

The middle school standards are set at a level of performance approximately equivalent to the end of eighth grade. It is expected that some students might achieve this level earlier and others later than this grade. (See “Deciding what constitutes a standard-setting performance,” page 10.)

English Language Arts

E1 Reading

- E1 a Read twenty-five books of the quality and complexity illustrated in the sample reading list.
- E1 b Read and comprehend at least four books on the same subject, or by the same author, or in the same genre.
- E1 c Read and comprehend informational materials.
- E1 d Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of public documents.
- E1 e Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of functional documents.

E2 Writing

- E2 a Produce a report of information.
- E2 b Produce a response to literature.
- E2 c Produce a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical).
- E2 d Produce a narrative procedure.
- E2 e Produce a persuasive essay.

E3 Speaking, Listening, and Viewing

- E3 a Participate in one-to-one conferences with the teacher.
- E3 b Participate in group meetings.
- E3 c Prepare and deliver an individual presentation.
- E3 d Make informed judgments about TV, radio, film.

E4 Conventions, Grammar, and Usage of the English Language

- E4 a Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work.
- E4 b Analyze and subsequently revise work to improve its clarity and effectiveness.

E5 Literature

- E5 a Respond to non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive and critical processes.
- E5 b Produce work in at least one genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

The margin notes on pages illustrating work produced by ESL students identify some of the expectations from the English as a Second Language chapter of the *New York City Curriculum Frameworks*. The ESL Frameworks are in alignment with the *New Standards™ Performance Standards*, and are intended for use across the disciplines by educators of English language learners.

PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

Middle School English Language Arts

E1 Reading¹

Reading is a process which includes demonstrating comprehension and showing evidence of a warranted and responsible interpretation of the text. “Comprehension” means getting the gist of a text. It is most frequently illustrated by demonstrating an understanding of the text as a whole; identifying complexities presented in the structure of the text; and extracting salient information from the text. In providing evidence of a responsible interpretation, students may make connections between parts of a text, among several texts, and between texts and other experiences; make extensions and applications of a text; and examine texts critically and evaluatively.

E1 a² The student reads at least twenty-five books or book equivalents each year. The quality and complexity of the materials to be read are illustrated in the sample reading list. The materials should include traditional and contemporary literature (both fiction and non-fiction) as well as magazines, newspapers, textbooks, and on-line materials. Such reading should represent a diverse collection of material from at least three different literary forms and from at least five different writers.

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of reading twenty-five books include:

- * Maintain an annotated list of works read. **1b**
- * Generate a reading log or journal. **1b**
- * Participate in formal and informal book talks. **1b, 3a, 3b**

¹ To see how these performance descriptions compare with the expectations for elementary school and high school, turn to pages 465-481.

The examples that follow the performance descriptions for each standard are examples of the work students might do to demonstrate their achievement. The examples also indicate the nature and complexity of activities that are appropriate to expect of students at the middle school level.

The cross-references that follow the examples highlight examples for which the same activity, and possibly even the same piece of work, may enable students to demonstrate their achievement in relation to more than one standard. In some cases, the cross-references highlight examples of activities through which students might demonstrate their achievement in relation to standards for more than one subject matter.

The cross-references after the examples that begin “**M**,” “**S**,” and “**A**” refer to the performance standards for Mathematics, Science, and Applied Learning respectively. See, for example, the cross-references after the examples of activities for **E1c**.

Samples of student work that illustrate standard-setting performances for these standards can be found on pages 202-330.

These standards allow for oral performances of student work wherever appropriate.

The work students produce to meet the English Language Arts standards does not all have to come from an English class. Students should be encouraged to use work from subjects in addition to English to demonstrate their accomplishments. The work samples include some examples of work produced in other classes that meet requirements of these standards. See page 302.

² **E1a** assumes an adequate library of appropriate reading material. In some places, library resources are too meager to support the amount of reading required for every student to achieve this standard. Where a shortage of books exists, better use of out-of-school resources must be made; for example, students may have to be assured access to local or county libraries.

E1a is intended primarily to generate the reading of full-length books. Combinations of quality magazines, newspapers, on-line materials etc., may be treated as equivalent texts that contribute to meeting the requirement of twenty-five books. Similarly, collections of portions of full-length books may be considered as book equivalents.

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E1b³ The student reads and comprehends at least four books (or book equivalents) about one issue or subject, or four books by a single writer, or four books in one genre, and produces evidence of reading that:

- makes and supports warranted and responsible assertions about the texts;
- supports assertions with elaborated and convincing evidence;
- draws the texts together to compare and contrast themes, characters, and ideas;
- makes perceptive and well developed connections;
- evaluates writing strategies and elements of the author’s craft.

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of reading comprehension include:

- * Construct a book review. 4a, 4b, 5a
- * Produce a literary response paper. 2b, 4a, 4b, 5a
- * Produce a research report. 1c, 2a, 4a, 4b, 5a
- * Participate in formal or informal book talk. 1a, 1c, 3a, 3b
- * Create an annotated book list organized according to author, theme, or genre. 1a

E1c The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that:

- restates or summarizes information;
- relates new information to prior knowledge and experience;
- extends ideas;
- makes connections to related topics or information.

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of reading informational materials include:

- * Use information to support or enhance a project. 2a, 4a, 4b, M8, S8, A3a
- * Write a report of information that draws from at least two sources. 2a, 4a, 4b
- * Incorporate expert opinions into a speech or position paper. 2e, 3c, 4a, 4b
- * Develop a proposal based on data obtained from reading informational texts. 4a, 4b
- * Write a report that analyzes several historical records of a single event and attempts to understand the reasons for the similarities and differences. 4a, 4b

³ **E1b** is intended to encourage students to invest themselves thoroughly in an area that interests them. Such an investment will generate reading from an array of resources, giving students more experience of reading as well as increased understanding of a subject. **E1b** is not intended to be a cursory experience of doing research on a topic which often requires little more than scanning materials, copying directly from references, and inserting transitional phrases and paragraphs. The challenge with the depth requirement is to encourage a complex understanding developed and enhanced through reading.

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E1d⁴ The student demonstrates familiarity with a variety of public documents (i.e., documents that focus on civic issues or matters of public policy at the community level and beyond) and produces written or oral work that does one or more of the following:

- identifies the social context of the document;
- identifies the author’s purpose and stance;
- analyzes the arguments and positions advanced and the evidence offered in support of them, or formulates an argument and offers evidence to support it;
- examines or makes use of the appeal of a document to audiences both friendly and hostile to the position presented;
- identifies or uses commonly used persuasive techniques.

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of familiarity with public documents include:

- * Summarize and critique two or more local newspaper articles related to the same topic or issue. **2a, 4a, 4b**
- * Respond to a public address made by an adult, e.g., the principal, a PTA/PTO officer, a visiting author.
- * Explain a local document to someone who has never heard of it (e.g., a school related directive, a community related brochure, or an informational pamphlet).
- * Write a letter to the editor in response to an editorial or to an article of local or national importance. **2e, 4a, 4b**

E1e⁵ The student demonstrates familiarity with a variety of functional documents (i.e., documents that exist in order to get things done) and produces written or oral work that does one or more of the following:

- identifies the institutional context of the document;
- identifies the sequence of activities needed to carry out a procedure;
- analyzes or uses the formatting techniques used to make a document user-friendly;
- identifies any information that is either extraneous or missing in terms of audience and purpose or makes effective use of relevant information.

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of familiarity with functional documents include:

- * Write a memo or conduct a briefing on procedures to be followed in a given situation. **2d, 3c, 4a, 4b**
- * Produce a manual setting out school rules. **2d, 4a, 4b, A1a**
- * Revise a set of instructions to improve their clarity. **2d, 4a, 4b**

⁴ Much writing can be classified as belonging to the public arena. New Standards, however, defines public documents to mean those pieces of text that are concerned with public policy, that address controversial issues confronting the public, or that arise in response to controversial issues or public policy. At the middle school level **E1d**, the issues students write about come primarily from the school or local community.

⁵ Functional writing is writing that exists in order to get things done. Functional writing is ordinarily considered technical writing and, as such, is often not part of the typical English curriculum. New Standards requires students to demonstrate proficiency with functional writing because such writing is of increasing importance to the complex literacy of our culture. Functional documents are included in **E1e**.

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This is a sample reading list from which the students and teachers could select. This list is not exclusive. Acceptable titles also appear on lists produced by organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English and the American Library Association. Substitutions might also be made from lists approved locally. The sample list for Spanish Language Arts is on page 482.

Fiction

Barrett, *Lilies of the Field*;
Buck, *The Big Wave*;
Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*;
Clark, *Freedom Crossing*;
Coerr, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*;
Collier, *My Brother Sam Is Dead*;
Cormier, *I Am the Cheese*;
Danziger, *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit*;
Dawson, Boyd, *Charlie Pippin*;
DePauw, *Seafaring Women*;
De Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*;
Eckert, *Incident at Hawks Hill*;
Fast, *April Morning*;
Fox, *The Slave Dancer*;
Fritz, *Homesick: My Own Story*;
Gaines, *A Gathering of Old Men*;
George, *Julie of the Wolves*;
Greene, *Summer of My German Soldier*;
Hamilton, *Anthony Burns: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave*; *The House of Dies Drear*;
Hansen, *Which Way Freedom*;
Holman, *Slake's Limbo*;
Hunt, *Across Five Aprils*;
Konigsberg, *A View From Saturday*;
Levoy, *Alan and Naomi*;
London, *The Call of the Wild*;
Lowry, *Number the Stars*; *The Giver*;
Maclachlan, *Baby*;
Mathis, *Listen for the Fig Tree*;
Mohr, *Nilda*;
Neville, *It's like This, Cat*;
O'Brien, *Z for Zachariah*;
O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*; *The Black Pearl*;
Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia*; *Park's Quest*; *Jacob I Have Loved*;
Paulsen, *Canyons*;
Peck, *A Day No Pigs Would Fly*;
Rawls, *Where the Red Fern Grows*;
Rylant, *Missing May*;
Schaefer, *Shane*;
Soto, *Living Up the Street*;
Speare, *Sign of the Beaver*; *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*;
Spinelli, *Maniac Magee*;
Steinbeck, *The Pearl*;
Taylor, *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*;

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Voigt, *Dacey's Song; Homecoming*;
Wojciechowska, *Shadow of a Bull*;
Yep, *Dragon Wing*;
Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*.

Non-Fiction

Abells, *The Children We Remember*;
Amory, *The Cat Who Came for Christmas*;
Berck, *No Place to Be: Voices of Homeless Children*;
Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*;
Freedman, *Children of the Wild West; Lincoln: A Photo Biography*;
George, *The Talking Earth*;
Haskins, *Outward Dreams*;
Hautzig, *Endless Steppe: A Girl in Exile*;
Herriott, *All Creatures Great and Small*;
Lester, *To Be a Slave*;
Meyers, *Pearson, a Harbor Seal Pup*;
Murphy, *The Long Road to Gettysburg*;
Reiss, *The Upstairs Room*;
White, *Ryan White: My Own Story*;
Yates, *Amos Fortune, Free Man*.

Poetry

Adams, *Poetry of Earth and Sky*;
Bruchac, *Four Ancestors: Stories, Song and Poems from Native North America*;
Eliot, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*;
Frost, *You Come Too*;
Greenfield, *Night on Neighborhood Street*;
Livingston, *Cat Poems*.

Drama

Davis, *Escape to Freedom*;
Gibson, *The Miracle Worker*;
Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*;
Lawrence and Lee, *Inherit the Wind*;
Osborn, *On Borrowed Time*;
Stone, *Metamora, or, the Last of the Wampanoags*.

Folklore/Mythology

Blair, *Tall Tale America*;
Bruchac, *The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story*;
Bryan, *Beat the Story-Drum, Pum-Pum*;
D'Aulaire, *Norse Gods and Giants*;
Gallico, *The Snow Goose*;
Lee, *Toad Is the Uncle of Heaven: A Vietnamese Folk Tale*;
Pyle, *Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*.

Modern Fantasy and Science Fiction

Babbitt, *Tuck Everlasting*;
Bradbury, *Dandelion Wine*;
Cooper, *The Grey King*;
Hamilton, *The Magical Adventures of Pretty Pearl*;
L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*;

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Tolkien, *The Hobbit*;
Yep, *Dragon of the Lost Sea*.

Magazines/Periodicals

Calliope (world history);
Cobblestone (American history);
Faces (anthropology);
Junior Scholastic (Scholastic);
Odyssey (science);
Science World (Scholastic);
Scope (Scholastic);
World (National Geographic).

Other

Computer manuals; instructions; contracts. See also the reading lists included in award books corresponding to reading provided by the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and the Boy Scouts of America.

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E2 Writing

Writing is a process through which a writer shapes language to communicate effectively. Writing often develops through a series of initial plans and multiple drafts and through access to informed feedback and response. Purpose, audience, and context contribute to the form and substance of writing as well as to its style, tone, and stance.

