on the old foundations a more enduring structure for the better use of future generations...

In this process evil things formerly accepted will not be so easily condoned. Hard-headedness will not so easily excuse hardheartedness. We are moving toward an era of good feeling. But we realize that there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will.

For these reasons I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

Among men of good will, science and democracy together offer an ever-richer life and ever-larger satisfaction to the individual. With this change in our moral climate and our rediscovered ability to improve our economic order, we have set our feet upon the road of enduring progress.

Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead? Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way? For "each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth."

I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. Its hundred and thirty million people are at peace among themselves; they are making their country a good neighbor among the nations. I see a United States which can demonstrate that, under democratic methods of government, national wealth can be translated into a spreading volume of human comforts hitherto unknown, and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But here is the challenge to our democracy: In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens—a substantial part of its whole population—who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day.

I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labeled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

But it is not in despair that I paint you that picture. I paint it for you in hope—because the nation, seeing and understanding the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country's interest and concern; and we will never regard any faithful law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

Government is competent when all who compose it work as trustees for the whole people. It can make constant progress when it keeps abreast of all the facts. It can obtain justified support and legitimate criticism when the people receive true information of all that government does.

If I know aught of the will of our people, they will demand that these conditions of effective government shall be created and maintained. They will demand a nation uncorrupted by cancers of injustice and, therefore, strong among the nations in its example of the will to peace.

Today we reconsecrate our country to long-cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. In every land there are always at work forces that drive men apart and forces that draw men together. In our personal ambitions we are individualists. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up, or else we all go down, as one people.

In taking again the oath of office as President of the United States, I assume the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance.

*[www.historymatters.gmu.edu](http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu)*

**File Name: I9-10P Gains of the Great Depression****Informative / Explanatory****Grade 9-10****On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt****Gains of the Great Depression**

During the Great Depression, millions of people lost jobs, and families struggled to find financial footholds. It lasted for ten years,

leaving very strong memories of dramatically dark times. Throughout those years, people found new ways to cope with the struggles, and

interestingly enough, new emotions and belief in the ideals of America.

Everybody learned the importance of being resourceful, while also keeping hope for the future and growing more unified and patriotic as a country.

One important effect of the Great Depression was how it made people and families resourceful. That quality is largely a part of the memoir Digging In, where a man who lived during the Depression talked about his family's

frugality, and how they had to "cut back on everything possible" in order to save money. Some of the things they had to cut back on included city

Integrates  
quotations  
effectively  
into analysis

water, selling their car, and discontinuing purchases of toothpaste, toilet paper, and snacks, just to name a few. They also "took care of

**Introduces the topic:**

The writer gives strong context that sets the stage for the essay; includes **topic / focus** of the piece, which previews what is to follow

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic**

**Analyzes ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections**

**Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions:**

The writer cites several texts but organizes the essay mainly by abstract **concept** (e.g., resourcefulness, patriotism), not text.

**Develops the topic with well-chosen, relevant, sufficient, accurate facts and concrete details**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the**

what [they] had", and listed all the ways they used a cotton cloth, which included using it as a dish cloth, bandage, quilt piece and more. These qualities of being frugal and resourceful weren't bad; they taught people to not be wasteful and to not spend money on things that aren't necessary. Being resourceful became a part of life during the Depression as a way to help families stay financially afloat.

**Establishes and maintains a formal style, objective tone while attending to norms and conventions of discipline in which the student is writing**

More significantly the Great Depression, in a broad sense, brought a sense of patriotism and more unity as a country. Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt enriched his second inaugural address with these ideals. He said that the greatest change he had witnessed was the "change in the moral climate of America" and that they were on the road of progress. Another quote of his was "in seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up, or else we all go down, as one people." What Roosevelt was implying was if the people wanted their country to go in the right direction, they all had to work together. Working together wouldn't be hard, due to the entire country's new sense of belief in their country, also known as patriotism. The United States' stronger sense of unity that came about during the depression helped citizens work through the hard times.

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts and create cohesion**

**Analyzes evidence**

Most importantly, the Depression oddly enough brought a sense of hope. In some cases, farmers had to keep hope for the future and that it would bring rain for their crops so they could get money, as a farmer had in a poem called "Debts". In an article about "The New Deal", an explanation was given about how Roosevelt gave the country hope by creating many reforms that were aimed to "relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic

**Develops topic with well-chosen, relevant, sufficient, accurate facts and concrete details** from New Deal text

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic**

recovery". This hope for the future gave people something worth living for during times when suicide didn't seem like a bad idea. Indeed, this sense of hope was a very important effect that the Great Depression had on the people who lived through it.

Reminds audience of the focus / topic / main point of the essay.

Even though the Depression devastatingly affected tens of millions of people, the way it changed people's outlooks was inspiring. Instead of tossing a cotton bag in the garbage, people learned to be resourceful and used them as towels and dish cloths. A stronger sense of pride in their country helped them work through the hardships together, with patriotism and unity. Above all else, without hope for the future, people would've given up on trying to fix their severely wounded economy. These enhanced senses of resourcefulness, unity, along with patriotism and hope were all ways that the Great

**Makes an important distinction, demonstrating understanding of the complexity of the topic**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the information presented by articulating implications and the significance of the topic**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer provides some context about the severity of the Great Depression in the introduction and then states his main points (the Great Depression taught people to be resourceful as well as inspired unity), which serves to preview what follows.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly by concept, using textual evidence to support the main points. While he uses the texts extensively, they are not the organizing principle; rather, the concepts of resourcefulness and unity are. The writer uses appropriate, varied, and strong transitions to clarify relationships and create cohesion (for example, *"Indeed, this sense of hope..."*). Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and explain the effects, which he has identified from the texts he has read. The writer analyzes evidence thoughtfully throughout so that the reader grasps the complexity of the topic.

While the essay is compelling and even dramatic, it has an appropriately formal style. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented, and in it the writer analyzes the implications and significance of the topic.

Depression affected Americans.

**File Name: N9-10P Gains of the Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 9-10**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Gains of the Great Depression**

During the Great Depression, millions of people lost jobs, and families struggled to find financial footholds. It lasted for ten years, leaving very strong memories of dramatically dark times. Throughout those years, people found new ways to cope with the struggles, and interestingly enough, new emotions and belief in the ideals of America. Everybody learned the importance of being resourceful, while also keeping hope for the future and growing more unified and patriotic as a country.

One important effect of the Great Depression was how it made people and families resourceful. That quality is largely a part of the memoir Digging In, where a man who lived during the Depression talked about his family's frugality, and how they had to "cut back on everything possible" in order to save money. Some of the things they had to cut back on included city water, selling their car, and discontinuing purchases of toothpaste, toilet paper, and snacks, just to name a few. They also "took care of what [they] had", and listed all the ways they used a cotton cloth, which included using it as a dish cloth, bandage, quilt piece and more. These qualities of being frugal and resourceful weren't bad; they taught people to not be wasteful and to

not spend money on things that aren't necessary. Being resourceful became a part of life during the Depression as a way to help families stay financially afloat.

More significantly the Great Depression, in a broad sense, brought a sense of patriotism and more unity as a country. Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt enriched his second inaugural address with these ideals. He said that the greatest change he had witnessed was the "change in the moral climate of America" and that they were on the road of progress. Another quote of his was "in seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up, or else we all go down, as one people." What Roosevelt was implying was if the people wanted their country to go in the right direction, they all had to work together. Working together wouldn't be hard, due to the entire country's new sense of belief in their country, also known as patriotism. The United States' stronger sense of unity that came about during the depression helped citizens work through the hard times.

Most importantly, the Depression oddly enough brought a sense of hope. In some cases, farmers had to keep hope for the future and that it would bring rain for their crops so they could get money, as a farmer had in a poem called "Debts". In an article about "The New Deal", an explanation was given about how Roosevelt gave the country hope by creating many reforms that were aimed to "relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery". This hope for the future gave people something worth living for during times when suicide didn't seem like a bad idea. Indeed, this sense of hope was a very important effect that the Great Depression had on the people who lived through it.

Even though the Depression devastatingly affected tens of millions of people, the way it changed people's outlooks was inspiring. Instead of tossing a cotton bag in the garbage, people learned to be resourceful and used them as towels and dish cloths. A stronger sense of pride in their country helped them work through the hardships together, with patriotism and unity. Above all else, without hope for the future, people would've given up on trying to fix their severely wounded economy. These enhanced senses of resourcefulness, unity, along with patriotism and hope were all ways that the Great Depression affected Americans.

**File Name: I 11-12P Hope During the Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grades 11-12**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Hope During The Great Depression**

Life is difficult. Sometimes, it is devastatingly so. Yet the human race can be defined by the dual characteristics of perseverance and hope. We, the human race, are the infamous turtle of Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, we take each obstacle in stride and keep on going on. The Great Depression is one of the best examples of humankind's tendency towards both perseverance and hope. The fact that so many people managed to live through the terrible poverty of the Great Depression is a testament to the tenacity of hope and optimism in humans, and Americans in particular.

**Introduces the topic:** The writer provides context, acknowledging the **complexity** of the **concept** of life's difficulty.

**Uses the domain-specific technique of metaphor** (the turtle in *Grapes of Wrath*) **to manage the complexity of the topic**

**Develops topic with appropriate, accurate, facts and concrete details; uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in well-chosen evidence** from the text (here, the Second Inaugural)

The texts provided for this analysis all discuss the Great Depression and its effects on the people who lived through it. On the whole, the theme translated from

the texts is that the people who survived the Great Depression developed, as a direct result of the Depression, a curiously strong sense of optimism. President

Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his Second Inaugural Address, attributes this

sense of optimism to democracy, and its "...innate capacity to protect its

people against disasters once considered inevitable, to solve problems

once considered unsolvable." Roosevelt is, of course, making a blunt

reference to his popular and effective programs under the New Deal. It is

true that the New Deal had come at just the right moment, and that millions of

people were helped through the New Deal, particularly the WPA, or Works

Progress Administration, which was, as put in the fourth source from PBS, a

"major work relief program...[employing] more than 8.5 million people to build

bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports." 8.5 million people is a lot

of people to employ, and based upon these facts alone it would seem that the

New Deal was indeed reason to hope.

Yet the other sources, and indeed even later on in Roosevelt's speech,

indicate that such hope was perhaps misplaced, at least in the extent that the

hope was placed upon Roosevelt. In "Digging

second source written by Robert J. Hastings,

**Develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant, relevant, accurate facts and concrete details from the text**

**Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information:** Beginning with a discussion of Roosevelt's optimism in his Second Inaugural, the writer **creates a unified whole** in which **each new element builds on that which precedes it**

**Analyzes** Roosevelt's speech in terms of author's craft (anaphora); connects the use of this rhetorical device to the essay's topic of perseverance and hope, to **manage the complexity of the topic**

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions and syntax to clarify relationships among complex ideas and concepts and create cohesion.** This section of the essay **builds from the section which precedes it and connects to the next** ("Digging In") to **create a unified whole**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary and techniques to manage the complexity of the topic**

In", the

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the writer is working**

States focus

Integrates quotations effectively into analysis

the narrator reflects on her father's efforts to get money: "it was a day's work here and a day's work there...a few days on the WPA..." Thus, it seems that although the WPA may have employed 8.5 million people, it was not by any means a source of income, if people were only able to work for a few days at a time. However, the focus of "Digging In" is not to evaluate federal programs, but to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own efforts to help oneself. More than anything, the lengths to which the narrator's family went in order to save money exemplifies, once again, an incredible amount of perseverance. From the selling of the car, to the renouncement of milk and ice, the family maintains their perseverance and their hope. Towards the end of the passage, the narrator's mother speaks of this imperative hope: "I've learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere..." Whether or not this was true, it certainly seems to be a sentiment that enabled the family to maintain their sanity

In Roosevelt's speech, there is a section in which he employs anaphora to give emphasis to the negative effects of the Depression by repeating, for several lines, "I see..." followed by a sad image, thought, or idea. He finishes the anaphora with "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished." While this rhetorical emphasis is used mainly to lead into his positive images to follow, in order to be more convincing towards his audience, the negative scenes which he describes were not only rhetorical, but quite real. People were homeless and clotheless and foodless during the Great Depression, millions of them. That is why it is so incredible that the primary effect of such a tragedy was to create a generation of hopeful people. Such hope is characterized in the first source, a poem by Karen Hesse entitled "Debts". In

**Uses the most  
significant and relevant  
evidence to develop  
topic**

this poem, the narrator describes that "Daddy is thinking/ of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men..." This connection to the New Deal emphasizes that the government, through President Roosevelt, helped instigate the massive flood of hope in the American people. The dad in the poem wants to buy wheat even though such an idea is completely impractical; the dad is a naively hopeful character.

As the "Ma" says in the last phrase of the poem, "well, it rains enough...to keep a person hoping./But even if it didn't/your daddy would have to believe." This quote

defines succinctly the mind-set amongst Americans living in the Depression that hope will lead to greatness. Perhaps this was because Americans could do nothing else but hope, and work, and trust in the leaders of their country. It is human nature, after all, to do everything one can to keep oneself going. Thus, the Depression imprinted a sense of hope on the people that lived through it. It is a sense of hope that has not been witnessed to the same extent in our time, yet hope continues to persevere in humans.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented and reflects on the significance of topic**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer provides context about the deep difficulty of living during the Depression in the introduction. She analyzes the metaphor of Steinbeck's turtle to help manage the complexity of the topic. In the second paragraph, she offers her main point/focus: the Great Depression created a "*curiously strong sense of optimism*" in people.

The writer organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly to support the main point using textual evidence, doing so in such a way that each section builds on the one that precedes it. While she draws on texts extensively, they are not the organizing principle; rather, the concepts of hope, optimism, and perseverance are. The writer uses appropriate, varied, and strong transitions to connect concepts and create coherence. (For example, "*However, the focus of "Digging In" is not to evaluate federal programs, but to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own efforts to help oneself.*") Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary and techniques to name and explain the effects, which she has identified from the texts she has read. The writer analyzes evidence thoughtfully throughout so that the reader grasps the complexity of the topic.

**File Name: I 11/12P Hope During The Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grades 11-12**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Hope During The Great Depression**

Life is difficult. Sometimes, it is devastatingly so. Yet the human race can be defined by the dual characteristics of perseverance and hope. We, the human race, are the infamous turtle of Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, we take each obstacle in stride and keep on going on. The Great Depression is one of the best examples of humankind's tendency towards both perseverance and hope. The fact that so many people managed to live through the terrible poverty of the Great Depression is a testament to the tenacity of hope and optimism in humans, and Americans in particular.

The texts provided for this analysis all discuss the Great Depression and its effects on the people who lived through it. On the whole, the theme translated from the texts is that the people who survived the Great Depression developed, as a direct result of the Depression, a curiously strong sense of optimism. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his Second Inaugural Address, attributes this sense of optimism to democracy, and its "...innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable." Roosevelt is, of course, making a blunt reference to his popular and effective programs under the New Deal. It is true that the New Deal had come at just the right moment, and that millions of people were helped through the New Deal, particularly the WPA, or Works

Progress Administration, which was, as put in the fourth source from PBS, a "major work relief program...[employing] more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports." 8.5 million people is a lot of people to employ, and based upon these facts alone it would seem that the New Deal was indeed reason to hope.

Yet the other sources, and indeed even later on in Roosevelt's speech, indicate that such hope was perhaps misplaced, at least in the extent that the hope was placed upon Roosevelt. In "Digging In", the second source written by Robert J. Hastings, the narrator reflects on her father's efforts to get money: "it was a day's work here and a day's work there...a few days on the WPA..." Thus, it seems that although the WPA may have employed 8.5 million people, it was not by any means a source of income, if people were only able to work for a few days at a time. However, the focus of "Digging In" is not to evaluate federal programs, but to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own efforts to help oneself. More than anything, the lengths to which the narrator's family went in order to save money exemplifies, once again, an incredible amount of perseverance. From the selling of the car, to the renouncement of milk and ice, the family maintains their perseverance and their hope. Towards the end of the passage, the narrator's mother speaks of this imperative hope: "I've learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere..." Whether or not this was true, it certainly seems to be a sentiment that enabled the family to maintain their sanity

In Roosevelt's speech, there is a section in which he employs anaphora to give emphasis to the negative effects of the Depression by repeating, for several lines, "I

see..." followed by a sad image, thought, or idea. He finishes the anaphora with "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished." While this rhetorical emphasis is used mainly to lead into his positive images to follow, in order to be more convincing towards his audience, the negative scenes which he describes were not only rhetorical, but quite real. People were homeless and clotheless and foodless during the Great Depression, millions of them. That is why it is so incredible that the primary effect of such a tragedy was to create a generation of hopeful people. Such hope is characterized in the first source, a poem by Karen Hesse entitled "Debts". In this poem, the narrator describes that "Daddy is thinking/ of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men..." This connection to the New Deal emphasizes that the government, through President Roosevelt, helped instigate the massive flood of hope in the American people. The dad in the poem wants to buy wheat even though such an idea is completely impractical; the dad is a naively hopeful character.

As the "Ma" says in the last phrase of the poem, "well, it rains enough...to keep a person hoping./But even if it didn't/your daddy would have to believe." This quote defines succinctly the mind-set amongst Americans living in the Depression that hope will lead to greatness. Perhaps this was because Americans could do nothing else but hope, and work, and trust in the leaders of their country. It is human nature, after all, to do everything one can to keep oneself going. Thus, the Depression imprinted a sense of hope on the people that lived through it. It is a sense of hope that has not been witnessed to the same extent in our time, yet hope continues to persevere in humans.

***K-5 Range of Writing  
Informative/Explanatory  
Samples***

**File name: IKR Boats**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

**boats bui**

Boats by

*Bob*

**Names the topic he is  
writing about**

boats Flot n wdrt

sbmurens Go ndr wdrt

**Supplies some  
information about  
the topic**

In this Kindergarten informative/explanatory piece, the writer names a general topic (boats) and supplies two pieces of information about the topic. Kindergarteners may use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing in their pieces. In the original version of this student's text, a drawing accompanies each piece of information and adds additional detail to the writing.

**File name: IKR Boats**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

Boats

by Bob

Boats float in water. Submarines go underwater.

**File name: IKR Boats**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

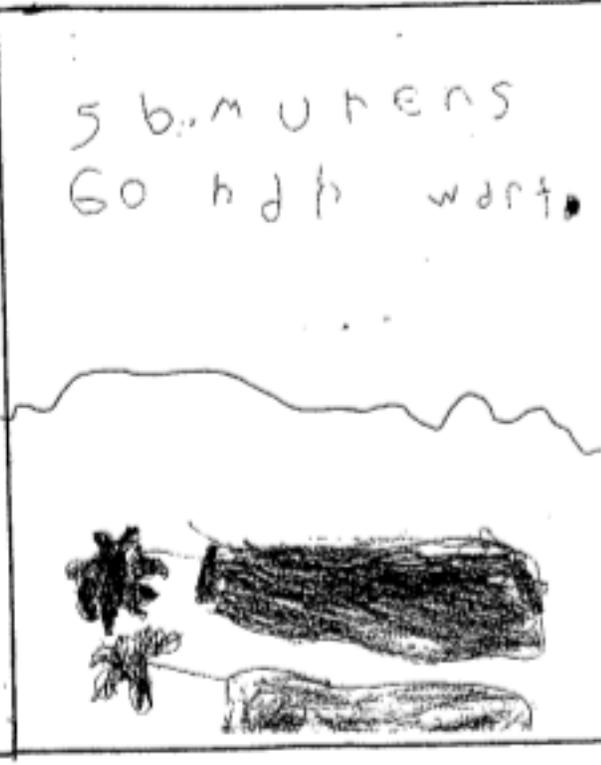
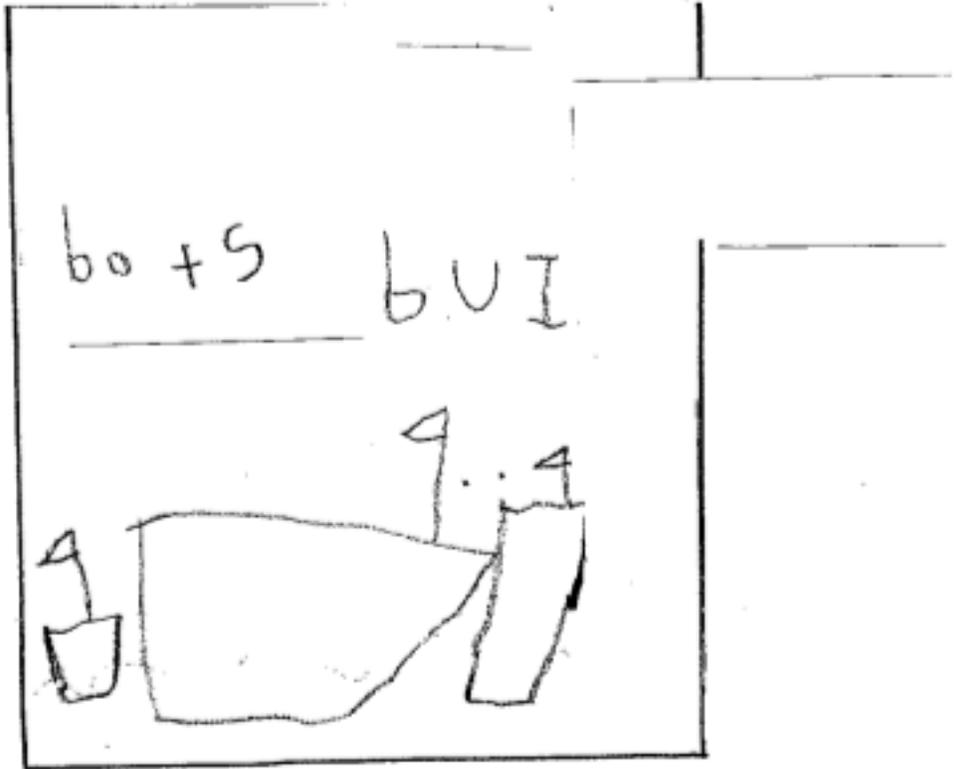
**Range of Writing**

bots bui

*Bob*

bots Flot n wdr

sbmurens Go ndr wdr



**File name: IKR Plants**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

Plants

*What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?\**

**Names what he/she is writing about**

Plas need wotr To gou

Plas need sun To gou

**Supplies some information about the topic**

*\*question provided by the teacher*

In this Kindergarten informative/explanatory piece, the student uses a combination of drawing and writing to answer a question that focused the class' science unit on plants: *What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?*. The student provides two pieces of information learned in class ("*Plas need wotr To gou*" and "*Plas need sun To gou*"), adding detail in the picture that accompanies the text.

**File name: IKR Plants**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

## Plants

*What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?\**

Plants need water to grow.

Plants need sun to grow.

\* provided by teacher

**File name: IKR Plants**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

Plants

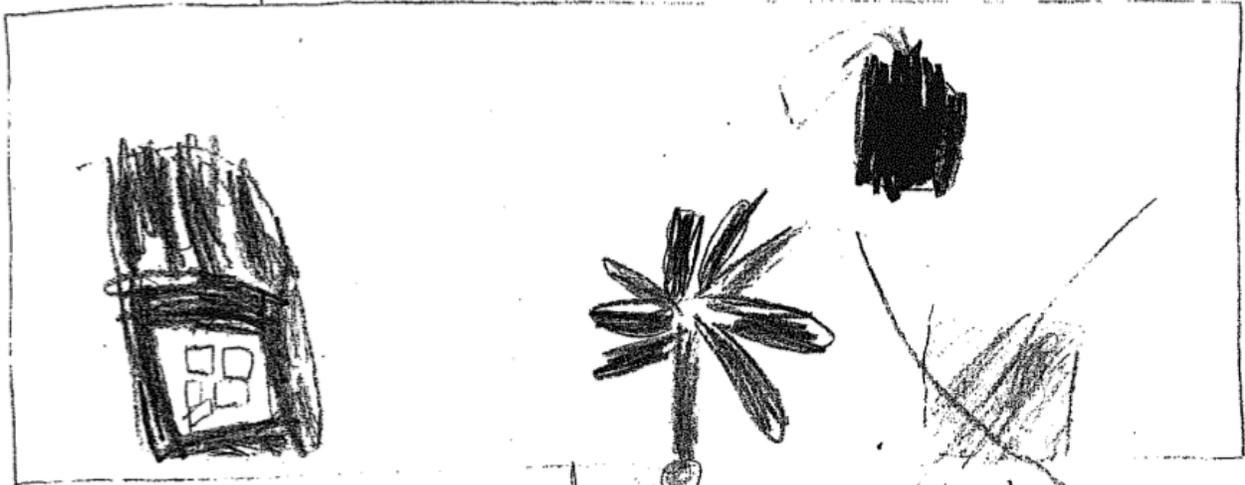
*What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?\**

Plas need wotr To gou

Plas need sun To gou

\* provided by teacher

What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?



Plants need water to grow  
Plants need sun to grow.

Plants need water  
to grow

Plants need sun  
to grow.

**File name: I1R Chester's Way**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

Chester's Way

**Names a topic**

Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes is a storey about two mice named Chester and Wilson. They were best friends. They played with echether. They remgndid echether to wear sunscreen. They rode bikes with echother. They drest the same way for Halloween. Chester and Wilson were probelby best friends forever. I have a best friend his name is Chris we like to takeing trns paying at our house.

**Supplies some facts about the topic**

Informative/Explanatory writing includes many subtypes, including summaries and literary analysis. This first-grade piece gives information about a literary text read in class. The writer establishes a topic (Chester and Wilson “*were best friends.*”) and uses evidence from the text to supply facts about the topic (“*They played with echether. They remgndid echether to wear sunscreen. They rode bikes with echother. They drest the same way for Halloween.*”). The piece ends with a relevant personal connection (“*I have a best friend his name is Chris...*”), providing a sense of closure.

**File name: I1R Chester's Way**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Chester's Way

Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes is a story about two mice named Chester and Wilson. They were best friends. They played with each other. They reminded each other to wear sunscreen. They rode bikes with each other. They dressed the same way for Halloween. Chester and Wilson were probably best friends forever. I have a best friend his name is Chris we like to taking turns paying at our house.

**File name: I1R Chester's Way**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

### Chester's Way

Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes is a story about two mice named Chester and Wilson. They were best friends. They played with each other. They reminded each other to wear sunscreen. They rode bikes with each other. They dressed the same way for Halloween. Chester and Wilson were probably best friends forever. I have a best friend his name is Chris we like to take turns playing at our house.

**File name: I1R how do cheetah run fast**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

how do cheetah run **Names a topic**

Cheetahs run fast because they have a strong body. They use their feet to run 70 mph. Their tail helps them balance.

If cheetahs do not run fast then they will be eaten.

**Supplies some facts  
about the topic**

**Provides some  
sense of closure**

In this first-grade informative/explanatory piece, the writer establishes and maintains a clear focus on how cheetahs run fast and supplies some facts to answer the question posed in the title. Although the piece is short, the thinking expressed is quite sophisticated for a first grader. The writer has chosen to explain why the cheetah runs fast (strong body, good feet, a tail for balance) rather than just list loosely related information about the animal. The piece provides a sense of closure by adding a bit of reflection about why it might be important for a cheetah to run fast (*"If cheetahs do not run fast then they will be eaten."*).

**File name: I1R how do cheetah run fast**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### How Do Cheetahs Run Fast?

Cheetahs can run fast because they have strong bodies. They use their feet to run up to 70 mph. Their tails help them balance. If cheetahs do not run fast, then they will be eaten.

**File name: I1R how do cheetah run fast**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

how do cheetah run fast?

Cheetahs run fast because they have a strong body. They use their feet to run 70 mph. Their tail helps them bales.

If cheetahs do not run fast then they will be eaten.

**File name: I1R The Dentist**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

**Names a topic**

We should visit the dentist twice a year. He will help keep our teeth healthy and strong. If my tooth broc my dentist can repair my tooth. My dentist takes a x-ray to see in my tooth. My dentist teaches me to brush my teeth. The dentist makes sure our teeth are healthy and strong.

**Supplies some facts about the topic**

**Provides some sense of closure** by restating the topic of the piece.

This first-grade piece was written at the end of a unit on dental health. The writer begins with a brief introduction (“*We should visit the dentist twice a year.*”), and then states a topic (“*He will help keep our teeth healthy and strong.*”). He then develops the topic with three specific facts (“*...my dentist can repair my tooth*”; “*My dentist takes a x-ray to see in my tooth*”; “*My dentist teaches me to brush...*”) that explain how the dentist will help us keep our teeth healthy and strong. The ending sentence restates the topic (“*The dentist makes sure our teeth are healthy and strong.*”) and provides a sense of closure.

**File name: I1R The Dentist**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

We should visit the dentist twice a year. He will help keep our teeth healthy and strong. If my tooth breaks, my dentist can repair my tooth. My dentist takes an x-ray to see inside my tooth. My dentist teaches me to brush my teeth. The dentist makes sure our teeth are healthy and strong.

**File name: I1R The Dentist**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

We should visit the dentist twice a year. He will help keep our teeth healthy and strong. If my tooth broc my dentist can repair my tooth. My dentist takes a x-ray to see in my tooth. My dentist teaches me to brush my teeth. The dentist makes sure our teeth are healthy and strong.

**File name: I2R Training a Snow Search Dog**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Training a Snow Search Dog**

It's hard to train a snow search dog. First, you have to get a pup. They have to love hunting things so they can find people. They have to have a thick coat to stay warm. They have to be strong to climb mountains. It's hard to know which pup is right for you. Next, you need to train the pup. First, you need to play hide and go seek with the dog. The handler goes and hides under the snow and the other person lets go of the leash. The person that is hiding has dog treats, if the dog finds him the dog gets a treat. Hide and seek gets harder when the handler goes farther and he buries him self. The dog goes to find him. Dogs train for two years! Training a snow search dog is rough, but it is important to train them. If we didn't people who are buried in avalanches would die.

**Introduces the topic**

**File name: I2R Training a Snow Search Dog**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Training a Snow Search Dog**

It's hard to train a snow search dog. First, you have to get a pup. They have to love hunting things so they can find people. They have to have a thick coat to stay warm. They have to be strong to climb mountains. It's hard to know which pup is right for you.

Next, you need to train the pup. First, you need to play hide and go seek with the dog. The handler goes and hides under the snow and the other person lets go of the leash. The person that is hiding has dog treats. If the dog finds him, the dog gets a treat. Hide and seek gets harder when the handler goes farther and he buries himself and the dog goes to find him. Dogs train for two years! Training a snow search dog is rough, but it is important to train them. If we didn't, people who are buried in avalanches would die.

**File name: I2R Training a Snow Search Dog**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Training a Snow Search Dog**

It's hard to train a snow search dog. First, you have to get a pup. They have to love hunting things so they can find people. They have to have a thick coat to stay warm. They have to be strong to climb mountains. It's hard to know which pup is right for you. Next, you need to train the pup. First, you need to play hide and go seek with the dog. The handler goes and hides under the snow and the other person lets go of the leash. The person that is hiding has dog treats, if the dog finds him the dog gets a treat. Hide and seek gets harder when the handler goes farther and he buries him self. The dog goes to find him. Dogs train for two years! Training a snow search dog is rough, but it is important to train them. If we didn't people who are buried in avalanches would die.

**File name: I2R The Lorax**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

**The Lorax**

The Lorax said he cares for the earth. The Lorax spoke for the fish. He said stop putting your left over gunk in the water because the humming fish can't hum with gunk in their gills. The Lorax spoke for the trees. He said stop cutting the trees because they give us air. The Lorax spoke for the Brown Barbaloots. He said stop cutting trees because the Brown Barbaloots eat the fruit on the trees. The Lorax cares for the earth.

**File name: I2R The Lorax**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **The Lorax**

The Lorax said he cares for the earth. The Lorax spoke for the fish. He said, stop putting your left over gunk in the water, because the humming fish can't hum with gunk in their gills. The Lorax spoke for the trees. He said, stop cutting the trees, because they give us air. The Lorax spoke for the Brown Barbaloos. He said, stop cutting trees, because the Brown Barbaloos eat the fruit on the trees. The Lorax cares for the earth.

**File name: I2R The Lorax**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Lorax**

The Lorax said he cares for the earth. The Lorax spoke for the fish. He said stop putting your left over gunk in the water because the humming fish can't hum with gunk in their gills. The Lorax spoke for the trees. He said stop cutting the trees because they give us air. The Lorax spoke for the Brown Barbaloots. He said stop cutting trees because the Brown Barbaloots eat the fruit on the trees. The Lorax cares for the earth.

**File name: I2R Parts of a plant**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Parts of a plant**

How are the parts of a plant important? Here are some ways the parts of a plant are important. One way is that the roots suck nutrients from the soil so the plants can grow, roots also secure the plant in the ground, so it doesn't blow away. Another way is flowers, seeds are kept in flowers, and the flower keeps the seeds safe. Stems are also important they carry nutrients through the plant. Also leaves, leaves collect sunlight for food for the plant. And last but not least, seeds, when seed gets in the ground the plants life begins. Those are some things That show how the parts of a plant are important.

**File name: I2R Parts of a plant**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Parts of a Plant**

How are the parts of a plant important? Here are some ways the parts of a plant are important. One way is that the roots suck nutrients from the soil so the plants can grow. Roots also secure the plant in the ground so it doesn't blow away. Another important part is the flowers. Seeds are kept in flowers, and the flower keeps the seeds safe. Stems are also important. They carry nutrients through the plant. Leaves are also important. Leaves collect sunlight for food for the plant. And, last but not least, are the seeds. When a seed gets in the ground, the plant's life begins. Those are some things that show how the parts of a plant are important.

