



Third Grade

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Confident Readers and Writers

Third grade is a pivotal year in literacy development. Students who have reached reading and writing standards for kindergarten, first grade and second grade should be confident readers and writers by the time they enter third grade. Most third graders are comfortable with the conventions of language — and they are, by the end of third grade, making use of reading and writing for their own purposes. They can find out about a topic independently and then state matter-of-factly what they learned.

Students who enter third grade without this confidence will need to catch up. As in earlier grades, “summer learning loss” is a handicap among children who do not read during summer vacation. At this point, most students lose not only accuracy and fluency when they don’t read, but also new vocabulary and concepts. These students face an even more severe challenge if they are still carrying an accumulated learning deficit from the previous summer.

Moreover, these literacy deficits may snowball into social and emotional problems as well. Third graders are keenly aware that they all should be reading well — and they know that real textbooks will be coming their way in fourth grade. Third graders who do not bounce back and make progress will need intensive intervention to help them catch up.

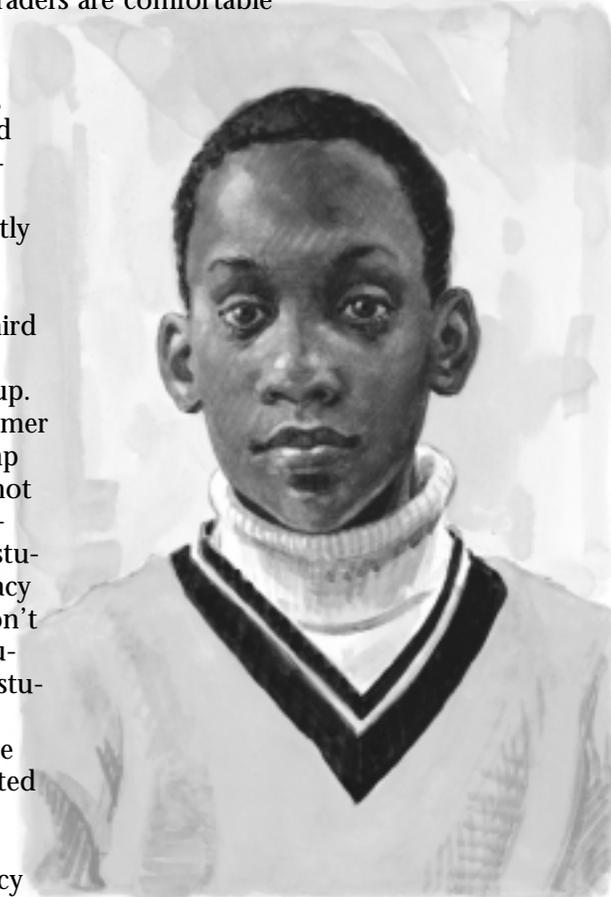
Reading and Writing: What to Expect

Most third graders are discerning readers and writers, picking up details in a nonfiction book such as the Wright Group’s *Whales* or a fiction book such as Avon Books’ *Ramona Quimby*,

Age 8. They read thoughtfully, comprehending shades of meaning. When they talk and write about books, they reveal a deep understanding of the text — making comparisons among books, questioning authors’ perspectives, interpreting the significance of stories and identifying characteristics of particular authors. Frequently, these responses are very personal.

Third graders can read stories they enjoy as well as serious, non-fiction books. Non-fiction reading builds third graders’ vocabularies and introduces them to major concepts they will study in more depth in later

grades. Students may read more than one book about the way plants grow, the American Revolution or Egyptian pyramids, for example; these books challenge them with new words and important ideas that they can use in their writing. Students also may read fiction and nonfiction books on the same topic and then





compare the real and imaginary worlds. For a science unit on insects, for example, students may raise live crickets for a few weeks, read about crickets in nonfiction texts and the fiction book *The Cricket in Times Square*, and write about what they have learned.

“Reading to learn,” in fact, becomes a reality in third grade, when students are capable of doing independent research from sources they choose themselves. Through their reading, they can become experts on topics that interest them, taking notes about what they read, composing elaborate narratives and writing lengthy reports.

Most third graders communicate in writing with teachers, parents and friends, for example,

by composing songs and plays. They write longer pieces, take on harder topics and embed their writing with more details than do students in earlier grades. They use language to paint a picture or set a mood. They play with language and make conscious word choices. They use their imaginations to create a believable world and develop characters, and then they dramatize this world for others. The connection between reading and writing is stronger in third grade. When students discover a literary feature or technique used by a favorite author, for example, they try it in their own writing. They read to each other and to younger children; in doing so, they enhance their sense of themselves as readers.

Literacy is a more social and practical endeavor in third grade. Like adult readers, most third graders are eager to talk about what they are reading and learning — and apply it to their own work. They frequently use their new knowledge to elaborate on reports and narratives.

Developing Literacy Habits

Third graders should read widely, from fiction and nonfiction books, and in depth. Their

readings should include author studies, in which students read and compare several works by a favorite author, and genre studies, in which students read and compare several works in a particular genre, such as folk tales, mystery stories or poetry. Most third graders notice a stunning array of nuances about language, style and effect when they read. Structured author and genre studies enable students to articulate

and categorize their observations as well as sharpen their skills at interpreting, analyzing and synthesizing what they read.

Most reading should be done independently. Third graders can learn to select books they can read on their own — and most like extended time for curling up with a good book. Independent and assisted reading become more rich sources of new vocabulary than in previous grades, where the texts are easier. However, third graders still need to hear their teacher read books aloud to them. Like younger students, third

graders expand their vocabularies and learn the ebb and flow of language by listening to good literature. *For examples of the kinds of books third graders should read, see **What Books Should Third Graders Read?**, page 194, and **Leveled Books to Read for Accuracy and Fluency**, page 196.*

Third graders also should write daily.

Classroom time and access to response partners should help students harness their budding creativity — and their genuine pleasure in writing

and language. Third graders can write poems, plays and stories as well as real-world pieces, such as letters, lists, surveys, posters, complaints and songs. They enjoy hearing their writing read aloud. The way words sound — the way they say words themselves — delights third graders.

Third graders also should be expected to stretch themselves when they write. They can experiment further with writing narrative accounts,

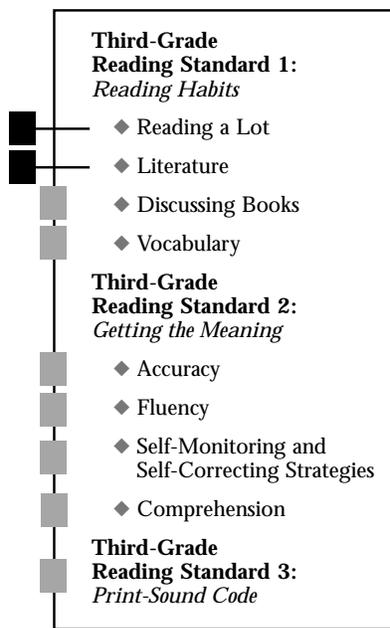
responses to literature, reports and procedures. Students who are especially fluent show their originality by trying new ways to engage readers. They revise their first drafts on their own, as well as with feedback from classmates and adults.

By third grade, students no longer use drawings as a key element to convey meaning. They may use drawings to illustrate their stories or charts and diagrams to add information to their reports — but the main story, now, is in their writing.

Like adult readers,
most third graders are
eager to talk about
what they are reading and
learning — and apply it
to their own work.

Third-Grade Reading Standard 1: Reading Habits

At third grade, children can do most of their reading on their own. But being read to is still important for a variety of reasons — for example, it exposes children to the rhythms and patterns of written language read aloud and to examples of language that may be different (for example, more literary) than what children typically choose for their independent reading. A read-aloud is also an important occasion for deep discussion of books.



As children’s reading matures, learning how to read is only part of the literacy picture. By third grade, students should begin to study literature for its own sake, not simply because it helps them learn to read (although it also does that). Reading literature helps build good reading habits by reinforcing the interest and pleasure that reading holds. For these reasons, our third-grade standards set forth specific expectations for literature.

Reading a Lot

The reading habits we expect to see in third grade are similar to those we expect to see in second, but they are more rigorous because the texts students encounter are increasingly complex. As before, third graders should read across a range of genres. The more difficult books they now read typically present more full realizations of the genres than books they read in second grade.

We expect third-grade students to:

- ◆ read 30 chapter books a year, independently or with assistance, and regularly participate in discussions of their reading with another student, a group or an adult;

- ◆ read and hear texts read aloud from a variety of genres, including narrative accounts, responses to literature (written by other students and found in book blurbs and reviews), informational writing, reports, narrative procedures, recountings, memoirs, poetry and plays;
- ◆ read multiple books by the same author and be able to identify differences and similarities among them;
- ◆ reread some favorite books, or parts of longer books, gaining deeper comprehension and knowledge of author’s craft;
- ◆ read their own writing and the writing of their classmates, including pieces compiled in class books or placed on public display;
- ◆ read the functional and instructional messages they see in the classroom environment (for example, announcements, labels, instructions, menus, invitations) and some of those encountered outside school;
- ◆ listen to and discuss at least one chapter read to them every day; and
- ◆ voluntarily read to each other, signaling their sense of themselves as readers.

Literature

Children’s literature includes stories, poems, plays, autobiographical writing and some nonfiction. By third grade, students should recognize and be able to evaluate and discuss literary qualities and themes of the children’s literature they read. They talk and write about similarities they see in different books by the same author; differences in similar books by different authors; genre features; and the effects of author’s craft including content, point of view, word choice, plot, beginnings and endings, and character development. They interpret themes across works and authors, usually through identification with story characters.

We expect third-grade students to:

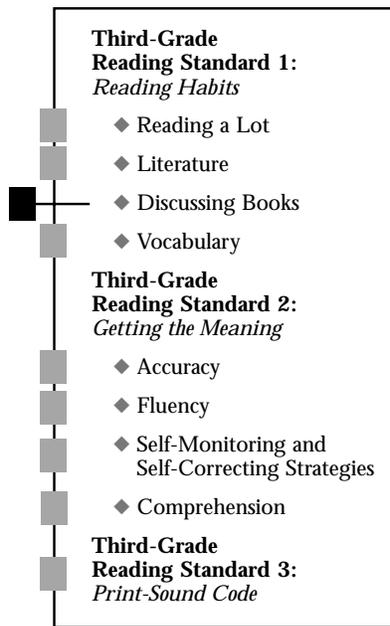
- ◆ read good children’s literature every day;
- ◆ have worthwhile literature read to them to model the language and craft of good writing;
- ◆ discuss underlying themes or messages when interpreting fiction;
- ◆ read and respond to poems, stories, memoirs and plays written by peers;
- ◆ identify and discuss recurring themes across works;
- ◆ evaluate literary merit and participate informatively in peer talk about selecting books to read;
- ◆ examine the reasons for a character’s actions, accounting for situation and motive;
- ◆ read multiple books by the same author and be able to identify differences and similarities among them;
- ◆ recognize genre features, understand differences among genres and compare works by different authors in the same genre; and
- ◆ note and talk about author’s craft: content, point of view, word choice, plot, beginnings and endings, and character development.

Discussing Books

Third-grade book discussions are likely to vary widely, attending to themes and content, to author's craft, and to inferred meanings of the text. Third graders also should be extending their ability to talk "accountably" in all of the ways described in second grade.

In discussions of their reading, we expect students finishing third grade to be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate the skills we look for in the comprehension component of Reading Standard 2: Getting the Meaning;
- ◆ note and talk about author's craft: word choice, beginnings and endings, plot, and character development;
- ◆ use comparisons and analogies to explain ideas;
- ◆ refer to knowledge built during discussion;
- ◆ use information that is accurate, accessible and relevant;
- ◆ restate their own ideas with greater clarity when a listener indicates noncomprehension;
- ◆ ask other students questions requiring them to support their claims or arguments; and
- ◆ indicate when their own or others' ideas need further support or explanation.





**Jennifer Karson and
Third-Grade Class**

Reading Standard 1:

Reading Habits

Discussing Books

- ◆ Refer to knowledge built during discussion
- ◆ Use information that is accurate, accessible and relevant

The students in this class have just finished jotting down their thoughts about connections between what they know about Japanese culture (from their recent study of Japan) and their current reading of the novel *The Big Wave* by Pearl S. Buck. The teacher asks the children to share entries in their Japan schema. Sara replies, “My Japan schema is that in Japan there are ... tsunamis [big waves].”

When the teacher requests another entry, Erica answers, “Respectfulness! And my connection to *The Big Wave* is ‘Jiya respected the old man for his kindness.’”

After charting Erica’s response, the teacher continues, “Who thinks they have another one?”

Josephine answers, “Japanese people wear wooden shoes. And my connection from *The Big Wave* is that Setsu wore wooden shoes when she saw Jiya.”

Adding relevant information to this comment, another student calls out, “I want to tell Josephine that, um, the wooden shoes that Setsu wore are called clogs.”

Alison continues with another connection between life in Japan and the picture of Japanese life from the book *The Big Wave*: “Fish, rice, green

tea and vegetables. And my connection is ‘All these foods were in the book when Japanese people ate.’”

Demonstrating a culture of accountable talk, a boy extends this comment and says, “I can build off of what Alison said because mine was kinda like hers. I said, ‘In Japan many people eat rice and healthy foods. In *The Big Wave*, in Kino’s home, they ate a lot of rice and healthy foods.’”

Dana adds another idea: “Obeying parents. Kino and Setsu has to obey the parents.”

When called upon, Dzemal concludes this segment by adding “[The] sea. Kino, Jiya and the father fear the sea.”

The children in this class demonstrate strategies for discussing books by referring to knowledge built together during previous social studies lessons and by making connections to the text currently under discussion. They point to specific relevant examples from the book, citing characters and scenes. One student adds information that is accurate, accessible and relevant when she names the wooden shoes as “clogs.”

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

Vocabulary

We expect third-grade students to:

- ◆ learn new words every day from their reading;
- ◆ recognize when they don't know what a word means and use a variety of strategies for figuring it out (for example, ask others, look at the context, find the word in use elsewhere and look for clues there);
- ◆ know meanings of roots, prefixes and suffixes;
- ◆ talk about the meaning of most of the new words encountered in independent and assisted reading;
- ◆ notice and show interest in understanding unfamiliar words in texts that are read to them;
- ◆ know how to talk about what nouns mean in terms of function (for example, "Water is for drinking"), features (for example, "Water is wet") and category (for example, "Water is a liquid");
- ◆ know how to talk about verbs as "action words"; and
- ◆ talk about words as they relate to other words: synonyms, antonyms or which word is more precise.