E2 a The student produces a report that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject;
- creates an organizing structure appropriate to a specific purpose, audience, and context;
- includes appropriate facts and details;
- excludes extraneous and inappropriate information;
- uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as providing facts and details, describing or analyzing the subject, narrating a relevant anecdote, comparing and contrasting, naming, and explaining benefits or limitations;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples of reports include:

- * An I-search essay (an essay that details a student’s search for information as well as the information itself; I-search papers are developed through a variety of means, e.g., interviews and observation, as well as traditional library research). **1c, 4a, 4b**
- * A saturation report (a report that recounts substantial information on a topic gathered by a student over a period of time). **1c, 4a, 4b**
- * A report produced as part of studies in subjects such as science, social studies, and mathematics. **1c, 4a, 4b, M7a, M7b, M7c, S7a, S7b, S7c**

E2 b⁶ The student produces a response to literature that:

- engages the reader through establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- advances a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective;
- supports a judgment through references to the text, references to other works, authors, or non-print media, or references to personal knowledge;
- demonstrates an understanding of the literary work;
- anticipates and answers a reader’s questions;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples of responses to literature include:

- * A literary analysis. **1b, 4a, 4b, 5a**
- * A book or movie review. **1b, 3d, 4a, 4b, 5a**
- * A literary response paper. **1b, 4a, 4b, 5a**
- * A comparison of a piece of literature with its media presentation. **1b, 3d, 4a, 4b, 5a**

⁶ **E2b** is meant to expand the repertoire of responses students traditionally write when they respond to literature. This type of response requires an understanding of writing strategies.

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E2c The student produces a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical) that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a point of view, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- establishes a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict (and for autobiography, the significance of events and of conclusions that can be drawn from those events);
- creates an organizing structure;
- includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character;
- excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies;
- develops complex characters;
- uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, tension or suspense, naming, and specific narrative action, e.g., movement, gestures, expressions;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples of narrative accounts include:

- * A biographical account. 4a, 4b
- * A fiction or non-fiction story. 4a, 4b, 5b
- * A personal narrative. 4a, 4b, 5b
- * A historical account. 1c, 4a, 4b
- * A detailed travel diary. 4a, 4b
- * A news account of an event, fiction or non-fiction. 4a, 4b

E2d The student produces a narrative procedure that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- provides a guide to action for a relatively complicated procedure in order to anticipate a reader's needs; creates expectations through predictable structures, e.g., headings; and provides transitions between steps;
- makes use of appropriate writing strategies such as creating a visual hierarchy and using white space and graphics as appropriate;
- includes relevant information;
- excludes extraneous information;
- anticipates problems, mistakes, and misunderstandings that might arise for the reader;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples of narrative procedures include:

- * A set of rules for organizing a class meeting. 4a, 4b
- * A set of instructions for playing computer games. 4a, 4b
- * A set of instructions for using media technology. 4a, 4b
- * An explanation of a mathematical procedure. 4a, 4b, M7c, M7e
- * A project manual. 4a, 4b, A1a

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E2e The student produces a persuasive essay that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- develops a controlling idea that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment;
- creates and organizes a structure that is appropriate to the needs, values, and interests of a specified audience, and arranges details, reasons, examples, and anecdotes effectively and persuasively;
- includes appropriate information and arguments;
- excludes information and arguments that are irrelevant;
- anticipates and addresses reader concerns and counter-arguments;
- supports arguments with detailed evidence, citing sources of information as appropriate;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

Examples of persuasive essays include:

- * A position paper. 4a, 4b
- * An evaluation of a product or policy. 4a, 4b, A1a
- * An editorial on a current issue that uses reasoned arguments to support an opinion. 4a, 4b
- * A speech for a candidate running for school or public office. 4a, 4b

E3 Speaking, Listening, and Viewing

Speaking, listening, and viewing are fundamental processes which people use to express, explore, and learn about ideas. The functions of speaking, listening, and viewing include gathering and sharing information; persuading others; expressing and understanding ideas; coordinating activities with others; and selecting and critically analyzing messages. The contexts of these communication functions include one-to-one conferences, small group interactions, large audiences and meetings, and interactions with broadcast media.

E3a⁷ The student participates in one-to-one conferences with a teacher, paraprofessional, or adult volunteer, in which the student:

- initiates new topics in addition to responding to adult-initiated topics;
- asks relevant questions;
- responds to questions with appropriate elaboration;
- uses language cues to indicate different levels of certainty or hypothesizing, e.g., “what if...,” “very likely...,” “I’m unsure whether...”;
- confirms understanding by paraphrasing the adult’s directions or suggestions.

Examples of one-to-one interactions include:

- * Book talks with a teacher or parent. **1a, 1b, 1c, 5a**
- * Analytical discussion of a movie or television program with a teacher or parent. **3d**
- * Student-teacher conferences regarding a draft of an essay, the student’s progress on a mathematics assignment, or the status of a science project. **4b**
- * Interviews with teachers or adults. **2a**
- * Discussion with a teacher or parent about a portfolio of work. **4b**

E3b The student participates in group meetings, in which the student:

- displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors;
- actively solicits another person’s comment or opinion;
- offers own opinion forcefully without dominating;
- responds appropriately to comments and questions;
- volunteers contributions and responds when directly solicited by teacher or discussion leader;
- gives reasons in support of opinions expressed;
- clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so; asks classmates for similar expansions;
- employs a group decision-making technique such as brainstorming or a problem-solving sequence (e.g., recognize problem, define problem, identify possible solutions, select optimal solution, implement solution, evaluate solution).

Examples of activities involving group meetings include:

- * Create a plan for a group project (e.g., organize a presentation to be made to the class; plan a science project).

⁷ For samples of student work that illustrate standard-setting performances for **E3a** and **E3b** refer to the videotape accompanying this book.

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- * Develop and negotiate a class rubric.
- * Engage in classroom town meetings.
- * Take part in book talks with other students. **1a, 1b, 1c, 5a**
- * Work as part of a group to solve a complex mathematical task.
- * Role-play to better understand a certain historical event. **1c**
- * Participate in peer writing response groups. **4b**

E3c The student prepares and delivers an individual presentation, in which the student:

- shapes information to achieve a particular purpose and to appeal to the interests and background knowledge of audience members;
- shapes content and organization according to criteria for importance and impact rather than according to availability of information in resource materials;
- uses notes or other memory aids to structure the presentation;
- develops several main points relating to a single thesis;
- engages the audience with appropriate verbal cues and eye contact;
- projects a sense of individuality and personality in selecting and organizing content, and in delivery.

Examples of presentations include:

- * A presentation of project plans or a report for an Applied Learning project. **4a, 4b, A2a**
- * A report that analyzes several historical records of a single event and attempts to understand the reasons for the similarities and differences. **1c, 4a, 4b**
- * A report that presents data collected to prove/disprove a particular hypothesis, along with an appropriate conclusion. **1c, 4a, 4b**
- * A talk that outlines a plan of action for implementing a new school policy and the reasoning supporting the selected plan over other options. **4a, 4b**
- * A report that analyzes a trend running through several literary works. **1b, 4a, 4b, 5a**

E3d The student makes informed judgments about television, radio, and film productions; that is, the student:

- demonstrates an awareness of the presence of the media in the daily lives of most people;
- evaluates the role of the media in focusing attention and in forming opinion;
- judges the extent to which the media are a source of entertainment as well as a source of information;
- defines the role of advertising as part of media presentation.

Examples of activities through which students might produce evidence of making informed judgments about television, radio, and film productions include:

- * Present a paper or report on reasons for selecting one media choice over another. **1c, 2a, 3c**
- * Prepare a report on the benefits obtained (including information learned) from media exposure. **1c, 2a, 4a, 4b**

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- * Summarize patterns of media exposure in writing or in an oral report. **1c, 2a, 3c, 4a, 4b**
- * Describe the appeal of particularly memorable commercials. **2a, 3c**
- * Analyze the appeal of popular television shows and films for particular audiences. **2a, 4a, 4b**
- * Explain the use of “propaganda techniques” (e.g., bandwagon, glittering generalities, celebrity) in television commercials. **2a, 4a, 4b**

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E4 Conventions, Grammar, and Usage of the English Language

Having control of the conventions and grammar of the English language means having the ability to represent oneself appropriately with regard to current standards of correctness (e.g., spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, capitalization, subject-verb agreement). Usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats.

E4a The student demonstrates an understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work, and selects the structures and features of language appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the work. The student demonstrates control of:

- grammar;
- paragraph structure;
- punctuation;
- sentence construction;
- spelling;
- usage.

Examples of activities through which students might demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language include:

- * Demonstrate in a piece of writing the ability to manage the conventions, grammar, and usage of English so that they aid rather than interfere with reading. 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 5a, 5b
- * Proofread acceptably the student’s own writing or the writing of others, using dictionaries and other resources, including the teacher or peers as appropriate. 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 5a, 5b
- * Observe conventions of language during formal oral presentations. 3c
- * Revise a piece of writing by combining sentences. 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 5a, 5b

E4b The student analyzes and subsequently revises work to clarify it or make it more effective in communicating the intended message or thought. The student’s revisions should be made in light of the purposes, audiences, and contexts that apply to the work. Strategies for revising include:

- adding or deleting details;
- adding or deleting explanations;
- clarifying difficult passages;
- rearranging words, sentences, and paragraphs to improve or clarify meaning;
- sharpening the focus;
- reconsidering the organizational structure.

Examples of activities through which students might provide evidence of analyzing and revising work include:

- * Incorporate into revised drafts, as appropriate, suggestions taken from critiques made by peers and teachers. 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3c, 3d, 5a, 5b
- * Produce a series of distinctly different drafts that result in a polished piece of writing or presentation. 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3c, 3d, 5a, 5b
- * Describe the reasons for stylistic choices made as a writer or presenter. 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3c, 3d, 5a, 5b
- * Critique the writing or oral presentation of a peer.

E5 Literature

Literature consists of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and essays as distinguished from instructional, expository, or journalistic writing.

E5a The student responds to non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive, critical, and evaluative processes; that is, the student:

- identifies recurring themes across works;
- interprets the impact of authors' decisions regarding word choice, content, and literary elements;
- identifies the characteristics of literary forms and genres;
- evaluates literary merit;
- identifies the effect of point of view;
- analyzes the reasons for a character's actions, taking into account the situation and basic motivation of the character;
- makes inferences and draws conclusions about fictional and non-fictional contexts, events, characters, settings, and themes;
- identifies stereotypical characters as opposed to fully developed characters;
- identifies the effect of literary devices such as figurative language, allusion, diction, dialogue, and description.

Examples of responding to literature include:

- * Analyze stereotypical characters in a popular television production. **3d**
- * Examine themes in the work (fiction or non-fiction) of one popular young-adult author. **1b, 2b, 4a, 4b**
- * Evaluate the effect of literary devices in a number of poems by one author or poems on a common topic. **1b, 2b, 4a, 4b**
- * Compare the literary merits of two or more short stories, biographies of one individual, novels, or plays. **1b, 2b, 4a, 4b**
- * Write or perform a skit. **1b, 2b, 4a, 4b, 5b**
- * Write a parody. **2b, 4a, 4b**
- * Speculate about point of view in a work read by the class. **3b**

E5b The student produces work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

Examples of literary genres include:

- * A personal essay. **4a, 4b**
- * A short story. **2c, 4a, 4b**
- * A short play. **4a, 4b**
- * A poem. **4a, 4b**
- * A vignette. **4a, 4b**

Work Sample & Commentary: *Should the Labels...?* Middle School English Language Arts

The task

Students were asked to research, outline, and write a term paper on a current, controversial topic. The assignment included the selection of a topic of personal interest and the development of a thesis question.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| in class | √ as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback | √ with peer feedback |
| timed | √ opportunity for revision |

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E1c Reading: Read and comprehend informational materials.

E2e Writing: Produce a persuasive essay.

E4a Conventions: Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language.

What the work shows

E1c Reading: The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that:

- restates or summarizes information;
- relates new information to prior knowledge and experience;
- extends ideas;
- makes connections to related topics or information.

(A) The student read materials from a variety of sources in order to collect information about the labels that are used to refer to people with disabilities. This reference section includes materials from research studies, journals, popular magazines, and books.

The student summarized the information on the impact of labels and stereotyping to support the discussion and conclusion of the paper.

(B) The work demonstrates that the student was able to extend the ideas presented in these materials and form an opinion.

(C) The work forges connections between more general studies of language and uses them to support the opinion that the way language is used to describe people is important to their self-respect.

E2e Writing: The student produces a persuasive essay that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- develops a controlling idea that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment;
- creates an organizing structure that is appropriate to the needs, values, and interests of a specified audience, and arranges details, reasons, examples, and anecdotes effectively and persuasively;

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- includes appropriate information and arguments and excludes information and arguments that are irrelevant;
- anticipates and addresses reader concerns and counter-arguments;
- supports arguments with detailed evidence, citing sources of information as appropriate;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(D) Through the title and the discussion of politically correct language, the work draws the reader into the controversy concerning the use of language to identify disabled people.

