



# California Standards Tests

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## Teacher Guide for the 2007 California Writing Standards Test in Grade Seven

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prepared by the  
California Department of Education

Available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>

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### For More Information

For more information about the California Writing Standards Tests (CSTs in writing) or the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, consult the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp> or contact the Standards and Assessment Division of the CDE at (916) 445-8765 (phone), at (916) 319-0969 (fax), or at [STAR@cde.ca.gov](mailto:STAR@cde.ca.gov) (e-mail).

## **Acknowledgments**

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We wish to acknowledge the teachers in California's public schools who continue to promote good student writing in their classrooms. A special thanks goes to the many teachers and administrators who over the past seven years have contributed to the development of the teacher guides for the California Writing Standards Tests (CSTs in writing) in grades four and seven.

## Introduction

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In February 2000, the Governor signed legislation to add writing assessments to the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program's California Standards Tests (CSTs) to be administered at the elementary and middle grade levels. The CSTs in writing have been administered annually since 2001 in grades four and seven as part of the California English-Language Arts Standards Tests (CSTs in English-language arts).

The CSTs in writing address the state Writing Application content standards for grades four and seven. In grade four, these standards require students to produce four types of writing: narratives, summaries, information reports, and responses to literature. In grade seven, these standards require students to produce five types of writing: narratives, persuasive essays, summaries, responses to literature, and research reports.

The CSTs in writing do not assess information reports in grade four or research reports in grade seven because these writing assignments require extended time for students to select research topics and gather information before writing can begin. In addition, the narrative writing tested in grades four and seven does not include personal or autobiographical narrative. Writing that would invite personal disclosure is not tested in any genre on the CSTs in writing.

In addition to the CSTs in writing, the 2007 CSTs in English-language arts in grades four and seven contained 75 multiple-choice questions. Beyond 2007, the CSTs in English-language arts in grades four and seven will continue to include a CST in writing. The writing test in each of these grades may address any of the writing types identified as appropriate for testing in that grade level.

This document is the latest in a series of teacher guides for the CSTs in writing in grades four and seven that have been provided each year since writing assessments were added to the STAR Program's CSTs. Every guide has featured the writing tasks administered that year, sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics used to score student responses. The guides for the 2005, 2006 and 2007 CSTs in writing provide multiple sample student responses at each score point for all writing tasks administered. Teacher guides from previous years are available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

## Writing Tasks and Scoring Rubric

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The writing tasks for the 2007 CSTs in writing in grade seven are shown on pages 5 and 6 and page 35. Students in schools, tracks, or programs in session on March 6, 2007, responded to the task administered on that date or on the makeup date, March 7. Students in schools, tracks, or programs not in session on March 6 responded to the task administered on May 1 or on the makeup date, May 2. Students had time to read the tasks and to plan, write, and proofread their responses. The estimated administration time was 75 minutes, including time for directions.

Student responses to the writing tasks administered in 2007 were scored using a four-point holistic scoring rubric, with four being the highest score. Each student response was evaluated by one reader and assigned a score ranging from 1 to 4. Ten percent of the responses were evaluated by a second reader to ensure that the scores were accurate and reliable. The score from the second reader did not count toward the student's writing test score. The score the student received from the first reader was doubled to produce the student's overall score on the writing test.

The scoring rubric for grade seven is shown on pages 66 and 67. On pages 68 through 75, the grade seven rubric is presented in a rearranged format to indicate how all the scoring criteria are applied to student responses in each genre tested.

In 2007, each student's result on the grade seven writing task was reported as a separate Writing Applications score that could range from 2 to 8. This score was combined with the student's multiple-choice score on the CST in English-language arts to determine the student's overall English-language arts performance level. The total score possible for the CST in English-language arts was 83 points if students received the highest rating on the writing test and answered all of the multiple-choice questions correctly.

It is important to note that the score a student receives on the CST in writing does not equate to a performance level. A student can be said to have achieved at a particular performance level only when that student's performance-level result is based on results of the full CST in English-language arts (including the CST in writing).

