“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.
Background Information

Writing Sample Title: Everyone Should Go to All About Birds.com

Text Type and Purpose: Opinion/Argument
Grade level/Content area: Grade 2 English Language Arts
Type of Assignment: Persuasive Essay
Standards Addressed: (W.2.1), (W.2.4), (W.2.8), (RI.2.1), (L.2.1), (L.2.2), (L.2.3), (L.2.6)
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 clear opinion in an effective introduction
• Groups pertinent reasons and relevant information in a mostly clear and logical manner appropriate to the task and the persuasive purpose
• Uses linking words and phrases effectively to connect opinion, reasons, and evidence
• Provides a concluding statement to reinforce the opinion
• Indicates an emerging ability to create sentences of varying types and sophistication
• Incorporates general academic and domain-specific words
• Demonstrates the writer’s enthusiasm for the stated opinion

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: 

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: 

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) section (end)
Instructional Practices:
The teacher used the following practices:

- Making provisions for a daily routine of bird identification
- Teaching the concept of cause and effect and encouraging thinking, reasoning, and sequencing, with an emphasis on organization, while supporting and preserving the individual voice
- Expecting and encouraging students to practice stating opinions both orally and in writing
- Providing opportunities for every student to become an “expert” on a bird, using digital resources, books, and observations
- Setting an environment for students to share what they learn

Assignment Description:
Students were immersed in an interdisciplinary project that began with identifying birds. Each child chose a particular bird to learn about through research and created a model of the bird. Students used what they learned about their chosen bird to give an oral performance. This could have been a student-written poem, haiku, or informational piece. Students produced four types of writing (poetry, narrative, opinion, and informational) over the course of six months as each was becoming an expert on a bird.

Intended Audience:
Students as an expert community, classroom parent community on Bird Night at school

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Writing Standards:
Grade 2, Standard 1 (W.2.1)
Write opinion pieces that introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

EXAMPLE: A

Writing Standards:
Grade 2, Standard 4 (W.2.4)
Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

EXAMPLE: B

Writing Standards:
Grade 2, Standard 8 (W.2.8)
Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

EXAMPLE: C

Reading Standards for Informational Text:
Grade 2, Standard 1 (RI.2.1)
Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

EXAMPLE: A

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Writing Standards in Action Project
www.doe.mass.edu/candi/wsa

Page 3 SAMPLE B2-3 (Opinion/Argument—Persuasive Essay)
Time:
1 to 2 writing sessions

Writing Process:
Alone; in class; pre-writing; cut-and-paste organization of notes; drafting; revising; self-editing; teacher feedback; production of a final draft

Materials:
Online tools, books, spelling resources, writing checklists, access to computers for research and typing

Note:
While the student writer uses a ‘.com’ URL in both the title and the narrative, the actual website address is www.allaboutbirds.org. This is an online resource from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Language Standards:
Grade 2, Standard 1 (L.2.1)
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: [D E]

Language Standards:
Grade 2, Standard 2 (L.2.2)
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
EXAMPLE: [F]

Language Standards:
Grade 2, Standard 3 (L.2.3)
Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
EXAMPLE: [E]

Language Standards:
Grade 2, Standard 6 (L.2.6)
Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, activities in the grade 2 curriculum, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe.
EXAMPLE: [G]
Everyone Should Go to All About Birds.com

I have been on All About Birds.com and I have noticed there are stuff you may not know about birds. And you can

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

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, substandards 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:

marks the beginning and 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 2, Standard 1 AND Reading/Informational Text. Grade 2, Standard 1

W.2.1 AND RI.2.1

W.2.1
Write opinion pieces that introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

RI.2.1
Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
learn about the birds’ habitat, what they eat, where they migrate and how to identify them also you can watch videos of the bird and you can hear there sound. And I believe you should go to All About Birds.com.
Here are some reasons why I think you should go to All About Birds.com. First of all, you can learn about any bird you want. So, it is great for research or just for fun. I used it for research.

**Writing. Grade 2, Standard 1** AND **Reading/Informational Text. Grade 2, Standard 1**

(continued)

**A7**

The writer provides a concluding statement that suggests a plausible course of action (Therefore, I hope you go to All About Birds.com and teach people about birds.).

**Writing. Grade 2, Standard 4**

**W.2.4**

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

**Overall text reference**

The writer develops the opinion in a manner appropriate to persuasive writing. The result is an opinion essay that maintains a mostly clear focus and that is organized in a purposeful manner to persuade the reader of the merits of visiting All About Birds.com.

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

**Writing. Grade 2, Standard 8**

**W.2.8**

Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

**Overall text reference**

The writer uses experiences doing research on All About Birds.com and information gathered from the website to convince the reader of the website’s value.

*Note: Comment refers to the piece as a whole rather than a specific example within the text.*
Another is that if you like screens or like playing games on a screen All About Birds.com is way more educational then a game that people play mostly every day. Finally other people may...
like to learn about birds and you can teach them about

Therefore, I hope you go to All About Birds.com and teach people about birds.

Language. Grade 2, Standard 2

F L.2.2
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Overall text reference
The writer demonstrates in effective and sophisticated sentences mostly consistent command of the conventions of standard English.

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

Language. Grade 2, Standard 6

G L.2.6
Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, activities in the grade 2 curriculum, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe.

G Examples: 1 · 2 · 3
The writer uses accurately domain-specific and general academic words associated with the study of birds (habitat, migrate, identify).