(E) The controlling idea for the work is developed by presenting various research studies on the impact of labels and stereotyping on people.

The student presented well documented facts and details based on appropriate research that advances a thorough understanding of the issues.

The student used a range of appropriate strategies, such as:

(A) providing facts and details based on research (bibliography and footnotes);

(B) analyzing the subject through a personal reexamination; and

(F) recounting a relevant anecdote based on the experiences of a successful disabled person.

The student created a structure by organizing the material around the arguments for and against the theory that labels affect the status and behavior of people with disabilities. The work develops a sophisticated view that goes beyond the popularly held notion of the benefits of politically correct language by incorporating published research.

(F) The student presented counter-arguments by incorporating an alternative view from a respected disabled person who believes that politically correct language is used for the benefit of the general population and not to aid people with disabilities.

(A) The student's arguments are based on appropriate research and present both sides of the controversy as is documented by the bibliography. This is also evidenced in the footnotes.

(G) The student provided a strong sense of closure by establishing the importance of seeing disabled people as people regardless of the labels used to describe them.

E4a Conventions, Grammar, and Usage of the English Language: The student demonstrates an understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work, and selects the structures and features of language appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the work. The student demonstrates control of:

- grammar;
- paragraph structure;
- punctuation;
- sentence construction;
- spelling;
- usage.

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In almost error free writing, the student demonstrated an understanding of the rules of the English language.

The student incorporated a number of techniques used in academic writing, such as footnotes and a reference section. Each of the quotations used are contextualized and referenced. This gives the report a professional look and gives the student's arguments much more credibility. The student does not, however, do the more extensive processing of information that would be expected at the high school level.

There is an error in the "Sources Consulted" section ("socil" instead of "social"). This appears to be a typographical error since the student spelled this word correctly elsewhere.

**Should The Labels
We Give Groups Of
Disabled People Be
Changed So That
They Are
"Politically
Correct?"**

Due 3-5-97

3-5-97

D Should We Change The Labels That We Give Groups Of Disabled People In Order To Make Them "Politically Correct?"

There has been a motion to change the labels we use to describe people with disabilities. Labels such as "physically challenged," "mentally challenged," "differently abled" and "handicapable" have been offered as substitute labels to replace words like "disabled," "handicapped," "deaf," "blind" and "mentally retarded." Labels are terms that classify or group

E people. Language has the power to unite people and the power to change people's perceptions. The "politically correct language" movement tries to change the words that we use in an attempt to give the disabled power as a group, change the way people perceive the disabled and promote a positive self image in the individuals with the disabilities.

Groups of disabled people have begun to draw attention to what they are called in an attempt to gain political power. In the past, dominant groups have used labels as a way of keeping others in their place. Some minority groups have focused on the issue of naming in order to counteract this attempt to belittle them. By choosing what to be called, Blacks and women, for example, remind us that they have power and must be recognized. Similarly, people with disabilities are trying to turn what may

Work Sample & Commentary: *Should the Labels...?* Middle School English Language Arts

be seen as a stigma into a positive identity by questioning how they should be labeled.¹

People with disabilities are usually thought of exclusively in terms of their disabilities and what we call them reflects this way of thinking. It would seem that they are called "handicapped" and are then expected to act "handicapped." It is then assumed that they are helpless, dependent and generally incapable. People think of a person in a wheelchair and conclude that the person is incapable of taking charge of his life. People speak louder to a blind man because they assume that all his senses are impaired. The mentally ill person is considered subhuman and out of control. Therefore, he is feared.

People are so interested in focusing on the words we use in labeling the disabled because there is a body of research that indicates that language affects our thoughts. For example, a study conducted by Benjamin Whorf showed that people in our culture think of snow as a mere inconvenience and have only one word for it. Eskimos, however, who live in a land of ice and snow and must deal with these conditions for survival have many words for snow.² In another study, Curt Hoffman found that bilingual speakers develop different impressions of a person depending on what language they are using. In the study bilingual students read descriptions of hypothetical individuals in English or Chinese. They then wrote essays about their impressions of the people using the language that the description was



¹Irving Kenneth Zola, "Self Identity and the Naming Question: Reflections on the Language of Disability," *Social Science and Medicine*, January 1993, 167–173.

²Benjamin Whorf, *Language Thought and Reality* (New York: Wiley, 1956).

written in. The subjects focused on different aspects of the people in their essays depending on which language they were writing in.³

There is disagreement over whether the labels used to describe the disabled have a significant impact on the disabled and society. While some people campaign for new "politically correct" labels, others challenge and even ridicule the idea.

Some proponents of the politically correct movement have conducted studies with the mentally ill in support of the importance of labeling. According to their labeling theory, negative labels and stereotypes of the mentally ill lead to bad reactions from society and result in the deterioration of functioning in the mentally ill person and even causes mental disorders. Other supporters have modified this theory based on their research and they suggest that although labels cannot cause mental illness, they can result in self-devaluation on the part of the afflicted and expectations of devaluation from others.

Studies on social stereotyping further substantiate the importance of labeling. Snyder reviewed the work of social scientists and has found that social stereotypes often result in a chain of events that affects our attitudes towards the disabled and even influences their behavior. Social stereotyping is a way of labeling and generalizing the characteristics of a group of people. These generalizations may serve as grounds for predictions about the future behavior of disabled people. Assuming how a disabled person is going to act, often changes how we relate to them. Tension

³Curt Hoffman and I. Lau and D.R. Johnson, "The Linguistic Relativity of Person Cognition." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1986, 1097-1105.

between the "normal" person and the disabled person often builds up and this tension may cause the disabled person to act as predicted.⁴

A study conducted by Daniel SocalI brings evidence relating to the importance of labeling that is very convincing. SocalI had two groups of people, one labeled "mentally ill" and another group labeled "physically ill." Both groups of people behaved in the same manner. Subjects were asked to interact with people from both groups and tell of their reactions toward them. Although the groups behaved identically, there were more negative reactions toward the "mentally ill" people. Respondents considered the "mentally ill" less predictable than the "physically ill." In this case, the way people were labeled clearly affected the subject's reaction toward them.⁵

Those who negate the importance of labeling seem to have equally cogent arguments and research. They feel that changing a label does not solve the problem of discrimination and that we should try to eliminate the problem by making people aware of the capabilities of the disabled. Changing a label alone, does not change a person's attitudes toward the disabled.

Critics of the labeling theory argue that people's behavior towards the disabled is a reaction to the behavior on the part of the disabled person and is not related to the label given. For example, Gove showed that negative

⁴ Mark Snyder, "Social Perception and Interpersonal Behavior: On the Self-Fulfilling Nature of Social Stereotypes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1977, 656-666.

⁵ Daniel SocalI, "Attitudes Toward the Mentally Ill: The Effects of Label and Beliefs," *Sociological Quarterly*, Fall 1992, 435-445.

attitudes towards the mentally ill are the result of their behavior and the label of "mentally ill" has little or no effect.⁶

In a study on the physically disabled, Lynch, Thuli and Groombridge found that in hiring an applicant, respondents were not influenced by the use of a "disability focused descriptor." In this study three hundred subjects of varying educational level were given questionnaires to fill out. The questionnaires had descriptions of a job applicant who was physically disabled. Some of the questionnaires had descriptions using the words "wheelchair bound" and "confined to a wheelchair" to refer to the applicant. Others referred to him as a "person with a wheelchair." In choosing adjectives to describe the applicant, the subjects rated both groups as equally "competent" and "effective."⁷

F

A statement by Judy Heumann, Assistant Commissioner of The Office Of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, who is wheelchair bound herself is of considerable importance in weighing the effect of labeling. She says: "We have been plagued by people, almost always not themselves disabled, attempting to change what we call ourselves. If we are 'victims' of anything, it is of such terms as physically challenged, able-disabled, differently abled, handi-capable and people with differing abilities, to offer just a few. Non disabled people's discomfort with reality-based terms such as 'disabled' led them to these euphemisms." She says that her disability

⁶ W.R. Gove, *Deviance and Mental Illness* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982), 273-300.

⁷ Ruth Lynch and Kelli Thuli and Laurie Groombridge, "Person-First Disability Language: A Pilot Analysis of Public Perceptions," *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 1994, 18-22.

Work Sample & Commentary: *Should the Labels...?* Middle School English Language Arts

"cannot be labeled away and I am not ashamed of it. I feel no need to changed the word disabled."⁸

The controversy over labeling has really made me think about the way that I perceive the disabled. It made me aware that I think of disabled people as incapable of leading normal lives. I often pity them and assume that life is more difficult for them, that they are helpless and that they are dependent on others. Both the opponents and proponents of changing the labels given to groups of disabled people gave arguments that made me realize that I should not think of the disabled any differently than I think of other people. I should not feel bad for them because they are just as capable as I am. I think talking about whether we should change the labels given to the disabled makes people more aware of their prejudices.

B

I believe that labels affect people's attitudes toward the disabled. However, I do not agree with the proposed solution to the problem of labeling. I do not think that we should assign new labels to disabled groups. Instead I think that we should eliminate labels altogether. Assigning a group of people any label points to their differences and is prejudicial. We can do this by using what is called "person-first language." This simply means that when referring to a disabled person we should state who they are before describing their condition. For example, instead of saying "disabled person" we could say "person with a disability" and instead of saying "blind person" we could say "person who is blind" or "individual who can not see."⁹ Some might say that it is not necessary to remind an individual that he/she

⁸ Judy Huemann, "Person First, then the Disability," *Pacesetter*, September 1994, 8.

⁹ Ruth Lynch and Keili Thuli and Laurie Groombridge, "Person-First disability Language: A Pilot Analysis of Public Perceptions," *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 1994, 18-22.

G

is a person. While this may be true, it is also true that disabled people are often thought of only in terms of their disabilities. Therefore I think it is important to remind others that the disabled are people too.



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2-4-97

**Should The Labels We Give Groups Of Disabled People Be Changed So That
They Are "Politically Correct?"**

- I. Explanation of controversy**
 - A. Does it matter what labels we give people with physical and mental disabilities?**
 - 1. The disabled as an emerging power group—How can you turn a stigma into a common positive identity?**
 - 2. Attitudes towards the disabled**
 - a. people see wheel chair, not person**
 - b. fear of the "mentally ill"**
 - 3. Evidence that language affects thought**
 - a. Eskimos have many words for snow**
 - b. Bilingual people develop different impressions of a person depending on which language they are using**
 - B. Definition of terms**
 - 1. labels—classification that leads to social stereotyping**
 - 2. disabled groups**
 - a. physically— suggested words to be used such as "physically challenged"**
 - b. mentally— suggested words to be used such as " mentally challenged"**
 - 3. assumptions of political correct language movement**
 - a. to change others attitudes towards the disabled**
 - b. to promote positive self image in the individual with the disability**
- II. We should change the labels we give disabled groups so that they are**

"politically correct"

A. Labeling theory

1. negative labels-negative societal reactions-cause of mental disorders
2. Modified theory- negative societal reactions do not cause disorder but do cause target self-devaluation and expectation of devaluation from others

B. Stereotype-predictions about future behavior-influence interaction between perceiver and target-generates behavior on part of target-validate predictions of perceiver

C. Study conducted by Daniel Socali- more negative reactions towards "mentally ill" than "physically ill"

III. We should not change the labels we give disabled groups so that they are "politically correct"

A. Focus on changing behavior not words

B. Critics of labeling theory- studies show that negative societal reactions are a result of the behavior of the disabled

C. A study shows that labeling does not affect hiring practice

D. Statement of wheel chair bound girl

IV. My opinion

A. Labeling does affect attitudes towards the disabled

B. A better practice-no label (instead of "She is disabled," say "she has a disability")

Work Sample & Commentary: *Indium*

Middle School English Language Arts

The task

Students were asked to read from a variety of sources on a scientific element and report their findings to the class in the form of an oral presentation.

This student chose to present the information found on the element “indium” in a creative manner. The facts describing Indium were woven into a fictional account of a missing person, in this case an element. It was presented to the class orally and later transcribed.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| in class | √ as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback | with peer feedback |
| timed | √ opportunity for revision |

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E1c Reading: Read and comprehend informational materials.

What the work shows

E1c Reading: The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that:

- restates or summarizes information;
- relates new information to prior knowledge and experience;
- extends ideas;
- makes connections to related topics or information.

The student read information from a variety of sources to report on the characteristics of the scientific element indium.

The student synthesized the information gathered about indium and presented it in the form of a narrative, e.g., “When I last saw him he was wearing five energy rings....” The student’s easy humor, for example when talking about the “job” of the element, reveals a confidence and familiarity with the material.

(A) Using a typical missing person profile, i.e., name, alias, age, description, etc., the student related the new found information to prior knowledge about missing person reports. The student also listed appropriate information under the various categories. This demonstrates a clear understanding of the properties of the element.

(B) The student presented basic information in a unique format. This creative process, as the student suggested, may have resulted in a more thorough understanding of the information.