In spring 2007, students in grade seven were required to write a fictional narrative. It should be noted, however, that the type of writing students may be asked to produce can change annually since other genres may be tested in this grade.

## Sample Student Responses and Teacher Commentaries

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Sample student responses to the writing tasks administered in grade seven on March 6 and 7 are shown on pages 7 through 34, along with teacher commentaries. Sample student responses to the tasks administered on May 1 and 2 are shown on pages 36 through 65, along with teacher commentaries. This guide contains three sample student responses that are typically at the mid-range of each score point for the two writing tasks administered in grade seven in March and May 2007. Three responses for each score point are provided to illustrate the different types of responses that may receive the same score. Accompanying these student responses are teacher commentaries that illustrate how criteria for each score point were applied during the scoring process.

The sample responses are drawn from field tests and operational tests. Although there are three student responses for each score point, it should be remembered that the range of student work within any of the four score points is broader than even multiple examples can suggest. Furthermore, responses demonstrate differing combinations of strengths and weaknesses within a given score point.

## Suggested Uses for This Teacher Guide

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The writing tasks, sample student responses, and teacher commentaries in this guide are intended to illustrate how the scoring rubric was used to score student responses on the 2007 CST in writing in grade seven. Teachers also can use the information provided as guidance in applying the rubric to their students' writing. Students can familiarize themselves with state content standards addressed on the writing test by using the rubric to score other students' writing. These suggested activities can enable teachers and students to use rubric-based scoring as a diagnostic tool to help identify areas of strength and weakness in student writing.

The list below provides further suggestions for using the teacher guide to inform and improve the assessment and teaching of student writing.

### **Using the Teacher Guide for School District or School Assessments**

Some suggestions for using the teacher guide to help improve school district or school assessments include the following activities:

- Use the contents of the guide to become familiar with the key components of writing assessments (i.e., writing task, scoring rubric, student responses).

- Examine the released writing tasks to identify distinguishing elements of fictional narrative writing.
- Examine the scoring rubric to ascertain critical features of a holistic rubric.
- Analyze sample student responses in conjunction with teacher commentaries and criteria in the scoring rubrics to determine grade-level-specific writing expectations. This information can inform decisions about areas of focus for writing programs.
- Compare the state writing tasks and scoring rubrics with those that accompany the school's existing curricular program. This information can help identify areas that may need to be strengthened in writing programs. It could be determined, for example, that a particular writing program may not provide students enough opportunities to write in a particular genre. It also could be determined that the characteristics of a writing genre in a particular curricular program do not align well with the characteristics of that genre as defined by the state content standards.

### **Using the Teacher Guide for Classroom Assessments**

Some suggestions for using the teacher guide to help improve classroom assessments include the following activities:

- Use the writing tasks, sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics to help teachers identify the knowledge and skills required by the specific state content standards that are the focus of the writing tests. This information should become the focus of writing instruction.
- Use the writing tasks and scoring rubrics to help teachers understand the advantages and benefits of writing tests:
  - The tasks and rubrics engage students in cognitively complex activities, and
  - They give students an opportunity to create rather than select a response.
- Encourage teachers to study the scoring rubrics to understand the criteria that should be used to assess writing.
- Encourage teachers to use the writing tasks, sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics to help their students understand what is expected of them on the CST in writing.

## Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

The writing task below was administered to students who took the CST in writing in grade seven on March 6 or 7, 2007. Sample student responses and teacher commentaries for this task are shown on pages 7 through 34. The writing task used for the May 1 and 2, 2007, administration is shown on pages 36 through 65.

### Fictional Narrative Writing Task

**Directions:**

- In this writing test, you will respond to the writing task on the following pages.
- You will have time to plan your response and write a first draft with edits.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.
- Use only a No. 2 pencil to write your response.

**Scoring:**

Your writing will be scored on how well you

- develop a plot with a beginning, a middle, and an end
- develop a setting and character(s)
- use appropriate strategies; for example: dialogue, suspense, narrative action
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Read the following writing task. You must write a fictional narrative about this topic.

