“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.

GRADE 3

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

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**

**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

---

**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

**Grade 3, Standard 4 (W.3.4)**
Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**EXAMPLE:**
E

**Grade 3, Standard 7 (W.3.7)**
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

**EXAMPLE:**
A

**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

**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

**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
Inform / Explain

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.

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).
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.

Caption

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

A2 Keller was born on June 27, 1880. When Helen was 19 months old, she became very sick. Soon enough, she became blind and deaf. Now that Helen was deaf and blind, she couldn’t speak. She couldn’t share her emotions.

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

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

Annie Sullivan arrived on March 3, 1887. Helen was 8 years old. 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. But, Helen still had tantrums. Annie taught her how to behave. Next, Helen learned braille, a raised dot language and square-handed script.
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!

A2 Annie and Helen went to the Perkins Institution.

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.

Helen was very, very smart.

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 2

Provide a concluding statement or section.

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).
Helen entered Radcliffe College in the fall of 1900! After that, Helen wrote books and magazine articles. One of her books was called “The World I Live In”.

In 1936, Helen’s teacher, Annie Sullivan died. Annie was with Helen every step of the way. Next Polly Thompson took Annie's place. Helen needed someone to be with her after Annie died.
When Helen got older, she traveled to different nations, talking to people. Once she went to Japan. Also, she met famous people, like John F. Kennedy.

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.