

In Common: Effective Writing for All Students
Collection of All Narrative Samples, K-12

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

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Document Overview

Common Core State Writing Standard 3: Narrative Writing

The third Common Core State Writing Standard calls for students to "write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences." The following collection of student work offers a series of samples illustrating what effective narrative writing might look like at each grade level.

The first section of the document is comprised of "On Demand" writing. This section contains pieces written in response to a uniform text-based prompt. The second section is made up of "Range of Writing" samples. These pieces provide examples of student writing for "a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences" over both extended and shorter time frames.

Each piece in the collection is annotated using the language of the Common Core State Standards for a particular grade level and writing type.

Brief User Guide for On-Demand Narrative Writing

Brief User Guide for On-Demand Narrative Writing

The pieces in this On-Demand section represent one of the three types of writing named in the Common Core State Standards for Writing: narrative writing. Students at all grade levels were given a stimulus and a writing prompt. Students at kindergarten through grade five were asked to write a narrative about a painting of three dogs and a cat. At grades six through twelve, students were given a text about the Dust Bowl, and several accompanying photographs, and were asked to write a narrative growing out of some aspect of the Dust Bowl experience. All writing was done on their own, without input from peers or teachers.

The prompts and the individual pieces based on them are arranged in grade order. Each piece has a file number for easy identification. Every piece of writing includes two versions that have been transcribed exactly as written by the student – one annotated with the language of the Common Core Standards, and one un-annotated for a variety of uses. In addition, pieces in the K-5 collection have a third version as well; this version has been revised and edited for major errors in conventions and can be used as a model for students. Kindergarten pieces also include PDF's of original student work, including student writing and drawing. This is because kindergarten students may use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to satisfy the Standards.

Suggestions on how to use these pieces are available at the end of the introductory document, "Using the *In Common* Resource."

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
several loosely
linked events in
the order in
which they
occurred**

*In a house, the dogs want the cat. **

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.

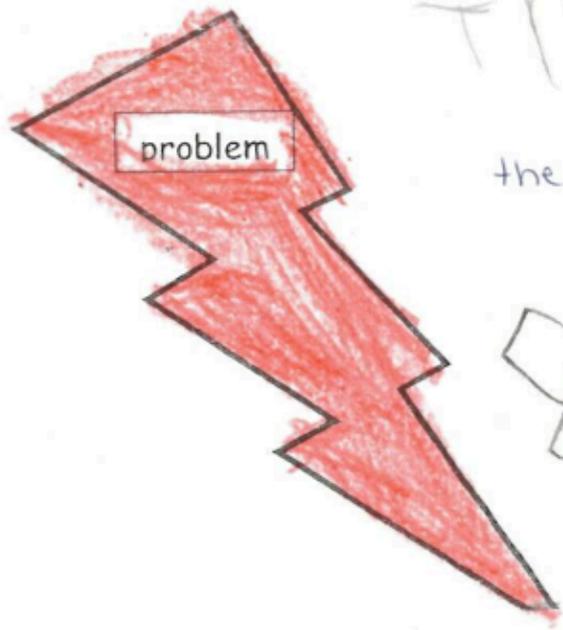
**dictation in italics*

In a house. (H)