**File name: I2R Parts of a plant**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Parts of a plant**

How are the parts of a plant important? Here are some ways the parts of a plant are important. One way is that the roots suck nutrients from the soil so the plants can grow, roots also secure the plant in the ground, so it doesn't blow away. Another way is flowers, seeds are kept in flowers, and the flower keeps the seeds safe. Stems are also important they carry nutrients through the plant. Also leaves, leaves collect sunlight for food for the plant. And last but not least, seeds, when seed gets in the ground the plants life begins. Those are some things That show how the parts of a plant are important.

**File Name: I3R Beatrice's Goat**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Beatrice's Goat

Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier is about a girl named Beatrice who got a very special gift. Beatrice lived in Africa in a poor village. Beatrice wanted to go to school but her family did not have the money to send her. Her family needed a roof that didn't leak, healthy food for the children and money.

An organization called Heifer International gave Beatrice's family a goat named Mugisa and she got everything she needed.

Before Mugisa came Beatrice's family did not have healthy food Mugisa gave her milk to drink so the family was much healthier. Before Mugisa came Beatrice had to work and still had little money. Mugisa gave them milk to sell. Now her family has money to buy the things they need. She even got money to buy a uniform and a slate. Now she can get an education!

Beatrice's Life changed when she got a goat. I always thought a goat could not do much. Now I now it can!

**File Name: I3R Beatrice's Goat**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Beatrice's Goat

Beatrice's Goat, by Page McBrier, is about a girl named Beatrice who got a very special gift. Beatrice lived in Africa in a poor village. Beatrice wanted to go to school, but her family did not have the money to send her. Her family needed a roof that didn't leak, healthy food for the children and money. An organization called "Heifer International" gave Beatrice's family a goat named Mugisa and she got everything she needed.

Before Mugisa came, Beatrice's family did not have healthy food. Mugisa gave her milk to drink, so the family was much healthier. Before Mugisa came, Beatrice had to work and still had little money. Mugisa gave them milk to sell. Now her family has money to buy the things they need. She even got money to buy a uniform and a slate. Now she can get an education!

Beatrice's life changed when she got a goat. I always thought a goat could not do much. Now I know it can!

**File Name: I3R Beatrice's Goat**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Beatrice's Goat

Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier is about a girl named Beatrice who got a very special gift. Beatrice lived in Africa in a poor village. Beatrice wanted to go to school but her family did not have the money to send her. Her family needed a roof that didn't leak, healthy food for the children and money.

An organization called Heifer International gave Beatrice's family a goat named Mugisa and she got everything she needed.

Before Mugisa came Beatrice's family did not have healthy food Mugisa gave her milk to drink so the family was much healthier. Before Mugisa came Beatrice had to work and still had little money. Mugisa gave them milk to sell. Now her family has money to buy the things they need. She even got money to buy a uniform and a slate. Now she can get an education!

Beatrice's Life changed when she got a goat. I always thought a goat could not do much. Now I now it can!

**File Name: I3R Squids**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Squids

There are many kinds of Squids. The giant deep-sea Squid can be longer than a city bus and they are cousins of the octopus. Squid have a long body and ten arms. They live in the Caribbean. The Squid protects it self by hiding.

A Squid can squirt out a blob of inky stuff. The inky blob may confuse hungry creatures. Its eggs come in handy because it surrounds itself with eggs and protects itself that way. Isn't this amazing that it can be camouflaged in one second? They hide by moving in jet propulsion. If a shark tries to attack a Squid it will shoot out ink so it confuses the shark and zips away. Remember about the eggs? This is something like it. They swim together to protect themselves. They squirt out dark liquid to hide themselves from enemies. They change their color and patterns to blend in with their surroundings.

Therefore you can see that the squid have many ways of hiding.



**File Name: I3R Squids**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

## Squids

There are many kinds of squids. The giant deep-sea squid can be longer than a city bus, and they are cousins of the octopus. A squid has a long body and ten arms. They live in the Caribbean. The Squid protects itself by hiding.

A Squid can squirt out a blob of inky stuff. The inky blob may confuse hungry creatures. Its eggs come in handy because it surrounds itself with eggs and protects itself that way. Isn't this amazing that it can be camouflaged in one second? They hide by moving with jet propulsion. If a shark tries to attack a squid, it will shoot out ink so it confuses the shark and zips away. Remember about the eggs? This is something like it. They swim together to protect themselves. They squirt out dark liquid to hide themselves from enemies. They change their colors and patterns to blend in with their surroundings.

Therefore you can see that the squid have many ways of hiding.

**File Name: I3 Squids418**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Squids

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Therefore you can see that the squid have many ways of hiding.

**File Name: I3R the Abenaki**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

the Abenaki

The Abenaki lived in Vermont in the early 1600. The Abenaki are a group of native people. They lived here much before you and me they learned how to dell with the land. There were no houses no electricity not even heating the land had hills moutain lots of trees rivers. Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food.

Vermont's land affected the Abenaki's housing. The Abenaki used young trees to build their houses. They cut it down and then bent it into a round roof. This kept the Abenaki warm in the winter because the roof kept the warmth in. Vermont's land also had lots of animals. They skinned the animals and took their sinews the sinews held the saplings together. This helped the Abenaki people keep their houses stable. Vermont's land also had lots of trees. They used the bark from the trees to tie on the frame like singles. That helped the Abenaki the rain out so they staid dire all the time. The Abanaki's housing was greatly affected by the land.

Not only dose the land affect the Abenaki's housing but it also affected the Abenaki's food to. The Abenaki women picketed seeds in the forest. Then they planted them in some fresh soil. This helped the Abenaki because they had their own gardens and they planted seeds and soon they had food.

Vermont's land also had alot of fish. They killed the fish and the dead fish helped fertilize the soil. That gave the Abenaki extra food. Vermont's land also had abundant wild life. The Abenaki fished and hunted game. All of the fresh meat was shard among the whole village to keep everybody strong. The Abenaki's food supply was affected by the land.

Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food. The land seems to be a tough place to live but the Abenaki respited the land and only took what they needed and the land gave them what they needed.

**File Name: I3R the Abenaki**

**Informative/ Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### The Abenaki

The Abenaki lived in Vermont in the early 1600s. The Abenaki are a group of native people. They lived here much before you and me. They learned how to deal with the land. There were no houses, no electricity, not even heating. The land had hills, mountains, lots of trees, and rivers. Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food.

Vermont's land affected the Abenaki's housing. The Abenaki used young trees to build their houses. They cut them down and then bent them into a round roof. This kept the Abenaki warm in the winter because the roof kept the warmth in. Vermont's land also had lots of animals. They skinned the animals and took their sinews. The sinews held the saplings together. This helped the Abenaki people keep their houses stable. Vermont's land also had lots of trees. They used the bark from the trees to tie on the frame like shingles. That helped the Abenaki keep the rain out, so they stayed dry all the time. The Abenaki's housing was greatly affected by the land.

Not only does the land affect the Abenaki's housing, but it also affected the Abenaki's food, too. The Abenaki women picked seeds in the forest. Then they planted them in some fresh soil. This helped the Abenaki because they had their own gardens, and they planted seeds, and soon they had food. Vermont's land also had a lot of fish. They killed the fish, and the dead fish helped fertilize the soil. That gave the Abenaki extra food. Vermont's land also had abundant wildlife. The Abenaki

fished and hunted game. All of the fresh meat was shared among the whole village to keep everybody strong. The Abenaki's food supply was affected by the land.

Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food. The land seems to be a tough place to live, but the Abenaki respected the land and only took what they needed, and the land gave them what they needed.

**File Name: I3R the Abenaki**

**Informative/ Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

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Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food. The land seems to be a tough place to live but the Abenaki respected the land and only took what they needed and the land gave them what they needed.

**File Name: I4R Best Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

### **Best Friends**

*“It’s not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.”*

Charlotte’s Web (p. 184)

The book Charlotte’s Web by E. B. White is a story about an endearing pig named Wilbur. He is desperately trying not to die. He meets a nice friend named Charlotte. She is a spider that weaves words into her web to save Wilbur from dying. She keeps weaving to make the Zuckermans believe that Wilbur is “Some Pig”, “Terrific”, “Radiant”, and “Humble”. Charlotte the spider proves to be both a good writer and a true friend to Wilbur.

When Charlotte writes she focuses day and night to make it right. For example, on Fair night down in the barn cellar all the animals were asleep except Charlotte. She was busy writing the word “Humble” in her web because it

described Wilbur perfectly. Wilbur is low to the ground and not proud of himself.

Charlotte was a good writer, no doubt about it but she was also a true friend to the little pig. Charlotte was one of the most caring friends you could have for a long time. One way she was caring was when Wilbur was tired of being terrific all day. Charlotte sang him a lullaby. Another example is that she calmed Wilbur down when he was scared. Wilbur was devastated when he found out he was going to die and Charlotte said, “You shall not die I shall save you”. She was so caring to Wilbur forever.

Charlotte was also a true friend, helping Wilbur when he was in trouble. For example in her web, “She neatly wrote the word Terrific.” She doubled the letters so that they would have the best effect. Another example of how Charlotte helped Wilbur is that “Charlotte wrote the word Radiant”. She knew it would make people think that Wilbur was radiant. One day “Neatly woven in block letters was the word “Some Pig”. Charlotte had woven it into her web. This was Charlotte’s plan to convince the Zuckermans that they did not want to kill Wilbur. Charlotte helped Wilbur alot when he was in trouble.

Charlotte was the best friend Wilbur ever had. Charlotte was both a true friend to Wilbur and a good writer. She made Wilbur the best known pig in the state!



**File Name: I4 Best Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Best Friends**

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**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

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**File Name: I4R Ecotourism**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

*It's vacation time!!! Rey and his family are working as ecotourist. Their job is looking after turtle eggs. Rey and his family are working with biologists. When Rey and a biologist were on "turtle patrol" Rey found a nest and brought the eggs that were in it back to camp.*

Ecotourism can have bad and good effects. In keeping the balance ecotourism is described as something more complicated than it actually is. Ecotourism is really when tourists go to a country to see its wildlife. Ecotourism can help people understand wildlife but it can also harm it. This is a serious problem but there are some solutions.

Ecotourism can really ruin things. If ecotourists disturb wildlife they might wreck the ecosystem. Ecotourism can destroy plants and natural habitats. For example ecotourists might trample plants and/or scare animals and/or leave garbage everywhere. Ecotourist need lodging (Hotels and resorts) and bathrooms. These harm the environment by polluting water and destroying forests which the ecotourists would otherwise be looking at. Generally ecotourism is supposed to focus on personal growth and environmental responsibility, but mostly it doesn't.

But there is some hope. If everybody puts their heads together we can think up some ways to improve ecotourism, environmentally. All we really need is a few ideas to "spark" the brain storm, so here they are.

One thing we could do is just prevent ecotourism altogether. But then people might forget how to value and treat nature respectfully. Another thing we could do is set some lower limits than there are at the moment for ecotourism. Something else we could do is decrease the number of ecotourists to a small average.

Another good solution is to make pathways and trams and things to keep ecotourists at a distance from wildlife. One more thing we can do to improve ecotourism is to have a class on how to treat the flora and fauna. Those are just 4 things we could do to improve ecotourism.

I think those are all the "sparks" we need. I hope these "sparks" light up peoples understanding of ecotourism.

**File Name: I4R Ecotourism**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

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**File Name: I5R Claudette**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **What Claudette Colvin Did**

*Learn about how Claudette Colvin helped the Civil Rights Movement*

Though most people don't know it, Rosa Parks was not the first black person to refuse to give up her seat. Claudette Colvin refused nine months before Rosa, in 1955. It was during segregation and you would get arrested if you didn't let a white person sit down on a crowded bus while you stood. Segregation happened in lunch counters, schools, almost everywhere down south... Claudette Colvin was important because she stood up for what she knew was right and she motivated others.

### **Who was Claudette?**

She was a fifteen year old black girl. She went to Booker T. Washington high in Montgomery, Alabama. Her family was very poor and her parents tried not to be noticed by white people because they didn't want to be arrested- the almost opposite of Martin Luther King Jr. She was a smart girl and hated **segregation**, especially the bus laws because her family had no car and she had to sit in the back. She really wanted to be able to sit in the front- or anywhere- of the bus. You can tell that Claudette wanted to do something about the bus laws.

### **What did she do?**

One thing she did was she refused to give up her seat. The law in Montgomery was that you had to give your seat up to a white person if there was no space for them. Claudette was still fifteen. One day, she was tired of having to get up, so she just stayed in her seat. The bus driver yelled at her and soon police came and arrested her kicking and screaming. She was very brave to stand up to a police. An NAACP lawyer named Fred Grey decided to go to the city's federal court to say that **segregation** laws were **unconstitutional**. He tried to find people who would go and talk about how the bus laws were unfair. Most people who had been mistreated were too scared of what might happen to their families. Only four blacks came to the hearing; Claudette and three older women. She was very brave to go to court even though she knew the consequences.

### **Who did she motivate?**

Nine months after Claudette's arrest Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat as well. On Monday, December fifth, Martin Luther king and other black leaders had black elementary and high schools pass out thirty– five thousand fliers saying stay off the buses. That was the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Though Claudette was not the reason for the bus boycott, she made black leaders realize that they needed to do the same thing only using someone more experienced.

### **Why didn't black leaders use her?**

Though Claudette did refuse before Mrs. Parks, black leaders didn't want to start a bus boycott just because of a teenager. Also, she was hard to deal with because she swore a lot when the police took her off the bus, so they didn't want that to happen in court or anything. Being poor didn't help either, and Claudette thought they didn't use her because she and her parents weren't part of the inner circle, a group of more wealthy. The court case she went to is not very well known so she is not recognized that way. Big history books don't even have a caption about her. While she is not well known, she was still important to the civil rights movement.

In conclusion, Claudette Colvin did what was right and motivated people. She was a big help to the civil rights movement because she motivated Rosa Parks and the black leaders to start the bus boycott. She helped when she went to the hearing because it ended segregation on buses. As Claudette said, "Enough is enough" and at the time that was very true.

**Sources**

, recognize

**File Name: ISR Claudette Report**  
**Informative/Explanatory**  
**Grade 5**  
**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **What Claudette Colvin Did**

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Though most people don't know it, Rosa Parks was not the first black person to refuse to give up her seat. Claudette Colvin refused nine months before Rosa, in 1955. It was during segregation, and you would get arrested if you didn't let a white person sit down on a crowded bus while you stood. Segregation happened at lunch counters, in schools—almost everywhere down south... Claudette Colvin was important because she stood up for what she knew was right, and she motivated others.

### **Who was Claudette?**

She was a fifteen-year-old black girl. She went to Booker T. Washington High in Montgomery, Alabama. Her family was very poor, and her parents tried not to be noticed by white people because they didn't want to be arrested—the almost opposite of Martin Luther King Jr. She was a smart girl and hated **segregation**, especially the bus laws, because her family had no car and she had to sit in the back. She really wanted to be able to sit in the front of—or anywhere in—the bus. You can tell that Claudette wanted to do something about the bus laws.

### **What did she do?**

One thing she did was she refused to give up her seat. The law in Montgomery was that you had to give your seat up to a white person if there was no space for him or her. Claudette was still fifteen. One day, she was tired of having to get up, so she just stayed in her seat. The bus driver yelled at her, and soon police came and arrested her as she was kicking and screaming. She was very brave to stand up to the police. An NAACP lawyer named Fred Grey decided to go to the city's federal court to say that segregation laws were **unconstitutional**. He tried to find people who would go and talk about how the bus laws were unfair. Most people who had been mistreated were too scared of what might happen to their families. Only four blacks came to the hearing: Claudette and three older women. Claudette was very brave to go to court even though she knew the consequences.

### **Whom did she motivate?**

Nine months after Claudette's arrest, Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat as well. On Monday, December fifth, Martin Luther King and other black leaders had black elementary and high schools pass out thirty-five thousand fliers saying "Stay off the buses!" That was the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Though Claudette was not the reason for the bus boycott, she made black leaders realize that they needed to do the same thing, only using someone more experienced.

### **Why didn't black leaders use her?**

Though Claudette did refuse before Mrs. Parks, black leaders didn't want to start a bus boycott just because of a teenager. Also, she was hard to deal with because she swore a lot when the police took her off the bus, and black leaders didn't want that to happen in court or anything. The fact that she was poor didn't help either, and Claudette thought they didn't use her because she and her parents weren't part of the inner circle, a group of more wealthy black people. The court case she went to is not very well known, so she is not recognized that way. Big history books don't even have a footnote about her. While she is not well known, she was still important to the civil rights movement.

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**Sources**

**File Name: ISR Claudette Report**  
**Informative/Explanatory**  
**Grade 5**  
**Range of Writing**

*Note: The student's original report was done using a publishing application. This version does not include all of the illustrations and text features in the original.*

**What Claudette Colvin Did**

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**Sources**

**File Name: I5R Letters From Rifka**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **Letters From Rifka**

Have you ever been determined to do something? In the book, Letters From Rifka, the main character was determined to leave Ukraine to get to America. Rifka, a 12 year old girl, is forced to leave Russia because if she doesn't she will be killed. Along the way she is determined and that determination helps her to get to America. Rifka never gave up hope. In other words she had indomitable spirit.

In the beginning, at the Polish border when Rifka got off the train, the guards force her and her family to take off their clothes for the Doctor. They did this because the Doctor wanted to see if she had a disease. Her determination enabled her to stand there naked, even though it was an uncomfortable, humiliating situation.

Another time was when she was on the ship to America. She nearly drowned and lost a friend when a tempest hit. She goes into the hold which really smells. After the storm ends she looks for her friend, Peter, and learns that he has been lost at sea during the storm. Rifka returns to her cabin in tears. A few hours later, when she hears people ooing and ahing up on deck as the statue of Liberty

comes into sight she realizes she still wants to go to America. Her determination gave her the power to endure the emotions she had and then gave her strength to carry on without her friend.

Another example is when Rifka is in the hospital wing at Ellis Island. A Doctor asks Rifka to take off her kerchief so he can check her for ringworm. Rifka realizes that if he finds something wrong with her she can be sent back to Ukraine. She was so determined to get to America that she stood up to an American doctor. Other people that didn't have as much determination might not have done that because they would be too frightened to stand up to someone who could send them back to their old country.

So as you can see, determination can get you anywhere. It got Rifka to America. How? It gave her the strength to carry on even though the obstacles were hard to overcome. Determination can help you achieve your goals too.



**File Name: I5R Letters From Rifka**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Letters From Rifka**

Have you ever been determined to do something? In the book, Letters From Rifka, the main character was determined to leave the Ukraine to get to America. Rifka, a 12 year old girl, is forced to leave Russia because, if she doesn't, she will be killed. Along the way she is determined, and that determination helps her to get to America. Rifka never gave up hope. In other words she had indomitable spirit.

In the beginning, at the Polish border when Rifka got off the train, the guards force her and her family to take off their clothes for the Doctor. They did this because the Doctor wanted to see if she had a disease. Her determination enabled her to stand there naked, even though it was an uncomfortable, humiliating situation.

Another time was when she was on the ship to America, she nearly drowns and loses a friend when a tempest hit. She goes into the hold which really smells. After the storm ends she looks for her friend, Peter, and learns that he has been lost at sea during the storm. Rifka returns to her cabin in tears. A few hours later, when she hears people "ooing" and "ahhing" up on deck as the Statue of Liberty comes into sight she realizes she still wants to go to America. Her determination

gave her the power to endure the emotions she had, and then gave her strength to carry on without her friend.

Another example is when Rifka is in the hospital wing at Ellis Island. A doctor asks Rifka to take off her kerchief so he can check her for ringworm. Rifka realizes that if he finds something wrong with her she can be sent back to Ukraine. She was so determined to get to America that she stood up to an American doctor. Other people that didn't have as much determination might not have done that because they would be too frightened to stand up to someone who could send them back to their old country.

So as you can see, determination can get you anywhere. It got Rifka to America. How? It gave her the strength to carry on even though the obstacles were hard to overcome. Determination can help you achieve your goals too.

**File Name: I5R Letters From Rifka**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **Letters From Rifka**

Have you ever been determined to do something? In the book, Letters From Rifka, the main character was determined to leave Ukraine to get to America. Rifka, a 12 year old girl, is forced to leave Russia because if she doesn't she will be killed. Along the way she is determined and that determination helps her to get to America. Rifka never gave up hope. In other words she had indomitable spirit.

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Another example is when Rifka is in the hospital wing at Ellis Island. A Doctor asks Rifka to take off her kerchief so he can check her for ringworm. Rifka realizes that if he finds something wrong with her she can be sent back to Ukraine. She was so determined to get to America that she stood up to an American doctor. Other people that didn't have as much determination might not have done that because they would be too frightened to stand up to someone who could send them back to their old country.

So as you can see, determination can get you anywhere. It got Rifka to America. How? It gave her the strength to carry on even though the obstacles were hard to overcome. Determination can help you achieve your goals too.

***6-12 Range of Writing  
Informative/Explanatory  
Samples***

**File Name: I6R Center of Life**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Center of Life**

The saguaro cactus is a huge cactus that lives in deserts. It can live up to 150 years old! Even though it grows very very slowly, it grows up to be one of the tallest plants in the desert! The saguaro cactus is very adapted to desert life and this makes it a good home and food for many animals.

The saguaro cactus is adapted to survive in the deserts in many different ways. Because of the heat in the desert, saguaro cacti have waxy skin to prevent moisture loss. Many more adaptations help the saguaro keep water, though. It holds water in its stem, that's pleated like an accordion so that it can expand and hold more water. The roots also help it get more water. They spread out very far, almost as wide as the cactus is tall so that helps. The roots are also very close the surface, as little as 3 inches below ground. Because of this, if it rains, the cactus can get lots of water before the ground sucks too much up.

The cactus is also a home and food for lots of animals that live in the desert. Snakes can find a home, and many birds can perch on the big cactus. Many small flying creatures eat the nectar from the flowers. The cactus also bears fruit. After a while in the sun, the fruit splits in half and birds and insects eat the oozing sweet stuff from inside the fruit. Other fruit falls to the ground, where lots of animals eat them. Other animals eat the seeds. But after a long time, the cactus dies and falls down. Still, it is a place for small ground dwelling animals. Scorpions can take shelter from the sun. Jackrabbits can make a home there.

The saguaro cactus is really and amazing plant. It's also a good place for animals to live and find food. If one day I could go to see one, I totally would. If I was stuck in a desert, I think I would go to the nearest saguaro cactus to wait for help.

**Introduces the topic:**

The writer provides context in the form of background information on the saguaro cactus and then states the main point / focus

Focus / **topic** of the piece is clearly stated

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information:** the writer describes the adaptation of the cactus to desert life using various categories

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary within evidence to develop and support topic** of saguaro adaptation

**Uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to develop and**

**Provides a concluding section that follows from the information presented** by restating the main point and reflecting on the topic

In this assignment from a science unit, students were asked to explain how the saguaro, a desert plant, has adapted to desert life and provides a home and food for desert creatures. The writer gives some background about the saguaro in general in the introduction and then states his main point (the saguaro is well-adapted to desert life and provides a home and food for desert creatures).

The writer organizes information and ideas clearly by category to support the main point. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to convey information about the saguaro. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

While the language is sometimes a bit informal (*"If one day I could go to see one, I totally would"*), the bulk of the essay has a formal style. The conclusion follows from main point and, although not required by the Standards, provides some reflection on the topic.



**File Name: I6R Center of Life**

**Informative/ Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

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The saguaro cactus is adapted to survive in the deserts in many different ways. Because of the heat in the desert, saguaro cacti have waxy skin to prevent moisture loss. Many more adaptations help the saguaro keep water, though. It holds water in its stem, that's pleated like an accordion so that it can expand and hold more water. The roots also help it get more water. They spread out very far, almost as wide as the cactus is tall so that helps. The roots are also very close the surface, as little as 3 inches below ground. Because of this, if it rains, the cactus can get lots of water before the ground sucks too much up.

The cactus is also a home and food for lots of animals that live in the desert. Snakes can find a home, and many birds can perch on the big cactus. Many small flying creatures eat the nectar from the flowers. The cactus also bears fruit. After a while in the sun, the fruit splits in half and birds and insects eat the oozing sweet stuff from inside the fruit. Other fruit falls to the ground, where lots of animals eat them. Other animals eat the seeds. But after a long time, the cactus dies and falls down. Still, it is a place for small ground dwelling animals. Scorpions can take shelter from the sun. Jackrabbits can make a home there.

The saguaro cactus is really and amazing plant. It's also a good place for animals to live and find food. If one day I could go to see one, I totally would. If I was stuck in a desert, I think I would go to the nearest saguaro cactus to wait for help.

**File Name: I6R Lyddie's Choices****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 6****Range of Writing****Lyddie's Choices**

Lyddie Worthen is the main character in Katherine Patterson's *Lyddie*. Lyddie is a young girl living on a Vermont farm in the 1840's. This is the time of the Industrial Revolution. Lyddie's father has abandoned the family and Lyddie's mother leaves her and her brother behind thinking that the world is coming to an end. The only thing Lyddie has left is her farm which she desperately wants to hold on to. In order to keep her farm Lyddie has to work off the debts on her farm, but the job she has isn't paying enough, so she leaves to begin a new life as a factory girl at the newly developed textile mills in Lowell Massachusetts. Because of working in the Lowell mills Lyddie gets a broader sense of herself. She is able to make some choices about who she wants to be in her life.

**Introduces the topic clearly**, including naming the title and author of the novel; provides context of for the story, including naming identifying characters and main central ideas of the novel

Lyddie is working at a place called Cutlers Tavern for very low wages. If she keeps working like this she will never be able to pay off her debts, so she decides to go to Lowell and work in the mills so that she can make more money.

States focus / **topic** of the piece

She is told by a customer who works in the mills "you'd do well in the mill you know. You'd clear at least two dollars a week. And' she paused 'you'd be independent.'" (p. 25)

**Develops the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and quotations, or other information and examples from the text.** The writer explains the meaning of the quotation he has chosen, with details about context (what was going on here). He also explains details that **clarify the relationship among the ideas / topic** he is working with in the piece.

Lyddie then makes the choice to go to the mill. She realizes that at the mill she will be able to pay off the farm debts faster. This is a hard choice for Lyddie, if she stays at the tavern she knows that she will continue to make money and eventually pay off the debt. If she goes to the mill she has a chance of not getting the job at all but if she does get the job she will be able to pay off the farm debts much faster. This is when Lyddie begins to take her life into her own hands and makes the choice to take a chance at the mill.

When Lyddie begins working at the mill, she starts making much more and with that money she is able to buy a book. Lyddie does not have a good education and people at the mills by her roommate Betsy she becomes passionate about reading so she goes to buy a book.

“I-I come to purchase at book...” “what book do you have in mind...” “uh-uh *Oliver Twist* if you please sir” (p.83-84) she then pays with two silver dollars.

**Develops the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples:** the writer explains the meaning of the quotation he has chosen.

By making the choice to purchase that book she opens the doors to education and becomes a smarter person who loves to learn. She also changes from a thrifty penny pincher to someone who realizes that money isn't always the most important thing in life.

Because of Lyddie's love for reading she makes the choice to leave the farm that she has just returned to, and leave Luke, the man who loves her to go to Oberlin College in Ohio.

**Establishes and maintains a reasonably formal style**

“I'm off” she said “to Ohio, there's a college there that will that will take a women just like a man”. (p.181)

By making the choice to go to college Lyddie is showing that she won't give up on her education and won't give up on an adventurous life. Even though things haven't been great for her she is still ready to start another chapter in her life.

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

What does the author want us to understand about the power of the Industrial Revolution? I think that in Lyddie it is showing that the Industrial Revolution gave people many opportunities in their lives. The Industrial Revolution also had lots of hard moments where people would get sick, break a bone, or even die. The Industrial Revolution seemed to rule a lot of people's lives and ruin their families. Lyddie took advantage of the Industrial Revolution well and through the choices she made was able to pull past just being a factory girl and take different paths in life.

**Uses precise word choice, and domain-specific vocabulary** about the Industrial Revolution

**Provides a concluding section that follows from the explanation presented** by restating the main point and reflecting on the topic

In this assignment, students were asked to reflect on the question “How did the work in the Lowell mills change Lyddie’s life?” after they had read the book *Lyddie* by Katherine Paterson. Class discussion helped students to arrive at the focus statement that this writer uses. He provides enough context about the book in the introduction that even people who have not read the text can follow the writer’s thinking in the piece that follows.

The writer clearly organizes his evidence using three quotations from the text. In each case, he gives some context for the quotation he uses and follows the quote with a well-elaborated explanation that makes the relationship between the quote (evidence) and the topic / focus clear. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Throughout the piece, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to make his thinking clear.

The writer uses a formal, academic tone as he explains his thinking. The conclusion follows from the main point and, although not required by the Standards, provides some thoughtful reflection on the topic.

**File Name: I6R Lyddie's Choices**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Lyddie's Choices**

Lyddie Worthen is the main character in Katherine Patterson's *Lyddie*. Lyddie is a young girl living on a Vermont farm in the 1840's. This is the time of the Industrial Revolution. Lyddie's father has abandoned the family and Lyddie's mother leaves her and her brother behind thinking that the world is coming to an end. The only thing Lyddie has left is her farm which she desperately wants to hold on to. In order to keep her farm Lyddie has to work off the debts on her farm, but the job she has isn't paying enough, so she leaves to begin a new life as a factory girl at the newly developed textile mills in Lowell Massachusetts. Because of working in the Lowell mills Lyddie gets a broader sense of herself. She is able to make some choices about who she wants to be in her life.

Lyddie is working at a place called Cutlers Tavern for very low wages. If she keeps working like this she will never be able to pay off her debts, so she decides to go to Lowell and work in the mills so that she can make more money.

She is told by a customer who works in the mills "you'd do well in the mill you know.

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Lyddie then makes the choice to go to the mill. She realizes that at the mill she will be able to pay off the farm debts faster. This is a hard choice for Lyddie, if she stays at the tavern she knows that she will continue to make money and eventually pay off the debt. If she goes to the mill she has a chance of not getting the job at all but if she does get the job she will be able to pay off the farm debts much faster. This is when Lyddie begins to take her life into her own hand and makes the choice to take a chance at the mill.

When Lyddie begins working at the mill, she starts making much more and with that money she is able to buy a book. Lyddie does not have a good education and people at the mills by her roommate Betsy she becomes passionate about reading so she goes to buy a book.

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By making the choice to purchase that book she opens the doors to education and becomes a smarter person who loves to learn. She also changes from a thrifty penny pincher to someone who realizes that money isn't always the most important thing in life.

Because of Lyddie's love for reading she makes the choice to leave the farm that she has just returned to, and leave Luke, the man who loves her to go to Oberlin College in Ohio.

"I'm off" she said "to Ohio, there's a college there that will take a woman just like a man". (p.181)

By making the choice to go to college Lyddie is showing that she won't give up on her education and won't give up on an adventurous life. Even though things haven't been great for her she is still ready to start another chapter in her life.

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**File Name: I7R To Build a Fire**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 7**

**Range of Writing**

### **To Build a Fire**

One of the most important things in life is to know how to build a successful fire. For ages fire has been a critical part of our lives. Fire provides heat, and this is what it is mainly used for. Heat cooks food. This is also critical because some uncooked foods can cause some very nasty, unmentionable diseases. And, of course, there is aesthetics. Could one be more cheerful than roasting chesnuts over an open fire?

So, now that you're all convinced that fire is the greatest thing in the world, you probably should know how to make a successful fire. Well, I agree wholeheartedly to teaching you. So, let us go through the steps one by one.

First you need to decide where you are going to build the fire, whether it be in a woodstove, in a fireplace, or out in the open. They are all relatively the same in terms of process, but materials used can differ. The basic process is as follows.

First you need to find some newspaper, or other easily burnt materials such as birch bark, office papers, old report cards, etc. Crumple up enough of the paper to cover the bottom of your fire area (if you are using birch bark just lay a few strips down). Next you need kindling. Kindling usually is best in the form of split boards, but split wood is also fine as long as the wood is dry and not green (not in color but if wood has been cut recently it is usually referred to as "green"). About four to eight pieces should be laid on top of the paper in a criss-cross design in order to allow the fire air. See Figure 1. Note: Fire will not burn without oxygen! Do not smother it!

**Introduces the topic / focus clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer provides background information about the importance of fire, leading into an explanation of how to build a fire.

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information using sequence:** The writer explains the process of building a fire in a step-by-step fashion

**Develops the topic with appropriate accurate, facts and concrete details** about the materials and steps needed to build a fire.

**Uses precise, domain-specific vocabulary to explain and analyze.**

**Establishes and maintains a formal style.**

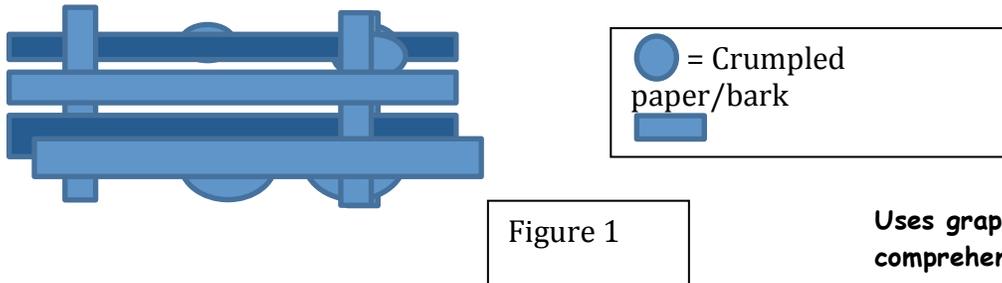


Figure 1

**Uses graphic to aid comprehension**

Then you need a small piece of firewood, preferably not green. This should be laid diagonally across the top of the kindling.

Well, that's the hard part. Now you just need a match. Light the paper (or bark) in a few places and watch the fire blaze. Note: The wood will need to be replenished now and then. Just lay a piece of firewood across the top of the currently burning log and it will soon start blazing Enjoy your wonderful fire wherever you are!