May 31, 1997

Indium

I am gonna tell you a story that happened to me not too long ago... One day I opened my science textbook to study for my science exam. I opened the book to the periodic table and started to study the elements. As I reviewed the elements I noticed that there was an empty space in group 13. I scanned through my mind what element was missing? Indium! He was the missing one.

I walked down to the police station to file a missing element report. I walked up to the police officer and told him I would like to file a missing element report. He asked me the element's name. "Indium", I replied. "Indian", he asked. "No you fool. Indium. I-N-D-I-U-M. Indium.". He looked at me oddly and handed me a missing person's report. I went over in the corner to fill it out.

NAME: Indium
ALIAS: He has no real nickname, but his symbol is 'In'.
AGE: He was discovered in 1863 so he's about 134 years old.
DESCRIPTION: When I last saw him he was wearing five energy rings. Two electrons in the first ring, eight in the second, eighteen in the third and fourth, and three in the last.
JOB: He has no real job, but I know he is used in solar panels.
WEIGHT: Atomic weight of 114.818
OTHER: Melting point- 156.2 c
Boiling- 2000 c
Value- \$1 to \$5 per gram depending on quality and purity

When I handed the report back to the police officer he said, "Oh, this looks familiar...wait a sec. I'm gonna check out if this is the guy we picked up last night." He walked in to the back, took Indium out of the cell, and handed him to me. "We picked him up last night for Jay walking. He's been in a lot of trouble lately. We first picked him up in Germany. He was planning to rule the world." I looked at Indium and walked out. We got home and I started studying again. The next day I had to write an essay on Indium in Science. Guess what? I aced it!

Work Sample & Commentary: *Ciao, Italia!*

Middle School English Language Arts

The task⁸

As part of a cooperative learning project in social studies for Geography Awareness Week, students were asked to select an unfamiliar international location and produce a written and oral presentation about the location. Students used travel brochures, guide books about their chosen area, newspaper travel articles, and interviews to answer the following questions:

1. Where is the destination located?
2. How would someone get there?
3. What language is spoken?
4. What currency is used? What is the correct exchange rate?
5. What are some reasons a person might want to travel there?
6. List and describe some of its attractions.
7. What travel documents are required and how would you get them?
8. Recommend a specific itinerary for a visitor to the destination.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| √ alone | √ in a group |
| √ in class | √ as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback
timed | √ with peer feedback
√ opportunity for revision |

This was a long term project that was completed by two students.

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E1 c Reading: Read and comprehend informational materials.

E2 a Writing: Produce a report.

E5 b Conventions: Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language.

What the work shows

E1 c Reading: The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that:

- restates or summarizes information;
- relates new information to prior knowledge and experience;
- extends ideas;
- makes connections to related topics or information.

(A) The students collected information on Italy from a variety of sources and then restated that information as a narrative of an imaginary trip to Italy.

⁸ At first glance, “Ciao, Italia!” and “Trip to London” (page 294) appear to be similar. However, the task differentiates the purpose of each piece. “Trip to London” uses facts in the service of a story whereas “Ciao, Italia!” uses information as an organizing structure. Its purpose is to focus the reader on the information using an interesting format.

These work samples reflect the variety of tasks that may produce standard-setting work.

Work Sample & Commentary: *Ciao, Italia!* Middle School English Language Arts

(B) The work relates new information about traveling to Italy to the students' prior knowledge of taking a trip.

(C) The students extended the information by incorporating their own likes and dislikes into the narrative. This not only makes their report more interesting, it also adds authenticity.

The students made the connections between the new information about Italy and the practical knowledge of what is required when planning a trip.

E2 a Writing: The student produces a report that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject;
- creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context;
- includes appropriate facts and details;
- excludes extraneous and inappropriate information;
- uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as providing facts and details, describing or analyzing the subject, narrating a relevant anecdote, comparing and contrasting, naming, and explaining benefits or limitations;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(D) The use of superlatives (e.g., “so many,” “most beautiful”) and ellipses for suspense (...Italy!) in the first sentence engage the reader by demonstrating the students' excitement over visiting the country of their ancestors. This also establishes the context for the report.

(E) The travel log listing cities and their attractions conveys the perspective of a tourist and creates the organizing structure. Each entry includes facts and details about the city as well as imaginary personal anecdotes.

(F) The work includes appropriate facts and details throughout, e.g., the description of Rome.

(G) (H) The work describes and analyzes the attractions in each city giving historical details and explaining the significance of the attractions. The students used appropriate strategies for integrating factual information into their anecdotes about famous tourist attractions. For example, the narrative about the Leaning Tower of Pisa includes an explanation of why the tower is covered with steel scaffolding. The students gave authenticity and some local flavor to the travel log by including an Italian phrase “zuppa di pesce” and explaining what it means. This is appropriate for a travel log.

(I) The wish at the fountain to return one day is a natural and popular segue to closure as the students prepare to return home.

E5 b Literature: The student produces work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

The work includes information in the form of a travel log, citing an itinerary organized by cities with their specific attractions. The students included factual information throughout the work to demonstrate the geographical and historical knowledge acquired during this assignment. The fictional details are used to engage the reader and convey the perspective of a visitor to Italy.

We know this trip couldn't take place today, but we imagined the sort of vacation we would plan together in a few years.

For so many years we talked about visiting the home of our ancestors and one of the most beautiful countries on earth...Italy! Well, it was finally time to do it! Two months before we wanted to go, we called a friend of ours who works at Alitalia. She invited us to her office at the headquarters on Fifth Avenue and showed us many brochures and information on tours. It was all great, but we wanted to create our own trip. So, we used some of her suggestions for hotels, car rental, and airline. Then, we did some other research at local travel agencies and at the library. We wanted this to be a trip to remember. Money was no object. We picked December to visit Italy for two reasons. First, we would have a long vacation break from school. Second, the crowds of tourists would be gone.

The only way to get to Italy in style would be with Alitalia, Italy's national airline. We booked reservations for business class. The food and service on Alitalia are rated excellent. Alitalia flight 611 is a 747 wide body. It leaves John F. Kennedy International Airport at 7:40pm, and arrives in Milan the next morning at about 9:30. Next, we made the following car and hotel reservations:

- * Avis car rental: sporty, red two-door Fiat Punta (special 2 week rate of 60,000 lira per day)
- * Milan: two nights at Grand Hotel Et Milan (200,000 lira per night)
- * Venice: three nights at the Flora Hotel (110,000 lira per night)
- * Florence: two nights at Albergo Fiorita (65,000 lira per night)
- * Pisa: one night at Pistoia Hotel (70,000 lira per night)
- * Naples: two nights at Hotel Fontana (63,500 lira per night)
- * Rome: three nights at Pensione Rosa (105,000 lira per night)

With only a month to go before we left, we had our passports renewed.

Then, we made arrangements to get international drivers licenses. We also checked the money conversion rate. For one American dollar we could expect to receive approximately 1,455 Italian lira. We found out that the weather in December in Milan would be like New York City, but the other cities on our tour would be much milder. We packed mostly spring-time clothes.

On our departure day we got to the airport two hours before the flight in order to check-in. Crowds were expected because of the security situation in most major airports. Everything went fine. We got on board, had a delicious dinner, watched a movie of our choice, and slept part of the way over the Atlantic. Before we knew it, the plane was flying high over the tops of the Swiss Alps. Milan's airport, Malpensa, was an hour away!

At Malpensa, it was strange to see Italian soldiers patrolling the area. We heard that most European countries use the military for that purpose. We knew we weren't in the good, old USA anymore! Most

Work Sample & Commentary: *Ciao, Italia!*

Middle School English Language Arts

of the people spoke at least a little English, and we managed with our few words of Italian. After a quick trip through customs and passport control, we found the Avis desk. Our shiny red Punta was gleaming on the lot. We were off!

Here's the itinerary we followed from Milan to Rome, over the next two weeks.

MILAN We settled into our rooms at the Grand Hotel Et Milan, phoned home, and had some lunch. In the afternoon, we found a bank and exchanged most of our cash. That night, we saw a fashion show. The next day was chilly but we got out early and saw the sites of this busy, modern city. The highlight was a visit to Il Duomo, a huge and beautiful cathedral. We did a little shopping and bought some gifts for our families. We left Milan the next morning for our 4 hour drive east to Venice.

VENICE We arrived in Venice by waterbus after leaving our car at the Tronchetto. The Flora Hotel was right off the Grand Canal. You can walk just about anywhere in this ancient city. We saw glass blowers, old churches, and canals everywhere you look. During our three days in Venice we also took a gondola ride, took a boat to the island of Torcello (where Venice was originally settled by mainlanders in the 6th century), toured St. Mark's Square, the Palace of Doges, the Bridge of Sighs, and a few art galleries. We had our best dinner on our last night in Venice when we ate risotto, a rice and sauce dish from the region. The next morning, we jumped on the waterbus and picked up the Punta.

FLORENCE We zoomed along the highway for the 4 hour drive into the province of Tuscany. The scenery along the way was beautiful. We drove through the mountains and hills of the Appenines of central Italy. Florence is the capital of Tuscany and a city famous for its Renaissance art and churches. Even we were impressed! Our hotel was the Albergo Fiorita, in the heart of the city. We saw the statue of David by Michelangelo, and paintings and sculptures by Da Vinci and Botticelli. Other sites we saw were the Arno River running through the city, the Ponte Vecchio, Piazza

Work Sample & Commentary: *Ciao, Italia!* Middle School English Language Arts

della Signoria, and the home of the famous writer, Dante. We left Albergo Fiorita around noon and drove about an hour to another city in Tuscany, Pisa.

PISA In Pisa, we went straight to the Leaning Tower and were disappointed to see the entire structure covered with steel scaffolding. The tower is in such danger of falling over that the government is working to repair it. The tower is actually a bell tower for the church next door. We had a dinner of zuppa di pesce (a fish stew and local specialty) at our Pistoia Hotel. The next morning we were leaving for Naples. **G**

NAPLES We left Pisa early in the morning to get a start on the long trip down the coast of Italy to Naples. The weather was warm and clear and we had terrific views of the Mediterranean. We had lunch in Old Naples and walked through the outdoor markets. Later, we arrived at Hotel Fontana and rested up. Our second day was spent at Mount Vesuvius, the famous active volcano, and the ancient city of Pompeii, which was completely destroyed by the volcano in 79 AD. The night before we left Naples, we ate dinner at an outdoor cafe, met some other students from Italy and Germany and talked about our trip. We knew we were coming to the end of our vacation because our next and final stop was Rome, just a two hour ride north.

ROME The Eternal City is the nickname of Rome because it has lasted in its beauty and importance for thousands of years. Just standing in the city leaves an impression. We got to our hotel, Pensione Rosa, and planned out the next two full days. We had lots to see and do, but the most important sites for us were the Vatican and the Colosseum. Roman ruins are all over the city. For example, we saw the Arch of Titus, Arch of Constantine, the Roman Forum, and the Aurelian Walls. We spent one entire day at the Vatican. St. Peter's Basilica is huge, the size of many footballs fields. It is the largest Catholic church in the world. Of course, we saw the famous chapel inside the Vatican, The Sistine Chapel, which has Michelangelo's awesome ceiling painting of the creation of man. The Colosseum was built in 80 AD. Its grand opening lasted 100 days and was filled with gladiator battles (that ended only when one athlete died), the slaying of 5,000 wild animals, and a naval show that took place when the ground level of the stadium was flooded! Now, this once grand arena looks like just a jumble of stone and rocks, but it's easy to imagine what it once was. Our last night in Rome was a wild and crazy night of partying and dancing at the local hot spots. We stopped by the Trevi Fountain and threw some coins into the **F** **H**

I water and made a wish to return one day. We hoped the old legend was true. The next morning, we were up early to pack and check-out. At Leonardo Da Vinci Airport, we returned the Punta, which served us well, and checked in at Alitalia for our 8 hour flight home. We had time for a cappuccino and then we heard the boarding call for Alitalia flight 608, non-stop service to JFK.

Ciao, Italia!

Work Sample & Commentary: *Turner Essay*

Middle School English Language Arts

The task

Students were asked to evaluate Turner’s Frontier Hypothesis and compare his theory of the westward movement in America with what the students were learning in class about the actual events. The students were asked to discuss ways in which Turner was both right and wrong, and whether or not his hypothesis was an accurate one.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| √ in class | √ as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback | √ with peer feedback |
| timed | √ opportunity for revision |

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E1c Reading: Read and comprehend informational materials.

E2a Writing: Produce a report.

What the work shows

E1c Reading: The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that:

- restates or summarizes information;
- relates new information to prior knowledge and experience;
- extends ideas;
- makes connections to related topics or information.

Information from a variety of sources is organized and restated in a manner appropriate for an informational piece of writing.

(A) The student produced evidence from various sources to support a possible criticism of the theory being discussed.

(B) The student used evidence from a variety of sources to make a judgment about the theory of manifest destiny.

(C) Ideas that emerged from the theory of manifest destiny are related to modern day circumstances.