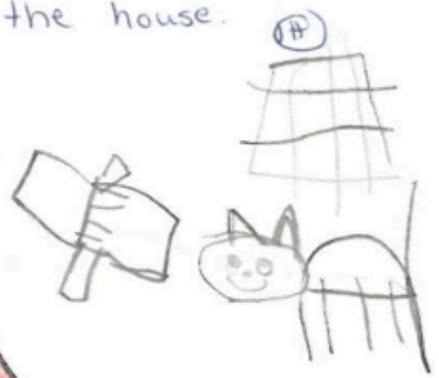


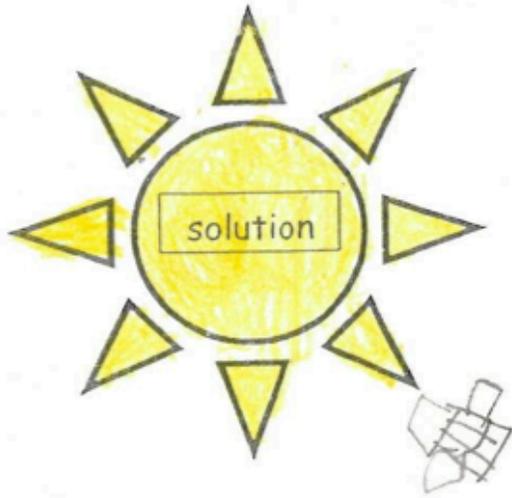
The dogs want
the cat. 



THE CAT WXS WRECKS

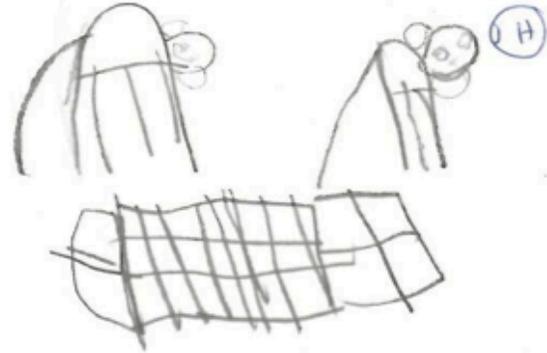
the house.





Dogs

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.

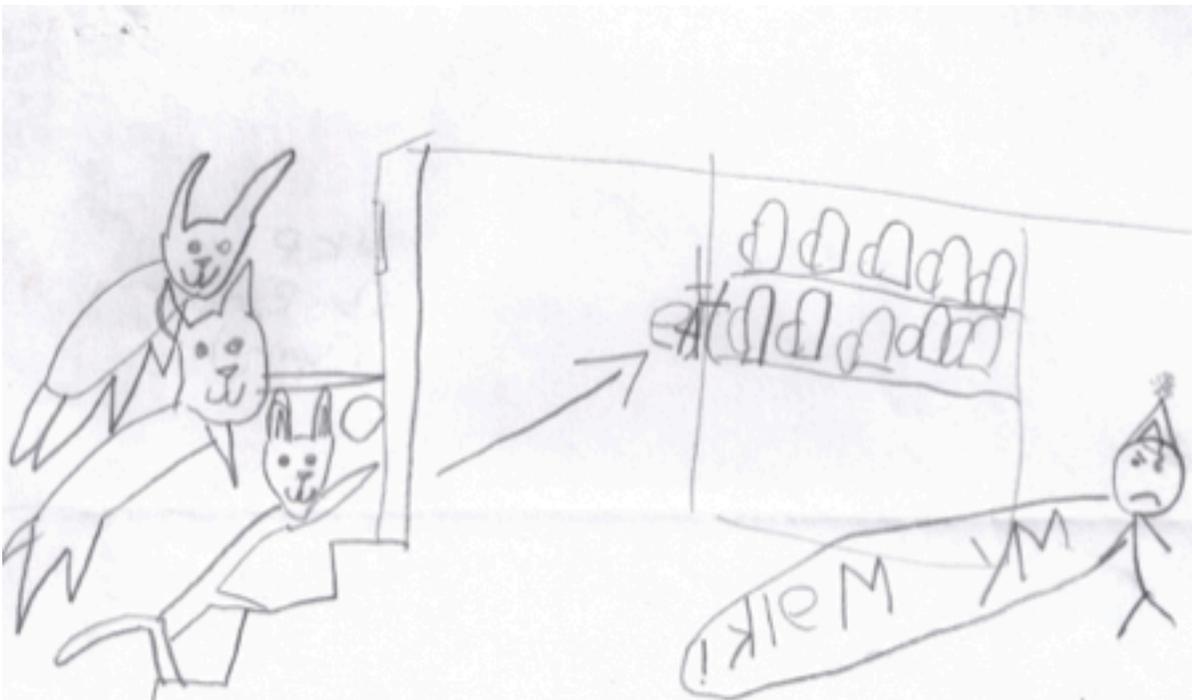
File Name: NKSP Cat Burglar

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 mudi tow dogs
 of milk Two

kam to hop some it opind.
 came help soon opened

the cat Aet all the melk.
 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

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 class room 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

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.