**Uses appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

I hope that if you survive your first fire you will continue to use this wonderful power of nature safely so that all can enjoy it. And remember, 'only YOU can prevent forest fires!'

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation presented**

In this assignment, from a language arts class, students were asked to explain a concrete procedure. This writer gives some background information about fire in the introduction and then states his purpose (to explain how to build a fire), thereby previewing the sequential steps to follow.

The writer organizes the essay sequentially, explaining each step carefully. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and accurately explain the steps in building a fire. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts, and to create cohesion. To make the steps easier for a reader to follow, he includes a graphic. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

Except for a few lapses ("*only you can prevent forest fires*"), the tone of the essay is objective and the style formal—both appropriate for procedural writing. The conclusion follows from and supports the information given.

**File Name: I7R To Build a Fire****Informational/Explanatory****Grade 7****Range of Writing****To Build a Fire**

One of the most important things in life is to know how to build a successful fire. For ages fire has been a critical part of our lives. Fire provides heat, and this is what it is mainly used for. Heat cooks food. This is also critical because some uncooked foods can cause some very nasty, unmentionable diseases. And, of course, there is aesthetics. Could one be more cheerful than roasting chesnuts over an open fire?

So, now that you're all convinced that fire is the greatest thing in the world, you probably should know how to make a successful fire. Well, I agree wholeheartedly to teaching you. So, let us go through the steps one by one.

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Note: Fire will not burn without oxygen! Do not smother it!

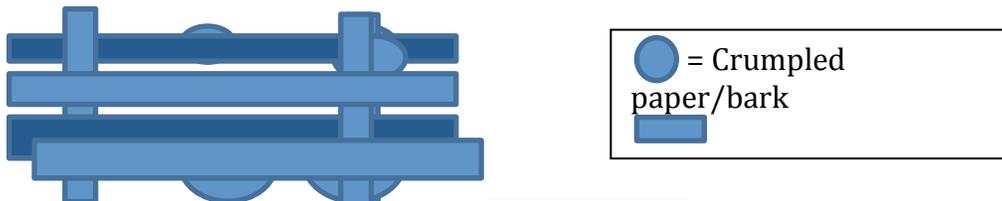


Figure 1

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I hope that if you survive your first fire you will continue to use this wonderful power of nature safely so that all can enjoy it. And remember, 'only YOU can prevent forest fires!'

**File Name: I7R Question 1****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 7****Range of Writing****Question 1**

Jean Baptiste de Lamarck and Charles Darwin were both naturalists that had theories about organisms getting helpful variations. Lamarck's theory was called the theory of acquired characteristics and Darwin's was called the theory of evolution by natural selection. Lamarck and Darwin's theories are the same and different in some ways.

Darwin and Lamarck's theories were very different. Darwin theory said that organisms get helpful variation before changes in the environment. He thought they got the variation by chance at birth. He explained that the reason giraffes had long necks was because some giraffes had a variation which was a longer neck. The giraffes with short necks could only get food on the ground so they had to compete for it so they died. The giraffes with the long necks did not have to compete because they could get the food up high and they survived and passed the long necks onto their young. Lamarck theory said that organisms got helpful variation after a change in the environment. He said that giraffes got long necks when the food on the ground ran out. The giraffes needed to eat food and there was food up high so they stretched out their necks. They then passed it on to their young. Their theories are different because Lamarck thought that organisms changed out of need and after a change in the environment and Darwin thought organisms changed by chance when they were born and before there was a change in the environment.

Darwin and Lamarck's theories were very different but they were also very similar. They both thought that organisms changed. They thought these changes could be very useful and could help them survive. The changes could then get passed down to the young. That is how Lamarck and Darwin's theories are similar.

**Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer gives provides general context, background information about the theories of evolution of Lamarck and Darwin, states the main point, and signals that similarities and differences in the theories will be the essay's focus.

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information using comparison/contrast.** This paragraph discusses differences between the two theories, first describing Darwin's theory and then Lamarck's.

**Develops topic with appropriate, accurate facts and concrete details** about theories of evolution; **provides analysis of content**

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary and a formal style.**

**Uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

Lamarck and Darwin's theories are both the same and different in some ways.

**Provides a concluding statement, which follows from the information provided**

For this summative assessment from a seventh-grade science unit, students were asked to explain the differences and similarities in Lamarck's and Darwin's theories of evolution, respectively. This writer provides some background information about Lamarck's and Darwin's theories in the introduction and then establishes his focus on similarities and differences in Darwin's and Lamarck's theories, which serves also to preview his compare/contrast organizational structure.

The writer organizes his essay by first discussing differences between the two theories and then the similarities. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to characterize the theories and analyze them. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone of the essay is objective and the style formal—both appropriate for science writing. The conclusion follows from the information given. Though it is a simple restatement, this is appropriate for a content assessment.



**File Name: I7R Question 1****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 7****Range of Writing****Question 1**

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Darwin and Lamarck's theories were very different but they were also very similar. They both thought that organisms changed. They thought these changes could be very useful and could help them survive. The changes could then get passed down to the young. That is how Lamarck and Darwin's theories are similar.

Lamarck and Darwin's theories are both the same and different in some ways.



**File Name: I8R How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 8****Range of Writing****How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell**

Have you ever looked at your own cells? No, of course not. You're a mortal and you don't have the power or technology to do that. Maybe some day in the future we shall grant humans the power of microscopic vision. Who knows? That's up to Zeus. Cells are amazing things. Each one is individually different. When I first looked at my own cells I thought, "*WOW there is nothing like this in the whole world.*" I was wrong. Recently, I came to the realization that my own dear Mount Olympus is very much like a cell itself. There are many components in a cells that can also, in a way, be found on Mount Olympus. The structure of a cell and the components within are very like Mount Olympus. What? You don't believe me? Well fine! Come on. I'll show you. Oh, and by the way my name is Eos and I'm the Greek goddess of dawn. I'm responsible for the rising of the sun. Be careful and follow me. Don't let anyone else see you. Mortals aren't allowed up her. Let's go.

In an animal cell, the cell membrane controls what enters and leaves the cell. There are small pores that allow things of different sizes through. Up her, on Olympus what keeps the mortals from entering, or leaving (if they are to be kept here) is an instilled fear of us. Mortals dare not enter unless told to by one of the gods or goddesses. They dare not leave either.

Now, all of you stand still. No, it's okay. This is just a powder that will make you invisible. Nobody move or make a sound. Got it? If you do, it will be your life wasted. I just have to check to make sure that neither Zeus or Hera are in their throne room...Okay, we can go in. Just go silently and quickly! This is

Zeus and Hera's throne room, which is very similar to the nucleus of a cell.

In a cell, the nucleus is the control center of activity on a cellular level It's

**Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer orients the reader to the narrative setting through which information and ideas will be conveyed, introduces a narrator (the goddess Eos), and establishes the essay's explanatory focus on a comparison between the structure of cells and Mount Olympus.

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories:** The writer uses a narrative structure (a tour through Mount Olympus) as the frame for conveying specific comparisons between the structure of cells and Mount Olympus

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary** within accurate evidence to **develop topic**

**Uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.** Here, the writer is using a chronological narrative structure in addition to the cell structures to aid comprehension.

from here that Zeus and Hera control the happenings of immortals and mortals alike. It's like the control center for the world.

Holy Zeus! Someone's coming in. It's Zeus himself! Quick into here. No noise, no movement, no nothing! Those of you who can peer through the window, do so. You'll be able to see the head god himself! Zeus and his wife, Hera, control the gods, goddesses, and mortals. They are like the chromosomes in a cell. In a cell, the chromosomes determine what kind of cell it will be and how it acts. That is what Zeus and Hera do in the world.

In a cell, the ribosomes turn amino acids into proteins. On Mount Olympus we make many things like laws, rules, and the weather. However, the most material thing that we make are lightning bolts. Of course, only Zeus can actually make them. Although others can use them if they have his permission. See how Zeus only uses his left hand for tasks? That is because his right hand is used to make lightning. Like the ribosomes, his hand takes raw materials (the abundant plasma and energy up here) and creates a whole new product (lightning.) His hand is like the ribosomes in a cell.

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary to explain topic**

Continues to **analyze** comparison between cell structure / function and Mount Olympus (develops topic, makes meaning clear)

Good, Zeus is leaving. This closet is starting to get stuffy. We should go quickly out into the hall. Now take a right, then a left into here. This is the courtyard. Immortals don't have to eat, but we do it for the pleasure of it. Also, eating helps keep us healthy and happy. The fountains flow with sweet juices and wines. The trees have the best fruits possible. That table over there is always supplied with the most delectable food imaginable. Those chests that are spread around are filled with gold and jewels for our taking. Wearing these helps enhance our godly image. This courtyard represents the vacuoles in a cell. In the vacuoles, large amounts of what the cell needs are stored. Here large amounts of what immortals thrive on is stored.

Don't be alarmed. Those are our mortal slaves. They won't tell on us because I have ordered them not to. In an animal cell, mitochondria store energy and release it when necessary. They power the cell. Here on Mount Olympus, we could not get by with out thee slaves. They perform almost every task that can even slight be considered laborious. The energy they get from food is stored in their bodies and released in order to do tasks.

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary to explain topic**

In a cell, the ER, or endoplasmic reticulum, help to move substances around the cell. The halls and paths we've been following are very similar to

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary within evidence to develop topic**

the ER, they are like the roads that contain all movement.

Quick, into this room here. That was Hermes the messenger god. Now that I think of it, he is very much like the golgi bodies in a cell. The golgi bodies package and ship substances from place to place in a cell. Hermes, similarly wraps items up in goat skin and takes them from one person, immortal, or Titan to another.

Now, let's go back to the entrance. You should go. Soon every god, goddess, demi-god, and demi-goddess will be coming. There is a big meeting tonight. So they were all summoned here. By now, I'm sure you can see how Mount Olympus is structured like a cell Just follow that path down there until you get home. Wait, the day is almost over and it'll get dark. Each of you swallow some of this powder. There, this enables you to fly, which is much faster than walking. If you promise not to tell anyone about this and you can go. You swear? Okay, good bye

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation presented:** The writer restates the main point but also provides a sense of closure to the narrative frame

For this piece of blended writing (informational and narrative) from an eighth-grade science class, students were asked to address the question: "How is a cell like a familiar building or city?" This writer responds by comparing cell structure to the structure of Mount Olympus and writes from the perspective of one of the gods. She begins by orienting the reader to the narrative conceit, providing some context about cells and Mount Olympus, and then stating her main point (Mount Olympus is structured like a cell), thereby previewing what follows in the essay.

The writer organizes the essay clearly by using both a narrative story line (for both reader interest and analogical purposes) and a compare/contrast informative/explanatory structure. She uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and accurately explain elements of the comparison. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone is conversational and the style relatively informal, both appropriate for this type of blended writing. The conclusion follows from and supports the main point, as well as providing a sense of closure for the narrative.

**File Name: I8R How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

### **How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell**

Have you ever looked at your own cells? No, of course not. You're a mortal and you don't have the power or technology to do that. Maybe some day in the future we shall grant humans the power of microscopic vision. Who knows? That's up to Zeus. Cells are amazing things. Each one is individually different. When I first looked at my own cells I thought, "*WOW there is nothing like this in the whole world.*" I was wrong. Recently, I came to the realization that my own dear Mount Olympus is very much like a cell itself. There are many components in a cells that can also, in a way, be found on Mount Olympus. The structure of a cell and the components within are very like Mount Olympus. What? You don't believe me? Well fine! Come on. I'll show you. Oh, and by the way my name is Eos and I'm the Greek goddess of dawn. I'm responsible for the rising of the sun. Be careful and follow me. Don't let anyone else see you. Mortals aren't allowed up her. Let's go.

In an animal cell, the cell membrane controls what enters and leaves the cell. There are small pores that allow things of different sizes through. Up her, on Olympus what keeps the mortals from entering. or leaving (if they are to be kept here) is an instilled fear of us. Mortals dare not enter unless told to by one of the gods or goddesses. They dare not leave either.

Now, all of you stand still. No, it's okay. This is just a powder that will make you invisible. Nobody move or make a sound. Got it? If you do, it will be your life wasted. I just have to check to make sure that neither Zeus or Hera are in their throne room...Okay, we can go in. Just go silently and quickly! This is Zeus and Hera's throne room, which is very similar to the nucleus of a cell. In a cell, the nucleus is the control center of activity on a cellular level. It's from here that Zeus and Hera control the happenings of immortals and mortals alike. It's like the control center for the world.

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chromosomes in a cell. In a cell, the chromosomes determine what kind of cell it will be and how it acts. That is what Zeus and Hera do in the world.

In a cell, the ribosomes turn amino acids into proteins. On Mount Olympus we make many things like laws, rules, and the weather. However, the most material thing that we make are lightning bolts. Of course, only Zeus can actually make them. Although others can use them if they have his permission. See how Zeus only uses his left hand for tasks? That is because his right hand is used to make lightning. Like the ribosomes, his hand takes raw materials (the abundant plasma and energy up here) and creates a whole new product (lightning.) His hand is like a the ribosomes in a cell.

Good, Zeus is leaving. This closet is starting to get stuffy. We should go quickly out into the hall. Now take a right, then a left into here. This is the courtyard. Immortals don't have to eat, but we do it for the pleasure of it. Also, eating helps keep us healthy and happy. The fountains flow with sweet juices and wines. The trees have the best fruits possible. That table over there is always supplied with the most delectable food imaginable. Those chests that are spread around are filled with gold and jewels for our taking. Wearing these helps enhance our godly image. This courtyard represents the vacuoles in a cell. In the vacuoles, large amounts of what the cell needs are stored. Here large amounts of what immortals thrive on is stored.

Don't be alarmed. Those are our mortal slaves. They won't tell on us because I have ordered them not to. In an animal cell, mitochondria store energy and release it when necessary. They power the cell. Here on Mount Olympus, we could not get by with out thee slaves. They perform almost every task that can even slight be considered laborious. The energy they get from food is stored in their bodies and released in order to do tasks.

In a cell, the ER, or endoplasmic reticulum, help to move substances around the cell. The halls and paths we've been following are very similar to the ER, they are like the roads that contain all movement.

Quick, into this room here. That was Hermes the messenger god. Now that I think of it, he is very much like the golgi bodies in a cell. The golgi bodies package and ship substances from place to place in a cell. Hermes, similarly wraps items up in goat skin and takes them from one person, immortal, or Titan to another.

Now, let's go back to the entrance. You should go. Soon every god, goddess, demi-god, and demi-goddess will be coming. There is a big meeting tonight. So they were all summoned here. By now, I'm sure you can see how Mount Olympus is structured like a cell Just follow that path down

there until you get home. Wait, the day is almost over and it'll get dark. Each of you swallow some of this powder. There, this enables you to fly, which is much faster than walking. If you promise not to tell anyone about this and you can go. You swear? Okay, good bye.

**File Name: I8R Frosty and Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

**Frosty and Friends**

I need to find out how much Frosty will weigh after 12 days, and how many days it will take until he completely melts away.

How I Derived My Answer

First, I divided 38 by 1.3 to find out how many days it would take for him to completely melt away. I noticed that the answer was 29 days. I also observed that there was a remainder of .3, so it would take the 30<sup>th</sup> day for him to melt.

**Introduces the topic /focus clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer succinctly lays out the mathematics problem to be addressed, although the introduction assumes that the reader understands the premise

**Organizes ideas, information, and concepts into broader categories, using headings and graphics to aid comprehension**

1)

Frosty - 38 lbs		
Loses 1.3 lbs. / day		
1.3	3.8	
-	26	20
	12	
-	6.5	5
	5.5	

$$Y = 38 - (1.3x)$$

Y = weight after certain number of days

X = number of days

38 = initial weight

1.3 = pounds lost / day

**Uses tables and charts to aid comprehension**

After 29 days, Frosty will have .3 pounds of snow left. Thus, he will completely melt on the 30<sup>th</sup> day.

**Establishes and maintains  
a formal style**

2)

1.3	38	
-	1.3	10
25		
-	2.6	2
22.4		12 days

Frosty will weigh 22.4 lbs. after 12 days.

= 35.7 after 17 days

22.1	
+	13.6
	35.7

3)

To accommodate with the children's helping Frosty, the new equation will be:  $Y = 38 - (1.3X) + 0.8$

The 0.8 stands for the weight of snow the children add to Frosty.

Frosty

$$1.3 * 17 = 22.1$$

$$+ (0.8 * 17) = 13.6$$

**Uses precise and domain-specific language and vocabulary to explain and**

**Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts, definitions, and mathematical reasoning.**

I divided 38 by 1.3 to find the number of days it would take for him to melt completely.

Then I used my equation to calculate his weight after 12 days. After I divided, I made a new equation for the third question:  $Y = 28 - (1.3X) - 0.8$ . I knew that if I did this then I would be able to figure out the third question. Finally, I figured out that if the children added 0.8 pounds of snow to him everyday, he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

#### My Solution

Knowing that he will lose 1.3 pounds per day, it will take 30 days before Frosty completely melts away. Using the equation I made, Frosty would weigh 22.4 pounds after 12 days. Finally, if the schoolyard children pack 0.8 pounds onto him everyday, then he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

**Uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts**

**Provides a concluding section that follows from the information and explanation given**

In this informative/explanatory text from an eighth-grade mathematics class, the writer begins by setting out the mathematical problem of how much Frosty will weigh after twelve days and how long it will take him to melt away completely. While this introduction would be clear enough to those already familiar with this assignment (such as the teacher), other readers might have some questions, such as who built Frosty in the first place or how much he initially weighed.

The writer organizes the explanation by category (problem, approach, solution) and includes subheadings and graphics to aid comprehension. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to accurately describe the problem and explain his reasoning. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone of the explanation is objective and the style formal—both appropriate for describing mathematical thinking. The conclusion follows from and supports the main point of the piece.

**File Name: I8R Frosty and Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

### Frosty and Friends

I need to find out how much Frosty will weigh after 12 days, and how many days it will take until he completely melts away.

#### How I Derived My Answer

First, I divided 38 by 1.3 to find out how many days it would take for him to completely melt away. I noticed that the answer was 29 days. I also observed that there was a remainder of .3, so it would take the 30<sup>th</sup> day for him to melt.

1)

Frosty - 38 lbs	
Loses 1.3 lbs. / day	
$\begin{array}{r} \phantom{0} \\ \hline 1.3 \overline{) 38} \\ \underline{26} \phantom{0} \\ 12 \phantom{0} \\ \underline{6.5} \phantom{0} \\ 5.5 \end{array}$	

$$Y = 38 - (1.3x)$$

Y = weight after certain number of days

X = number of days

38 = initial weight

1.3 = pounds lost / day

After 29 days, Frosty will have .3 pounds of snow left. Thus, he will completely melt on the 30<sup>th</sup> day.

2)

$$\begin{array}{r|l}
 1.3 & 38 \\
 \hline
 - & 1.3 & 10 \\
 \hline
 & 25 & \\
 - & 2.6 & 2 \\
 \hline
 & & 
 \end{array}$$

Frosty will weigh 22.4 lbs. after 12 days.

after 17 days                    22.1

$$\begin{array}{r}
 + \quad 13.6 \\
 \hline
 35.7
 \end{array}$$

3)

To accommodate with the children's helping Frosty, the new equation will be:  $Y = 38 - (1.3X) + 0.8$

The 0.8 stands for the weight of snow the children add to Frosty.

Frosty

$$\begin{array}{l}
 1.3 * 17 = 22.1 \\
 + (0.8 * 17) = 13.6
 \end{array}$$

= 35.7

I divided 38 by 1.3 to find the number of days it would take for him to melt completely. Then I used my equation to calculate his weight after 12 days. After I divided, I made a new equation for the third question:  $Y = 28 - (1.3X) - 0.8$ . I knew that if I did this then I would be able to figure out the third question. Finally, I figured out that if the children added 0.8 pounds of snow to him everyday, he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

### My Solution

Knowing that he will lose 1.3 pounds per day, it will take 30 days before Frosty completely melts away. Using the equation I made, Frosty would weigh 22.4 pounds after 12 days. Finally, if the schoolyard children pack 0.8 pounds onto him everyday, then he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

**File Name: I9-10R Secret Communication of Wolves**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 9-10**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Secret Communication of Wolves**

A long piercing howl shatters the quiet night of a northern forest. The howl grows into a chorus of yelps and barks, and the valley echoes to the chilling sound. The leader of the pack starts the noise, while other pack members, as well as other wolf packs, join in (O'Toole 22).

Among wolves, communication is a very highly developed skill. For instance, the howl of the pack leader has many different meanings. Most of the time a lone howl is a warning for other packs. It tells them to stay away, for there are many young to be protected and food to be guarded (O'Toole 23). A howl can also be a way of marking their territory. Many wolves howl when they feel another pack is too close. Some wolves howl when they are lost or trying to find another member of the pack. Most wolves use this howl at least once a day to locate missing pups or other pack members (Primate).

**Introduces the topic:** The writer gives context that sets the stage for the essay; includes **topic / focus** of the piece, which previews what is to follow (the wavs and

To wolves, the territory that they occupy (the territory of some packs may cover 20-120 square miles) is like a house to a human being. They feel that they must protect it all times, and, other packs must not trespass. Neighboring packs may share up to a mile of territory, but rarely will they share more than that (Primate). All wolves know that if they run through another pack's territory, they run the risk of being killed (Primate). In addition, wolves mark their territory by scent (mostly urine). This helps all wolves know where their territory begins.

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic**

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts and create cohesion**

Like humans, the wolf has three main avenues of communication,

postural (body language);  
vocal (the howl or snarl);

and olfactory (scent) (Wolfhaven). The scent is the most commonly used, and probably the most important. Besides marking territory, it helps show food ownership, as well as acting as a road map for themselves. Wolves also have scent glands between their toes, which leaves their scent wherever they go (Primate).

Moreover, much communication is done through body language. Many postures have been evolved to reduce conflict and aggression among pack members. Facial expressions are the most obvious. Generally, bared teeth with ears erect and pointed back can indicate a threat by a dominant male (Wolfhaven). In contrast, a closed mouth, slitlike eyes, and ears pulled forward (and close to their head) will most likely indicate subordinate behavior (Wolfhaven). Wolves also use their tail position to communicate emotion. Threatening wolves hold their tails high, almost perpendicular, while more submissive wolves lower themselves before dominant pack members. These lower class members often have their tails tucked between their legs (Primate). A wolf that has been defeated in a fight can avoid being attacked by its victorious companion by taking a posture similar to that of a pup begging for food (University of Oklahoma Press 91).

**Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections, the various factors in the communication of wolves**

**Develops topic with well-chosen, relevant, sufficient, accurate facts and concrete details**

Wolves must communicate at all times when they are hunting. They have to work together to catch most of their food (due to the size of the food that they hunt). The concept that wolves use is called the “Pincer Attack” (Baily 91). When using the pincer attack, the pack splits in two groups and surround the prey (mostly deer, sheep, and other medium-sized mammals). One of the groups causes a diversion, while the other half ambushes the helpless prey. Wolves can move quickly and quietly. Many of them operate on stamina rather than on sudden bursts of speed (Baily 85). Because of the cooperation of the group, when it comes to hunting, the pack usually ends up victorious, and they have enough food for a couple of days. If they pack gets a big kill,

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to norms and conventions of**

**Develops topic with well-chosen, relevant, sufficient, accurate facts and concrete details**

then the leader will have the next strongest male guard the kill during the night to keep off other animals.

Like other animals, wolves communicate with a social ladder. They have one dominant male (usually the leader of the pack) (Primate). This wolf has many responsibilities. He has to make sure that all the other wolves don't get out of line, and makes sure that there is harmony among the group. The pack leader does this by barking at the other wolves and fighting with the other males. Normally, the pack leader will not fight with the females of the pack unless it is necessary (Timberwolf). With the leader comes a dominant female. Together they are known as the breeding pair. These two are in charge of the pack, raising the young, selecting denning areas and rendezvous sites, capturing food, and maintaining the pack's territory (Primate). These two wolves are also responsible for the offspring. Not many of the other wolves mate for offspring because that is the dominant pair's job. Every year the dominant pair will produce one litter of pups. These pups take the place of the older wolves that are too old to hunt. Because the pack is so close and they communicate all the time, many of the other female wolves help the dominant female with taking care of the young (Wolfhaven). The dominant female will assign each pup to an older female. This helps the other females learn how to be a mother, and it helps the dominant female so she can hunt and not have to worry about taking care of her young.

**Analyzes ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections**

If only humans could communicate as well as wolves, today's society would be wonderful. Wolves' methods of communication are simple and usually resolve conflicts without violence. Wolves have been living together for many, many years so they must be doing something right. Maybe we can learn something from the wolves instead of trying to make them extinct.

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the information presented by articulating**

In this assignment, students were asked to research a topic of their choice (here, wolves), and establish a focus within that topic (how/why wolves communicate). This writer provides some context about wolves' communication in the introduction and then states his main point that among wolves, communication is a highly developed skill.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly by category, using aspects of communication to develop the main point. The writer uses appropriate and varied transitions to clarify relationships and create cohesion ("*Like humans, the wolf has three main avenues of communication...*"). Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic (explaining the aspects of wolf communication), which he cites. While this subject does not call for much analysis, the writer occasionally analyzes evidence so that the reader grasps the complexity of the topic.

The essay has an appropriately formal style and objective tone. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented.

**File Name: I9-10R Secret Communication of Wolves**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 9-10**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Secret Communication of Wolves**

A long piercing howl shatters the quiet night of a northern forest. The howl grows into a chorus of yelps and barks, and the valley echos to the chilling sound. The leader of the pack starts the noise, while other pack members, as well as other wolf packs, join in (O'Toole 22).

Among wolves, communication is a very highly developed skill. For instance, the howl of the pack leader has many different meanings. Most of the time a lone howl is a warning for other packs. It tells them to stay away, for there are many young to be protected and food to be guarded (O'Toole 23). A howl can also be a way of marking their territory. Many wolves howl when they feel another pack is too close. Some wolves howl when they are lost or trying to find another member of the pack. Most wolves use this howl at least once a day to locate missing pups or other pack members (Primate).

To wolves, the territory that they occupy (the territory of some packs may cover 20-120 square miles) is like a house to a human being. They feel that they must protect it all times, and, other packs must not trespass. Neighboring packs may share up to a mile of territory, but rarely will they share more than that (Primate). All wolves know that if they run through another pack's territory, they run the risk of being killed (Primate). In addition, wolves mark their territory by scent (mostly urine). This helps all wolves know where their territory begins.

Like humans, the wolf has three main avenues of communication, postural (body language); vocal (the howl or snarl); and olfactory (scent) (Wolfhaven). The scent is the most commonly used, and probably the most important. Besides marking territory, it helps show food ownership, as well as acting as a road map for themselves. Wolves also have scent glands between their toes, which leaves their scent wherever they go (Primate).

Moreover, much communication is done through body language. Many postures have been evolved to reduce conflict and aggression among pack members. Facial expressions are the most obvious. Generally, bared teeth with ears erect and pointed back can indicate a threat by a dominant male (Wolfhaven). In contrast, a closed mouth, slitlike eyes, and ears pulled forward (and close to their head) will most likely indicate subordinate behavior (Wolfhaven). Wolves also use their tail position to communicate emotion. Threatening wolves hold their tails high, almost perpendicular, while more submissive wolves lower themselves before dominant pack members. These lower class members often have their tails tucked between their legs (Primate). A wolf that has been defeated in a fight can avoid being attacked by its victorious companion by taking a posture similar to that of a pup begging for food (University of Oklahoma Press 91).

Wolves must communicate at all times when they are hunting. They have to work together to catch most of their food (due to the size of the food that they hunt). The concept that wolves use is called the “Pincer Attack” (Baily 91). When using the pincer attack, the pack splits in two groups and surround the prey (mostly deer, sheep, and other medium-sized mammals). One of the groups causes a diversion, while the other half ambushes the helpless prey. Wolves can move quickly and quietly. Many of them operate on stamina rather than on sudden bursts of speed (Baily 85). Because of the cooperation of the group, when it comes to hunting, the pack usually ends up victorious, and they have enough food for a couple of days. If they pack gets a big kill, then the leader will have the next strongest male guard the kill during the night to keep off other animals.

Like other animals, wolves communicate with a social ladder. They have one dominant male (usually the leader of the pack) (Primate). This wolf has many responsibilities. He has to make sure that all the other wolves don't get out of line, and makes sure that there is harmony among the group. The pack leader does this by barking at the other wolves and fighting with the other males. Normally, the pack leader will not fight with the females of the pack unless it is necessary (Timberwolf). With the leader comes a dominant female. Together they are known as the breeding pair. These two are in charge of the pack, raising the young, selecting denning areas and rendezvous sites, capturing food, and maintaining the pack's territory (Primate). These two wolves are also responsible for the offspring. Not many of the other wolves mate for offspring because that is the dominant pair's job. Every year the dominant pair will produce one litter of pups. These pups take the place of the older wolves that are too old to hunt. Because the pack is so close and they communicate all the time, many of the other female wolves help the dominant female with taking care of the young (Wolfhaven). The dominant female

will assign each pup to an older female. This helps the other females learn how to be a mother, and it helps the dominant female so she can hunt and not have to worry about taking care of her young.

If only humans could communicate as well as wolves, today's society would be wonderful. Wolves' methods of communication are simple and usually resolve conflicts without violence. Wolves have been living together for many, many years so they must be doing something right. Maybe we can learn something from the wolves instead of trying to make them extinct.

**File Name: I11-12R McValues**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 12**

**Range of Writing**

**McValues**

Looking at this ad, who would guess that those golden arches bring home approximately fourteen billion dollars a year customers worldwide? Who would guess that McDonald's is the world's leading food organization and employs over 28,000 workers in 120 different countries? The ad is, in fact, an image of a completely different nature. It is a calm, nostalgic looking ad; nothing in the peaceful summer scene hints that McDonald's has or ever will represent anything other than quality family living.

The characters in the ad are strategically positioned to inspire within the viewer, feelings of fun and familiarity. The picture located at the center of the page, depicts an older woman with a little girl—perhaps her granddaughter—beside her. The two are lying on their stomachs, propped up by elbows in the sand. Neither looks up as the camera clicks, catching them at play. The little girl giggles as her tiger toy leaps over the walls of her castle made of sand. Her grandmother looks on with a knowing smile, perhaps remembering the days when she used to play such innocent games. The sun shines down on their backs and speckles the older woman's face through her woven sunhat. Behind, their legs are crossed at the ankles in carefree swing—the girl in imitation of her clearly admirable grandmother.

**Introduces the topic:** The writer provides background information describing the McDonald's ad that he will analyze, and then states the main point.

States the focus / **topic** of the piece

**Develops topic thoroughly with accurate evidence—concrete details, most significant and relevant facts** for analysis of the images in the ad

**Uses appropriate language, transitions, and vocabulary, and techniques such as relationships among ideas and complete organization that each new chunk builds from one which precedes it to create a unified whole**

They have obviously been to this beach before, and are having the time of their lives.

As with the characters, the placement of the props in the ad is very significant. The slightly unfocused images of the beach gear on their right are clearly placed as a backdrop, almost as a side note—not directly related to the McDonald’s message about family values, but still essential. The responsible grandmother planned ahead and brought along all they might need for a day on the beach, but does not need to broadcast it to the viewer. In the far corner, an umbrella stands shading their picnic blanket; beside the grandmother’s arm is a pair of sunglasses, and upon her head rests a hat to protect her from the sun. Oh, and what’s that in the corner? Ah yes, the McDonald’s Happy Meal they picked up on their way. Cheeseburgers with french-fries is far from the healthiest picnic Grandma could have brought for her granddaughter, but what does that matter? They’re spending time together.

The summer scene in black and white instantly creates a feeling of nostalgia. It is a time warp of sorts, to the safety of the 1950s when family values were still a part of American society. It jumps back to simpler days when children did as they were told and a day on the beach with family was an acceptable way to spend the weekend—the “good old days” when all was well with the world.

The busy parents of today can be assured that McDonald’s is just as wholesome and just as capable of creating memories as their mothers’ picnics were in the 1950s. The first line of print below the picture reads, “Some connections never seem to fade.” The statement refers to the family connection that existed for the parents of today when they were young. The message makes it very clear that the dwindling respect for quality family values is kept alive with McDonald’s.

In stark contrast to the quiet shades of gray and the general feeling of calm in the photo, the McDonald’s logo stands out sharply in the lower corner. Being the only colored object in the ad, the ketchup and mustard “M” is

**Analyzes content of ad for overall effect**

**Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole:** The writer draws a connection between the imagery in the ad and the message for today’s parents.

**Analyzes content of ad for overall effect**

impossible to miss. There can be no confusion over whose product is being sold.

The few sentences about, and the image of, Pooh corner appeals to the whole family—the parents and their Pooh-loving kids. Above the logo and the scene of contentment, the page is blank except for one sentence: “Suddenly the house on Pooh corner doesn’t seem so far away.” This statement, coupled with the image of the girl recreating Pooh’s world on the beach, emphasizes the idea that McDonald’s makes dreams come alive. The ad states that Pooh corner doesn’t seem so far away, and right below it is their proof—a little girl playing in “Pooh corner”

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as personification to manage the complexity of the topic**

In the lower right corner, below the hideously-bold, trademark “M”, the ad makes yet another pitch. In this modern world of work and stress, McDonald’s kindly asks everyone to “smile.” In that one, simple word, so much more is implied. “Slow down, take a break, we’re here to help, be happy, come to McDonald’s, we understand.”

