

“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*

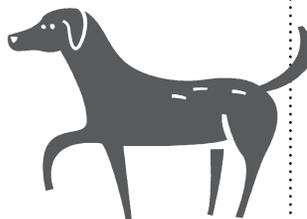
Grade 5 English Language Arts

Opinion / Argument (*Essay*)

Be Careful When You Let
Your Dog Off Leash



Massachusetts Department of
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION



Background Information



FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Writing Sample Title:

Be Careful When You Let Your Dog Off Leash

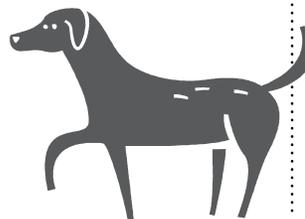
Text Type and Purpose: Opinion/Argument
Grade level/Content area: Grade 5 English Language Arts
Type of Assignment: Essay
Standards Addressed: (W.5.1), (W.5.4), (L.5.1), (L.5.2), (L.5.5), (L.5.6)
See descriptions of these standards in the right column of the next page.

Highlights:

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

- Establishes a clear position—*Be careful when you let your dog off leash!*
- Provides several persuasive reasons supported by skillful use of anecdotes
- Addresses other aspects of the issue
- Provides a strong lead to engage reader interest
- Maintains a consistent focus on topic
- Incorporates a variety of sentence types, lengths, and beginnings
- Demonstrates a strategic choice of words to match the topic, purpose, and audience
- Reveals a developing sense of writer’s voice

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:

- Writing workshop model, including mini-lessons on aspects of effective writing followed by guided practice
- Sharing of personal essays
- Strategies to develop topics, especially the use of anecdotes, to develop a topic
- Student choice of topic
- Graphic organizers, index cards, business envelopes, and manila envelopes to organize ideas
- Teacher and peer feedback
- Time to develop a number of drafts and publish a final essay

Assignment Description:

Students engaged in a writing workshop to write a number of personal essays from multiple drafts

Intended Audience:

Family members, friends, neighbors, and classmates

Time:

6 weeks – multiple drafts

Writing Process:

Pre-writing; organizing; drafting; revising; self-editing; peer-editing/peer response; teacher feedback/teacher-student conference; publishing

Materials:

Graphic organizer, index cards, business envelopes, and manila envelopes for each student to use in organizing ideas/information

Please note:

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

END OF BACKGROUND ■

**Writing Standards:****Grade 5, Standard 1 (W.5.1)**

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

EXAMPLES: **A B C I**

Writing Standards:**Grade 5, Standard 4 (W.5.4)**

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

EXAMPLE: **B**

Language Standards:**Grade 5, Standard 1 (L.5.1)**

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**

Language Standards:**Grade 5, Standard 2 (L.5.2)**

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

EXAMPLE: **D F**

Language Standards**Grade 5, Standard 5 (L.5.5)**

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

EXAMPLE: **G**

Language Standards:**Grade 5, Standard 6 (L.5.6)**

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (*e.g., however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition*).

EXAMPLE: **H**

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

In this sample...

The writer formulates a position that includes several persuasive reasons and enough evidence to support his/her position. In addition, the writer briefly attempts to address other aspects of the issue. The sample incorporates personal anecdotes and strong details to create a convincing, well-developed argument that flows logically while maintaining a clear focus. The writer demonstrates good control of word choice, conventions and sentence variety to effectively communicate the writer's feelings on the topic, strengthening the overall impact of the argument.

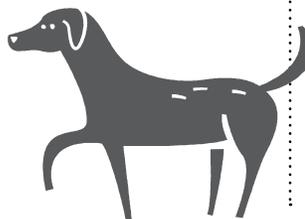
Be Careful When You Let Your Dog Off Leash

A1 If you have a dog, I bet you have let your dog off leash. **A1** Maybe to play Frisbee or soccer, or maybe just to play fetch. **A2** It is great to watch your dog get exercise. **A2** **A3** But have you ever thought of the unknown perils of letting your dog off leash? Be careful when you let your dog off leash! **A3**

H First of all **H** **C** a car might hit your dog. **C**
A1 **B** Not so long ago, my dog almost got hit by a car. **B**

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.

Writing. Grade 5, Standard 1:

A W.5.1.a

Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped in paragraphs and sections to support the writer's purpose.

A1 A1 Examples: 1 • 2

The writer focuses on a topic that is familiar to him/her, gives many reasons for his/her view and skillfully uses personal anecdotes to develop them, often addressing the reader directly. Although this approach lacks the formal tone expected in later grades, it demonstrates developing awareness of audience.

A2 A2 Examples: 1 • 2

The writer briefly attempts to address other aspects of the issue and demonstrates an emerging awareness of the need to anticipate potential counterarguments (*dogs need exercise, walking your dog can be a nuisance*).