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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 Majj. 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 stdet the stdets name was Kiana Kiana was nice an she was a panda all the other kids were super eicsted but Kiana was sie she walit in the class room ms. moore said eveone say hello to Kiana Kiana was not sie anymore she rzed they were all friedlee too Dogs were helping her case this was her fist Day of school the Dogs were willy nice one Dogs name was tito and the ohter Dogs name was maiJ they Became Best frieds 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 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 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 finally 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

Uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey events precisely

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, Surgar and Shantell danced with the monsters.”

Uses dialogue and description of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop events and show the response of characters to situations

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 Surgar 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 Surgar 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 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. 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 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, Sargar 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 to 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 buisness 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

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

Uses description to develop events and show the responses of characters to situations

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.

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 electrifying 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 men 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.
 1. Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
 2. 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 loically.

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 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.

"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

Uses precise descriptive sensory language to convey experience; language captures the action going on here, as the dust swallows the narrator

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.

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 a 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.

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."

Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated events, the struggle to survive at the migrant camp

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 murmmurs 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

Uses

sensory details to convey vivid picture of experience

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

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.

File Name: N 9-10P 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 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.

Brief User Guide for Range of Writing Narrative Writing

Brief User Guide for Range of Writing, Narrative

The pieces in this Range of Writing section represent one of the three types of writing named in the Common Core State Standards for Writing: narrative writing. However, unlike the on-demand pieces, these pieces were not done in response to a particular focusing question or under specific conditions. Rather, these pieces represent a wide variety of content areas, curriculum units, conditions for writing, and purposes – exactly what one would expect to find in a range of classrooms. They reflect Common Core State Writing Standard 10 which specifies that students “[w]rite routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.”

Like the on-demand pieces, these pieces are arranged in grade order. Each piece has a file number for easy identification. Every piece of writing includes two versions that have been transcribed exactly as written by the student – one annotated with the language of the Common Core Standards, and one unannotated for a variety of uses. In addition, pieces in the K-5 collection have a third version as well; this version has been revised and edited for major errors in conventions and can be used as a model for students. Kindergarten pieces also include PDF’s of original student work, including student writing and drawing. This is because kindergarten students may use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to satisfy the Standards.

Suggestions on how to use these pieces are available at the end of the introductory document, “Using the *In Common* Resource.”

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 wipt 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