**Maintains formal style, objective tone**

The entire ad is an attempt to appeal to the parental ideal. Connecting McDonald’s food with an image of family fun provides an “equal” alternative for busy parents who don’t have room in their lives for quality time with their families. McDonald’s is the world’s largest and fastest growing food chain. It brings in billions of dollars a year, has thousands of stockholders and represents one of the biggest food monopolies in the world, but none of that matters in the ad. Life can be good, and it can be bought at McDonald’s.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented:** The writer assesses the appeal the ad has for today’s busy parents and then **articulates the significance of the topic**

In this piece of twelfth-grade informative/explanatory writing, the writer addresses the underlying messages of an ad for McDonald's. She provides some context about McDonald's and the ad itself in the introduction so that the reader can clearly follow her thinking even without having seen the ad. The writer then indicates that the main analytical purpose of the essay is to unpack the ad's imagery and to contrast the ad's implicit messages with the reality of the McDonald's food empire.

The writer organizes the essay clearly and carefully so that each chunk builds upon the one that precedes it. She describes the ad, analyzes its messages, and assesses the appeal of those messages to today's busy parents. She uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to describe and analyze the ad. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone of the essay is objective and the style formal, both appropriate for an essay in cultural criticism. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented, and reflects on the significance of the topic.

**File Name: I 11-12R McValues**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 12**

**Range of Writing**

### **McValues**

Looking at this ad, who would guess that those golden arches bring home approximately fourteen billion dollars a year customers worldwide? Who would guess that McDonald's is the world's leading food organization and employs over 28,000 workers in 120 different countries? The ad is, in fact, an image of a completely different nature. It is a calm, nostalgic looking ad; nothing in the peaceful summer scene hints that McDonald's has or ever will represent anything other than quality family living.

The characters in the ad are strategically positioned to inspire within the viewer, feelings of fun and familiarity. The picture located at the center of the page, depicts an older woman with a little girl—perhaps her granddaughter—beside her. The two are lying on their stomachs, propped up by elbows in the sand. Neither looks up as the camera clicks, catching them at play. The little girl giggles as her tiger toy leaps over the walls of her castle made of sand. Her grandmother looks on with a knowing smile, perhaps remembering the days when she used to play such innocent games. The sun shines down on their backs and speckles the older woman's face through her woven sunhat. Behind, their legs are crossed at the ankles in carefree swing—the girl in imitation of her clearly admirable grandmother. They have obviously been to this beach before, and are having the time of their lives.

As with the characters, the placement of the props in the ad is very significant. The slightly unfocused images of the beach gear on their right are clearly placed as a backdrop, almost as a side note—not directly related to the McDonald's message about family values, but still essential. The responsible grandmother planned ahead and brought along all they might need for a day on the beach, but does not need to broadcast it to the viewer. In the far corner, an umbrella stands shading their picnic blanket; beside the grandmother's arm is a pair of sunglasses, and upon her head rests a hat to protect her from the sun. Oh, and what's that in the corner? Ah yes, the McDonald's Happy Meal they picked up on their way. Cheeseburgers with french-fries is far from the healthiest picnic Grandma could have brought for her granddaughter, but what does that matter? They're spending time together.

The summer scene in black and white instantly creates a feeling of nostalgia. It is a time warp of sorts, to the safety of the 1950s when family values were still a part of American society. It jumps back to simpler days when children did as they were told and a day on the beach with family was an acceptable way to spend the weekend—the “good old days” when all was well with the world.

The busy parents of today can be assured that McDonald’s is just as wholesome and just as capable of creating memories as their mothers’ picnics were in the 1950s. The first line of print below the picture reads, “Some connections never seem to fade.” The statement refers to the family connection that existed for the parents of today when they were young. The message makes it very clear that the dwindling respect for quality family values is kept alive with McDonald’s.

In stark contrast to the quiet shades of gray and the general feeling of calm in the photo, the McDonald’s logo stands out sharply in the lower corner. Being the only colored object in the ad, the ketchup and mustard “M” is impossible to miss. There can be no confusion over whose product is being sold.

The few sentences about, and the image of, Pooh corner appeals to the whole family—the parents and their Pooh-loving kids. Above the logo and the scene of contentment, the page is blank except for one sentence: “Suddenly the house on Pooh corner doesn’t seem so far away.” This statement, coupled with the image of the girl recreating Pooh’s world on the beach, emphasizes the idea that McDonald’s makes dreams come alive. The ad states that Pooh corner doesn’t seem so far away, and right below it is their proof—a little girl playing in “Pooh corner”

In the lower right corner, below the hideously-bold, trademark “M”, the ad makes yet another pitch. In this modern world of work and stress, McDonald’s kindly asks everyone to “smile.” In that one, simple word, so much more is implied. “Slow down, take a break, we’re here to help, be happy, come to McDonald’s, we understand.”

The entire ad is an attempt to appeal to the parental ideal. Connecting McDonald’s food with an image of family fun provides an “equal” alternative for busy parents who don’t have room in their lives for quality time with their families. McDonald’s is the world’s largest and fastest growing food chain. It brings in billions of dollars a year, has thousands of stockholders and represents one of the biggest food monopolies in the world, but none of that matters in the ad. Life can be good, and it can be bought at McDonald’s.



# **Section III: Narrative Writing**

# ***K-5 On-Demand Narrative Samples***

## Grades 1-5, Prompt for Narrative Writing

Common Core Standard W.CCR.3

### Teacher Directions

- Show the picture. Ask the class what they see happening in the picture.
- Explain that each student is to write a story about what might be happening in this picture. When they have finished writing, they will add a picture of their own.
- Allow a few minutes for discussion with a partner. Give out lined or unlined paper. Then use your typical classroom writing process to support students in completing the writing prompt. The piece should represent first draft writing (done in a single sitting).
- The response should include a picture and whatever sentences, words, or letters the child can add. An adult may assist with sounding out or spelling words and/or transcribe the child's words if desired. Dictation is permitted.
- Please distinguish the child's independent production from words or letters produced with adult help by **underlining any part of the writing done with teacher support**. The writing sample will be most useful to other teachers if it is easy to tell where help was given.
- We understand that, especially in the fall, most Kindergartners have had limited experience with writing.

## Kindergarten Narrative Prompt



Write a story about this picture.  
Then add your own picture to tell  
more about what happened.

**File Name: NKFP Cats and Dogs**

**Narrative**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

### Cats and Dogs

hou

CAT

**Narrates**

*In a house, the dogs want the cat. \**

**several loosely  
linked events in  
the order in  
which they  
occurred**

The CAT WXS

*The cat wrecks the house.*

Dogs

*The dogs clean it up.*

**Provides a reaction to what happened**

*\*dictation in italics*

Produced through a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing, this Kindergarten narrative relays a short series of events in chronological order. This piece was originally written as a small stapled booklet, with one event on each page. For Kindergarteners, written language is a very new medium of expression, and much of the story is expressed orally (recorded as dictation) and in the pictures. Combining more familiar modes of communication with written language helps solidify a young child's understanding that spoken words can be written down and is an important step in the developmental process.

**File Name: NKFP Cats and Dogs**

**Narrative**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Cats and Dogs**

In a house, the dogs want the cat. The cat wrecks the house. The dogs clean it up.

**File Name: NKFP Cats and Dogs**

**Narrative**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**On Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

**Cats and Dogs**

hou                    CAT

*In a house, the dogs want the cat. \**

The CAT WXS

*The cat wrecks the house.*

Dogs

*The dogs clean it up.*

*\*dictation in italics*

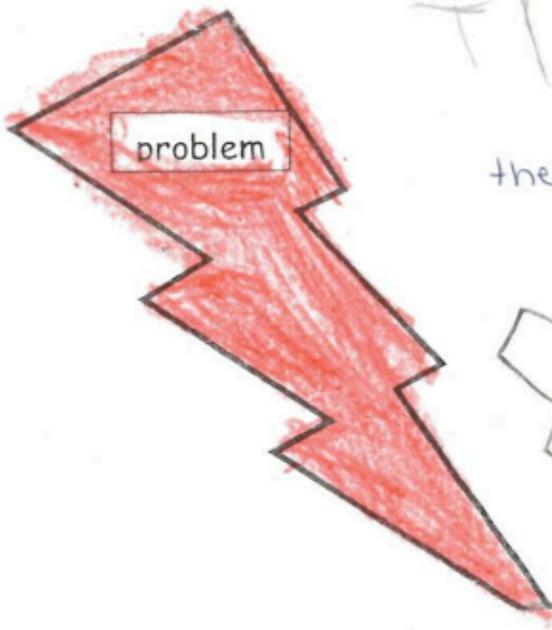
In a house. (H)





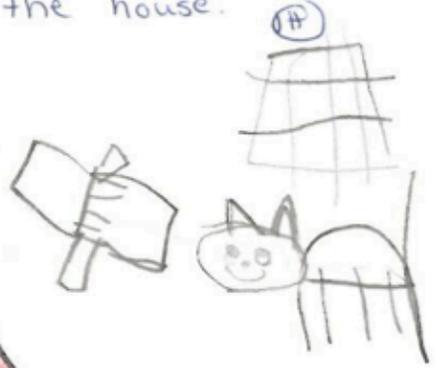


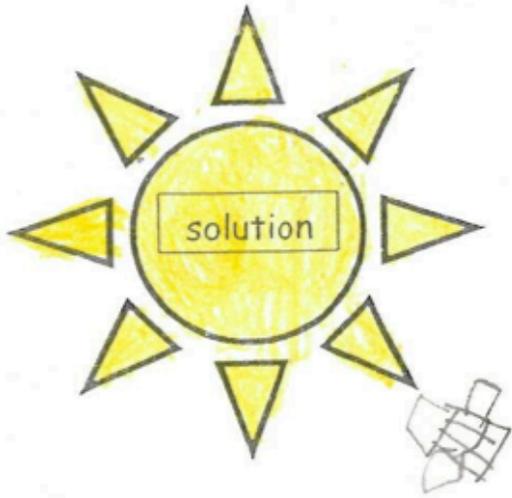
The dogs want  
the cat. 🐾



# THE CAT WXS WRECKS

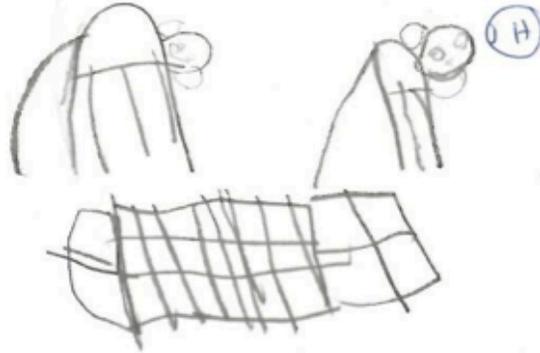
the house.





DOG 5

The dogs clean it up.





**File Name: NKSP Cat Burglar**

**Narrative**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

A cat was triing to git into a stor becuse star war guGs fo muki. tow Dogs kam to hep. sone It opinD. the cat aet oll the melk.

**Narrates  
several loosely  
linked events in  
the order in  
which they  
occurred**

This Kindergarten narrative, written in the spring, relays a short series of loosely linked events in the order in which they occurred. The story begins with a problem (*A cat was triing to git into a stor*), which is resolved at the end of the piece (*It opinD. the cat aet oll the melk.*). Some of this story is told through the illustrations. The writer **provides a reaction** to what is happening **by drawing** a clearly angry store keeper, complete with a speech bubble containing the words, “*My melk!*”. The motivation of the cat is also clarified in the illustrations with an arrow labeled with the word, “*eat*” drawn between the cat and the milk. As specified by the standard, Kindergarten writing is often supported by drawing and labeling.

**File Name: NKSP Cat Burglar**

**Narrative**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**Revised and Edited for student use**

A cat was trying to get into a store because there were jugs of milk. Two dogs came to help. Soon it opened. The cat ate all the milk.

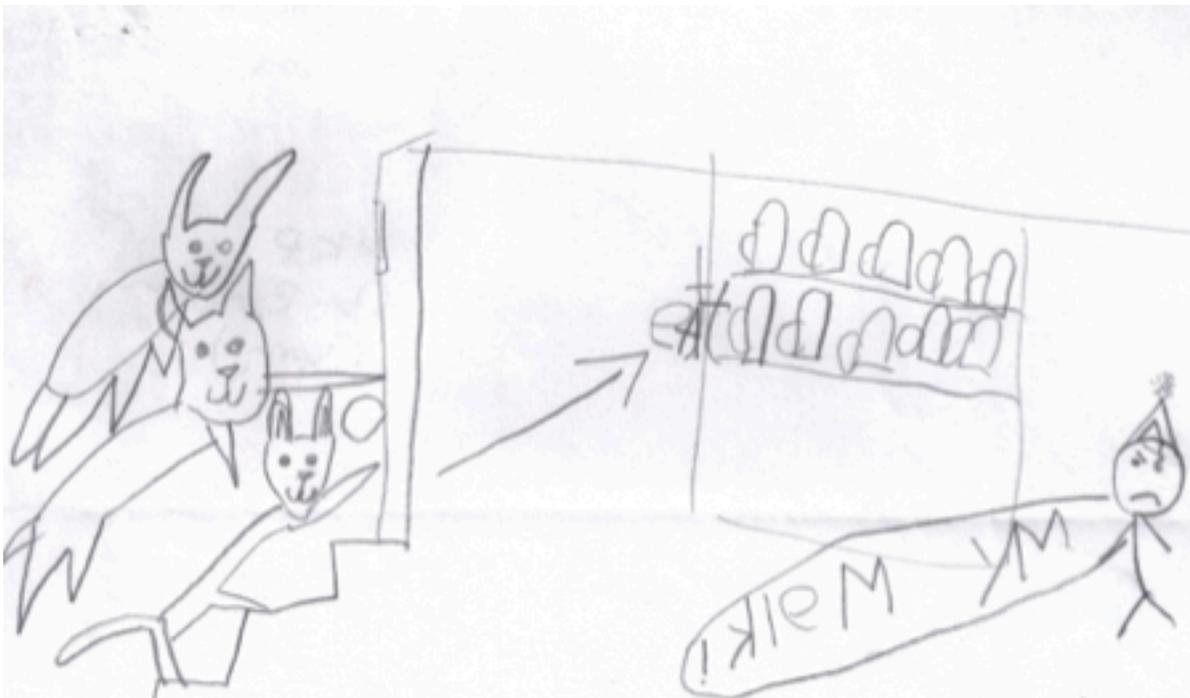
**File Name: NKSP Cat Burglar**

**Narrative**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

A cat was triing to git into a stor becuse star war guGs fo muki. tow Dogs kam to hep. sone It opinD. the cat aet oll the melk.



A cat was trying to get in to  
 trying

A store because star war  
 store there were

gugs fo Muxi tow dogs  
 of milk Two

KAM to hop some it opind.  
 came help soon opened

The cat Aet all the milk.  
 ate all milk.

## Grades 1-5, Prompt for Narrative Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.3

### Teacher Directions

#### Day 1 (45 minutes)

- Pass out the prompt. (If desired, a link to the image is available on page 3 of these directions.)  
Ask the class what they see happening in the picture. Allow 3 minutes for students to turn and talk about what they see to a partner.
- Explain that each student is to write a story about what might be happening in this picture. Read the prompt under the picture together and clarify the directions.
- Provide lined paper (or a computer if your students are accustomed to composing on a keyboard) and give students the remainder of the period to write. The writing should be completed individually, without help.
- When the period is over, explain that students may finish writing and proofread tomorrow. Collect student work and materials.

#### Day 2 (45 minutes)

- Return student work and materials. Students may be given access to a dictionary, thesaurus, spell check, or grammar check.
- Allow the remainder of the period to finish writing and proofread.

\* If you are having difficulty with the quality of the image, the painting can be found online at:

[http://www.vintage-views.com/cat-holding-court-with-a-retriever\\_pointer-and-hound.html](http://www.vintage-views.com/cat-holding-court-with-a-retriever_pointer-and-hound.html)

## Narrative Prompt



Write a story to go with this picture. Your story may be realistic or imaginative.

Remember that a good story:

- has a clear beginning , middle and end
- has a main character or characters
- uses dialogue and description

You will have two class periods to write your story. When you have finished, be sure to proofread and correct any mistakes.

**File Name: N1P The London Castle**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

**The London Castle**

once there Lived A cat and three Dogs. they LivD in a caseL in New yorK. and one Day they Find the King of New YorK. and there was a carc in the Door. and they jumPD out the Door. and raNaway to a caseL in London and they LiKeD it there it was very nis. there the king of London Feed them ever daY. and wased them ever week. and the Qunne cLeaND the cats Litter Box everweek. and one Day they FionD a Rat in the wall and the cat chast the rat all aFtoNooN. and that Day 22 Fox came to attK. But they DiDnt becasue the 3 Dog capt them out. the cat was vere haPPy JumPt uP and Down and that Day they haD a Graet Day. But they meet 4 more Dogs. one was Named Reese one was Named txox one was Named bob jr one was Named bob and they all Lovet to Play and sing and ResoL the END.

**Uses temporal words to signal event order**

**Recounts two or more appropriately sequenced events**

**Includes some details regarding what happened**

**Provides some sense of closure**

In this first-grade narrative, we hear about the adventures of a cat and three dogs. Temporal words (“once”, “one Day”, “ever daY”, “ever week”, “that Day”, “all aFtoNooN”) are used to signal order, and some details are provided (“they LiKeD it there it was very nis”). First experiments with telling stories, such as this one, may ramble a bit and lack a central focus; this writer does, however, show a firm understanding of the importance of establishing a basic chronology and including detail when recounting events.

**File Name: N1P The London Castle**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **The London Castle**

Once there lived a cat and three dogs. They lived in a castle in New York. And one day they found the king of New York. And there was a crack in the door. And they jumped out the door and ran away to a castle in London, and they liked it there. It was very nice. There, the king of London fed them every day and washed them every week, and the queen cleaned the cat's litter box every week.

One day, they found a rat in the wall, and the cat chased the rat all afternoon. That day, twenty-two foxes came to attack. But they didn't because the three dogs kept them out. The cat was very happy and jumped up and down, and that day they had a great day. They met four more dogs. One was named Reese, one was named Txox, one was named Bob Jr., and one was named Bob, and they all loved to play and sing and wrestle.

The End

**File Name: N1P The London Castle**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

### **The London Castle**

once there Lived A cat and three Dogs. they LivD in a caseL in New yorK. and one Day they Find the King of New YorK. and there was a carc in the Door. and they jumPD out the Door. and raNaway to a caseL in London and they LiKeD it there it was very nis. there the king of London Feed them ever daY. and wased them ever week. and the Qunne cLeaND the cats Litter Box everweek. and one Day they FionD a Rat in the wall and the cat chast the rat all aFtoNooN. and that Day 22 Fox came to attK. But they DiDnt becasue the 3 Dog capt them out. the cat was vere haPPy JumPt uP and Down and that Day they haD a Graet Day. But they meet 4 more Dogs. one was Named Reese one was NameD txox one was Named bob jr one was Named bob and they all Lovet to Play and sing and ResoL the END.

**File Name: N2P Kiana's First Day of School**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

**Kiana's First Day of School**

ones upon a time there was a new student the student's name was Kiana Kiana was nice and she was a panda all the other kids were super excited but Kiana was shy she waited in the classroom ms. moore said everyone say hello to Kiana Kiana was not shy anymore she realized they were all friendly too Dogs were helping her cause this was her first Day of school the Dogs were really nice one Dog's name was Tito and the other Dog's name was Mimi they became Best friends and then they went home

**Includes details to describe feelings**

**Includes details to describe actions**

**Includes details to describe thoughts**

**Provides a sense of closure**

The short sequence of events in this second-grade narrative is well elaborated with details that describe feelings (*"all the other kids were super excited"*), actions (*"ms. moore said everyone say hello to Kiana"*), and thoughts (*"she realized they were all friendly"*). Temporal words (*"first"*, *"waited"*) establish the sequence of events. This narrative revolves around a central problem, Kiana's shyness on her first day of school, which is resolved at the end of the story when Kiana overcomes her shyness and makes friends.

**File Name: N2P Kiana's First Day of School**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Kiana's First Day of School**

Once upon a time, there was a new student. The student's name was Kiana. Kiana was nice. She was a panda. All the other kids were super excited, but Kiana was shy. She walked into the classroom. Ms. Moore said, "Everyone, say hello to Kiana." Kiana was not shy anymore. She realized they were all friendly dogs. They were helping her because this was her first day of school. The dogs were really nice. One dog's name was Tito, and another dog's name was Maij. They became best friends, and then they went home.

**File Name: N2P Kiana's First Day of School**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

### **Kiana's First Day of School**

ones upon a time there was a new student the student's name was Kiana Kiana was nice and she was a panda all the other kids were super excited but Kiana was shy she walked in the classroom ms. moore said everyone say hello to Kiana Kiana was not shy anymore she realized they were all friendly too Dogs were helping her cause this was her first Day of school the Dogs were really nice one Dog's name was tito and the other Dog's name was maiJ they became Best friends and then they went home

**File Name: N3P The Barn Cat**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **The Barn Cat**

“We should get a barn cat” Mrs. Thurlow told Mr. Thurlow. Bandit, Sonya and Sam’s ears popped up. Bandit, Sonya and Sam were their barn dogs. “Yes! A cat to chase!”

Bandit yelled. Then Mr. Thurlow said, “Sure, but what are we going to name her?” Sam thought for a moment. Then Sam walked up to Mr. Thurlow and started to bark. This is what Bandit and Sonya heard Sam say, “Whatever you do don’t name her Samantha, don’t name her Samantha, DON’T name her Samantha!” Mrs. Thurlow said “How about

Baby?” Mr. and Mrs Thurlow thought for awhile. After much thought, Mr. Thurlow Announced “A splendid idea! Let’s get her tomorrow!” Then the two farmer’s fed the dogs, ate dinner, did the chores, then went to bed. The next morning at 6:00 they did the morning chores. They were ready to pick up Baby at 8:15 a.m. When they got to The Pet Shop in Woodstock they were in and out. Mr. and Mrs. Thurlow gave Baby a callor

when they got home. Also Bandit, Sonya and Sam gave Baby a tour of everything they own. When they got to the barn Bandit started to chase Baby an he said “I can’t resist!” Sam and Sonya tried to stop Bandit, but Bandit was too fast! Baby ran to the barn across the street. “We’re not supposed to be here!” Sam and Sonya yelled to Baby, so she ran

back home and the dogs followed. Baby jumped up in a foot rest. Then calm down. Bandit agreed to never chase Baby again.

**Establishes a situation and introduces characters**

**Uses descriptions of actions and thoughts to develop events and show the response of characters to situations**

**Uses dialogue to develop events and show the response of characters to situations**

**Uses temporal words and phrases to signal event order**

**Uses effective technique and descriptive details**

**Provides a sense of closure**

This third-grade narrative relays a connected sequence of events that focuses on Baby's arrival at the barn. The writer uses dialogue to set up the action (*"We should get a barn cat"*), advance the plot (*"A splendid idea! Let's get her tomorrow!"*), and show the characters' thoughts and reactions (*"I can't resist"*). The writer uses other narrative techniques, as well. For example, we learn subtly of Sam's worry about losing her place in the family when she barks, *"Whatever you do, don't name her Samantha."*

The writer organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally. Temporal words and phrases (*"the next morning"*, *"in and out"*) help manage the flow of time in the piece and keep the reader oriented. Although a little abrupt, the ending shows the writer's awareness of the need to wrap up the action, and the last line (*"Bandit agreed to never chase Baby again"*) provides a sense of closure.

**File Name: N3P The Barn Cat**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **The Barn Cat**

“We should get a barn cat,” Mrs. Thurlow told Mr. Thurlow. Bandit, Sonya, and Sam’s ears popped up. Bandit, Sonya, and Sam were their barn dogs. “Yes! A cat to chase!” Bandit yelled. Then Mr. Thurlow said, “Sure, but what are we going to name her?” Sam thought for a moment. Then Sam walked up to Mr. Thurlow and started to bark. Bandit and Sonya heard Sam say, “Whatever you do, don’t name her Samantha, don’t name her Samantha, DON’T name her Samantha!” Mrs. Thurlow said, “How about ‘Baby’?” Mr. and Mrs. Thurlow thought for a while. After much thought, Mr. Thurlow announced, “A splendid idea! Let’s get her tomorrow!” Then the two farmers fed the dogs, ate dinner, did the chores, and then went to bed.

The next morning at 6:00, they did the morning chores. They were ready to pick up Baby at 8:15 a.m. When they got to The Pet Shop in Woodstock, they were in and out. Mr. and Mrs. Thurlow gave Baby a collar when they got home. Also Bandit, Sonya, and Sam gave Baby a tour of everything they own. When they got to the barn, Bandit started to chase Baby, and he said, "I can't resist!" Sam and Sonya tried to stop Bandit, but Bandit was too fast! Baby ran to the barn across the street. “We’re not supposed to be here!” Sam and Sonya yelled to Baby, so she ran back home, and the dogs followed.

Baby jumped up on a footrest and then calmed down. Bandit agreed to never chase Baby again.

**File Name: N3P The Barn Cat**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **The Barn Cat**

"We should get a barn cat" Mrs. Thurlow told Mr. Thurlow. Bandit, Sonya and Sam's ears popped up. Bandit, Sonya and Sam were their barn dogs. "Yes! A cat to chase!" Bandit yelled. Then Mr. Thurlow said, "Sure, but what are we going to name her?" Sam thought for a moment. Then Sam walked up to Mr. Thurlow and started to bark. This is what Bandit and Sonya heard Sam say, "Whatever you do don't name her Samantha, don't name her Samantha, DON'T name her Samantha!" Mrs. Thurlow said "How about Baby?" Mr. and Mrs Thurlow thought for awhile. After much thought, Mr. Thurlow Announced "A splendid idea! Let's get her tomorrow!" Then the two farmer's fed the dogs, ate dinner, did the chores, then went to bed. The next morning at 6:00 they did the morning chores. They were ready to pick up Baby at 8:15 a.m. When they got to The Pet Shop in Woodstock they were in and out. Mr. and Mrs. Thurlow gave Baby a callor when they got home. Also Bandit, Sonya and Sam gave Baby a tour of everything they own. When they got to the barn Bandit started to chase Baby an he said "I can't resist!" Sam and Sonya tried to stop Bandit, but Bandit was too fast! Baby ran to the barn across the street. "We're not supposed to be here!" Sam and Sonya yelled to Baby, so she ran back home and the dogs followed. Baby jumped up in a foot rest. Then calm down. Bandit agreed to never chase Baby again.

**File Name: N4P The Haunted House**

**Narrative**

**Grade 4**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **The Huanted House**

There once was a dog who roamed an alley with another dog. That dog's name was Max. The other dog's name was Rocky. Max and Rockey were brother and sister, although the look nothing alike. In another alley not far from Max and Rocky's there was a dog and a cat who lived together in that alley. The dog's name was Surgar and the cat's name was shantell. One day they all met behind a trachcan and became best buds.

**Introduces main characters**

One day while all the friends were out walking in the street and then Shantell(the cat) spotted a ghost flying around in a house and took off running to go see the ghost. Then all the dogs took off afterer her. When the dogs finaly cought up to Shantell they were all deep in the huanted house. Max and Surgar started to shake. Rocky and Shantell started to quake. Then a loud Boom came from the floor above them. After, Max got a brillent idea. They should sneak up on the monsters and attack them.

**Orients the reader by establishing a situation**

**Uses a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events**

Finally all four animals were ready to put their maniecle plan into action. Shantell tip-toed up the mantel while Max and Surgar went up the back stairs. Which left Rockey creeping up the front stairs. When they all were ready to attack the monsters they heard music. The went alot like this "Shake, Shake shake dem bones now!" The

**Uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey events precisely**

**Uses dialogue and description of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop events and show the response of characters to situations**

friends were confused but quickly got back on track. Shantell gave the ready signal and they all jumped up.

They were surprized to see what they saw. They saw about a dozen monsters doing the monster mash. One of the vampires said “Come in dogs and cats. Why don’t you dance with us. So Max, Rocky, Surgar and Shantell danced with the monsters.”

**Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated events**

The first paragraph of this fourth-grade narrative introduces the four main characters and the relationship between them. In the second paragraph, the writer sets up the story, establishing an event (the ghost chase) that brings the characters into the haunted house, where most of the story takes place. The sequence of events unfolds naturally and the writer develops these events with concrete, sensory details (*“they heard music. The went alot like this”*), dialogue (*“Why don’t you dance with us”*), and descriptions of thoughts, actions, and feelings (*“they were surprized”*). Transitional words (*“one day”, “then”, “after”, “finally”*) manage the sequence of events. The story comes to a satisfying conclusion, which is developed over the course of the last paragraph.

**File Name: N4P The Haunted House**

**Narrative**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **The Haunted House**

There once was a dog that roamed an alley with another dog. That dog's name was Max. The other dog's name was Rocky. Max and Rocky were brother and sister, although they looked nothing alike. In another alley, not far from Max and Rocky's, there was a dog and a cat that lived together. The dog's name was Sugar, and the cat's name was Shantell. One day, they all met behind a trash can and became best buds.

One day while all the friends were out walking in the street, Shantell spotted a ghost flying around in a house and took off running to go see the ghost. Then all the dogs took off after her. When the dogs finally caught up to Shantell, they were all deep in the haunted house. Max and Sugar started to shake. Rocky and Shantell started to quake. Then a loud "boom" came from the floor above them. After, Max got a brilliant idea: they should sneak up on the monsters and attack them.

Finally, all four animals were ready to put their maniacal plan into action. Shantell tiptoed up the mantel while Max and Sugar went up the back stairs, which left Rocky to creep up the front stairs. When they all were ready to attack the monsters, they heard music. The music sounded a lot like this: "Shake, shake, shake dem bones now!"

The friends were confused but quickly got back on track. Shantell gave the ready signal, and they all jumped up.

They were surprised to see what they saw. They saw about a dozen monsters doing the Monster Mash. One of the vampires said, "Come in, dogs and cats. Why don't you dance with us?" So Max, Rocky, Sugar, and Shantell danced with the monsters.

**File Name: N4P The Haunted House**

**Narrative**

**Grade 4**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **The Huanted House**

There once was a dog who roamed an alley with another dog. That dog's name was Max. The other dog's name was Rocky. Max and Rockey were brother and sister, although they look nothing alike. In another alley not far from Max and Rocky's there was a dog and a cat who lived together in that alley. The dog's name was Sargar and the cat's name was Shantell. One day they all met behind a trashcan and became best buds.

One day while all the friends were out walking in the street and then Shantell(the cat) spotted a ghost flying around in a house and took off running to go see the ghost. Then all the dogs took off after her. When the dogs finally caught up to Shantell they were all deep in the haunted house. Max and Sargar started to shake. Rocky and Shantell started to quake. Then a loud Boom came from the floor above them. After, Max got a brilliant idea. They should sneak up on the monsters and attack them.

Finally all four animals were ready to put their maniac plan into action. Shantell tip-toed up the mantel while Max and Sargar went up the back stairs. Which left Rocky creeping up the front stairs. When they all were ready to attack the monsters they heard music. They went a lot like this "Shake, Shake shake dem bones now!" The

friends were confused but quickly got back on track. Shantell gave the ready signal and they all jumped up.

They were surprized to see what they saw. They saw about a dozen monsters doing the monster mash. One of the vampires said "Come in dogs and cats. Why don't you dance with us. So Max, Rocky, Surgar and Shantell danced with the monsters."

**File Name: N5P Queen and The Three Dogs****Narrative****Grade 5****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt****Queen and The Three Dogs**

“It’s too bad that Mr. Griff is closing the shop,” Queen thought to her self. Queen and three dogs had been pets of Mr. Griff the owner, but now the shop was going out of business and Mr. Griff put all the furnistur outside his shop so people could look at them. Queen had to hold a meeting with the dogs. They loved the shop but they would probably have to go to the pound because Mr. Griff wouldn’t be able to feed them with what little money he had. Queen meowed a couple of times and the dogs came bounding over. First Charlie then skip and then spot. Queen climbed up to the top of the velvet chair and got right down to the point. “You guys are going to have to leave hear or go to the pound. What do you want to do?” “We wouldn’t go to the pound for anything,” they chorused, “So I guess your leaving,” Queen said. Queen \*\*\* trying to hold tears back. She loved the dogs but she wouldn’t be able to come with them. She had a bad leg and when ever she tried to run pain shoot up her leg like a lightning bolt electricuting someone. Queen would have to go to the pound or be a street cat which she disliked. Do you boys have all your toys with you? Yes we do. Are you sure you will be ok without me? We think so. Queen followed the boys in the shop so she could hear there barks of goodbye to Mr. Griff. But he was talking to a men. After what seemed like an eternity the men left with a grin on his face. Mr. Griff also had a grin on his face. My wonderful

**Orients the reader by establishing a situation and introducing characters**

**Uses a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events**

**Uses dialogue and description to develop experiences**

**Uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences precisely**

develop events and  
show the responses  
of characters to  
situations

pets we will be able to stay in the upstairs apartment because that wonderful man bought  
the shop from us but he is letting us stay upstairs still! The dogs jumped for joy and even

though Queen couldn't jump she started to purr. **Provides a conclusion  
that follows from the  
narrated events**

This fifth-grade narrative is focused on a single problem (finding a new place to live) and its solution (being given permission to live in the apartment upstairs). The sequence of events unfolds naturally, and a variety of transitional words and phrases (*"first", "then", "After what seemed like an eternity"*) manage the sequence of events. This writer shows considerable control of narrative techniques. The problem is introduced in the first line using dialogue; events are often developed subtly through a character's response to a situation (*"the men left with a grin on his face"*); concrete details are used throughout (*"pain shoot up her leg like a lightning bolt electricuting someone"*). The satisfying conclusion shows how characters are feeling using actions, as well as words (*"The dogs jumped for joy and even though Queen couldn't jump she started to purr."*). There are few events and little action in this story. Instead, the writer has taken a single experience and fully developed it using narrative techniques such as dialogue and rich description.

