

“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 7 English Language Arts

Opinion/Argument (*Short Research Project*)

Animal Rights:
Give Them a Voice



Background Information

GRADE
7

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Writing Sample Title: Animal Rights:
Give Them a Voice

Text Type and Purpose: Opinion/Argument

Grade level/Content area: Grade 7 English Language Arts

Type of Assignment: Short Research Project

Standards Addressed: (W.7.1), (W.7.4), (W.7.9), (RI.7.1),
(L.9-10.1), (L.7.2), (L.7.3), (L.7.5)
*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:

- Makes a claim in terms designed to elicit the reader's sympathy
- Acknowledges an opposing point of view and offers a compromise alternative
- Elaborates on the claim with mostly clear reasoning and with evidence that is appropriate to an audience unfamiliar with the issues in question
- Integrates textual evidence in a coherent manner
- Provides plausible analysis based on the textual evidence cited
- Gives emphasis to important elements of the argument with effective parallel structures
- Demonstrates control of mechanics, grammar, and usage

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 the 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 the student work

EXAMPLE: **A**

2. Colored 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)

CONTINUED ►



Instructional Practices:

Unknown

Assignment Description:

Unknown

Intended Audience:

Teacher, classmates, family

Time:

Unknown

Writing Process:

Unknown

Materials:

Unknown

Writing Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 1 (W.7.1)

Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

EXAMPLES: **A** **B** **C**

Writing Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 4 (W.7.4)

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

EXAMPLES: **D**

Writing Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 9 (W.7.9)

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 7 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

EXAMPLES: **B**

Reading Standards

for Informational Text:

Grade 7, Standard 1 (RI.7.1)

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate.

EXAMPLES: **B**

Please note:

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

END OF BACKGROUND ■

MORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED ►



Language Standards:

Grade 9-10, Standard 1 (L.9-10.1)

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.

EXAMPLES: **E** **G**

Language Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 2 (L.7.2)

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

EXAMPLES: **F**

Language Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 3 (L.7.3)

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

EXAMPLES: **G**

Language Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 5 (L.7.5)

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

EXAMPLES: **G**

Please note:

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



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

In this sample...

The writer makes a mostly effective argument by appealing to readers' sensibilities about the treatment of animals in the production of commercial products. The progression of ideas is largely easy to follow, and carefully integrated textual evidence supports the claim and bolsters analysis. Acknowledgement and rebuttal of an opposing claim, as well as discussion of a practical compromise alternative, demonstrate the writer's understanding of the complexities of the argument. The concluding paragraph gives added impact to the argument by synthesizing it and hinting at a course of action. Notwithstanding some stylistic awkwardness, this sample is a mostly effective effort at persuading the reader of the merits of the writer's claim.

Animal Rights: Give Them a Voice

A1 **E** You finish up a savory burger. You apply a coat of makeup before your birthday party. You take some medicine when you have a headache. **E** Do you ever wonder, how did it all come to be? **A1** **A2** Each year, more than one hundred million animals are killed in U.S. laboratories to ensure the medicine you take, and makeup

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



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 normally 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 labeled arrows in the text do not necessarily appear in alphabetical order.

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 1

A W.7.1.a

Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically in paragraphs and sections.

A1 A1 Examples: 1

The writer creates a lead that makes the context of the argument personal to the reader (*You finish up a savory burger. You apply a coat of makeup before your birthday party. You take some medicine when you have a headache. Do you ever wonder, how did it all come to be?*).

A2 A2 Examples: 1 • 2

The writer then introduces assertions from which the argument flows (*Each year, more than one hundred million animals are killed in U.S. laboratories to ensure the medicine you take, and makeup you wear is safe for the human body... nearly ten billion animals are killed in factory farms each year to produce the meat, eggs, and dairy you consume daily.*).

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

you wear is safe for the human body. **A2** And **A2** nearly ten billion animals are killed in factory farms each year to produce the meat, eggs, and dairy you consume daily. **A2** **A3** It's out of the question how animals should be allowed rights. **A3**

Animals are very similar to us humans, and we wouldn't put ourselves in harm's way for the sake of medicine, would we? Of course, they may have fur, tails and four legs, but they eat and breathe. They feel sadness, pain, and loneliness, just like humans do. Animals are innocent and they deserve the right to live freely among us. All these animals are asking for is peace and love to fulfill their short lifespan. They deserve everything we do. **G** **E** They are like our children,

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 1
(continued)**A3** A3 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

Although the claim made in the introductory paragraph is unclear (*It's out of the question how animals should be allowed rights.*), the writer clarifies it later in the essay (*They can't speak for themselves, so us as humans have to protect them.... animals don't have voices to speak out for themselves, so we need to grant them the rights they deserve...*).

