

First Grade

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and the sense of stories can help
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the puzzle of reading and writing
begins to come together.

Exuberant Readers and Writers

Most first graders come to school filled with expectations about the classroom experiences in store for them. Kindergarten opened their eyes to school culture and classroom routines. By first grade, students settle in and know the rules — though these energetic young children aren't always attentive to them. Still, first graders realize that their teachers and parents expect them to learn. And they bring a can-do gusto to their schoolwork.

At the same time, first graders have expectations of their own. They expect to learn — and they expect help when they need it. First graders also expect to play and have fun. They don't expect to sit still for long.

Like kindergartners, first graders often come to school with dramatically different literacy experiences from their early childhood. Children who come from families, child care and kindergarten programs that provide strong literacy experiences likely will find reading and writing easier than will children less experienced in literacy. Hearing books read aloud, engaging in conversations, playing rhyming games and acting out make-believe dramas — experiences like these influence the levels of reading and writing proficiency that students bring to first grade. Rich literacy experiences also may improve the rate at which students acquire new literacy skills.



Beginning in first grade, literacy skills are important not only for students' academic success, but also for their social and emotional well-being. In kindergarten and at the beginning of first grade, students believe they are all pretty much the same. By the end of first grade, they know who is the “best” reader or the “best” artist in the class. This sensitivity to their own strengths — and weaknesses — gets stronger year by year.

Reading and Writing: What to Expect

First graders who come to school having had an array of experiences with speaking, listening, reading and language play generally are well prepared to meet the first-grade literacy standards. Other first graders must do a lot of catching up to understand the concepts that many of their classmates learned in kindergarten. They have to learn that sounds correspond to letters, that letters make words and that words make text. If students who are behind show rapid growth toward meeting kindergarten standards, and continue to make progress on the first-grade standards, their likelihood of eventually developing competent literacy skills is strong. While their end-of-year performances may not meet the standards, they should fall within a safe range.

By the end of first grade, most children can read books with more elaborate story structures, episodes and themes than lower-level books.



Simon & Schuster's *Hattie and the Fox* is an example of a text that most first graders can read by the end of the year. When they read aloud, their accuracy and fluency should indicate that they recognize most words, take some cues from punctuation and understand what they are reading. Students whose literacy skills are below the first-grade standards, however, may be able to read only simpler books. Even so, the expectations for accuracy and fluency remain firm.

For texts read independently, students should be able to demonstrate their comprehension by retelling or summarizing a story, sharing some new bit of information they discovered, or answering questions about the story.

In first grade, most students master the print-sound code. Over the course of the year, they will understand that print is made up of words, words are made up of letters and letters correspond to sounds. When students understand that, together, the sounds of language and the sense of stories can help them become word problem-solvers, the puzzle of reading and writing begins to come together.

New Standards

When their teacher reads aloud from a more complex text, most first graders can, by the end of the year, extend the story, predict what will happen next, discuss the characters' motives, question the author's meaning or word choice, and describe the causes and effects of specific events. When they talk about books, first graders can, and often do, tie the reasons for their comments directly to the text.

In writing, too, first graders' proficiency varies. Their reading and writing skills, in fact, often are linked. The leap from kindergarten to first-grade writing is pronounced; by the end of first grade, students who are working at standard levels truly can communicate in writing. Details they would have added orally in kindergarten they now add routinely in their first-draft writing. Their oral responses to writing become more sophisticated as well. First graders reread their writing to monitor for meaning. They begin to use feedback from other children and adults to improve their writing — by adding more text or making minor revisions or edits. First graders can extend meaning by inserting

text in the middle of their writing rather than merely adding on to the end of it — a big leap in writing development.

First graders use language deliberately, crafting their writing to achieve particular purposes and moods. Frequently, they play with print to make their meaning clear, punctuating excessively with exclamation points or writing with all capital letters, for example. Their style, a holdover from kindergarten, lends an exuberance to their writing, as in “I LOVE PENGUINS!!!” Like kindergartners, first graders write very much the way they talk — and they like to talk and write about what *I* like, how *I* feel, what *I* know. Even as they mimic their speech in their writing, they also mimic the language of books they read and hear.

First graders who begin the year with minimal understanding of letter-sound correspondence will produce writing that cannot necessarily be read yet. Over the course of the year, as they put the print-sound code together, their writing proficiency will grow by fits and starts as well. With good instructional support, they will catch up — although their focus on the print-sound code may distract them temporarily from paying attention to issues of craft or genre. Children who are working somewhat behind the first-grade expectations are not necessarily at risk in literacy development. As long as they are making regular progress in writing, their literacy skills should continue to develop. The best indicator of whether a child is in danger of falling behind irreparably is the rate of growth, rather than a particular inventory of skills. However, any child who is still writing in letter strings or relying primarily on pictures and single-word labels at the middle of first grade needs immediate, intensive intervention to catch up.

Developing Literacy Habits

First graders should continue to read a lot, immersing themselves in a range of texts that capture their interest, give them pleasure and reinforce their sense of themselves as readers.

By reading and discussing their favorite books again and again, first graders “study” the way language works, find more meanings and probe deeper into the stories they read. First graders should continue to read picture and story books. They should read widely from narrative, functional and informational genres.

By the end of the year, most first graders will read independently and with assistance from a classmate or teacher. Nevertheless, first graders also should listen to books and other texts read aloud to them every day. Listening to more sophisticated books develops language, knowledge and enjoyment of literature. *For examples of the kinds of books first graders should read, see **What Books Should First Graders Read?**, page 99, and **Leveled Books to Read for Accuracy and Fluency**, page 109.*

First graders on target to meet the reading and writing standards should engage in activities common to literate people. They should read their own writings and those of their classmates, re-enact plays, sing songs, and recite poems. They should read and understand the “environmental print” in the classroom, such as a sign warning them away from a wet painting on an easel. And they should read and follow simple instructions for feeding the resident tadpoles or booting up the classroom computer, for example.

Every day, first graders should have time to write. From stories, reports and poems to riddles, signs and letters, the writing students do should encompass many genres and purposes. First-grade writers should create stories that unfold sequentially, from “first” to “next” to “then.” They should focus on a topic and set up rudimentary categories, such as “all about dogs” or “my new sister” — strategic thinking that eventually will lead to grouping ideas into paragraphs.

Most first graders still incorporate drawing into their writing. For some, the pictures expand the writing. Still others use drawing as a supportive scaffold. During first grade, drawing should assume less importance in students’ writing.

First-Grade Reading Standard 1: Reading Habits

It is important that first graders continue to read a lot. Through first and second grades, expectations for independent and assisted reading are elaborated separately from those for being read to. Books read to students are chosen for their interest and literary value; they usually have greater complexity than a student can handle reading independently or with assistance.

Independent and Assisted Reading

We expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ read four or more books every day independently or with assistance;
- ◆ discuss at least one of these books with another student or a group;
- ◆ read some favorite books many times, gaining deeper comprehension;
- ◆ read their own writing and sometimes the writing of their classmates; and
- ◆ read functional messages they encounter in the classroom (for example, labels, signs, instructions).

Discussing Books

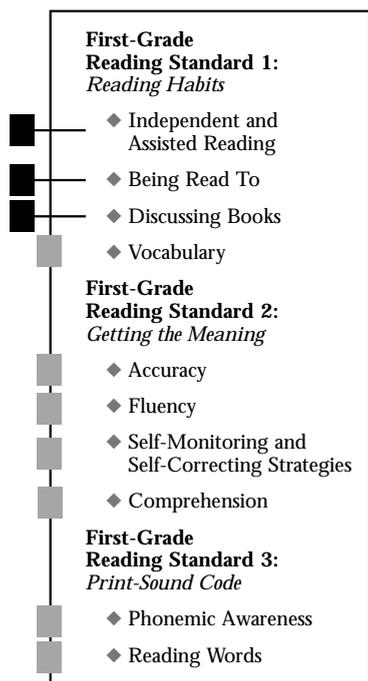
Daily discussion of books continues to be essential in first grade. Children now can deal with more complex and longer texts and relate books to each other. In classroom and small-group discussions of their reading and of books read to them, we expect students finishing first grade to be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate the skills we look for in the comprehension component of Reading Standard 2: Getting the Meaning;
- ◆ compare two books by the same author;
- ◆ talk about several books on the same theme;
- ◆ refer explicitly to parts of the text when presenting or defending a claim;
- ◆ politely disagree when appropriate;
- ◆ ask others questions that seek elaboration and justification; and
- ◆ attempt to explain why their interpretation of a book is valid.

Being Read To

We expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ hear two to four books or other texts (for example, poems, letters, instructions, newspaper or magazine articles, dramatic scripts, songs, brochures) read aloud every day; and
- ◆ listen to and discuss every day at least one book or chapter that is longer and more difficult than what they can read independently or with assistance.





Hannah and Matt

Reading Standard 1: Reading Habits

Discussing Books

In this class discussion, the children are thinking about the father character in several books. In *William's Doll*, the father brings the boy a basketball and, on a different occasion, an electric train to distract him from wanting a doll. Matt says, "Um, his father is just making it worse — he's pushing it. Every time he brings him something, he thinks about [the doll] more, so he wants it more."

The teacher comments that the father in *William's Doll* reminds her of the father in *Leo the Late Bloomer*. She asks, "Do you guys remember what the father there does?"

Jose responds, "He sneaks, and he always watches him without letting him know."

The teacher, agreeing with Jose, reads the section from *Leo the Late Bloomer* that makes his point that the father is not being helpful.

Hannah challenges this interpretation when she tells the teacher, "I have two things to say. One is that I disagree with, with, you a little bit. When Leo's father, um, it's just like the father in

that book, because [Leo's] father's trying to be nice and trying to wait for the blooming to come, and [William's] father just doesn't want his son to have a doll. But maybe he's kinda being nice, um, in *William's Doll*, because he's maybe thinks that, maybe, if he gets the doll, that everyone will notice and they'll tease him, and he doesn't want his son to, like, be really teased."

The teacher asks Matt, "What do you think, Matt? What do you want to say back to Hannah about that?"

Matt replies, "I disagree with her. That was pretty mean because he will still want it."

Hannah and Matt demonstrate success in discussing books. Their comments show their attempts to explain why their interpretations of the book are valid. In doing so, they refer to specific parts of the texts. They listen to each other carefully and identify when their opinions differ. They politely point out how what they think is different from what someone else has said, and they give reasons for their opinions.



Ashanti

In the book *William's Doll*, the grandmother wants to get William the doll he desires so much. After hearing several pages read aloud, Ashanti offers her interpretation of the grandmother's motivation and connects it to her own life. She says, "Maybe his grandmother, um, knows that it doesn't matter if a boy has a girl thing and if a girl has a boy thing. It is sort of like my life, because my brother plays with my dolls." With this comment Ashanti justifies her interpretation by citing an example from personal experience. ►►

The images and commentary in the reading section of this book refer to reading performances available on the CD-ROM.



Allegría

Reading Standard 1:

Reading Habits

Discussing Books

The children in this class discuss several books they have decided should go together in the “Trying Center” because the main characters in these books all try to do something. The teacher asks, “Who can start us off by doing some comparing?”

Allegría says, “I think *William’s Doll* is a little different from *Leo the Late Bloomer* and *Today Is a Terrible Day** and *Wilson Sat Alone* and *Franklin in the Dark*. Because, um, all these are ones, um, are people are naturally growing up and they’re trying to do it but they can’t, but in *William’s Doll*, he’s trying to get a doll.”

The teacher attempts to paraphrase Allegría’s meaning and checks for understanding. Allegría shakes her head no, disagrees with the teacher’s paraphrase of her comment and tries again. “Like, um, in *Wilson Sat Alone* and

Today is a Terrible Day and *Franklin in the Dark* and *Leo the Late Bloomer*, they are growing up, growing up and trying to do stuff . . . naturally, but in, umm, *William Wants a Doll*,** he just wants a doll, he’s not like growing up or anything.”

In this book discussion, Allegría is able to identify an element that four of the books have in common that the fifth book does not share. She politely disagrees with the teacher and restates her point.

*The actual name of the book is *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.

**The actual name of the book is *William’s Doll*.

Vocabulary

Like kindergartners, first graders know more words than they can read or write. They still acquire most of their new vocabulary by listening to spoken language and hearing books read aloud, though reading and discussing books enhances the quality and breadth of their word knowledge. Children easily absorb into their vocabulary new words that come up and recur in conversation and reading.

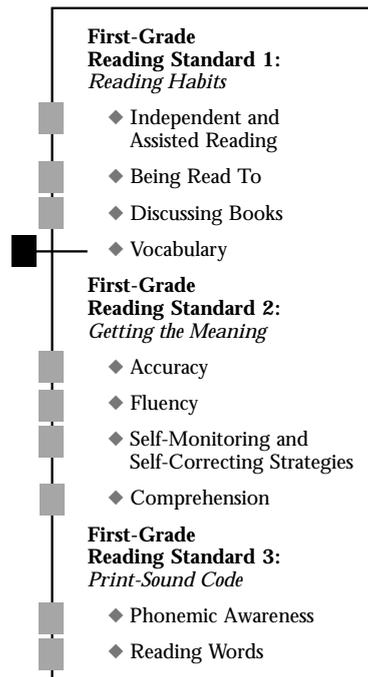
We expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ make sense of new words from how the words are

used, refining their sense of the words as they encounter them again;

- ◆ notice and show interest in understanding unfamiliar words in texts that are read to them;
- ◆ talk about the meaning of some new words encountered in independent and assisted reading;

- ◆ know how to talk about what words mean in terms of functions (for example, “A shoe is a thing you wear on your foot”) and features (for example, “Shoes have laces”); and
- ◆ learn new words every day from talk and books read aloud.



What Books Should First Graders Read?

