“What does good student writing at this grade level look like?”

The answer lies in the writing itself.

The Writing Standards in Action Project uses high quality student writing samples to illustrate what performance to grade level standards looks like—in action.

Grade 3
English Language Arts

Narrate
(Personal Narrative)

Run Away Rachel
Writing Sample Title: Run Away Rachel

Text Type and Purpose: Narrate
Grade level/Content area: Grade 3 English Language Arts
Type of Assignment: Personal Narrative
Standards Addressed: (W.3.3), (W.3.4), (L.3.1), (L.3.2), (L.3.3)

Highlights:
This sample of student work meets grade level standards. It demonstrates the following attributes of effective writing.
The sample:
• Reflects the writer’s choice to develop a significant personal experience
• Demonstrates a well organized narrative sequence that maintains a clear focus
• Develops experiences and events with effective supporting details
• Uses temporal words and phrases effectively to signal event order
• Reveals an engaging writer’s voice

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY
The student writing sample that follows includes standards-based commentary. The commentary found in this column describes how the writing meets the standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy (2011) and other content frameworks when applicable.

Understanding the Standards-Based Commentary

1. Grade-specific standards addressed are:
   - Listed in the column to the right of student work by strand, grade, and number (or number and letter, where applicable)
   - Marked by a colored block with a letter code, also in the column to the right of student work
   EXAMPLE: A

2. Colored arrow blocks beneath each standard in the right column:
   - Are of the same color and letter code as the block that marks the standard being addressed
   - Mark standards-based commentary related to the standard being addressed
   - Appear in alphabetical order
   EXAMPLE: A1

3. Corresponding colored arrow blocks within the text:
   - Set off sections of student work to which commentary applies
   - Do not necessarily appear in alphabetical order—but where evidence of a particular standard exists
   EXAMPLE: (begin) A1 section A1 (end)
Instructional Practices:
The teacher used the following practices:

- Student choice of topic
- Writing workshop model, with daily mini lessons on aspects of effective writing and ongoing teacher modeling
- Teacher conferences to provide targeted instruction and feedback
- Revision and editing strategies to improve clarity
- Student sharing of their work
- Guidance through the writing process, including reference to a rubric, use of student exemplars, discovery drafting, and revising
- Access to a writing resource text

Assignment Description:
Students engaged in a writing workshop to write narratives based on personal experiences.

Intended Audience:
Teacher, peers

Time:
Unknown

Writing Process:
Alone; in class; pre-writing; organizing; drafting; revising; self-editing; peer-editing/peer response; teacher feedback; teacher-student conference; publishing

Materials:
A writing resource text; a rubric that reflected district standards; student exemplars

Writing Standards:
Grade 3, Standard 3 (W.3.3)
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
EXAMPLES: A B C D

Writing Standards:
Grade 3, Standard 4 (W.3.4)
With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
EXAMPLES: E

Language Standards
Grade 3, Standard 1 (L.3.1)
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
EXAMPLES: F G

Language Standards
Grade 3, Standard 2 (L.3.2)
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
EXAMPLES: H

Language Standards:
Grade 3, Standard 3 (L.3.3)
Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
EXAMPLES: I

Please note:
The samples may contain inaccuracies in wording and content or shortcomings in the use of standard English conventions.
Run Away Rachel

It all started on a half day when I had my best friends (name of friend) and (name of friend) over. We were playing with my guinea pig Rachel when...it happened!

The writer relates a simple childhood adventure in the animated voice of a third grader. The story takes the reader through a complete and focused event sequence that flows smoothly from beginning to end. With sentences of various types, precise word choice, and appropriate figures of speech, the writer paints a clear picture of the narrator’s spirited response to the problem posed by a pet guinea pig’s escape from its cage.

Understanding the Standards-Based Commentary

The student writing sample that begins on this page includes in this column standards-based commentary describing how the writing meets the standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy (2011) and other content frameworks, when applicable. Where they apply, sub-standards marked by letters are included. Evidence for the commentary is noted in the text of the student writing using color-coded, numbered ‘begin’ and ‘end’ arrows.

For example:

A1 marks the beginning and A1 marks the end of the relevant section in the text. Please note that the labeled arrows in the text do not necessarily appear in alphabetical order.

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 3:

A W.3.3.a

Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

A1 Examples: 1

The writer establishes him or herself as the narrator and introduces the other characters in the well-crafted lead (It all started on a half day when I had my best friends [name of friend] and [name of friend] over.).

A2 Examples: 1

The writer draws in the reader with a broad hint at the sequence of events about to unfold (We were playing with my guinea pig Rachel when...it happened!).