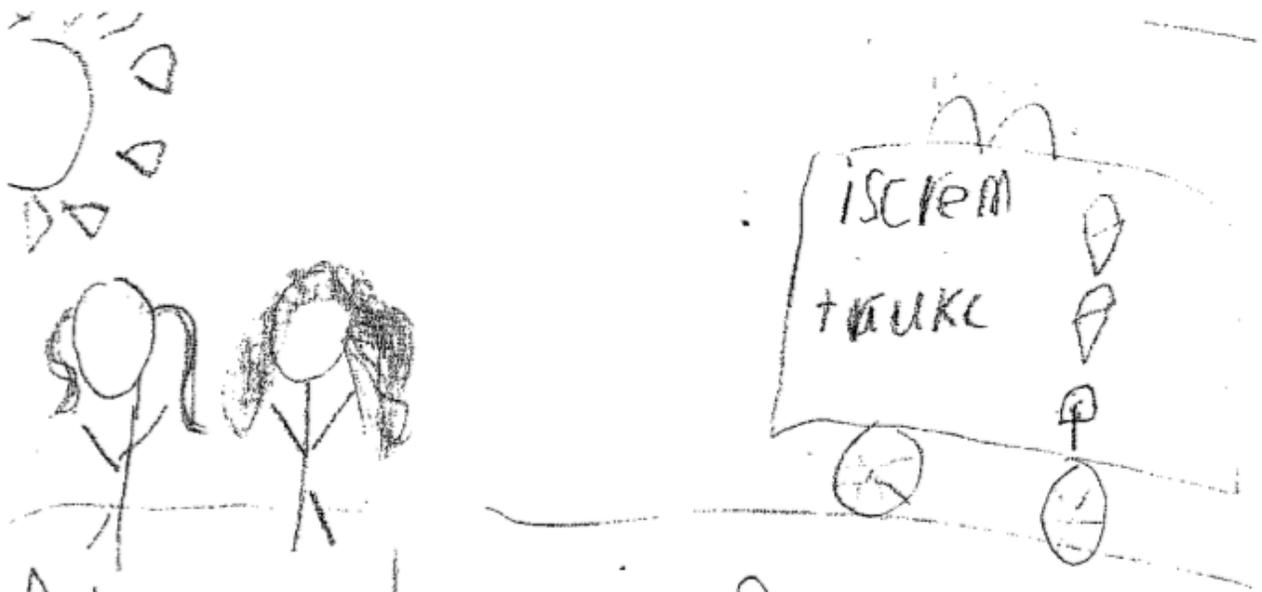
Kindergarten

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 wipt cream it was a lot of fun.



My best friend

came to my house

the iScReM truck

came to 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
 muffins and we ice Dakte
 And put on WIPT cream
 it was a lot 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

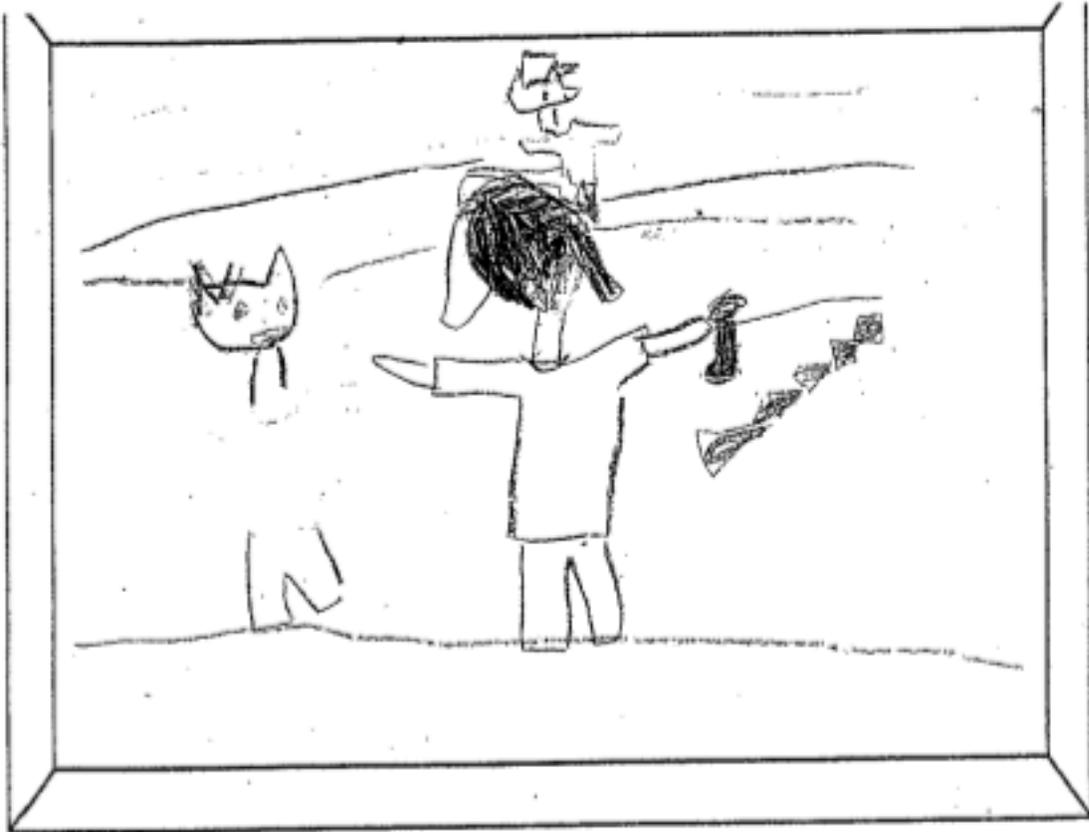
Kindergarten

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 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