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

We were on the sidewalk and on the other side of the road there was a **G** road kill. **G** My dog ran toward it. A car seemed to come out of nowhere and my dog was suddenly in danger of death. Luckily, the driver knew what he was doing, and his car screeched to a halt about one and a half feet in front of my own dog, (name of dog). **A1**

I know if I let my dog get hit by a car I would never forgive myself.

A2 **D** Although it can be a **G** nuisance **G** **D** to walk your dog instead of letting him/her off leash, I guarantee you might

regret it if your not careful. **A2** **D** If a car hit your dog, **D**

C not only would you miss your dog, but also it would make you even more sad and disgusted to see the gross sight of the scene. **C**

H Another reason **H** why **E** you should be **E** careful when you let your dog off leash is because **C** your dog could hurt other dogs, humans, or possibly even harm him/her self. **C**

D In a field with children, **D** they don't think about their

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



Writing. Grade 5, Standard 1: (continued)

A3 A3 Examples: 1

The writer creates a strong lead that clearly states an opinion, conveys voice, and demonstrates engagement with the topic. The writer then maintains focus on topic throughout the piece.

B W.5.1.b

Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.

AND

B W.5.4

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

B B Examples: 1 • 2

The writer uses anecdotes and strong details to develop the argument and enhance the focus of the piece. In a few cases, omitted words and letters cause minor interference in conveying meaning. (*Not so long ago, my dog almost got hit by a car... A few months ago, a little, nippy, ferocious dog slashed out from a path and started to assail my own dog,..... One time my friend and I were playing at with my dog...*).

C W.5.1.c

Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (*e.g., consequently, specifically*).

C C Examples: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4

The writer gives several reasons for his/her point of view (*a car might hit your dog... your dog could hurt other dogs, humans, or possibly even harm him/her self... dogs could also run away*).

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

“perfect pets” hurting somebody. **E** If my dog hurt somebody, I would feel terrible **E** and ashamed. How **E** would you feel if your dog bit **E** somebody or another animal? A few months ago, **F** **G** a little, nippy, ferocious dog **G** **F** **G** slashed out **G** from a path and started to assail my own dog, (name of dog). Of course, the dog was off leash, and the owner was some hundred yards behind. There is also a dog who gets off leash a lot in my near where I live. People used to be worried about the dog biting their children. Luckily, the dog was friendly. What if the dog had bitten small children?

C Dogs could also run away if you are not careful. **C**

H Often when I am walking my own dog, **H** I meet a **G** random dog **G** that I have never met before. The owner is nowhere to be seen, and the dogs are running wild. **E** What if they don't stop running? What would happen if your dog ran away?

Language. Grade 5, Standard 1:**E L.5.1.a**

Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions, choosing among verb tenses depending on the overall meaning of the sentence.

E E Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer uses subjunctive and conditional tenses to express hypothetical situations that strengthen the argument.

Language. Grade 5, Standard 2:**F L.5.2.b**

Use punctuation to separate items in a series.

F F Examples: 1

The writer demonstrates the use of comma in a series (*a little, nippy, ferocious dog*).

D L.5.2.c

Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence.

D D Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer skillfully separates introductory elements, enhancing the continuity and focus of the argument (*although it can be a nuisance... If a car hit your dog... In a field with children...*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

How would you feel? What would you do? How would your family feel? **E** To back up my point, I will give you an example from my own life.

H One time **H** **B** my friend and I were playing at with my dog down at (name of playing field). **B** We were throwing around a tennis ball, so we let (name of dog) (my dog) off leash. He got the tennis ball and went on a path next to the school, and if he kept on going in he right direction, he would make it to my house. But if he made a wrong turn, he was off in his world. Just up ahead, there was a crosswalk, it took us a very long time to catch him. My mother was the one who finally caught him, and that was only because we had called her on my friend's cell phone earlier in the chase.

I I'm not trying to say that you shouldn't let your dog off leash. I'm just saying to be careful when you let your dog off leash. **I**

begin section **end**

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■

**Language. Grade 5, Standard 5:****G L.5.5.c**

Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.

G G Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

The writer uses specific and appropriate word choice for topic, purpose, and audience (*road kill; nuisance; little, nippy, ferocious dog slashed out; and random dog*) that contribute to the focus of the piece and help reveal the writer's voice.

Language. Grade 5, Standard 6:**H L.5.6**

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., *however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition*).

H H Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer uses words, phrases, and clauses (*First of all... another reason... Often when I am walking my own dog... One time ...*) to signify spatial and temporal relationships correctly, although they are somewhat predictable and demonstrate emerging skill in the use of transition statements.

Writing. Grade 5, Standard 1:**I W.5.1.d**

Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

I I Examples: 1

The writer includes a concluding statement; however, it could use improvement to match the body of the essay.