

“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

*(Essay Written as a Spring
Benchmark Sample)*

Pros and Cons of Technology



Background Information

GRADE
6

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Writing Sample Title:	Pros and Cons of Technology
Text Type and Purpose:	Opinion / Argument
Grade level/Content area:	Grade 6 English Language Arts
Type of Assignment:	Essay Written as a Spring Benchmark Sample
Standards Addressed:	(W.6.1), (W.6.4), (W.6.9), (RI.6.1), (L.6.2), (L.6.3), (L.6.6) <i>See descriptions of these standards in the right column of the next page.</i>

Highlights:

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

The sample:

- Organizes reasons and evidence logically to arrive by inductive reasoning at a clear claim
- Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence
- Offers independent reasoning based on relevant evidence
- Demonstrates clear and coherent writing appropriate to the task and purpose
- Includes strategically placed rhetorical questions
- Provides a concise, effective conclusion that states the writer's claim and hints at a course of action based on that claim
- Maintains an effective style and tone

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:

Unknown

Assignment Description:

This is a spring benchmark sample of the writer’s ability to produce an effective opinion/argument essay. The teacher-provided prompt asked students to consider whether advances made by modern technology have been, on the whole, helpful or harmful. Students developed and defended positions on this question, in part aided by research articles furnished by the teacher.

Intended Audience:

Teacher, parents

Time:

Unknown

Writing Process:

Unknown

Materials:

Pre-writing planning template divided into “pro” and “con” columns, pertinent research articles (not submitted with this writing sample)

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****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: **D****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: **B****Reading Standards:****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: **B****Language Standards:****Grade 6, Standard 2 (L.6.2)**

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

EXAMPLE: **E****Language Standards:****Grade 6, Standard 3 (L.6.3)**

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

EXAMPLE: **E F G****Language Standards:****Grade 6, Standard 6 (L.6.6)**

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; independently research words and gather vocabulary knowledge.

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 ■



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

In this sample...

The writer uses an inductive strategy to make an effective argument and to acknowledge opposing points of view. Considerable coherence and clarity make the progression of ideas largely easy to follow. Precise general academic and domain-specific language and varied sentence constructions clarify complex ideas and create a style and tone that reflect the writer's knowledge of the topic and enthusiasm for the claim. The sample concludes with a concise statement of the claim that crystallizes the argument and gives the claim added impact. Notwithstanding some awkward transitioning among ideas and incorrect spellings, this sample is an effective effort at persuading the reader of the wisdom the writer's claim.

Pros and Cons of Technology

What if you were able to go up into space to see our whole world? Would you think it was big or small? Without a doubt I think you would be **G1** astonished **G1** by how huge it is! But is our world really that big? **A3** With modern technology you are able to communicate with anyone on planet earth, from India to Italy. This

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 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 • 2

The writer exceeds grade level standards by acknowledging counter claims (*Although, I will admit that technology has helped our world in so many different ways... Technology is faster, easier, and more convenient in a lot of ways.*).

A2 A2 Examples: 1

The writer arrives at the sample's claim inductively, introducing it in the final paragraph of the sample (*Technology is faster, easier, and more convenient in a lot of ways, but I don't see how it is worth hurting children!*).

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

is a common recourse that could be helpful to anyone, but is most assistaming to businesssed that must communicate internationally.

F Is an easier way to communicate really worth risking childrens lives to obesity and **G2** diabetes? **G2** I think its not worth it! **A3** **B1** In 2004 16% of children between the ages of 6 and 19 were obese, a number that has tripled since 1980 because of technology use. A study in Standford shows that 20% of your calorie intake per a day is in front of the TV. **B1** **F** **B2** When you're eating many **G2** lipids **G2** while plopped on the couch, it is most likely that you are not going to burn them off. **B2** Often life threatening health concerns tag along with obesity such as, high **G2** cholsterol, asthma, social discrimination, **G2** and so much more! Are all these dicases really worth watching the final episode of

Writing. Grade 6, Standard 1

(continued)

A3 A3 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

The writer follows an inductive strategy by presenting several reasons for the validity of the claim before making it explicit (*With modern technology you are able to communicate with anyone on planet earth, from India to Italy. This is a common recourse that could be helpful to anyone, but is most assistaming to businesssed that must communicate internationally. Is an easier way to communicate really worth risking childrens lives to obesity and diabetes? I think its not worth it!... Technology can't just hurt kids in health ways, but it can also play a role in doing poorly in school... Have you ever come face to face with the choices of hanging out with your family or texting one of your friends? Sadly many kids would rather text than hang out with their family... "Bam! Bam! Boom!" Do these noises sound familiar to you? These are the sounds of a seven year old trying to murder someone on a video game. Little children are exposed to fake weapons way to much, and this could lead to bad things... From ipads to iphone Apple is making more ways to use technology by the minute, but there is always an expense to new things.*)

begin section end

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

Shark Tank? **A3** Technology can't just hurt kids in health ways, but it can also play a role in doing poorly in school. **A3** When kids are used to **G1** multi-tasking **G1** all the time with Facebook open, while listening to music, while playing Temple Run, how do you think they are able to focus on school work? Technology may help academics in some ways, but I think its opened up a new world of apps and music for kids. When you are doing schoolwork on the computer, I bet it is tempting to go onto a different website to play games or check your emails. It could also be hard for you to not look up answers on Google or use a calculator. That's the problem, the we start to rely on it, and we rely on it to much.