Beyond leveled books, which are used for practice-reading, teaching, and testing for accuracy and fluency, first graders should read and reread a variety of books and other print material.

Many excellent fiction and nonfiction books do not appear on any leveled text lists. Classroom libraries should include a wide range of classic and modern books that will satisfy readers with various reading abilities and interests. First graders need books at their own reading levels to practice new skills and books above their reading levels to stretch and challenge them. When they read books that are difficult for them, they will exhibit more overt self-monitoring behaviors, less accuracy and fluency, and slower or less-precise comprehension.

First-grade classrooms also should include books that teachers can read aloud to the students. Most first graders will not be able to read the read-aloud books on their own, but they can understand and enjoy more advanced books — and they need to hear them to absorb the rhythms and cadences of more sophisticated language.

There are many lists of recommended titles, including the Newbury and Caldecott Award winners, *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease, *Books to Build on: A Grade-by-Grade Resource Guide for Parents and Teachers (Core Knowledge Series)* by E.D. Hirsch, and the *Elementary School Library Collection: A Guide to Books and Other Media*. The American Library Association also recommends titles.

First-Grade Reading Standard 2: Getting the Meaning

Accuracy

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to be able to:

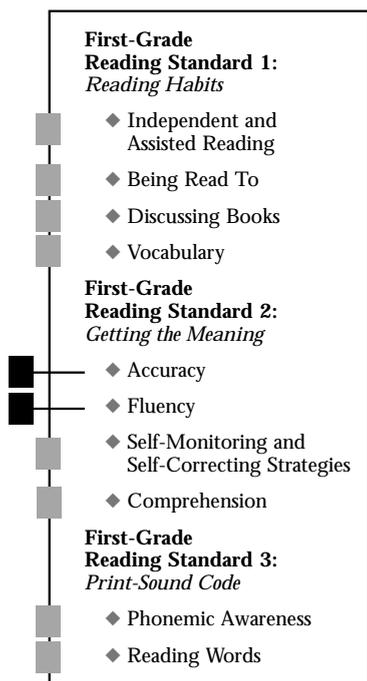
- ◆ read Level I books that they have not seen before, but that have been previewed* for them, with 90 percent or better accuracy of word recognition (self-correction allowed).

Fluency

When they read aloud, we expect first graders to sound like they know what they are reading. Fluent readers may pause occasionally to work out difficult passages.**

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to be able to:

- ◆ independently read aloud from Level I books that have been previewed for them, using intonation, pauses and emphasis that signal the structure of the sentence and the meaning of the text; and
- ◆ use the cues of punctuation — including commas, periods, question marks and quotation marks — to guide them in getting meaning and fluently reading aloud.



Reading Standard 2:

Getting the Meaning

Accuracy

Christopher reads *The Hole in Harry's Pocket* with 98 percent accuracy and, therefore, meets the standard for accuracy. He mispronounces the name *Harry* as “Hah-ree” throughout the story, but it is counted as a single mistake. On page 3, he reads “into his pocket” rather than “in his pocket.” And on page 12, he is unable to decipher the word *hurry*, even with help from his teacher. On two or three occasions, he stumbles a bit or transposes words, but he self-corrects on each occasion, and it does not affect his ability to read fluently.

Fluency

Christopher reads fluently, clearly demonstrating he understands the book’s content. However, he could pause more appropriately at commas when they appear just before a quotation mark. Although he usually drops his voice to note the ends of sentences, the drop could be more emphatic. With a bit of coaching, he probably could improve this skill quickly. It is important that he refine his ability to notice punctuation clues so that he can maintain a level of comprehension when reading more difficult texts.

*Previewing means telling the student the title of the book and what it is about, as well as introducing any difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary that is important to the story.

**Such pauses, provided they are preceded and followed by fluent reading, are more likely to indicate use of self-monitoring strategies than lack of fluency.



Christopher

Self-Monitoring and
Self-Correcting Strategies

Christopher uses self-monitoring strategies successfully. For instance, on page 2, he first reads “didn’t lose it” and then corrects to “don’t lose it.” On two occasions, he mispronounces the word *curb* as “crub” but then self-corrects. On page 14, he first reads “I did sure” but then corrects to “I sure did.” These self-corrections show that he is listening well and scrutinizing his own performance.

(For more on Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting Strategies, see page 102.)

Comprehension

Christopher shows that he gets the gist of the story when he says Harry is “shocked because he forgot all about [getting the milk].” He also lists from memory several of the things Harry carried in his pocket (the ring, the money and the whistle) and the amount of money given to him by his mother (a dollar). Evidence of comprehension also is found in the simple fact that he obviously enjoyed the book when he smiles and giggles over the outcome.

(For more on Comprehension, see page 104.)

A First-Grade Running Record*

SC = Self-correction
R = Repeated the word

the Pocket Hah-ree SC

Book Title: The Hole in Harry's Pocket
Hah-ree

Page 1: Harry looked in the refrigerator. “Mom!” he called. “There’s no milk.”

Page 2: “You’ll have to go to the store and get some,” said his mother.
“Here’s the money. Put it in your pocket so you don’t lose it.” SC R

Page 3: Hah-ree
Harry put the money in his pocket. Then he picked up his toy car, his lucky ring, and his whistle. He put them in his pocket, too.

Page 4: Hah-ree SC
Harry liked to walk to the store. He liked to hop on the curb.

Page 5: SC Hah-ree R
He liked to look in all the windows and count cracks in the sidewalk.

Page 6: Hah-ree
Harry got the milk. But when he looked for his money, it was gone!
What could he do?

Page 7: Hah-ree
Harry put the milk back. He started to walk back home.
Then he saw something on the sidewalk. It was a red toy car.

Page 8: Hah-ree
“Hmmm,” Harry thought. “That looks like my toy car — the one I had in my pocket.” He picked it up.

Page 9: Hah-ree SC
Then Harry saw something near the curb. It was a shiny silver ring.

Page 10: Hah-ree look SC R That
“That looks like my lucky ring,” Harry thought. “The one I had in my pocket.” He picked it up.

Page 11: Hah-ree SC R
Next, Harry saw a toy whistle. “That looks like my whistle,” he thought. “The one I had in my pocket.” He picked it up, too.

Page 12: Hah-ree Hah-ree, hurry R
Then Harry saw some money. Hurray! It was just what his mom gave him!

Page 13: Hah-ree
Harry picked up the money. “I guess I have a hole in my pocket,” he thought. He held the money tightly and ran the rest of the way home.

Page 14: SC Hah-ree Hah-ree
“Did you have a nice trip to the store?” asked his mother. “I sure did!” Harry said.

Page 15: Hah-ree
“Good,” said his mom.
“So where’s the milk?”

(Word count: 279)

5 errors = 98% accuracy

2 insertions
Hah-ree 1 mispronunciation
Hurray 2 misreads

The Hole in Harry's Pocket by Robin Bloksberg, illustrated by Fred Willingham, from Guided Reading, Collection 1 in Houghton Mifflin Reading: Invitations to Literacy by Pikulski, et al. Copyright © 1995 by Houghton Mifflin Company, Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

*For more on running records, see page 23.

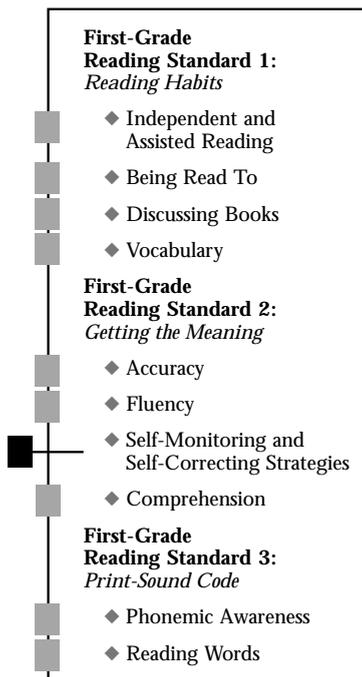
Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting Strategies

Whenever children read, they should use a variety of self-monitoring and word-recognition strategies to help them figure out words they do not recognize immediately. By the end of first grade, we expect children to monitor their own reading for accuracy and sense and to use successfully strategies to solve reading problems. To see these strategies — which normally are deployed privately and silently inside children’s minds — it may be necessary to ask children to read aloud from books that are a bit of a stretch for them in terms of difficulty.

First-grade readers should stretch beyond books that are easy for them. When they read books like those that are more difficult, we expect to see more overt self-monitoring behaviors, less accuracy and fluency, and slower or less-precise comprehension.

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ notice whether the words sound right, given their spelling;
- ◆ notice whether the words make sense in context;
- ◆ notice when sentences don’t make sense;
- ◆ solve reading problems and self-correct, through strategies that include using syntax and word-meaning clues, comparing pronounced sounds to printed letters, gathering context clues from surrounding sentences or pictures, and deriving new words by analogy to known words and word parts (for example, using *tree* and *my* to get *try*); and
- ◆ check their solution to a difficult word against their knowledge of print-sound correspondences and the meaning of the text.



**Chelsea**

Reading Standard 2:
Getting the Meaning

Self-Monitoring and
Self-Correcting Strategies

Chelsea demonstrates strategies for solving reading problems by comparing pronounced sounds to printed letters when she encounters the word *curb* while reading a book. She tries reading it as “creb,” “crub,” “cirb” and “crib.” When none of these words makes sense in the context, she looks to the teacher for help. When told that the word is *curb*, she demonstrates how much she knows about the print-sound code. She says, “There are all kinds of sounds for the *u* ... I would expect an *ir* or an *er* there, because we have a chart in our classroom that has the *er* sound, and we have *ur*; but I didn’t expect it to be *ur*.” Although she was unsuccessful in decoding *curb* in this instance, she clearly has the strategy of trying the various sounds for the letters in a word and checking to see if her attempt makes sense in the sentence she is reading.

**Gerardo**

Gerardo has difficulty reading the book *The Hole in Harry’s Pocket*, but he does show an excellent attempt to monitor his own efforts and self-correct. On page 3, he reads the first sentence correctly: “Harry put the money in his pocket.” But then he seems to lose sight of the words on the next line, saying “pocket” for *picked* and becoming confused. However, he soon starts over, even verbalizing to himself, “No,” and shaking his head. He begins again, rereading, “Then he picked up his toy car, his lucky ring, and his whistle.” At first he placed “and” before “his lucky ring,” but here again, he is aware that the word does not actually appear in the text. He says, “No,” again and then rereads the phrase correctly.

**Jasmin**

Jasmin shows he is adept at self-monitoring while reading the book *Ants*. For instance, on the very first page, after he reads, “Is this a jaw?” he subvocalizes, “Yes, it is,” as he checks the text against the illustrations. Next he comes across the word *hooks*, and he tries it first with a long /o/ sound and then a short /o/. When that does not work, he asks if the *h* might be silent. Finally, he connects the illustration of the ant’s bent legs to the word and sees that it might be *hooks*.

Comprehension

By the end of first grade, we expect children to demonstrate their comprehension of books that they read independently or with a partner, as well as books that adults read to them. We also expect them to read and understand simple written instructions and functional messages.

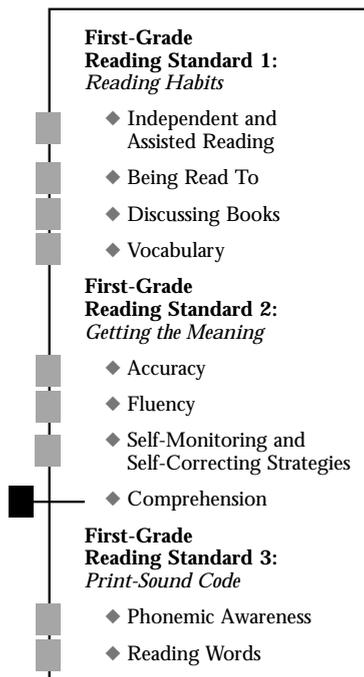
When they independently read texts they have not seen before, we expect students at the end of first grade to be able to:

- ◆ retell the story;
- ◆ tell what the book is about (summarize it);
- ◆ describe in their own words what new information they gained from the text; and
- ◆ answer comprehension questions similar to those for kindergartners.

The texts that adults read to first graders usually have more complex conceptual and grammatical features than the texts the children read independently, permitting greater depth in the kinds of comprehension children can display.

For texts that are read to them, we expect children at the end of first grade also to be able to:

- ◆ extend the story;
- ◆ make predictions about what might happen next and say why;
- ◆ talk about the motives of characters; and
- ◆ describe the causes and effects of specific events.





Alyssa

Reading Standard 2:

Getting the Meaning

Comprehension

- ◆ Make predictions about what might happen next and say why

This class is engaged in an author study about Judith Viorst. The teacher has read aloud several books by this author, and the class has discussed them. While reading *The Good-Bye Book* aloud to the class, the teacher stops and asks the class to compare it to other books they have read. Thinking about how the book might end, Alyssa makes a connection to two other books by Judith Viorst. She says, “Maybe at the end, he, it’s going to be happy, happier just like in *Alexander, Who’s Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move* and in *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day ...* because at the end, it’s always getting happier.”

Although she does not specifically refer to parts from the other books that remind her of this one, Alyssa claims that the books are similar because the endings in all of these books are happier than their beginnings. This comment demonstrates that she is using her knowledge about two other books by this author to make a prediction about how this one will end.

First-Grade Reading Standard 3: Print-Sound Code

First grade is the time when knowledge of the print-sound code should take root, as the phonemic awareness that children developed in kindergarten deepens and expands. By the end of first grade, students should be well on the way to mastering phonemic awareness. No longer working on sounds or letters separately, they now are able to put these elements of the code together to read meaningful, connected texts. The set of

high-frequency words they recognize also has expanded since kindergarten.

