GRADE 6

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:
Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy (**2017**)

"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

Opinion / Argument
(Persuasive Letter)

Massachusetts Department of ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Dear Mr. Sandler

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Writing Standards *in Action* Project
www.doe.mass.edu/candi/wsa

Background Information

GRADE 6

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:
Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Writing Sample Title:

Dear Mr. Sandler

Text Type and Purpose:	Opinion/Argument
Grade level/Content area:	Grade 6 English Language Arts
Type of Assignment:	Persuasive Letter
Standards Addressed:	(W.6.1), (W.6.4), (W.6.9), (L.6.1), (L.6.3), (RI.6.1), (RI.6.7), (SL.6.2)
	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:

- Makes a clear claim
- Elaborates and supports that position with specific examples and facts
- Acknowledges opposing points of view
- Exhibits strong voice through the use rhetorical questions and forceful sentences
- Clarifies the relationship between the stated position and supporting reasons through effective transitions
- Concludes with a call to action

The sample also is featured in Appendix C of the Common Core State Standards:

www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_C.pdf

BACKGROUND, 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)

Background Information

GRADE 6

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Instructional Practices:

The teacher used the following practices:

- Discussion of how movie writers and producers promote smoking through the characters
- Screening of the *Smoke Screeners* video
- Instruction in the use of research and examples to support an argument

Assignment Description:

After discussion of how movie writers and producers promote smoking through the behavior of characters in their movies, students viewed the video, *Smoke Screeners*. The video provides a picture of the entertainment industry's use of smoking on-screen. Then the teacher asked the students to write a one-page letter to ask movie directors or studios to limit or remove from their movies depictions of characters smoking. The writer of the letter included here chose to view the movie, *The Benchwarmers*, and then wrote to its producer to object to the portrayal of smoking in the movie.

Writing Standards:
Grade 6, Standard 1 (W.6.1)

Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

EXAMPLE: A B C D

Writing Standards:
Grade 6, Standard 4 (W.6.4)

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

EXAMPLE: E

Writing Standards:
Grade 6, Standard 9 (W.6.9)

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 6 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

EXAMPLE: F

Language Standards:
Grade 6, Standard 1 (L.6.1)

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: G

Language Standards
Grade 6, Standard 3 (L.6.3)

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

EXAMPLE: H

BACKGROUND, CONTINUED

STANDARDS, CONTINUED

Background Information

GRADE 6

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Intended Audience:
The producer of the movie, *The Benchwarmers*

Time:
1 week

Writing Process:
Drafting; revising; peer-editing/peer response; teacher-student conference

Materials:
Smoke Screeners video, *Smoke Screeners* Health Fact Sheet for Students, *Smoke Screeners* Health Fact Sheet for Educators, *The Benchwarmers* video

Reading Standards for Informational Text: Grade 6, Standard 1 (RI.6.1)
Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate.
EXAMPLE: I

Reading Standards for Informational Text: Grade 6, Standard 7 (RI.6.7)
Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
EXAMPLE: I

Speaking and Listening Standards: Grade 6, Standard 2 (SL.6.2)
Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
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 ■

END OF STANDARDS ADDRESSED ■

Opinion/Argument

GRADE 6

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:
Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy (2017)

In this sample...

The writer clearly and forcefully asserts that characters in movies should not promote smoking. Organization is skillful. The writer acknowledges opposing points of view, adroitly introduces the claim, and supports it with carefully selected evidence seamlessly woven into a lucid argument. Consistent appeals to the reader in a style appropriate to this mode of writing make the case more convincing. The formal tone through much of the sample is customary for a letter addressed to someone whom the writer does not know well. The conclusion is direct and compelling, with a clear call to action.

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, 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.

E Dear Mr. Sandler, E

A1 Did you know that every cigarette a person smokes takes seven minutes off their life? A1 I mention this because A2 I just watched the movie, Benchwarmers, and J I I noticed that Carlos smoked. A2 I Why did you feel the need to have one

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES

Writing. Grade 6, Standard 1:

A W.6.1.a

Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly in paragraphs and sections.

A1 A1 Examples: 1

The writer opens the piece with a fact from which the rest of the letter flows *(Did you know that every cigarette a person smokes takes seven minutes off their life?)*.

A2 A2 Examples: 1

The writer introduces the stimulus for writing *(I just watched the movie, Benchwarmers, and I noticed Carlos smoked.)*.

of the characters smoke? H C1 Did you think that would make him look cool? Did you think that would make him look older? C1 It did neither of those things. H E A3 As a matter of fact, E I think it made him look stupid and not very cool. Especially when I he put out a cigarette on his tongue. A3 I J

C2 If I were producing a movie, I would want my characters to be strong, healthy and smart. A3 I would not have any smokers in my movies for many reasons. A3 A4 B1 The first reason is it sets a bad example for children. C2 B2 An estimated 450,000 Americans die each year from tobacco related disease. In fact,

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES

Writing. Grade 6, Standard 1:
(continued)

A3 A3 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer provides a clear claim *(I would not have any smokers in my movies for many reasons.)* made more powerful by previous debunking of opposing points of view *(As a matter of fact, I think it made him look stupid and not very cool. Especially when he put out a cigarette on his tongue.)*.

