

“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 6 English Language Arts

Narrate

(Short Narrative)

Feelings of Fall



Background Information

GRADE
6

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Writing Sample Title: Feelings of Fall

Text Type and Purpose: Narrate

Grade level/Content area: Grade 6 English Language Arts

Type of Assignment: Short Narrative

Standards Addressed: (W.6.3), (L.6.2), (L.6.3)
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:

- Engages the reader with a strong lead
- Utilizes internal and external dialogue to describe the central conflict and adjust the pacing at key points in the narrative
- Maintains a clear, consistent focus
- Incorporates a variety of sentence patterns
- Demonstrates strategic word choice appropriate to audience and purpose

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)

CONTINUED ►



Instructional Practices:

The teacher used the following practices:

- Student choice of topic
- Instruction and discussion of elements of fiction
- Discussion and brainstorming of topics as a class and in small groups
- Teacher and peer feedback
- Guidelines and scoring rubric for writing narratives that include criteria for: organization, content, style, grammar/mechanics
- Time to develop multiple drafts and a final essay

Assignment Description:

The assignment asked students to write narratives or scripts incorporating some of the basic elements of fiction studied.

Intended Audience:

Teacher and peers

Time:

Unknown

Writing Process:

Pre-writing; organizing; drafting; revising; peer-editing/peer response; teacher feedback

Materials:

Guidelines and scoring rubric for writing narrative

Writing Standards:

Grade 6, Standard 3 (W.6.3)

Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences.

EXAMPLE: **A B C D E**

Language Standards:

Grade 6, Standard 2 (L.6.2)

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

EXAMPLE: **F**

Language Standards:

Grade 6, Standard 3 (L.6.3)

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

EXAMPLE: **G**

Please note:

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

END OF BACKGROUND ■



Narrate

GRADE
6

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

In this sample...

The writer organizes the narrative around a conflict that takes place over raking leaves during a cold November. However, the piece moves beyond simply recounting the action to reveal the evolution of the main character's thinking. The strategic use of both internal and external dialogue slows the pace of the narrative at key moments and focuses the reader's attention on the central conflict of the narrative. The dialogue, coupled with the efficient use of vivid details and carefully crafted transitional phrases, also supports the development of the characters and marks the path to a natural conclusion.

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 (2011)* 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.

Feelings of Fall...

B2 **A1** Vanessa woke up with a yawn. **A1** Looking at her clock, she thought, **G** "Oh no, not another day that I'll probably miss my bus." She was late. **G** **B2** Actually, she had only three minutes until her bus came to her bus stop.

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



Writing. Grade 6, Standard 3:

A W.6.3.a

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an appropriate narrative sequence.

A1 A1 Examples: 1

The writer introduces the main character in the first sentence of the narrative (*Vanessa woke up with a yawn.*).

A2 A2 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer sets the context of the narrative and signals the event sequence about to unfold (*Since it was already November, the colorful leaves were almost all on the ground by now... Vanessa thought, "Grandpa will probably ask me to rake the leaves again."*).

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

F As she was running to her bus stop, **F** she noticed that **D** the weather was getting colder. **D** **F** **A2** Since it was already November, **F** **D** the colorful leaves were almost all on the ground by now, **D** **A2** and **D** the squirrels were gathering nuts for the winter. **D**

As she boarded the bus, **D** Vanessa could see her icy breath in the foggy air. **D** She was surprised that she actually didn't miss the bus. **F** **C** **B2** As the bus drove on and on picking students up, **B1** **A2** Vanessa thought, "Grandpa will probably ask me to rake the leaves again." **A2** **B1** **B2** **F**

The day passed by slowly. **C** Finally, Vanessa got on her

Writing. Grade 6, Standard 3:

(continued)

B W.6.3.b

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

B1 B1 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer depicts Vanessa's attitude toward helping Grandpa rake leaves through brief but effective internal and external dialogue that serves to slow the pace and highlight the central conflict of the narrative (... *Vanessa thought, "Grandpa will probably ask me the rake the leaves again..." "Huh! I already raked for you yesterday." the girl said to her grandpa.*)