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

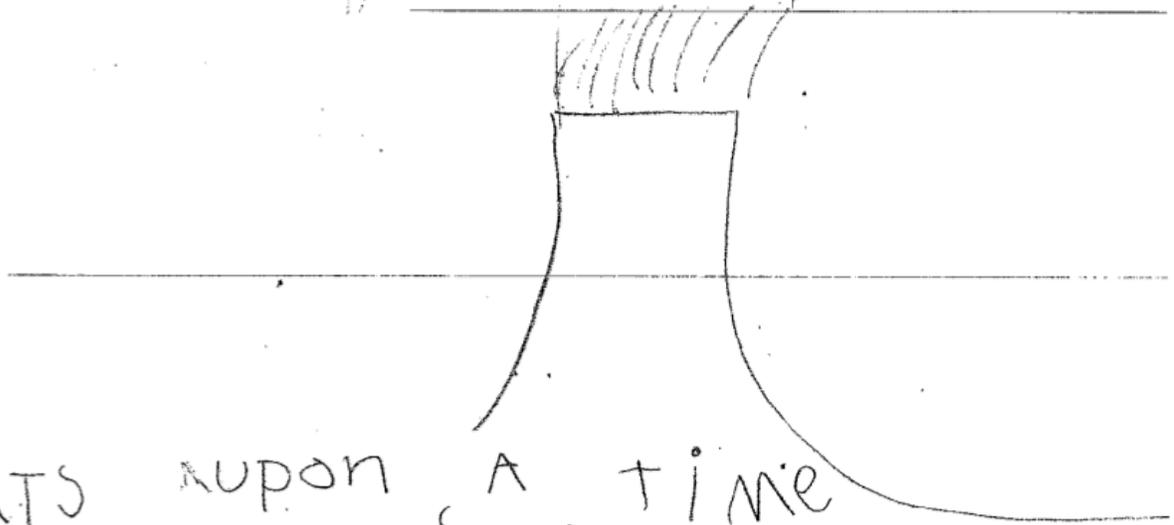
THE little volcano

wuts upon A time THERE wus A volcano sHe wus A LoNLE volcano