**File Name: N5P Queen and The Three Dogs**

**Narrative**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Queen and The Three Dogs**

“It’s too bad that Mr. Griff is closing the shop,” Queen thought to herself. Queen and the three dogs had been pets of Mr. Griff, the owner, but now the shop was going out of business, and Mr. Griff put all the furniture outside his shop so people could look at it.

Queen had to hold a meeting with the dogs. They loved the shop, but they would probably have to go to the pound because Mr. Griff wouldn’t be able to feed them with what little money he had. Queen meowed a couple of times, and the dogs came bounding over. First Charlie, then Skip, and then Spot. Queen climbed up to the top of the velvet chair and got right down to the point. “You guys are going to have to leave here or go to the pound. What do you want to do?”

“We wouldn’t go to the pound for anything,” they chorused.

“So I guess you’re leaving,” Queen said. Queen was trying to hold tears back. She loved the dogs, but she wouldn’t be able to come with them. She had a bad leg, and whenever she tried to run, pain would shoot up her leg like a lightning bolt electrocuting someone. Queen would have to go to the pound or be a street cat—an idea she disliked.

“Do you boys have all your toys with you?”

“Yes, we do.”

“Are you sure you will be OK without me?”

“We think so.”

Queen followed the boys into the shop so she could hear their barks of goodbye to Mr. Griff. But Mr. Griff was talking to a man. After what seemed like an eternity, the man left with a grin on his face. Mr. Griff also had a grin on his face. “My wonderful pets, we will be able to stay in the upstairs apartment because that wonderful man bought the shop from us, but he is letting us stay upstairs still!” The dogs jumped for joy, and even though she couldn’t jump, Queen started to purr.

**File Name: N5P Queen and The Three Dogs**

**Narrative**

**Grade 5**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Queen and The Three Dogs**

"It's too bad that Mr. Griff is closing the shop," Queen thought to her self. Queen and three dogs had been pets of Mr. Griff the owner, but now the shop was going out of business and Mr. Griff put all the furniture outside his shop so people could look at them. Queen had to hold a meeting with the dogs. They loved the shop but they would probably have to go to the pound because Mr. Griff wouldn't be able to feed them with what little money he had. Queen meowed a couple of times and the dogs came bounding over. First Charlie then Skip and then Spot. Queen climbed up to the top of the velvet chair and got right down to the point. "You guys are going to have to leave here or go to the pound. What do you want to do?" "We wouldn't go to the pound for anything," they chorused, "So I guess you're leaving," Queen said. Queen \*\*\* trying to hold tears back. She loved the dogs but she wouldn't be able to come with them. She had a bad leg and whenever she tried to run pain shoot up her leg like a lightning bolt electricuting someone. Queen would have to go to the pound or be a street cat which she disliked. Do you boys have all your toys with you? Yes we do. Are you sure you will be ok without me? We think so. Queen followed the boys in the shop so she could hear their barks of goodbye to Mr. Griff. But he was talking to a man. After what seemed like an eternity the man left with a grin on his face. Mr. Griff also had a grin on his face. My wonderful

pets we will be able to stay in the upstairs apartment because that wonderful man bought the shop from us but he is letting us stay upstairs still! The dogs jumped for joy and even though Queen couldn't jump she started to purr.

*\*\*\* words unclear on copy*

# ***6-12 On-Demand Narrative Samples***

## Grades 6-12, Prompt for Narrative Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.3

Great historical events often have deep effects upon the people who live through them. Depending on the person and the situation, those effects can be very different.

You are going to read a short article about the Dust Bowl days in American history titled “Black Blizzard.” You will also look at some photographs taken during that time period. As you read and study the photographs, think about how this experience may have affected the individual people who lived through it.

Finally, you will write a narrative, showing how a particular small moment during this experience affected one person.

Remember, a good narrative:

- *Establishes a clear point of view*
- *Focuses closely on one character or characters*
- *Uses strong sensory details to make the character(s) and event come alive*
- *Uses precise language*  
*May use dialogue and description to capture the character(s) and event*
- *Concludes effectively*

Here are your choices for your narrative:

- A young child watching the “black blizzard” rolling in over the plains
- A young child, watching a tractor knock down his family home in Oklahoma, several years into the Dust Bowl drought
- A mother sitting on her front steps in a migrant camp in California
- An unemployed father, arriving at a squatter camp in California from Oklahoma

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The narrative will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

## **Grades 6-12, Prompt for Narrative Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.3**

### *Teacher Directions*

- The article and photographs provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should read the text independently before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes.
  
- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.
  
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
  - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
  - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If they are using a word processor, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.
  
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## **Black Blizzard**

From *Teaching Students to Read Nonfiction*, Scholastic, 2003

Used by permission of *Teaching Students to Read Nonfiction*

Imagine this: You're eating breakfast one Tuesday morning, minding your own business. You chance to look out the window.

"Ma! Dad!" you yell, "It's back. Take cover!"

Even though it's nine A.M., the sky in the distance is pitch black. A dry tidal wave of dust and dirt – 7,000 feet high – is rolling, howling towards you. Your parents race to cram wet towels in the spaces under doors and windows, as the huge black cloud rumbles closer.

It's an eerie sight. In front of the cloud, birds fly and rabbits run, terrified. Soon the cloud is here. The sky is pure black. The wind is screaming, pelting your tiny house with dirt. Your mom hands you a wet towel, which you put over your face, but you can still taste the dust, feel it with every breath, gritty between your teeth. You huddle in the middle of the room with your family in total darkness, waiting for the dust storm to end.

### **A Natural Disaster**

In the mid 1930's, large areas of Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, and Colorado were hit by hundreds of these storms. Together, these storms made up some of the worst natural disasters in America's history.

The dust storms destroyed the land, ruined the economy of the whole area, and threatened the lives of most of the population. Everyone who could picked up and moved west. It became the greatest peacetime migration ever in America. How did it happen?

From 1900 to 1930, many families bought or leased small parcels of land in the Plains states, and built farms. The area was mostly dry grasslands, where crops are difficult to grow. With hard work, the farmers were able to grow wheat and corn, and to raise cattle.

But in 1931, a terrible drought fell across the middle of the nation. America was already suffering from the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression. Now, from 1931 to 1935, farmers got almost no rain at all.

For five years in a row, their corn and wheat crops failed. Farmers had no income, and couldn't pay their mortgages. And soon their financial troubles were matched by the horror of their surroundings.

### **The Soil Blew Away**

With no rainfall, the soil in the area became loose, dry, and dusty. The region's native wild grasses, which had served to hold the soil together, had been replaced long ago by crops, which now dried up and blew away.

Soon, heavy winds began to howl, picking up the dust and soil. When the winds reached 50 or 60 miles an hour, they picked up the topsoil right off the ground. The flying dust buried roads. It flew through the walls and windows of flimsy farmhouses. It killed cattle, and ruined the engines of vehicles. Old people and children caught outside were suffocated. Thousands of others died slowly of “dust pneumonia.”

The dust storms were the last straw for many area farmers. They had already suffered through five years with little or no income because of the drought. Now, banks and mortgage companies took their farms, sending tractors to knock their houses down and run them off the land. The farmers, with no other choice, packed up their families and meager belongings and headed west.

More than one million people migrated west from the Plains states during that time. Poor, dirty, and hungry, they rumbled down Route 66, searching for work picking crops, digging roads – anything that would keep their families from starving.

### **Tough Times**

But things were tough in the West, too. There were not enough jobs for all the new arrivals. Few could afford housing. Most of the migrant families camped or “squatted” where they could.

Many native Californians resented the migrants, calling them “Okies,” and spreading rumors that they were mentally retarded. They felt the migrants were ruining local schools with overcrowding. Mobs of local men, armed with clubs and ax handles, raided the squatters’ camps and tried to beat the migrants into leaving.

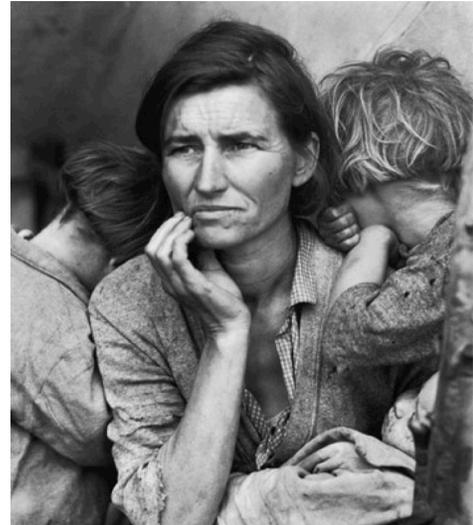
Eventually, as America came out of the Great Depression, things began to improve for the migrants in California. Within a few years, the rains returned to the Dust Bowl, and people began farming again. Over the decades since, there have been several other serious droughts in the Plains states. But the Dust Bowl of the 1930’s will always be remembered as the worst of all.



Dust storm coming in.

*National Geographic*

Used by permission of  
*National Geographic*



Top left: squatters tent in California. California State University, Bakersfield

Used by permission of California State University, Bakersfield

Top right: Migrant Mother with children, Dorothea Lange photograph, 1936

Used by permission of Dorothea Lange photograph

Bottom left: migrant child, Oklahoma (History.com, Dust Bowl Photo Gallery)

Used by permission of (History.com, Dust Bowl Photo Gallery)



**File Name: N6P Black Mountains of Dust****Narrative****Grade 6****On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt****Black Mountains of Dust**

I was sitting at a park bench when I saw the endless black heading towards me. "Mom look!" I screamed. My mom turned around and faced me. A look of pure horror was painted across her face.

"Margaret come on we need to go now!"

She shouted. We ran across roads and dried up cropt fields. We did not dare

look back. Suddenly I wasn't running away from the black cloud. Instead I was face down in the dirt. Oh no I had tripped over my shoelace! I slowly

looked up where was my mom? The cloud loomed closer and closer. I choked feeling the gritty dust in my throat. I tryed to crawl forward but needles shot through my legs. Oh great in a time like this my legs fall

asleep! A whiff of dust blew toward me, burning my eyes and making everything blurry.

"Mom!" I screamed. "Mom!"

I tryed to yell again but was choked by more dust. "Mom" I whined.

Where was she. I started coughing from all of the dust in my lungs and throat.

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context** for the narrative that follows and **introduces a narrator and characters**. The narrator and her mother needing to escape the storm becomes the central focus /conflict in the narrative.

**Uses narrative technique of dialogue to develop events. Event sequence to follow unfolds naturally and logically.**

**Uses transitional phrase to signal shift from one setting to another**

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey events and develop characters**

**Uses the narrative technique of dialogue to develop events and characters; controls pacing by slowing down the action**

"Margaret! Darling come on!" My mom motioned me to get up but I shook my head.

My Mom flung me into her arms and ran, soaring farther away from the storm. After

what seemed forever, my mom stopped running. Screams and yells echoed off walls. I covered my ears.

**Uses transitional clause to signal shift from one time frame to another**

A person right in front of us said:

"Get inside quickly!"

My mom answered "okay" and then I was carried into a building, that looked like the town hall.

My mom set me down in a corner, in the town hall and sat next to me. "Mom?" I croaked.

"Yes Sweetie?" She said in a sweet voice, almost like honey.

"Is this going to happen ever again, this storm?" I asked my voice still thick with dust. She did not answer and I knew that she knew this wouldn't be the the last time the black mountains of dust attacked the plain states.

**Provides a conclusion which follows from and then reflects on the events and focus / conflict of the narrative, the dust storm of the Dust Bowl days**

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a girl and her mother being caught in a dust storm during the days of the Dust Bowl. She focuses the narrative around the central conflict of trying to escape the storm. The protagonist/narrator is a girl who is terrified by the storm as she is caught up in it.

The writer organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Some development of the events and characters is done through dialogue. Some precise words and phrases, descriptive details, and sensory language are used as well. At times in the narrative, it would have been helpful to have had a bit more description along with the dialogue, but, in general, the writer controls plot and character development adequately.

**File Name: N6P Black Mountains of Dust**

**Narrative**

**Grade 6**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Black Mountains of Dust**

I was sitting at a park bench when I saw the endless black heading towards me. "Mom look!" I screamed. My mom turned around and faced me. A look of pure horror was painted across her face.

"Margaret come on we need to go now!"

She shouted. We ran across roads and dried up cropt fields. We did not dare look back.

Suddenly I wasn't running away from the black cloud. Instead I was face down in the dirt. Oh no I had tripped over my shoelace! I slowly looked up where was my mom? The cloud loomed closer and closer. I choked feeling the gritty dust in my throat. I tried to crawl forward but needles shot through my legs. Oh great in a time like this my legs fall asleep! A whiff of dust blew toward me, burning my eyes and making everything blurry.

"Mom!" I screamed. "Mom!"

I tried to yell again but was choked by more dust. "Mom" I whined. Where was she. I started coughing from all of the dust in my lungs and throat.

"Margaret! Darling come on!" My mom motioned me to get up but I shook my head.

My Mom flung me into her arms and ran, soaring farther away from the storm. After what seemed forever, my mom stopped running. Screams and yells echoed off walls. I covered my ears.

A person right in front of us said:

"Get inside quickly!"

My mom answered "okay" and then I was carried into a building, that looked like the town hall.

My mom set me down in a corner, in the town hall and sat next to me. "Mom?" I croaked.

"Yes Sweetie?" She said in a sweet voice, almost like honey.

"Is this going to happen ever again, this storm?" I asked my voice still thick with dust.

She did not answer and I knew that she knew this wouldn't be the the last time the black mountains of dust attacked the plain states.

**File Name: N7P Dust Storm**

**Narrative**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Dust Storm**

My family thought our lives were absolutely perfect. My twelve year old mind thought so, too, until our Sunday paper arrived. I heard the clunk of the mail slot, and sprinted to get the first peek of the paper. People on the first page were being interviewed by frantic news reporters, wanting to know reasons for our year long hot weather. I thought they were crazy, until they were right.

Days went by, and the hot temperatures got worse. Hot baths were long gone, replaced with iced cold water. We had all ate the cold foods we could eat, no more ovens or fires, if you were rich enough. Our family had a fire, and a pan. We stopped doing that yesterday. I slipped out of my thoughts as my younger sister, Leesh, yelled out names. "Mom! Dad! Mary! Come see this!"

The yell was far distance, followed by a scream so high pitch, I sprinted outside, into the woods to find Leesh. Mom and Dad followed, pale with panic and worry. I smelled my own blood, from all the thorns in our woods. I felt the trickling on my legs, my bare legs, and arms, lucky

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context** for the narrative to follow, and by **introducing a narrator and characters:** The arrival of the storm becomes the focus/conflict of the narrative, which is told from the perspective / point of view of a first person narrator

**Uses the narrative technique** of foreshadowing **to develop events**

**Uses a transitional clause to convey sequence and signal a shift from one time frame to another**

**Uses the narrative technique** of dialogue **to develop events and characters**

**Uses precise descriptive sensory language to convey experience**

my sundress hasn't yet ripped. "Leesh! Leesh - where are you?" I saw our fallen treehouse, and something a little beyond the trees.

"Mom, Dad, get Leesh down. I think I see something beyond the trees!" They opened their mouths to say something, but they were lost for words, as I ran.

Tree branches, sticks, thorn bushes, and stumps were my obstacles. I noticed the animals all ran the opposite way, with fear and shock in their faces and eyes. I got to the end, staring in shock at the terrifying sight in front of me.

**Uses precise descriptive sensory language to convey events**

Over the hills, rather than sun and clouds, I saw it. A big, pitch black cloud, thousands and thousands of feet tall, making any tree look like action figures. It moved with the wind blowing its way towards me. It came up the last hill, the one I stood on. The dust cloud swallowed me, and it whipped me in the face, stinging me like needles piercing every inch of my helpless body. I still sprinted, as fast as my legs could take me, swallowing the dust in my mouth, nose, and burning eyes. I wheezed, coughed, and barely breathed. I felt myself suffocating, remembering my name, will myself I would make it. You can do this Mary, you can get out of this. I opened my mouth to scream, instead filling myself with gallons of dust in my throat and lungs. I realized I was finally back in the woods, almost reaching my terrified family. I took huge rock, and wrote with saliva and dust. My vision blurred and I tripped over tree branches, rocks, and anything in my way. I tumbled, over my head, crashing on the ground. I felt myself suffocate before my head hit the rock, never seeing light or dust, as my body shut down.

**Uses precise descriptive sensory language to convey experience; language captures the action** going on here, as the dust swallows the narrator

**Provides a conclusion which follows from the events** and focus / conflict of the narrative, the dust storm of the Dust Bowl days

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a girl and her family caught in a dust storm during the days of the Dust Bowl. She focuses it around the narrator's conflict with the huge storm. The protagonist/narrator is a girl who is terrified by the storm as she is caught up in it.

The writer organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically, including a bit of effective foreshadowing at the beginning of the narrative, which strengthens the piece. The writer uses minimal dialogue; most of the detail is provided through description. There is a significant amount of precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive detail, and sensory language used to portray events. The narrative concludes with the narrator falling and losing consciousness—perhaps a bit overly dramatic for an ending but reasonable for this grade level. Because the narrator is losing consciousness, she understandably cannot reflect on the experience (as the Standards require).



**File Name: N7P Dust Storm**

**Narrative**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Dust Storm**

My family thought our lives were absolutely perfect. My twelve year old mind thought so, too, until our Sunday paper arrived. I heard the clunk of the mail slot, and sprinted to get the first peek of the paper. People on the first page were being interviewed by frantic news reporters, wanting to know reasons for our year long hot weather. I thought they were crazy, until they were right.

Days went by, and the hot temperatures got worse. Hot baths were long gone, replaced with iced cold water. We had all ate the cold foods we could eat, no more ovens or fires, if you were rich enough. Our family had a fire, and a pan. We stopped doing that yesterday. I slipped out of my thoughts as my younger sister, Leesh, yelled out names. "Mom! Dad! Mary! Come see this!"

The yell was far distance, followed by a scream so high pitch, I sprinted outside, into the woods to find Leesh. Mom and Dad followed, pale with panic and worry. I smelled my own blood, from all the thorns in our woods. I felt the trickling on my legs, my bare legs, and arms, lucky my sundress hasn't yet ripped. "Leesh! Leesh - where are you?" I saw our fallen treehouse, and something a little beyond the trees.

"Mom, Dad, get Leesh down. I think I see something beyond the trees!" They opened there mouths to say something, but they were lost for words, as I ran. Tree

branches, sticks, thorn bushes, and stumps were my obstacles. I noticed the animals all ran the opposite way, with fear and shock in their faces and eyes. I got to the end, staring in shock at the terrifying sight in front of me.

Over the hills, rather than sun and clouds, I saw it. A big, pitch black cloud, thousands and thousands of feet tall, making any tree look like action figures. It moved with the wind blowing its way towards me. It came up the last hill, the one I stood on. The dust cloud swallowed me, and it whipped me in the face, stinging me like needles piercing every inch of my helpless body. I still sprinted, as fast as my legs could take me, swallowing the dust in my mouth, nose, and burning eyes. I wheezed, coughed, and barely breathed. I felt myself suffocating, remembering my name, will myself I would make it. You can do this Mary, you can get out of this. I opened my mouth to scream, instead filling myself with gallons of dust in my throat and lungs. I realized I was finally back in the woods, almost reaching my terrified family. I took huge rock, and wrote with saliva and dust. My vision blurred and I tripped over tree branches, rocks, and anything in my way. I tumbled, over my head, crashing on the ground. I felt myself suffocate before my head hit the rock, never seeing light or dust, as my body shut down.

**File Name: N8P Daydreams of A Migrant Mother****Narrative****Grade 8****On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt****Daydreams of A Migrant Mother**

The cool afternoon wind brushed against my face. I watched as the kids played with a rabbit they had found in the woods. All around me the sounds of the camp faded in my mind. The sounds of babies crying turned to a soft wail. The yelling of the kids turned to quiet murmurs as I drifted into my mind.

For the past few weeks since we left Oklahoma, I've been worried. It's been really rough living on the road without a proper home and I just really want the best for my family. The kids have been going to a public school just two miles from where we'd been camping. They've told me that the kids have given them ugly looks and said awful things about them calling them "Okies" or saying they were retarded. I couldn't stand any of my kids having to go through this misfortune. I focused my vision on my two kids Annie and Joey. They were laughing and shoving some grass in the rabbit's mouth. I didn't want them living like this but there was nothing I could do. I felt useless and weak.

The wind blew again and I went back to my daydreaming. My husband had been out for three days looking for any job available. We had

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context** for the narrative to follow and introducing a **narrator and characters**: The struggle to live at a migrant camp is the central conflict of the narrative, which is told from the perspective / point of view of a first person narrator

**Uses transitional clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among events**

Uses the **narrative technique of reflection to develop events**, as well as the **character** of the narrator

**Uses transitional clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among events**

planned to be at least in a home that put a roof over our heads but we accomplished nothing. Most of our close friends that had traveled with us already had a job and housing. The feeling bothered me. I looked around and saw some of the families huddled under their tents. I don't want to be like this anymore I thought. But yet again there was nothing I could do.

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey events**

Sometimes I felt angry with myself. As if I wasn't trying my hardest, but eventually it would just turn to sorrow.

**Uses the narrative technique of reflection to develop events, as well as the character of the narrator**

My thoughts were disrupted by Annie and Joey running up to me smiling. I looked down on them and smiled, wondering how lovely childhood must be with no worries.

"Ma, when are we going to eat, I'm starving?" asked Joey.

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated events, the struggle to survive at the migrant camp**

Even I didn't know the answer to that question, we had completely run out of food. I pondered on how I would say this to them. I gave up and just said, "I don't know Joey."

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a mother watching her children in a migrant camp during the days of the Dust Bowl. She focuses it around the narrator's internal and external conflicts as she struggles with helping her family survive in the camp. The protagonist/narrator is the mother.

This narrative lacks a real sequence of events, but it still unfolds naturally and logically. The writer uses minimal dialogue; most of the detail is provided through the narrator's reflection as she watches her young children playing. The mother's character—caring and overwhelmed—is captured through this reflective detail. The narrative concludes with the mother unable to find a solution to her situation, unable even to find her children something to eat. The lack of tidy resolution is appropriate to this narrative and suggests the maturity of the writer.

**File Name: N8P Daydreams of A Migrant Mother****Narrative****Grade 8****On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt****Daydreams of A Migrant Mother**

The cool afternoon wind brushed against my face. I watched as the kids played with a rabbit they had found in the woods. All around me the sounds of the camp faded in my mind. The sounds of babies crying turned to a soft wail. The yelling of the kids turned to quiet murmurs as I drifted into my mind.

For the past few weeks since we left Oklahoma, I've been worried. It's been really rough living on the road without a proper home and I just really want the best for my family. The kids have been going to a public school just two miles from where we'd been camping. They've told me that the kids have given them ugly looks and said awful things about them calling them "Okies" or saying they were retarded. I couldn't stand any of my kids having to go through this misfortune. I focused my vision on my two kids Annie and Joey. They were laughing and shoving some grass in the rabbit's mouth. I didn't want them living like this but there was nothing I could do. I felt useless and weak.

The wind blew again and I went back to my daydreaming. My husband had been out for three days looking for any job available. We had planned to be at least in a home that put a roof over our heads but we accomplished nothing. Most of our close friends

that had traveled with us already had a job and housing. The feeling bothered me. I looked around and saw some of the families huddled under their tents. I don't want to be like this anymore I thought. But yet again there was nothing I could do. Sometimes I felt angry with myself. As if I wasn't trying my hardest, but eventually it would just turn to sorrow.

My thoughts were disrupted by Annie and Joey running up to me smiling. I looked down on them and smiled, wondering how lovely childhood must be with no worries.

"Ma, when are we going to eat, I'm starving?" asked Joey.

Even I didn't know the answer to that question, we had completely run out of food. I pondered on how I would say this to them. I gave up and just said, "I don't know Joey."



**File Name: N9-10P The Day The Tractor Came****Narrative****Grade 10****On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt****The Day The Tractor Came**

I was four years old when our house was destroyed. I didn't

**Uses**

**sensory**

**details to**

**convey vivid**

**picture of**

**experience**

understand why but I could remember when the big red tractor came

belching its smoke, gleaming in the hot midday sunshine, and rolling

over the landscape plowing long furrows in perfect unison. Years later

they told me it was the bank - the monster that lived and breathed profits

from the land. We lived on that land and worked it until it was exhausted. I

was still in the womb when the drought came with its monstrous black

clouds of dust that enveloped the landscape. Pa said that the storms caused

the land to be barren of profit. When the profit ceased, the bank found other

means to satisfy its never-ending appetite for the financial food known to

farmers as profit.

I'll never forget the day the bank took our house. Pa told me that the

bank was cultivating the land because we could no longer sustain the profit

ourselves. I did not know nor cared what it meant. I was just a kid playing

Indians and Cowboys with my two brothers and sister the day the tractor

came. The shiny monster had been plowing the land all day long when it

finally got to our small cabin. My father put up a stand, but to no avail. The

tractor driver delivered his monotonous address to Pa about the bank's

**Engages and orients the reader by setting out a problem as the focus for narrative to follow, establishing a point of view, and introducing a narrator and characters:** A child's anguish over the destruction of his home by a tractor is the central focus of the narrative, which is told from the perspective of a first person narrator.

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole**

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory and figurative language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters**

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

**Uses the narrative technique of personification (portraying the tractor as the enemy) to develop events and characters**

situation and needs. Legally it was fair, but it did not seem fair. Finally, Pa stepped away from the tractor squatted down and buried his head in his hands. Without hesitation, the driver fired up the incredible machine and let its engines roar. Looking back, the tractor driver seemed to have an ultimate connection with his machine because he was an obstinate man controlling an unstoppable force. Slowly, the machine approached the house as if it were not even there. At immediate contact, the wall and roof caved in as if it were a flimsy cardboard box against a freight train. The tractor then proceeded as if there never was a house, without a care in the world, unaware and unconcerned of the devastation left in the dust.

Back then, I was merely a child watching and wondering what his father would do next. Pa had always been a strong man, a man that our family could depend on. However, in five minutes, the tractor was able to reduce Pa to nothing. Never before had I seen my father break down with hopelessness. Seeing him there without a plan made me feel as though we were alone in a desert with nowhere to turn. But the tractor, the arrogant tractor, took my small life, shattered it into million pieces, and left it on the ground in front of me. What few memories still had in that house flashed before me as I watch them knocked to the ground. That was my home, the house where I was born, the house where I learned to walk, and the house my father had built with his own craftsmanship so quickly destroyed returning to the dust from which it came. But what do I care; I was merely a child in a large, dusty, lonely, world.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory and figurative language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters:**

Precise, vivid language captures the force of the tractor as it destroys the

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory and figurative language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters:**

Precise, telling details contrast the misery of the family with the lack of

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole**

**Uses the narrative technique of reflection to develop events, as well as the character of the narrator**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative**

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a child watching his home being razed by a tractor during the days of the Dust Bowl. He focuses it around the narrator's experience of losing the home his father had built. The narrator and main character is the child.

The writer uses a clear sequence of events to develop the story, using some skillfully executed flashbacks to illuminate the present experience with the tractor. The writer uses no dialogue; most of the detail is provided through the narrator's reflection and through vivid descriptions of events. The narrator's state of mind—bewildered and shocked—is captured through this reflective detail. The narrative concludes with the narrator reflecting on his powerlessness and aloneness. The lack of tidy resolution is appropriate to this narrative and suggests the maturity of the writer.

**Narrative****Grade 10****On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt****The Day The Tractor Came**

I was four years old when our house was destroyed. I didn't understand why but I could remember when the big red tractor came belching its smoke, gleaming in the hot midday sunshine, and rolling over the landscape plowing long furrows in perfect unison. Years later they told me it was the bank - the monster that lived and breathed profits from the land. We lived on that land and worked it until it was exhausted. I was still in the womb when the drought came with its monstrous black clouds of dust that enveloped the landscape. Pa said that the storms caused the land to be barren of profit. When the profit ceased, the bank found other means to satisfy its never-ending appetite for the financial food known to farmers as profit.

I'll never forget the day the bank took our house. Pa told me that the bank was cultivating the land because we could no longer sustain the profit ourselves. I did not know nor cared what it meant. I was just a kid playing Indians and Cowboys with my two brothers and sister the day the tractor came. The shiny monster had been plowing the land all day long when it finally got to our small cabin. My father put up a stand, but to no avail. The tractor driver delivered his monotonous address to Pa about the bank's situation and needs. Legally it was fair, but it did not seem fair. Finally, Pa stepped away from the tractor squatted down and buried his head in his hands. Without hesitation, the driver fired up the incredible machine and let its engines roar. Looking back, the tractor

driver seemed to have an ultimate connection with his machine because he was an obstinate man controlling an unstoppable force. Slowly, the machine approached the house as if it were not even there. At immediate contact, the walls and roof caved in as if it were a flimsy cardboard box against a freight train. The tractor then proceeded without a care in the world, unaware and unconcerned of the devastation left in the dust, as if there never was a house there.

Back then, I was merely a child watching and wondering what his father would do next. Pa had always been a strong man, a man that our family could depend on. However, in five minutes, the tractor was able to reduce Pa to nothing. Never before had I seen my father break down with hopelessness. Seeing him there without a plan made me feel as though we were alone in a desert with nowhere to turn. But the tractor, the arrogant tractor, took my small life and shattered it into million pieces, and left it on the ground in front of me. What few memories I had in that house flashed before me as I watch them knocked to the ground. My home, the house where I was born, the house where I learned to walk, and the house my father had built with his own craftsmanship was so quickly destroyed, returning to the dust from which it came. But what do I care? I was merely a child in a large, dusty, lonely world.

**File Name: N11-12P (Better Than the Sunset.)****Narrative****Grade 12****On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt****(Better Than the Sunset.)**

Adam sat on the porch and watched the clear blue sky. Today was his sixth birthday and all he wanted was to watch the sunset. It was only noon and he had hours to go. Inside the house his mother was cooking and his father was out in the fields. He didn't mind being alone on his birthday. He liked the quiet.

He sensed it before he saw it. Something felt wrong. Everything was too quiet, much the same as the minutes before a hurricane. Those moments were magical. The world seemed to stand still; the air charged with electricity.

Waiting to explode into chaos.

Today was no different. A cloud that had not been present only seconds before covered the sun. Adam looked up and squinted into the still bright sky. The cloud covering the sun was alone. It would not be a thunderstorm.

Suddenly a huge shadow loomed before him. It sped forward from the tree line and deftly made its way towards him.

Time slowed down and he watched as animals exploded from their hiding places. The wide yard was chaos as a hundred tiny bodies ran for cover. His breath caught in his throat and while he *was* afraid he could not

**Engages and orients the reader by setting out a situation and its significance, establishing a point of view, and introducing a character:**

The writer delays the introduction of the problem of the dust storm, instead focusing on a setting. The narrative is told from the perspective of a third person limited narrator.

Establishes the **problem** (coming of the dust storm) and **its significance**, using narrative technique of **suspense**

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and character**

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome, the coming of the storm**

tear his eyes away. There was something beautiful about the way the cloud of black dust crept towards him, swallowing everything in its path. To him it looked like a monster. Big and ugly and destructive and yet somehow extraordinary at the same time.

**Uses description and reflection to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome,** how the child will experience the storm

He vaguely registered that his name was being called, but there was nothing urgent enough to tear him away from the havoc unfolding before his eyes. He ignored the voices and watched as his mother's flowerbed was swallowed in seconds. Next were the tractor and then the shed. His big blue eyes grew wide as the cloud of angry, swirling black dust drew ever closer. His heart pounded now not from fear, but from something else. Adrenaline sang through his veins. It was exhilarating to watch his own death approach. He had no intention of dying today, but he couldn't bear to run inside and lose sight of this beautiful destruction.

**Reflection builds towards the outcome** of how child will experience this storm

The voices grew more and more frantic and the swirling mass of dust threatened closer and closer. And still Adam sat, watching and waiting for what was to be swallowed next. The shadow of this beast loomed over the house and he craned his head back to watch the hurricane of dust descend upon him. If possible time slowed even more. The door behind him burst open, the wood creaking and groaning in protest at the force shoved against it. The span of seconds in which his father ran towards him, shouting his name, stretched and seemed to become years. His footsteps pounded against the rotting planks of the porch, the noise exploding in Adam's ears. He looked between his father and the black monster, which had now reached the bottom step.

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters:** Here, the writer conveys the danger of the moment

His father's strong arm reached towards him and closed around his body like a metal vice. His small bones jarred from the impact. He watched over his father's shoulder as the storm wailed closer.

*I'll catch you*, it seemed to be mocking.

As suddenly as time had slowed, it began again. The dust exploded around them just as his father slammed the door, shutting out the world.

Black dust curled under the door and shifted forward in fury. His mother shoved a wet towel in the crack and pressed another to Adam's face.

Together, the three of them huddled in the middle of the room, gasping and hacking and choking for air. But Adam didn't mind. He had only one thought as the black dust wormed its way into his lungs and stole his breath.

*That was better than the sunset.*

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative:** The writer contrasts the danger of the storm with the child's experience of it to establish an ironic ending.

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a child experiencing a dust storm during the days of the Dust Bowl. He focuses it around the irony of such a dreadful thing being such a magical experience for the child. The main character is the child, and the narrative is told from a third-person limited point of view.

The writer uses a clear sequence of events to develop the story, beginning with the main character watching the sunset and using the notion of the sunset to create a cohesive whole by the end of the narrative. The writer uses no dialogue; most of the detail is provided through reflection on the part of the child and through vivid description of events. The child's state of mind—shocked but also thrilled—is captured through this reflective detail. The narrative concludes with the child thinking, "*That was better than the sunset,*" an ironic resolution that is appropriate to this narrative and that suggests the maturity of the writer.