#### Writing a Fictional Narrative

Airplanes, trains, ships, and cars have made it easy for people to travel to places far from their home. If you were given the opportunity to travel anywhere in the world for one week, where would you go? Think about a place you would love to visit and write a narrative describing the events that happen on your trip.

When you write about this experience, remember

- to develop a plot with a beginning, a middle, and an end
- to develop a setting and character(s)
- to use appropriate strategies; for example: dialogue, suspense, narrative action
- to use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

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## Fictional Narrative Writing Task—Grade Seven

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Student responses to the fictional narrative writing tasks on pages 7 through 34 and 36 through 65 were scored using the Grade Seven Scoring Rubric shown on pages 66 and 67. This rubric contains criteria adapted from the state Writing Applications content standards that speak to genres and their characteristics for grade seven, including the Writing Applications content standard for grade seven fictional or autobiographical narrative writing (shown below). In addition, this rubric incorporates portions of the English-language arts content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions that address writing in general.

### Standard

#### Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

- 2.1 Write fictional or autobiographical narratives
- a. Develop a standard plot line (having a beginning, conflict, rising action, climax, and denouement) and point of view.
  - b. Develop complex major and minor characters and a definite setting.
  - c. Use a range of appropriate strategies (e.g., dialogue, naming of specific narrative action, including movement, gestures, and expressions).

#### Grade Seven Focus

Students were expected to write a fictional narrative with a developed plot line, setting, and characters. Students who did well incorporated narrative strategies such as dialogue, specific narrative action, and descriptive detail and developed major and minor characters. They also demonstrated a sound grasp of written conventions.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 4 Response

### Student Work Sample One

*Jenna sat up in her bed and rubbed her bleary eyes. She glanced over at the calendar hanging on her bedroom wall, her face breaking into a wide grin. Today was the day she had been waiting for ever since her mother had won a free trip for five to anywhere in Europe. The family (along with Jenna's best friend, Lindsay) were leaving for Belgium. Jenna pushed back the sheets and got up, her feet tingling as they touched the cold wood floor. She hurriedly woke up Lindsay (who had been sleeping on the floor), dressed herself, and carried her baggage downstairs to the front hall. Breakfast was waiting on the table. As she and Lindsay sat down with Jenna's parents and 9-year-old brother Harry, Jenna let out a contented sigh, and tucked into her meal.*

*The plane flight went smoothly. The entire family was under orders to sleep on the flight so that they would be able to withstand jetlag and immediately go see some sights. Even Harry obliged to the long nap.*

*When they arrived at the International Airport of Brussels, they had their luggage sent to the hotel before catching a train in the Metro to the famed Grand Place. As they stepped out into the open from the grimy Metro station, Jenna had to shield her eyes to avoid the blinding light. But hearing gasps of wonder from the others in the group tempted her too much, so she allowed herself to look. A small squeal of delight escaped her. Never, in all of her twelve years of living had she seen such splendor. The colossal buildings were all lit up against the night, and the beautiful sculptures adorning them added a wonderful feeling of fantasy and mystery. Visions of beautiful angels swooping down from the heavens upon this majestic place filled her mind . . . when her mother abruptly called out, "Harry? Harry!"*

*Jenna twisted around sharply to find three worried-*

### Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task by presenting a thoroughly developed plot with major and minor characters and a definite setting. It demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience by conveying a clear central idea with strategies such as dialogue, suspense, narrative action, and descriptive detail.

The response is consistently narrated from the third person point of view, allowing the reader into the mind of Jenna, the main character ("Panic flooded into Jenna's mind . . . a fierce joy rose within her."). The response focuses consistently on the main incident, the disappearance of Harry, Jenna's little brother, during a family trip to Belgium. The response moves the reader skillfully through the narrative with a variety of transitional techniques. These techniques include coordinating conjunctions to begin sentences ("But now she . . . And he was okay;"), phrases ("With that, Lindsay grabbed her hand . . . By then it was 8:30 p.m. . ."), subordinate clauses ("When they arrived at the International Airport of Brussels, . . . As they stepped out into the open . . ."), and whole paragraphs that perform a mainly transitional function ("The plane flight went smoothly. The entire family was under orders to sleep on the flight so that they would be able to withstand jetlag and immediately go see some sights. Even Harry obliged to the long nap.").

