

“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 Standards *in Action*

Grade 3 English Language Arts

Inform / Explain

(Biography)

Visions of Helen Adams Keller



Helen Keller, c. 1904 (Library of Congress)
www.loc.gov/pictures/item/94515457



Background Information

GRADE
3

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Writing Sample Title: Visions of Helen Adams Keller

Text Type and Purpose: Inform / Explain

Grade level/Content area: Grade 3 English Language Arts

Type of Assignment: Biography

Standards Addressed: (W.3.2), (W.3.4), (W.3.7), (W.3.8),
(RI.3.2), (RI.3.3), (L.3.2), (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:

- Includes an effective introduction and conclusion
- Groups and sequences information in a clear, logical manner appropriate to the task and purpose
- Develops broad ideas concisely with pertinent facts and details
- Links ideas within categories of information with pertinent words and phrases
- Includes illustrations with captions that supplement textual evidence in the body of the sample
- Features effective, purposeful use of a variety of sentence types
- Demonstrates strong command of the conventions of standard English consistent with edited writing

CONTINUED ►



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:

Each student researched the life of a famous woman and wrote a biography based on that research.

Intended Audience:

Teacher, other students

Time:

Unknown

Writing Process:

Unknown

Materials:

Unknown

Writing Standards:**Grade 3, Standard 2 (W.3.2)**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

EXAMPLE: **A B C D****Writing Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 4 (W.3.4)**

Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

EXAMPLE: **E****Writing Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 7 (W.3.7)**

Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

EXAMPLE: **A****Writing Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 8 (W.3.8)**

Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

EXAMPLE: **B****Reading Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 2 (RI.3.2)**

Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

EXAMPLE: **B****Reading Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 3 (RI.3.3)**

Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, mathematical ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

EXAMPLE: **C****Language Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 2 (L.3.2)**

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

EXAMPLE: **F****Language Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 3 (L.3.3)**

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

EXAMPLE: **G****Please note:**

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

END OF BACKGROUND ■



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

In this sample...

The writer creates a solid example of biographical writing. Concise, mostly consistent elaboration of broad ideas with key facts and details reveals the significance of Helen Keller's life. Use of linking words and phrases, as well as a variety of correctly formed sentences, contributes to a purposeful and controlled progression of ideas. The sample culminates in a strong conclusion that expresses, in the engaging voice of a young writer, empathy for Helen Keller and admiration for the life she lived.

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 (2017)* 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.

Visions of Helen Adams Keller

(The writer produced numerous illustrations that cannot be reproduced here. Captions that add significant textual evidence are included below.)

Introduction

A1 Have you ever heard about Helen Keller? She made a big difference in the world. Helen was both blind and deaf. But, Annie

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 2 AND

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 7

A **W.3.2.a** AND **A** **W.3.7**

W.3.2.a

Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.

W.3.7

Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

A1 A1 Examples: 1

The writer provides an introduction that identifies Helen Keller in general terms and incorporates significant ideas for development later in the sample (*Have you ever heard about Helen Keller? She made a big difference in the world. Helen was both blind and deaf. But, Annie Sullivan arrived, and that helped her. Helen learned lots of things from Annie. The first word Helen learned from Annie was water. Find out how Helen Learned that by reading this book.*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

Sullivan arrived, and that helped her. **C** Helen learned lots of things from Annie. The first word Helen learned from Annie **C** was water. Find out how Helen learned that by reading this book. **A1**

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 2 AND Writing. Grade 3, Standard 7
(continued)

A2 A2 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8

The writer groups related information into sequential sub-topics that describe important events in Helen Keller’s life. This creates a logical progression of ideas that makes the sample easy to follow (*Keller was born on June 27, 1880... Annie Sullivan arrived on March 3, 1887... Annie and Helen went to the Perkins Institution... Helen entered Radcliffe College in the fall of 1900... In 1936, Helen’s teacher, Annie Sullivan died... When Helen got older, she traveled to different nations talking to people... During World War 2, Helen visited soldiers that were blinded in the battle... Helen Adams Keller died on June 1, 1968.*).

A3 A3 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer provides numerous illustrations with captions. Two captions supplement information in the text of the sample (*Helen Keller had a lot of tantrums. Her tantrums got bigger and bigger as she grew... Helen learned a lot of things. She went to classes from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. She wanted to learn.*).

Caption

A3 Helen had a lot of tantrums. Her tantrums got bigger and bigger as she grew. **A3**

A2 Keller was born on June 27, 1880. **A2** **C** When

Helen was 19 months old, she became very sick. **B** Soon

enough, **C** she became blind and deaf. Now that Helen was

deaf and blind, she couldn’t speak. She couldn’t share her emotions.

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

That developed into tantrums. **B** Mr. and Mrs. Keller could not control Helen. They needed someone to help them.