**File Name: N 11-12P (Better Than the Sunset.)**

**Narrative**

**Grade 12**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

**(Better Than the Sunset.)**

Adam sat on the porch and watched the clear blue sky. Today was his sixth birthday and all he wanted was to watch the sunset. It was only noon and he had hours to go. Inside the house his mother was cooking and his father was out in the fields. He didn't mind being alone on his birthday. He liked the quiet.

He sensed it before he saw it. Something felt wrong. Everything was too quiet, much the same as the minutes before a hurricane. Those moments were magical. The world seemed to stand still; the air charged with electricity.

Waiting to explode into chaos.

Today was no different. A cloud that had not been present only seconds before covered the sun. Adam looked up and squinted into the still bright sky. The cloud covering the sun was alone. It would not be a thunderstorm. Suddenly a huge shadow loomed before him. It sped forward from the tree line and deftly made its way towards him.

Time slowed down and he watched as animals exploded from their hiding places. The wide yard was chaos as a hundred tiny bodies ran for cover. His breath caught in his throat and while he *was* afraid he could not tear his eyes away. There was something beautiful about the way the cloud of black dust crept towards him, swallowing

everything in its path. To him it looked like a monster. Big and ugly and destructive and yet somehow extraordinary at the same time.

He vaguely registered that his name was being called, but there was nothing urgent enough to tear him away from the havoc unfolding before his eyes. He ignored the voices and watched as his mother's flowerbed was swallowed in seconds. Next were the tractor and then the shed. His big blue eyes grew wide as the cloud of angry, swirling black dust drew ever closer. His heart pounded now not from fear, but from something else. Adrenaline sang through his veins. It was exhilarating to watch his own death approach. He had no intention of dying today, but he couldn't bear to run inside and lose sight of this beautiful destruction.

The voices grew more and more frantic and the swirling mass of dust threatened closer and closer. And still Adam sat, watching and waiting for what was to be swallowed next. The shadow of this beast loomed over the house and he craned his head back to watch the hurricane of dust descend upon him. If possible time slowed even more. The door behind him burst open, the wood creaking and groaning in protest at the force shoved against it. The span of seconds in which his father ran towards him, shouting his name, stretched and seemed to become years. His footsteps pounded against the rotting planks of the porch, the noise exploding in Adam's ears. He looked between his father and the black monster, which had now reached the bottom step.

His father's strong arm reached towards him and closed around his body like a metal vice. His small bones jarred from the impact. He watched over his father's shoulder as the storm wailed closer.

*I'll catch you,* it seemed to be mocking.

As suddenly as time had slowed, it began again. The dust exploded around them just as his father slammed the door, shutting out the world. Black dust curled under the door and shifted forward in fury. His mother shoved a wet towel in the crack and pressed another to Adams face. Together, the three of them huddled in the middle of the room, gasping and hacking and choking for air. But Adam didn't mind. He had only one thought as the black dust wormed its way into his lungs and stole his breath.

*That was better than the sunset.*

***K-5 Range of Writing Narrative  
Samples***

**File Name: NKR Ice Cream**

**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Range of Writing**

**Ice Cream**

My best friend came to my house the ice cream truck came. me and Agry took a  
 strawberry short cake. We eat it. And after that we went in the sprinkler. it was  
 fun. And after that we baked muffins and we iced them. And put on wip cream it  
 was a lot of fun.

**Narrates  
 several loosely  
 linked events**

**Tells about the  
 events in the  
 order in which  
 they occurred**

**Provides a reaction  
 to what happened**

This Kindergarten narrative tells about a personal experience. The events are loosely linked, all happening during a friend's visit. The writer relates the events in chronological order (*"And after that"*) and provides a reaction to what happened (*"it was a lot of fun"*). In the original, illustrations add further detail about the weather and the ice cream truck.

**File Name: NKR Ice Cream**

**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Ice Cream**

My best friend came to my house. The ice cream truck came. Avery and I took a strawberry shortcake. We ate it. And after that we went in the sprinkler. It was fun. And after that, we baked muffins, and we iced them and put on whipped cream. It was a lot of fun.

**File Name: NKR Ice Cream**

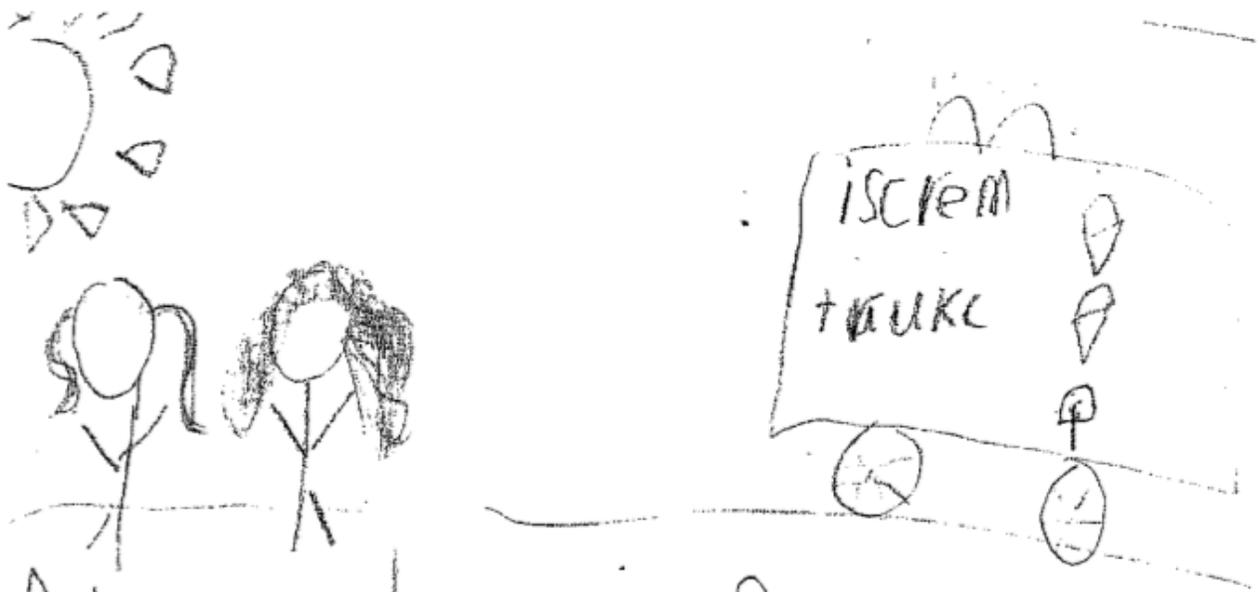
**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Range of Writing**

### **Ice Cream**

My best friend came to my house the ice cream truck came. me and Agry took a strawberry short cake. We eat it. And after that we went in the sprinkler. it was fun. And after that we baked muffins and we iced them. And put on whipped cream it was a lot of fun.



My best friend  
 came to my house  
 the iScream truck  
 came me and Agry  
 took a Strawberry  
 Short cake We Eat

it. And after that  
we went in the  
Springkuis, it was fun.  
And after that we  
mufins and we ice bakte  
And put on wipt cream  
it was alot of fun.

**File Name: NKR Buster and Socks**

**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Range of Writing**

**Buster and Socks**

One day, Buster and Socks went to a park. They brought a kite that was hansum yellow. Buster and Socks kite blew into the tree. Officer Ray was a good climber. So helpet Buster and Socks climb the tree then the kite went down. And Buster and Socks thanket Officer Ray. And if the kite flew away again they will call him for help.

**Narrates  
several loosely  
linked events**

**Tells about the  
events in the  
order in which  
they occurred**

**Provides a reaction  
to what happened**

This well-developed Kindergarten narrative provides a series of linked events that follows a kite getting stuck in a tree. The piece provides rich detail for a Kindergartener (“*They brought a kite that was hansum yellow*”, “*Officer Ray was a good climber*”). The ending provides a reaction to what happened (“*And if the kite flew away again they will call him for hap*”).

**File Name: NKR Buster and Socks**

**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Buster and Socks**

One day, Buster and Socks went to a park. They brought a kite that was a handsome yellow. Buster and Socks's kite blew into the tree. Officer Ray was a good climber, so he helped Buster and Socks climb the tree. Then the kite went down, and Buster and Socks thanked Officer Ray. And if the kite flies away again, they will call him for help.

**File Name: NKR Buster and Socks**

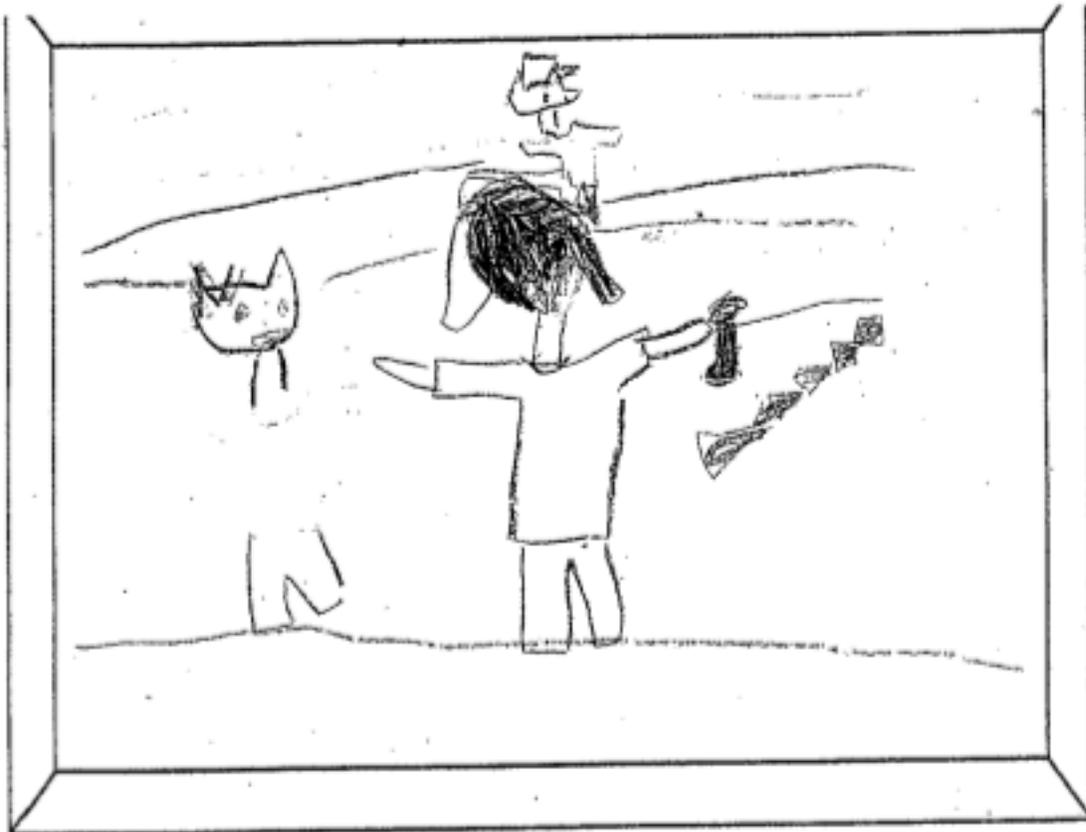
**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Range of Writing**

### **Buster and Socks**

One day, Buster and Socks went to a park. They brought a kite that was hansum yellow. Buster and Socks kite blew into the tree. Officer Ray was a good climber. So helpet Buster and Socks climb the tree then the kite went down. And Buster and Socks thanket Officer Ray. And if the kite flew away again they will call him for help.



One day, Buster  
and Socks went to a

park. They brought

a kite that was

handsome yellow.

Buster and

Socks's kite blew

into the tree.

Officer Ray was

a good climber. So he let Buster,

and Gocks climb

the tree then

the kite went

down. And

Buster and Gocks

thanket Officer Ray.

And if the kite flew away

again they will call him for help

**File Name: NKR THE little volcano**

**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Range of Writing**

THE little volcano

wuts upon A time THERE was A volcano sHe was A LoNLE volcano

wuts THE LITT volcano saw ather she DID NOT FEel lonLe

wHen THE otHER volcano aRRived THE LiTTle volcano plAD BALL

**Provides a reaction  
to what happened**

**Narrates several loosely linked events in the order in which they occurred**

In this Kindergarten narrative, the student relates the imaginative story of a lonely volcano, who finds a friend. The events—the Little Volcano saw another volcano, the other volcano arrived and then they played ball—are loosely sequenced, and the Little Volcano reacts to these events by no longer feeling lonely. In this story, the student drawings add detail to the writing. The Little Volcano is shown smiling when she first sees her new friend, and the two volcanoes playing ball on the last page are clearly happy and enjoying each other's company. The setting of the story, which appears to be a desert, is also shown in the drawings, even though it is not explicitly mentioned in the text. Kindergarteners will often combine writing with drawing, a more familiar mode of expression, to express their thinking.

**File Name: NKR THE little volcano**

**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### The Little Volcano

Once upon a time, there was a volcano. She was a lonely volcano.

Once the little volcano saw another, she did not feel lonely.

When the other volcano arrived, the little volcano played ball.

**File Name: NKR THE little volcano**

**Kindergarten**

**Narrative**

**Range of Writing**

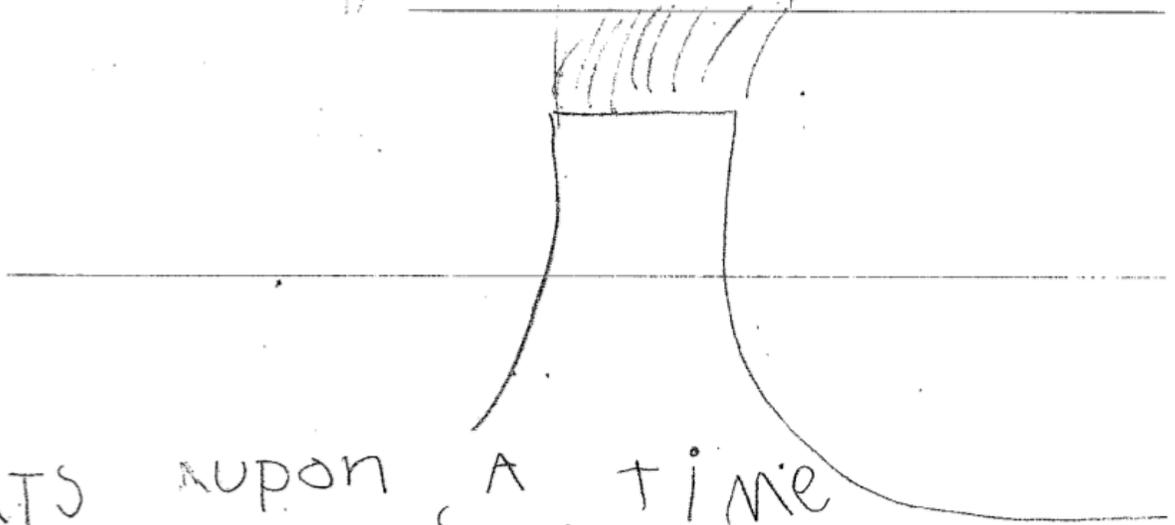
THE little volcano

wuts upon A time THERE wus A volcano sHe wus A LoNLE volcano

wuts THE LITT volcano saw ather she DID NOT FEel lonLe

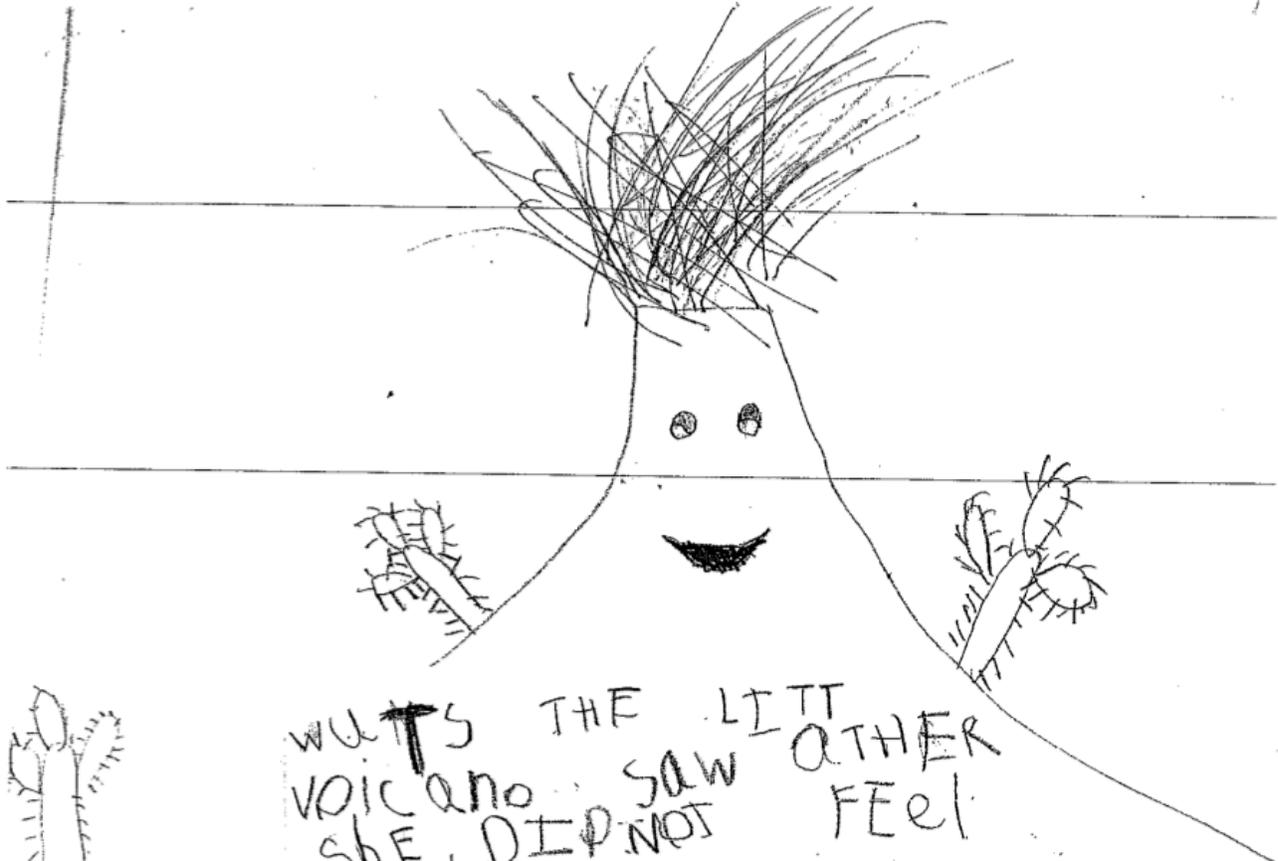
wHen THE otHER volcano aRRIVED THE LiTTle volcano plAD BALL

THE LITTLE volcano

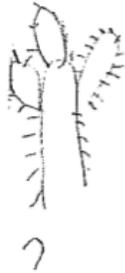


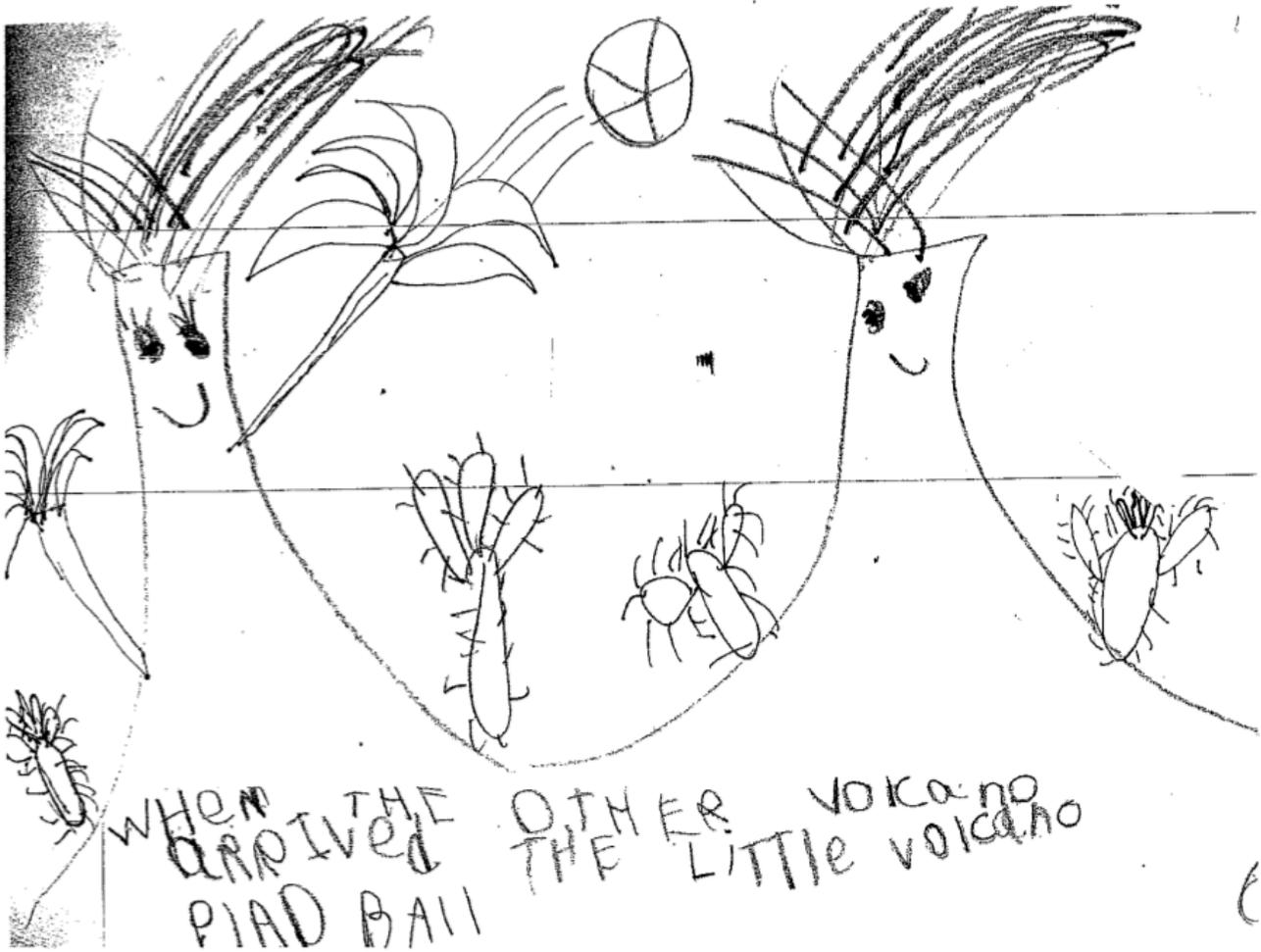
WAS UPON A TIME  
THERE WAS A TIME

VOICANO SHE WAS A  
LONLE VOICANO



WUTS THE LITT  
VOICANO... SAW OTHER  
SHE, DID NOT FEEL  
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**File Name: N1R The Lonely Horse**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Lonely Horse**

Once upon a time there was a horse. his name was patches. he lived ulown in a big field. he ran arownd the field feeling lonly. then one day when he was run arownd he saw a barn and in one of the stalls he saw another horse. her name star. because she had a star on her cheek. then she saw him. She luped over the fence and the two horses ran arownd the feaild together. By the next day they were feainds and they ran anond the field together and from then on patches was never lonly agein. The end!

**Uses temporal words to signal event order**

**Includes some details regarding what happened**

**Provides some sense of closure**

This imaginary first-grade narrative tells the story of a lonely horse named Patches. The writer uses temporal words and phrases (“one day”, “then”, “by the next day”) to recount a series of events in which Patches finds a friend. The story includes details regarding what happened (“She luped over the fence and the two horses ran arownd the feaild together.”) and also uses detail to help us better understand the characters created (“he ran arownd the field feeling lonly.... her name was star. because she had a star on her cheek.”). The reader is left with a sense of closure when we learn that Patches found a friend and “was never lonly agein.”

**File Name: N1R The Lonely Horse**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **The Lonely Horse**

Once upon a time there was a horse. His name was Patches. He lived alone in a big field. He ran around the field feeling lonely. Then one day when he was running around, he saw a barn and in one of the stalls he saw another horse. Her name was Star because she had a star on her cheek. Then she saw him. She jumped over the fence and the two horses ran around the field together. By the next day they were friends and they ran around the field together, and from then on Patches was never lonely again.

The end!

**File Name: N1R The Lonely Horse**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Lonely Horse**

Once upon a time there was a horse. his name was paches. he lived ulown in a big field. he ran arownd the field feeling lonely. then one day when he was runing arownd he saw a barn and in one of the stalls he saw another horse. her name was star. because she had a star on her cheek. then she saw him. She luped over the fence and the two horses ran arownd the feaild together. By the next day they were feainds and they ran anond the field together and from then on paches was never lonely agein. The end!

**File Name: N1R When Our Key was Locked in the Car**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

**When Owr Ke was Lokd in the Ca**

One day me, my Dad, and one of my dads frens went to the ter. When we came back we notisd that the ke was lockd in the car. "oh no" said my dad. So we went back to the ter to try to find something to get the door open. Then when we wer trying to find somthing to get the door open we fownd something. ya said my daddy. Then we went back to the car and we got the door open! Then we went hom. mak shur the ke isnt intin the car.

**Includes some details regarding what happened**

**Uses temporal words to signal event order**

**Provides some sense of closure**

This first-grade narrative recounts a sequence of events, which revolve around a central problem (*“the ke was lockd in the car.”*). The writer uses temporal words and phrases (*“One day”*, *“When we came back”*, *“then”*) to sequence events and provides some details about what happened (*“we went back to the ter to try to find something to get the door open.”*). At the end of the story, the problem is solved, providing some sense of closure for the reader. The writer also offers some advice based on his experiences (*“mak shur the ke isnt intin the car.”*).

**File Name: N1R When Our Key was Locked in the Car**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **When Our Key was Locked in the Car**

One day me, my dad and one of my dad's friends went to the store. When we came back we noticed that the key was locked in the car. "Oh, no!" said my dad. So, we went back to the store to try to find something to get the door open. Then, when we were trying to find something to get the door open, we found something. "Yeah!" said my daddy. Then, we went back to the car and we got the door open! Then we went home. So, when you get out, make sure the key isn't in the car!

**File Name: N1R When Our Key was Locked in the Car**

**Narrative**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

**When Owr Ke was Lokd in the Ca**

One day me, my Dad, and one of my dads frens went to the ter. When we came back we notisd that the ke was lockd in the car. "oh no" said my dad. So we went back to the ter to try to find something to get the door open. Then when we wer trying to find somthing to get the door open we fownd something. ya said my daddy. Then we went back to the car and we got the door open! Then we went hom. mak shur the ke isnt intin the car.

**File Name: N2R The Adventure into the Abandoned Warehouse****Narrative****Grade 2****Range of Writing**

## The Adventure into the Abandoned Warehouse

Once there was an abandoned warehouse that was enormous. You could hear growling if you came near.

Introduces the main character and setting to provide some context for understanding the events that follow

There was this kid named Clay who has blue eyes and brown hair and he's always ready for an adventure. He is 8 years old.

One day, Clay and his younger brothers Bobby and George wanted to get into the abandoned warehouse that they passed by one day while walking. They wanted to find out what was making all that noise. All of them were scared and excited.

**Recounts a well-elaborated short sequence of events**

But the second time they got there, there were guards and this time they were really scared so they left. They came there again and the guards were still there. They thought they would never get in.

**Includes details to describe feelings**

**Uses temporal words to signal event order**

Then, Clay had an idea. “How about we go home and get a distraction?” They decided that George and Bobby would yell at the guards and say, “Hey Buddy!” Then they would run around the abandoned warehouse and go in the door and meet Clay. When they got back, the distraction was ready. They were successful. So, when they got in, they looked until they heard it. They heard a growl. “Let’s go,” said, Bobby and George.

**Includes details to describe thoughts**

**Includes details to describe actions**

They said, “OK.” They got there and they heard it. They could not see it and then they saw it, it was a puppy! They were so happy.

**Provides a sense of closure**

In this second-grade narrative, the writer describes a short series of connected events that begins when a group of friends hears growling in an abandoned warehouse. This piece is rich in detail. The writer describes the characters’ feelings (“*All of them were scared and excited*”), thoughts (“*Then, Clay had an idea.*”), and actions (“*So, when they got in, they looked until they heard it.*”). The discovery that the growling came from a puppy wraps up the story logically and provides a sense of closure. Like many second-grade narratives, this story ends a bit abruptly and leaves the reader with unanswered questions. Creating a satisfying ending is a difficult skill, often not mastered in the primary grades.

**File Name: N2R The Adventure into the Abandoned Warehouse**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### The Adventure into the Abandoned Warehouse

Once there was an abandoned warehouse that was enormous. You could hear growling if you came near. Close to the warehouse lived a kid named Clay who had blue eyes and brown hair and was always ready for an adventure. He was 8 years old.

Clay and his younger brothers, Bobby and George, wanted to get into the abandoned warehouse that they had passed by one day while walking. They wanted to find out what was making all that noise. All of them were scared and excited.

But the second time they got there, there were guards. This time, they were really scared, so they left. Then they went there again and the guards were still there. They thought they would never get in!

Then Clay had an idea. "How about we go home and get a distraction?" They decided that George and Bobby would yell at the guards and say, "Hey, buddy!" Then they would run around the abandoned warehouse and go in the door and meet Clay. When they got back, the distraction was ready. They were successful.

When they got in, they looked until they heard it. They heard a growl. "Let's go," said Bobby and George. They said, "OK." They got there, and they heard it again, but they could not see anything. And then they saw it. It was a puppy! They were so happy.

**File Name: N2R The Adventure into the Abandoned Warehouse**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### The Adventure into the Abandoned Warehouse

Once there was an abandoned warehouse that was enormous. You could hear growling if you came near.

There was this kid named Clay who has blue eyes and brown hair and he's always ready for an adventure. He is 8 years old.

One day, Clay and his younger brothers Bobby and George wanted to get into the abandoned warehouse that they passed by one day while walking. They wanted to find out what was making all that noise. All of them were scared and excited.

But the second time they got there, there were guards and this time they were really scared so they left. They came there again and the guards were still there. They thought they would never get in.

Then, Clay had an idea. "How about we go home and get a distraction?" They decided that George and Bobby would yell at the guards and say, "Hey Buddy!" Then they would run around the abandoned

warehouse and go in the door and meet Clay. When they got back, the distraction was ready. They were successful. So, when they got in, they looked until they heard it. They heard a growl. "Let's go," said, Bobby and George.

They said, "OK." They got there and they heard it. They could not see it and then they saw it, it was a puppy! They were so happy.

**File Name: N2R Airplane Trouble****Narrative****Grade 2****Range of Writing**

**Recounts a short  
sequence of events**

**Airplane Trouble**

Once upon a time there was a man named Bob. He was 88. And his pet parrot named Billy. He was 4 years old. They lived in New York. One day Bob and Billy were going to VA. He was packing his bags to go on the Airplane. And then he remembered his flight left at 8:00. And it was 7:50. So he got his stuff in the car and drove there. When they got there the plane left. "We missed out flight" said Bob. Bob was mad. They went in to the Airport to see if there was a different plane. There wasnt any other plane. "Why don't we drive a car" said Bob. "Ok" said Billy. So they went to the car and drove.

**Includes details  
to describe  
actions**

**Includes details  
to describe  
thoughts**

**Includes details  
to describe  
feelings**

This imaginative second-grade narrative was written independently in response to a picture. The writer describes a short series of connected events surrounding a trip to the airport. This story revolves around a central problem (*"We missed out flight"*). Details that describe actions (*"He was packing his bags"*), feelings (*"Bob was mad"*), and thoughts (*"And then he remembered his flight left at 8:00."*) advance the plot and show the reactions of characters to the situation. Temporal words (*"one day"*, *"and then"*, *"when"*) signal the order of events clearly. The story ends when the main characters decide to drive instead, providing the reader with a sense of closure.

**uses  
temporal  
words to  
signal  
event  
order**

**File Name: N2R Airplane Trouble**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Airplane Trouble**

Once upon a time there was a man named Bob. He was 88. His pet parrot named Billy was 4 years old. They lived in New York. One day, Bob and Billy were going to VA. He was packing his bags to go on the airplane. Then he remembered his flight left at 8:00. And it was 7:50! So he got his stuff in the car and drove there. When they got there the plane had left. "We missed out flight!" said Bob. Bob was mad. They went in to the airport to see if there was a different plane. There wasn't any other plane. "Why don't we drive a car?" said Bob. "O.K.," said Billy. So they went to the car and drove.

**File Name: N2R Airplane Trouble**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Airplane Trouble**

Once upon a time there was a man named Bob. He was 88. And his pet parrot named Billy. He was 4 years old. They lived in New York. One day Bob and Billy were going to VA. He was packing his bags to go on the Airplane. And then he remembered his flight left at 8:00. And it was 7:50. So he got his stuff in the car and drove there. When they got there the plane left. "We missed out flight" said Bob. Bob was mad. They went in to the Airport to see if there was a different plane. There wasnt any other plane. "Why don't we drive a car" said Bob. "Ok" said Billy. So they went to the car and drove.

**File Name: N2R My Dog**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

**Response to Text: Freckle Juice**

**We listened to the book Freckle Juice by Jude Blume. “Andrew arcus wanted Freckles.” Write about a time that you really wanted something and what you did to make that happen.**

**My Dog**

One time I relly wanted a dog. In fact evry time I blew out a candle I wished for a dog. But my mom and dad would not let me becuase thay thought it would be to much work. But then thay changed thare mind so we started to look on line for a puppy and we found one. She came in a big truck. we brought her home. and evry morning I get up erly and take her out and feed her.