The response clearly illustrates the central idea of the narrative: Jenna's discovery that she cares for her little brother. This idea is illustrated through explanation ("Much as she despised Harry at times, she found out that moment that she cared about him.") and through descriptive detail (" . . . Jenna had reduced to tears. Lindsay's eyes were brimming as well . . . A fresh flow of tears spilled out of [Jenna's] blue eyes . . . Jenna ran up to [Harry] and enveloped

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 4 Response

### Student Work Sample One (continued)

*looking faces scanning the vast crowd in search of her missing brother. Panic flooded into Jenna's mind; the Grand Place was filled with people. How would they find him in such a crowd? Much as she despised Harry at times, she found out that moment that she cared about him. An uprising feeling of panic rose in her mind. What had happened to him?*

*"We'll find him. Stay here; we'll call if we do," Jenna heard Lindsay say. With that, Lindsay grabbed her hand and led her into the crowd. They searched for about half an hour in vain. By then it was 8:30 pm, and Jenna had reduced to tears. Lindsay's eyes were brimming as well, when Jenna felt the need to call her parents and reveal the sorrowful truth. She turned her cell phone on. The dim glow of the screen faded into a picture of the family at Christmastime. She and Harry were laughing. A fresh flow of tears spilled out of her blue eyes as she dialed her mother's cell phone number. "Hello?" Her mom's melodic voice rang out.*

*"Hey, Mom. It's Jenna. We couldn't find Harry. I'm sorry." Her voice cracked as she apologized.*

*She heard her mother sigh at the other end. "Honey, we found him about five minutes after you and Lindsay left to look for him. He had gone to the restroom. We've been looking for you and Lindsay ever since. Go to the bathrooms and you'll find us." And she hung up.*

*Jenna stood there, rooted to the spot with shock, when a fierce joy rose within her. She grabbed Lindsay's arm and pulled her in the direction of the restrooms. All her life she had thought that she detested Harry for getting into her things. But now she knew she cared about him. And he was okay; for the moment, that was all that mattered.*

*Jenna and Lindsay found them waiting. When Harry*

### Commentary

him in a tight hug."). Harry's character is illustrated economically through his reaction to Jenna's tears ("When Harry spotted Jenna, he grumbled, 'I didn't get lost yet there's still waterworks.'"; "What?? Eww! She's hugging me! That's even worse!").

A mixture of sentence lengths and types move the narrative along smoothly ("Jenna pushed back the sheets and got up, her feet tingling as they touched the cold wood floor. She hurriedly woke up Lindsay [who had been sleeping on the floor], dressed herself, and carried her baggage downstairs to the front hall. Breakfast was waiting on the table. As she and Lindsay sat down with Jenna's parents and 9-year-old brother Harry, Jenna let out a contented sigh, and tucked into her meal.").

The response contains very few errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include a missing apostrophe ("Thats) and a few inaccurate word choices ("Even Harry obliged to the long nap."; "... Jenna had reduced to tears."; "[Jenna] tucked into her meal."). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A clear organization, a central idea thoroughly developed through description, dialogue, and explanation, and excellent sentence variety are among the qualities that make this response a strong score point 4.

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# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

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## Score Point 4 Response

### Student Work Sample One (continued)

*spotted Jenna, he grumbled, "I didn't get lost yet there's still waterworks."*

*Jenna ran up to him and enveloped him in a tight hug. He let out a surprised yell and said, "What?? Eww! She's hugging me! Thats even worse!"*

*Jenna felt herself begin to laugh. Soon, everyone else joined in. She scooped Harry up into her arms with a smile. Then the group walked away in the moonlight, Harry on Jenna's shoulders.*

### Commentary

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# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 4 Response