Phonemic Awareness

By the end of the year, first-grade students' phonemic awareness should be consolidated fully. (For more on phonemic awareness, see page 62.) They should be able to demonstrate, without difficulty, all of the skills and knowledge expected at the end of kindergarten. The ability to segment and blend each of the sounds in words — which they began to develop in kindergarten — should now be developed fully. We expect students at the end of first grade to be able to:

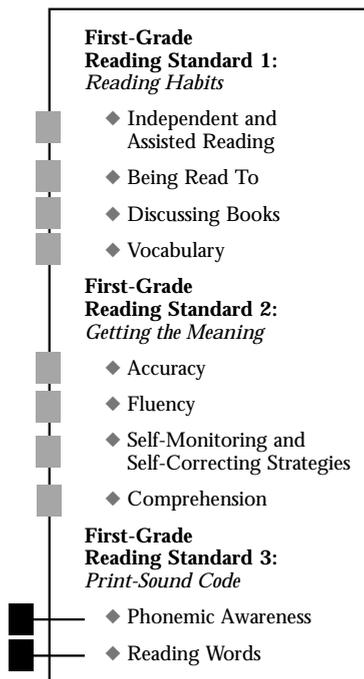
- ◆ separate the sounds by saying each sound aloud (for example, /c/-/a/-/t/); and
- ◆ blend separately spoken phonemes to make a meaningful word.

*In consonant blends, each consonant keeps its regular sound (*br*, *cr*). A digraph is a combination of two letters that, together, make one sound, which is different from either of the letter sounds alone. Consonant digraphs include letter combinations such as *ch*, *ph*, *sh*, *th* and *wh*. Vowel digraphs include combinations such as *ea* in *eat*, *ay* in *day*, *oi* in *oil* and *oa* in *coat*.

Reading Words

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ know the regular letter-sound correspondences and use them to recognize or figure out regularly spelled one- and two-syllable words (see Appendix, page 292);
- ◆ use onsets and rimes to create new words that include blends and digraphs;* and
- ◆ recognize about 150 high-frequency words as they encounter the words in reading.



Print-Sound Code

Some children may continue to struggle with the print-sound code. Often their difficulties with translating letters to sounds stem from problems segmenting and blending sounds orally (*cat* into /c/-/a/-/t/ and vice versa), i.e., phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness difficulties take the form of belabored word attack strategies as well as immature spelling (for example, “PRK” for *park* or “JRAGN” for *dragon*) at the end of first grade.

**Christopher**

Reading Standard 3:

Print-Sound Code

Phonemic Awareness

- ◆ Separate the sounds by saying each sound aloud

In this task, the teacher first asks Christopher to identify “the last sound in the word.”

Christopher clarifies her instructions, asking, “You mean the ending sounds?” He then identifies all seven of the ending sounds. Christopher does this accurately and with great clarity, mentally segmenting and then speaking each phoneme distinctly.

**Beatriz**

- ◆ Separate the sounds by saying each sound aloud (identifying the middle sound in a word)

The teacher asks Beatriz to identify the middle sound in a series of regularly spelled three- and four-letter words. In all cases, she says the sounds clearly and is able to speak the correct phoneme. Beatriz handles this task with confidence; in this exercise, she easily identifies the short and long vowel sounds in the middle of the words.

**Juan**

- ◆ Separate the sounds by saying each sound aloud (replacing the beginning and ending sounds to form new words)

During a series of exercises, Juan demonstrates a fully developed phonemic awareness. He is able to hear and then replace the beginning and ending sounds to form new words. He stumbles on the third try when the teacher switches from replacing the beginning sound to replacing the ending sound, but on a second attempt, he switches gears and is successful. ►►



Yasmen

Reading Standard 3:
Print-Sound Code

Phonemic Awareness

- ◆ Blend separately spoken phonemes to make a meaningful word (blending three separate phonemes to make a word)

Yasmen meets the standard by being able to hear distinct phonemes and then blend them to make a word. Though she is restless and not always looking directly at the teacher when she speaks, Yasmen is listening well and successfully blends all eight words.



Christopher

Reading Words

- ◆ Know the regular letter-sound correspondences

In this dictation task, Christopher shows that his phonemic awareness is fully developed. His knowledge of letter-sound correspondences has deepened so that now he not only is able to translate letters to sounds by reading words in decodable text, but he also can translate sounds to letters to write regularly spelled three- and four-letter words. The teacher says five words (one containing an initial blend), and Christopher spells all five correctly. On this task, he works silently, no longer needing to sound out the separate phonemes as many kindergartners do.

Read-Aloud Books

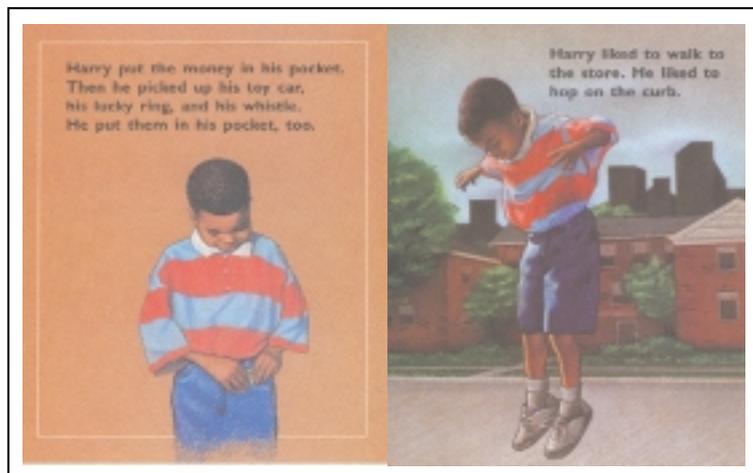
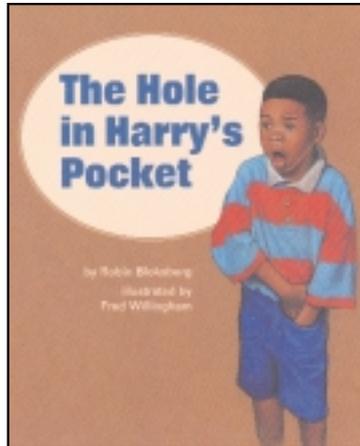
- Bourgeois, Paulette, *Franklin in the Dark*
 Cannon, Janell, *Stellaluna*
 Cleary, Beverly, *Ramona the Pest*
 Dahl, Roald, *The Minpins*
 Dakos, Kalli, *If You're Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand: Poems About School*
 Dorros, Arthur, *Abuela*
 Fox, Mem, *Hattie and the Fox*
 Gardiner, John Reynolds, *Stone Fox*
 Henkes, Kevin, *Chrysanthemum*
 Hess, Debra, *Wilson Sat Alone*
 Hoffman, Mary, *Amazing Grace*
 Kraus, Robert, *Leo the Late Bloomer*
 Lindgren, Astrid, *Pippi Longstocking*
 Martin, Bill, Jr. *Knots on a Counting Rope*
 Mitchell, Margaree King, *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*
 Munsch, Robert N., *Thomas' Snowsuit*
 Polacco, Patricia, *The Keeping Quilt*
 Polacco, Patricia, *Rechenka's Eggs*
 Schwartz, Alvin, *And the Green Grass Grew All Around: Folk Poetry from Everyone*
 Sendak, Maurice, *Chicken Soup With Rice*
 Various authors, *The American Girls Collection* (series)
 Viorst, Judith, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*
 Viorst, Judith, *Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move*
 Viorst, Judith, *The Good-Bye Book*
 Waber, Bernard, *Ira Sleeps Over*

- Warner, Gertrude Chandler, *The Boxcar Children* (series)
 White, E.B., *Charlotte's Web*
 Yee, Paul, *Roses Sing on New Snow: A Delicious Tale*
 Yolen, Jane, *Miz Berlin Walks*
 Zolotow, Charlotte, *William's Doll*

Level I Texts

- D.C. Heath & Co., Little Readers, Bloksberg, *The Hole in Harry's Pocket*
 Houghton Mifflin, Little Readers, deWinter, *Worms for Breakfast*
 Houghton Mifflin, Little Readers, Fear, *Ginger*

A Level I Text



The Hole in Harry's Pocket by Robin Bloksberg, illustrated by Fred Willingham, from *Guided Reading, Collection 1* in *Houghton Mifflin Reading: Invitations to Literacy* by Pikulski, et al. Copyright © 1995 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

- Rigby, Literacy 2000, *Jack and the Beanstalk*
 Scholastic, Zimmerman, *Henny Penny*
 Simon & Schuster, Alladin Paperbacks, Rockwell, *Apples and Pumpkins*
 William Morrow & Co., Mulberry Books, Hutchins, *Tidy Titch*
 Wright Group, Sunshine, Level 1, Luhrs, *Camouflage*
 Wright Group, Sunshine Science Series, Cutting, *Ants*
 Wright Group, Sunshine, Set 1, Cowley, *Quack, Quack, Quack*

Leveled Books to Read for Accuracy and Fluency

Level I books include a variety of texts with more complex story structures, more elaborate episodes and more sophisticated themes than lower-level texts. These books are more rich in meaning, giving students opportunities to explore different points of view, discuss new ideas and compare the books to others read independently or aloud in class. The characters are memorable.

Level I books also feature more pages, with more sentences per page and more specialized, unusual and challenging vocabulary in the sentences. Many words will be familiar to first-grade readers, however, so only unfamiliar words will test their problem-solving skills.

The illustrations provide minimal to moderate support to students as they try to interpret and extend the text.

First-Grade Writing Standard 1: Habits and Processes

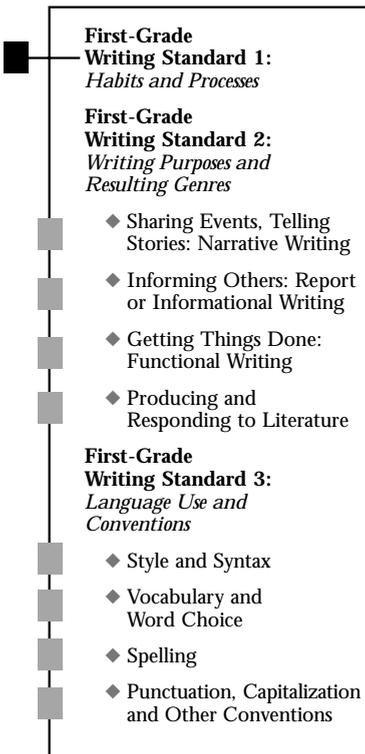
In good programs, first graders write every day, both independently and with a partner or partners. When given blocks of time for writing, students take responsibility for choosing a topic (unless otherwise directed) and developing text around it. Quite often students work for more than a single day on creating a piece of writing. Taking selected pieces of their work through the

processes of planning, drafting, getting response, revising and editing is very much the norm for first-grade writers. Students meeting standards have a growing awareness of what constitutes good writing and can work together to generate criteria for judging the quality of their written work. They can generate ideas for their writing, confer with other students and the teacher about what they have written, and make suggested changes in a piece, sometimes consulting word lists and classmates for more correct spellings. Working in response groups or partnerships with classmates, they are able to ask for and give each other feedback. They work toward producing the best writing they can, paying closer attention to spelling correctly and using periods than they did as kindergartners.

Throughout the year, students should revise, edit and polish selected pieces of writing for audiences beyond the classroom. Polished pieces are placed on display, read aloud, presented to someone the child cares about or acknowledged in some public way. Such displays are important ways of recognizing young writers' accomplishments.

We expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ write daily;
- ◆ generate topics and content for writing;
- ◆ reread their work often with the expectation that others will be able to read it;
- ◆ solicit and provide responses to writing;
- ◆ revise, edit and proofread as appropriate;
- ◆ apply a sense of what constitutes good writing (that is, apply some commonly agreed-upon criteria to their own work); and
- ◆ polish at least 10 pieces throughout the year.



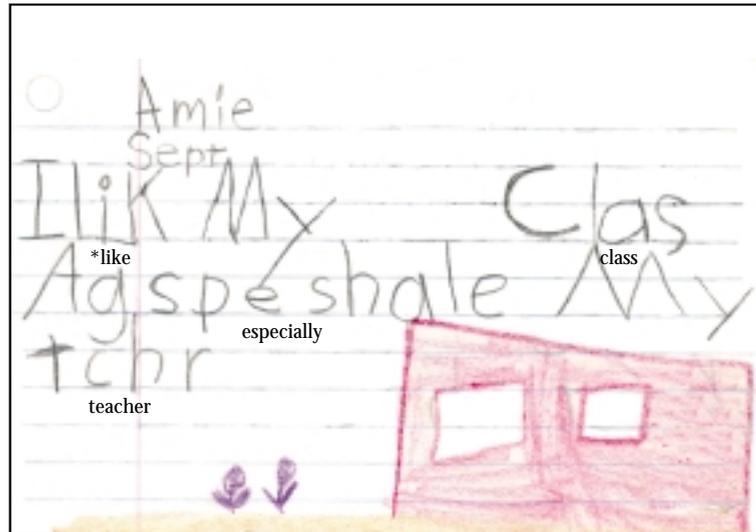
“I Lik My Clas”

Writing Standard 1: Habits and Processes

Amie’s sample comes from her writing folder, which contains all the pieces she produced during first grade, including those pieces that were refined (edited and revised) over several drafts. The collection of pieces in the folder provides evidence that she meets the Writing Habits and Processes Standard. Amie wrote every day. She generated topics that interested her. She also responded to topics provided by her teacher. Amie’s folder holds pieces on which she wrote herself notes about where and how to make revisions. It is reasonable to assume such notes came from the suggestions of response partners. Her final drafts are carefully refined pieces.

Amie wrote the first sample, “I Lik My Clas,” on the first day of school. She spells four of the seven words phonetically, and she spells the other three words correctly, controlling for word boundaries and demonstrating left-to-right and top-to-bottom movement. Her message can be read — although “Agspeshale” may give readers some problems. A picture accompanies the text, though it is doubtful whether the picture ties to the text.