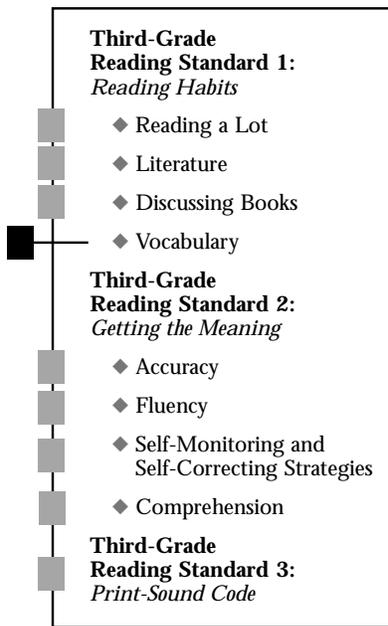
What Books Should Third Graders Read?

Beyond leveled texts, which are used for practice-reading, teaching, and testing for accuracy and fluency, third graders should read widely from a variety of texts.

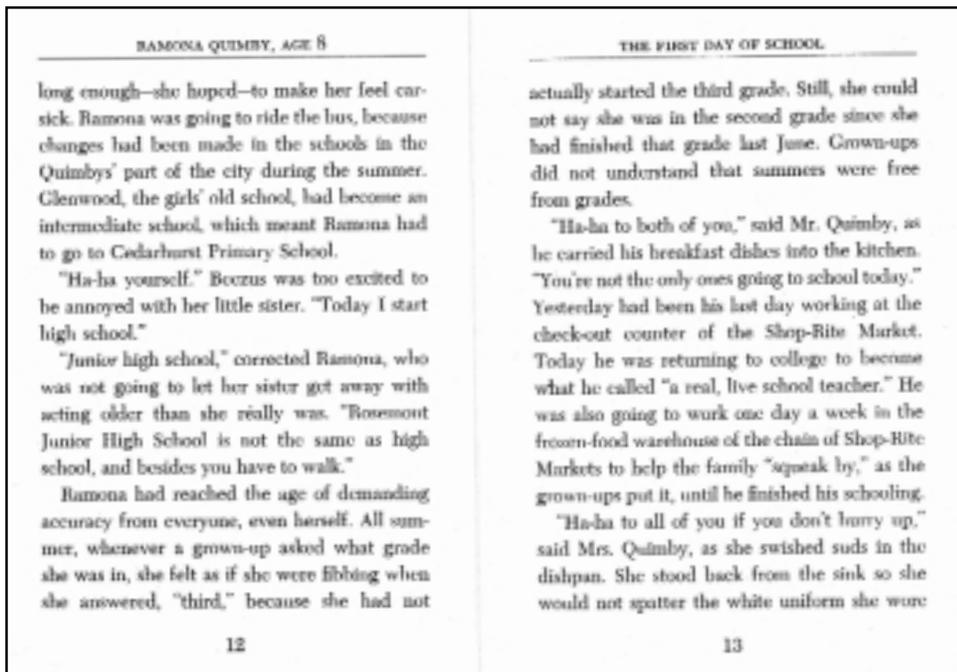
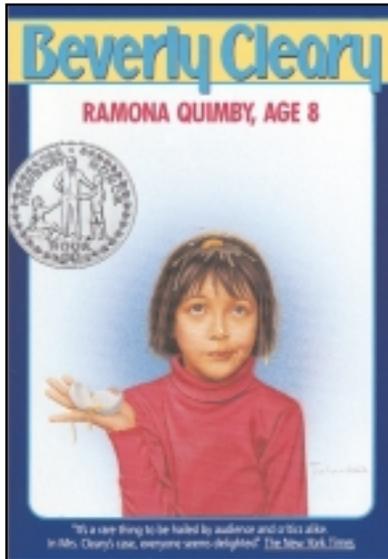
Many excellent fiction and nonfiction books do not appear on any leveled text lists. Classroom libraries should include a wide range of classic and modern books that will satisfy readers with various reading abilities and interests. Third graders need books at their own reading levels and books above their reading levels to stretch and challenge them.

Third-grade classrooms also should include books that teachers can read aloud to students. Third graders need to hear books to learn new vocabulary and more sophisticated syntax.

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.



A Level O Text



Read-Aloud Books

Buck, Pearl S., *The Big Wave*
 Cleary, Beverly, *Dear Mr. Henshaw*
 Dahl, Roald, *Danny the Champion of the World*
 Dahl, Roald, *James and the Giant Peach*
 Dalglish, Alice, *The Courage of Sarah Noble*
 Fleischman, Paul, *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*
 Forbes, Esther, *Johnny Tremain*
 Garland, Sherry, *The Lotus Seed*
 Gipson, Fred, *Old Yeller*
 Heide, Florence Parry, *The Shrinking of Treehorn*
 Lewis, C.S., *The Chronicles of Narnia* (series)
 Lewis, C.S., *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
 Lowry, Lois, *Number the Stars*
 MacLachlan, Patricia, *Sarah, Plain and Tall*
 MacLachlan, Patricia, *Skylark*
 Marton, Jirina, *You Can Go Home Again*
 Polacco, Patricia, *Pink and Say*
 Rawls, Wilson, *Where the Red Fern Grows*
 Rylant, Cynthia, *Waiting to Waltz: A Childhood*

Silverstein, Shel, *Lafcadio: The Lion Who Shot Back*
 Viorst, Judith, *If I Were in Charge of the Words and Other Worries*
 Yolen, Jane, *Encounter*
 Young, Ed, *Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China*

Level O Books

Albert Whitman, The Boxcar Children Series, Warner, *The Boxcar Children*
 Avon Books, Cleary, *Beezus and Ramona*
 Avon Books, Cleary, *Henry and Beezus*
 Avon Books, Cleary, *Ramona Quimby, Age 8*
 Dell, Yearling Books, Coerr, *Mieko and the Fifth Treasure*
 Dial Books for Young Readers, Flournoy, *The Patchwork Quilt*
 Random House, Bullseye Books, Ackerman, *The Night Crossing*
 Scholastic, Engel, *We'll Never Forget You, Roberto Clemente*
 Scholastic, Little Apple, Hurwitz, *Class Clown*
 Wright Group, Wonder World, Boon, *Whales*

Third-Grade Reading Standard 2: Getting the Meaning

Accuracy

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

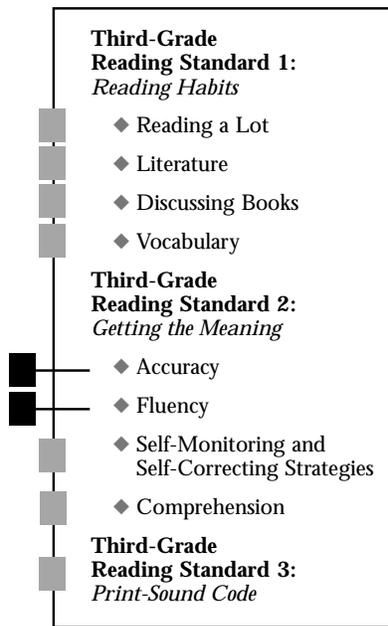
- ◆ independently read aloud unfamiliar Level O books with 90 percent or better accuracy of word recognition (self-correction allowed).

Fluency

Third graders' growing fluency is displayed mainly in the more mature texts they are able to read easily.

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

- ◆ independently read aloud from Level O books that they have previewed silently on their own, using intonation, pauses and emphasis that signal the meaning of the text;
- ◆ easily read words with irregularly spelled suffixes (for example, *-ous*, *-ion*, *-ive*);
- ◆ use the cues of punctuation to guide themselves in getting meaning and fluently reading aloud from the increasingly complex texts they read; and
- ◆ use pacing and intonation to convey the meaning of the clauses and phrases of the sentences they read aloud.



Leveled Books to Read for Accuracy and Fluency

Level O books include a variety of chapter books, often extending into a series. Fiction books have more sophisticated development of plot and character than books at previous levels, allowing students to explore concepts, ideas, setting, characters, craft and genre in more depth than ever before.

Level O expository books are more detailed; they are thick with information and longer than books at previous levels. They have real scientific or historical content.



Andrea

Reading Standard 2:
Getting the Meaning

Accuracy

In this sample, Andrea reads with 99 percent accuracy. She misses only a few words, and she handles irregularly spelled words with ease. Words such as *spoil*, *breakfast*, *stomach* and *quivery* do not give her pause. In addition, Andrea does not stumble over compound or hyphenated words such as *talking-to* or *carsick* (which was hyphenated because it fell at the end of a line in the text Andrea was reading). Andrea has difficulty with the word *intermediate* but attempts to sound it out. In one instance, she left out the word *high*, and in another, she put the incorrect stress on the word *accuracy*. Overall, these mistakes do not interrupt the flow of Andrea's reading.

Fluency

Andrea also reads fluently. For the most part, she uses the punctuation clues to measure her delivery and changes her voice to signal the character speaking "ha-ha" and the slightly taunting "*junior* high school." ▶▶

A Third-Grade Running Record*

Book Title: Ramona Quimby, Age 8

SC = Self-correction
O = Omitted the word
R = Repeated the word
T = Told a word

Page 11: The First Day of School

Ramona Quimby hoped her parents would forget to give her a little talking-to. She did not want anything to spoil this exciting day. "Ha-ha, I get to ride the ^{SC} ~~the~~ ^{school} ~~bus~~ ^R to school all by myself," Ramona bragged to her big ^R sister, Beatrice, at breakfast. Her stomach felt quivery with excitement at the day ahead, a day that would begin with a bus ride just the right length to make her feel a long way from home but not

Page 12: long enough — she hoped — to make her feel carsick. Ramona was

going to ride the bus, because changes had been made in the schools in the Quimbys' part of the city during the summer. Glenwood, the girls' old school, had become an ^T intermediate school, which meant Ramona had to go to Cedarhurst ^R Primary School.

"Ha-ha yourself." Beezus was too excited to be annoyed with her little sister. "Today I start high school."

"*Junior* high school," corrected Ramona, who was not going to let her sister get away with acting older than she really was. "Rosemont ^{SC} ~~Junior~~ ^O High School is not the same as high school, and besides you have to walk."

Ramona had reached the age of demanding ^{accuracy} accuracy from everyone, even herself. All summer, whenever a grown-up asked what grade she was in, she felt as if she were fibbing when she answered,

*For more on running records, see page 23.

Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting Strategies

Andrea automatically falls back to self-correcting strategies as needed, such as sounding out or rereading.

(For more on Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting Strategies, see page 200).

Comprehension

Gauging comprehension by such a short reading is difficult. Typically, third-grade students will read several chapters of a chapter book before they have gathered sufficient information to discuss character development and motivations, plots and subplots, style or use of language, and connections to their own lives. However, Andrea clearly gets the general gist of this reading — Ramona is excited because she will be riding the bus, and she doesn't want her sister trying to get away with acting older.

(For more on Comprehension, see page 202.)

Page 13: "third," because she had not actually started the third grade. Still, she could not say she was in the second grade since she had finished that grade last June. Grown-ups did not understand that summers were free from grades.

"Ha-ha to both of you," said Mr. Quimby, as he carried his breakfast dishes into the kitchen. "You're not the only ones going to school today."

3 errors = 99% accuracy

(Word count: 293)

Authors' Perspectives

“ Our fourth grade teacher read to us for a half an hour after lunch everyday. I still recall resting my head on my desk and staring out the window into the trees while her voice created the daydreams and visions of the stories in my mind.

“Many of my elementary teachers had the policy of reading to us in the morning and at the beginning of the afternoon session. How I loved that time. I'd wait with dread as they turned each page for fear it was time to stop. ”

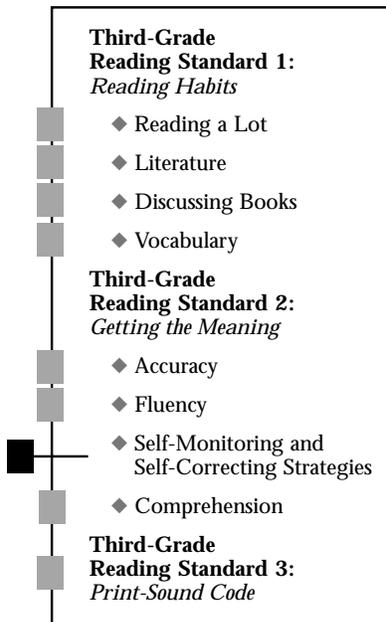
From G. Robert Carlsen and Anne Sherrill,
“Literature and the Human Voice,” *Voices of Readers*,
How We Come to Love Books (Urbana, Ill.:
National Council of Teachers of English, 1988), p. 3.

Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting Strategies

In third grade, children are deepening their self-monitoring strategies and are beginning to analyze the author's strategy as a way of figuring out what a passage means. They use these strategies most overtly when they read challenging texts that require them to stretch beyond their range for accuracy and fluency.

By the end of third grade, we expect students to:

- ◆ monitor their own reading, noticing when sentences or paragraphs are incomplete or when texts do not make sense;
- ◆ use their ear for syntax to help figure out the meaning of new words;
- ◆ infer the meaning of words from roots, prefixes and suffixes, as well as from the overall contextual meaning of what they are reading;
- ◆ analyze the relations among different parts of a text; and
- ◆ raise questions about what the author was trying to say and use the text to help answer the questions.



**Priscilla**

Reading Standard 2:
Getting the Meaning

Self-Monitoring and
Self-Correcting Strategies

While reading *Class Clown*, Priscilla automatically falls back on her self-correcting strategies to decipher more irregularly spelled words, such as *studies* (she corrects to a short /u/ sound) and *straight* (with its vowel digraph* and silent *gh*). If Priscilla were encouraged to think about contextual clues, she most likely would figure out the word *initials*, which she attempts unsurely.

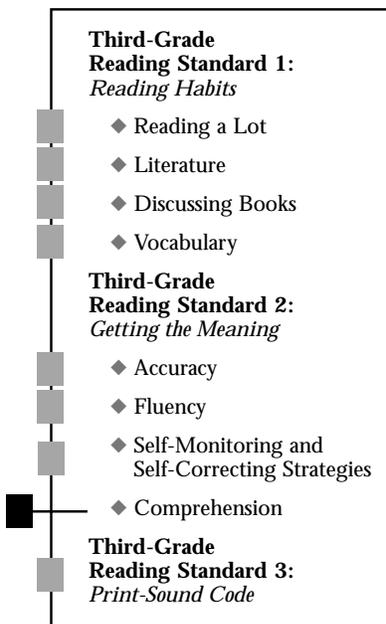
**Margaret**

Margaret demonstrates she can decode automatically as she reads *Henry and Beezus*. She has trouble with the word *looked* but uses a strategy to say it correctly. She knows the multiple sounds that *ed* can make — a /t/ sound, a /d/ sound or “sometimes makes *e-d*.”