wuts THE LITT volcano saw ather she DID NOT FEel lonLe

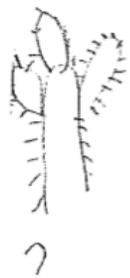
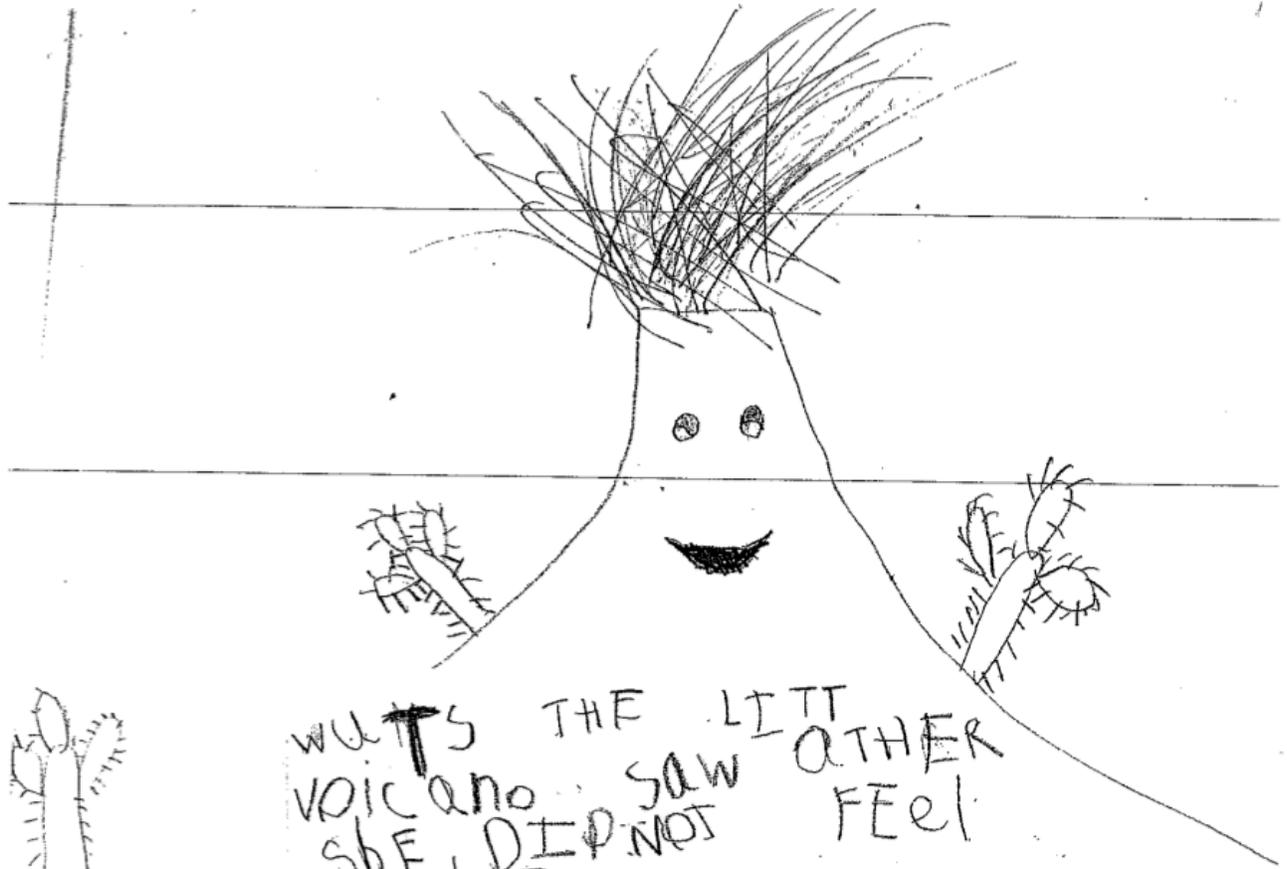
wHen THE otHER volcano aRRived THE LiTTle volcano plAD BALL