E2a Writing: The student produces a report that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject;
- creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context;
- includes appropriate facts and details;
- excludes extraneous and inappropriate information;

Work Sample & Commentary: *Turner Essay* Middle School English Language Arts

- uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as providing facts and details, describing or analyzing the subject, narrating a relevant anecdote, comparing and contrasting, naming, and explaining benefits or limitations;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(D) The essay establishes in the opening paragraph the information that is to be presented in the body of the work, generating an interest in the material in the body of the essay that helps maintain the reader’s interest throughout.

(E) The controlling idea of the essay is established in the form of a question regarding the accuracy of a particular theory.

The student worked within an appropriate structure for an informational piece of writing by presenting the information that serves as the basis for later judgments.

(F) The essay includes an appropriate amount of information on each of the groups mentioned in Turner’s theory, but not so much that the reader becomes bogged down in extraneous details.

(A) (B) The student analyzed the two possible answers to the initial question asked in the essay: “Was he [Turner] right, or was he wrong?”

(G) The essay closes appropriately with a restatement of the original question and a brief summary of the findings.

The few mistakes in the piece seem to represent slips rather than errors (e.g., using the word “seeked” instead of “sought”).

April 26,1996

Turner Essay

D → Frederick Turner, who was a professor at The University of Wisconsin as well as Harvard, believed in a theory. This theory was about the frontier. At first this was only an assignment; however, his hypothesis and theory turned out to be published in the late 1800's. Turner wrote a thesis on the western movement and how it was "destiny" for the United States to go coast to coast. He later named this destiny the Manifest Destiny. His theory involved six groups of people who settled in what he termed "waves". There were many people who opposed his point of view. Was he right, or was he wrong?

E → There is a good deal of evidence leading up to him being right. The six groups involved were: Fur Traders, Cattlemen, Pioneer Farmers, Miners, Equipped Farmers, and Specialist\ Urban Settlers. One of the first among the group of six to settle in the West were the Fur Traders. They discovered parts of Tennessee and Kentucky. A man named Daniel Boone was among the Fur Traders and was well known. On the way back from Tennessee and Kentucky, they brought with them coonskins and leather. The Fur Traders helped settle Tennessee. The next group were the Cattlemen. They stretched as far as San Diego to San Francisco. The Cattlemen, like the pioneer farmers, used the land and natural resources to survive. They built cattle kingdoms and survived by that for shelter, food, and warmth. The group that came after them were the Miners. There was a rumor of gold found in the West, especially in California.

F → Thousands of people came to California. These people were known as the 49ers because in 1849, people came for the gold. Approximately 80,000 people seeked their fortune in gold in California. This made the territory eligible for statehood, and later on, California became a state. Miners were usually ahead of the settlers, and were nomadic. They built "boom towns," and moved when an opportunity came up. A short while after, Pioneer Farmers came. The Pioneer Farmers followed the trails to the West, and there they cut down trees to build roads, farms, grow crops, etc. They wanted to find rich fertile land for their crops. They eventually got to California where the land was rich. As the Pioneer Farmers moved further west, the Equipped Farmers followed. The Equipped Farmers followed the Oregon trail and ended up forming a town at the end of the trail called Oregon City. They built better roads and turnpikes. They also

sold tools and utensils to miners in the West. The last group of people to settle the West were the Specialist/Urban Settlers. They were inspired to start new settlements and become friends with the Indians as well as learn some of their culture. A man named Jason Lee was a Specialist who educated whites and Indians. The Specialists were different because they were already wealthy and had another job than working the land. They established towns and communities and settled in Ohio. They also opened shops, schools, churches, etc. As you can see Turner was right that these six groups came in waves, first starting with the Fur Traders and ending with the Specialist.

Was he wrong? There is not as much evidence, but there is enough to question whether he was right or wrong in his theory. For example, one major group he left out were the Mormons. The Mormons followed the Oregon trail to Utah. To get to Utah they probably went on the California Trail which is connected to the Oregon Trail. The Mormons were very religious and believed in the practice of having more than one wife. The Mormons also had the most successful businesses in the West. Other reasons why he could be wrong are because people went to the West for opportunities. For example, a man named Nathan Hammond went to the West to become wealthy, find bigger land, and a better job. Otto and Anna Schippen moved to the West because their life consisted of moving around. Each place was a new adventure. However, Matthew and Patrice Reynolds moved for better jobs and to sell land. This proved that he could be wrong because it was not all "destiny."

I feel he was able to make a correct hypothesis because his findings all tie in — the six groups went West in waves and it appears it was destiny for them to go. One could say it was correct because he gathered all the facts, made generalizations, and from that, was able to draw a conclusion resulting in a correct hypothesis.

If I could ask Frederick Turner questions about his theory, I would first ask him one obvious question: What made you get so interested in the Western Movement? I would also ask him: How did he get all of his information and form a hypothesis?

Turner displayed many characteristics on the groups of people involved in this. For example, he spoke about Daniel Boone and his leather products as well as his coonskin hats. He explained thoroughly who these people were, what they wanted, and how they would achieve it. This can relate to computer technology because each year we are exploring more and more areas and finding out newer things just like the pioneers. We've come very far, from the first computer to America On Line, Cyberspace,

and the World Wide Web. This could also relate to the space program because each year we are finding and learning more things about space and the planets. We have landed on the moon, and now Russia and the United States are teaming up together to build a space station so they can explore further galaxies. That is just like when the trails and towns were built.

In conclusion, what started to be an assignment turned out to be published in a book, and become a well known part of history. Turner's theory opened up everybody into learning about Westward Movement. The main question is, do you think he was right or wrong?

Work Sample & Commentary: *Interview With the Vet* Middle School English Language Arts

The task

As an applied learning project students on an English/history team decided to design and publish a series of magazines organized around historical themes. The magazines were then distributed to middle school students who could not afford to buy magazines of this kind. The article here was one of many produced by the students that were subsequently published.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| √ in class | √ as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback | √ with peer feedback |
| timed | √ opportunity for revision |

Although a single student took the responsibility for this particular article, the decisions as to topics, as well as the compilation of written articles into magazines, were handled by the class as a whole.

The error in the transition from page one to page two occurred during the process of setting up the page layout.

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E2 a Writing: Produce a report.

What the work shows

E2 a Writing: The student produces a report that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject;
- creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context;
- includes appropriate facts and details;
- excludes extraneous and inappropriate information;
- uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as providing facts and details, describing or analyzing the subject, narrating a relevant anecdote, comparing and contrasting, naming, and explaining benefits or limitations;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(A) The reader's interest is engaged by a brief story that introduces the subject of the article.

(B) The article makes a transition from the opening story that took place in Vietnam to the present day interview that identifies the controlling idea for the article: a soldier remembering what war was like.

The structure of the article replicates the organizing structure often found in human interest articles in newspapers and magazines. The structure is appropriate here considering that the article is written within this genre.

Work Sample & Commentary: *Interview With the Vet* Middle School English Language Arts

The student stayed within the genre of a human interest article throughout, focusing on what the war was like primarily through the eyes of the article's subject, as opposed to dealing with the war in broad generalizations. As a result, the information included was appropriate.

The article includes a number of strategies appropriate to this genre. For example, the article begins with an engaging anecdote before moving on to less interesting facts and details, allowing those details to gain significance for the reader.

(C) A sense of closure is produced by ending on an uplifting note appropriate for human interest articles.

Interview With the Vet

A → It was a silent night in 1968. The day was rather hot, with some steamy wetness in the tropical Vietnamese climate. The night was a pretty normal one for twenty-one year old Corporal Francisco "Frank" _____. Patrolling had been rather uneventful, and the quiet night air was relaxing for the members of _____'s group. Men silently prowled the grounds amidst the looming compound in Da Nang, Vietnam, watching intently for any signs of disturbance. Cpl. _____ stood still, relaxed, taking it easy after a lonely, difficult day at work. But, how could you ever say that war was easy? The seemingly unnecessary and costly Vietnam War had been going on for several years, and Frank was there to do his job for right now. However, right then, Frank began to get some of his soldiers instinct for danger. He saw that the other soldiers on the patrol had also begun to look up with alertness. The night had grown deathly quiet in a normally noisy part of the land.

Just as Frank decided that it had definitely grown too quiet, whistling mortar shells and booming gunfire shattered the peaceful calm of the compound with shrieking and deafening noises. Everything seemed to be raining down from the pitch black,

sky, sending with it shards of powder, metal and debris. In the few seconds that all this occurred, Frank suddenly felt a searing, intense pain in his gut, near his stomach. He leaped to the ground for safety as emergency teams got him to the hospital. As he was rushed there, he got scared at the thought of a bullet hitting him. When he entered the



Frank _____ as a young soldier in Vietnam in 1968.

emergency room, the medics immediately began looking for the bullet hole, except it was never found. The sudden event had scared Frank so immensely that he had formed a huge ulcer in the pit of his stomach fear gripping him from the real world.

Mr. _____, now age forty-nine, looks back on that incident with a chuckle because he remembers how

one of his first encounters scared him thoroughly. Although many followed after that one in that foreign land, he looks back saying, "It scared the heck outta me...I'll never forget that night." That night was one of a lifetime for Frank while he served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War.

Although there were a few good times and a duty to finish out, Mr. _____ never quite got over the fact that this political war was fought for the wrong reasons. In his opinion and other's view on this war, "Everyone was out to profit or gain from this war. Generals got promoted, business boomed for the defense industry, new jobs were made in Vietnam and America alike. I really think that the basic effort of this whole operation was a wasted one." Vietnam was remembered to many as an unnecessary, cruel war that ruined two countries.

But how did this affair start? Well, you could say that it began with the end of World War II. During the reconstruction period after World War II, President Truman and other leaders of America, one of the most powerful nations during that time, wanted to have capitalism, which is when most property is owned privately by people or corporations. Communism was

B →

Work Sample & Commentary: *Interview With the Vet* Middle School English Language Arts

corporations. Communism, a system where all businesses and properties are owned by the government, was also an idea spreading quickly. In an effort to prevent communism from taking over the foreign policies of that era, Truman and his colleagues promised to help any country trying to resist communism. In short, throughout the years of Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, many efforts were made for the prevention of communism spreading through Vietnam.

Born in Big Spring, Texas, 250 miles west of Fort Worth, Francisco _____ was born to a Hispanic family, who also had roots in the border city of Presidio, where his father worked for the Air Force. Frank went through high school in Big Spring and graduated there. After graduation, he joined the Marine Corps and fought in Vietnam. His jobs there consisted of being an administrative clerk, and translator, the only one in his unit. Returning from Vietnam, he began attending _____ County Junior College and earned an associate degree in general business. Soon after, he met and married his wife, Elizabeth. They have two daughters, who are adults now. Their eldest had a son, Frank's first grandson.

I had wondered, however, if he had ever had any trouble with his race, a rather

rather controversial issue in the world, then and now. He explained, "In getting my education in the schools, I had little problem getting to where I eventually got. If I did, I probably ignored it. I mean, that's what you have to do. When I was in the boot and infantry camps, and even on the battleground, there were mainly blacks, whites, and I was the only Hispanic there. The people there in my unit didn't



Frank with the kids in the orphanage

bother me much; we were too busy working on a job that we had to do. I had a goal to accomplish, and I really didn't let any racism get in my way."

Basically, Frank was not quite satisfied with his one degree and started pursuing another one recently. He is currently attending _____ University to earn a Bachelor's degree in business. He is, however, already a successful man, working for _____ at its Fort Worth plant. Although he only had one degree, he worked himself up from the bottom several steps to become

steps to become an English supervisor in the plant. With even more education, he will work his way up in the business world. It just goes to show what one can accomplish with a sufficient education. In addition to his hard work at _____, he is in the Army Reserve with the rank of Sergeant Major and is a member of the Vietnam Veterans Association.

Mr. _____ turned out to be a very successful and well-grounded individual despite the effect the war had on him. He did have a suggestion for minorities or anyone else willing to join efforts in the military, though. He pointedly stated, "Get the best education you can while you are at it. Goofing off is never going to get you anywhere. If you do your best, never hesitate on being the leader. Lead your own crowd if you have to. The leaders of this day and age always get the best jobs in the military. Only the smart, intelligent and hardest workers get promoted to the senior stage. Always keep a positive outlook on the world, because war is one of the most negative things you'll mess with. It can really test you because it is never what you think it is. Just keep that positive outlook on life."



Work Sample & Commentary: *The Carnival Is Almost Here* Middle School English Language Arts

The task

For an applied learning project students planned a school carnival and used the proceeds to buy food for a homeless shelter. The project was initiated by a proposal from a student. As the actual event drew near the students recognized the need for a number of documents to help manage the event. The flier included here was produced to provide some last minute details so that the event would flow as smoothly as possible.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| alone | ✓ in a group |
| ✓ in class | as homework |
| with teacher feedback | ✓ with peer feedback |
| timed | ✓ opportunity for revision |

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E1e Reading: Demonstrate familiarity with functional documents.