A4 A4 Examples: 1

The writer acknowledges an opposing claim and rebuts it (*So, in a way, we need factory farms to give us the food we need. But, there is another choice.*).

A5 A5 Examples: 1

The writer offers a practical, compromise alternative that makes production of animal protein more humane (*Cows, chickens, pigs, and other animals are raised on free-range farms, which are very different from factory farms.*).

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

like our family. **E** **G** **A3** They can't speak for themselves, so us as humans have to protect them. **A3** **B1** Taking animals lives in order to secure the use of medicine isn't right. **B1** **B2** Tom Regan, a philosopher at North Carolina University, says that, "Animals have a basic moral right to respectful treatment... This inherent value is not respected when animals are reduced to being mere tools in a scientific experiment." **B2** **B3** This explains that animals are much more than research tools, and medicine testing on animals should be forbidden- because **B4** we as humans are here to protect them, not harm them. **B4** **B3**

B1 Most of us could eat meat every day for the rest of our lives. I can't blame you- meat's good, but the production of it isn't as delicious. **B1** **B2** According to SPCA, "About 10 billion animals never get to see the light of day each year, because they're raised just for meat, dairy, and eggs." **B2** **B3** These animals are crowded into tiny

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 1 AND
Writing. Grade 7, Standard 9 AND
Reading Informational Text.
Grade 7, Standard 1

B **W.7.1.b** AND **B** **W.7.9** AND
B **RI.7.1**

W.7.1.b

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

W.7.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 7 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

RI.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate.

B1 B1 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer supports the claim with reasons directly related to the argument's central assertions (*Taking animals lives in order to secure the use of medicine isn't right.... Most of us could eat meat every day for the rest of our lives. I can't blame you- meat's good, but the production of it isn't as delicious.... all they can do is sit and wait in anxiety of the next ghastly and painful procedure that will be tested on them. And all for what? To award us with the safety of pointless makeup? We're choosing to apply a thin coat of blush, over saving a fluffy, white life.*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

cages and sections, and are both tortured and harmed every day. In my opinion, this needs to at least be cut down for the sake of these innocent lives being take each year. **B3** As said before, **A3** animals don't have voices to speak out for themselves, so we need to grant them the rights they deserve **A3** ourselves. Along with the factory farms harming animals, it also harms the environment. "Factory farming accounts for 37 percent of methane (CH₄) emissions. Methane has more than 20 times the global warming potential of CO₂." (DoSomething.org) This concludes as one more reason for why humans should take into consideration the thought of cutting down on meat. "The waste lagoons on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) not only pollute our groundwater, but deplete it as well. Many of the farms use the groundwater for cleaning, cooling, and drinking." Not only does it kill over 10 billion animals each year, it also harms the environment, potentially leading to more serious problems in the future.

Right now, millions of rats, rabbits, apes, dogs, and other animals are locked inside cold, penetrating cages in laboratories across the

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 1 AND Writing. Grade 7, Standard 9 AND Reading Informational Text. Grade 7, Standard 1

(continued)

B2 B2 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer effectively embeds relevant, clear, convincing textual evidence to develop reasons that support the claim (*Tom Regan, a philosopher at North Carolina University, says that, "Animals have a basic moral right to respectful treatment... This inherent value is not respected when animals are reduced to being mere tools in a scientific experiment."... According to SPCA, "About 10 billion animals never get to see the light of day each year, because they're raised just for meat, dairy, and eggs."... Four Paws says, "Thousands of ingredients that are already safely used by humans are available for use in cosmetics. This demonstrates that animal testing is not needed to produce traditional products."*).

B3 B3 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer provides plausible, effectively placed analysis that is based on cited textual evidence (*This explains that animals are much more than research tools, and medicine testing on animals should be forbidden- because we as humans are here to protect them, not harm them.... These animals are crowded into tiny cages and sections, and are both tortured and harmed every day. In my opinion, this needs to at least be cut down for the sake of these innocent lives being take each year.... It's outrageous to think we're still testing makeup additives on animals, when we already have useful elements that are safe for us to use! It's like we've just finished a huge, delectable meal, but we're still scavenging the pantry for more snacks- even after we're full.*).

