

“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.

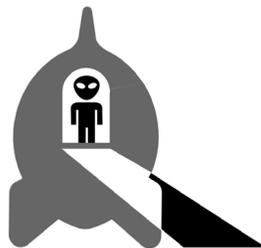
# Writing Standards *in Action*

## Grade 7 English Language Arts

### Inform / Explain

*(Response to a Text-Based Question)*

The Monsters Are Due  
on Maple Street



# Background Information

GRADE  
7

## FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework  
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

### Writing Sample Title:

The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

**Text Type and Purpose:** Inform / Explain

**Grade level/Content area:** Grade 7 English Language Arts

**Type of Assignment:** Response to a Text-Based Question

**Standards Addressed:** (RL.7.1), (RL.7.2), (RL.7.3),  
(W.7.2), (W.7.4), (W.7.9),  
(L.7.3), (SL.7.2)

*See descriptions of these standards  
in the right column of the next page.*

### Highlights:

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

The sample:

- Illustrates a theme in a literary text through well-chosen details and examples
- Exhibits skillful paraphrasing
- Demonstrates focus and conciseness in response to an on-demand assignment
- Conveys information clearly through use of sophisticated syntax
- Expresses ideas subtly with precise vocabulary
- Creates and maintains a matter-of-fact tone to convey the suspense and urgency that lead to the horror at the end

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:**

The teacher used the following practices:

- Explicit instruction and practice in writing this type of response
- Use of rubrics and graphic organizers

**Assignment Description:**

The assignment asked students to answer the following question:

Choose one of the themes below and explain how Rod Serling illustrates that theme in his teleplay, “The Monsters are Due on Maple Street.” Use specific and relevant evidence from the play to support your answer.

- Prejudice can be as dangerous as any weapon
- Fear can turn human beings into monsters
- When we let prejudice and suspicion control us, we become our own worst enemy

**Intended Audience:**

Teacher

**Time:**

Unknown

**Writing Process:**

Alone; in class

**Materials:**

District-provided text and related instructional materials, teacher-generated materials, including a PowerPoint on writing responses in this genre, rubrics, graphic organizers, trade books, online materials

**Reading Standards for Literature:****Grade 7, Standard 1 (RL.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: **A**

**Reading Standards for Literature:****Grade 7, Standard 2 (RL.7.2)**

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of a text.

EXAMPLES: **B**

**Reading Standards for Literature:****Grade 7, Standard 3 (RL.7.3)**

Analyze how particular elements of a story, poem, or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

EXAMPLES: **G**

**Writing Standards:****Grade 7, Standard 2 (W.7.2)**

Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

EXAMPLES: **A C D E**

**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: **F**

**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: **G**

**Please note:**

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

END OF BACKGROUND ■



**Language Standards:**

**Grade 7, Standard 3 (L.7.3)**

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

EXAMPLES: **D**

**Speaking and Listening Standards:**

**Grade 7, Standard 2 (SL.7.2)**

Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

EXAMPLES: **H**



## STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

### In this sample...

The author has crafted a clear, efficient response to an on-demand class assignment. It responds directly to the prompt, stating its focus in the first sentence and supporting it with well-chosen examples. The writing is concise, using precise language and formal, sophisticated syntax to convey the writer’s grasp of the concept of theme through a logical interpretation of the main action supported by specific evidence drawn from the text.

### The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

Question: Choose one of the themes below and explain how Rod Serling illustrates that theme in his teleplay, “The Monsters are Due on Maple Street.” Use specific and relevant evidence from the play to support your answer.

- Prejudice can be as dangerous as any weapon
- Fear can turn human beings into monsters
- When we let prejudice and suspicion control us, we become our own worst enemy

**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 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.

### **Reading Literature. Grade 7, Standard 1** **AND Writing. Grade 7, Standard 2:**

**A** **RL.7.1** AND **A** **W.7.2.b**

#### **RL.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.

#### **W.7.2.b**

Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

**A1** A1 Examples: 1 • 2

The writer paraphrases clearly key parts of the text explaining how, for example, an irrational fear transforms the community into a mob (*They instantly begin accusing their neighbors, who were once their friends... The peaceful members of suburbia transform into a bloodthirsty mob of monsters, all because they are scared of a mere possibility.*)

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

**F** **B1** The theme “Fear can turn human beings into monsters” is **D** expressed flawlessly **D** and clearly in this play. **B1** **F** **C** At the start of the play, **C** a blast of screeching sound and illuminating light descends from the sky. **H1** It strikes fear and terror into the hearts **H1** and minds of the people on Maple Street. **G2** They assume, with barely any proof, that it is a meteor. **G2** **C** **B2** As fear **A3** engulfs them, **A3** **C** a theory is given, **B2** by just a child, that there are aliens, and

**Reading Literature. Grade 7, Standard 1 AND Writing. Grade 7, Standard 2:**

(continued)

**A2** A2 Example: 1

The writer includes relevant evidence from the text (*The fear drives them so mad, that one of the people, Charlie, kills another human being, because of the slight chance that he could be an alien.*).