What the work shows

E1e Reading: The student demonstrates familiarity with a variety of functional documents (i.e., documents that exist in order to get things done) and produces written or oral work that does one or more of the following:

- identifies the institutional context of the document;
- identifies the sequence of activities needed to carry out a procedure;
- analyzes or uses the formatting techniques used to make a document user-friendly;
- identifies any information that is either extraneous or missing in terms of audience and purpose or makes effective use of relevant information.

(A) The work identifies the context of the flier clearly and concisely, so that readers will know immediately its purpose.

The students attempted to make the document readable by numbering the points to be made, listing the points in a logical order so that similar points are grouped together, and including a border so that the flier stands out from other papers and can be recognized easily.

The flier points out that those participating in the carnival will need to be aware of a number of procedures integral to doing their jobs. The procedures are succinct and to the point, providing an appropriate amount of information so that the participants should have no trouble following them.

A

The carnival is almost here, and there are a few details left to go over.

1. All booths must be set up by 4:15.
 2. Tables will be set up in your space; all you have to do is decorate.
 3. We need to have adults at each booth or in the close proximity (near).
 4. No money is to be accepted at the booths. You may accept TICKETS ONLY! Tickets may be purchased at the ticket booth.
 5. All "used" tickets are to be torn or marked to prevent "re-using".
 6. Turn in all tickets to the money booth at the end of the carnival. The money for the tickets will be given to the sponsor on Monday.
 7. All booths must be cleaned up by 7:30! Please, assist us by returning the tables to the cafeteria and picking up all trash.
 8. Attached is a map of the carnival grounds. In case of rain, we will be moving inside the new gym.
- If you have any questions, please see Mrs. _____ in room 226.
- Suggestion:** Have a timetable set up for the workers of your booth. This will allow workers a break to see the carnival.

Work Sample & Commentary: *Dear Cynthia Voigt* Middle School English Language Arts

The task

Students were asked to read books by an author whose protagonists were teenagers. Students were then asked to respond directly to the author in a friendly letter (similar to the Dear Author Contest idea, “Letters About Literature” from student magazines). In this work, the student is writing to Cynthia Voigt, author of *Homecoming*.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| √ in class | √ as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback | with peer feedback |
| timed | √ opportunity for revision |

Although a single student took the responsibility for this particular article, the decisions as to topics, as well as the compilation of written articles into magazines, were handled by the class as a whole.

The error in the transition from page one to page two occurred during the process of setting up the page layout.

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E2b Writing: Produce a response to literature.

What the work shows

E2b Writing: The student produces a response to literature that:

- engages the reader through establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- advances a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective;
- supports a judgment through references to the text, references to other works, authors, or non-print media, or references to personal knowledge;
- demonstrates an understanding of the literary work;
- anticipates and answers a reader’s questions;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(A) The student’s opening line demonstrates a warm familiarity with the author’s work. The conversational tone, appropriate to the purpose and task, engages the reader while creating a persona that permeates the letter. The student established the context by stating the main idea of the novel and referring to Dicey’s journey.

The student conveyed a judgment of the author’s craft directly by admiring the depiction of Dicey’s journey, and indirectly, by discussing the effect that the novel had on her as a person. The student supported this judgment through reference to the text and through reference to her own personal experience.

The student developed an organizational structure through the comparison between Dicey’s life and her own life.

**Work Sample & Commentary: *Dear Cynthia Voigt*
Middle School English Language Arts**

- (B) Through this comparison, the student made an evaluation not only about Dicey as a character, but also about what is important in life. The student resolved to become more like Dicey.
- (C) The student demonstrated an understanding of the literary text by making references to her own personal knowledge and experience with her family. The student recognized the protagonist’s bravery and self-sacrifice in helping her family.
- (D) The student provided closure to the writing by reiterating the author’s theme, “...that family comes first,” and by summarizing the effect the novel had on her.

Dec. 3, 1996

Dear Cynthia Voigt,

A I can go on and on about how your novel Homecoming motivated me. Yet, what I really want is to compliment you. I truly love the way you made Dicey’s journey come to life. Her troubles, her worries, and dreams became a part of me. Dicey’s faith taught me a great deal about the true importance of family. She showed me that life is full of unexpected moments and that I should take a step back and look at what I have. I should realize how lucky I really am. **C**

I have always taken things in my life for granted. My mother’s cooking, my father’s ongoing lectures, and my brother’s irritating ways were just things that I thought every kid had. When I began reading Homecoming, I realized that my philosophy was wrong. Dicey, a thirteen-year old like me, was the total opposite. Despite her hopeless situation, she kept her spirits up because she knew that she had loved ones relying on her. Dicey sacrificed her childhood and her innocence to save the only family she had. **C**

B You might ask what this taught me about myself. Well, let me explain. I have been a tough kid, if I say so myself. But no matter how bad things got, my parents were always there. I never thanked them. In fact, I didn’t even appreciate their presence. Now, however, I’ve changed. After reading Homecoming I went to my parents and said, “Thank you, for being there . . .” Now I never leave the table without thanking my Mom for the meal, I actually listen to my Dad’s lectures (I even learn from them), and last but not least, I realize that my brother’s ~~treasing~~ **C** is really his way of expressing his love for me.

D Homecoming touched my heart in a way no other novel did. It taught me that family comes first. I learned to treasure life and be grateful. Sure it’s important how my hair looks, but I should never forget who I got my hair from.

Your biggest fan,

Work Sample & Commentary: *Captain Ahab*

Middle School English Language Arts

The task

Students were asked to examine the character of either Ahab or Starbuck after reading Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*. They were to answer the following questions: What are this character’s best and worst qualities? Support your opinion with specific quotes from the book. Do you think this character is a hero? How would the novel have been different if this character was not part of it?

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| in class | √ as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback | with peer feedback |
| timed | √ opportunity for revision |

An abridged version of Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* published by the Globe Book Company, ©1992, was read for this assignment. The editor’s note states that the edition was prepared with the intent of maintaining the author’s purpose; some passages and vocabulary were omitted or modified, but as much of the original as possible was retained.

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E2 b Writing: Produce a response to literature.

E4 a Conventions: Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language.

What the work shows

E2 b Writing: The student produces a response to literature that:

- engages the reader through establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- advances a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective;
- supports a judgment through references to the text, references to other works, authors, or non-print media, or references to personal knowledge;
- demonstrates an understanding of the literary work;
- anticipates and answers a reader’s questions;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(A) The opening sentence engages the reader and establishes interest by imitating Melville’s writing style. Just as Melville begins his novel with, “Call me Ishmael,” the student created a persona by using a similar opening, “Call me _____” (the student’s first name). In addition, the student established the context by stating the purpose of the paper and briefly summarizing the plot.

(B) The student interpreted Ahab’s behavior and actions and made a judgment about whether or not Ahab was a hero.

(C) Each judgment of Ahab’s character is supported by a reference to the text. For example, the student cited Ahab’s vengefulness, “I seek the White Whale for revenge....”

Work Sample & Commentary: *Captain Ahab* Middle School English Language Arts

(D) The student demonstrated an understanding of the literary novel by reflecting upon the significance of Ahab’s passion for the hunt for Moby Dick as the key element in the story.

(E) The work focuses, for the most part, on Ahab’s negative qualities but the reader’s questions are anticipated and addressed by showing a positive aspect of Ahab’s character, i.e., “He was a good orator....”

(F) The last paragraph provides a sense of closure to the writing by reiterating the reasons for the student’s strong dislike for Captain Ahab. Also, the last sentence organizes the structure of the work by effectively completing the circle begun in the first sentence.

E4a Conventions, Grammar, and Usage of the English Language: The student demonstrates an understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work, and selects the structures and features of language appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the work. The student demonstrates control of:

- grammar;
- paragraph structure;
- punctuation;
- sentence construction;
- spelling;
- usage.

The student demonstrates, through virtually error free writing, the ability to manage the conventions of grammar and usage. The student manages a variety of sentence constructions, appropriate punctuation, and complex syntax. This is evident throughout the work.

Work Sample & Commentary: *Captain Ahab*

Middle School English Language Arts

April 13, 1997

CAPTAIN AHAB

A → Call me _____. Some days ago, never mind how many precisely, having no idea what to write I sat down with a pencil and paper and started to plan out a report on a sea captain. This was no ordinary sea captain, this was *Captain Ahab*. Captain Ahab was the creation of Herman Melville in his classic novel *Moby Dick*. The story *Moby Dick* is about a captain of a whaling ship who sets out to seek revenge on the most dangerous whale in the sea. Ahab's passion for killing this whale had originated on a previous voyage when *Moby Dick* had taken Ahab's leg. Ahab was out for *revenge*.

In my opinion, Captain Ahab was a horrible captain and he had many bad qualities. Of all of them, I think that the worst was dishonesty. When the crew started out on the voyage they did not know about the chase for *Moby Dick*, and they were not told until they were far out to sea. Captain Ahab also hid five men on board so that if the crew turned against him they would be on his side. You meet these men when the first cry for whales is made in the story. "A shout went up and all eyes turned to dark Ahab,

2

who was surrounded by five men no one had ever seen before”.

As you can see, Ahab was not a very honest man.

Ahab only cared about himself and his own intention. He was

B → *therefore very insensitive. When the Pequod met the Rachel, the captain of the Rachel asked Ahab to help him find his missing son. Ahab’s reply to Captain Gardinier’s plea for help was: “Stop,*

C → *touch not a rope yarn. Captain Gardinier I will not help you . Even now I lose time. Good-bye, Good-bye”.* Ahab was so intent on finding *Moby Dick* that he would not even stop to look for a 12

year old boy. When Starbuck, the first mate, asked to stop the ridiculous voyage, because he presumed they would perish, Ahab replied: **C** → *“By no means will I ever give up the chase for Moby Dick”.*

As we already know, the crew did not know about Moby Dick when they started out so when they were told, Ahab showed that he

B → *was vengeful by saying: “I seek the White Whale for revenge for it was him that took off me leg and I will stop at nothing to kill*

C → *him”.* It isn’t right for people to want revenge on a person and certainly not right to seek revenge on a whale that was trying to defend itself from being captured. In seeking revenge, Ahab gave

Work Sample & Commentary: *Captain Ahab*

Middle School English Language Arts

3

Moby Dick human qualities such as the ability to chase Ahab, and only Ahab. That, in my opinion, makes Ahab *INSANE!!!!*

E → Even though Ahab was a very bad person, I think he had one good quality. He was a good orator, meaning that he could speak to his crew very well and get his point across clearly. One example of this is when he first tells the crew about the chase and, instead of frightening them, he uses strong words and phrases to get them excited. When he is finished talking, he passes around a pitcher filled with wine and says: "Drink and swear, ye men that man the whale boats. Death to *Moby Dick*. The cups were lifted and the sailors drank amid cries against *Moby Dick*. Even though the sailors were getting excited about a dangerous expedition, it shows that Ahab had the ability to get his crew to look beyond the danger.

Now that I have discussed Ahab's good and bad qualities, lets move on to a question that many people wonder about. Was captain Ahab a hero? People may have their own opinions, but I don't think he was a hero at all. First of all, a hero is a person who does a good deed or goes out of his or her way to help somebody or

4

something. In the story, Ahab never helped anyone and he never went out of his way for anybody. When Ahab went on the voyage after Moby Dick he endangered the lives of his crew, and that is not heroic at all. If anyone in the story could be called a hero it would be Queequeg. He actually saved a persons life.

D →

If captain Ahab was not in Moby Dick, the story might have been the tale of a whaling crew out to find the largest whale in the sea. There would have been a chase for Moby Dick, but the chase would never have become so personal. It would have been a less interesting story because Ahab's passion for hunting the whale is what made the story as exciting as it was.

F

As you can probably tell, I didn't like the character of Captain Ahab. He was DISHONEST, INSULTING, AND VENGEFUL. All in all, I enjoyed reading Moby Dick and writing this report. As you can see, I've come a long way since some days ago. Almost like Ishmeal, but that's another story...

Work Sample & Commentary: *Analysis of The Old Man and the Sea* Middle School English Language Arts

The task

During a unit on literature, students were asked to write a critical analysis on a work of their choice.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| √ in class | as homework |
| with teacher feedback | with peer feedback |
| timed | √ opportunity for revision |

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E2b Writing: Produce a response to literature.

E4a Conventions: Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language.

What the work shows

E2b Writing: The student produces a response to literature that:

- engages the reader through establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- advances a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective;
- supports a judgment through references to the text, references to other works, authors, or non-print media, or references to personal knowledge;
- demonstrates an understanding of the literary work;
- anticipates and answers a reader's questions;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(A) The essay engages the reader through a brief summary of the plot in the first paragraph.

(B) The final sentence of the first paragraph establishes a context by incorporating a quotation into the guiding statement or thesis.

(C) The essay advances an interpretive judgment, i.e., "Santiago does not let the loss of his friend or the defeat that others see him suffering keep him off the sea...and prepares to catch the biggest fish of his life."

(D) Assertions about the piece are supported through references to the text.

(E) The student demonstrated an understanding of the literary work by making evaluative judgments that connected Santiago's dreams of lions to his victory over tremendous odds.