*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*.

Comprehension

Third-grade books are more complex than second-grade books. They often have chapters and cannot be read in one day. There frequently are subplots as well as plots. Characters develop, there is more detail and figurative language is used. So it is more difficult to summarize the more complicated story. In nonfiction texts, concepts with subordinate and coordinate structures are presented in complex and compound sentences. The conceptual content of texts, and children's background knowledge in relation to that content, starts to become important at this stage.



In third grade, the distinction between texts children read independently or with a partner and those that adults read to them is no longer a primary consideration with respect to the comprehension component of the standard. Now, the levels of complexity do not always differ, so our expectations for comprehension are generally the same for independent reading and being read to.

By the end of third grade, we expect students to continue to demonstrate the comprehension capabilities they used in second grade. In addition, we expect them to:

- ◆ capture meaning from figurative language (for example, similes, metaphors, poetic images) and explain the meaning;
- ◆ cite important details from a text;
- ◆ compare one text to another text they have read or heard; and
- ◆ discuss why an author might have chosen particular words.

In addition, when engaging with narratives (whether fiction or nonfiction), we expect third graders to:

- ◆ say how a story relates to something in real-life experience;
- ◆ explain the motives of characters; and
- ◆ discuss plot and setting.

Further, when they read informational texts, we expect third graders to:

- ◆ use the structure of informational text to retrieve information;
- ◆ analyze the causes, motivations, sequences and results of events;
- ◆ understand the concepts and relationships described;
- ◆ use reasoning and information from within and outside the text to examine arguments; and
- ◆ describe in their own words what new information they gained from a nonfiction text and how it relates to their prior knowledge.

Finally, we expect third graders to be able to:

- ◆ follow instructions or directions they encounter in the more complicated functional texts they now are reading.



Jennifer Karson and Third-Grade Students

Reading Standard 2: Getting the Meaning

Comprehension

In this segment, the children read and follow the directions for making origami animal finger puppets. Alison begins by reading the instructions: “You can make five animal puppets with the same basic pattern. A small piece of paper, about 2 inches x 2 inches, will make a decorative cap for a pen or a pencil and a large piece [of] a hat. See facing page.”

The teacher then asks the students, “What does it mean by ‘See facing page?’”

Dzemaal shows that he understands by pointing to the page opposite the one Alison just read from and saying, “Because it faces it.”

The teacher guides the children throughout this exercise by asking questions to check for understanding. “What should I do first, do you think?” the teacher asks.

Having read Step 1 to themselves already, Melanie, Alison and Del’Lana respond in unison, “Fold it in half.”

The teacher presses for further understanding by asking, “How does it say to fold in half and unfold?”

Melanie answers, “It’s like a diamond.”

The teacher guides the group by asking, “So, how should I hold my paper?”

Demonstrating that they get it, they answer in unison, “Sideways.”

The teacher asks, “And what’s the next step?”

Alison answers, “Unfold!”

The children then read Step 3: “Fold the top corners down.”

The teacher says, “Which way do the arrows go? I’m not sure I understand.”

Dzemaal answers, “You have to put both of them down here like this.”

The teacher asks the children, “How should I find out if I should make it exactly [even]?”

Melanie refers to the text and says, “What it is trying to say is, well, you see those arrows, like that, you just bring it down. Like and then it turns into a diamond, and it has a little space around the middle.”

Demonstrating that he knows to follow the directions in sequence, Youngnam adds, “And then after that you just like saying” When the teacher pushes for evidence, Youngnam refers to the text, saying, “Because it says right here, ‘Fold the bottom corner up . . . as shown to make ears.’”

Nearing completion, the teacher asks, “Now what does it say?”

Del’Lana reads, “Fold bottom up! All the way to here. And fold top corner forward.” She refers to the words on the instruction sheet once again. “Oh, now I get it! It’s this one!” she

announces. Getting up from her seat to lean over the table and show her classmates, she says, “You see it from here? It says, ‘9, now put it a little bit up.’”

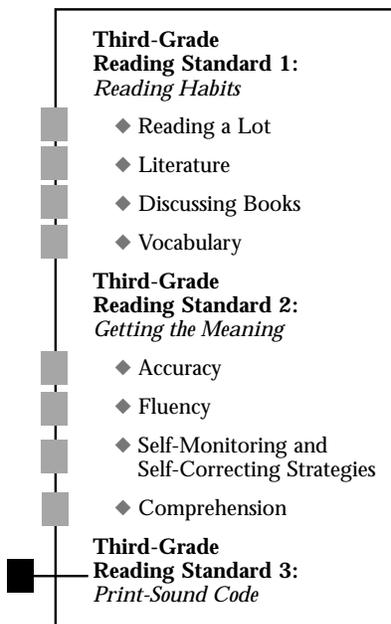
With the teacher’s encouragement, the children check to see if their folded paper matches the illustration. Their satisfaction with themselves is evident in their smiles, and the segment ends with the children discussing what kinds of faces they will draw on their puppets.

These children are learning how to read and follow directions. They demonstrate that they can handle this type of text by reading each step in turn and carrying out the instructions successfully. They talk and repeatedly refer to the text as they move through the steps and help one another make sense of the words and illustrations.

While the specific words encountered in these instructions pose no problem to these students, this genre requires a different type of comprehension and close attention to detail. The children demonstrate that they can use the structure of this informational text to retrieve information and understand the concepts and relationships described.

Third-Grade Reading Standard 3: Print-Sound Code

In third grade, students' decoding of the print-sound code should become automatic across the whole span of language. Throughout third grade they should continue to learn about words — roots, inflections, suffixes, prefixes, homophones and word families — as part of vocabulary growth. Each book they read presents new words that they should be able to figure out using their knowledge of word structures.



Carey

Reading Standard 3:
Print-Sound Code

- ◆ Decoding of the print-sound code should become automatic across the whole span of language

While reading *Beezus and Ramona*, Carey clearly is able to decode the print-sound code in more complex texts. Carey reads fluently, decoding more difficult words as she comes to them almost automatically. Words such as *exasperating* do not faze her. Carey pauses, rereading when necessary, to say the words clearly and with the correct emphasis.

Students' Perspectives

Sometimes instead of a middle I have a conflict. Some of my stories have more interesting words than others. I used to write silly stories. Now I am taking my writing more seriously. My handwriting used to be sloppy now it is a lot neater.

I am really happy my writing has improved, and gotten better.

Third-Grade Writing Standard 1: Habits and Processes

To become proficient writers, children should write a lot. By writing a lot, we mean that children should write every day; that the writing time should be uninterrupted; and that they should always have a way of preserving what they have written — a place in the classroom, a box, a folder, a notebook. Children should have access to

what they already have written; they need to revisit and revise their writing and also to reflect on their growing sense of what good writing is.

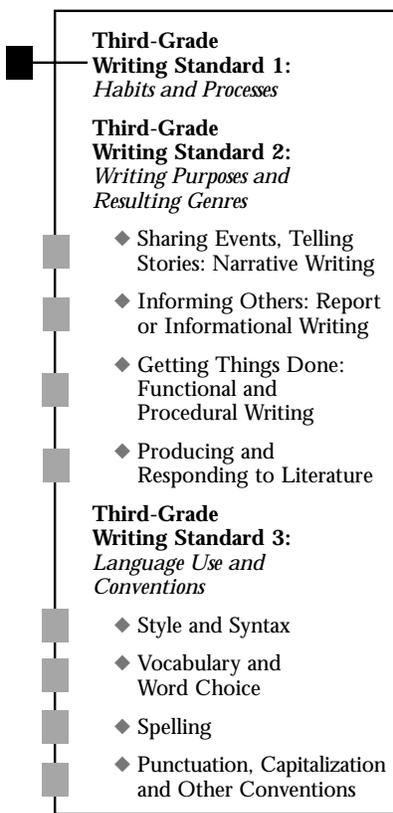
Third graders on target to meet the standard know how to decide what to write about and how to learn more about the topics they select. They have facility in extending a piece of writing and can say more or edit out whole sections for effect. Literate third graders understand the concept of audience. They know when to stop and share their writing. They count on their classmates to listen, tell them what they do not understand, ask questions that will help clarify or add details that will make the writing more meaningful to others. Proficient third-grade writers keep writing even when they do not know how to spell a word. They know that they can come back to the spelling problem, get help from teachers or peers, and make the corrections that will make the writing understandable to the audience.

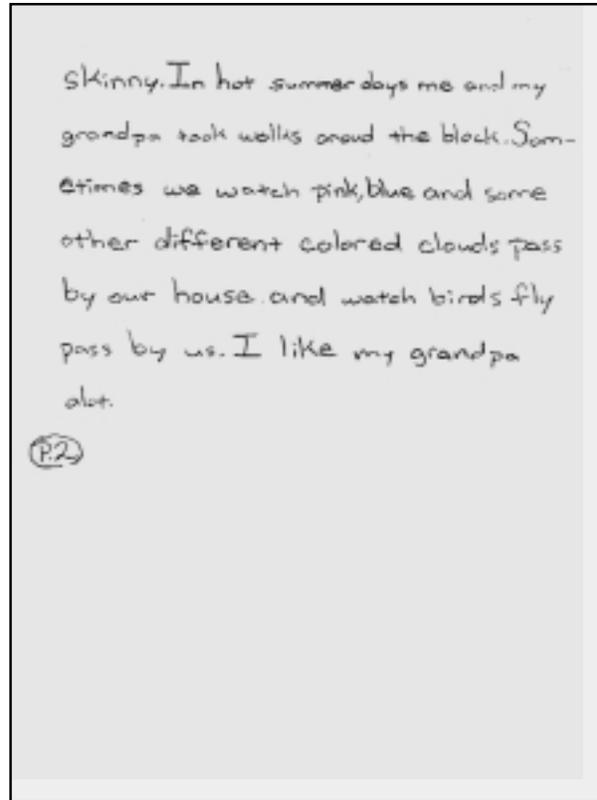
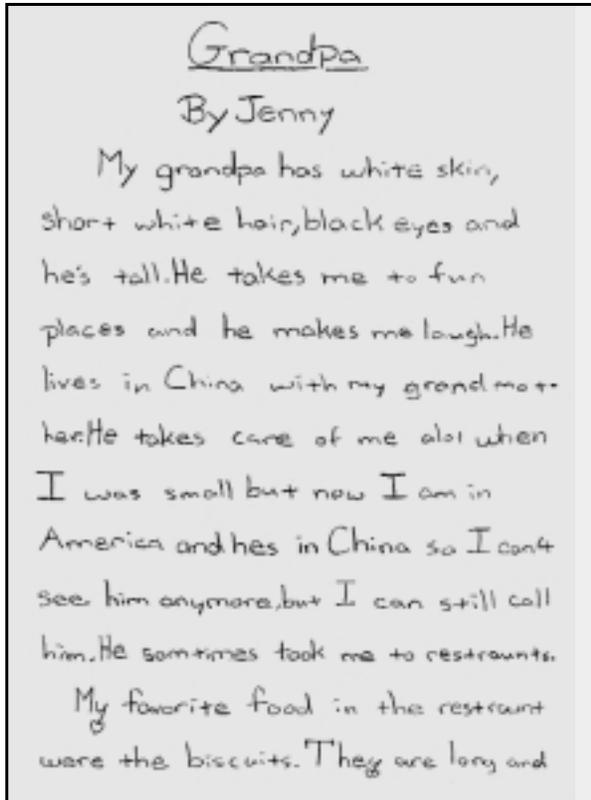
The writing habits and processes we expect in third grade are similar to those we expect in second grade. What differs is the work students produce. Third graders write longer, more complex and

more varied pieces than they did in second grade, showing their deepening understanding of genres and their increasing control of written language and its conventions.

We expect third-grade students to:

- ◆ write daily;
- ◆ generate their own topics and spend the necessary amount of time to revisit and refine their writing;
- ◆ extend and rework pieces of writing (for example, turn a paragraph from a memoir into a fully developed piece);
- ◆ routinely rework, revise, edit and proofread their work;
- ◆ over the course of the year, polish 10 or 12 pieces for an audience in and beyond the classroom;
- ◆ write for specific purposes of their own (for example, writing a thank-you letter, writing a birthday card for a parent or friend);
- ◆ consciously appropriate specific elements of a favorite author's craft to refine the quality of their own work; and
- ◆ apply criteria (both public and personal) to judge the quality of their writing.





“Grandpa”

Writing Standard 1: Habits and Processes

Jenny’s piece comes from her third-grade writing folder. Because Jenny is a third grader, she produces longer, more complex pieces of writing than students in earlier grades do, and her collection of work contains fewer pieces (the work on a single piece might extend over several days or longer). In particular, those pieces she revised took time to reshape and polish. Jenny obviously considers writing important, and she invests time and energy in getting it right. She takes notes on suggestions from response partners. She is careful

to correct spelling and to punctuate her final drafts. The collection as a whole provides evidence of meeting the standard for third-grade Writing Habits and Processes.

“Grandpa” is an informational piece about Jenny’s grandfather. It begins with a physical description of the grandfather (“white skin, short white hair, black eyes and he’s tall”). It goes on to say that he and Jenny used to visit fun places and that he made her laugh. Jenny explains that she no longer sees her grandfather because he remained in China when she moved to

America. She closes the piece by saying that she likes her grandfather a lot.

Only once does Jenny lose control of the piece — she digresses about biscuits — though she does have problems with verb tenses (“takes” for *took* and “watch” for *watched*). This piece, done in September of her third-grade year, shows Jenny is a very thoughtful writer who is able to communicate her feelings to the reader (she obviously cares a great deal for her grandfather) by providing details.

(For more of Jenny’s collection, see page 255.)

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

Third graders meeting standards have a well-defined sense of themselves as writers.

They know their strengths as poets, as fiction writers, as memoir writers, as experts about various nonfiction forms. They can talk knowledgeably about their writing and about the strategies of their favorite published writers.