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Writing Standards in Action Project
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Page 4 SAMPLE A3-2 (Narrate—Personal Narrative)
(name of friend), (name of friend) and I got hungry and went into the kitchen. We were dressed up in black like burglars because we wanted to steal some cookies. When we found the cookies we ate what was left of them. Then we went back to check on Rachel. I couldn’t believe my eyes! I only had Rachel for

**Writing. Grade 3, Standard 3:**

(continued)

**W.3.3.b**

Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

**B1** B1 Examples: 1

The writer conveys a sense of stunned disbelief by describing the narrator’s thought process *(When we got back her pen was empty! I couldn’t believe my eyes!)*.

**B2** B2 Examples: 1

The writer describes strong feelings in response to Rachel’s sudden disappearance *(I FELT LIKE I WAS GOING TO EXPLODE MY DAD IS GOING TO KILL ME!)*. The writer could have integrated the writer’s friends more directly into the situation by including some dialogue that included them.

**W.3.3.c**

Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.

**C** C Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer signifies the passing of time with temporal words and phrases that carry the reader smoothly through the sequence of event *(It started when… When we got back her pen was empty… Then I saw something move under the T.V.cabinet… After they went home…)*.
two days and now she ran away! I FEEL LIKE I WAS GOING TO EXPLODE MY DAD IS GOING TO KILL ME!

(Name of friend), (name of friend) and I looked everywhere but we couldn’t find her. Then I saw something move under the T.V. cabinet and I knew who it was. I quickly crawled under the T.V and pulled out a big, fat, puffy guinea pig. It was

**Standards-Based Commentary**

**Writing. Grade 3, Standard 3:**

*D* W.3.3.d

Provide a sense of closure.

**D1** Examples: 1

The writer brings closure by divulging Rachel’s method of escape (I put her back in her pen and she climbed over the bars so I knew what had happened.).

**D2** Examples: 1

The writer ends the narrative by circling back to the meaning of the title (*Run Away Rachel*).

**Writing. Grade 3, Standard 4:**

*E* W.3.4

With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

**E1** Examples: 1

The writer establishes the premise of the narrative (We were playing with my guinea pig Rachel when... it happened!).

**E2** Examples: 1

The writer creates a plausible trigger for further development of the narrative (*It started when [name of friend], [name of friend], and I got hungry and went into the kitchen.*).
Rachel! I put the little furball into her blanket and kept an eye on her until (name of friend) and (name of friend) had to go home.

After they went home I put her back in her pen and she climbed over the bars so I knew what had happened. Run away Rachel!

**Writing. Grade 3, Standard 4:** (continued)

**E3** E3 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer organizes the events of Rachel’s disappearance and recapture in clear chronological order (When we got back her pen was empty… [name of friend], [name of friend], and I looked everywhere… Then I saw something move under the T.V. cabinet… I quickly crawled under the T.V and pulled out a big, fat, puffy guinea pig.).

**E4** E4 Examples: 1

The writer completes the event sequence with a credible, succinct conclusion (...I put her back in her pen and she climbed over the bars so I knew what had happened.).

**Language. Grade 3, Standard 1:**

L.3.1.h

Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

**F1** F1 Examples: 1

The writer combines actions and ideas by using coordinating conjunctions ([name of friend], [name of friend] and I looked everywhere but we couldn’t find her. Then I saw something move under the T.V. cabinet and I knew who it was.).

**F2** F2 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer uses subordinating conjunctions to communicate event sequences (When we found the cookies we ate… After they went home I put her back in her pen…).
Language. Grade 3, Standard 1:
(continued)

L.3.1.i
Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.

G Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer forms a variety of sentences: complex, compound, and simple (We were dressed up in black like burglars because we wanted to steal some cookies... [name of friend], [name of friend] and I looked everywhere but we couldn’t find her... It was Rachell).

Language. Grade 3, Standard 2:

L.3.2.f
Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g. word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words.

H Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer demonstrates control of spelling patterns and orthographic rules including the use of /i/ before /e/ (friends... believe) and vowel teams such as ou and aw (found... crawled).
Language. Grade 3 Standard 3:

L.3.3.a
Choose words and phrases for effect.

I1 Examples: 1 · 2
The writer demonstrates a sense of humor with an appropriate simile and a vivid verb (We were dressed up in black like burglars … steal some cookies.).

I2 Examples: 1
The writer uses vivid verbs to create an image of urgency regarding Rachel's capture (I quickly crawled under the T.V and pulled out…).

I3 Examples: 1 · 2
The writer expresses a sympathetic attitude toward Rachel with precise adjectives (...a big, fat, puffy guinea pig...) and an appropriate metaphor that mentions the pet's blanket (I put the little furrball into her blanket…).

I4 Examples: 1 · 2
The writer uses exclamations to create an animated voice and urgent tone (...when…it happened! ... I couldn’t believe my eyes!).