(F) The material is organized logically by using two key elements of the quotation from the thesis statement as devices to guide the structure, i.e., "destroyed" but "not defeated" are the elements which are repeated in each paragraph; the concluding paragraph returns to the quotation in the guiding statement.

Work Sample & Commentary: *Analysis of The Old Man and the Sea* Middle School English Language Arts

E4a Conventions, Grammar, and Usage of the English Language: The student demonstrates an understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work, and selects the structures and features of language appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the work. The student demonstrates control of:

- grammar;
- paragraph structure;
- punctuation;
- sentence construction;
- spelling;
- usage.

The student managed the conventions, grammar, and usage of English so that they aid rather than interfere with reading.

The student managed a variety of sentence constructions and paragraph structures, e.g., see paragraph three for use of detail to develop the paragraph.

ANALYSIS OF THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

A → In the book The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway tells the story of an old Cuban fisherman named Santiago who, considered by the villagers to be the worst type of unlucky, is still determined to win a battle against a giant Marlin off the coast of Cuba. Santiago succeeds, but his successes do not come without great hardship and struggle. He spends three days being dragged in his skiff by the enormous marlin with minimal food and water, all the while enduring acute physical pain, tiredness, and an unending loneliness due to the absence of his young friend, Manolin. It is only after Santiago's prize fish is completely devoured by sharks that he returns home to the village scorners and the safety of Manolin's trust. As his suffering and loss compound, we can see that Hemingway's quote "a man can be destroyed but not defeated" offers a key insight into Santiago's life.

B → As the story begins, we learn that Santiago has gone eighty-four days straight without catching a fish. Young Manolin's parents will no longer allow the two to fish together, for they do not want their son being exposed any more to this type of failure. Santiago and Manolin are deeply saddened by this news, but Santiago does not let the loss of his friend or the defeat that others see him suffering keep him off the sea. Rather, with bright and shining eyes he thinks "maybe today. Every day is a new day" (pg. 32), and prepares to catch the biggest fish of his life. This shows that even though almost all of Santiago's acquaintances feel that his fishing career is over, he sees it about to reach its all time high. Though he knows he is physically older and weaker than most of his fellow fisherman, he refuses to let their opinions and stereotypes destroy his confidence and determination.

C → As the story progresses, Hemingway presents an even more vivid picture of Santiago refusing to be destroyed by the forces that threaten to defeat him. Even after he accomplishes the difficult task of hooking the giant Marlin, he finds his skiff being dragged by the fish for over two days. Living in the small boat is no easy task for Santiago, and soon injury and suffering seem to take over his entire body. His back is sore from sitting so long against the stiff wood, his face is cut from fishing hooks, his shoulders ache, and his eyes have trouble focusing. Most difficult to endure though is the terrible condition in which he finds his hands. The left one is weakened from a period of being tightly cramped, and both are extremely mutilated from the burn of the moving fishing line. It would have been so much easier for Santiago to simply give up and release the fish, yet he knows that if he endures a little longer, victory will be his. Even when it seems he has no effort left, Santiago promises himself "I'll try it again." (pg. 93) This is Santiago's real inner determination coming through. He has encountered so many obstacles during the past few days, yet he will not let them defeat his dream of killing the fish. There is no outside force promising a splendid reward if he succeeds, only those that threaten to ridicule him if he is destroyed. Santiago is working solely on his own desire to fulfill his dream and prove to himself that, although his struggles may cost him his life, he can accomplish even the seemingly impossible. **D** ←

Work Sample & Commentary: *Analysis of The Old Man and the Sea* Middle School English Language Arts

After three long days and nights, Santiago's determination pays off, and at last he manages to catch and kill the Marlin. It is only a very short time that he has to relish in his triumph though, for a few hours later vicious sharks begin to destroy the carcass of the great fish. For hours, Santiago manages to ward them off, but this time it is not he who wins the final battle. Spirits low and pain at an all time high, Santiago returns to the village, towing behind him only the bare skeleton of a treasure that once was. It seems as though Santiago is ready to just curl up and die, and indeed he has reason to feel this way. Yet as he rests alone and talks with Manolin, we see a hint of Santiago's determination, that has characterized his personality throughout the entire story, begin to shine through. Upon reaching home, he begins to make plans with Manolin about future adventures they will have together. Hemingway tells us that Santiago, in his youth, had loved to watch the majestic lions along his home on a white sand beach in Africa, and he still returns to those dreams when searching for contentment. That night, as Santiago drifts off to sleep, Hemingway tells us that he was indeed "dreaming about the lions." (pg. 127) This is perhaps the truest test of how much courage and determination a person has. If even when they have suffered the biggest defeat of their life, they are able to look to the future and realize the wonderful things they still possess. Though the forces of nature and time destroyed Santiago's prize fish, he refuses to let that fact ruin the rest of his life. No one can take away his love for Manolin or memories of what once was, and because of this, no one can ever truly defeat Santiago.

E →

In conclusion, throughout the entire story *The Old Man and the Sea*, Santiago refuses to surrender to the forces working against him. He ignores the comments of those who think he is unlucky, endures great physical pain, and rises up from the depths of sorrow over the lost Marlin to find happiness in what he does possess. Hemingway's quote "a man can be destroyed but not defeated" truly does display the amount of determination that Santiago shows throughout his life.

F →

Work Sample & Commentary: *My Brother*

Middle School English Language Arts

The task

Students were asked to write a narrative account about a special person who had made a significant impact on their lives. The students were given this task as a homework assignment. Revisions to the writing were made as a result of teacher/student and small group discussions.

This student chose to write an autobiographical account about her life in Guyana.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| √ alone | √ in a group |
| √ in class | √ as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback
timed | √ with peer feedback
√ opportunity for revision |

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E2 c Writing: Produce a narrative account.

What the work shows

E2 c Writing: Writing: The student produces a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical) that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a point of view, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- establishes a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict (and for autobiography, the significance of events and of conclusions that can be drawn from those events);
- creates an organizing structure;
- includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character;
- excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies;
- develops complex characters;
- uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, tension or suspense, naming, and specific narrative action, e.g., movement, gestures, expressions;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

In this narrative account, the student created a strong mental image of her younger brother living in the pastoral setting of Guyana.

(A) The work engages the reader’s interest with a paradoxical statement: although the student’s brother is far away, he is still very close to her. The persona for the story, along with the context, is established in this first paragraph.

(B) The student’s descriptions of her younger brother clearly express her love for him which further engages the reader’s curiosity since the student does not explain why they are now separated until much later in the narrative.

(C) The student’s feelings of joy and “privilege” at becoming the “second mother” to her younger brother establish the context for the narrator’s special memories. The student

Work Sample & Commentary: *My Brother* Middle School English Language Arts

further developed the context and the setting through descriptions of her child-caring activities which solidified the bond between the student and her younger brother.

The work is a flashback organized around the stages of the brother's growth beginning at the point where the student becomes his second mother, through his early childhood in Victoria Village, to the painful separation at the end. The sequential anecdotes strongly support the development of the story.

(D) The student included sensory details to create for the reader a pictorial image of her brother and their life in Guyana. The student emphasized the importance of their relationship by using concrete language to recall memories of them playing in Victoria Village meadows. This highlights their despair when they are separated at the end of the story.

(E) The student used dialogue to develop the relationship between the siblings and the character of the younger brother. The names and nicknames further illustrate the closeness that existed between the two siblings. The student developed the character of the protagonist as someone who makes the best out of a difficult situation (e.g., becoming a second mother to the younger brother and separating from a beloved person).

(F) The tempo of the story varies through the interplay of happy anecdotes with more somber ones. But even the happy stories are tinted with pathos since the student is no longer with her brother. The description of the separation at the airport is short, concise, and free of excessive sentimentality.

(G) The work closes with a feeling of hope as the student and her younger brother strive to maintain their weakening bond across the many miles of separation.

(H) The work then returns the reader to the beginning image of the idyllic bright sun lit meadows of the village in Guyana that sustains the narrator's fond memories.

Throughout the work the student used a variety of techniques to enhance the narrative including:

(I) the use of time to frame the narrative—present, past, present;

(J) specific dates and information which add authenticity to the story; and

(K) nicknames which also add authenticity while revealing the closeness of their relationship.

There are some errors in punctuation (e.g., “brothers’” instead of “brother’s” at the bottom of the second last page), run-on sentences (e.g., the first sentence in the fourth paragraph), and usage (e.g., “vivid” instead of “vividly” in the first paragraph). These errors do not detract from the overall quality of the narrative.

Work Sample & Commentary: *My Brother*
Middle School English Language Arts

Language Arts _____ class _____
04/16/97.

"My Brother"

_____, my youngest brother, is miles away from me in body, but in spirit I can feel him with me and I know were as close as a brother and sister can possibly be. The image of _____ playing with me still enters my mind and is as vivid as yesterday.

I can still see his smooth chocolate face and his bright brown eyes looking at me. I often recall his sweet little voice speaking to me, asking me to play with him. He will always be my sweet innocent brother.

My little brother is so dear and special to my life. There is an amazing relationship between Matthew and I. We've shared a special bond since the day my brother was born. I had to become his second mother, and found it a privilege to comfort and care for him.

When _____ was born my mother wasn't there to take care of him because she was sick, so I was the only one there for him, until she was better. In those two months I bottle feed him, changed his diapers, cradled him and did whatever it took to keep him happy. Being a second mother was a very challenging task for me.

Even though I was five years older than him,

I still liked to play games kids his age played, but I had responsibilities. Some Saturdays he would beg me to go into the meadows to play.

"Toby, can we go into the meadows today?" He asked.

F → "I really don't have time today _____," I replied.

"But why?" He looked at me in despair.

"Because I have a lot of work to do, I just don't have time," was my reply.

"But, but you always go with me," He stammered in disappointment.

C → "Baby, I know maybe next time," I responded, tired, picking his toys up from the floor.

E → "No! you have to, you have to _____," He cried.

"Ok, but we'll be back early," was my reply.

"I love you," He said with a bright smile on his face.

F → Then off we went into the green meadows of the Victoria Village under the bright sunshine. I would push him on a cart until he was tired from laughing very loud. He'd play hide and seek in the tall grass until the sun set and I'd push him all the way home on the cart. Playing these games with him made me feel like a kid again.

D

Living nine years together we knew each others' differences, similarities and secrets that no one

F → else knew. One day he came home from school and was walking towards me very slowly. Normally he runs to me to get a hug when he comes home, but that day he didn't.

E → "What's the matter Pookie Pie?" I asked, looking at _____ with concern. He opened his eyes very wide staring at me.

E → "_____ I'm speaking to you," I repeated. "_____", he said trembling, "I lost my ring." "You what?!" I replied in a loud tone of voice.

"I lost my ring," he replied again.

"But _____ how?" I responded, asking him in a soft voice.

"I had a fight, then I looked at my finger and it just wasn't there!" _____ exclaimed.

K → "Oh, baby" I said and gave him a hug, "Don't worry about it, just don't worry."

So his secret became mine I loved him so much that even if I had to give him some lashes to make him do the right things, I would, but that day I didn't.

When we were living in the same house in Guyana we behaved almost like twins, spending all of our time with each other, until my father was awarded custody of me and I was told I'd be moving to the U.S from my home in Guyana. I realized I wouldn't be with my brother anymore.

K

F →

It's very hard for me to live the days of my life without him. We can't go to school together anymore, and we're not there for each other like we used to be. Being apart from each other is like a storm on a picnic day because everything becomes so mixed up in one's mind.

J →

September twenty eighth, nineteen ninety six was the hardest day of my life. That was the day when I left my brother to migrate to the US. That day my thoughts were all consuming thinking about how I could cope with _____ and his laughter not being with me. On that day he came to the airport with me. He walked around the airport waiting for the plane to arrive. We were happy until the plane arrived, then it was time for me to say good bye.

"Do you have to go now?" He asked.

"Yes, baby I have to leave now," I replied trying to control my tears.

"But why? Can't you stay for one more day," He mumbled. I forced a smile, "If I had a wish in the world it would be to stay with you," I said to Matthew.

"You don't have to go. You just don't have to," He burst out in tears.

I said to him, "Yes _____ I have to."

F →

After that I couldn't hold my tears any longer I began to cry, at that time I couldn't say another word, there was a lump at my throat. My brothers'

Work Sample & Commentary: *My Brother*
Middle School English Language Arts

eyes were red, and he looked at me as if he was lost and couldn't understand. Saying no more, I pulled my brother with a harsh swift movement towards me, hugged him tightly and kissed him goodbye.

As I walked towards the airplane my feet were shaking. I could hardly see where I was going. As I stepped on the plane and looked back I gave my brother a smile and that was my good bye to him.

I Now we communicate by writing letters, speaking on the telephone and sending pictures to each other. Reading his letters always bring back memories of the two of us together. The encouraging words in his letters makes me stronger as the days go by. The tangible things we shared are all gone now. Sometimes I feel like the bond we had is slipping away slowly.