Once these third graders plan what to write about, often

drawing inspiration from notebooks, they can choose from several genres a form that will allow them to develop effectively what they have to say.

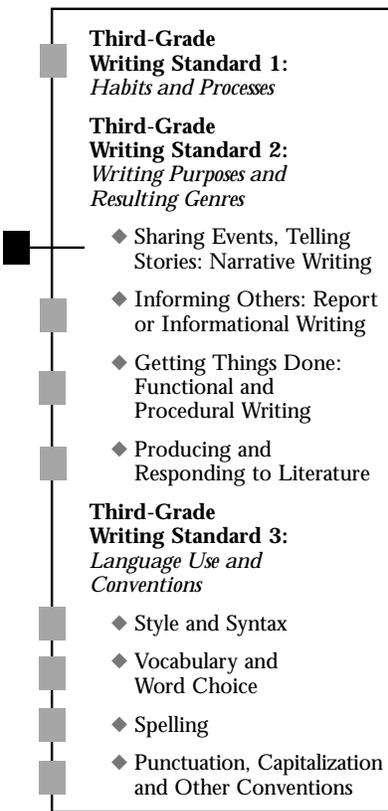
Sharing Events, Telling Stories: Narrative Writing

In a typical third-grade narrative, the student shows a developing sense of story. Autobiographical pieces — frequently memoirs — are drawn from important memories, and their significance often is described. Fictional narratives sometimes make use of the traditional problem/resolution structure seen in many of the stories students have read. Often these narratives express how a character (or the writer) feels — that is, they tell the internal story and offer the author’s reflections or commentary.

Building on the skills they developed in second grade, third-grade writers are able to infuse their stories with mood and to create pace and tension. They use details carefully to create believable worlds in which their events unfold naturally, and they employ dialogue to reveal character, to advance the action and to provide readers with important understandings.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to produce narrative accounts (fictional or autobiographical) that:

- ◆ orient or engage the reader (set the time, indicate the location where the story takes place, introduce the character or enter immediately into the story line);
- ◆ create a believable world and introduce characters through the precise choice of detail;
- ◆ create a sequence of events that unfolds naturally;
- ◆ provide pacing;
- ◆ develop a character, often by providing motivation for action and having the character solve the problem;
- ◆ develop the plot or tell about the event by describing actions and emotions of the main characters, including descriptive details, using dialogue and other story strategies;
- ◆ add reflective comments (especially in an autobiographical narrative); and
- ◆ provide some kind of conclusion.



“When my Puppys Ranaway”

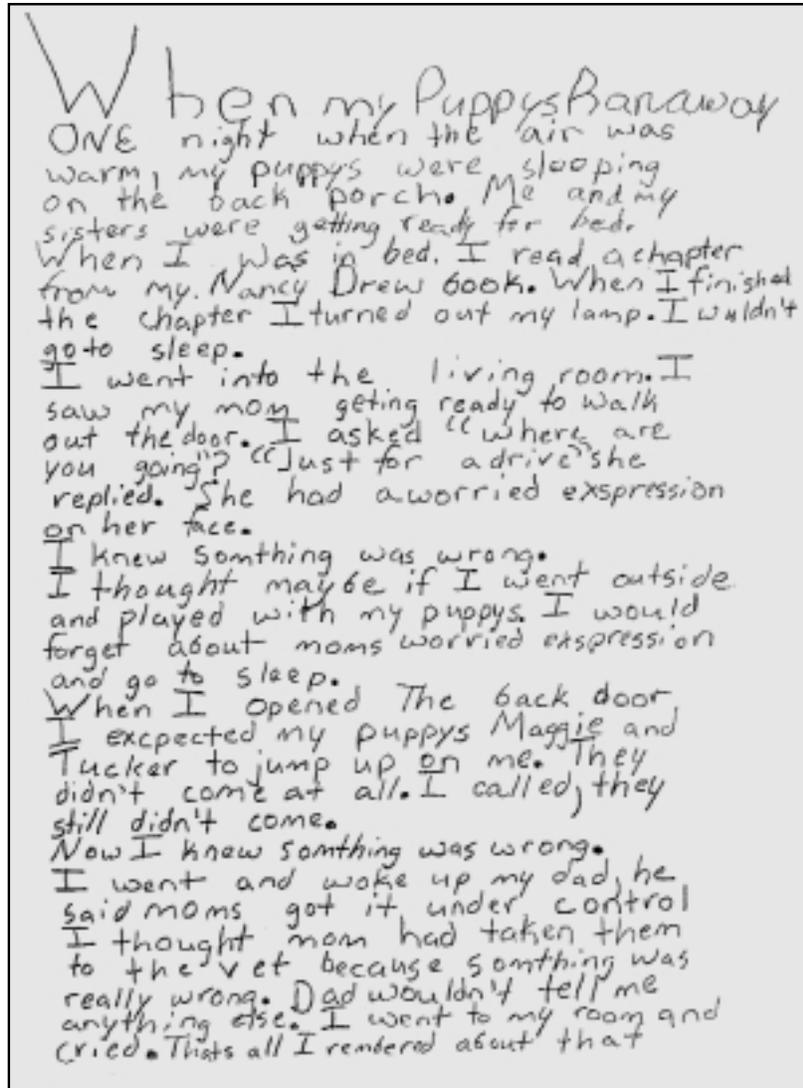
Writing Standard 2:

**Writing Purposes and
Resulting Genres**

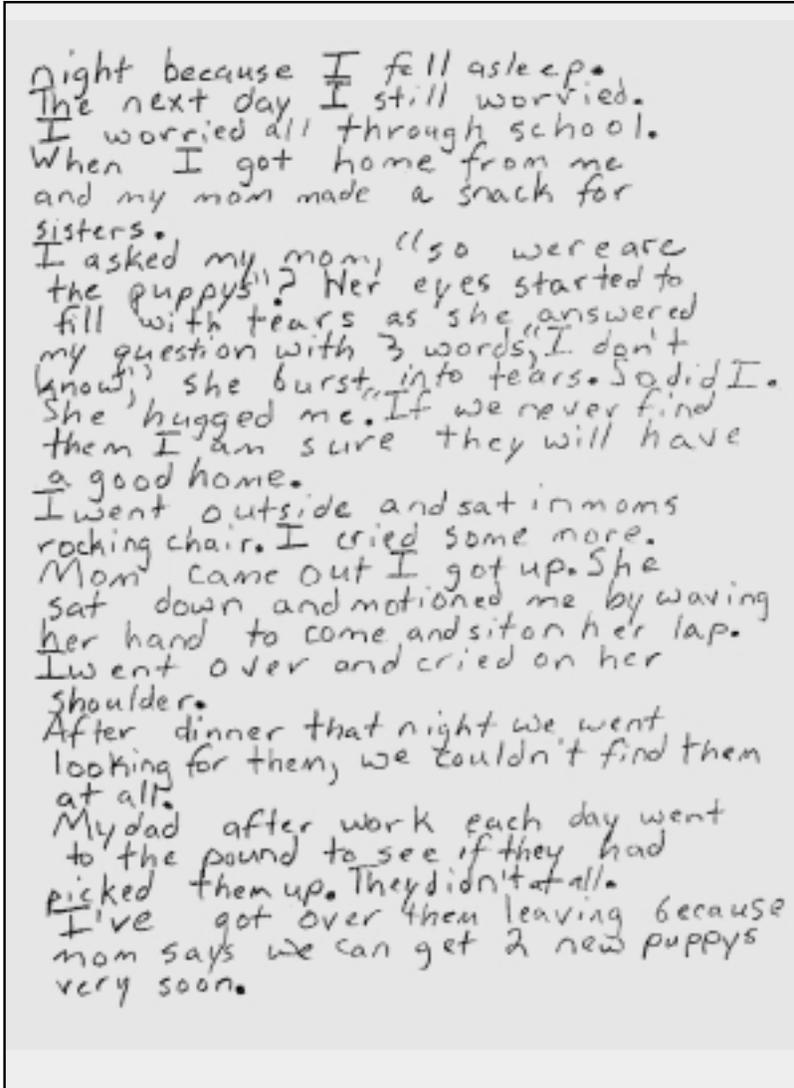
Narrative Writing

This piece is an example of a controlled narrative account that is capable of causing an emotional response from some readers. It includes many of the characteristics of narrative writing; specifically, it builds a believable story line by creating a sequence of events that occurs quite naturally. It meets the standard for narrative writing in third grade.

- ◆ The piece engages the reader by establishing the time of day, implying time of year and introducing characters (“ONE night when the air was warm” and “I was in bed”).
- ◆ The piece includes a number of characters and develops the emotion of these characters (“She had a worried exspression on her face,” “I worried all through school” and “Her eyes started to fill with tears”).
- ◆ The piece creates a believable world through Alex’s choice of detail (“I wuldn’t go to sleep,” “I thought maybe if I went outside” and “I went to my room and cried”).
- ◆ The piece creates a sequence of events that unfolds naturally (“ONE night ... I went into ... I opened The back door ... I ... woke up my dad ... The next day ... I got home from ...”).



- ◆ The piece adds reflective comments (“I knew somthing was wrong”).
- ◆ The piece provides a conclusion by solving the problem (“I’ve got over them leaving because ...”). ▶▶



Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

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

Style and Syntax

Alex uses a variety of syntactic patterns, including introductory adverbial clauses, to address the time of events or to show

passage of time. She uses transitions to keep the story grounded in the sequence of events ("When," "Now," "The next day" and "After"). She also embeds literary language by replicating story elements effectively (the initial nighttime setting, the mother's evasive reply to child's question, the father's offhanded response that the mother

had "it under control," and the crying of child and mother).

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Alex uses words that show familiarity with literary language ("ONE night when the air was warm," "moms worried expression" and "Her eyes started to fill with tears"). She also shows the result of effective word choices in the use of precise and vivid words ("worried all through school" and "she answered my question with 3 words").

Spelling

Alex spells nearly all words correctly but consistently pluralizes *puppy* by adding *s* rather than changing the *y* to *i* and adding *es*.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

Alex demonstrates a clear sense of paragraphing, even though she does not indent in the traditional style. She uses quotation marks when writing dialogue. She approximates the use of a comma to separate two independent clauses ("I called, they still didn't come"). She uses a comma to set off an introductory dependent clause ("ONE night when the air was warm, my puppies were sleeping on the back porch") and uses apostrophes correctly and consistently in all contractions.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

“My Sad Trip To the Doctors Office”

Writing Standard 2: Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Narrative Writing

This narrative illustrates Kendall's familiarity with a demanding writing strategy. The sample is actually a story within a story. At one level, Kendall describes a trip to the doctor's office to get a shot. While waiting there, her mother tells her a story to alleviate her boredom. What is interesting about the parallel stories is the way Kendall uses the emotional impact of the story to carry her through the pain of getting a shot. This is a sophisticated strategy, and given that Kendall is a third grader, she carries it off nicely.

Nevertheless, the piece obviously is driven by the plot. Kendall does not do much to develop character or provide detail about events or settings. So the piece is not as balanced as it might have been had she drawn more from personal experience. This writing meets the standard for narrative writing in third grade.

- ◆ The story weaves together two narratives and successfully creates a unified ending.
- ◆ Kendall creates a context for both the story (a visit to the doctor's office) and for the story within the story (the mother telling a story to distract her child).
- ◆ The events of these parallel stories unfold naturally and reflect her

My Sad Trip To the Doctors Office

By: Kendall

I was about 8 year's old and I was waiting in the the doctors office waiting for my doctor. I was pretty bored so I asked my mom if she had something for me to do. She said, "I'll look but I'm not sure." Crossing my fingers I hoped that she had something for me to do because by now I was about to die of boredom. Lucky for me she pulled out a couple of piece's of paper with a little story on it. I wondered what in the world it was. Then my mommy asked me, " Do you want to hear a story?" I nodded my head yes. And that's where our story begins...

One cool Summer day a little boy named Alex was riding his bike in the drive - way, practicing his tricks. He was practicing tricks like no hands, no feet,

- ◆ careful planning to merge the two story lines at the end of the piece.
- ◆ The piece adequately details Kendall's emotions ("I was pretty bored," "I hoped that she had something for me to do" and "I was so scared that I could barley feel my shot!"). We also know a little about the narrator's character
- she says a prayer for Alex at the end of the piece.
- ◆ The writer uses dialogue as a segue between the two stories. The line "Shawn, you may come in with Kendall now" brings the reader back into the story that began in the doctor's waiting room. ►►

even no hands and no feet. But most of all with his eyes closed, and that's the scary part. It is scary because his dad thought that Alex was having fun and he would be out there for a while-so he closed the garage door. Right after he pushed the button and went inside, there went Alex, eyes closed headed for the garage. Just then his bike slid into the garage.

plop! Alex was stuck under the garage and couldn't breath. He was yelling for help as loud as he could at that moment. His dad came running out of terror screaming, "Where are you and what is the matter!?" By the time his father got there there was Alex lying there dead. His father drove him to the hospital but the doctor said, "I'm sorry your son is dead."

"Shawn, you may come in with Kendall now." "All right." I was so scared that I could barley feel my shot! That night after my mom kissed me good night I said a prayer that Alex was happy in heaven and would have a good life up there.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

The vocabulary of this piece comes from language appropriate for third grade. The most descriptive words used are those that describe bicycle tricks ("no hands and no feet," etc.), and these also seem to come from oral language. The phrase "running out of terror" is a bit awkward but highly evocative.

Spelling

This is a published piece and so has been edited for spelling errors.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

The piece demonstrates Kendall's control for capital letters and punctuation as well as quotation marks and ellipses. This level of correctness is to be expected in an edited piece by a third-grade writer.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see pages 230.)

Writing Standard 3:
Language Use and Conventions

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

Style and Syntax

This writing exhibits a full range of syntactic patterns. The author uses both transition words ("Then") and other

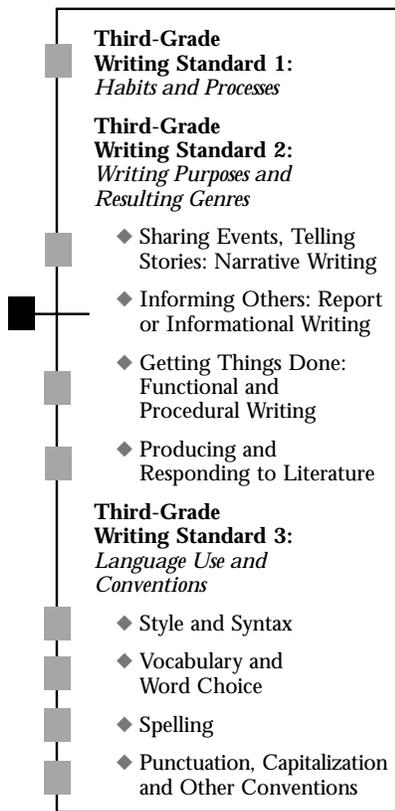
more sophisticated structures ("By the time") to signal changes in time. The sentences themselves have clausal embeddings, some of them quite elegant ("Crossing my fingers I hoped"). The text has both the rhythms of natural speech and the language of authors ("And that's where our story begins...").