(For more of Amie’s collection, see page 245.)



*Translation of phonetically spelled words

First-Grade Writing Standard 2: Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Much of what children did orally when they were in kindergarten — sharing events and telling stories, producing and responding to literature, issuing instructions to get things done, and informing others — they do more extensively in writing by the end of first grade. But both the written and the continuing oral work are done with more elaboration and confidence

than was evidenced in kindergarten. As writers, many begin to show an intention to really connect with a reader by, for example, producing text that strives to be interesting or surprising.

Sharing Events, Telling Stories: Narrative Writing

First graders draw primarily on their own experience and knowledge as the source of material for their writings. They also borrow from and build on the stories read to them, as well as create their own fiction. Their narratives become longer and more detailed, clear and sequential.

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to produce narrative accounts — both fictional and autobiographical — in which they:

- ◆ evidence a plan in their writing, including making decisions about where in a sequence of events they should enter;
- ◆ develop a narrative or retelling containing two or more appropriately sequenced events that readers can reconstruct easily, which the author then often reacts to, comments on, evaluates, sums up or ties together;

- ◆ frequently incorporate drawings, diagrams or other suitable graphics with written text, as well as gestures, intonation and role-played voices with oral renditions;
- ◆ demonstrate a growing awareness of author’s craft by employing some writing strategies, such as using dialogue, transitions or time cue words; giving concrete details; and providing some sense of closure (for example, “The End,” “And I will never forget that day,” “I was glad to have my dog back. I will never forget to love him again”);
- ◆ imitate narrative elements and derive stories from books they have read or had read to them; and
- ◆ in some cases, begin to recount not just events but also reactions, signaled by phrases like “I wondered,” “I noticed,” “I thought” or “I said to myself.”

**First-Grade
Writing Standard 1:
*Habits and Processes***

**First-Grade
Writing Standard 2:
*Writing Purposes and
Resulting Genres***

- ◆ Sharing Events, Telling Stories: Narrative Writing
- ◆ Informing Others: Report or Informational Writing
- ◆ Getting Things Done: Functional Writing
- ◆ Producing and Responding to Literature

**First-Grade
Writing Standard 3:
*Language Use and
Conventions***

- ◆ Style and Syntax
- ◆ Vocabulary and Word Choice
- ◆ Spelling
- ◆ Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

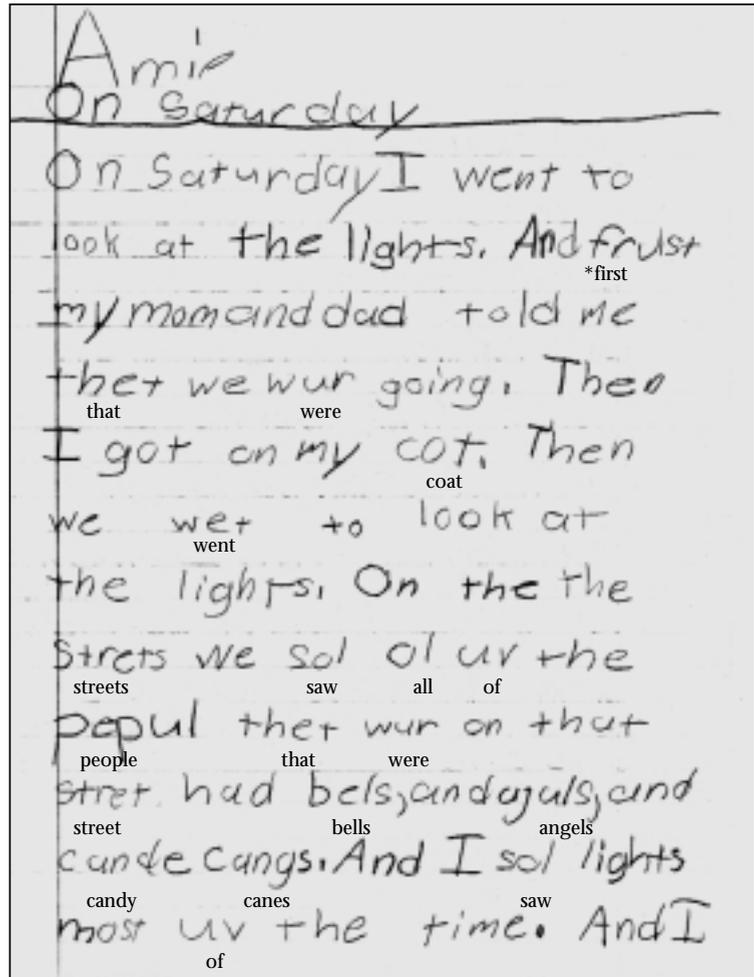
“On Saturday”

Writing Standard 2:
**Writing Purposes and
 Resulting Genres**

Narrative Writing

Amie’s writing sample is a good example of a first grader narrating one focused event with more elaboration supporting the initial event. The narrative is told in simple story form, drawing from Amie’s own personal experience. As a piece of writing, the text is typical of “bed-to-bed” narratives — a list of events flowing from “frust” through to the end, with no discrimination. However, she controls the focus of the story; that is, the events are all relative to a particular situation: looking at lights. It represents narrative writing that successfully meets the first-grade standard.

- ◆ Amie plans the writing by establishing an initiating event (“On Saturday I went to look at the lights”).
- ◆ The piece develops a series of events that flow from the initiating event (“my mom and dad told me that we wur going,” “I got on my cot,” “we wet to look at the lights,” “we sol ol uv the pepul ... had bels, and ajuls, and cande cangs,” “And I sol sunclos to,” etc.).



*Translation of phonetically spelled words

- ◆ She demonstrates an awareness of craft by signaling the chronology of events through transition words (“frust” and “Then”), providing some concrete detail (“a culurfol cande cang”) and establishing a sense of closure (“The End”). ▶▶

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

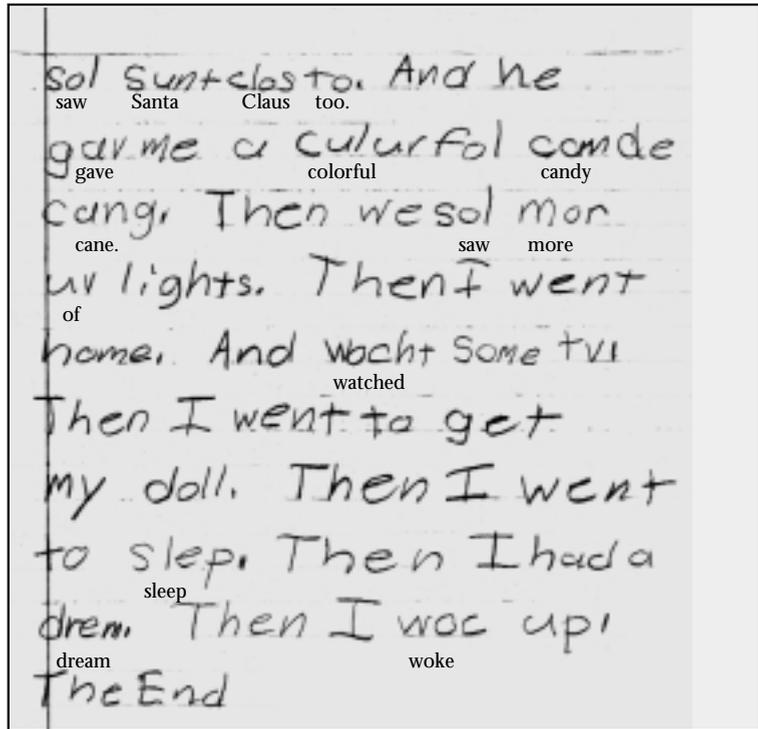
This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade.

Style and Syntax

The style of this piece clearly reflects Amie's efforts to "take on" the language of authors. Almost two-thirds of the sentences begin with a transitional word — most frequently, "Then." In fact, these transitional words provide most of the organizational framework for the writing. For the most part, Amie uses simple sentences, but there are two complex sentences as well.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

This work provides evidence that Amie uses words common to her speaking vocabulary — she has not modified her word choice by using shorter words to control for spelling. For example, Amie uses "culurfol" to describe the candy canes, a very precise word choice.



Spelling

This work provides evidence that Amie controls the spelling of many high-frequency words ("On," "went," "the," "look," "at," etc.). Amie produces text that can be read easily by others. Even words that are misspelled can be read because they are represented phonetically.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

This work provides evidence that Amie consistently controls for the use of capital letters at the beginning of sentences and periods at the end.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)

“Once up on a hill”

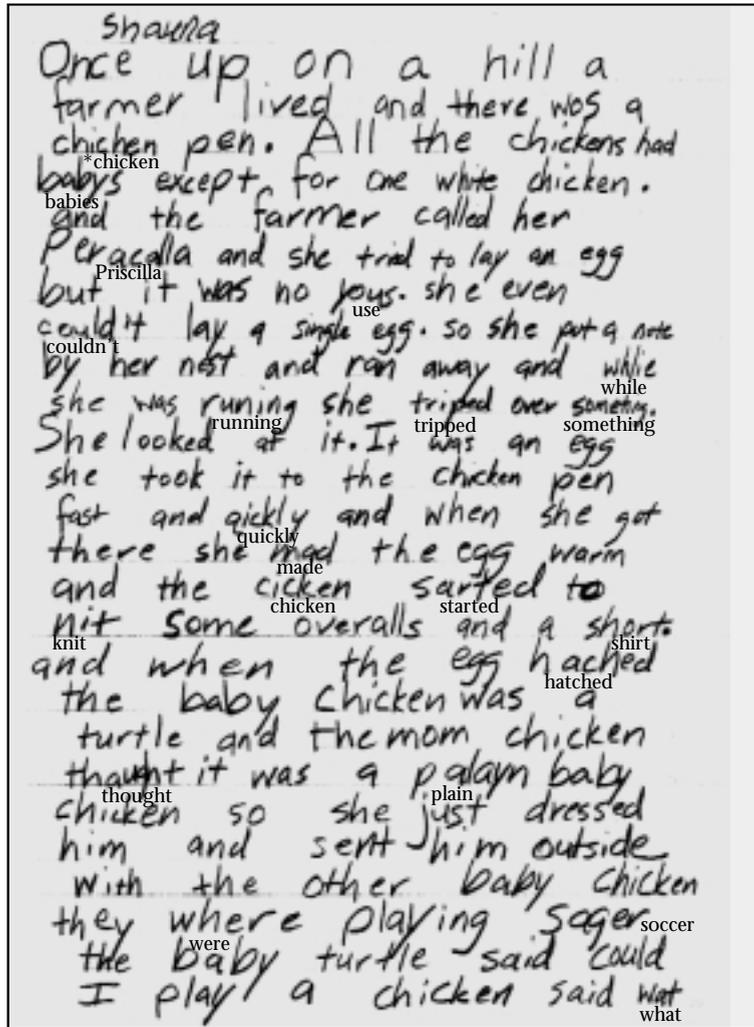
Writing Standard 2:
**Writing Purposes and
 Resulting Genres**

Narrative Writing

Shauna’s fictional narrative incorporates many of the elements that comprise the genre. This is a first-draft piece and is incomplete because Shauna ran out of time and space (though one can infer a coherence to an ending because of how she structures the last sentence — “the turtle was the savedy garde so when the baby chickens fell in the water ...”). Time was also a factor in her lack of punctuation — Shauna explained that she was in a hurry to get the story out and that she would “fix up” punctuation later. This sample meets the standard for narrative writing for first grade.

◆ The piece clearly has been planned — the hero is a chicken who is really a turtle and so is capable of swimming and saving his friends. Shauna enters the sequence very early on — notice how she explains how a turtle is part of this story about chickens (solving the problem of the hen who couldn’t lay an egg).

◆ This narrative actually is made up of two series of events, one series about the hen who couldn’t lay an egg and a second series about the heroic act of the turtle who saves the lives of the chickens who mocked him.



*Translation of phonetically spelled words

◆ The piece incorporates several writing strategies: dialogue, including the use of “HELP!” in all capital letters to indicate desperation, and literary language (“Once up on a hill a farmer lived”).

◆ Shauna uses concrete details (“she took it to the chicken pen fast and qickly”).

◆ The writing evidences a plot/ subplot structure — the plot built around the turtle’s heroism and the subplot built around how the turtle becomes a part of a chicken colony in the first place. ►►

- ◆ This sample builds on and weaves together several common story lines from children’s books. In particular, the introductory sentences mimic the syntax common to children’s books, though all the syntax is fairly sophisticated.

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade.