**Includes details to describe thoughts and feelings**

**Includes details to describe actions**

**Uses temporal words to signal event order**

**Provides a sense of closure**

This independent second-grade narrative was part of a literature study. The writer recounts a well-elaborated, short sequence of events leading to the arrival of a new puppy. Temporal words and phrases (“*every time*”, “*then*”, “*started*”, “*every morning*”) signal event order; the story flows naturally from the point of wishing for a puppy to the puppy’s arrival. Details connect the characters’ thoughts and feelings with actions (“*evry time I blew out a candle I wished for a dog*”, “*my mom and dad would not let me becuase thay thought it would be to much work*”, “*But then thay changed thare mind so we started to look on line for a puppy*”), creating believable characters and events. The last line, describing life with the new puppy, provides a sense of closure.

**File Name: N2R My Dog**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

**Response to Text: Freckle Juice**

**We listened to the book Freckle Juice by Jude Blume. “Andrew arcus wanted Freckles.” Write about a time that you really wanted something and what you did to make that happen.**

My Dog

One time I really wanted a dog. In fact, every time I blew out a candle, I wished for a dog. But my mom and dad would not let me get one because they thought it would be too much work. But then they changed their minds, so we started to look online for a puppy, and we found one. She came in a big truck. We brought her home and every morning I get up early and take her out and feed her.

**File Name: N2R My Dog**

**Narrative**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

**Response to Text: Freckle Juice**

**We listened to the book Freckle Juice by Jude Blume. “Andrew arcus wanted Freckles.” Write about a time that you really wanted something and what you did to make that happen.**

My Dog

One time I really wanted a dog. In fact every time I blew out a candle I wished for a dog. But my mom and dad would not let me because they thought it would be too much work. But then they changed their mind so we started to look online for a puppy and we found one. She came in a big truck. We brought her home. and every morning I get up early and take her out and feed her.

**File Name: N3R My Lost Kittens**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### **My Lost Kittens**

One sunny day my mom and I took our kittens for a walk around our house. The kittens were very excited because it was their first time. My kittens names are Flounder and Aerial. Aerial is a girl and Flounder is a boy with a circle on his side. They are both the color yellow and white. When we took the kittens outside we had to be very careful so they would not get loose. Then a car drove by. It scared them and they ran. Their harnesses got loose and they went into the woods. We went inside to put away the harnesses and the leashes. Then we went back outside to look for them in the woods. We looked left and right but we couldn't find them. We went back home to make signs to put up that said: LOST KITTENS yellow and white call 569-9823. We were very sad. After a few mouths still no one could find them. But when we were looking for them the kittens were look for us they really wanted to find their way home. The kitten aske a cat named Shadow for help. Shadow said they lived next door but they were not home the were on vacation. Shadow brought them inside to Theresa. When Theresa saw them she knew who they lived with. Theresa took care of them until we came home she called us and siad "I have a surprise for you!!" I thought that she had found our kittens. When we

**Establishes a situation and introduces a narrator and characters**

**Uses descriptions of actions and feelings to show the response of characters to situations.**

**Uses temporal words and phrases to signal event order**

**Uses dialogue and descriptions of thoughts to develop events**

went over to her house we followed her up to the bedroom and saw a cage when she opened the door. We saw our kittens in it. We were so happy that we went right over and unlocked it. The kittens ran out of the cage and over to us. We took them home and thanked Theresa. We were very happy to see them. And they were happy to us too.

**Provides a sense of closure**

This third-grade narrative begins by introducing the main characters (*“my mom and I took our kittens...”*) and establishing a situation (*“we took the kittens outside”*). The story revolves around a central problem, the kittens are lost, and organizes a sequence of events that unfolds naturally toward the resolution of the problem—when the kittens are returned. Although the story can be a bit confusing in spots (*“Shadow said they lived next door but they were not home the were on vacation”*), temporal word and phrases (*“then”, “After a few mouths”, “when”*) signal event order and move the reader through the story.

This young writer is beginning to experiment effectively with techniques like dialogue (*“I have a surprise for you!!”*), as well as descriptions of thoughts (*“I thought that she had found our kittens.”*), feelings (*“We were very sad”*) and actions (*“We went back home to make signs.”*) to develop the events in the story. The last lines provide a sense of closure (*“We were very happy to see them. And they were happy to [see] us too.”*).

**File Name: N3R My Lost Kittens**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **My Lost Kittens**

One sunny day, my mom and I took our kittens for a walk around our house. The kittens were very excited because it was their first time. My kittens' names are Flounder and Aerial. Aerial is a girl and Flounder is a boy with a circle on his side. They are both the colors yellow and white. When we took the kittens outside, we had to be very careful so they would not get loose. Then a car drove by. It scared them and they ran. Their harnesses got loose and they went into the woods. We went inside to put away the harnesses and the leashes. Then we went back outside to look for them in the woods. We looked left and right, but we couldn't find them. We went back home to make signs to put up that said: LOST KITTENS: yellow and white, call 569-9823. We were very sad.

After a few months, still no one could find them. But, when we were looking for them, the kittens were looking for us! They really wanted to find their way home. The kitten asked a cat named Shadow for help. Shadow said, "Your family lives next door, but they are not home they are on vacation." Shadow brought them inside to Theresa. When Theresa saw them, she knew who they lived with. Theresa took care of them until we came home. She called us and said, "I have a surprise for you!!" I thought that she had found our kittens!

When we went over to her house, we followed her up to the bedroom and saw a cage. When she opened the door, we saw our kittens in it. We were so happy that we went right over and unlocked it. The kittens ran out of the cage and over to us. We took them home and thanked Theresa. We were very happy to see them, and they were happy to see us too!

**File Name: N3R My Lost Kittens**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### **My Lost Kittens**

One sunny day my mom and I took our kittens for a walk around our house. The kittens were very excited because it was their first time. My kittens names are Flounder and Aerial. Aerial is a girl and Flounder is a boy with a circle on his side. They are both the color yellow and white. When we took the kittens outside we had to be very careful so they would not get loose. Then a car drove by. It scared them and they ran. Their harnesses got loose and they went into the woods. We went inside to put away the harnesses and the leashes. Then we went back outside to look for them in the woods. We looked left and right but we couldn't find them. We went back home to make signs to put up that said: LOST KITTENS yellow and white call 569-9823. We were very sad. After a few mouths still no one could find them. But when we were looking for them the kittens were look for us they really wanted to find their way home. The kitten aske a cat named Shadow for help. Shadow said they lived next door but they were not home the were on vacation. Shadow brought them inside to Theresa. When Theresa saw them she knew who they lived with. Theresa took care of them until we came home she called us and siad "I have a surprise for you!!" I thought that she had found our kittens. When we

went over to her house we followed her up to the bedroom and saw a cage when she opened the door. We saw our kittens in it. We were so happy that we went right over and unlocked it. The kittens ran out of the cage and over to us. We took them home and thanked Theresa. We were very happy to see them. And they were happy to us too.

**File Name: N3R The Family Who Traveled West**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

**Establishes a situation and introduces characters**

The Family Who Traveled West

Once upon a time there was a pioneer family that was moving west. They were moving west because they wanted to find more gold. They had to gather their livestock. They used horses. They packed pots and pans, food and drinks. The family was traveling from Massachusetts to Oregon. They started to go. Anna their little girl said “I wish something would happen” and it did. They came upon Indians. The Indians were nice enough to let them go past. A few days later they came upon Oregon. “Ya” evryone shouted. Ma said “lets unpack and dig for gold”. Pa said, After we dig for gold, let’s build a farm to keep our livestock in and to live in”. They lived hapily ever after.

**Uses descriptions of actions to develop events**

**Uses dialogue and temporal words and phrases to signal event order**

**Uses dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop events or show the response of characters to situations**

**Provides a sense of closure**

Although brief, this third-grade narrative—written as part of a unit on westward expansion—quickly establishes a situation and a series of events that unfolds naturally. The reader comes to understand events through the character’s actions (“*They packed pots and pans, food and drinks*”) and reactions (“*‘Ya’ evryone shouted*”). The writer uses dialogue effectively to advance the plot. Although it may sound trite to adults, the last line leaves the reader with a sense of closure.

**File Name: N3R The Family Who Traveled West**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### The Family Who Traveled West

Once upon a time there was a pioneer family that was moving west. The members of the family were moving west because they wanted to find more gold. They had to gather their livestock. They used horses. They packed pots and pans, food and drinks. The family was travelling from Massachusetts to Oregon. They started to go. Anna, the little girl, said, "I wish something would happen," and it did. They came upon Indians. The Indians were nice enough to let them go past. A few days later, the family came upon Oregon. "Yeah!" everyone shouted. Ma said, "Let's unpack and dig for gold." Pa said, "After we dig for gold, let's build a farm to keep our livestock in and to live in." They lived happily ever after.

**File Name: N3R The Family Who Traveled West**

**Narrative**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### The Family Who Traveled West

Once upon a time there was a pioneer family that was moving west. They were moving west because they wanted to find more gold. They had to gather their livestock. They used horses. They packed pots and pans, food and drinks. The family was traveling from Massachusetts to Oregon. They started to go. Anna their little girl said "I wish something would happen" and it did. They came upon Indians. The Indians were nice enough to let them go past. A few days later they came upon Oregon. "Ya" everyone shouted. Ma said "lets unpack and dig for gold". Pa said, After we dig for gold, let's build a farm to keep our livestock in and to live in". They lived hapily ever after.

**File Name: N4R Finding Rosalita**

**Narrative**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

### Finding Rosalita

It was Sunday. My family and I were in France. I was as happy as a b  
 We were driving along the road when my Daddy stopped the car. He told my  
 brother and sister to get out of the car to see what the furry lump on the side of  
 the road was. They got out of the car. 10 seconds later, they got back in the car  
 with a very small kitten in their hands. She was about the size of a very, very,  
 very, very small baby bottle. My stomach went into my throat when I saw it  
 actually was a kitten. She was meowing as loud as a fog horn. It was so horrible  
 I couldn't think. Mreow. I felt horrible. I knew that I hadn't done anything bad  
 her, but I just couldn't help it. She was so cold. I was worried. Her claws were  
 sharp as sewing needles being pricked into your skin. I shuddered. She had crus  
 over her eyes, from infections, that looked like they hurt. We were headed into  
 the village. Madame Sanz was there. We asked her what to do. I was afraid that  
 she wouldn't have any advice. Thankfully, she told us what to do. She told us to  
 boil rose petals in water 'till they were warm and wet. Then we should pour them  
 into a bowl with some water and keep on rubbing then over her eyes. After that,  
 we decided to call the little kitten, Rosalita. We also call her other things that

**Orients the reader by  
 establishing a situation and  
 introducing a narrator and  
 characters**

**Uses description to  
 develop events and  
 show the responses  
 of characters to  
 situations**

**Uses concrete  
 words and phrases  
 and sensory  
 details to convey  
 experiences and  
 events precisely**

**Uses a variety of  
 transitional words and  
 phrases to manage the  
 sequence of events**

**Provides a conclusion  
that follows from the  
narrated events**

sound like Rosalita, but I won't mention that. We prayed. Luckily, she is still with us now. Hopefully, She will be with us much, much, much, much longer.

In this fourth-grade narrative, the writer describes an experience using effective techniques, descriptive details, and a clear event sequence that unfolds naturally. Descriptions of actions (“*I shuddered*”), feelings (“*I felt horrible*”), and thoughts (“*I knew I hadn't done anything bad to her, but I just couldn't help it*”) help the reader identify with the narrator. Sensory details (“*She had crusts over her eyes*”) add to our understanding of the situation and paint a vivid picture of the experience. The writer controls the sequence of events with transitional words and phrases and ends with a concluding reflection that is clearly connected to the narrated experience.

**File Name: N4R Finding Rosalita**

**Narrative**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Finding Rosalita

It was Sunday. My family and I were in France. I was as happy as a bee. We were driving along the road when my daddy stopped the car. He told my brother and sister to get out of the car to see what the furry lump on the side of the road was. They got out of the car. Ten seconds later, they got back in the car with a very small kitten in their hands. She was about the size of a very, very, very, very small baby bottle.

My stomach went into my throat when I saw it actually was a kitten. She was meowing as loud as a foghorn. It was so horrible, I couldn't think. *Mreow*. I felt horrible. I knew that I hadn't done anything bad to her, but I just couldn't help it. She was so cold. I was worried. Her claws were as sharp as sewing needles being pricked into your skin. I shuddered. She had crusts over her eyes, from infections, that looked like they hurt.

We were headed into the village. Madame Sanz was there. We asked her what to do. I was afraid that she wouldn't have any advice. Thankfully, she told us what to do. She told us to boil rose petals in water till they were warm and wet. Then we should pour them into a bowl with some water and keep on rubbing them over the kitten's eyes.

After that, we decided to call the little kitten Rosalita. We also call her other things that sound like Rosalita, but I won't mention that. We prayed. Luckily, she is still with us now. Hopefully, she will be with us much, much, much, much longer.

**File Name: N4R Finding Rosalita**

**Narrative**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

### Finding Rosalita

It was Sunday. My family and I were in France. I was as happy as a bee. We were driving along the road when my Daddy stopped the car. He told my brother and sister to get out of the car to see what the furry lump on the side of the road was. They got out of the car. 10 seconds later, they got back in the car with a very small kitten in their hands. She was about the size of a very, very, very, very small baby bottle. My stomach went into my throat when I saw it actually was a kitten. She was meowing as loud as a fog horn. It was so horrible, I couldn't think. Mreow. I felt horrible. I knew that I hadn't done anything bad to her, but I just couldn't help it. She was so cold. I was worried. Her claws were as sharp as sewing needles being pricked into your skin. I shuddered. She had crusts over her eyes, from infections, that looked like they hurt. We were headed into the village. Madame Sanz was there. We asked her what to do. I was afraid that she wouldn't have any advice. Thankfully, she told us what to do. She told us to boil rose petals in water 'till they were warm and wet. Then we should pour them into a bowl with some water and keep on rubbing then over her eyes. After that, we decided to call the little kitten, **Rosalita**. We also call her other things that sound like **Rosalita**, but I won't mention that. We prayed. Luckily, she is still with us now. Hopefully, She will be with us much, much, much, much longer.

**File Name: N5R Frustration**

**Narrative****Grade 5****Range of Writing**

## Frustration

Orients the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator

I dip my fountain pen into the ink container. I place the pen on the paper.

What will be the first words of the Declaration of Independence? They must be convincing, but also get the message to King George that we want to be free.

After waiting for what seems like an hour, I print the words: *“The Colonists of the new land want to”*...No! that won’t do. The words must be more convincing. I

crumble the paper and throw it across the room. I dip the pen again and place the

pen on a new clean sheet of paper. Now I print the words: *“We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal”*...No! that will go later in the

paper, I scream, now ripping up the paper. I’m so angry that when I dip my pen it splatters on my white cuff. After an hour I decide on the first words: *“When in the*

*course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the*

*political bonds...”* Yes! those will be the first words of the Declaration of

Independence, I say leaping for joy.

Uses a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events

Uses narrative techniques to develop events and show the responses of characters to situations

Uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely

Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated events

In this fifth-grade historical narrative, written as part of a unit on the American Revolution, the writer focuses on one event, the writing of the Declaration of Independence. The first three sentences effectively give a sense of the time period and provide historical context using well-chosen details (the fountain pen, the Declaration, and King George). Even in this very brief piece, transitions are needed to manage the sequence of events. Transitional words and phrases (“Now”, “After waiting for what seems like an hour”) allow the event to unfold naturally. The writer uses both dialogue and description to show Jefferson’s frustration and to bring the piece to a satisfying conclusion.

**File Name: N5R Frustration**

**Narrative**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Frustration

I dip my fountain pen into the ink container. I place the pen on the paper. What will be the first words of the Declaration of Independence? They must be convincing and also get the message to King George that we want to be free. After waiting for what seems like an hour, I print the words "*The Colonists of the new land want to . . .*" No! That won't do. The words must be more convincing. I crumble the paper and throw it across the room. I dip the pen again and place the pen on a new, clean sheet of paper. Now I print the words "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . .*" "No! That will go later in the paper," I scream, now ripping up the paper. I'm so angry that when I dip my pen, ink splatters on my white cuff. After an hour, I decide on the first words: "*When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds . . .*" "Yes! Those will be the first words of the Declaration of Independence," I say, leaping for joy.

**File Name: N5R Frustration**

**Narrative**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### Frustration

I dip my fountain pen into the ink container. I place the pen on the paper. What will be the first words of the Declaration of Independence? They must be convincing, but also get the message to King George that we want to be free. After waiting for what seems like an hour, I print the words: “*The Colonists of the new land want to*”...No! that won’t do. The words must be more convincing. I crumble the paper and throw it across the room. I dip the pen again and place the pen on a new clean sheet of paper. Now I print the words: “*We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal*”...No! that will go later in the paper, I scream, now ripping up the paper. I’m so angry that when I dip my pen it splatters on my white cuff. After an hour I decide on the first words: “*When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds...*” Yes! those will be the first words of the Declaration of Independence, I say leaping for joy.

**File Name: N5R Tooth Trouble**

**Narrative**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **Tooth Trouble**

“Charlie if you don’t like your oatmeal just tell me and I’ll get you some cereal.” Mom said looking over the table with a puzzled face.

**Orients the reader by introducing characters**

Her daughter, Charlie, short for Charlene was chewing her favorite food

slowly and carefully and she was making a funny face. Charlie’s twin sister, Tess was doing the same thing. “We like oatmeal, but we don’t want to disturb them,” said Tess.

**Uses dialogue and description to show the responses of characters to situations**

“Disturb who?” asked Aaron, their older brother. He shook his curly black hair and looked strangely at Mom. She looked back and shrugged.

Tess and Charlie threw back their tiny red cropper heads and showed their teeth. They each wiggled one and smiled. “Looth tooth.” said Aaron getting up from the table and putting on his backpack.

**Establishes a situation**

“Looth tooth.” said Tess and Charlie at the same time. They were walking out the door with Aaron to catch the bus. Mom followed them out the door and

got into the car to go to work.

“Bye kids, see you after school!” called Mom backing out of the driveway.

On the bus Charlie and Tess decided to tell thier best best friend Molly first about thier teeth. When they got to school they ran into kindergaten room faster than Aaron could run to the eighth grade room. In the class room they met the very person they wanted to see, Molly Stagburn.

“Molly! Molly, guess what?” yelled the twins.

“What?” said Molly.

“We have loose teeth!” said the twins with a big smile. A look of horror spred across Molly’s face.

Oh, no!” she said.

“My big brother Zack said that when one tooth comes out the rest come out too. He knowes everything becausf he’s almost in third grade.” Tess and Charlie almost cried.

At snack they only ate one cracker each, and at lunch they decided not to eat at all.

After lunch, their teacher, Mrs. Tellen noticed they where looking sort of pale.

**Uses description to develop events**

“Charlie, Tess, are you feeling all right?”

“No,” they replied.

“Oh dear, I suppose I should call your mother,” she sighed and walked over to the phone.

Half an hour later the twins found themselves in the back of their mothers car.

“Girls, I would like you to tell me what made you sick. Was it something you ate?” Charlie and Tess looked at each other.

**Uses a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.**

“Actually Mom, we haven’t eaten all day,” said Tess.

“But you told me what you wanted. Did you change your minds?”

“No. but we didn’t want all our teeth to fall out.”

“What did Aaron tell you this time?” Mom asked remembering the time Aaron had told them that if you ate bananas, monkeys would fly out your ears. “It wasn’t Aaron this time. Molly’s brother said that if one tooth comes out the others come out too,” said Tess as they pulled into the driveway.

“Molly’s brother has a grapenut for a brain.” Mom joked.

When they were inside the house, Mom put them on schools and gave them each apples. Almost emediately they forgot about their teeth and ate.

“Now you listen to me. All your teeth are not going to fall out. the only way that would happen would be if Aaron punched you hard enough. If that happend I would take you to the dentist to have him look at your teeth, and I would ground Aaron for 20 years,” Mom said softly.

“Hey my tooth came out!”

“Mine too!” Charlie and Tess yelled together.

“See, I told you Zack was wrong. Next time don’t listen to Molly,” said Mom.

Charlie and Tess looked at Mom and smiled. They both had big gaps in their smiles.

**Uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey events precisely**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated events.**

THE END

This well-crafted fifth-grade narrative develops a humorous event through a series of events that unfold naturally. The main characters in the story are introduced one at a time, orienting the reader. The situation (the twins have loose teeth) is established through actions (“*They each wiggled one...*”) and dialogue (“*Looth tooth*”). The writer uses a variety of transitional words and phrases (“*Half an hour later*”, “*Almost emediately*”) to manage the sequence of events. The story is advanced largely through dialogue and description. Concrete words and details (“*Charlene was chewing her favorite food slowly and carefully and she was making a funny face.*”) paint a vivid picture of each event for the reader. The resolution of the story is effectively presented with a well-chosen image (“*They both had big gaps in their smiles.*”).

**File Name: N5R Tooth Trouble**

**Narrative**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Tooth Trouble**

“Charlie, if you don’t like your oatmeal just tell me and I’ll get you some cereal,” Mom said, looking over the table with a puzzled face.

Her daughter, Charlie, short for Charlene, was chewing her favorite food slowly and carefully, and she was making a funny face. Charlie’s twin sister, Tess, was doing the same thing. “We like oatmeal, but we don’t want to disturb them,” said Tess.

“Disturb who?” asked Aaron, their older brother. He shook his curly black hair and looked strangely at Mom. She looked back and shrugged.

Tess and Charlie threw back their tiny, red copper heads and showed their teeth. They each wiggled one and smiled. “Looth tooth,” said Aaron getting up from the table and putting on his backpack.

“Looth tooth,” said Tess and Charlie at the same time. They were walking out the door with Aaron to catch the bus. Mom followed them out the door and

got into the car to go to work.

“Bye, kids, see you after school!” called Mom, backing out of the driveway.

On the bus, Charlie and Tess decided to tell their best best friend Molly first about their teeth. When they got to school, they ran into kindergarten room faster than Aaron could run to the eighth grade room. In the classroom, they met the very person they wanted to see, Molly Stagburn.

“Molly! Molly, guess what?” yelled the twins.

“What?” said Molly.

“We have loose teeth!” said the twins with a big smile. A look of horror spread across Molly’s face.

Oh, no!” she said.

“My big brother Zack said that when one tooth comes out the rest come out too. He knows everything because he’s almost in third grade.” Tess and Charlie almost cried.

At snack, they only ate one cracker each, and at lunch they decided not to eat at all.

After lunch, their teacher, Mrs. Tellen, noticed they were looking sort of

pale.

“Charlie, Tess, are you feeling alright?”

“No,” they replied.

“Oh dear, I suppose I should call your mother,” she sighed and walked over to the phone.

Half an hour later, the twins found themselves in the back of their mother’s car.

“Girls, I would like you to tell me what made you sick. Was it something you ate?” Charlie and Tess looked at each other.

“Actually Mom, we haven’t eaten all day,” said Tess.

“But you told me what you wanted. Did you change your minds?”

“No. but we didn’t want all our teeth to fall out.”

“What did Aaron tell you this time?” Mom asked remembering the time Aaron had told them that if you ate bananas, monkeys would fly out your ears. “It wasn’t Aaron this time. Molly’s brother said that if one tooth comes out, the others come out too,” said Tess as they pulled into the driveway.

“Molly’s brother has a grapenut for a brain.” Mom joked.

When they were inside the house, Mom put them on stools and gave them

each apples. Almost immediately, they forgot about their teeth and ate.

“Now you listen to me. All your teeth are not going to fall out. The only way that would happen would be if Aaron punched you hard enough. If that happened, I would take you to the dentist to have him look at your teeth, and I would ground Aaron for 20 years,” Mom said softly.

“Hey , my tooth came out!”

“Mine too!” Charlie and Tess yelled together.

“See, I told you Zack was wrong. Next time don’t listen to Molly,” said Mom.

Charlie and Tess looked at Mom and smiled. They both had big gaps in their smiles.

THE END

**File Name: N5R Tooth Trouble**

**Narrative**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **Tooth Trouble**

“Charlie if you don’t like your oatmeal just tell me and I’ll get you some cereal.” Mom said looking over the table with a puzzled face.

Her daughter, Charlie, short for Charlene was chewing her favorite food slowly and carefully and she was making a funny face. Charlie’s twin sister, Tess was doing the same thing. “We like oatmeal, but we don’t want to disturb them.” said Tess.

“Disturb who?” asked Aaron, their older brother. He shook his curly black hair and looked strangely at Mom. She looked back and shrugged.

Tess and Charlie threw back their tiny red cropper heads and showed their teeth. They each wiggled one and smiled. “Looth tooth.” said Aaron getting up from the table and putting on his backpack.

“Looth tooth.” said Tess and Charlie at the same time. They were walking out the door with Aaron to catch the bus. Mom followed them out the door and

got into the car to go to work.

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Oh, no!” she said.

“My big brother Zack said that when one tooth comes out the rest come out too. He knowes everything becausf he’s almost in third grade.” Tess and Charlie almost cried.

At snack they only ate one cracker each, and at lunch they decided not to eat at all.

After lunch, their teacher, Mrs. Tellen noticed they where looking sort of pale.

“Charlie, Tess, are you feeling all right?”

“No,” they replied.

“Oh dear, I suppose I should call your mother,” she sighed and walked over to the phone.

Half an hour later the twins found themselves in the back of their mothers car.

“Girls, I would like you to tell me what made you sick. Was it something you ate?” Charlie and Tess looked at each other.

“Actually Mom, we haven’t eaten all day,” said Tess.

“But you told me what you wanted. Did you change your minds?”

“No. but we didn’t want all our teeth to fall out.”

“What did Aaron tell you this time?” Mom asked remembering the time Aaron had told them that if you ate bananas, monkeys would fly out your ears. “It wasn’t Aaron this time. Molly’s brother said that if one tooth comes out the others come out too,” said Tess as they pulled into the driveway.

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When they were inside the house, Mom put them on schools and gave them each apples. Almost emediately they forgot about their teeth and ate.

“Now you listen to me. All your teeth are not going to fall out. the only way that would happen would be if Aaron punched you hard enough. If that happend I would take you to the dentist to have him look at your teeth, and I would ground Aaron for 20 years,” Mom said softly.

“Hey my tooth came out!”

“Mine too!” Charlie and Tess yelled together.

“See, I told you Zack was wrong. Next time don’t listen to Molly,” said Mom.

Charlie and Tess looked at Mom and smiled. They both had big gaps in their smiles.

THE END

***6-12 Range of Writing Narrative  
Samples***

**File Name: N6R How the Great Saltwater came to be****Narrative****Grade 6****Range of Writing****How the great Saltwater came to be**

A long, long time ago, there were many gods. Two were Sarias the salt god, and Walior the water god. They argued quite a bit and all of the other gods were sick of it. So was a newt named Yellow-Belly. I was the middle of the summer and one day when the gods were on a ship, Yellow-Belly had also snuck aboard. Once again, they were arguing and Yellow-Belly decided to put a stop to it once and for all.

“Sarias how can you put up with that insolent Walior? You guys should have a battle and whoever loses will be dead and you won’t have to worry about arguing anymore.”

Meanwhile up in the sky the other gods are trying to figure out a way to get the two gods to stop arguing but they didn’t want it to be in a violent way. They have no idea what the shrewd newt Yellow-Belly was up to.

Yellow-Belly gets Walior alone and now he want Walior to have a battle too. “Walior why are you just sitting here you guys should have a battle to the death so that you won’t have to argue about who’s right anymore.”

“Well Yellow-Belly I don’t know what if I lose and get killed?”

“Walior are you really asking me that? Of course you won’t lose and get killed. I mean you are the better of the two. You are more handsome and way stronger. You have nothing to lose by having a battle because Sarias is sure to lose.”

“Of course you are right Yellow-Belly and that is a great idea.”

Now Yellow-Belly has Walior eager to do battle with Sarias, but what if Sarias doesn’t agree?

“So Sarias have you made up your mind on whether you will have a battle with Walior?”

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing context for narrative to follow. Main characters are introduced** – Sarias the salt god, Walior the water god, and the most important character (protagonist) the newt Yellow-Belly. The arguing between the two gods becomes the focus / conflict of the narrative.

**Uses dialogue to develop characters and events,** so that the plot develops.

**Uses transitional clause** to signal shift in setting

**Uses dialogue to develop character,** which shows the reader how clever Yellow-Belly is

“No not really because I am worried that Walior might win.”

“Oh you mean that great buffoon. He couldn’t beat you if your eyes were shut and your hands tied up my lord. You have no need to worry about him because YOU are sure to be the winner. You are smaller sure but you have cunning and fearlessness on your side. I mean, have you lost a battle yet? No, because you are the best god ever.”

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details to develop action, events, and characters**

“I guess you are right and I will do as you suggest. But what about Walior?”

“Oh don’t worry about him my lord I have already taken care of him. He will die at your hand.”

“All right you gods are you ready for your battle? You know who will win and you don’t need to worry about it.”

**Uses dialogue to develop character.** This time, the dialogue is between the two gods, which again shows the reader how clever Yellow-Belly has been in setting up this action.

“So Sarias, you sure you want to do this? You know that I will win because I am much more handsome and I am way stronger.”

“Even so Walior I am more cunning and I haven’t lost to any beast yet.”

“There’s always a first time Sarias.”

There was a great battle that lasted 8 days and 8 nights. Eventually Sarias emerged victorious. As he was standing over Walior and gloating: “Ha ha I have killed you W...”

**Uses transitional clauses and words to signal shifts from one timeframe to another**

As he said this Walior reached up and slashed him in the stomach. As Sarias fell from the pain, his great-sword plunged into Walior’s heart. And so the great Sarias won the battle but he died in the end from his stomach wound because Walior had been very vicious and had cut a major artery. And so they both died because of a newt who was fed up with their antics. After they died, they both had left behind great quantities of both salt and water. The other gods saw it and they had to figure out what to do with all of that salt and water.

**Uses precise sensory language**

They were smart and they did the smartest thing that they could think of. They mixed all of the salt with all the water, and they made salt water. Then they picked a HUGE place to distribute all of it and there is now salt water because of that crazy newt, Yellow-Belly.

**Provides a conclusion which follows from the events and focus / conflict of the narrative**

But of course, Yellow-Belly had to be punished. However, the other gods were so happy because they didn't have to deal with arguing between the deceased, that they didn't want to punish Yellow-Belly very much. They just sentenced him and all of his descendants to a life in pond water with NO talking.

In this narrative, the writer tells the story of how the seawater became salty, in the manner of a myth or legend. She focuses it around the conflict between two gods, the god of salt and the god of water. The protagonist is the newt, whose interests and actions to get the gods to stop arguing drive the plot of the narrative.

The writer has organized a well-structured event sequence that unfolds naturally to develop the story line. She uses transition words, phrases, and clauses to move the plot along, and to signal shifts in time frame and setting (*“meanwhile”*, *“up in the sky”*).

The writer makes the tricky and clever character of the newt very clear throughout. Most of the action and character development is done through dialogue. There is some precise descriptive sensory language used, as well. At times, it would be helpful to have a bit more description or “narrator voice” along with the dialogue, but in general the writer controls this plot and character development well.

The narrative concludes with “how we got salt water,” which follows well from the narrated events.

**Narrative****Grade 7****Range of Writing****The Boy**

The young boy stood with the most menacing look he could muster spread across his face. He just stood there watching the endless columns stretch as far as the eye could see down the long, dusty road. The soldiers would turn and look as they went by, and he made sure to look right back. He made sure to stare as far as he could into the dark pupils of their eyes, as if it would raise the house that was now nothing more than a heap of ashes. Only a few charred remains of the walls were left.

As his eyes went from soldiers to remains he saw a small soft lump poking up from the ashes. He knew exactly what it was and he turned away. That teddy bear had been his favorite friend. Not a toy, it was more than a toy to him. For a second he was back on a green lawn, with the shutters of a house tapping softly on the window pane. And there was his bear. They waited for the next pirate ship to come around the bend in the road, so they could board it and make the captain walk the plank. But then he heard a shout and knew he was back on the dusty road with no green lawn and no shutters tapping softly.

He leaped down from his perch on an old dresser, one of the few things that hadn't been pillaged or burned in the fire. He bent down, putting both hands on his knees as his eyes searched the ground intently. He picked up the most deadly rock he could find and hopped back up on his perch to resume his watchful glare. No soldier escaped the watchful eyes as he probed them. The giant snake of blue tails was tapering off, and the boy could now see the end of the tail. The boy once again hopped down from his perch. He could feel the sweat-covered rock in his palm. The last of the blue columns were passing.

The boy took a step forward and leaned back, then whipped his body forward and released the rock at the same moment. The boy heard a

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing context for narrative to follow. Main character is introduced,** the boy. The story will be told from his **point of view**, a limited third person

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory details to capture the action and convey events:** The writer subtly establishes both the setting and focus - the conflict the boy is dealing with.

**Uses transitional clause to signal time shift** back in time (flashback). **Uses precise language** to capture the memory the boy has of his life before the soldiers came

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory details to capture the action and convey events,** and to develop the

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated events:** The boy's "hateful eyes with tears rolling forth" are a comment on the events of the story—the boy is angry but helpless in the face of war.

thud as the rock came home and the rear most soldier clutched his side and looked back – but all he saw were those hateful eyes with tears rolling forth.

For this narrative from a seventh-grade social studies class, the student was asked to write a story on the Civil War that focused on the effect of the war on one character at one moment in time. The writer effectively introduces a main character—a child whose home has been burned by the Yankees (“*the giant snake of blue tails*”) and relates events from his perspective.