A4 A4 Examples: 1

The writer supports the claim with clearly organized reasons and associated evidence.

B W.6.1.b

Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

B1 B1 Examples: 1

The writer supports the claim with clear reasons *(The first reason is it's bad for children... Another reason not to promote smoking is it ages and wrinkles your skin... Lastly, smoking is a very expensive habit...)*.

B2 B2 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer supports the reasons with relevant evidence *(An estimated 450,000 Americans die each year from tobacco related disease. In fact, tobacco use causes many different types of cancers such as lung, throat, mouth, and tongue… A heavy smoker spends thousands of dollars a year on cigarettes.)*.

I tobacco use causes many different types of cancers such as lung, throat, mouth, and tongue. B2 C2 Another reason not to promote smoking is it ages and wrinkles your skin. Who wants to look 75 if you are only 60? F It turns your teeth yellow and may lead to gum disease and tooth decay. F I Lastly, smoking is a very expensive habit. A4 B1 C2 B2 A heavy smoker spends thousands of dollars a year on cigarettes. B2 E I can think of better things E to spend money on.

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES

Writing. Grade 6, Standard 1:
(continued)

C W.6.1.c

Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

C1 **C1 Examples: 1**

The writer bolsters the claim with effective rhetorical questions that acknowledge opposing views and highlight the significance of the claim *(Did you think that would make him look cool? Did you think that would make him feel older?).*

C2 **C2 Examples: 1 · 2**

The writer writer uses appropriate words and phrases to establish the logical connection between the claim and the reasons *(If I were producing a movie... I would not have any smokers... The first reason... Another reason... Lastly).*

D W.6.1.e

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

D1 **D1 Examples: 1**

The concluding statement addresses the audience directly and provides the call to action that follows from the argument *(So Mr. Sandler, I urge you to take smoking out of all future movies you produce.)*.

D2 **D2 Examples: 1**

The writer also offers a recommendation in the concluding statement *(Instead of having your characters smoke have them do healthy things.)*.

D1 So Mr. Sandler, E I urge you E to take smoking out of all future movies you produce. D1 D2 Instead of having your characters smoke have them do healthy things. D2 E That will set a positive influence E for children instead of poisoning their minds. Thanks for reading my letter. E I hope you agree with my opinion. E

E Sincerely, E

P.S. I love your Chanukah song.

begin section end

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■

Writing. Grade 6, Standard 4:

E W.6.4

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

E E Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7

The task was to write a letter to persuade movie makers to limit or remove portrayals of characters smoking in movies. In formal letter format *(Dear Mr. Sandler… I hope you agree with my opinion…Sincerely)* the writer makes and carefully develops a clear argument in a persuasive style appropriate to the task *(As a matter of fact…,I can think of better things… I urge you… That will set a positive influence.)*.

Writing. Grade 4, Standard 9:

F W.6.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 6 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

F F Examples: 1

The writer supports reasons with relevant facts *(It turns your teeth yellow and may lead to gum disease and tooth decay)*.

Language. Grade 6, Standard 1:

G L.6.1

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.

G Overall text reference

The writer demonstrates sufficient control of grammar and usage to make a clear argument. Errors in grammar and sentence structure do not detract from the clarity of the text.

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

MORE COMMENTARY

Language. Grade 6, Standard 3:

H L.6.3.a

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

H H Examples: 1

The writer mixes sentences of varying lengths and types. This contributes to the letter's persuasive style. For example, use of a shorter sentence after a series of larger, parallel rhetorical questions adds emphasis to the main idea *(Did you think that would make him look cool? Did you think that would make him look older? It did neither of those things.)*.

Reading—Informational Text. Grade 6, Standards 1 and 7:

I RI.6.1 AND I RI.6.7

RI.6.1: **Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate.**

RI.6.7: **Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.**

I I Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer includes information from *The Benchwarmers (I noticed that Carlos smoked… he put out a cigarette on his tongue.)* and specific support from tobacco-related Health Fact Sheets *(tobacco causes many different types of cancers… wrinkles your skin… turns your teeth yellow)* to strengthen the argument against smoking in future movies.

begin section end

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

Speaking and Listening. Grade 6, Standard 2:

J SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

J J Examples: 1

The writer interprets information from *The Benchwarmers (I noticed that Carlos smoked. As a matter of fact, I think it made him look stupid and not very cool. Especially when he put out a cigarette on his tongue.)* and formulates personal perceptions, discerned in the film, of smokers *(Did you think that would make him look cool? Did you think that would make him look older?)*.

begin section end