Style and Syntax

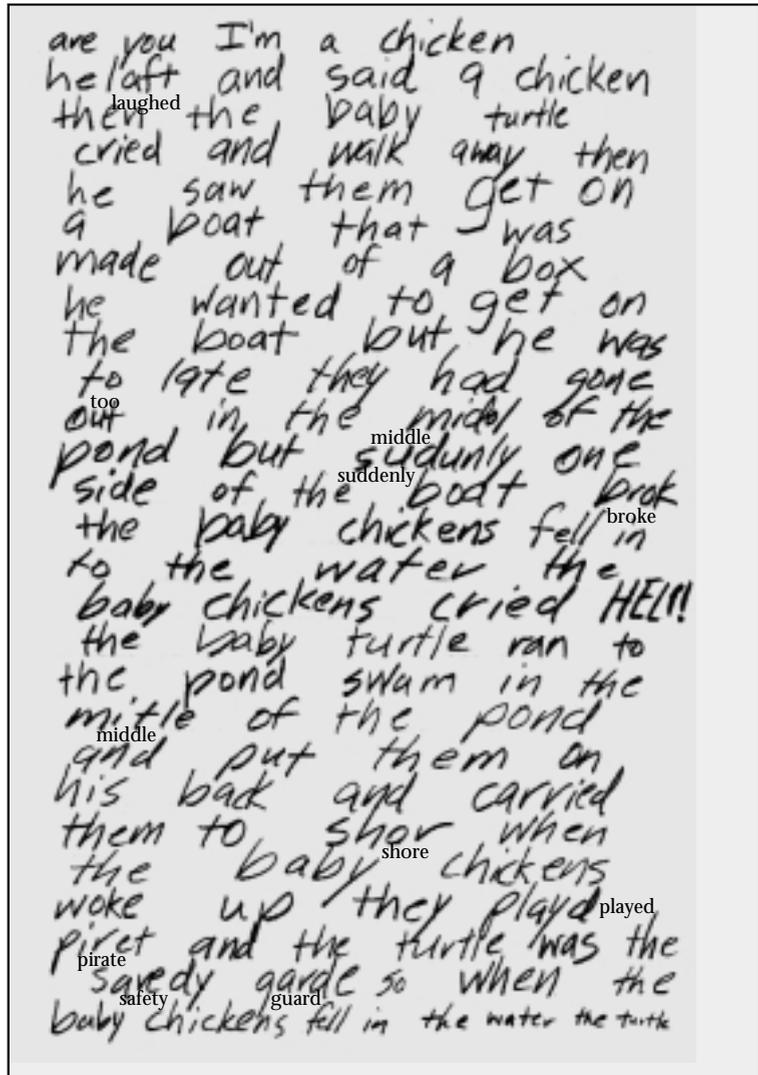
Shauna employs an array of syntactic patterns. The piece is made up of simple, compound and complex sentences — although not all are properly punctuated. There are prepositional phrases, various kinds of clauses, and both noun and verb modifiers. “Once up on a hill” is a variation on “once upon a time.” There is also an unusual placement of adverbs (“took it to the chicken pen fast and quickly”).

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Shauna uses words from her everyday vocabulary and words she is not wholly familiar with (“nit some overalls and a short”).

Spelling

The spelling in this piece is relatively consistent. Certainly, she evidences much control for a first-draft effort. The words can be read by another person, and the misspelled words correspond to phonetic attempts to record sound. Notice particularly Shauna’s attempts to spell *middle*



(“midol” and “mitle”) in which each attempt represents a different, though logical, pronunciation of this word.

beginning of this story. Her control is inconsistent after that.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

Shauna exhibits knowledge of capitalization and end punctuation at the

Authors' Perspectives

“I’m a compulsive writer. I get up in the morning and I have all these things inside me that want to come out. Sometimes I’m struck by a story that will never be told unless I tell it. And once I start telling it, I want to tell it in the very best way I can. It’s never perfect when I write it down the first time, or the second time, or the fifth time. But it always gets better as I go over it and over it.”

— Jane Yolen

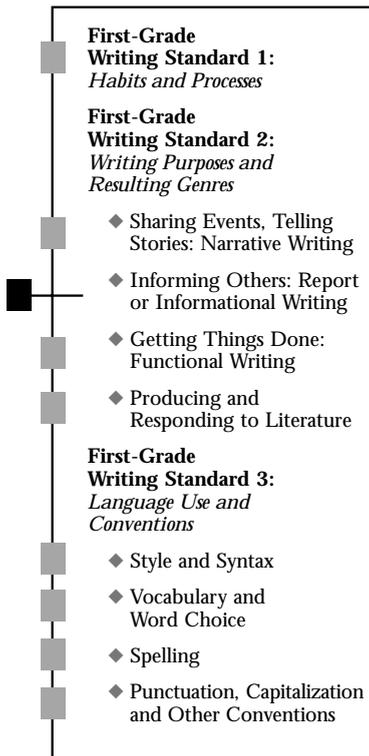
From Pamela Lloyd, “Why Writers Write,”
How Writers Write (Heinemann
Educational Books, Inc., 1987), p. 143.

Informing Others: Report or Informational Writing

Like kindergartners, most first graders love to tell people “all about” various subjects. Students on target to meet first-grade standards produce inventories of things they like or things they know, as well as informational reports — from simple lists to more elaborately detailed descriptions — that enumerate what they have learned about a topic. These first graders have a growing sense of the reader or listener and the need to communicate clearly, along with an emerging sense of control of information, which they exhibit by sorting facts and ideas into major categories. Their work seems to say, “I’m trying to teach you, and I have a lot of good stuff to tell.” They may use headings like the ones they have seen in “all-about” or chapter books: *Kinds of Dogs*, *Choosing a Dog*, *Caring for a Dog*. They may include pictures, diagrams, maps or other graphics to add detail. And they generally make some effort to wrap things up or close with a flourish.

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to produce reports in which they:

- ◆ gather information pertinent to a topic, sort it into major categories — possibly using headings or chapters — and report it to others;
- ◆ independently recognize and exclude or delete extraneous information according to appropriate standards governing what “fits”; and
- ◆ demonstrate a growing desire and ability to communicate with readers by using details to develop their points; sometimes including pictures, diagrams, maps and other graphics that enhance the reader’s understanding of the text; and paying attention to signing off.



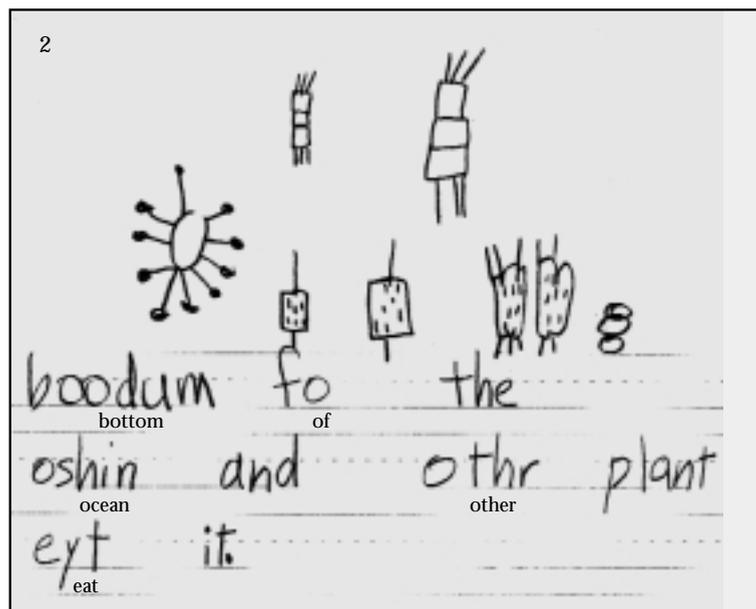
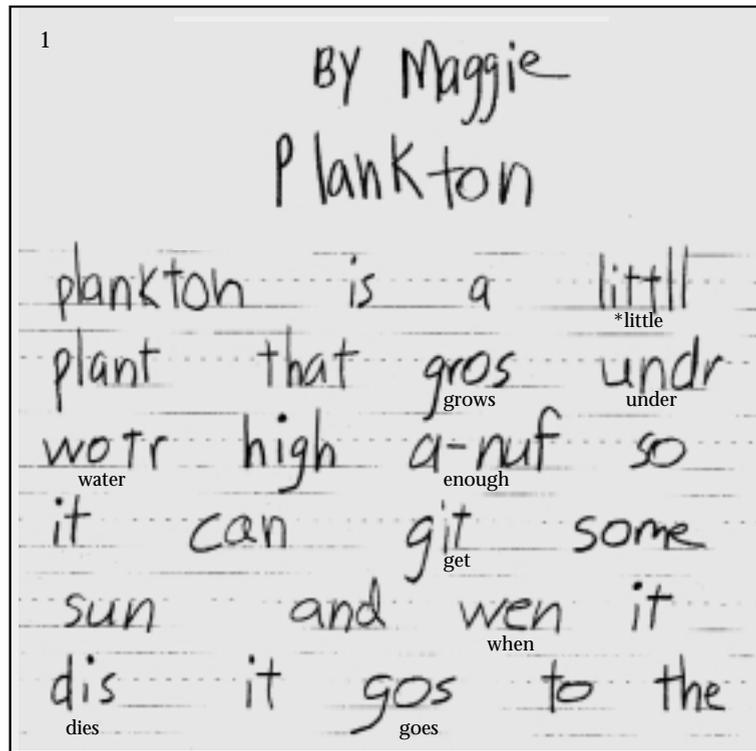
“Plankton”

Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

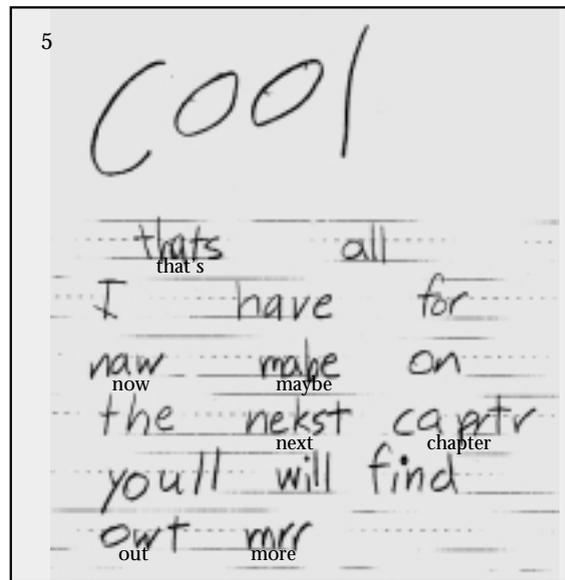
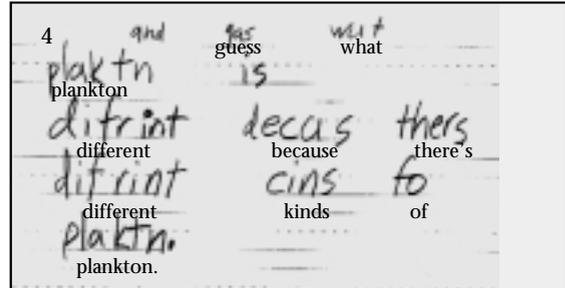
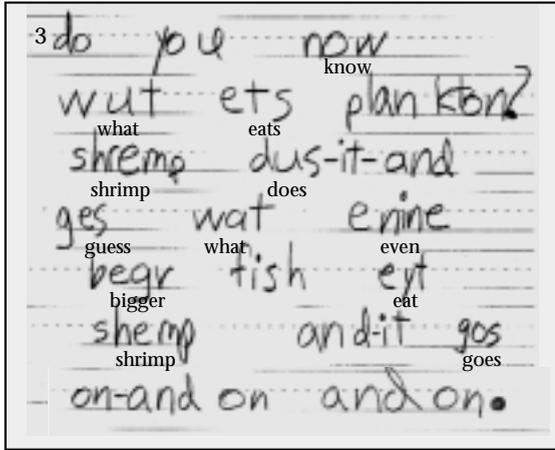
Report or Informational Writing

Maggie’s sample is a typical report that organizes information into chapters. This piece of writing clearly owes its organization to chapter books with which she is familiar. It represents informational writing that meets the standard for first grade.

- ◆ The sample uses the title as an introduction to the topic and defines plankton, which is a common introductory strategy for a report in first grade.
- ◆ Maggie seems to have written it over time because an apparent ending (“thats all I have for naw”) is followed by a promise (“mabe on the nekst captr youll find owt mrr”) and then delivery of more information in subsequent chapters.
- ◆ The sample includes many concrete details and an impressive number of facts. While a reader sees some repetitions and irrelevancies, the report contains 21 facts (“plankton is a littll plant,” “gros undr wotr,” “high a-nuf so it can git some sun,” etc.). ▶▶



*Translation of phonetically spelled words



Writing Standard 3:
Language Use and Conventions

This piece does not meet the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade because of overall lack of attention to conventions. Admittedly, this piece is a first draft, which was written over several days, so correctness was not necessarily an issue. Maggie sometimes uses dashes to mark spaces, and she does not seem to make a consistent attempt to use capital letters to begin sentences or periods to end them. The piece does have some notable features, however.

Maggie mostly uses directly stated sentences, which are characteristic of reports of information. She likewise uses present-tense verbs that are appropriate for this kind of report and includes rhetorical questions as a way of introducing information (“do you now wut ets plankton?”).

Maggie mixes everyday oral language (repetition of “and” and “gas/ges wat”) with rhetorical questions — language that shows the influence of reading informational books. In addition, she employs a number of

specialized terms related to the topic (“plant,” “fish,” “kelp,” “snalls,” etc.). She correctly spells both a number of high-frequency words and a number of the specialized words. Additionally, she shows awareness of letter-sound correspondence for initial and ending consonants and spells correctly some words with short vowels (“sun,” “it,” “to” and “do”). Maggie shows a discernible logic in spelling other words (“a-nuf,” “wen,” “boodum,” etc.).

Maggie uses periods at the end of declarative sentences and question marks for some interrogative sentences.