A3 Have you ever come face to face with the choices of hanging out with your family or texting one of your friends? Sadly

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



Writing. Grade 6, Standard 1 AND
Writing. Grade 6, Standard 9 AND
Reading Informational Text.
Grade 6, Standard 1

B **W.6.1.b** AND **B** **W.6.9** AND
B **RI.6.1**

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.

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.

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.

B1 **B1** Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer effectively embeds relevant, clear, and convincing textual evidence to develop reasons that support the claim (*In 2004 16% of children between the ages of 6 and 19 were obese, a number that has tripled since 1980 because of technology use. A study in Stanford shows that 20% of your calorie intake per a day is in front of the TV... 4 -6 year olds were asked if they rather watch TV or hang out with their dads. 54% of them said they would rather watch TV... In the USA 20-25 [murders] are shown on children shows each hour.*).

B2 **B2** Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer offers plausible, effectively placed inferences based on relevant textual evidence (*When you're eating many lipids while plopped on the couch it is most likely you are not going to burn them off... This is because technology has taken over the lives of the human race!... Then, we wonder why kids are so aggressive.*).

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

many kids would rather text than hang out with their family. **A3**

B1 4 -6 year olds were asked if they rather watch TV or hang out

with their dads. 54% of them said they would rather watch TV. **B1**

I might be part of that 54%! The average parent only spends 3 ½

minutes a week having a meaningful conversation with their kids!

That is unbelievable! **B2** This is because technology has taken over

the lives of the human race! **B2**

A3 “Bam! Bam! Boom!” Do these noises sound familiar

to you? These are the sounds of a seven year old trying to murder

someone on a video game. Little children are exposed to fake weapons

way to much, and this could lead to bad things. **A3** A survey says

at A.C. Neilson Company that once a child has finished elementary

school they have encountered 8,000 murders! Believe it or not this

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►

**Writing. Grade 6, Standard 1****C W.6.1.e**

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

C C Examples: 1

The writer provides the claim of this inductively structured sample in a concise, effective conclusion that hints at a course of action (*Technology is faster, easier, and more convenient in a lot of ways, but I don't see how it is worth hurting children! Its almost as if technology is setting up kids to become monsters! Are we going to let this monster be created or are we going to put a stop to it?*).

Writing. Grade 6, Standard 4**D W.6.4**

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

D Overall text reference

The sample demonstrates a degree of coherence and clarity that makes the writer's complex progression of ideas largely easy to follow. The writer appropriately heightens the persuasive impact of the sample by providing specific reasons and evidence that progress to the claim of the sample.

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

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

violence doesn't stop there! **B1** In the USA 20-25 [murders] are shown on children shows each hour. **B1** **B2** Then, we wonder why kids are so aggressive. **B2** **A1** Although, I will admit that technology has helped our world in so many different ways **A1** from killing diseases to entertainment it has also created many problems. For example, a huge problem for kids is cyberbullying. When it is so easy to communicate with people it is hard not to **G1** encounter **G1** this. Cyberbullying is a easy way to hurt someone without getting in trouble. This is becoming a huge problem in the US.

A3 From ipads to iphone Apple is making more ways to use technology by the minute, but there is always an expense to new things. **A3** All these devices cost a lot of money, and are very fragile.

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES 



Language. Grade 6, Standard 2 AND Language. Grade 6, Standard 3

E L.6.2 AND E L.6.3.a

L.6.2

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

L.6.3.a

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

E Overall text reference

With multiple correctly punctuated exclamations and rhetorical questions, the writer maintains an enthusiastic tone that enhances the effectiveness of the argument presented.

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

Language. Grade 6, Standard 3

F L.6.3.a

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

F F Examples: 1 · 2

The writer mixes sentences of varying lengths and types; this contributes to the effectiveness of the sample's style and tone. *(Is an easier way to communicate really worth risking childrens lives to obesity and diabetes? I think its not worth it! In 2004 16% of children between the ages of 6 and 19 were obese, a number that has tripled since 1980 because of technology use. A study in Standford shows that 20% of your calorie intake per a day is in front of the TV.... As a kid you are able to look up anything on Google. This could be a good thing and a bad thing. This can help kids get answers fast, but it could also give them wrong information and it could expose them to very inappropriate things.).*

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

If you don't have a case on your phone you are bound to break it! Also, overtime the speed of your **G1** device **G1** will go down. **F** As a kid you are able to look up anything on Google. This could be a good thing and a bad thing. This can help kids get answers fast, but it could also give them wrong information and it could expose them to very inappropriate things. **F**

C **A1** **A2** Technology is faster, easier, and more convenient in a lot of ways, **A1** but I don't see how it is worth hurting children! **A2** Its almost as if technology is setting up kids to become monsters! Are we going to let this monster be created or are we going to put a stop to it? **C**

Language. Grade 6, Standard 3 AND
Language. Grade 6, Standard 6

G L.6.3 AND **G** L.6.6

L.6.3

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

L.6.6

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; independently research words and gather vocabulary knowledge.

G1 G1 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer maintains an effective style with precisely chosen general academic language (*astounded... multi-tasking... encounter... device*).

G2 G2 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer makes evidence more authentic and effective by using appropriate domain-specific language (*diabetes... lipids... cholesterol, asthma, social discrimination*).

begin section **end**

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■