Informing Others: Report or Informational Writing

Reports are a favorite form of writing for many third graders, who love looking things up or going places and writing down what they have seen. Third-grade reports can be expected to sound “authorial” — that is, they sound like the kinds of nonfiction third graders are reading and approximating. Many third-grade reports are drawn from classroom research efforts and, especially in science, are a combination of observation and data drawn from textbooks. They are most successful when the reports are on a topic that the child actually knows something about firsthand.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to produce reports that:

- ◆ introduce the topic, sometimes providing a context;
- ◆ have an organizational structure that is useful to the reader;
- ◆ communicate big ideas, insights or theories that have been elaborated on or illustrated through facts, details, quotations, statistics and information;
- ◆ use diagrams, charts or illustrations appropriate to the text;
- ◆ have a concluding sentence or section; and
- ◆ employ a straightforward tone of voice.



“Horses”

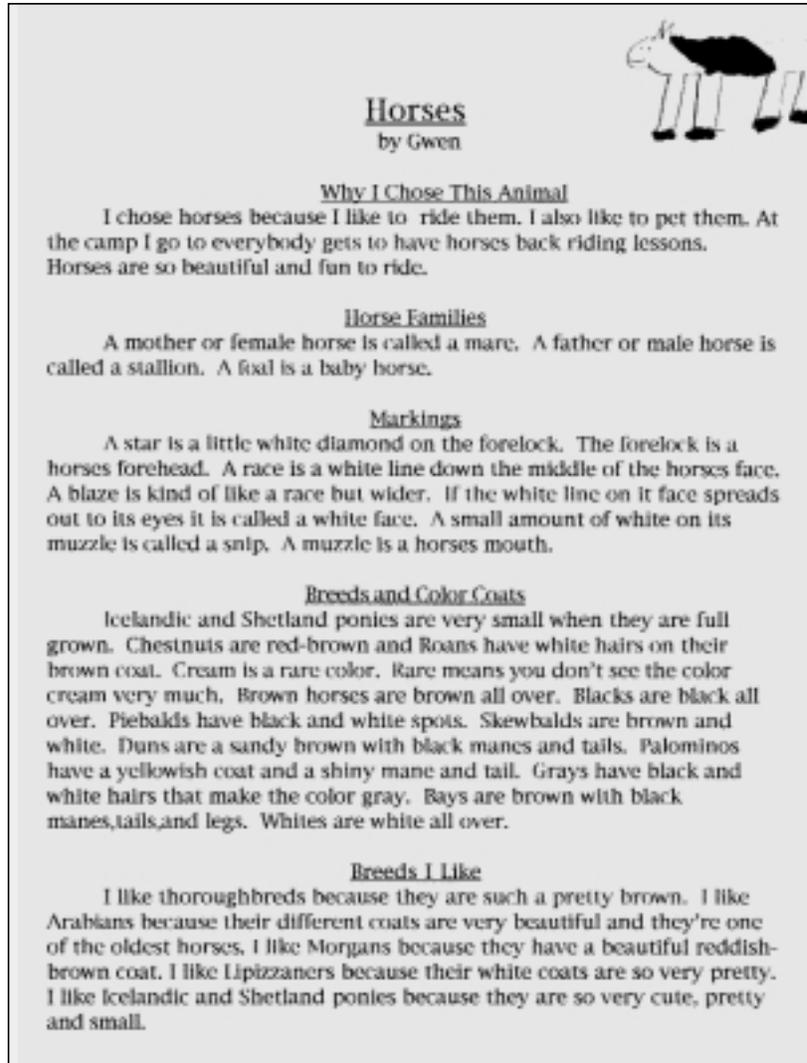
Writing Standard 2:
**Writing Purposes and
Resulting Genres**

Report or Informational Writing

In “Horses,” Gwen uses an authorial tone, blending her own knowledge of and experiences with horses with material gathered from a variety of sources. Throughout the report, Gwen’s stance clearly is that of one who is an authority on horses; in fact, in her conclusion, she asserts, “I like horses and I know a lot about them.”

Gwen uses an organizational structure typical of children’s informational texts — headings followed by anywhere from one to 13 sentences. This model typically does not incorporate transitional devices that lead from one topic to the next, and Gwen does not include them either. While she uses printed sources of information for her report, she blends this information throughout the report with her own observations and interpretations (“Don’t give a young horse too much oatmeal, it makes them too hyper” and “If you thought, like I did that the Wild stallion was really dangerous you were wrong”). This piece meets the standard for report writing in third grade.

- ◆ The sample explains why Gwen chose to write on the topic of horses by relating her own interest in and experiences with horses at camp.



- ◆ Gwen uses headings to organize the piece, providing the reader with a structure to follow. Within each topic, she uses definitions to ensure that the reader understands all the terminology.
- ◆ The ideas in this report range from horse origins and survival to feeding and breeds. Each idea is elaborated on with facts, definitions, and sometimes, personal experiences or comments.
- ◆ The conclusion refers to the opening (“I like to ride them”) and expresses a wish to own a horse.

Horses from Different Countries

Horades are from Japan, Sambas are from Indonesia, and Pinios are from America.

Horse Movement

A horse can walk, trot, canter, and gallop. A trot is kind of like a skip. A canter is like a fast skip. And a gallop is like running.

Friendly Horses

Horses can be great friends. Some horses can be dangerous. Most horses are very lovable.

Foals

Baby horses are called foals. When a foal is ready to be born, the mare (the mother horse) lies down. As soon as the foal is born it struggles to break out of the membrane sack. When the foal breaks out of the sack it breathes on it's own. In about less than a minute the foal tries to get up and walk on it's own. Foals are born with their hooves first and head last. They drink their mother's milk until they're nine to ten months old.

How Long a Horse Lives

They live about 12 to 14 years.

Horses Habitat

You usually find horses in a barn. Some horses are wild. You can find horses on ranches too.

What Horses Eat

Horses eat hay, grass, barley and oats. The best food for a tired horse is oatmeal. Don't give a young horse too much oatmeal, it makes them too hyper. Horses love carrots, apples, molasses and sugar cubes. A block of salt gives the horse important minerals and makes them thirsty so they will drink enough water.

The Most Dangerous Horse

The most dangerous horse is the Percheron. Some people cannot pronounce that so they call them war horses. It is only dangerous if it is a wild horse. If it is wild it can kill you in 7 to 8 minutes. If it is trained it is nice like any other horse.

The Fastest Horse

The fastest horse is the wild stallion. If you thought, like I did that the wild stallion was really dangerous you were wrong. A wild stallion can kill you but it could take up to one hour.

The First Horses

The first horses were no bigger than a fox and looked like a donkey. They had short tails and small ears. These horses lived millions of years ago, but now they are extinct. The only way we know there were horses like that was because the first humans (our ancestors) painted these horses on ancient cave walls. These horses lived in North America and over the years they changed into the horses we know now.

Horse Survival

Most horses live on farms or ranches, but some horses are wild. Wild horses can survive hard weather and they graze on hills, marshes and grasslands. These days wild horses are very rare. People work to keep these wild horses free.

My Description of a Horse

A horse is a mammal because it has fur, drinks milk and their babies are born alive. They have four legs and hooves. They have beautiful long manes and tails.

I like horses and I know a lot about them. I like to ride them and they're so beautiful. Their coats are beautiful, I wish I had a horse of my own!

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

This piece does not meet the Language Use and Conventions Standard for third grade because it depends too much on short, simple sentences. It does have some notable features, however.

Throughout the piece, Gwen uses appropriate vocabulary, carefully defining words that may not be part of the reader's vocabulary (technical language). Gwen confidently handles specialized vocabulary.

Gwen makes an effort to spell all specialized vocabulary in the report correctly. There are several errors in punctuation, largely the omission of commas with initial dependent clauses and the use of apostrophes ("it's" instead of *its*). Gwen uses capital letters for proper nouns, although there are some inaccuracies ("the Wild stallion").

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

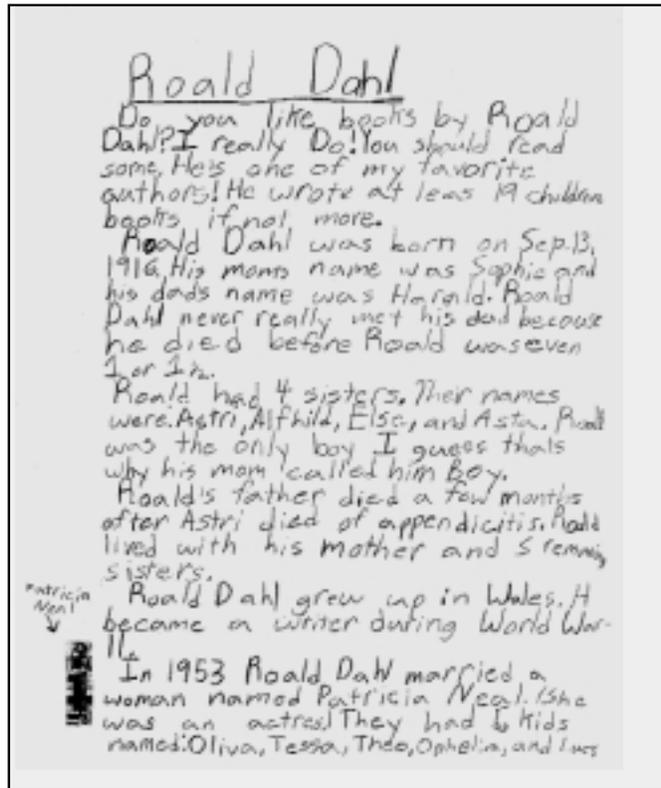
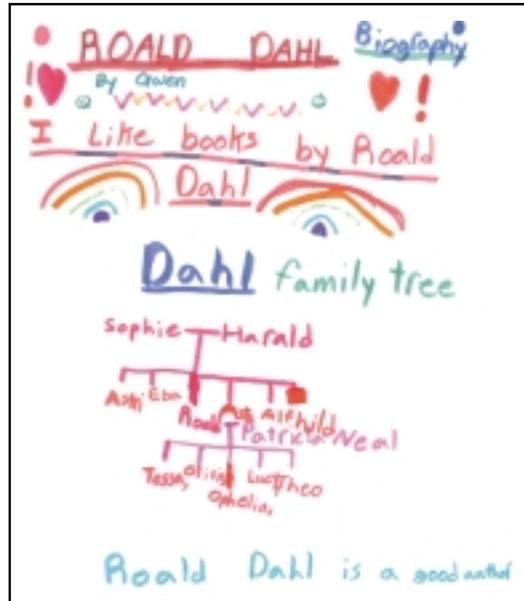
“ROALD DAHL Biography”

Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Report or Informational Writing

Gwen’s biography is a good example of a third-grade report. It was done as part of an author study on Roald Dahl. Although some of the phrases may have been lifted from various sources, these phrases are embedded in text that clearly has been written by a third grader. Furthermore, Gwen conveys a genuine interest in the subject (“I really like the books he writes” and “He also makes his stories funny, I even laugh sometimes”). She shows a familiarity with report writing by using pictures with labels to accompany the writing. This piece meets the report writing standard for third grade.

- ◆ The writing is organized coherently, with each paragraph dedicated to a single overarching idea. The first paragraph announces the topic, the second covers the subject’s parents, the third discusses his siblings, etc.
- ◆ The report looks across Roald Dahl’s works. For example, Gwen explains the commonality of death or dying in a number of books.
- ◆ At the conclusion of the report, the voice of a third grader comes through again (“I want to read all of his books, but I’m not there yet!”).
- ◆ The pictures, with labels, add to the information in the report.



Writing Standard 3:
Language Use and Conventions

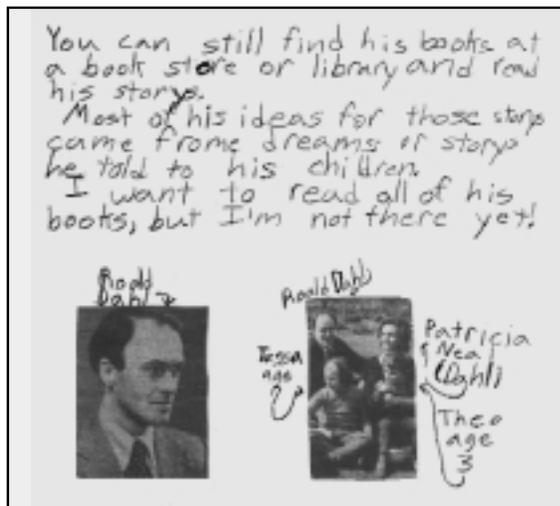
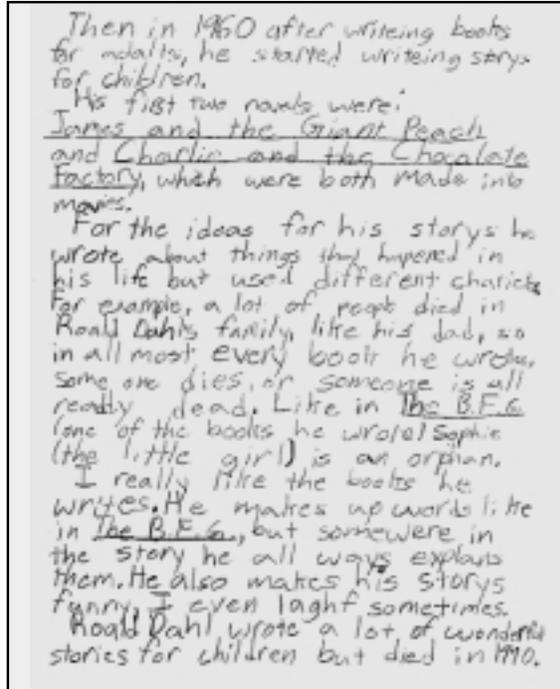
This piece does not meet the Language Use and Conventions Standard for third grade because of syntactic problems. For example, some sentences do not express complete, well-developed thoughts (“He wrote at least 19 children’s books if not more,” “Roald Dahl wrote a lot of wonderful stories for children but died in 1990”). This piece does have some notable features, however.