A2 Annie Sullivan arrived on March 3, 1887. **A2** Helen was 8 years old. **B** Annie Sullivan came to help them. Annie tapped into Helen’s hand. **C** The tappings were words. At first, Helen didn’t know what it was but then Helen knew. **B** **C** But, Helen still had tantrums. Annie taught her how to behave. Next, Helen learned braille, a raised dot language and square-handed script.

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 2 AND
Writing. Grade 3, Standard 8 AND
Reading Standards for Informational Text. Grade 3, Standard 2

B **W.3.2.b** AND **B** **W.3.8** AND
B **RI.3.2**

W.3.2.b

Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.

W.3.8

Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

RI.3.2

Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

B **B** Examples: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5

The writer develops broad ideas concisely with pertinent facts and details (*Soon enough, she became blind and deaf. Now that Helen was deaf and blind, she couldn’t speak. She couldn’t share her emotions. That developed into tantrums... Annie Sullivan came to help them. Annie tapped into Helen’s hand. The tappings were words. At first, Helen didn’t know what it was but then Helen knew... Helen took classes with children that were blind and deaf. Annie spelled every word that the teacher said into Helen’s hand. Helen learned geography, Latin, German, Greek, French, and English... Next Polly Thompson took Annie’s place. Helen needed someone to be with her after Annie died... She encouraged the soldiers and gave them advice. She helped them too.*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

Caption

A3 Helen learned a lot of things. She went to classes from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. She wanted to learn! **A3**

A2 Annie and Helen went to the Perkins Institution. **A2**

B Helen took classes with children that were blind and deaf.

Annie spelled every word that the teacher said into Helen’s hand.

Helen learned geography, Latin, German, Greek, French, and

English. **B** Helen was very, very smart.

**Writing. Grade 3, Standard 2 AND
Reading Standards for Informational
Text. Grade 3, Standard 3**

C W.3.2.c AND C RI.3.3

W.3.2.c

Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *also, another, and, more, but*) to connect ideas within categories of information.

RI.3.3

Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, mathematical ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

C C Examples: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5

The writer uses linking words and phrases to make explicit connections between sections, general ideas, and specific facts and details (*Helen learned lots of things from Annie. The first word Helen learned from Annie... When Helen was 19 months old, she became very sick. Soon enough... The tappings were words. At first, Helen didn’t know what it was but then Helen knew... Helen entered Radcliffe College in the fall of 1890! After that, Helen wrote books and magazine articles. One of her books was called... When Helen got older, she traveled to different nations, talking to people. Once she went...*).

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 2

D W.3.2.d

Provide a concluding statement or section.

D D Examples: 1

The effective concluding section acknowledges the end of Helen Keller’s life and the writer’s empathetic response to Helen Keller’s life story (*Helen Adams Keller died on June 1, 1968. We should all remember this wonderful, talented lady. I hope Helen knows we know she is very, very brave.*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

C **A2** Helen entered Radcliffe College in the fall of 1900! **A2** After that, Helen wrote books and magazine articles.

One of her books was called **C** “The World I Live In”.

A2 In 1936, Helen’s teacher, Annie Sullivan died. **A2** Annie was with Helen every step of the way. **B** Next Polly Thompson took Annie’s place. Helen needed someone to be with her after Annie died. **B**

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 4

E W.3.4

Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

E Overall text reference

The writer develops the topic of this sample in a sequential manner appropriate to biographical writing. The result is an informational sample that maintains a clear focus and presents information organized in a purposeful and controlled manner. Next steps for an additional revision of this sample could include more explicit connection of details to several ideas the writer attempts to develop.

Note: Comment refers to the piece as a whole rather than a specific example within the text.

Language. Grade 3, Standard 2

F L.3.2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

F Overall text reference

The writer demonstrates strong command of the conventions of standard English consistent with edited writing. Though there may be a few minor errors, meaning is clear throughout the sample.

Note: Comment refers to the piece as a whole rather than a specific example within the text.

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



Language. Grade 3, Standard 3

G L.3.3.a

Choose words and phrases for effect.

G G Examples: 1 • 2

The writer produces sequences of varied and correctly formed sentences that demonstrate the writer’s empathy and admiration for Helen Keller (*During World War 2, Helen visited soldiers that were blinded in the battle. She encouraged the soldiers and gave them advice. She helped them too... Helen Adams Keller died on June 1, 1968. We should all remember this wonderful, talented lady. I hope Helen knows we know she is very, very brave.*).

C **A2** When Helen got older, she traveled to different nations, talking to people. **A2** Once she went **C** to Japan. Also, she met famous people, like John F. Kennedy.

G **A2** During World War 2, Helen visited soldiers that were blinded in the battle. **A2** **B** She encouraged the soldiers and gave them advice. She helped them too. **B** **G**

G **D** **A2** Helen Adams Keller died on June 1, 1968. **A2** We should all remember this wonderful, talented lady. I hope Helen knows we know she is very, very brave. **D** **G**

begin section **end**

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■