B4 B4 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer uses the concluding sentences of some paragraphs to maintain logical focus on the claim (*...we as humans are here to protect them, not harm them.... It's nonsense to continue killing animals for no apparent reason, and it needs to stop.... Although animals are still being killed for food, this way they get to enjoy a lot more of life than they would in factory farms.*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

country. They dwindle in pain, anguish with loneliness, and long to ramble free. Instead, **B1** all they can do is sit and wait in anxiety of the next ghastly and painful procedure that will be tested on them. And all for what? To award us with the safety of pointless makeup? We're choosing to apply a thin coat of blush, over saving a fluffy, white life. **B1** **B2** Four Paws says, "Thousands of ingredients that are already safely used by humans are available for use in cosmetics. This demonstrates that animal testing is not needed to produce traditional products." **B2** **B3** It's outrageous to think we're still testing makeup additives on animals, when we already have useful elements that are safe for us to use! It's like we've just finished a huge, delectable meal, but we're still scavenging the pantry for more snacks- even after we're full. **B3** **B4** It's nonsense to continue killing animals for no apparent reason, and it needs to stop. **B4**

Although going vegetarian is a great thing to do, I understand it's hard for a lot of people to accomplish. Meat includes protein, which

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 1**C** W.7.1.e

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

C C Examples: 1

The concluding statement reminds the reader of the essence of the argument and hints at a course of action (*Next time you pick up that burger, next time you look in the mirror before putting on some mascara- think of the cries and pain that got those items to you. Animal rights should be taken into consideration more seriously. These poor creatures are tortured in order to give us absurd things that are truly pointless, and/or have substitutions. We're all animals with feelings, so why kill each other?*).

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 4**D** W.7.4

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

D Overall text reference

Notwithstanding some stylistic awkwardness, the writer develops the argument and organizes information in a mostly clear and coherent manner that is mostly appropriate to an audience unfamiliar with the issues in question. The progression of ideas is largely easy to follow.

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

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

Language. Grade 9-10, Standard 1**E L.9-10.1.c**

Use parallel structure as a technique for creating coherence in sentences, paragraphs, and larger pieces of writing.

E E Examples: 1 • 2 • 3

The writer exceeds the standard by using the repetition in parallel structures to emphasize the central question posed and the claim that follows from it (*You finish up a savory burger. You apply a coat of makeup before your birthday party. You take some medicine when you have a headache.... They are like our children, like our family.... Next time you pick up that burger, next time you look in the mirror before putting on some mascara- think of the cries and pain that got those items to you.*).

Language. Grade 7, Standard 2**F L.7.2**

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

F Overall text reference

The writer's control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling enhances the clarity of this sample. There are some errors, but overall meaning is clear.

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

is a key factor in being healthy. Eggs and dairy are also daily choices that keep your body running. **A4** So, in a way, we need factory

farms to give us the food we need. But, there is another choice. **A4**

Organic meat, dairy, and eggs are a healthier and safer prime.

A5 Cows, chickens, pigs, and other animals are raised on free-range

farms, which are very different from factory farms. **A5** On free-

range farms, animals are allowed to roam around fields, and are given

healthier food to consume: no pesticides included. **B4** Although

animals are still being killed for food, this way they get to enjoy a lot

more of life than they would in factory farms. **B4**

C **E** Next time you pick up that burger, next time you

look in the mirror before putting on some mascara- think of the cries

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

and pain that got those items to you. **E** Animal rights should be taken into consideration more seriously. These poor creatures are tortured in order to give us absurd things that are truly pointless, and/or have substitutions. We're all animals with feelings, so why kill each other? **C**

Work Cited

“Why Animal Rights?” *PETA*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 May 2014.

“Should Animals Have Rights?” *The Premier Online Debate Website*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 May 2014.

“THE USE OF ANIMALS IN PRODUCT TESTING.” *The Use of Animals in Product Testing*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 May 2014

Language. Grade 7, Standard 3 AND Language. Grade 7, Standard 5 AND Language. Grade 9-10.1, Standard 1

G L.7.3 AND G L.7.5 AND G L.9-10.1.c

L.7.3

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

L.7.5

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

L.9-10.1.c

Use parallel structure as a technique for creating coherence in sentences, paragraphs, and larger pieces of writing.

G G Examples: 1

The writer uses effective and concise parallel similes to encourage the reader to sympathize with the argument to follow (*They are like our children, like our family.*).

begin section **end**

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■

