

“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

Opinion

(Opinion Essay)

Keep Endangered
Animals Safe



Background Information

GRADE
3

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Writing Sample Title: Keep Endangered Animals Safe

Text Type and Purpose: Opinion

Grade level/Content area: Grade 3 English Language Arts

Type of Assignment: Opinion Essay

Standards Addressed: (W.3.1), (W.3.4),
(L.3.1), (L.3.2), (L.3.3), (L.3.5)
*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:

- Includes an introduction with a clear opinion and an effective conclusion
- Groups reasons and relevant information in a mostly clear and logical manner appropriate to the task and purpose
- Develops relevant reasons with pertinent details
- Uses words and phrases strategically to lend authority to the opinion
- Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English
- Features effective use of a variety of sentence types

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)

CONTINUED 



Instructional Practices:

Unknown

Assignment Description:

Students wrote essays in which they introduced a topic of their choosing, stated an opinion about the topic, and developed reasons to support the opinion.

Intended Audience:

Teacher, classmates, family

Time:

Unknown

Writing Process:

Unknown

Materials:

Unknown

Writing Standards:**Grade 3, Standard 1 (W.3.1)**

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting an opinion with reasons.

EXAMPLE: **A B C****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: **D****Language Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 1 (L.3.1)**

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: **E F G****Language Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 2 (L.3.2)**

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

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

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

EXAMPLE: **I****Language Standards:****Grade 3, Standard 5 (L.3.5)**

Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meaning.

EXAMPLE: **J****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 provides a solid example of persuasive writing that states an opinion and develops it with relevant reasons and details. Logical organization and mostly clear focus advance the writer's persuasive purpose, notwithstanding the need for more direct linking of the opinion and reasons. Carefully chosen language imparts an emotional appeal that enhances the sample's persuasive effect, and a compelling conclusion provides an explicit call to action.

Keep Endangered Animals Safe

(The writer produced illustrations that cannot be reproduced here.)

A1 Do you ever wonder where some animals have
E disappeared **E** out of nowhere? If you're wondering that,
you should try and help endangered animals by doing some of
these things! **A1**

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 3, Standard 1

A W.3.1.a

Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.

A1 A1 Examples: 1

The writer provides an effective introduction that states an opinion and encourages continued reading to inform the suggested course of action (*Do you ever wonder where some animals have disappeared out of nowhere? If you're wondering that, you should try and help endangered animals by doing some of these things!*).

A2 A2 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer uses reasons as sub-topics (*No one should **LITTER** in the ocean! ... People should stop killing so many animals for just material and food... People shouldn't cut down so many trees.*).

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

A2 No one should **LITTER** in the ocean! **A2**

E Ducks **E** are always getting **E** stuck **E** in soda

packagings! **B2** Don't you feel bad for the helpless animal? **B2**

Other **B1** animals get covered with oil spills! **B1** **B2** And it's not

even their fault. **B2** **E** Fish **E** get poisoned by eating litter!

Thinking the litter is food. You should cooperate and try to help

these poor animals.

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 1

(continued)

B W.3.1.b

Provide reasons that support the opinion.

B1 B1 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer develops relevant reasons with pertinent details (*...animals get covered with oil spills! ... animals can get extinct if they keep getting killed... if all the trees in the world would be cut down, there would not be any more of apples, peaches, cherries, etc.*).

B2 B2 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer uses a rhetorical question (*Don't you feel bad for the helpless animal?*) and analysis (*And it's not even their fault.*) for emphasis.

C W.3.1.d

Provide a concluding statement or section.

C C Examples: 1

The writer provides an effective conclusion that includes an emphatic reiteration of the opinion and an appeal for a specific course of action (*So now that you've read my speech, you know my point! You can help to keep endangered animals protected too. Wait! There's one more thing, you can DONATE, so more people could care for animals that are not yet endangered.*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

A2 People should stop killing so many animals for just material and food. **A2** Because **B1** animals can get extinct if they keep getting killed, **B1** also, **F** if **F** animals get extinct, **J** predators won't be able to find prey and they will also eventually get extinct too, **J** until every being will be extinct.

Writing. Grade 3, Standard 4**D W.3.4**

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

D 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 is organized in a purposeful and mostly controlled manner. An additional revision of this sample could include more use of linking words and phrases to connect the opinion and reasons.

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

Language. Grade 3, Standard 1**E L.3.1.g**

Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns and the past tense of regular and irregular verbs.

E E Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

The writer uses correct forms of regular and irregular plural nouns (*ducks, fish*) and the past tense of regular and irregular verbs (*disappeared, stuck, read*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

G **A2** People shouldn't cut down so many trees. **A2** **G** All trees are homes to animals, **F** so **F** even if one tree gets cut down, all the animals that in it, will lose their Habitat. Also, **B1** if all the trees in the world would be cut down, there would not be any more of apples, peaches, cherries, etc. **B1**

G Another reason is that there wouldn't be any place that would be quiet, **F** because **F** land everywhere would have buildings **F** and **F** stuff. **G**

Language. Grade 3, Standard 1

(continued)

F **L.3.1.d**

Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions and choose between them depending on the overall meaning of the sentence.

F **F** Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer correctly uses coordinating (*so, and*) and subordinating (*if, because*) conjunctions.

G **L.3.1.a**

Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple, compound, and complex sentences.

G **G** Examples: 1 · 2

The writer produces correctly formed simple and complex sentences (*People shouldn't cut down so many trees... Another reason is that there wouldn't be any place that would be quiet, because land everywhere would have buildings and stuff.*).

Language. Grade 3, Standard 2**H** **L.3.2**

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

H **H** Overall text reference

The writer demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Though there may be a few 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 ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

C So now that you've **E** read **E** my speech,
I1 you know my point! **I1** You can help to keep endangered
 animals protected too. **I2** Wait! **I2** There's one more thing,
 you can DONATE, so more people could care for animals that are not
 yet endangered. **C**

Language. Grade 3, Standard 3**I L.3.3.a**

Choose words and phrases for effect.

I1 I1 Examples: 1The writer uses a terse exclamation (*...you know my point!*) to reinforce the opinion.**I2** I2 Examples: 1The writer uses an exclamation made up of a single word (*Wait!*) to call attention to and signal enthusiasm for an affirmative course of action.**Language. Grade 3, Standard 5****J L.3.5.b**Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are *friendly* or *helpful*).**J** J Examples: 1The writer uses the words *extinct*, *predator*, and *prey* to describe real-life consequences of uncontrolled killing of animals (*...predators won't be able to find prey and they will also eventually get extinct too...*).

begin section end

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■