B2 B2 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

The writer keeps the narrative moving over a two-day time period by organizing the story around important moments in time. In the process, the writer provides vivid details and reveals salient aspects of the personalities of Vanessa and Grandpa (*Vanessa woke up with a yawn. Looking at her clock, she thought, "Oh no, not another day that I'll probably miss my bus." She was late...; As the bus drove on and on picking students up, Vanessa thought, "Grandpa will probably ask me to rake the leaves again..."; When the girl got off her stop, her grandpa was waiting there. "Could you please help me rake the leaves today, Vanessa?" Grandpa Joe stood there with his rake in his hand and some leaves in his hair and pocket, looking at her. "Huh! I already raked for you yesterday." the girl said to her grandpa...; The next day, when Vanessa was in science class... She decided that she was going to try not to complain about raking leaves anymore...; Vanessa ran home happily that day... and started raking the leaves that were piled up in heaps in her yard... she actually raked the leaves without even having Grandpa Joe ask her to.*)

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ▶



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

bus to go home. **B2** When the girl got off her stop, her grandpa was waiting there. “Could you please help me rake the leaves today, Vanessa?” Grandpa Joe stood there with his rake in his hand and some leaves in his hair and pocket, looking at her.

B1 “Huh! I already raked for you yesterday.” the girl said to her grandpa, **B1** **B2** but when she came home, she still helped him, although unwillingly.

B2 The next day, when Vanessa was in science class, she learned about how people didn’t experience Fall or Winter, because of where they lived. She kind of felt bad for always whining about raking

Writing. Grade 6, Standard 3:

(continued)

C W.6.3.c

Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.

C C Examples: 1 · 2

The writer creates sophisticated transitions between paragraphs by hinting at a plot element from the previous paragraph in the first sentence of the next (*As the bus drove on and on picking students up... The day passed by slowly; She decided that she was going to try not to complain about raking leaves anymore... Vanessa ran home happily that day.*)

D W.6.3.d

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, figurative and sensory language, and techniques such as personification (e.g., “the fog crept in”) to convey experiences or events.

D D Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer creates a vivid, realistic sense of November through the use of a few well-chosen images (*...the weather was getting colder...the colorful leaves were almost all on the ground... the squirrels were gathering nuts... Vanessa could see her icy breath in the foggy air.*)

E W.6.3.e

Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

E E Examples: 1

Vanessa’s conflict is resolved when she rakes the leaves without having Grandpa Joe ask her (*...she actually raked the leaves without even having Grandpa Joe ask her to. From now on, Vanessa would try to not be grumpy and also look at things in a good way...*)

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

leaves, when others, didn't even have beautiful, colorful, leaves in September, October, and November. **G** **C** She decided that she was going to try not to complain about raking leaves anymore, and enjoy the nice weather until the leaves were covered with snow, and not seen until next Spring. **B2**

B2 Vanessa ran home happily that day. **C** **G** **G** Oh, how beautiful the brightly colored leaves looked to her. **F** She glanced at her neighbors' neatly raked yards. **F** **G**

F When the girl came home, **F** she dropped off her

Language. Grade 6, Standard 2:**F** L.6.2

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

F G Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

The writer demonstrates control of punctuation, especially with respect to the following:

1. Placement of commas associated with quotation marks (*As the bus drove on and on picking students up, Vanessa thought, "Grandpa will probably ask me the rake the leaves again."*).
2. Correct use of commas after introductory clauses (*As she was running to her bus stop,... Since it was already November,... When the girl came home,...*).
3. Correct use of an apostrophe to mark the possessive plural case (*She glanced at her neighbors' neatly raked yards.*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

books, and started raking the leaves that were piled up in heaps in her yard.

After her hard work, she was sweating, but Vanessa was proud of herself. For a first, **E** she actually raked the leaves without even having Grandpa Joe ask her to. **B2** From now on, Vanessa would try to not be grumpy and also look at things in a good way **E** (like raking leaves).

Language. Grade 6, Standard 3:**G L.6.3.a**

Maintain appropriate consistency in style and tone while varying sentence patterns for meaning and audience interest.

G H Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer switches from longer, more complex sentences to shorter, simpler sentences that create emphasis at key points in the narrative (“Oh no, not another day that I’ll probably miss my bus.” She was late;... She decided that she was going to try not to complain about raking leaves anymore, and enjoy the nice weather until the leaves were covered with snow, and not seen until next Spring. Vanessa ran home happily that day.; Oh, how beautiful the brightly colored leaves looked to her. She glanced at her neighbors’ neatly raked yards.).

begin section **end**

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■