### Student Work Sample Two

*Johnny, Chrissy, and I had just gotten off the last flight, the "Red Eye", leaving Paris to arrive in Italy. The plane trip was okay, except for all the turbulence during a storm. It was now 5:00 am and pouring buckets of rain outside. "Katie!", I heard someone yelled across the airport. The person was my sweet old grandpa, ready to pick us up after our trip with wide open, loving arms. My sister and my boyfriend climbed into the blue beemer car, while my grandpa loaded our suitcases into the trunk. Johnny, Chrissy, and I were starving because all we ate on the plane was coke cola and peanuts. All of a sudden, my grandpa whips out a delicious-smelling, double cheese, with extra peperroni pizza out of the trunk. "We, here in Italy, have the best pizza," he said. All four of us gobbled down the warm pizza as we drove to our hotel in the cold rain.*

*We woke up the next day at about eleven o'clock AM. Johnny and I walked down to the bakery to get some coffee and muffins, while my sister took a shower. After each of us got dressed and had our breakfast, Grandpa Joe took Johnny, Chrissy, and I to a huge, beautiful museum downtown. We walked inside just as some cops were running in yelling "We got a 692 situation" into their walkie-talkies. We could tell something was wrong.*

*Johnny, Chrissy, Grandpa Joe, and I started making our way to the main room in the building with delicate and unique pictures of angels on the ceiling. In the room, there were reporters, cops, and worried people all around a broken pile of the world famous statue, David. Apparently someone had knocked over the statue and had ran away. The cops were asking all of the museum's visitors to leave, when all of a sudden a familiar voice shouts out, "I know who did it!" I turn around and I see Johnny all excited and ready to point out the criminal to the cops.*

### Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task by providing a thoroughly developed plot with major and minor characters and a definite setting. It demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose through a narrative developed with appropriate strategies such as dialogue, suspense, and narrative action.

Although the narrative unintentionally switches verb tense on occasion ("Johnny, Chrissy, and I were starving because all we ate on the plane was coke cola and peanuts. All of a sudden, my grandpa whips out..."), it is consistently narrated from the first person point of view. After the introductory section of the narrative, the focus remains consistently on the main incident of the plot, the solving of a "crime" in a museum in Italy.

The response conveys the central idea that the narrator's trip to Italy provided pleasant surprises. This idea is conveyed through events (the "grandpa" who provides pizza for the hungry travelers; the boyfriend's sleuthing at the museum; the medal the boyfriend receives; and the invitation to dinner with the mayor), through narrative action and descriptive detail ("All of a sudden, my grandpa whips out a delicious-smelling, double cheese, with extra peperroni pizza out of the trunk."; "[At the Italian restaurant] We all laughed and joked while having a huge delicious plate of fettechinii noodles and garlic sauce. For dessert we had a bowl of ice cream with sweet sugar breadsticks."), and through dialogue ("The cops were asking all of the museum's visitors to leave, when all of a sudden a familiar voice shouts out, 'I know who did it!' I turn around and I see Johnny [the narrator's boyfriend] all excited and ready to point out the criminal to the cops.").

The response contains sentence variety. Midway through the response, for example, the writer mixes

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

*Johnny then tells everyone how he solved this mysterious case, within six minutes of being inside the museum. "I walked into the museum and dropped my loose change on the hard marble floor," Johnny began to explain, "that's when I saw dust marks on this man's shoes as I knelt down. He had this afraid expression on his face," Johnny continued. "Now as I look across the room, I see the same man with a guilty look on his face because he was the one who broke the statue!" Johnny yelled as he pointed at the tall man with all brown on. The police took the man away into their police car and made their way over to the Supreme Court. The mayor asked the four of us if he could take us out to dinner to one of the finest restaurants in Italy.*

*The mayor gave Johnny a gold medal of honor as a reward for capturing the criminal and solving the case. Who would have guessed that my sweet Johnny would be smart enough to solve that big case? Not me, that's for sure! We all laughed and joked while having a huge delicious plate of fettechinii noodles and garlic sauce. For desert we had a bowl of ice cream with sweet sugar breadsticks. I can't wait to come back to Italy again!*

#### Commentary

a short simple sentence with a longer complex sentence to produce a smooth progression and establish narrative suspense ("We woke up the next day at about eleven o'clock AM. Johnny and I walked down to the bakery to get some coffee and muffins, while my sister took a shower. After each of us got dressed and had our breakfast, Grandpa Joe took Johnny, Chrissy, and I to a huge, beautiful museum downtown. We walked inside just as some cops were running in yelling, 'We got a 692 situation' into their walkie-talkies. We could tell something was wrong.").