While Maggie uses few capitals, she knows to capitalize the personal pronoun *I*.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)

6

kelp lives in
 now sea land and
 south Zealand
 south Africa
 kelp-lives in cold water.
 lives water

~~to~~

kelp forest-are found
 off the west and
 north and across
 America and the
 southern coast
 of in-oshtraly
 Australia

8

sea otters help kelp.
 there are many
 animals that grow
 in the kelp forest
 that are strange
 looking

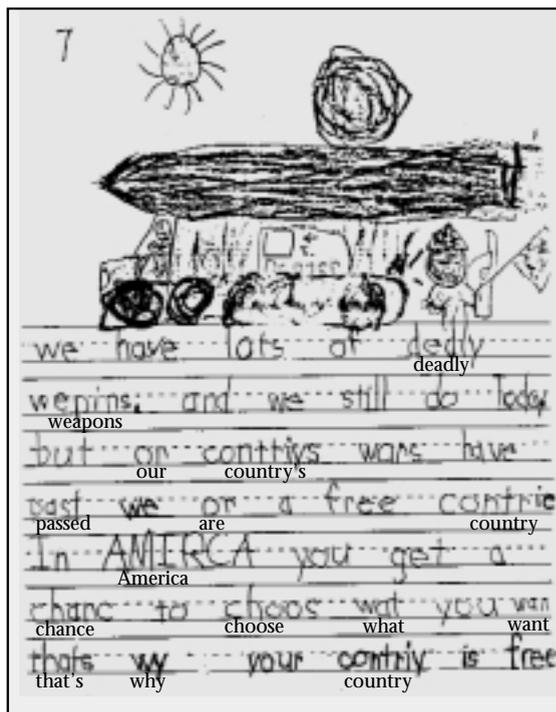
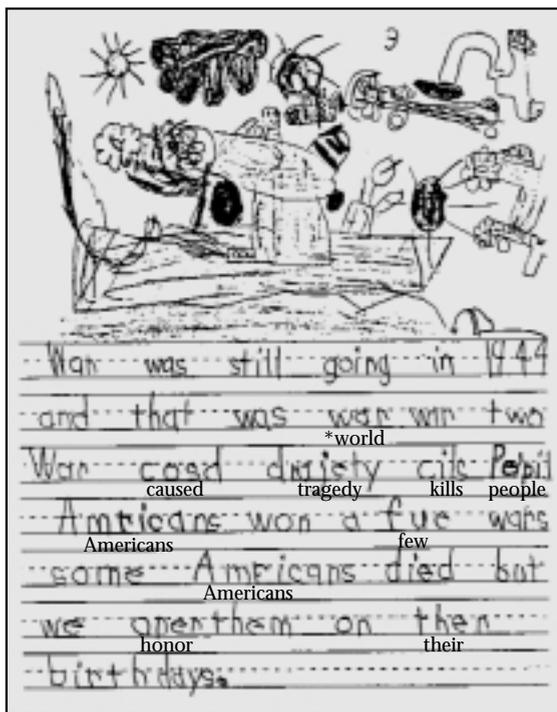
7

I like
 kelp

kelp changes with
 the season. But
 in the winter
~~it~~ ~~is~~ waves
 it dies
 for ~~the plant~~

9

the kelp helps
 many animals
 sea slugs
 are snails with
 out any shell
 and they are
 different species just
 like kelp



*Translation of phonetically spelled words

“Wars”

Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

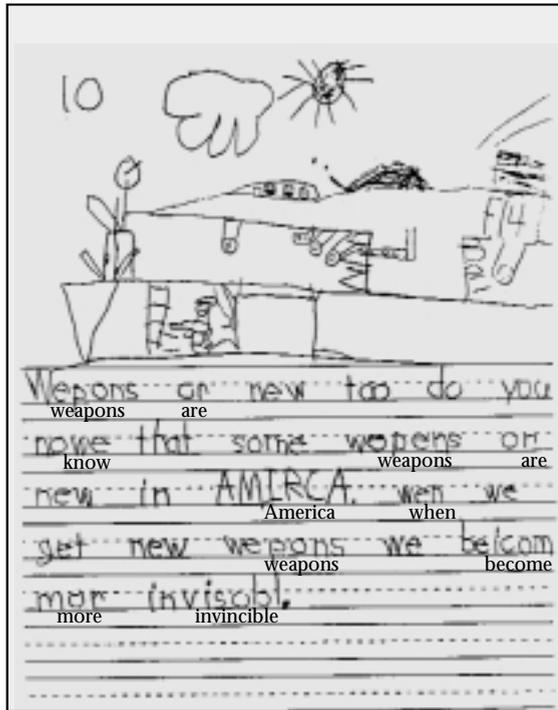
Report or Informational Writing

This sample is part of a 10-page report entitled “War in the History of America.” The whole text is richly illustrated and distinguished both by Chuck’s knowledge of the topic and by his vocabulary. The three pages reproduced here are representative of the report as a whole. Although the piece is marred by an overall lack of organization, control of 10 pages of text far exceeds reasonable expectations for first-grade writing. Basically, this sample is a very mature example of an “all-about” text.

This piece reflects a broad knowledge of the topic (Chuck’s father was in the military), but even this knowledge reflects a naive understanding (“war war two” for *World War II*). Essentially, the piece is remarkable for its breadth; each of the many topics is elaborated on by no more than a single fact. It represents writing that meets the standard for informational writing in first grade.

- ◆ The piece is organized pictorially rather than by categories. Chuck provides very detailed drawings of fighter planes during an attack, huge missiles and a modern bomber landing. Under each picture is text about what the picture illustrates.
- ◆ The information clearly fits in with the overall topic.

- ◆ The information is drawn from Chuck’s background knowledge and is presented to the reader with sufficient detail to be coherent. For example, on page 7, Chuck moves from the picture of a missile to telling the reader that America has deadly weapons. He then states that ours is a free country and goes on to say that we have freedom of choice and that is what constitutes being a free country.



Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade.

Style and Syntax

Chuck's syntax is relatively sophisticated. There are a variety of sentence patterns used, and though the piece is lengthy, there is no sense that he relies on chaining (generating text by using the end topic of one sentence to begin a new sentence), which is sometimes the case with writing of this length produced by very young authors. Chuck uses a rhetorical question ("do you nowe that some wepens or new in AMIRCA") and takes on syntactic patterns that are quite adult ("War cosd drajety cils Peipil" or "contriys wars have past we or a free contrie").

Vocabulary and Word Choice

The vocabulary of this writing is impressive. "Oner," "dedly wepins" and "invisobl" are all words not commonly associated with first-grade writing, but they are words that work naturally, given the topic. It is safe to assume that these words have been part of family conversations and subsequently are incorporated into associations with the topic. It is often the case that when students like Chuck address a topic they know a great deal about, their vocabulary will be quite technical and sophisticated to convey precise meaning.

Spelling

The spelling in this piece is uneven. Chuck uses an impressive number of high-frequency words, which are spelled correctly. And he attempts

many words that are too advanced to be spelled correctly. Even so, a reader who is familiar with phonetic spelling is able to understand these difficult words because they are represented phonetically. This is a polished piece of writing; Chuck may have solicited some help with spelling.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

The punctuation and capitalization in this piece are not consistent. Nevertheless, Chuck demonstrates an awareness of beginning capitalization and punctuation.

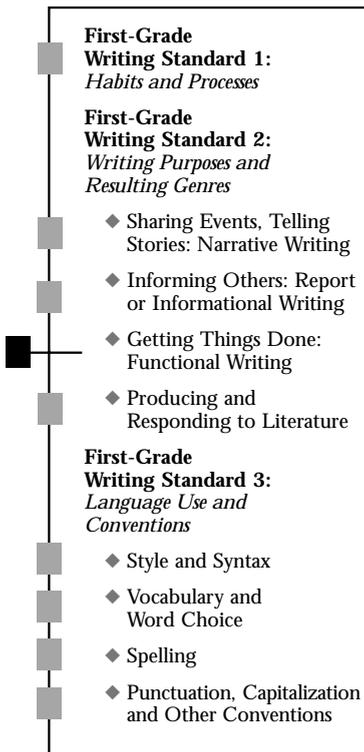
(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)

Getting Things Done: Functional Writing

First-grade students write for many of the same functional purposes that they did as kindergartners. They create signs, announcements, invitations, letters, lists and labels that support the myriad activities going on in their lively classrooms and sometimes outside school. They also may compose instructions that explain, albeit in minimal detail, how to make or do something. Their early functional writing is the foundation for narrative procedures that students will be expected to write in later grades.

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to produce functional writings that:

- ◆ give instructions;
- ◆ describe, in appropriate sequence and with a few details, the steps one must take to make or do a particular thing; and
- ◆ claim, mark or identify objects and places.



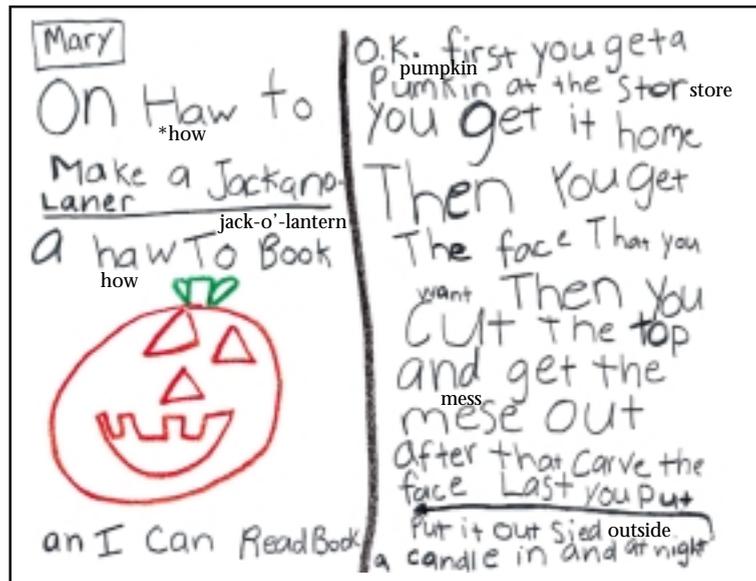
“On Haw to Make a Jackanolaner”

Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Functional Writing

Mary’s sample is a rich example of a child’s literacy development. It has been polished — that is, Mary worked on it to correct gross misspellings and a sequencing problem (see the editing arrow at the bottom right). It represents functional writing that meets the standard for first grade. (To see this same topic treated adequately by students at other grades, see page 279.)

- ◆ This piece of writing provides the reader a general sense of the steps involved in making (carving) a jack-o’-lantern.
- ◆ The piece begins by explaining to the reader where to get a pumpkin (“at the stor”) and then sequences the steps from the beginning (“get The face That you want”) to the end (“Put ... a candle in and at night Put it out sied”).
- ◆ Although the detail is minimal (“get a Pumkin at the stor” and “get [carve] The face That you want”), the reader has a clear sense of the “what” of the process, though not exactly of the “how.”
- ◆ Mary demonstrates a familiarity with the genre by labeling the work as a functional work (“a haw To Book”) and by ascribing a reading level to it (“an I Can Read Book”).



*Translation of phonetically spelled words

- ◆ Mary also creates a title page that is formatted and illustrated appropriately.
- ◆ She makes the text coherent through the use of transitional words (“first,” “Then” and “Last”).

Writing Standard 3:
Language Use and Conventions

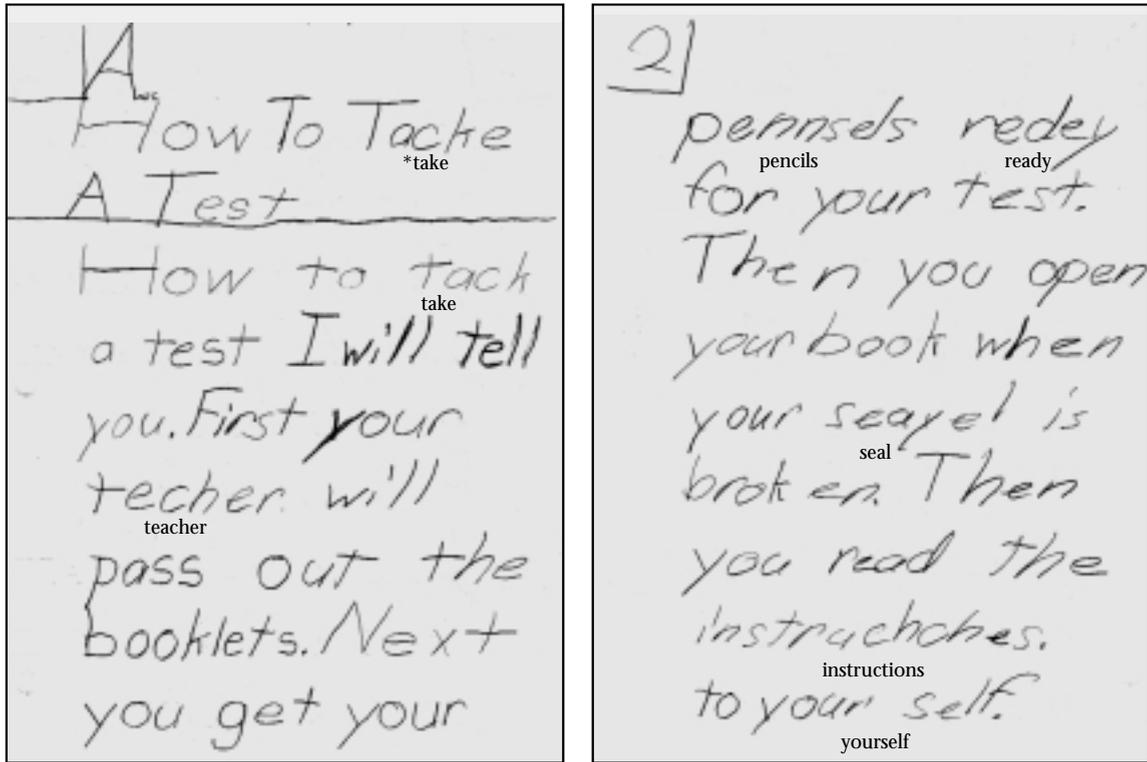
This piece does not meet the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade because Mary shows no awareness of end punctuation. It does have some notable features, however.

Mary uses an informal beginning (“O.K.”) at the start of this writing sample, clearly connecting it to the patterns of oral language. At the same time, she uses transition words that obviously mark the piece’s association

with written text. This piece has varied sentence openers rather than a repeated sentence stem to scaffold ideas: The syntax is primarily a subject-verb patterning of simple sentences introduced by a variety of appropriate transition words.