The writer has organized a well-structured event sequence that unfolds naturally (though not in linear time order). To do this, he develops a structure that shifts the narrative from the main character’s present to a happier past, when the boy could play with his bear, and then back to the narrative present. He uses transitional clauses to signal this time shift. The writer uses precise words and phrases, sensory details, and some metaphoric language (“*giant snake of blue tails*”) to tell the story.

This narrative does not conclude in the traditional sense. The boy is left to throw a rock in helpless fury at the soldiers passing by. The lack of overt reflection is, in fact, an implied reflection on his helplessness in this war.

**File Name: N7R The Boy**

**Narrative**

**Grade 7**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Boy**

The young boy stood with the most menacing look he could muster spread across his face. He just stood there watching the endless columns stretch as far as the eye could see down the long, dusty road. The soldiers would turn and look as they went by, and he made sure to look right back. He made sure to stare as far as he could into the dark pupils of their eyes, as if it would raise the house that was now nothing more than a heap of ashes. Only a few charred remains of the walls were left.

As his eyes went from soldiers to remains he saw a small soft lump poking up from the ashes. He knew exactly what it was and he turned away. That teddy bear had been his favorite friend. Not a toy, it was more than a toy to him. For a second he was back on a green lawn, with the shutters of a house tapping softly on the window pane. And there was his bear. They waited for the next pirate ship to come around the bend in the road, so they could board it and make the captain walk the plank. But then he heard a shout and knew he was back on the dusty road with no green lawn and no shutters tapping softly.

He leaped down from his perch on an old dresser, one of the few things that hadn't been pillaged or burned in the fire. He bent down, putting both hands on his knees as his eyes searched the ground intently. He picked up the most deadly rock he could find and hopped back up on his perch to resume his watchful glare. No soldier escaped the watchful eyes as he probed them. The giant snake of blue tails was tapering off, and the boy could now see the end of the tail. The boy once again hopped down from his perch. He could feel the sweat-covered rock in his palm. The last of the blue columns were passing.

The boy took a step forward and leaned back, then whipped his body forward and released the rock at the same moment. The boy heard a thud as the rock came home and the rear most soldier clutched his side and looked back – but all he saw were those hateful eyes with tears rolling forth.



**File Name: N6R How the great Saltwater came to be**

**Narrative**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **How the great Saltwater came to be**

A long, long time ago, there were many gods. Two were Sarias the salt god, and Walior the water god. They argued quite a bit and all of the other gods were sick of it. So was a newt named Yellow-Belly. It was the middle of the summer and one day when the gods were on a ship, Yellow-Belly had also snuck aboard. Once again, they were arguing and Yellow-Belly decided to put a stop to it once and for all.

“Sarias how can you put up with that insolent Walior? You guys should have a battle and whoever loses will be dead and you won’t have to worry about arguing anymore.”

Meanwhile up in the sky the other gods are trying to figure out a way to get the two gods to stop arguing but they didn’t want it to be in a violent way. They have no idea what the shrewd newt Yellow-Belly was up to.

Yellow-Belly gets Walior alone and now he wants Walior to have a battle too. “Walior why are you just sitting here you guys should have a battle to the death so that you won’t have to argue about who’s right anymore.”

“Well Yellow-Belly I don’t know what if I lose and get killed?”

“Walior are you really asking me that? Of course you won’t lose and get killed. I mean you are the better of the two. You are more handsome and way stronger. You have nothing to lose by having a battle because Sarias is sure to lose.”

“Of course you are right Yellow-Belly and that is a great idea.”

Now Yellow-Belly has Walior eager to do battle with Sarias, but what if Sarias doesn’t agree?

“So Sarias have you made up your mind on whether you will have a battle with Walior?”

“No not really because I am worried that Walior might win.”

“Oh you mean that great buffoon. He couldn’t beat you if your eyes were shut and your hands tied up my lord. You have no need to worry about him because YOU are sure to be the winner. You are smaller sure but you have cunning and fearlessness on your side. I mean, have you lost a battle yet? No, because you are the best god ever.”

“I guess you are right and I will do as you suggest. But what about Walior?”

“Oh don’t worry about him my lord I have already taken care of him. He will die at your hand.”

“All right you gods are you ready for your battle? You know who will win and you don’t need to worry about it.”

“So Sarias, you sure you want to do this? You know that I will win because I am much more handsome and I am way stronger.”

“Even so Walior I am more cunning and I haven’t lost to any beast yet.”

“There’s always a first time Sarias.”

There was a great battle that lasted 8 days and 8 nights. Eventually Sarias emerged victorious. As he was standing over Walior and gloating: “Ha ha I have killed you W...”

As he said this Walior reached up and slashed him in the stomach. As Sarias fell from the pain, his great-sword plunged into Walior’s heart. And so the great Sarias won the battle but he died in the end from his stomach wound because Walior had been very vicious and had cut a major artery. And so they both died because of a newt who was fed up with their antics. After they died, they both had left behind great quantities of both salt and water. The other gods saw it and they had to figure out what to do with all of that salt and water.

They were smart and they did the smartest thing that they could think of. They mixed all of the salt with all the water, and they made salt water. Then they picked a HUGE place to distribute all of it and there is now salt water because of that crazy newt, Yellow-Belly.

But of course, Yellow-Belly had to be punished. However, the other gods were so happy because they didn’t have to deal with arguing between the deceased, that they didn’t want to punish Yellow-Belly very much. They just sentenced him and all of his descendants to a life in pond water with NO talking.

**File Name: N8R Black and White Photo****Narrative****Grade 8****Range of Writing****Black and White Photo**

I walked past the playground. The pigeons swarmed around the crumbs of food dropped by children, and made a cloud filled with feathers, dust, and leaves. Admiring the day with every step, I continued to walk through Central Park. I strode out of the park and onto the sidewalk. As I walked a few blocks, I picked out the tourists from the crowds. Most of them were stopping by every table to buy either and “I love NY” shirt or a postcard.

Finally, I saw the fountains and the big stone columns that protected the Metropolitan Museum. I ran up the endless steps, dodging the people and cameras. I entered the cavernous halls, donated my dollar, and was directed through stairways, exhibits, and halls. After I walked through the Greek pottery section, I entered the exhibit of Richard Avedon. It was my first time seeing his photographs, and I was fascinated.

I saw portraits of Marian Anderson, former presidents, and Andy Warhol. The crowds moved slowly, as if to try to suck up the emotions of the photographs for life. Several people blocked doorways, selfishly. With a little but meaningful push, I moved on. Each room was watched by a security guard, I thought of how lucky they were to be able to see these photos every day and have the time to think about each person being photographed. Most of the people were very important to society and history. Some photos were being blocked off, from the amount of people crowding around them, while other photos were lonely. I felt badly for those photos and made sure I stopped to look at them. Each photograph was in black and white but was able to capture the persons emotions and personality.

About three quarters of the way through the exhibit, I came across a lonely photo. I immediately walked over to it, and then when I was two feet away, I realized that the man in the photo must

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing context for narrative to follow.** The reflection / narrative will be from the **point of view** of the writer, with a focus on the insight drawn from the experience

**Descriptive details develop the experience** of being in the museum.

**Descriptive details develop the character's experience** of the photographs.

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events:** The writer uses sensory language and descriptive details to describe the photograph and the narrator's reaction to it

**Uses full-sentence transition to signal shift from one setting to another** as the writer arrives at the key photograph.

**Precise sensory details develop** both the image of the photograph and the writer's reaction to the photograph.

have been upset and lost. The man's face was round but hollow. His eyes were sunken in a he had dark bags surrounding them. He was beginning to go bald and his hair was worn and messy. He looked as if he hadn't bothered to shave for a week and little black prickles were starting to grow in where his beard should be. He appeared crushed and broken. Small tears gathered at the bottom of each eye, the type of tears that hadn't fallen yet but made the world around you look blurry. His mind seemed chained to a memory that he couldn't escape. I felt awful, sorry, and shocked.

Blinking my eyes, I woke myself from my daze. I looked at the bottom left hand corner of the portrait. His name was Colonel Paul Tibbets. I had never heard his name before. Then I noticed the words under his name. He was titled as the pilot of the B-29 Enola Gay. He was titled as the man who dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. As my lips repeated these words to myself, I felt even more sorry and even more shocked. I sensed from the photograph that when he dropped the bomb, he didn't know what he was doing. The photo told me he regretted it, and I sensed that he felt guilty and responsible for the 200,000 lives lost that day.

He was a man who made a huge impact on World War II. He is a man who models for us what war really is. He opened our eyes by dropping a monster who could not be tamed. Things like this happen during wars. People are killed. Not just the phony actors who spill their fake blood and fire their fake guns with fake smoke. Real people are killed. Nearly every person sees movies on wars. People are taught through commercialism that those movies are what was really is.

**Uses narrative technique of reflection, pondering on experience of seeing the photograph, coming to a new understanding (insight) of the significance of war.**

Before seeing this photograph, I was like other people who thought war was a bunch of GI Joe's, dressed in camouflage, being brave. But after seeing this photo, I realized that war was just pain and misery. It made me wake up to the real world and learn that everyone is affected by war, both those who are killed and injured and those who kill and injure them. Both sides of people are innocent. By looking into Colonel Paul Tibbets' watered eyes, I was awakened to what happened and what can happen in war. He helped define the word "victim." In war, those who are bombed, hurt and killed are victims, but those who are instructed to perform terrible acts in war are victims too. War affects everyone. Everyone is innocent. Everyone is a victim.

**Uses transitional clause to signal shift from one time frame to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events**

I wish that people could see this photograph before making opinions on war today. I wish that Colonel Paul Tibbets' lonely picture was surrounded by crowds at the Met. I wish that he had the opportunity to teach more people from his huge mistake rather than us learning by another being made.

**Conclusion follows from events of the experience.**  
Writer **reflects further** on what this photograph has meant to her.

For this reflective narrative from an eighth-grade language arts class, the student was asked to write an essay on a moment in her life when she realized something new. This essay is not a story in the fictional sense, but it does use narrative techniques. The writer chose to write about seeing a photograph at a museum and the understanding of the world gleaned from that experience.

In the reflection, the writer uses a structure in which she first describes the experience of seeing the photograph and then reflects on the meaning of the photograph in an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. She uses precise words and phrases and sensory language to tell about the experience itself and reflective details to develop the response to the photograph.

The reflection concludes with the narrator's ideas about what she wishes people could learn from the photograph and the story it tells.

**File Name: N8R Black and White Photo**

**Narrative**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

### **Black and White Photo**

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About three quarters of the way through the exhibit, I came across a lonely photo. I immediately walked over to it, and then when I was two feet away, I realized that the man in the photo must have been upset and lost. The man's face was round but hollow. His eyes were sunken in and he had dark bags surrounding them. He was beginning to go bald and his hair was worn and messy. He looked as if he hadn't bothered to shave for a week and little black prickles were starting to grow in where his beard should be. He appeared crushed and broken. Small tears

gathered at the bottom of each eye, the type of tears that hadn't fallen yet but made the world around you look blurry. His mind seemed chained to a memory that he couldn't escape. I felt awful, sorry, and shocked.

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He was a man who made a huge impact on World War II. He is a man who models for us what war really is. He opened our eyes by dropping a monster who could not be tamed. Things like this happen during wars. People are killed. Not just the phony actors who spill their fake blood and fire their fake guns with fake smoke. Real people are killed. Nearly every person sees movies on wars. People are taught through commercialism that those movies are what was really is.

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I wish that people could see this photograph before making opinions on war today. I wish that Colonel Paul Tibbets' lonely picture was surrounded by crowds at the Met. I wish that he had the opportunity to teach more people from his huge mistake rather than us learning by another being made.

**File Name: N8R Deadly Ink**

**Narrative**

**Grade 8****Range of Writing****Deadly Ink****Queen Elizabeth I**

One tiny black leg gracefully sweeps forward. Then five more identical legs immediately follow. The distance covered is just slightly over a mere quarter of an inch. Carried on its face is no discernible expression. The same face carried from the first introduction to oxygen. To freedom. To life. The little bug pauses shortly from its purposeful stride.

Yes indeed, there is much happening outside in the country of England. The year is 1587, and the month February. Everyone still wishes me to be married, but I do not think it a wise idea. Should I hand my country over to someone else who will recklessly run England? No. I owe it to my subjects to keep them safe as long as possible, and for as long as I am alive. I also at the moment need to keep my country safe from France and Spain who seem to be plotting against me, planning to take over this country.

However, my attention is focused on the bug. Such a frail, helpless looking character.

The task at hand requires only a signature from me. My name, written identically countless times before. The consequence of signing this paper are far bigger than any paper put forth in my past existence, unfortunately. This time my signature means the death of a fellow human being. My cousin, Mary, the Scottish queen.

The bug continues its deliberate march forward, this time coming closer to the figure standing across from me, the woman reading the paper. It seems to glance upward at my huge figure looming over it. Threatening, but at the moment sitting still.

There is no question about what I must do. Mary has been kept in many different prisons here after being accused of plotting her husband's

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context for narrative.** The key conflict / focus in the story, "to freedom, to life" (or not) is introduced, though not yet fully developed

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator,** Queen Elizabeth, in the first person.

**Uses a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events,** as attention shifts back to the bug.

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey events:** The writer uses details to develop suspense of the internal conflict the Queen is struggling with, her character, and the events of the story.

**Uses narrative techniques of pacing, reflection, and description to develop the character of Queen, the events of the story, and the internal conflict she faces.**

murder and after escaping prison in Scotland to come asking for my help. I had no choice but to keep her here. I have kept her here for over twenty years. I could not leave her helpless.

Now, however, Mary is guilty of high treason. She was found to be communicating with France and Spain. She has been devising plans with them to take over England. To let her live would be wrong. Nevertheless, she is a relative of mine. In addition, she is a queen. How can I put to death royalty? The hand belonging to none other than me has to sign the paper for her death. Is there a special term for me giving approval to Mary to be killed? Regret? Shame? Murder?

A hand seemingly unnoticed by the bug raises into the air.

My signature is the task at hand. My signature is Mary's death. The tip of my quill pen finds its way to the paper. My heart beat finds its rate speeding up.

I look up just in time to see the hand of one of my guards falling, slicing through the air. A foot away from the table. Half a foot. Two inches.

The little bug looks upward at the hand falling above its back. It panics. The frail legs start to move as fast, and almost faster, than the bug knew it could. Not fast enough.

A cold chill runs down my back, causing my hand to shake at the impact of the other hand hitting the table. Of the other hand hitting the bug. I look down at my signature. Elizabeth. In the middle of the "z", there is a tiny fault where my hand slipped. The bump is hardly noticeable to those who would glance at my signature in the future. However, engraved in my mind is my name holding the mistake in the "z", holding the bug's death, and holding Mary's death.

**Shifts perspective back and forth** between the bug and the Queen to help create dramatic tension

**Uses description and reflection to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome**, focusing the reader on what is about to happen, both to the bug and to Mary

**Provides a conclusion** of the bug's death and Mary's death that **follows from events of the story**. The lack of reflection on Elizabeth's part indicates that the time for reflecting is over and she has taken action.

For this narrative from an eighth-grade social studies class, the student was asked to write a narrative showing a moment of critical importance in the life of a historical character the class had studied. This writer effectively introduces a character, Queen Elizabeth I, and tells the story of her decision to execute her cousin Mary. The writer uses the bug as a narrative device to build the dramatic tension as Elizabeth tries to come to her decision.

The writer develops a structure in which the focus shifts back and forth between Elizabeth's ruminations on her cousin's fate and that of the bug that symbolically represents her cousin, a use of metaphor that is not stated in the Standards at this grade level. The event sequences unfold naturally and logically. The writer uses precise words and phrases and sensory details to tell the story and to develop Elizabeth as a character. She sequences events so that they build inexorably to the outcome of the death of both the bug and Mary, an aspect of narrative writing not stated in the Standards at this grade level.

The narrative concludes almost abruptly, as the bug is killed and Elizabeth arrives at her decision that Mary must be executed. It seems to reflect the firmness with which she finally decides, after having struggled mightily with the decision.

**File Name: N8R Deadly Ink**

**Narrative**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

**Deadly Ink**  
**Queen Elizabeth I**

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Yes indeed, there is much happening outside in the country of England. The year is 1587, and the month February. Everyone still wishes me to be married, but I do not think it a wise idea. Should I hand my country over to someone else who will recklessly run England? No. I owe it to my subjects to keep them safe as long as possible, and for as long as I am alive. I also at the moment need to keep my country safe from France and Spain who seem to be plotting against me, planning to take over this country.

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**File Name: N9-10R Walking the Dog****Narrative****Grade 9****Range of Writing****Walking the Dog**

I slouch on the couch, comfortable in my favorite clothes, staring at the news anchor as he drones on about that disaster or this riot. A snow storm is supposed to be moving in tonight, the weatherman preaches. My dog Chloe lays curled up beside my feet, with her head propped on her leg. She's our pure bred Brittney Spaniel recently adopted and already a special member of the family. As I push myself into the cushions, my feet nudge her a bit too much for her own taste. She then starts the slow process of standing up. She squints her eyes while she stretches out her leg, as if trying to grasp at some imaginary treasure on the floor. With hesitation she pushes herself up with her hind legs first. Walking out of the room as if she had completely forgotten me, she goes to check on her food that is so predictably there. I am amazed at how such an animal can keep to her schedule better than I do mine.

I then hear the all too familiar directive from my mother in the adjacent room. I have come to expect it, yet it still gets me agitated. I sink even deeper into the warm embrace of the couch, as if hearing nothing. I always delay as much as possible the dreaded task before me. After her third command, I wearily begin to pull myself away from the comfort that has enveloped me. Out the window the flakes form horizontal streaks as the wind blows furiously. As slowly as possible, I stretch out my arms and legs, not wanting to leave the peace of the room.

I trudge up the stairs to change into something appropriate for the task that lay before me. Now fully awake, I bound down the stairs. Searching for me gloves and hat, and finding none, I unwillingly grab my father's worn knit cap, only to be stopped by my mother holding mine in

**Engages and orients the reader by setting out a situation and its significance, establishing a point of view, and introducing a character:**  
The writer sets the context and focus (relaxing on the couch with the dog, not wanting to go out) for the story to follow. The narrative is told from the perspective of a third person narrator.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the character of the dog, who is clearly important to the narrator**

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome, a change in perspective/mood resulting from the walk with the dog**

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

her hand while she rolls her eyes. Reluctantly I pull the gloves over my hands, and my hat over my head. I stomp towards the door as Chloe bounds after me. Pulling down the leash and snapping it to her collar, I slowly open the door and step out into the dark cold.

Just then, the hard driving flakes seem to slow down, and light upon the dust covered world. I take a deep breath of the rich air, revitalizing me. Leaping down the steps, I begin the route that has become routine. With Chloe at the lead, no force but her adventurous spirit pulls me along. Passing her, she takes it as a sign to quicken her own pace. She soon starts into a gallop, pulling me along once again. I then hit full stride, keeping abreast of while running together as if that was all there was to do. We come around the next corner, and see the house in plain view. That quickly? It seems like only a few moments have passed before we begin to slow down. We both reluctantly slacken our pace into a slow trot, and then a flat out walk.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, and characters,** as the narrator's mood shifts dramatically while she runs with the dog through the snow

Panting, exhausted, we climb the stairs with no real drive. Opening the door I begin the arduous task of drying Chloe off. With an annoyed look on my face and an edge to my voice, I call to my mother to bring a towel. Through the door one sails toward me. Holding her tightly by the collar, I ruffle her with the towel until she is sufficiently dry. As soon as my grasp releases, she runs towards the kitchen to see my mother. I pull my hat and gloves off, and put them both in their proper place together. Removing the now wet boots, I bound up the stairs and change into my old clothes. I am soon back on the couch, with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria. With a pleased smile on my face, I push myself as far as possible into the cushions and change the channel.

**Uses precise details to mirror details from beginning**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative:** Though so much is the same as at the beginning, the writer is "pleased" now

In this narrative, the writer tells the story of a young woman who is bored at home on the couch. She takes a walk in the snow with her dog, and even though she returns to the same couch at the end, her perspective has subtly changed. The narrative is told from a third person point of view.

The writer uses some dialogue and descriptive detail, which capture her boredom at the beginning (*“drones on”, “preaches”*), and how much she values the dog (*“squints her eyes while she stretches out her leg, as if trying to grasp at some imaginary treasure on the floor”*). The writer’s words are carefully chosen throughout, and she creates the same scene at the end of the story as at the beginning (*“with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria”*), with the single word, “pleased”, to make clear that though the scene is similar, the narrator has been changed by the walk with the dog.

To develop the story, the writer uses a clear sequence of events beginning and ending with sitting on the couch, and a run with the dog in between to create a cohesive whole by the end of the narrative.

**File Name: N 9-10R Walking the Dog**

**Narrative**

**Grade 9**

**Range of Writing**

### **Walking the Dog**

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**File Name: N11-12R All the Roads to Kansas**

**Narrative**

**Grade 11**

**Range of Writing**

### **All The Roads to Kansas**

I was six years old when my mother ran off with the pizza delivery boy. She sent a note in the mail to my grandmother that read, “Katie’s at home. Needs food and clothing. Jane.” Gramma drove the one-thousand-seven-hundred-twenty miles from Kansas to pick me up, pulling into the trailer lot in her blue, wood-paneled station wagon, slamming the car door behind her. I was sitting in a rusty hubcap on the front lawn, my chin cupped in my palm and my heart thundering wildly when she said, “Well, I’m here.”

She wore a pink silk handkerchief around the beehive of her blue-tinted hair, a paisley mu-mu and orange scuffs on her feet. Red, plastic-rimmed glasses hung from the chain around her neck and a cigarette dangled from the corner of her pink-painted mouth. She was terrifying.

She was perfect.

She crossed the front lawn without saying a word, opening the door to the trailer as she looked back, once, for me to comply. I followed her, remaining stubbornly, apprehensively, at the front door. She bustled around the house, bundling up all my clothes and tying them with a piece of twine she found heaped in the back of her Buick. Before she decided it was time to leave, she trussed me up in my snow gear, explaining tersely, “It’s cold in Kansas this time of year.”

I had been sitting inside the trailer, alone, for three days. Leaving for Kansas was the most spectacular adventure I could imagine, so wondrous I could barely believe it was real. She hauled me into the Buick, grunting at the dead weight of my tense body, and we sat on the leather bench seat of her car as

**Engages and orients the reader by setting out a situation and its significance, establishing a point of view, and introducing a character:**  
The writer succinctly sets the context and focus (the mother running off, the child waiting for the grandmother) for the story to follow. The narrative is told from the perspective of a third person

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the character of the grandmother from the child's perspective**

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome—leaving home behind and going to Kansas**

she let it idle in the lot. She was flicking cigarette ashes out the open window when I mustered up the nerve to pinch her, just to make sure I wasn't dreaming.

"What--?" she narrowed her gaze at me, dragging on the cigarette so the tip gleamed in a bright orange "O" between her lips.

"You're real," I whispered in wonder.

"As much as you are," she huffed, tossing the cigarette from the car and cranking up the window. "Just don't make a habit of pinching people to test out that theory, 'kay, Sugar?" She rammed the car into reverse and sped away from the lot. The pieces of my childhood were fading as fast as the scenery, and yet I was filled with a sense of bone-deep elation. For the first time in three days, I smiled.

I saw Gramma cut a look at me out of the corner of her eye, and nod. She glanced back at the road when she pulled the slip of paper from her pocket, and said, "It's all you've got of your momma, so I figured you'd want to keep it."

I was six, and I couldn't read the words my mother had hastily scrawled on a grocery receipt, but I kept that piece of paper fisted in my hand all along the roads to Kansas. "Gramma," I whispered after a few hours, barely awake and suddenly terrified, "are you ever gonna bring me home?"

I could see her eyes in the passing lights of oncoming cars, watching them fill up with giant, watery tears, saw them go soft and achy. "Oh, Katydid," she murmured gently, reaching out in the darkness to clutch the fist that held my mother's letter. "We're getting there."

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, and characters**

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative: the grandmother recognizing the sadness and importance of this moment for the child, whose old home and mother are now gone**

In this narrative, the writer tells the story of a young child who has just been abandoned by her mother, 677 and whose grandmother has come from far away to claim her. The narrative is told from a third person point of view, the young child, but the grandmother is the most significant character in the story.

The writer uses some dialogue and descriptive detail, which capture the hardscrabble existence of the child (“*sitting in a rusty hubcap on the front lawn*”) and the commanding presence of the grandmother (“*She was terrifying. She was perfect.*”).

To develop the story, the writer uses a clear sequence of events beginning with the grandmother coming to pick up the narrator, to create a cohesive whole by the end of the narrative.

Beginning with the first sentence (“*I was six years old when my mother ran off with the pizza delivery boy*”), the writer builds carefully toward the outcome that this child will not see her mother or her home again, and that the grandmother is in fact rescuing her.

**File Name: N 11-12R All the Roads to Kansas**

**Narrative**

**Grade 11**

**Range of Writing**

### **All The Roads to Kansas**

I was six years old when my mother ran off with the pizza delivery boy. She sent a note in the mail to my grandmother that read, “Katie’s at home. Needs food and clothing. Jane.” Gramma drove the one-thousand-seven-hundred-twenty miles from Kansas to pick me up, pulling into the trailer lot in her blue, wood-paneled station wagon, slamming the car door behind her. I was sitting in a rusty hubcap on the front lawn, my chin cupped in my palm and my heart thundering wildly when she said, “Well, I’m here.”

She wore a pink silk handkerchief around the beehive of her blue-tinted hair, a paisley mu-mu and orange scuffs on her feet. Red, plastic-rimmed glasses hung from the chain around her neck and a cigarette dangled from the corner of her pink-painted mouth. She was terrifying.

She was perfect.

She crossed the front lawn without saying a word, opening the door to the trailer as she looked back, once, for me to comply. I followed her, remaining stubbornly, apprehensively, at the front door. She bustled around the house, bundling up all my clothes and typing them with a piece of twine she found heaped in the back of her Buick. Before she decided it was time to leave, she trussed me up in my snow gear, explaining tersely, “Its cold in Kansas this time of year.”

I had been sifting inside the trailer, alone, for three days. Leaving for Kansas was the most spectacular adventure I could imagine, so wondrous I could barely believe it was real. She hauled me into the Buick, grunting at the dead weight of my tense body, and we sat on the leather bench seat of her car as she let it idle in the lot. She was flicking cigarette ashes out the open window when I mustered up the nerve to pinch her, just to make sure I wasn’t dreaming.

“What--?” she narrowed her gaze at me, dragging on the cigarette so the tip gleamed in a bright orange “O” between her lips.

“You’re real,” I whispered in wonder.

“As much as you are,” she huffed, tossing the cigarette from the car and cranking up the window. “Just don’t make a habit of pinching people to test out that theory, ‘kay, Sugar?” She rammed the car into reverse and sped away from the lot. The pieces of my childhood were fading as fast as the scenery, and yet I was filled with a sense of bone-deep elation. For the first time in three days, I smiled.

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**File Name: N11-12R Playing Me**

**Narrative**

**Grade 11**

**Range of Writing**

### **Playing Me**

In the real world, I am insecure. I walk down the halls of my high school trying to project an image of confidence and self-respect. Despite my concentrated attempts, I feel neither of these. Like everyone else, I want to be liked, admired, and respected, the kind of person that everyone thinks well of. This desire to be accepted taints my personality, causing an aspect of me to emerge that is not anything close to the reality of my character. Sometimes I can talk to a person and laugh with that person for a long time, but that person still has no idea of who I am. They haven't even scratched the surface, but it's not their fault. I can't expect anyone to become acquainted with me when insecurity urges me to put on the face that I know they want to see. In my life of lies, I have one truth. It is something I can never lie about how much I love, no matter whom I talk to. I can never ignore the fact that it and it alone pulls me out and makes me real. When I am on stage I may be playing a character that isn't myself, but I, for once, am living the truth.

My head is bent down, concentrating on the slippery, uncooperative strings of the hoop tied around my waist. I suck my stomach in, trying to avoid the inevitable moment when the safety pin that holds the thin fabric together will pop open and stab my belly button. The hoop flares outward from my waist, just brushing the ground at my feet. It is a pale gray, with irregular white splotches scattered throughout. The tissue paper thin fabric holds its hoop shape with the aid of three wicker circles glued to the inside. My corset sucks my torso in and pushes it up in all the right places, making me feel feminine in the old-fashioned way. My bare shoulders display a faint bathing suit line, partially covered by the wavy tumble of pale hair across my face. My arms are bent at the elbow, my hands a faint blur as I struggle with my hoop skirt. The outline of my body stands out clearly from the dark of the risers stacked behind

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing context and focus for narrative to follow—the tension between the way the writer feels and the way she presents herself. The reflection / narrative will be from the point of view of the writer.**

**Establishes the significance of the observation.**

**Uses precise words, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the costume that means so much to the writer.**

me. A gaudy assortment of costume pieces are sprinkled across the top of the risers, awaiting attention or use. My beat-up sneakers are visible a few feet away, unwelcome reminders of the tenth grader in jeans and a sweatshirt who had first reached for the hoop skirt and corset ten minutes ago. The rest of my costume is draped carefully behind me, almost slipping to a puddle of silk on the carpet. In a moment, I will emerge from behind the curtain and, arms in the air, wiggle the cool, smooth dress over my head, completing the physical transformation to my character. But for the moment, I am engaged in the difficult task of securing my hoop, the most integral aspect of my costume.

**Uses precise words, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the costume that means so much to the writer.**

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome—the writer’s transformation on stage**

I loved the costume more than anything. In my opinion, it was the best thing to ever come out of the U-32 costume closet. I loved the feeling of the swishy layers of skirts swaying back and forth as I stalked across the auditorium, and the smooth touch of the satiny cloth against my back and arms. I felt as though I had become the six-year old version of me, playing dress-up in my best friend’s attic. I used to find the most glamorous, beautiful outfits I could, and then prance downstairs and find some adoring grown-up to show off for. My friends and I would have costume parades, and if we were at my house, I’d beg my mother to take pictures of us posing together. As a little six-year-old, I would have killed for this costume, and let’s just say that ten years later, nothing had changed.

**Uses narrative technique to move from one time setting to another and back again**

**Uses description and reflection to develop experiences and character**

The hour before each show is filled with a high concentration of pre-show adrenaline, the imminence of the performance causing a delicious tension that hangs in the air. The cast and the crew rush madly around, trying to accomplish a thousand things that all seem to be, at the last minute, the deciding factor in the quality of the play. Costumes are pinned or sewed, makeup is slathered on by the spongefull, and props are set in their places or searched for. Everything combined created chaos, but in the beautiful way you only appreciated after it’s over. As we all try to do warm-ups in our crazy and uncooperative costumes, I stare around the auditorium, visualizing the people that will soon fill it’s seats. My gaze flickers up to the stage, the beautiful stage, and I picture our story unfolding across it’s face. I smile as I bend first to the right and

**Builds a tone of keen tension / anticipation towards the outcome of the story—the actual performance on stage.**

the then to the left, wishing that the pure excitement and nervous anticipation I was experiencing could be bottled and saved for later enjoyment.

My performance energy carries me to my spot backstage where I attentively list to the audience commotion as I squeeze the clammy hands of my fellow cast members. Then the moment comes when the lights dim and the audience falls into a unanimous hush, just in time for the best sound of all, the opening of the curtain. The stage lights up and the reality of the audience world gives way to focus on the set and the actors that enter our new world of the play.

I stand perfectly still backstage, my eyes tightly closed, listening attentively for Tamsen's line to bring me on. I am silently mouthing the words along with her, but I jump a little when I hear it anyway. "And now for something a tad delightful, a bit decadent, and a little devilish...the Duchess of Dressing Up!" The Duchess of Dressing Up raises her chin, ignoring the momentary was of butterflies and the goosebumps that cover her arms as she moves onto the stage. I eagerly soak up the bright lights and the knowledge that everyone is watching me. I revel in this awareness, allowing the audience presence to enhance my acting. I shut of all access to my \*\*\*ness and become someone else. My alter ego. My other half. My stage self. Each moment I spend on stage pulls more out of my character, forcing me to focus and perform as hard as I can. I am in heaven.

Being on stage infuses me with a special feeling that I have grown o love fiercely over the years. It lends me the confidence and the self-respect that I constantly seek whenever I'm offstage, out of the light. I feel like a fish in water; I am in my element. If I am on stage, I am happy, whether I'm front and center or somewhere out in the distant downstage right. When I say a line, people listen to me, and I can do whatever I want because it's not me. It's someone else. With that feeling of becoming another person, I can get away with anything. Only then am I truly confident.

As I stand behind the curtain, my fingers fumbling with my skirt and my hair cascading over my face, I am not on stage, but I am still happy. I am myself,

**Continues to build a tone of keen tension / anticipation toward the outcome of the story—the actual performance on stage. Uses sensory language, telling details, and pacing to slow down the action and focus reader attention on the bia moment that is comina**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative:** In the long reflection / conclusion, the writer begins to **reflect on** the meaning of the onstage

caught in a moment of unawareness, caught in a moment of pure existence and not of performance.

In this piece of blended writing from a language arts class, the student was asked to write a reflective essay on an aspect of her life that was significant to her. This reflective essay is not a story, but it does use elements of story and narrative techniques. The writer chooses to write about the tension she experiences between herself as an actor offstage, and who she becomes onstage.

In the reflection, the writer uses a chronological structure in which the event sequences unfold naturally and logically. The writer uses precise words and phrases and sensory details to tell the story of what she experiences as she prepares to go onstage. She controls the pacing carefully, which helps to build toward the final outcome of the essay—going onto the stage.

The reflection builds to a conclusion, where the writer reflects on the sense of being “caught in a moment of pure existence”, which is clearly more significant to her than performance.

**Narrative****Grade 11****Range of Writing****Playing Me**

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