The response contains some errors in the conventions of the English language. Most are errors in verb tense ("Johnny, Chrissy, and I were starving because all we ate [rather than 'had eaten'] on the plane . . ."; "Apparently someone had knocked over the statue and had ran away."). Others include use of a subjective pronoun where an objective pronoun is needed ("... Grandpa Joe took Johnny, Chrissy, and I ...") and errors in spelling ("peperoni," "fettechinii"). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Focused consistently on the narrative's central event and developed effectively with description and dialogue, this response is a score point 4.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 4 Response

### Student Work Sample Three

*"Boom!" the whole ship tilted to one side. Everybody froze in fear, then started screaming. Once again, "boom!" something hit the bottom of our ship, knocking us back and forth. I stared out at sea and saw something rushing under us . . . something big.*

*On that morning, my mother, father, and little sister were on our way to the seaport to get on a cruise ship that was going to take us to Hawaii. As we arrived I could smell the salt in the air, the dead fish that the sailors had caught, and a bunch of smells floating around. I looked around and could make out a ship, which looked like was floating in the cold, wet, grey, fog. I walked closer to the shadow. The ship was big and was blue with a yellow line going across it that said, "Paradise." It seemed like an old ship, because a bunch of the paint was chipped off. The metal and wood was showing underneath. "I hope it can get us to Hawaii in one piece," I mumbled to myself. "Honk, Honk!" the big horn shouted.*

*We got on the ship, and boy it was huge. One of the seamen gave us a number, and so we followed the red halls winding back and forth until we came to a room that had the number "314" written on a gold platform hanging on the door. It matched the same number on the card in our hand, so we pushed open the door.*

*My family and I stepped inside. My sister pushed her way in first.*

*"What else do you expect from an eight-year-old?" my mom, Jennifer, whispered in my ear.*

*The carpet inside our room was a light light pink, and on the right was our bathroom. Straight ahead were two big fluffy white beds, with a whole lot of pillows. On the side of both of them were blue lamps, and a vase of yellow flowers. I hopped on my bed, laying out flat, and closed my eyes.*

### Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task by presenting a narrative with a thoroughly developed plot that includes major and minor characters and a definite setting. It demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience through a narrative developed with strategies such as dialogue, narrative action, and descriptive details.

The response is consistently narrated from the first person point of view and maintains a consistent focus on the activities of the narrator's family. The organization is mostly consistent. The introduction presents a dramatic incident—the collision of an unidentified object with the narrator's cruise ship—that seems to foreshadow an ominous incident that never materializes. The body of the response recounts the experiences of the narrator and her family on the ship (where the collision is eventually explained) and at their vacation destination in Hawaii. These experiences at sea and on land, however, are connected only loosely by the fact that both occur during the narrator's vacation adventure and that both are novel experiences for the narrator. The conclusion of the response, the narrator's surfing experience with her new friend, Onnaqwa, suggests the narrator's appreciation for Hawaii's beauty, but this theme has not been suggested earlier in the narrative.