Mary uses words from her daily vocabulary (“mese”) as well as words familiar to the genre of directions (“first,” “Then” and “Last”). Her work contains a large proportion of correctly spelled, high-frequency words and can be read by others because most of the perceived sounds are phonetically represented. Familiar words and word endings are spelled correctly. There are actually only six misspellings.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)



*Translation of phonetically spelled words

“How To Tacke A Test”

Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

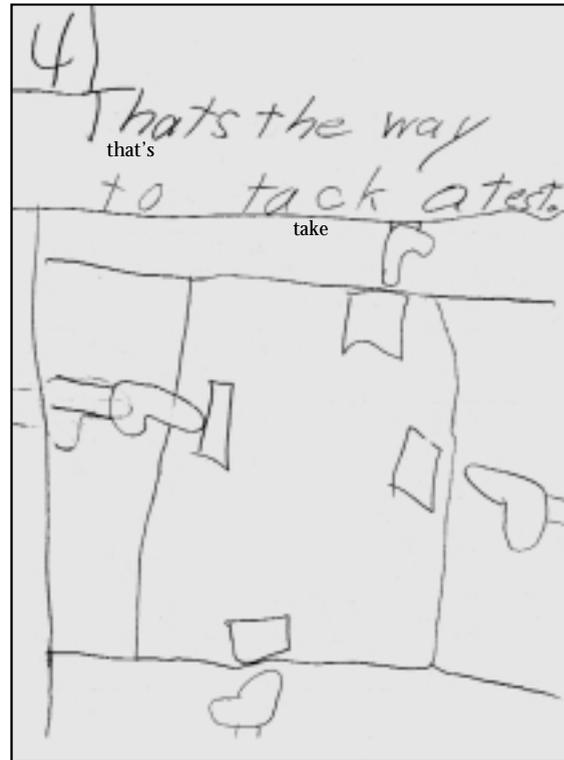
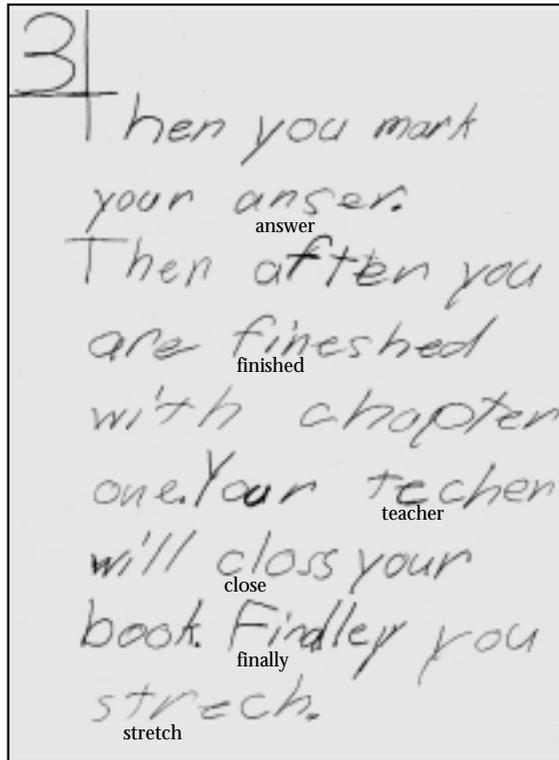
Functional Writing

This piece of functional writing grows naturally out of Amie’s own experience. The tone is both informative and conversational (“How to tack a test I will tell you”). It obviously is written student-to-student. Although fairly general — there’s no information about how to read the questions and problems or how to decide on a correct answer — the steps described could lead a reader through the process. The

writing is enhanced by the use of transition words and the illustration to show how and where students are positioned when tested — four to a table, seated on separate sides. This is writing that meets the standard for first-grade functional writing.

◆ Amie provides instructions that, though general, explain how to take a test (“First your techer will pass out the booklets”).

◆ She describes in appropriate sequence what a student should do during a standardized testing situation (“open your book when your seayel is broken ... read the instruchches to your self ... mark your anser ... stretch”).



Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade.

Style and Syntax

Amie uses both simple and complex sentences. Most of her sentences are relatively short and introduced by transitional words common to functional writing.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

This work provides evidence that Amie uses vocabulary appropriate for describing the procedure, even attempting

words beyond the range expected for first graders (“instruchches”). She also employs the transitional words commonly used in procedures (“First,” “Next,” “Then” and “Findley”).

Spelling

This work provides evidence that Amie controls for the spelling of a large percentage of high-frequency and familiar words (“How,” “to,” “test,” “will,” “tell,” “you,” “First,” “pass” and “out”). She writes text easily read by

others because misspelled words are represented phonetically (“techer”).

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

This work provides evidence that Amie uses punctuation correctly — she controls for the use of capitals to begin sentences and periods to end them.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)

Producing and Responding to Literature

First graders who have opportunities to immerse themselves in all forms of literature do the same kinds of re-enacting, retelling, borrowing and burrowing that they did in kindergarten. They notice the wide variety of genres and work to write in all these forms, each to suit an appropriate purpose. To do this, first graders try to use in their own writing the writing techniques they have learned. Literary language may begin to appear in their writing, and they may approximate especially appealing generic forms,

such as the distinctive rhythmic scheme of a particular poem or a familiar and predictable story line. But where kindergartners' responses to literature consist mostly of recounting, first graders move into evaluating. They may mark favorite passages with Post-it Notes™ and talk about what they liked. They may draw comparisons to events and people in their own lives. During first and even second grades, these evaluative responses to literature usually take oral forms such as conversation, presentation or group discussion. Later, we will expect students to be able to produce written responses to literature, but to get ready for this, it is important that they begin learning the form of a response to literature. At this stage, as earlier, it is important that children be allowed to respond orally so that the physical act of writing does not get in the way of the response to literature.

Producing literature

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to be able to:

- ◆ write stories, memoirs, poems, songs and other literary forms;
- ◆ demonstrate not only an awareness of but also an ability to reproduce some of the literary language and

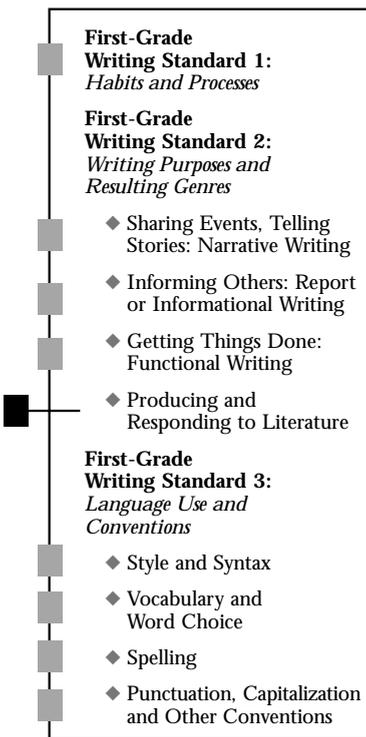
styles they hear and read in the classroom (these may include alliteration, metaphor, simile, rhythm, complex syntax, descriptive detail, sound effects, dialogue, gestures, familiar story grammars or plot lines, and poetic line breaks and rhyme schemes); and

- ◆ imitate a text or write in a genre when they respond to it.

Responding to literature

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to be able to:

- ◆ re-enact and retell stories, songs, poems, plays and other literary works they encounter;
- ◆ produce simple evaluative expressions about the text (for example, "I like the story because," "I like the part where");
- ◆ make simple comparisons of the story to events or people in their own lives;
- ◆ compare two books by the same author;
- ◆ discuss several books on the same theme;
- ◆ make explicit reference to parts of the text when presenting or defending a claim; and
- ◆ present a plausible interpretation of a book.



“what is Blue?”**Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and
Resulting Genres**

Producing Literature

Kyla’s poem “what is Blue?” is a good example of how children’s literature can inspire students to produce original pieces with similar formats on their own. This sample is reminiscent of various poems, songs and picture books, which all try to provide rich examples of a particular color. Kyla’s poem explores what blue is. She names blue objects and then adds further description (“Blue are my eyes/BiG and wondrous,” “Blue is the moon/BiG and round”). This poem meets the standard for producing literature in first grade.

- ◆ This piece uses literary language and style. The repetitive sentence openers work well as a means of organizing the rich imagery of the poem.
- ◆ The piece includes very precise descriptive detail (“a sea deeP sea”).
- ◆ The writing uses poetic line breaks and imagery (“Blue is my memory trailing behind me/Locked in my mind forever more”).



Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade. It is a polished final draft and is virtually error-free.

Style and Syntax

Kyla employs literary language (“Locked in my mind forever more”) and syntax obviously mimicking the structure and format of a familiar piece.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

She uses words common to first-grade writing as well as words that convey a sense of imagery (“sea deeP sea”).

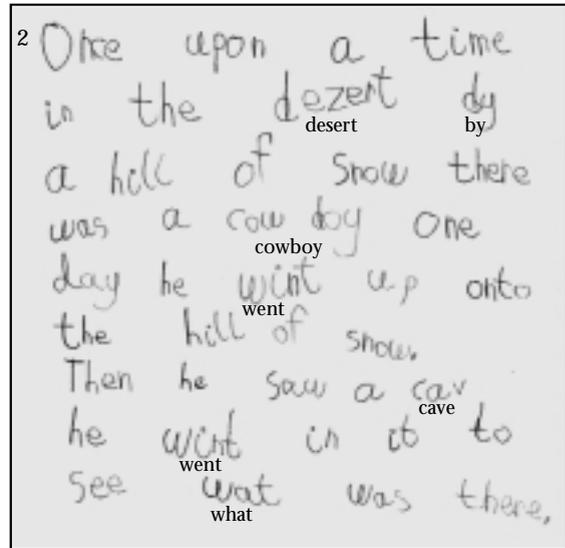
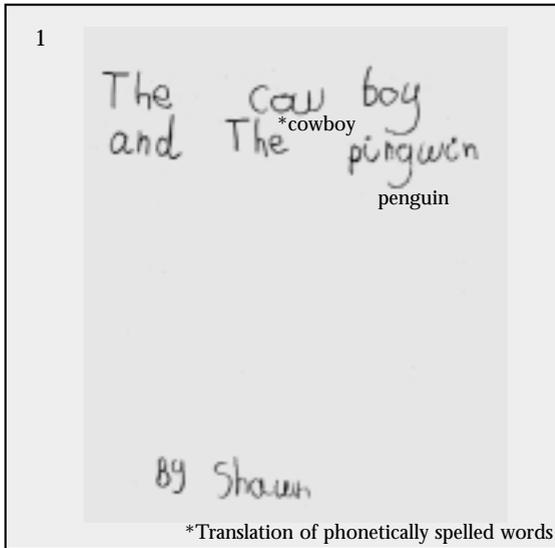
Spelling

There are no misspellings.

Punctuation, Capitalization and
Other Conventions

The piece has been polished, so it is logical to assume that Kyla had help with spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)



“The cow boy and The pingwin”

Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Producing Literature

Shawn’s work is a good example of a fictional narrative. He has pulled ideas from a variety of stories he has read to produce his own unique story, a strategy employed often by novice writers. This piece meets the standard for narrative writing in first grade.

- ◆ It has an appropriate story line containing a problem and a solution: The cowboy seeks gold, he goes on a quest and he finds gold.
- ◆ There is some use of literary language (“Once upon a time in the dezert dy a hill of snow there was ... ” and “And thay livd haply ever after”).
- ◆ The piece employs dialogue.
- ◆ The story follows a plot line: The cowboy takes on a quest, is successful, marries “the pridyist girl he nod” and lives happily ever after.



3
 he saw a penguin.
 Then he went in and
 the cowboy tried to
 talk to the penguin
 he said do you
 know where I can find
 some gold? And
 the penguin said yes
 I do.

5
 Then he had to
 find three caves
 with the stone pocket
 place it. took him
 6 weeks then
 it poured gold on him.
 And he married the
 prettiest girl he had.
 And they lived happily ever after.
 The end

4
 The cowboy said how
 the penguin said find
 these three things
 a crown a shell and a key.
 The cowboy had
 to go in a forest
 a junk yard and a cave
 to get it but he
 did it.

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade.

Style and Syntax

Shawn moves between the syntax of oral language — particularly the dialogue — and the syntax of literary language (“One day he went up onto the hill of snow”). His piece contains a variety of sentence openers and syntactic patterns.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

The vocabulary Shawn used in this piece is appropriate for first-grade expectations. There is language clearly influenced by books (“it poured gold on him”) and language more representative of oral language.

Spelling

The text clearly can be read by people other than Shawn. Words he did not spell correctly can be deciphered because they are represented phoneti-

cally. He spelled some high-frequency words correctly.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

Both correct beginning capitalization and end punctuation are captured in this first-grade piece. It is only around quotations that Shawn runs into problems, but such problems are to be expected.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)

“The Stre uvthe three Bers”

Writing Standard 2:
**Writing Purposes and
 Resulting Genres**

Responding to Literature

Cristina generated this piece in response to an assignment that asked students to retell a story. The piece is a remarkably complete retelling. It is a good example of one of several kinds of responses students may be asked to do. This piece meets the standard for a response to literature in first grade.

- ◆ The retelling is a complete and faithful recounting of a familiar story.

Cristina

The Stre uvthe three
 Bers. On spon atim the three
 Bers witfour a wock in the forest.
 Then Godin los Came to the
 three bers hasse. She Nocke
 on the door. nowun was ther
 At the hasse. then she tastid the
 Popus porch. She sed it wustohot
 Then she tastid the mamas Porch it wusto
 Cod. then She tasid the babebers
 Porch it wusgis rit. sow she dsirit
 To tak a litte Sit. she sit on popuscher
 It wus to hrd. sow she sit on mamas
 Cher it wusto soft. sow she sit on the babe
 Bers Cher but it broka fart. sow she wit
 up sters to tak a nap she Slept on Popus
 Bed it wus to hard. sow she slept on mamas
 Bed it wus to soft. sow she wit to babebers
 Bed it wusgis rit sow she wit uslep.