The style and syntax of this piece read like a blend of information drawn from encyclopedias and other resources that engage a third grader. It is difficult to be certain how much influence they had on this piece of writing, which is typical of elementary school reports. However, some sentences seem drawn from oral language patterns (“For example, a lot of people died in Roald Dahl’s family, like his dad, so in all most every book he wrote, some one dies, or someone is all readdy dead”). Overall, the piece uses a variety of sentence patterns.

The vocabulary, in turn, is drawn from oral language and copied directly from published materials. Because the topic does not call for it, there are no technical words.

The piece is marred by several misspellings (for example, “writing,” “stories” and “explains”). The misspellings are consistent; that is, the same word is misspelled the same way throughout the document.

Overall, the punctuation in this piece is quite good. Gwen correctly



punctuates sentences and controls for the use of parentheses, underlining of titles and several comma usages.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

Getting Things Done: Functional and Procedural Writing

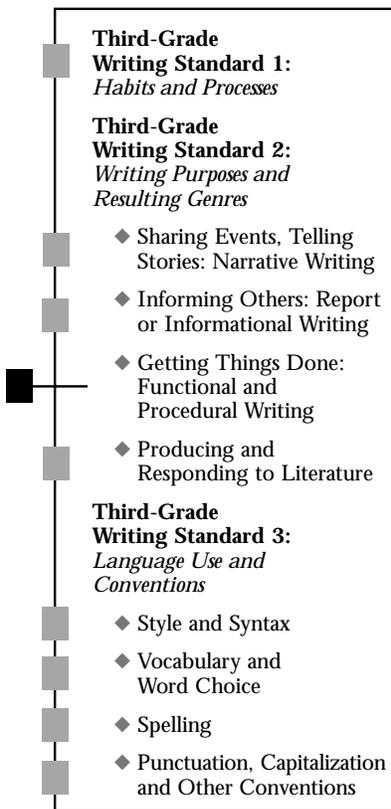
Third graders typically know a lot about the subjects that capture their interest and are good at doing a great many things. Given the opportunities, they work on computers, they earn merit badges, they care for pets, they ride bicycles, they use the library — theirs is a world that requires expertise. And their expertise constantly is being expanded by reading materials that detail how to do new things — play soccer, start a stamp collection, make cookies. Functional materials are important elements in developing third graders' own skills and in sharing their skills with others.

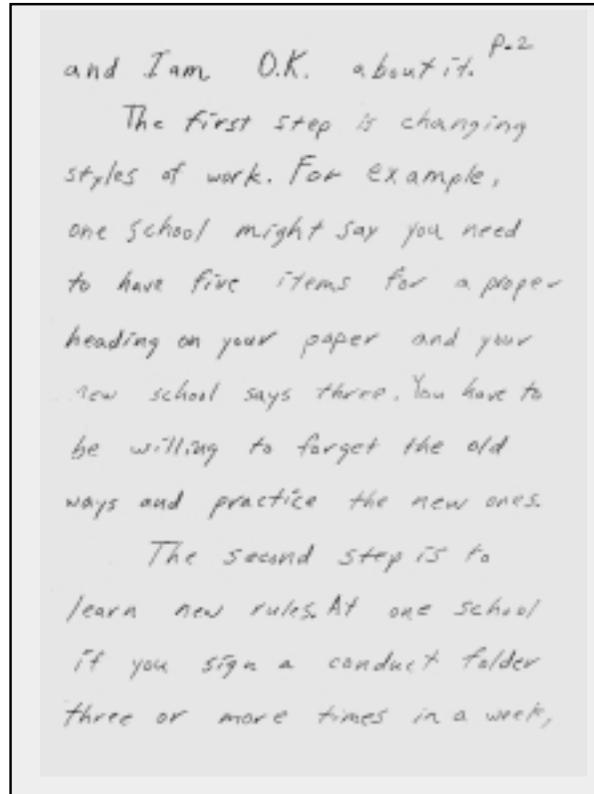
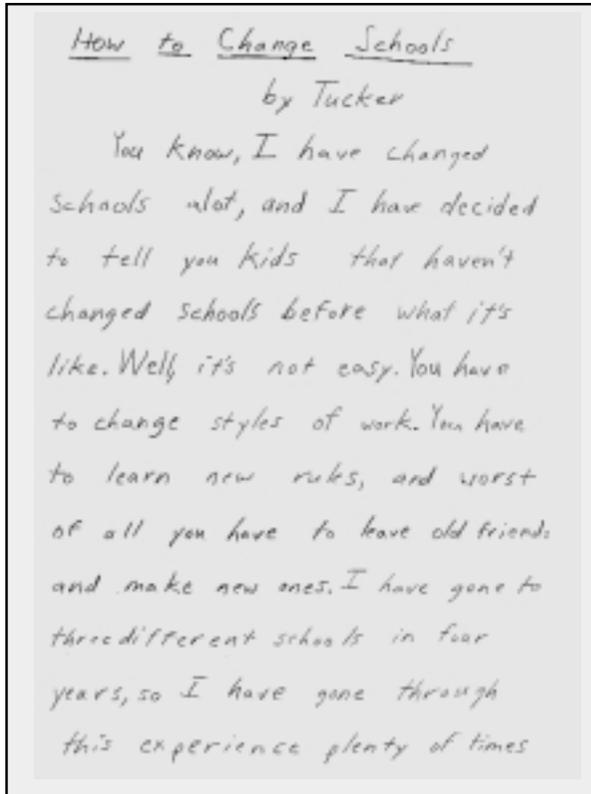
The process of explaining the steps in how to do something has strong real-world applications. Third graders should be able to take a process apart, look at the steps involved and explain to someone else

how to do it. Third graders often produce brochures that explain how to do something and minimanuals that detail more complicated processes.

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

- ◆ engage the reader by establishing a context for the piece;
- ◆ identify the topic;
- ◆ provide a guide to action;
- ◆ show the steps in an action in considerable detail;
- ◆ include relevant information;
- ◆ use language that is straightforward and clear; and
- ◆ may use illustrations detailing steps in the procedure.





“How to Change Schools”

Writing Standard 2:
Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Functional and Procedural Writing

This student sample is a fine example of procedural writing. In this piece, Tucker shows strong organizational abilities and an understanding of his audience. This piece of writing provides the reader with a very clear sense of the steps that may be involved, at least for this third-grade student, in moving from one school to another. He has

carefully crafted a procedure, which he has thought about. The sample represents procedural writing that meets the standard for third grade.

- ◆ Tucker engages the reader by identifying the topic and establishing a personal context (see title and first sentence).
- ◆ Tucker organizes the piece appropriately by showing the steps in detail. He establishes three areas of discussion (changing styles of work, learning new rules and making new friends) and organizes the piece around them.

- ◆ He takes into account the needs of readers who someday may have to change schools and provides directions for them, giving them a specific guide in clear, straightforward language.
- ◆ Each step contains considerable detail (“For example,” “At one school” and “This is the easiest part”). ▶▶

you would lose free time ^{p.3}
on Friday afternoons. At your
new school, if you sign a teacher
book three times in a day
you would have to call your
parents right then! So, you
might have to practice more
self control.

Last of all, you have
to make new friends. This
is the easiest part of change
because alot of the people are
nice. If ^{you} are nice to them

by sharing and joining in ^{p.4}
at games, they will want to
be your friend.

In my opinion changing
schools can be good because you
learn how to change what
you do and how you do it.
But best of all you end up
with more friends than before.

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

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

Style and Syntax

Tucker uses a conversational tone that is appropriate for his readers (“You know,” “you kids,” “Well, it’s not easy” and “O.K.”). In addition, he uses conventional transitions for this five-paragraph essay (“first step,” “second step” and “Last of all”) and elaborates on his examples appropriately.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Tucker uses words from an extensive speaking vocabulary and employs specific words that characterize certain rules from different schools.

Spelling

Tucker correctly spells all words, including some difficult words such as “practice” and “opinion.”

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

Tucker displays outstanding skills in correct use of punctuation and capitalization.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

“How to do ballet Positions”

Writing Standard 2:

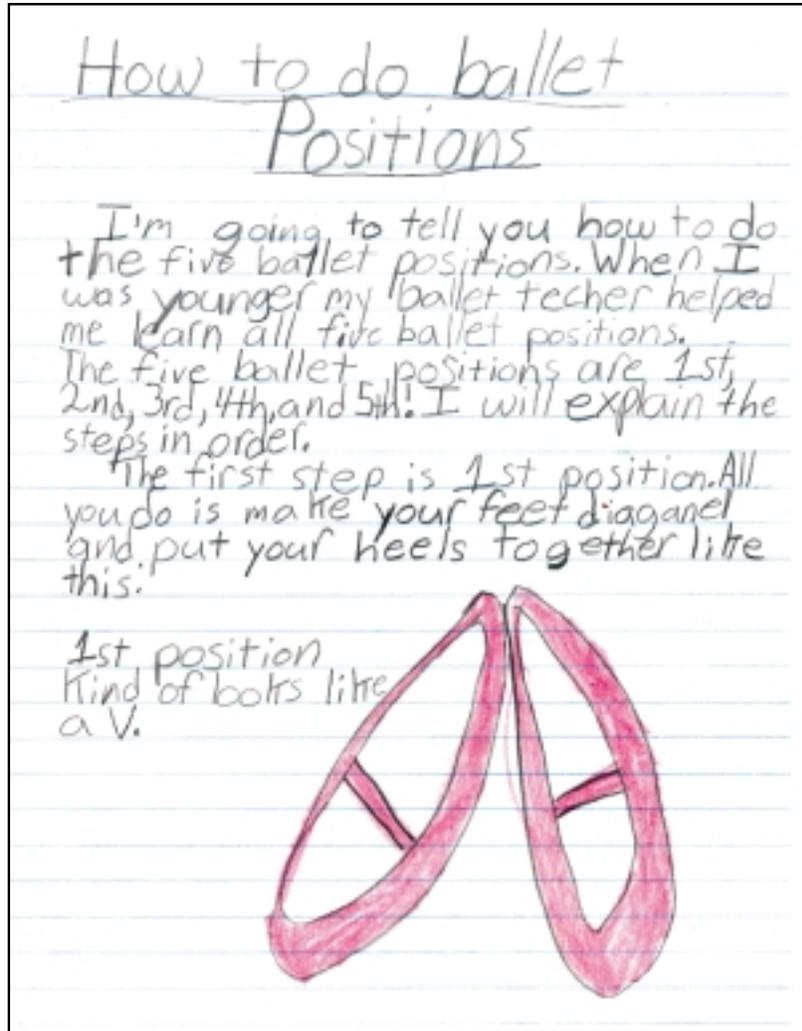
Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Functional and Procedural Writing

This wonderfully illustrated piece of functional writing manages to explain how to assume the five positions in ballet. The overall tone is lively and conversational, and the illustrations are integral to understanding the instructions. Whether the analogous information is original or not (“1st position Kind of looks like a V” and “3rd position Kind of looks like a T on its side”), its presence further elaborates on both the text and the drawings and provides the reader with very helpful information.

This piece is further remarkable for Gwen’s useful tips (“1st and 2nd position are pretty easy but 3rd, 4th, and 5th are pretty hard for beginners. One little thing I have to tell you, 3rd, and 4th position are not used very much in ballet”). This piece represents functional writing that meets the standard for third grade.

- ◆ This piece provides a very explicit set of directions that, if followed, could allow a reader to assume and teach the positions.
- ◆ The piece begins by announcing Gwen’s intent (“I’m going to tell you how to do the five ballet positions”) and establishing her expertise (“When I was younger my ballet teacher helped me learn all five ballet positions”).



- ◆ Each position is illustrated and described fully, with the illustration playing a very important role (“put your heels together like this”).
- ◆ The language is straightforward and clear, and Gwen goes a long way toward making the reader feel that learning the five positions is not an insurmountable task (“All you do is”) and later explaining that though positions three, four

and five are relatively difficult, the third and fourth positions are not used frequently. She also shows the similarities and differences in the positions so that a reader can easily believe that understanding one position makes learning another fairly simple.

- ◆ There is no extraneous information in this writing; it is lucid and coherent. ▶▶

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

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

Style and Syntax

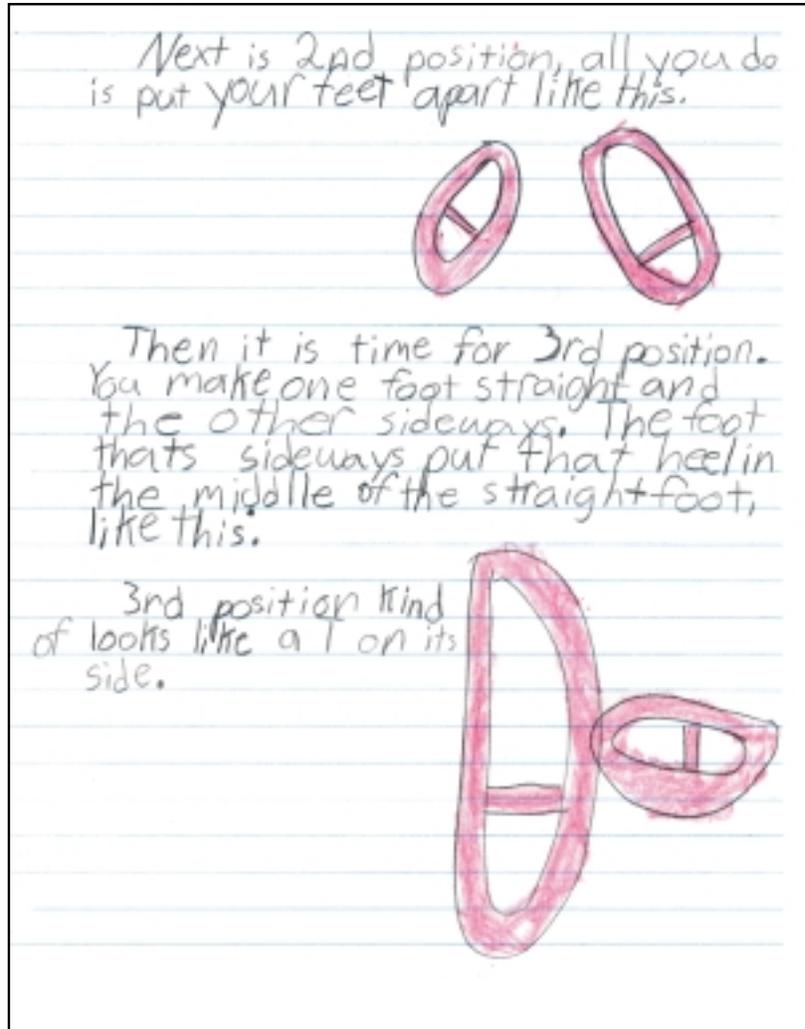
The writing has a style and range of sentence patterns appropriate for this genre. Sentences are relatively short, but they need to be short so that the reader is not confused. Meaning is further enhanced through transitional elements. Occasionally, Gwen does have syntax problems (“The foot thats sideways put that heel in the middlle”), but such problems are rare and do not inhibit meaning or take away from the overall sense that this is a well-written piece. When she drops into a conversational style (see the last paragraph), the sentence structures are more complex.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Gwen uses vocabulary appropriate for the task and subject at hand, in this case the specialized vocabulary of learning something about ballet. Although the language she employs is relatively simple, the simplicity is appropriate for teaching another child how to do something.