THE LITTLE VOLCANO

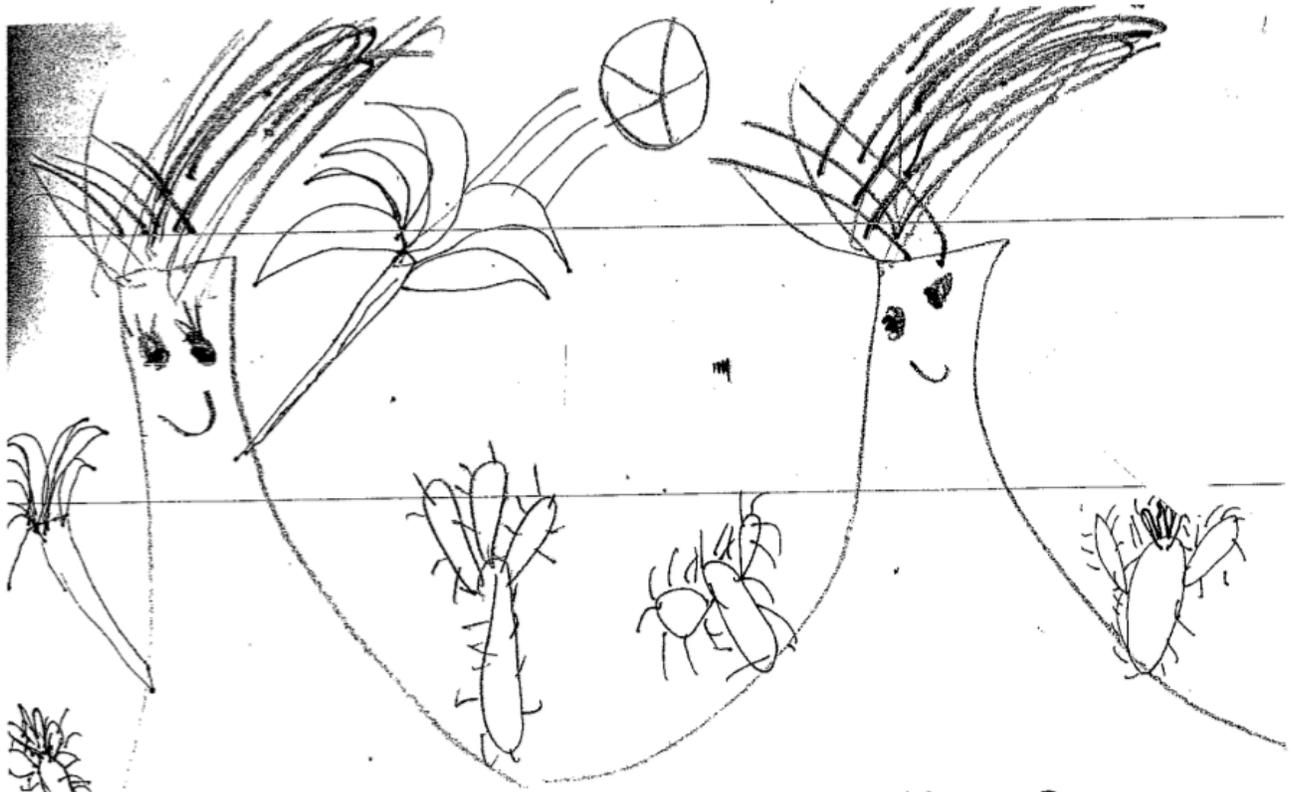


WAS UPON A TIME
 THERE WAS A TIME

VOICANO SHE WAS A
 LONLE VOICANO



WUTS THE LITT
VOICANO SAW A THER
SHE DID NOT FEEL
10 NIE



WHEN THE
ARRIVED
PIAD BALL

OTHER VOICANO
THE LITTLE VOICANO

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 runing arownd he saw a barn and in one of the stalls he saw another horse. he 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 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 lonly. 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 lonly 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**

**Uses
temporal
words to
signal
event
order**

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.

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 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.

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

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

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.

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 they were on vacation”*), temporal words and phrases (*“then”, “After a few months”, “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 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 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 them over her eyes. After that, we decided to call the little kitten,

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

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.

Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated events

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 them 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 their 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 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 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 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 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.

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 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

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“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.

“Bye kids, see you after school!” called Mom backing out of the driveway.

On the bus Charlie and Tess decided to tell their 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 class room they met the very person they wanted to see, Molly Stagburn.

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“What?” said Molly.

“We have loose teeth!” said the twins with a big smile. A look of horror spread across Molly’s face.

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At snack they only ate one cracker each, and at lunch they decided not to eat at all.

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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?

Engages and orients the reader by establishing context for narrative to follow. Main characters are introduced – Sarias the salt god, Waitor 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

“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.”

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

Provides a conclusion which follows from the events and focus / conflict of the narrative

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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Narrative

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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 an “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 warn 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.

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Narrative

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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.

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.

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**

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 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.

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.

Uses a bug as a metaphor for Mary

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 ¹⁶⁶ 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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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.

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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?

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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.

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.

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 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

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

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 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.

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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.

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 neck 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,¹⁷⁶ 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

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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.

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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.

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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.”

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

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.

skirt. The outline of my body stands out clearly from the dark of the risers stacked behind 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.

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.

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

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

Uses narrative technique to move from one time setting to another and back again

Uses description and reflection to develop experiences and character

Builds a tone of keen tension / anticipation towards the outcome of the story—the actual performance on stage.

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 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

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 big moment that is coming

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

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, 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.

File Name: N 11-12R 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 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.

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.

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 the then to the left, wishing that the pure excitement and nervous anticipation I was experiencing could be bottled and saved for later enjoyment.

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