**A3** A3 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer uses concrete details regarding the effects of fear to develop the topic (*... engulfs them... bloodthirsty mob of monsters... pushes people so far that a person would end someone’s life ...*”).

**Reading Literature. Grade 7, Standard 2:**

**B RL.7.2**

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of a text.

**B1** B1 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

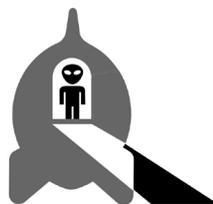
The writer identifies the theme in the opening sentence and systematically shows its development through an effective objective summary of the text (*The theme “Fear can turn human beings into monsters” is expressed flawlessly and clearly in this play... The terror of this foreign invasion causes them to go to such extremes as believing their friends to be aliens, determined to overtake planet Earth... The fear pushes people so far that a person would end someone’s life out of horror.*).

**B2** B2 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer analyzes the text’s treatment of the theme through psychological explanations (*As fear engulfs them, a theory is given ... The terror of this foreign invasion causes them...*).

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ▶



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

that they are disguised as humans on Maple Street. **C** In their desperation for some sort of explanation, **C** they believe him. **A1** They instantly begin accusing their neighbors, who were once their friends. **A1** **G1** **B2** **B1** The terror of this foreign invasion causes them **B2** to go to such extremes as believing their friends to be aliens, **G1** **D** determined to overtake planet Earth. **B1** **D** **H2** **F** **A1** The peaceful members of suburbia transform into a **A3** bloodthirsty mob of monsters, **A3** **F** all because **D** they are scared of a mere possibility. **A1** **D** **H2** **H1** **F** **A2** The fear drives them so mad,

**Writing. Grade 7, Standard 2:**

**C** **W.7.2.c**

Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

**C** C Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer uses transitions to indicate sequence and causation (*At the start of the play ... As fear engulfs them ... In their desperation for some sort of explanation...*).

**Writing. Grade 7, Standard 2 AND Language. Grade 7, Standard 3:**

**D** **W.7.2.d** AND **D** **L.7.3**

**W.7.2.d**

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

**L.7.3**

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

**D** D Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer conveys ideas concisely and clearly through precise word choices (*... expressed flawlessly ... determined to overtake planet Earth... they are scared of a mere possibility.*).

**Writing. Grade 7, Standard 2:**

**E** **W.7.2.f**

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

**E** E Example: 1

The writer includes an effective, concise concluding statement that echoes and encapsulates the theme illustrated in the sample (*It's monstrous.*).

**begin** section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES 



that one of the people, Charlie, kills another human, **F** because of  
 the slight chance he could be an alien. **A2** **H1** **B1** The fear  
**A3** pushes people so far that a person would end someone’s  
 life **A3** out of horror. **B1** **E** It’s monstrous. **E**  
**F** That is how this them is expressed in “The Monsters are Due on  
 Maple Street.” **F**

**Writing. Grade 7, Standard 4:**

**F W.7.4**

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

**F** F Examples: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4

The writer writes concisely and focuses on textual evidence that show awareness of the purpose—answering a text-based question; the writer also demonstrates awareness of the audience—the teacher as assessor (*The theme “Fear can turn human beings into monsters” is expressed flawlessly and clearly in this play... The peaceful members of suburbia transform into a bloodthirsty mob of monsters... The fear drives them so mad, that one of the people, Charlie, kills another human... That is how this them[e] is expressed in “The Monsters are Due on Maple Street.”*).

**Writing. Grade 7, Standard 9 AND Reading Literature.**

**Grade 7, Standard 3:**

**G W.7.9 AND G RL.7.3**

**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.

**RL.7.3**

Analyze how particular elements of a story, poem, or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

begin section end

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■



## STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

**Writing. Grade 7, Standard 9 AND  
Reading Literature.****Grade 7, Standard 3:**  
(continued)**G1** G1 Example: 1

The writer uses principles of character development to explain the motivations behind seemingly irrational acts (*The terror of this foreign invasion causes them to go to such extremes as believing their friends to be aliens...*).

**G2** G2 Example: 1

The writer notes examples of characters' flawed reasoning (*They assume, with barely any proof, that it is a meteor.*).

**Speaking and Listening.  
Grade 7, Standard 2:****H** SL.7.2

Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

**H1** H1 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer analyzes the main idea (*The fear drives them so mad that one of the people, Charlie, kills another human because of the slight chance he could be an alien.*) and mood (*It strikes fear and terror into the hearts...*) of a play performed in class.

**H2** H2 Example: 1

The writer explains how ideas developed in the play support the theme, "Fear can turn human beings into monsters" (*The peaceful members of suburbia transform into a bloodthirsty mob of monsters, all because they are scared of a mere possibility.*).

begin section end

