“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.

 Narrate
(Poetry)

The Rose
Writing Sample Title:
The Rose

Text Type and Purpose: Narrate
Grade level/Content area: Grade 5 English Language Arts
Type of Assignment: Poetry
Standards Addressed: (W.5.3), (W.MA.3.A), (L.5.2), (L.5.5)
See descriptions of these standards in the right column of the next page.

Highlights:
This sample of student work meets grade level standards. It demonstrates the following attributes of effective writing.

The sample:
- Uses poetic language effectively
- Demonstrates skillful use of poetic techniques such as imagery, rhyme, repetition and poetic language to convey the subtleties of an experience

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:

- This poem was written during a before-school poetry group run by students.

Assignment Description:
None

Intended Audience:
Family members, friends, classmates (poetry group)

Time:
Unknown

Writing Process:
Alone; with peer feedback; topic chosen by student; drafting; revising; self-editing; peer-editing-peer response

Materials:
None

Writing Standards:
Grade 5, Standard 3 (W.5.3)
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
EXAMPLE: A

Writing, Anchor Standard:
Standard 3A (W.MA.3.A)
Write fiction, personal reflections, poetry, and scripts that demonstrate awareness of literary concepts and genres.
EXAMPLE: B

Language Standards:
Grade 5, Standard 2 (L.5.2)
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
EXAMPLE: C

Language Standards
Grade 5, Standard 5 (L.5.5)
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
EXAMPLE: D

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

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Writing Standards in Action Project
www.doe.mass.edu/candi/wsa
In this sample...

This poem, written voluntarily for a peer audience of fellow poetry enthusiasts, demonstrates a strong awareness of the conventions of descriptive verse and a developing capacity to convey experience through this genre. The writer effectively uses poetic language and techniques to capture the essence of a blooming rose—its delicacy, beauty, and serenity. In addition, the poet’s allusions to the rose’s “evening close” and “open[ing] up again revealing spring” evince a symbolic interpretation of the scene. The piece includes some technical flaws (mostly mechanical), but it shows a clear sense of purpose and budding craftsmanship.

(sketch of three roses)

The Rose

It rose with a light tomato skin,
A rose with petals oh so thin,

(begin section end)

Writing. Grade 5, Standard 3:

A W.5.3.d

Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

A1 A1 Examples: 1

The writer employs precise language to evoke images in the reader’s mind (A rose sitting so comfort[ably], Embed[ded in pure brown soil]).

A2 A2 Examples: 1

The writer evokes images using multiple senses (Avo[i]ding movement or sound).

A3 A3 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer uses alliteration to reinforce imagery (Perfect pose . . . ruby red rose).
Sitting there,

A3 Perfect D3 B2 pose, A3 D3

One fine day for one A3 ruby red rose, A3 B2

It D3 enhances D3 the area around,

C4 C2 A2 Avoiding C4 movement or sound, A2 C2

A1 A rose sitting so comfortably,

D3 D1 Embedded D3 in pure brown soil. A1 D1

D2 C3 Nothing could let this moment spoil, C3 D2

B1 The C1 delicate C4 petles C4 of the rose finally come to a close,

The day finally comes to an end, C1

But worry not, B1

Another day will soon be in bloom,
Where the rose with a light tomato skin,
And petals oh so thin,
Will open up again, reveling spring!

Language. Grade 5, Standard 2:
(continued)

C3 Examples: 1
The writer uses commas to end most lines, though in some cases periods are needed (Nothing could let this moment spoil).

C4 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3
The writer misspells some common words (tamatoe for tomato, avoding for avoiding; petles for petals).

Language. Grade 5, Standard 5:

D L.5.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

D1 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3
The writer chooses poetic language that fits the topic (light tomato skin... embedded in pure brown soil... revealing spring).

D2 Examples: 1
The writer uses unconventional word order to create effective rhyme (Nothing could let this moment spoil).

D3 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3
The writer uses vocabulary to convey nuances of meaning (pose; enhances; embedded).