<p>*The Story of the Three Bears Once upon a time the three bears went for a walk in the forest. Then Goldilocks came to the three bears' house. She knocked on the door. No one was there at the house. Then she tasted the papa's porridge. She said it was too hot. Then she tasted the mama's porridge; it was too cold. Then she tasted the baby bear's</p>	<p>porridge; it was just right. So she decided to take a little sit. She sat on Papa's chair. It was too hard. So she sat on Mama's chair; it was too soft. So she sat on the baby bear's chair, but it broke apart. So she went upstairs to take a nap. She slept on Papa's bed; it was too hard. So she slept on Mama's bed; it was too soft. So she went to baby bear's bed; it was just right, so she went to sleep.</p>
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*Translation of phonetically spelled words

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade.

Style and Syntax

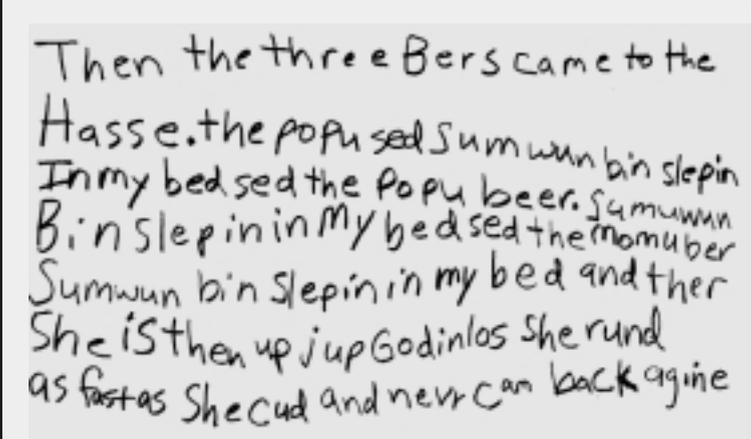
The style and syntax of Cristina's writing sample are what one would expect in a faithful retelling. That is, she begins with literary language ("On Spon atim") and then switches to the almost singsong cadences created by the repetitions in the story ("She sit on popuscher It was to hrd. Sow she Sit on momus cher it was to soft"). Many of the sentences begin with transitions ("Then") or words to signal cause ("Sow").

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Her vocabulary and word choice are determined by the story. For example, Cristina mentions "Porch" (porridge), possibly not a common word in her day-to-day vocabulary. On the other hand, she mentions that Goldilocks "dsirit To tak a litte sit" (decided to take a little sit) and so employs language that is clearly not part of the story.

Spelling

The spelling is easy to read because Cristina represents almost each sound in a word phonetically. The misspellings are logical and do not inhibit the reading of the piece. She spells many high-frequency words correctly.



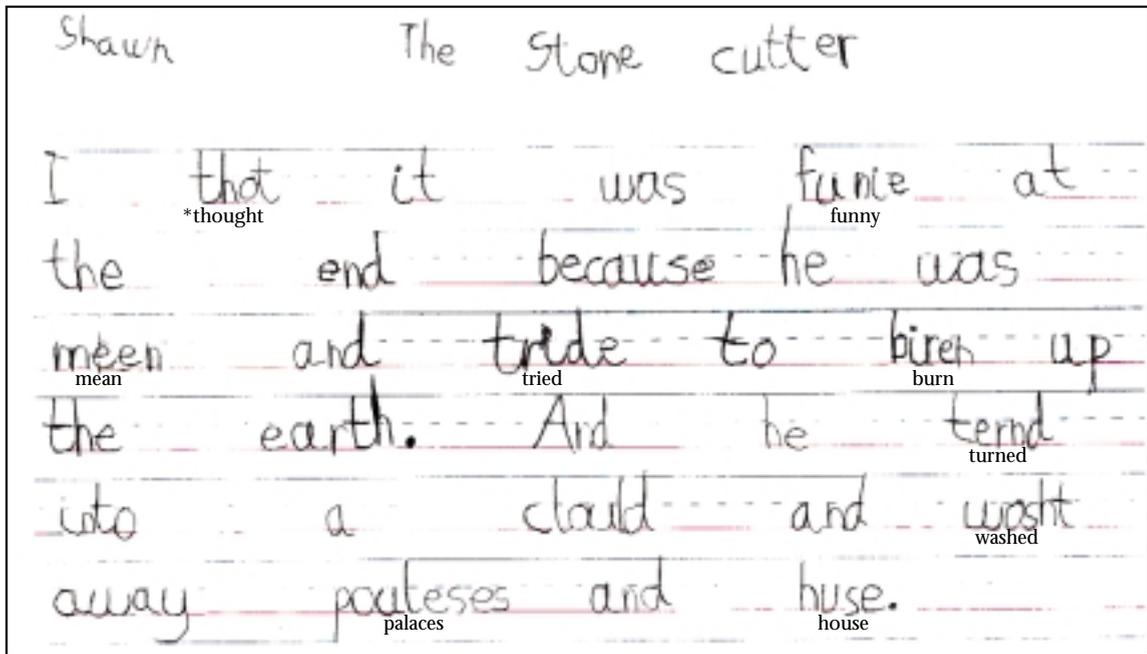
Then the thre e Bers came to the
Hasse. the popu sed Sumwun bin slepin
In my bed sed the Popu beer. samwun
Bin slepin in my bed sed the momu ber
Sumwun bin slepin in my bed and ther
She is then up jup Godinlos she rund
as fast as she cud and never can back agine

Then the three bears came to the house. The papa said, "Someone been sleeping in my bed," said the papa bear. "Someone been sleeping in my bed," said the mama bear. "Someone been sleeping in my bed, and there she is." Then up jump Goldilocks. She ran as fast as she could and never came back again.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

Cristina's control of capitalization and punctuation is quite consistent for a piece of this length. Some words are capitalized that should not be ("Porch" for *porridge* and "Bed" for *bed*).

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)



*Translation of phonetically spelled words

“The Stone cutter”

**Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and
Resulting Genres**

Responding to Literature

Shawn’s response to literature was produced when he was asked what he thought about the story *The Stone Cutter*. The writing, though brief, explains why the book appealed to Shawn. The writing meets the standard for a first-grade response to literature.

- ◆ Shawn begins with a judgment (“I thot it was funie at the end because ...”).
- ◆ Shawn makes an explicit reference to a particular part of the text (“at the end”) that is being commented upon and for which he defends his claim: It is funny because he “tride to biren up the earth. And [yet] he ternd into a clould and wosht away pouleses and huse.”

**Writing Standard 3:
Language Use and Conventions**

This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for first grade.

Style and Syntax

The sentence structure of this very short piece is representative of the syntax of oral language. Shawn uses causal reasoning in the first sentence and links the ideas using an independent clause (“I thot”) and a dependent clause (“because he was”).

Vocabulary and Word Choice

The vocabulary is appropriate for a first grader. He uses words that adequately convey his thinking.

Spelling

The spelling is read easily by another person with the possible exception of the last word, “huse.” He spelled the

14 high-frequency words correctly, and the other words are represented logically.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

The writing shows Shawn’s control of capital letters at the beginning of sentences and periods at the end.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 136.)

Research Perspectives

“Written text places high demand on vocabulary knowledge. Even the words used in children’s books are more rare than those used in adult conversations and prime-time television (Hayes and Ahrens, 1988). Learning new concepts and the words that encode them is essential for comprehension development. People’s ability to infer or retain new words in general is strongly dependent on their background knowledge of other words and concepts. Even at the youngest ages, the ability to understand and remember the meanings of new words depends quite strongly on how well developed one’s vocabulary already is (Robbins and Ehri, 1994).”

From National Research Council,
Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children
(Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1998), p. 217.

First-Grade Writing Standard 3: Language Use and Conventions

As they did in kindergarten, first graders still write mostly in their own language, producing text that mirrors the sentence structure and vocabulary of their speech. Although they are beginning to develop a sense of writing for a reader, their writers’ voices still are mostly egocentric. When first graders read books aloud and when they hear increasingly sophisticated spoken language

from adults, they begin to appropriate new vocabulary and more complex elements of style and syntax for their own writing. That is, they can make more choices about which words to use, in which form and in what order. They also may produce text containing fragments of the language of other writers or speakers such as literary or “book-ish” language or turns of phrase heard in adults’ speech.

Style and Syntax

In good programs, first graders are exposed throughout the year to increasingly sophisticated written and spoken language — and the elements of style embedded in both. By the end of the year, they are able to make more choices about which words to use and in what order. These first-grade writers produce text that mirrors the sentence structure and vocabulary of their oral language, sometimes enriched by literary language or the syntax of other genres they have been reading or hearing read.

Using one’s own language

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ vary sentence openers instead of relying on the same sentence stem (for example, “I like books,”

“I like dogs,” “I like my mom”); and

- ◆ use a wide range of the syntactic patterns typical of spoken language.

Taking on language of authors

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ embed literary language where appropriate; and
- ◆ sometimes mimic sentence structures from various genres they are reading.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Using one’s own language

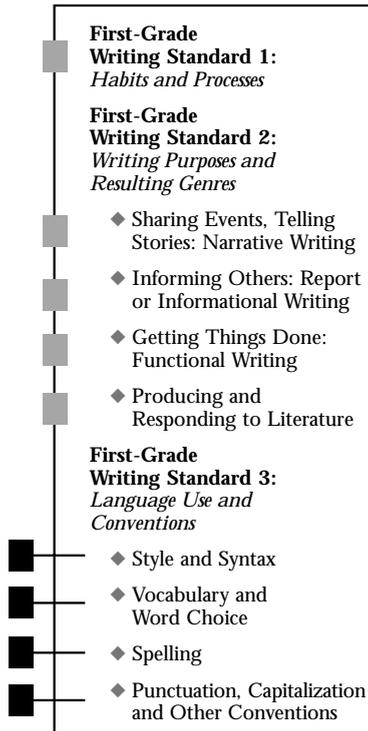
By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ produce writing that uses the full range of words in their speaking vocabulary; and
- ◆ select a more precise word when prompted.

Taking on language of authors

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ use newly learned words they like from their reading, the books they hear read, words on the classroom walls and talk.



Spelling

First-grade students still are experimenting with print and with the conventions that make print meaningful to a reader. By the end of the year, they should use appropriate letters to represent most of the sounds they hear in a word and so be able to produce writing that both they and others can read. This is not to say that the spelling is correct (conventional). Most first-grade writers use the segmenting and sounding-out strategies of phonetic spelling, but they also draw on a repertoire of other resources. For example, they may rely on meaningful parts of words that they know (*-tion, -ing, -ly*) and familiar word families with consistent (the *oo* in *book*) or inconsistent (*thay* for *they*) sound-spelling patterns.

By the end of the year, we expect first-grade students to:

- ◆ produce writing that contains a large proportion of correctly spelled, high-frequency words;
- ◆ write text that usually can be read by the child and others — regardless of the scarcity of correctly spelled words — because most of the perceived sounds in unfamiliar words are phonetically represented;
- ◆ draw on a range of resources for deciding how to spell unfamiliar words, including strategies like segmenting, sounding out, and matching to familiar words and word parts; and
- ◆ automatically spell some familiar words and word endings correctly.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

First-grade writers usually are aware of punctuation and are interested in trying to use it, albeit somewhat erratically. A collection of a first grader's writing over the year should show attempts to use exclamation points, quotations marks, ellipses and colons to add emphasis, create a mood, be clear or direct the reader's voice to use particular intonations. First-grade students also borrow conventions from their favorite authors. Though they often use them incorrectly, children at this age usually are beginning to show some control over periods, question marks, and the use of capital letters for names and sentence beginnings. Mostly, though, they like to play with using punctuation and conventions — like using all capital letters (for example, "HELP"), multiple underlinings (for

example, "He was very sad"), serial exclamation points (for example, "We won!!!") and other graphic representations that emphasize elements of a text.

First graders should demonstrate an awareness of punctuation marks by attempting to use them to direct a reader, to provide emphasis and intonation, to create mood in a piece, to borrow the conventions used by published authors, or to be clear.

Although first-grade students will not have consistent control over punctuation, capitalization and other conventions, by the end of the year we expect them to:

- ◆ demonstrate interest and awareness by approximating the use of some punctuation, including exclamation points, quotation marks, periods, question marks, ellipses, colons, and capitalization of proper names and sentence beginnings; and
- ◆ use punctuation accurately and sometimes use conventions that are borrowed from a favorite author to add emphasis, suggest mood, be clear and direct readers to use particular intonations.

“I went to the park”

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece describes Joey’s trip to the park. The narrative meets the standard for Language Use and Conventions. The style and syntax part of the standard, however, is not met as fully as the other three criteria. The narrative does not meet the standard for Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres because it is such a simple recounting.

Style and Syntax

Joey relies almost entirely on simple sentences beginning with the subject and verb. (The exception comes at the end of the piece when the construction is object/subject/verb with an elliptical clause as the object.) Each sentence is lined up at the left margin except the final one. Although most of the language is straightforward, the piece does include one simile (“high as a bird”). Another interesting syntactic feature is Joey’s use of a quotation tag at the end of the sentence (“‘Time to go’ she said”) instead of a more natural structure (“She said, ‘Time to go.’”).

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Joey uses the language of everyday speech for this piece. Although he does not use literary vocabulary, his word choice is adequate to convey the series of events.

Spelling

The sample contains 36 words with only two misspellings (“road” for *rode* and “scaired” for *scared*). Although there are many high-frequency words in the sample, this level of correctness is remarkable for first grade.

New Standards



*Translation of phonetically spelled words

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

This piece has no punctuation errors except for the omission of the comma after the quotation at the end of the piece. The first word of each sentence is capitalized, and question marks are

used appropriately. The writer also uses capital letters and double exclamation marks to indicate emphasis and cue intonations in oral reading.