Spelling

All the words in this text are spelled correctly except “diaganel,” “preety,” “middlle” and “techer.”



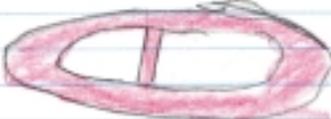
Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

Although there are several punctuation problems, most of these are comma errors. Gwen uses capital letters at the beginning of sentences and punctuation at the end, and she uses contractions, uppercase letters and lowercase letters correctly. One contraction

(“thats”) is not punctuated, and “ballet” in the title should be capitalized. Otherwise, this piece shows good control for conventions.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

3rd, 4th, and 5th position are a lot alike. 7th position is the same as 3rd but the foot that sideways, put that foot in front of the other foot like this.

5th position is the same as 3rd and 4th position but the foot that's sideways that heel connects to the tip of the straight foot like this.



5th position kind of looks like an L.

1st and 2nd position are pretty easy but 3rd, 4th, and 5th are pretty hard for beginners. One little thing I have to tell you, 3rd, and 4th position are not used very much in ballet. When you have learned the 5 positions of ballet you can go teach your friends!

Producing and Responding to Literature

The literature that third graders write reflects what they have learned in their genre studies of poetry, memoir, fiction and nonfiction. They have developed a repertoire of writing strategies and can identify specific elements of particular genres. They read and understand the variety of possibilities within a genre, and they discuss what strategies an author has used and whether these strategies work. All of this knowledge contributes to their writing repertoire.

When third graders evaluate literature, they are able to refer to the text and make assertions about big ideas, find commonalities across texts, develop interpretive hunches and run these hunches by others during book talks, and elaborate on their evaluation of the text. Because they write themselves, third graders are able to make discerning comments about literature, attending both to stylistic elements and overall effectiveness of a piece.

Producing literature

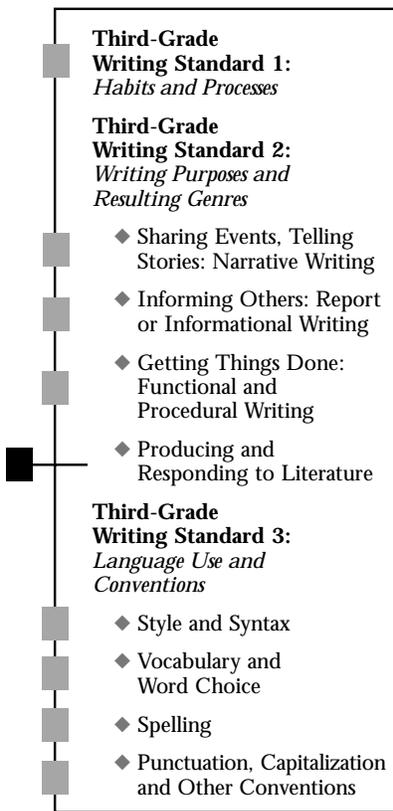
By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to be able to:

- ◆ write stories, songs, memoirs, poetry and plays — conforming to appropriate expectations for each form;
- ◆ produce a piece that incorporates elements appropriate to the genre after engaging in a genre study; and
- ◆ build on the thread of a story by extending or changing the story line.

Responding to literature

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

- ◆ support an interpretation by making specific references to the text;
- ◆ provide enough detail from the text so the reader can understand the interpretation;
- ◆ go beyond retelling;
- ◆ compare two works by an author;
- ◆ discuss several works that have a common idea or theme; and
- ◆ make connections between the text and their own ideas and lives.



“Turtle”

Writing Standard 2:

Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Producing Literature

“Turtle” is an excellent example of a student-written poem. The piece of writing suggests Emma has internalized poetic elements through reading and studying, and she uses several to describe a swimming turtle. “Turtle” is a piece of literature that meets the standard for third grade.

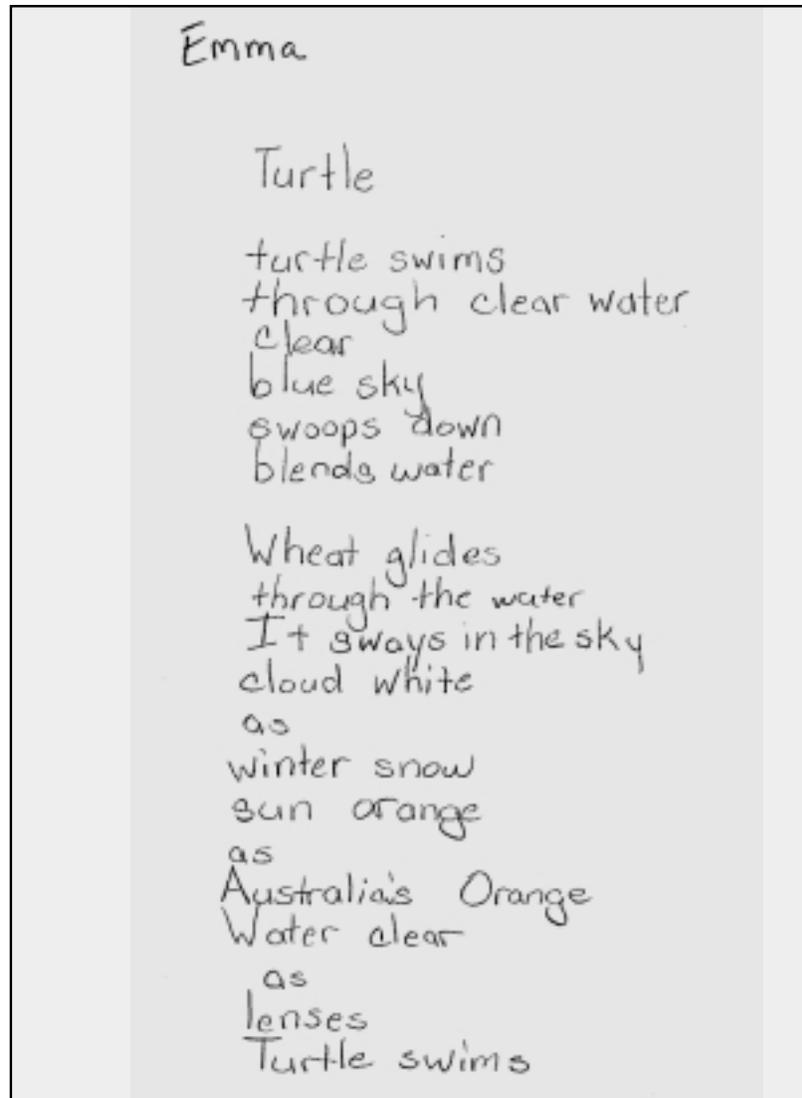
The piece displays short line lengths, probably in imitation of poems Emma has read. She develops imagery through effective use of descriptive action words (“swoops,” “blends,” “glides” and “sways”) and through use of similes (“cloud white/as/winter snow” and “Water clear/as/lenses”).

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece does not meet the Language Use and Conventions Standard for third grade because of inconsistencies in capitalization and lack of any punctuation. It does have some notable features, however.

Emma employs simple phrases in short line lengths, ending with a statement that repeats the first line to create a closed circle. She uses words that are natural to a speaking vocabulary. She also uses words in unusual groupings that are poetic (“blends water” and “Wheat glides”). She has created some



striking similes as well, especially “Water clear/as/lenses.” All words are spelled correctly.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

“Putting Things in Box’s”

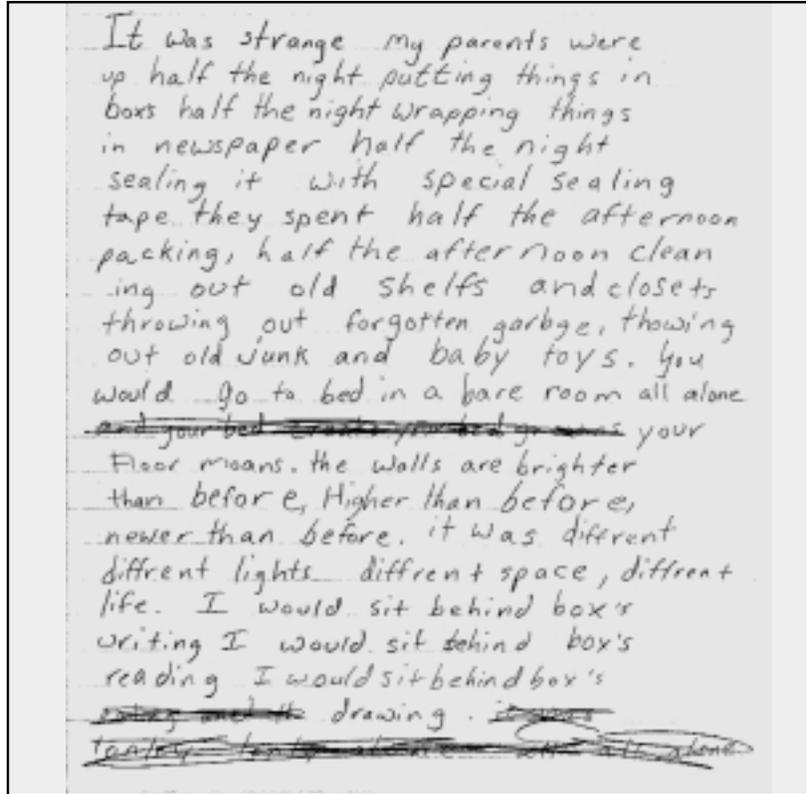
Writing Standard 2: Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Producing Literature

This sample displays Gabrielle’s rather amazing ability to create a piece of literature that looks like prose but reads like poetry. This piece of writing provides the reader with the sense that the writer has read widely and internalized a number of highly effective literary techniques. Gabrielle produces a piece of literature that meets the standard for third grade.

The writing occurred immediately after hearing the teacher read pieces that contained a lot of repetition. This piece represents Gabrielle’s understanding of repetition as a literary device. It also meets the third-grade standard for a response to literature.

- ◆ The piece effectively uses the repetition of phrases to heighten what is perhaps a sense of alienation (“half the night,” “half the afternoon,” “throwing out” and “sit behind box’s”). The parallel structure created by this repetition is quite sophisticated.
- ◆ By moving from a first-person point of view (“my parents”) to a third-person perspective (“they spent”) to a universal you (“You would go to bed”) and finally back to the original first person, the piece suggests a sense of uncertainty and loneliness.



Writing Standard 3: Language Use and Conventions

This piece does not meet the Language Use and Conventions Standard for third grade because of problems with spelling and punctuation, capitalization and other conventions. It does have some notable features, however.

The piece employs literary syntactic patterns, including the piling up of parallel phrases and clauses. Gabrielle initially uses long sentences, which are followed by short and partial ones to create a feeling of abandonment and loneliness.

Gabrielle uses words natural to a speaking vocabulary but creates a poetic effect by using everyday words in a stylistic manner. She correctly

spells most words or approximates correct spelling (“diffrent” for *different*). She shows evidence of understanding the addition of *s* to make a plural (“shelvs”) and exhibits an awareness of the apostrophe (“box’s”) without understanding how to use it.

Gabrielle uses some end punctuation but omits periods at the ends of several sentences. She uses the capital *I* correctly throughout and capitalizes the first word of a sentence if there is a period before it. She also uses commas correctly to indicate phrases in a series.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

“Wilfred Gorden McDonald Patridge”

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

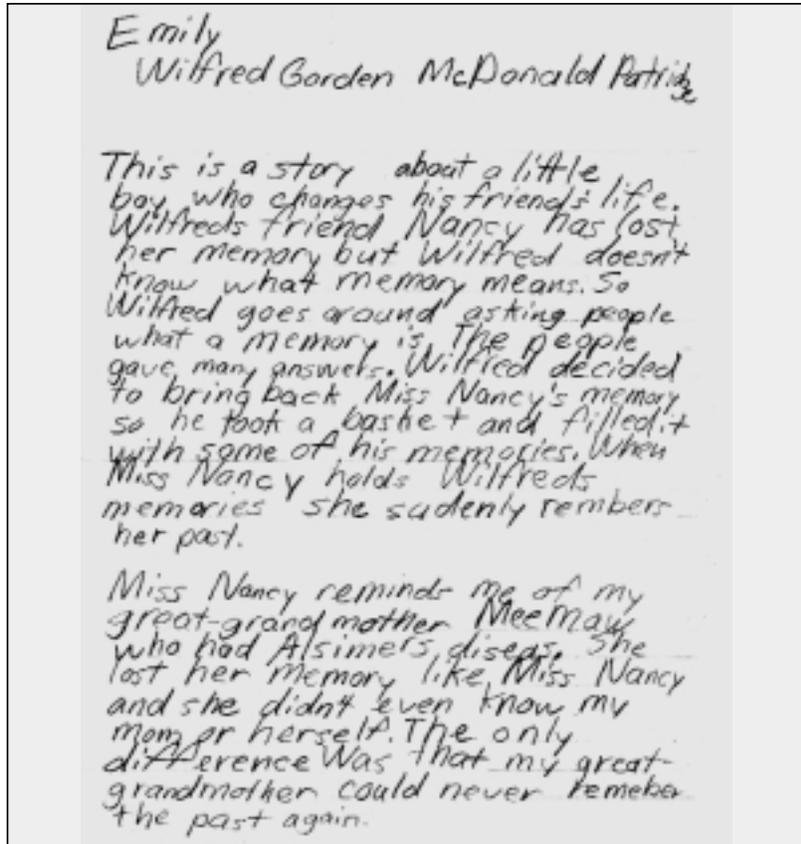
Responding to Literature

Emily’s sample shows how a third grader responds in several ways to a piece of literature. While the sample is not a full-blown “composition,” it shows one way a student can demonstrate a response to literature that meets the standard for third grade.