The response presents the central idea that the narrator's experiences provided "a great summer." This idea is developed through dialogue and description of the narrator's experiences on the cruise ship ("The next morning I woke, and to my surprise there was breakfast in bed. Eggs, sausage, bacon, strawberries, pancakes, blueberries, milk and orange juice all on one plate . . . [A blue whale] slowly whipped its 25 ft. tail around and swam back underwater. . . we saw dolphins that jumped at least five feet in the air. 'I touched one!' a little boy called out. 'Awesome!' a little

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 4 Response

### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

*"I want to sleep next to the window thing!" my sister Danica, complained.*

*"Whatever," I sighed.*

*All of a sudden, I jumped up, grabbed my coat, and ran out on deck. I piddled around for a while, checking out everything. A couple of hours passed, and I found myself reading on a lounge chair right by the pool.*

*"Yipee!" Danica threw her towel on my face and jumped in, making a big splash, and drenching me.*

*"Dad, I'm tired, I think I will grab a couple of snacks and go to bed," I said.*

*"Sure why not?" my dad, Dennis, replied cheerfully.*

*The next morning I woke, and to my surprise there was breakfast in bed. Eggs, sausage, bacon, strawberries, pancakes, blueberries, milk, and orange juice all on one plate. I smelled the aromas and started eating.*

*I got out of bed and changed. Outside it was really misty.*

*And that was when it happened.*

*For the third time, the ship shook, and it felt like we were going to tip. I found my family and told them about what I saw in the water. My mom reported it to the captain, and he steered in a different path. Everyone ran over to the right side of the ship and their mouths dropped open.*

*Something blue was rising to the surface. People backed up, and I saw that it was a blue whale. It slowly whipped its 25 ft. tail around and swam back underwater. Leaving just a trail of waves behind.*

*A couple of days later we saw dolphins that jumped at least five feet in the air. "I touched one!" a little boy called out.*

*"Awesome!" a little girl with pigtails screamed.*

*A week later, we arrived at the port of Hawaii. I ran down the platform and smelled the fresh air. My family*

### Commentary

girl with pigtails screamed.") and through description of her experiences in Hawaii ("That night when we went to sleep, we pulled up our ladder, hopped in bed, pulled up the covers, and had the cold air blow on us. . . . The next morning, tropical birds squaked and sang. We went into a little village and bought a grass skirt, coconut shells, and some coconut milk. . . . [The narrator and Onnaqwa] paddled out into a beautiful orange and purple sunset. A wave came and we both caught it; . . .").

The narrative is peopled with a major character (the narrator) and minor characters (the narrator's friend Onnaqwa and the narrator's father, mother, and little sister). The writer provides settings with descriptions of the departure dock ("... salt in the air, the dead fish that the sailors had caught, . . ."), the family's accommodations aboard ship (a "light pink" carpet, "two big fluffy white beds, with a whole lot of pillows. . . blue lamps, and a vase of yellow flowers."), their tree house ("a 15 ft. by 20 ft. of room . . . made out of wood, . . ." with "two beds, a toilet, sink, stove, oven, and cupboards."), and the birds and sunset in Hawaii.

The response includes sentence variety. One passage, for example, contains a simple sentence that begins with an adverbial phrase, a simple sentence that ends with an adverbial phrase, and a compound sentence ("All of a sudden, I jumped up, grabbed my coat, and ran out on deck. I piddled around for a while, checking out everything. A couple of hours passed, and I found myself reading on a lounge chair right by the pool.").

The writer generally uses the conventions of the English language effectively, especially when introducing quoted material and when indicating a change of speakers with a new paragraph. The response contains some errors in the conventions

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

*followed.*

*We rented a car and drove to the north coast. We parked the car and looked above us. There was about 150 acres of trees. Not just any trees, treehouses!*

*I climbed up our ladder, and there was about 15 ft. by 20 ft. of room. It was all made out of wood, and there were two beds, a toilet, sink, stove, oven, and cupboards. Danica and I chose the bed by the window, looking out at the ocean. That night when we went to sleep, we pulled up our ladder, hopped in bed, pulled up the covers, and had the cold air blow on us.*

*The next morning, tropical birds squaked and sang. We went into a little village and bought a grass skirt, coconut shells, and some coconut milk.*

*I met a nice girl name Onnaqwa and she had beautiful tan skin and long brown hair. She could only speak a little English, so I taught her a little more. We had lunch together, and she taught me a word.*