A Now I realize that our relationship is changing. I usually make up for the distance between us by imagining him smiling and laughing on the bright vast meadows of the Victoria Village in Guyana.

G

H

The task

Students were asked to write about an author using biographical information in their account. The information identified had to be presented from the point of view of someone who knew the author. This student selected J. R. R. Tolkien as the author and invented a twin brother for Tolkien to act as the narrator.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| √ in class | as homework |
| √ with teacher feedback | with peer feedback |
| timed | √ opportunity for revision |

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E2c Writing: Produce a narrative account.

What the work shows

E2c Writing: Writing: The student produces a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical) that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a point of view, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- establishes a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict (and for autobiography, the significance of events and of conclusions that can be drawn from those events);
- creates an organizing structure;
- includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character;
- excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies;
- develops complex characters;
- uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, tension or suspense, naming, and specific narrative action, e.g., movement, gestures, expressions;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(A) The journal format written initially in the voice of a six year old engages the reader's interest. The student delayed revealing the identity of the narrator until the second entry which also develops reader curiosity.

(B) The student opened the second entry with the dramatic news that the narrator, the less famous twin brother of J. R. R. Tolkien, hates his brother. This entry introduces the narrator (point of view), the context, and the conflict while continuing to develop reader involvement.

The conflict between J. R. R. Tolkien and his twin brother becomes the central focus of the narrative. The incidents of this rivalry recorded in the journal correspond to the significant stages of their lives. This progression of incidents establishes a tension that sustains reader interest.

Work Sample & Commentary: *Tolkien Story*

Middle School English Language Arts

The jealous point of view effectively creates conflict and tension, revealing the narrator’s life-long struggle to come to terms with his brother’s achievements.

(C) The student detailed some of the issues the narrator may have had with his brother. These grievances are plausible and add apparent authenticity to the narrative. The form of the journal is also an appropriate place for an “aggrieved” brother to express such jealousy and anger.

The work is clearly organized into a series of journal entries. This format follows significant events in Tolkien’s life.

(D) The student used concrete language and sensory details to underscore the disparity between the brothers’ positions in life.

Although there are some vague biographical references, the student’s focus is so intense that there are no extraneous details.

Despite the limitations of the form, the student successfully expounded on the character of a person driven by jealousy and feelings of inferiority. Ironically, this character only becomes more multifaceted at the very end of the narrative when his more famous brother dies. This type of epiphany at the very end is quite common in narratives dealing with life-long jealousy and animosity.

The student used the following strategies to maintain the authenticity and intensity of the narrative:

(E) tension;

(F) naming specific information; and

(G) use of quotation marks for emphasis and sarcasm.

(A) The student also developed the voice of the narrator by using child-like sentence structures in the initial entries (e.g., “me and my brother”) and then

(H) moving to more complex structures towards the end (e.g., “Why I remember my father...”).

(I) The student concluded the journal entries with an abrupt reversal which provides the work with a fitting, although ambiguous, sense of closure.

There are some errors in the work. For example, the use of “your” instead of “you’re” and the period outside the quotation mark in the entry dated May 20, 1965. However, these errors do not detract from the overall quality and readability of the work.

January 3, 1898.

A *Today is me and my brother's 6th birthday. At least I got one good present, you. I'm not very big on going to England. I like it here in Bloemfontein, South Africa, and I'm going to miss my friends. At least I have you and my family.*

April 27, 1907

B *I have discovered a hate for my twin brother, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. He seems to consume what life I have. I, Adam Gregory Tolkien, am tired of John's foolish acts of kindness with all of our classmates. It seems he can put on a happy face and*

C *have everyone like him. I am not saying, however, that I don't have this ability. It's just that I'm more content with my four best friends than having everyone in the world like me. Today I came home with 2 A's and 4 B+'s, but noooo---John had to get 3 A+'s. At first I wanted to transfer out of King Edward's*

F *school, but my mom said that only the rich and exclusive go to King Edward's.*

D *I entered St. Philip's High School and I thought to myself*

F *that I'll beat "Mr. Perfect".*

May 29, 1910

I just met the girl of my dreams, Sara Roden. Of course John's dating her. Not to worry, she doesn't like him. She likes me and sooner or later we'll be together.

F *Getting off the subject, I am soon to graduate St. Philip's High School with honors of valedictorian. Ha! I won, I beat John. He is salutarian and has to make a speech congratulating me. As I enroll in Cambridge University, My brother separates from me and goes away to Oxford. I hope not to see him for at least four years and plan to be a much happier man.*

February 12, 1915

D *I am down here in the french pits firing bullet after bullet in clouds of smoke and gas. My brother, however, talked his way into being a lieutenant in the fusiliers. All he has to do is keep the guns loaded. He hasn't even seen a dead man.*

C

D

September 26, 1916

E *I arrived home from the war just in time to see my brother wed Edith Mary Bratt. Who is this woman and how could she possibly marry my brother? I agreed to be the best man out of love for my mother and father and the bride, even though I really don't know her. Does my brother not know of my hate for him or is this a devious plan to make me crack. Why do I even bother--- everyone likes him but no one seems to care about me.*

April 9, 1921

I have been a political analyst for 3 years and its the best thing thats happened to me. My brother, however, is doing nothing but studying medieval languages. Be my guest. Why

does he bore himself when he could become something better? Hey, I don't mind the fame.

July 26, 1927

It's been 6 years in America and I love it. Their political forum is intriguing and exciting. I happened to be in New York's Columbia University when I noticed 5 newly translated books by my brother, Professor Tolkien. Since when did he get famous? Wait a minute. That's why he was studying those books!! I'm shocked that Oxford would even have such a topic as boring as medieval languages, and even worse, my brother teaches there. Shows how bad a school that is. Thank God I didn't go there.

December 12, 1937

*I'm back in England and a lot has changed. My brother has just published the *Hobbit*. I guess he got bored and wrote the book on all that free time. I must say that his plot is so simple and how he gets credit for writing a story about elves, dwarves and dragons I'll never know. Like he's the first to come up with that idea. Why I remember my father telling us stories about the same thing. All John did was go into detail.*



September 14, 1954

John has just completed his trilogy and I'm the only one who gets the story behind Gollum and how the ring made him kill his

brother. Is this a warning for the future or what he thinks I'll do to him?

May 20, 1965

G I have just come from my brother's award ceremony at Oxford because he's an "exceptionally" famous author. Honorary degree. Shows again what low standards Oxford has. There I saw his daughter and 3 sons for the very first time. They're already grown up and look nothing like their father, which leads me to believe that his wife has had affairs, and quite frankly I don't blame her. After the ceremony I went to the party at his house. **G** He "modestly" showed a case of about 20 awards. Ohhh you think your sooo special. Well I'll show you one of these days. Just count your blessings.

Here I am at my brother's 50th wedding anniversary. His kids are grown up now. His whole family is married and his daughter is pregnant. I only hope they realize their father's treachery and never let their children see their "grandfather".

Why is my brother able to socialize and become friendly with the best author, C. S. Lewis? What did he pay him and why is Mr. Lewis going along with it?

September 9, 1973

My brother has just passed away 1 week ago. The ceremony was nice. Kind of weird that he would die in the same place he

I was born. Just before he died he allowed his son Chris to edit and eventually publish the history of Middle Earth. Apparently he left me the title and honor of Commander, Order of the British Empire. I guess he did love me, and after all these years I thought it was just a show. I'm Sorrn

The task

In an on-demand assessment setting, students were asked to present a special person to readers who do not know the person. They could present the person through details of appearance and manner, descriptions of working or living environment, or habits and typical activities. In addition, the students were to reveal the personal quality of their relationship with the person presented.

Circumstances of performance

This sample of student work was produced under the following conditions:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| √ alone | in a group |
| √ in class | as homework |
| with teacher feedback | with peer feedback |
| √ timed | opportunity for revision |

Errors in this first draft may be attributed to the nature of the task, which was given in a timed writing situation. The writing was completed in forty-five minutes with no opportunities for review and revision. The spelling and grammatical errors in the work sample do not detract from the overall quality of the work.

This work sample illustrates a standard-setting performance for the following parts of the standards:

E2c Writing: Produce a narrative account.

What the work shows

E2c Writing: Writing: The student produces a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical) that:

- engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a point of view, and otherwise developing reader interest;
- establishes a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict (and for autobiography, the significance of events and of conclusions that can be drawn from those events);
- creates an organizing structure;
- includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character;
- excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies;
- develops complex characters;
- uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, tension or suspense, naming, and specific narrative action, e.g., movement, gestures, expressions;
- provides a sense of closure to the writing.

(A) The reader's interest is engaged by a vivid beginning that raises a question about why Miss Sadie is not in her rocking chair even though the narrator claims she can still see her.

The reader is further engaged by the creation of a persona that can handle an emotional issue, that is, the loss of a valued friend, without becoming overly sentimental.

(B) The significance of the events of the summer are established.

Work Sample & Commentary: *Miss Sadie*

Middle School English Language Arts

(A) (C) The student created an organizing structure by effectively completing the circle begun in the first paragraph: from “Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. But I still can see her,” to “Because Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. I’m glad that I can still see her.”

(D) Sensory details are included that draw the reader into the situations being described.

The character of Miss Sadie is developed through dialogue, description, short anecdotes, and a recounting of certain events, so that when the final meeting between the persona and Miss Sadie occurs, the reader has a clear understanding of its significance.

The student used a wide range of strategies to present the character of Miss Sadie, including:

(E) vivid imagery;

(F) dialect;

(G) accounts of ancestors; and

(H) the ability to understand and forgive rude behavior.

The image shows a student's handwritten work on lined paper, enclosed in a rectangular box. The text is written in cursive and is divided into three paragraphs. Red arrows point from circular annotations (A, D, E, F, G) to specific parts of the text. Annotation A points to the first sentence of the first paragraph. Annotation D points to the second paragraph. Annotations E, F, and G point to descriptive details in the first, second, and third paragraphs, respectively.

A → Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. But I still can see her. The old chair squeaking with every sway of her big, brown body. Her summer dresses stained from cooking in her sweet smelling kitchen. I see her gray hair pulled back in that awful, yellow banana clip. Most of all, I hear that voice. So full of character and wisdom.

I used to bring Miss Johnson cookies every summer day of 1988. I miss the days when I would sit on that shabby old porch and listen to her stories. "Melissa!" she would holler. "What 'chu doin' here? Come see me and my poor self, have ya?"

D → She once told me of her grandmother who escaped slavery, back when white men could only do anything, she would say. Her grandm ran for miles without food or water. It wasn't too long before her master came looking for her and took her home to whip her. I thought of how Blacks are treated today. I sighed. She would sing in her

E → her big, brown body. Her summer dresses stained from cooking in her sweet smelling kitchen.

F → "Melissa!" she would holler. "What 'chu doin' here? Come see me and my poor self, have ya?"

G → I thought of how Blacks are treated today.

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soulful, blaring voice, old negro hymns passed down from her mother and grand mother. I would sit there in amazement.

Once, Jimmy Taylor came walking by us yelling, "Melissa! Whattaya want with that old, fat, Black lady, anyways?"

H → Before I could retaliate, Miss Johnson said to me, "Now you musn't. We must feel sorry for that terrible child. His mother must have done gone and not taught him no manners!" She actually wanted me to bow my head and pray for him. (Even though I went to his house and punched him out the next day.)

My friends would tease me for spending the whole summer with Sadie Johnson, "The Cuckoo of Connecticut," they called her. But I'm so very glad I did. She taught me then, to not care what other people thought. I learned that I could be friends with someone

B → generations apart from my own.

My visits became less frequent when school started. I had other things to think about. Boys, clothes, grades. You know, real important stuff.

One day I was thinking, I haven't seen Miss Sadie in a while. So after school I trotted up to her house amidst the twirling, autumn leaves.

I rang her bell. The door cracked open and

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the women adjusted her glasses. "May I help you?"

"Miss Sadie, it's me, Melissa."

"I-T" she'd stuttered. "I don't remember," she said and shut the door. I heard crying. I rang the door again and she screamed, "Please leave!" in a scared, confused voice.

I went home bewildered and my mother told me to stop bothering Miss Sadie. I said I wasn't bothering her. Mama said, "Miss Johnson has a disease. Alzheimer's disease. It makes her forget things... people, family even. And so, I don't want you over there anymore, you hear?"

Then, I didn't realize or comprehend, how someone so special to you could forget your own existence when you'd shared a summer so special and vivid in your mind.

That Christmas I went to bring Miss Johnson cookies. She wasn't there. I learned from a family member that she was in the hospital and that she'd die very soon. As the woman, a daughter maybe, spoke, my heart broke.

"Well, you make sure she gets these cookies," I said, my voice cracking and tears welling in my eyes.

Today, I've learned to love old people. For their innocence, for their knowledge. I've learned to always treat people with kindness, no

matter how cruel they may seem. But mainly I've learned, that you must cherish the time spent with a person. And memories are very valuable. Because Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. I'm glad that I can still see her.

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