

“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 7 English Language Arts

Narrate

(Poem)

The Tale of a Leaf



Background Information

GRADE
7

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

Writing Sample Title:

The Tale of a Leaf

Text Type and Purpose: Narrate

Grade level/Content area: Grade 7 English Language Arts

Type of Assignment: Poem

Standards Addressed: (W.7.3), (W.7.4),
(L.7.1), (L.7.2), (L.7.5)

*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:

- Reveals a clear, sustained persona
- Includes vivid sensory imagery and figurative language
- Uses effective, precise vocabulary and an elevated style
- Exhibits organization and style appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience

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: 

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: 

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:

Information not provided

Assignment Description:

Information not provided

Intended Audience:

Family members, friends, classmates, and teacher

Time:

Unknown

Writing Process:

Information not provided

Materials:

Information not provided

Writing Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 3 (W.7.3)

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

EXAMPLES: **A** **B**

Writing Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 4 (W.7.4)

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

EXAMPLES: **C**

Language Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 1 (L.7.1)

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.

EXAMPLES: **D**

Language Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 2 (L.7.2)

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

EXAMPLES: **E**

Language Standards:

Grade 7, Standard 5 (L.7.5)

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

EXAMPLES: **F**

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
7

FRAMEWORK / CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
for ELA and Literacy (2017)

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

In this sample...

In this poem, the writer lends a patina of joy and wonder to the autumn flight of a falling leaf. With the help of sophisticated figurative and sensory language, the reader can imagine the experience of twirling *towards the ground* and being lifted by the breeze *high above my maple tree*. The writer's choice of first person point of view creates a sense of immediacy, and the skillfully executed poetic form is the matrix of the poem's focused, coherent structure.

The Tale of a Leaf

A swift, chapping **F** breeze runs through the maple

B3 tree, **B3** **F**

Making **B5** **B6** a soft rustling noise **B6** like gentle waves in

B3 the sea, **B3** **B5**

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 7, Standard 3:

A W.7.3.a

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

A A Examples: 1 · 2

The writer introduces a first person narrator and creates an easy-to-follow event sequence, beginning with the leaf embarking on its journey (*And I, the oldest, gently detach and twirl towards the ground.*) and ending with the leaf's reflections on its experiences (*The stories I will tell of my daring escapade and a new spirit I have found, For here I twirl 'round this breathtaking sunset, the truest joy of fall, 'round, 'round, 'round!*).

STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

The leave of **B2** my majestic tree **B2** are crinkly and

B3 browned, **B3**

B1 **A** And I, the oldest, gently detach and **B4** twirl towards **B4**

B3 the ground. **A** **B3** **B1**

As I near the musty **B4** forest floor **B4** covered in red,

orange, and yellow,

F **B2** The king buck of the forest emits a

B6 loud bellow, **B6** **B2** **F**

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 3:

(continued)

B W.7.3.b AND B W.7.3.d**W.7.3.b**

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

W.7.3.b

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and figurative and sensory language to establish a mood that evokes an emotion, to capture action, and to convey experiences or events.

B1 B1 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer suggests that a falling autumn leaf is symbolic of a life cycle in its latter stages (*And I, the oldest, gently detach and twirl towards the ground.*), still incomplete and joyful (*The stories I will tell of my daring escapade and a new spirit I have found...*).

B2 B2 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

The writer creates moods that change as the leaf continues on its journey: solemnity (*... my majestic tree... The king buck of the forest emits a loud bellow...*), exhilaration (*I fly high above my maple tree... sail oh so very high.*), and anticipation (*The stories I will tell...*).

B3 B3 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4

The writer incorporates in each stanza a rhyme scheme similar to that found in stanza one (*tree/sea... browned/ground*).

B4 B4 Examples: 1 · 2

The writer uses carefully placed alliteration (*... twirl towards... forest floor*).

begin section **end**

WRITING SAMPLE CONTINUES ►



STANDARDS-BASED COMMENTARY

A swift breeze pulses through the peaceful air,

B6 Sending shivers **B6** down **F** a gray squirrel's

soft tufts of hair. **F**

And me, **E** the aged, brown, pockmarked leaf, **E**

B2 **B5** I fly high above my maple tree, **B5** **B2** above

rooftops, above an eve,

The **B6** taste of crisp, fresh air **B6** surrounds me as I rise into

the sky,

And **B2** sail oh so very high. **B2**

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 3:

(continued)

B5 B5 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

The writer uses simile (*...a soft rustling noise like gentle waves in the sea...*), personification (*I fly high above my maple tree...*), and metaphor (*...travel into a spectrum of rubies and orange sapphires...*) to create images that contribute to the mood and tone of the poem.

B6 B6 Examples: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

The writer uses sensory language effectively (*...a soft rustling noise... loud bellow... sending shivers... taste of crisp, fresh air... spectrum of rubies and orange sapphires, and amazing sight...*).

Writing. Grade 7, Standard 4:**C** W.7.4

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

C1 Overall text reference

Establishes a clearly delineated stanza form.

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

C2 Overall text reference

Entertains and informs the reader through the easy-to-follow epic flight of the personified leaf.

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

Ah, me, **E** the ancient, frail leaf, **E** in this epic flight,

I sigh as it **B5** travel into a **B6** spectrum of rubies and orange

sapphires, **B5** and amazing sight, **B6**

B1 **B2** **A** The stories I will tell **B2** of my daring escapade and

a new sprit I have found, **B1**

For here I twirl ‘round this breathtaking sunset, the truest joy of fall,

‘round, ‘round, ‘round! **A**

Language. Grade 7, Standard 1:**D L.7.1**

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.

D Overall text reference

The writer makes few errors in grammar and usage, and they 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.

Language. Grade 7, Standard 2:**E L.7.2.a**

Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., a fascinating, enjoyable movie).

E E Examples: 1 · 2

The writer inserts commas between coordinate adjectives (...the aged, brown, pockmarked leaf... the ancient, frail leaf...).

Language. Grade 7, Standard 5:**F L.7.5**

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

F F Examples: 1 · 2 · 3

Throughout the poem the writer utilizes words precisely to convey nuanced descriptions of events (...breeze runs through the maple tree... The king buck of the forest emits a loud bellow... a gray squirrel’s soft tufts of hair.).

begin section **end**

END OF WRITING SAMPLE ■

