"What should 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.
Writing Sample Title: Weather in Polar Regions

Text Type and Purpose: Inform / Explain

Grade level/Content area: Grade 1 English Language Arts

Type of Assignment: Informational Essay

Standards Addressed: (W.1.2), (W.1.5), (W.1.8), (L.1.1), (L.1.2), (L.3.3)

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:
• Presents a distinct topic
• Has a clear and logical structure
• Develops reasons with relevant facts and supporting details gathered from provided sources
• Uses language effectively to stress the significance of the topic
• Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity

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 (2017) 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:
Unknown

Assignment Description:
Students organized and illustrated informational essays in which they introduced a topic of their choosing, developed it with relevant evidence, and conveyed a sense of closure.

Intended Audience:
Teacher, classmates, parents

Time:
Unknown

Writing Process:
Unknown

Materials:
Unknown

Writing Standards:
Grade 1, Standard 2 (W.1.2)
Write informative/explanatory texts that name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
EXAMPLE:  

Writing Standards:
Grade 1, Standard 5 (W.1.5)
With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
EXAMPLE:  

Writing Standards:
Grade 1, Standard 8 (W.1.8)
With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
EXAMPLE:  

Language Standards:
Grade 1, Standard 1 (L.1.1)
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned in previous grades.
EXAMPLE:  

Language Standards:
Grade 1, Standard 2 (L.1.2)
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
EXAMPLE:  

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

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

The writer provides an effective example of informational writing that presents a distinct topic and develops it with relevant facts. Logical organization and correctly formed declarative sentences create clear focus and an appropriately formal tone. The final sentence provides a sense of closure that adds emphasis to the topic.

Weather in Polar Regions

(The writer produced illustrations that cannot be reproduced here.)

Let me tell you about the weather in the polar regions. The North pole and south pole are cold. The Arctic is the coldest place on earth.

The writer names a topic (Let me tell you about the weather in the polar regions.).

The writer supplies relevant, overarching facts to develop the topic (The North pole and south pole are cold.... The Arctic is the coldest place on earth.).

The writer provides a sense of closure that gives more emphasis to the topic (The weather regions are cold cold cold.).
The temperature is low. The Arctic is the coldest place on earth. In the arctic region the Sun shines only from March to September. The weather regions are cold, cold, cold.

Writing, Grade 1, Standard 5 AND Writing, Grade 1, Standard 8

With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

The writer develops overarching facts with specific, relevant details gathered from provided sources (The temperature is low... In the arctic region the Sun shines only from March to September).

Language, Grade 1, Standard 1

Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in sentences.

The writer matches correct present tense forms of the verb, to be, with singular and plural nouns (Arctic is... regions are...).

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

END OF WRITING SAMPLE
Inform / Explain

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:
Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy (2017)

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

Language. Grade 1, Standard 1
(continued)

D L.1.1.g
Use frequently occurring prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and articles.

D1 D1 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4
The writer correctly uses adjectives to describe nouns and as predicate adjectives (North... south... Lowe... coldest).

D2 D2 Examples: 1
The writer correctly uses the adjectival form of a noun that appears elsewhere in the sample (plar).

D3 D3 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3
The writer uses prepositions appropriately at the beginning of prepositional phrases (about, from, to).

Language. Grade 1, Standard 2
E L.1.2.b
Use end punctuation for sentences.

E Overall text reference
The writer completes each sentence in the sample with appropriate end punctuation.

Note: Comment refers to the piece as a whole rather than a specific example within the text.
Language. Grade 1, Standard 2
(continued)

F  L.1.2.f
Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.

F  F Examples: 1 · 2
The writer creates reasonable phonetic representations of unfamiliar words (plar... tempercher).

Language. Grade 3, Standard 3

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

G  G Examples: 1 · 2
The writer exceeds grade 1 standards, stressing the significance of the topic by introducing it with an imperative phrase and by ending the sample with repetition of a key word (Let me tell you... cold cold cold).