- ◆ The piece expresses Emily’s understanding of the book by making a number of specific references to the text (“Wilfreds friend Nancy” and “he took a basket and filled it with some of his memories”).
- ◆ She begins with a straightforward summary of the plot, told in narrative form. However, she goes beyond retelling to recount her personal connection to the story, ending with the difference between the book’s ending and real life, where her great-grandmother “could never remeber the past again.”

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

This piece meets the Language Use and Conventions Standard for third grade. Although there are some spelling errors, the overall quality of the other elements of this standard offsets concerns raised because of misspellings.



Style and Syntax

Emily uses transitions such as “so,” but she also uses more sophisticated linkages (“like Miss Nancy” and “The only difference”). She uses a variety of sentence patterns to show the relationships among ideas and demonstrates control over subordinate phrases and clauses that are used appropriately to show such relationships (“When Miss Nancy holds Wilfreds memories she sudenly rembers her past”).

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Emily uses words that are generally part of a third grader’s speaking vocabulary but also uses some words that are specialized or technical (“Alsimers”).

Spelling

There are five spelling errors (“sudenly,” “rembers,” “remeber,” “diseas” and the specialized word “Alsimers”).

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

Emily uses capital letters at the beginning of sentences and for all proper names. Likewise, she uses end punctuation correctly. She sometimes correctly uses the apostrophe for possessives (“friend’s” and “Miss Nancy’s”) and in contractions.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

“The Outcast of Redwall”

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

Responding to Literature

This is an edited piece of third-grade writing, a variation on the book report, in which Miles recommends the book *The Outcast of Redwall* by Brian Jacques to another reader. It demonstrates his ability to determine the “big idea,” or theme, of the book (friendship and love) and to refer to specific incidents in the text that relate to that theme. Although he does not specifically compare this work with another, Miles does identify the book as part of a body of work from an author (“This well-known author has finally made a book” and “he is writing a new book”). This piece meets the standard for a third-grade response to literature.

- ◆ The writing incorporates the style of a published book review that Miles probably has read in book club promotions (“This book is a must for every library”). He uses a common rating system for books, movies, restaurants, etc. (“I rate this book *****”).
- ◆ Miles supports an interpretation by making specific references to the text (“Later Veail has a difficult decision to make. Should he ...”).

The Outcast of Redwall
By Brian Jaques

This well-known author has finally made a book that noone can resist or not love. This tale of friendship and love will bring tears to even the youngest readers. This book is a must for every library; pravtae, public or government.

I still remember the section in which Sunflash returned to Salamanston, a true badger lord. I can still see him walking across the hot sands to Salamanstrom. I remember Veail Six Claws difficult decision Veill's father was evil so Veail has two parts of evil in him and these parts lead him to murder and to be outcast. But Veail also has good parts...Later Veail has a difficult decision to make. Should he join the ones who outcast him or join his evil father and his murdering band

I suggest this book to readers young and old. It should be read immediatly. Also, Brian Jacques is open for letters and quite soon he will be opning a fan club and also he is writing a new book.

The Outcasts of Redwall has certainly brought a new dimension to book writing.I rate this book *****

Miles
reporter

- ◆ He provides enough detail from the text so that the reader can understand the interpretation (“Veail has two parts of evil in him and these parts lead him to murder and to be outcast”).
- ◆ The writing goes beyond merely retelling the story; Miles refers to specific incidents in the text without giving a plot summary. He refers to specific vivid images from the book without revealing too much to the intended audience (potential readers) (“I still remember the section in which ...” and “I can still see him walking”).

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

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

Style and Syntax

Miles uses a variety of syntactic patterns including complex sentences. He also uses some unusual literary constructions such as the retained adjectives in “This book is a must for every library; pravtae, public or government.”

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Miles uses both literary language (“This tale of friendship and love”) and his own language (“Brian Jacques is open for letters”). He uses the specialized vocabulary appropriate to the book review (“well-known author,” “to readers young and old” and “new dimension to book writing”).

Spelling

Familiar high-frequency words are spelled correctly, as are many words not frequently used by third graders (“government,” “outcast” and “dimension”). He spells words with inflectional endings correctly.

Although this is an edited final copy, there are a few errors in spelling (“noone,” “pravtae,” “immediatly” and “opning”). Some may be typing mistakes, as Miles used a word processor to copy his handwritten response.

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

Miles uses capital letters and periods correctly. He attempts some advanced punctuation marks — the semicolon and the ellipsis — although he omits some end punctuation marks and puts a period where a question mark should be.

(For more on Language Use and Conventions, see page 230.)

Third-Grade Writing Standard 3: Language Use and Conventions

Control of conventions is an important issue for third graders who want their writing to be read appropriately. By the time they finish the primary grades, young authors have several “writerly” techniques at their command. With their emerging mastery of the conventions of writing comes a growing sensitivity to the audience with whom they are trying to communicate. They can use direct quotations to

produce dialogue; they can write an engaging lead that will hook a reader; they can bring conflicting opinions and contrasting views to life; and they can build a sense of anticipation or suspense that keeps the reader interested. Third graders recognize the relationship between syntax and having readers read with the correct expression. They are able to explore a variety of syntactic patterns to create rhythm and tone that support meaning in their writing. They are equally adept with word choice — often reaching for words that they only partly control but that reflect a desire to give their writing substance and style.

Style and Syntax

Students meeting standards when they leave third grade have a strong “sentence sense.” They use more “writerly writing,” modeling and responding to the increasingly complex kinds of reading they are doing. Their style and syntax show an awareness of the choices a writer makes to produce a particular effect (for example, suspense) or to produce a certain kind of reading (getting the expression correct). Their writing reads like many of the books they hear in class, and they often embed borrowings, such as refrains or phrasings, from familiar books.

Using one’s own language

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

- ◆ use appropriately a variety of syntactic patterns (for example, equal weight in compound sentences, subordination in complex sentences) to show relationships of ideas;
- ◆ incorporate transitional words and phrases appropriate to thinking; and
- ◆ embed phrases and modifiers that make their writing lively and graphic.

Taking on language of authors

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

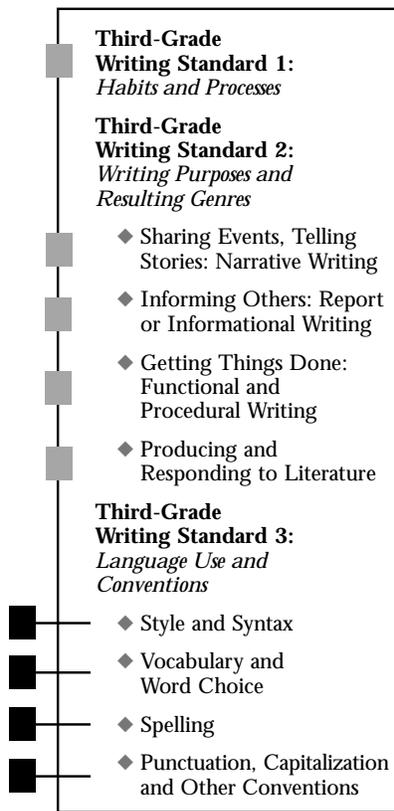
- ◆ use varying sentence patterns and lengths to slow reading down, speed it up or create a mood;
- ◆ embed literary language where appropriate; and
- ◆ reproduce sentence structures from various genres they are reading.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Using one’s own language

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

- ◆ use words from their speaking vocabulary in their writing, including



words they have learned from reading and class discussion; and

- ◆ make word choices that reveal they have a large enough vocabulary to exercise options in word choice (for example, more precise and vivid words).

Taking on language of authors

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

- ◆ extend their writing vocabulary by using specialized words related to the topic or setting of their writing (for example, the names of breeds of dogs if they are writing about dogs).

Spelling

Third graders typically are more focused on correct spelling than they were previously. They often can recognize when a word does not look correct. When they do not know how to spell a word, they look it up (given resources) or experiment until it looks right. By the end of third grade, we expect students' writing to be easy to read, with most words spelled correctly and errors limited to irregularly spelled and infrequently encountered words.

At the end of third grade, students should have a strong enough base of spelling knowledge that the rules are starting to make sense to them and they can catch on to spelling

instruction. That is, they have developed a layered understanding of how spelling works through experimenting with spelling patterns, generalizing from words they know how to spell and having had sufficient spelling instruction to draw on with confidence. These children use phonetic spelling correctly for regular and irregular words most of the time. They know and use word chunks, word families, spelling patterns and basic spelling rules to generate conventional or close-to-conventional spellings. They are learning to recognize how meaning influences spelling in combination with letter-sound correspondence (for example, *read* can be pronounced two ways, and the two words have different meanings; *read* and *red*, though they sound the same, have different spellings and meanings).

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

- ◆ notice when words do not look correct and use strategies to correct the spelling (for example, experiment with alternative spellings, look the word up in a dictionary or word list);
- ◆ correctly spell all familiar high-frequency words;
- ◆ correctly spell words with short vowels and common endings;
- ◆ correctly spell most inflectional endings, including plurals and verb tenses;

- ◆ use correct spelling patterns and rules such as consonant doubling, dropping *e* and changing *y* to *i*; and
- ◆ correctly spell most derivational words (for example, *-tion*, *-ment*, *-ly*).

Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

By the end of third grade, children should be using punctuation that makes sense, even if it is not always completely correct.

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

- ◆ use capital letters at the beginnings of sentences;
- ◆ use periods and other end punctuation correctly nearly all of the time;
- ◆ approximate the use of quotation marks;
- ◆ approximate the use of commas;
- ◆ use question marks;
- ◆ use capital and lowercase letters; and
- ◆ use contractions.

“Going to My Grandma’s”

Writing Standard 3:

Language Use and Conventions

This piece is a simple narrative about a trip to “Grandma’s.” Although the narrative itself does not meet the standard for Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres, it does meet the standard for Language Use and Conventions. This writing is made up of 12 sentences, which are punctuated almost flawlessly. The writer spells all words correctly and uses capitals appropriately. In fact, the only errors are some problems with commas, which are to be expected in third grade.

Style and Syntax

The piece contains a range of syntactic patterns. In addition, there are transition words (“One day,” “First,” “Then”) and introductory adverbial clauses (“When one of my cousins”) to signal shifts in time. The piece also uses the language of oral speech (“I had fun”).

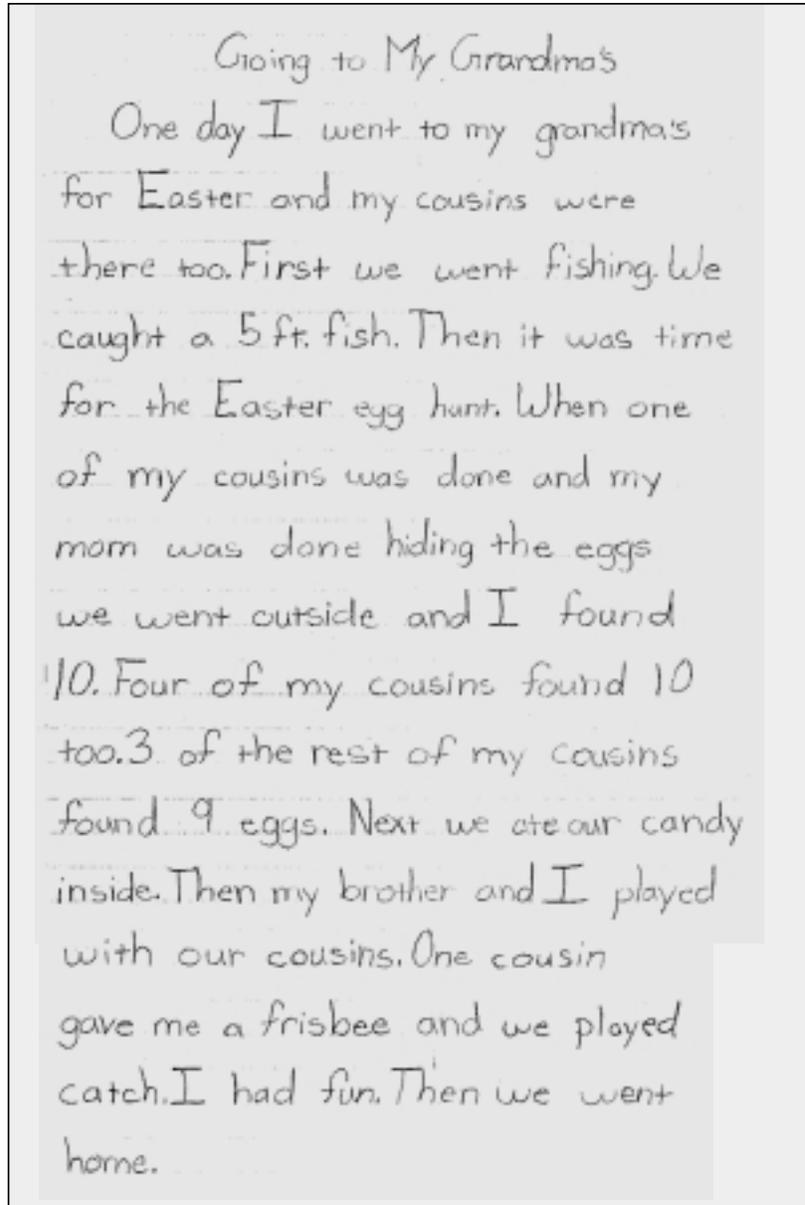
Vocabulary and Word Choice

The vocabulary and word choice in this piece are adequate to convey meaning, although there is scant concrete detail (“a 5 ft. fish” and the exact number of eggs found by the cousins). The vocabulary, hence, is not very precise, but the overall feel of the writing, almost “bed-to-bed” in character, does not require much precision.

Spelling

There are no misspellings in this piece.

New Standards



Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

There are no punctuation errors (except for the comma problem in the compound-complex sentence and the need for a comma after “10” and

before “too”). Not capitalizing “frisbee” (a brand name) is the only error in capitalization. The writer uses the apostrophe correctly and uses a period to mark an abbreviation (“ft.”).