*"Ohana," she whispered.*

*Ohana meant family, I asked my dad. Thats how I knew.*

*Later during sunset she was carrying wood on the beach. I caught up to her and found out it was her surfboard. I ran back to the tree house and got mine. We paddled out into a beautiful orange and purple sunset. A wave came and we both caught it, going left. I wondered in my head.*

*"What a great summer . . ."*

#### Commentary

of English grammar. These include failure to use apostrophes in contractions ("Im"; "Thats"), a sentence fragment ("Leaving just a trail of waves behind."), lack of commas between independent clauses ("I met a nice girl name Onnaqwa and she had beautiful tan skin and long brown hair."), misspellings ("beatiful"; "captian" rather than "captain"), and incorrect verb tense ("I found my family and told them about what I saw [rather than 'had seen'] in the water."). Given the length of this response, these errors are not excessive and do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although this response would be improved with a tighter plot structure, the inclusion of vivid descriptive language, sensory detail, and some effective dialogue make it a score point 4.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 3 Response

### Student Work Sample One

*It was May 2. My favorite day in the whole year, my birthday! It was so exciting! Me & my two best friends, Mimi & Breanna, were going to Florida for the week. We were on the airplane a would land in about an hour. My mom & and dad got us tickets to all the amusement parks & we were all so excited. We got off the airplane & went to get our luggage. There was a driver my dad hired to pick us up & take us to our hotel. We checked in & got our stuff all unpacked. We were off for our first adventure.*

*The first day, we all decided to go to Disneyland, it being kind of the main event. It was a lot of fun. We went on the perfect day when there were hardly know lines at all. We went on all the rides & some even more than once. We were really tired afterward so we ate dinner & then went back to our hotel. The next day was really hot so we decided to go to a water park, Blizzard Beach. It was so cool! It was made to look like a snow storm & had one of the tallest drop-of slides in the world! Around 3:00, it started to rain but it just made it funner because the weather was still hotter than ever.*

*The third day, we went to Epcott center. My favorite country we visited was Norway because it had a log ride-like thing. Test track was also a really fun ride. We ate dinner at Japan because I love Japanese food. The day after that, we went to Universal Studios. It was one of my favorite parks. I loved the tram ride & thought seeing all the different movie sets was awesome. We were so tired after the first four days that we slept in until noon. We decided to go to typhoon Lagoon, another water park, since it would be so late by the time we got anywhere. It was a fun day.*

*On the 5th day, we went to MGM studios. It topped all the other parks to me. I loved the Rock in Rollercoaster. It was like you were floating in air! On the last day of our*

### Commentary

This response addresses most of the writing task by presenting an adequately developed narrative that describes the narrator's week at Florida's amusement parks, and the response presents a definite setting. The response demonstrates a general understanding of purpose and audience by developing events with descriptive detail and narrative action.

The response maintains a consistent first person point of view, narrates the action consistently in the past tense, and demonstrates a consistent focus on the experiences of the narrator and her friends. Rather than a plot, however, the response relates a series of personal experiences that focus solely on amusement park activities and seldom involve another character. The mostly consistent organizational structure includes an introduction that describes the narrator's arrival in Florida, a body in which each paragraph describes two days' activities, and a conclusion that summarizes the trip. The organization of the body is inconsistent, however, in failing to provide adequate transitional material between the two days discussed in each paragraph. In the middle of the third paragraph, for example, the narrator says, "We ate dinner at Japan because I love Japanese food. The day after that, we went to Universal Studios." Similarly, in paragraph four the narrator says, "I loved the Rock in Rollercoaster. It was like you were floating in air! On the last day of our trip, we went to Animal Kingdom." These jarring transitions might be avoided either with topic sentences that suggest the paragraph will cover two days or by devoting a separate paragraph to each day and developing each of those days more fully.

The response illustrates the central idea that the narrator's trip to Florida was her "best birthday ever." This idea is illustrated through a combination of explanation ("We went on all the rides [at Disney World]

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

### Score Point 3 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

*trip, we went to Animal Kingdom. I loved it and all the animals were awesome. We went on a dinosaur ride though, & I almost died I was so scared. My heart throbbed like a mouse who was running from giant cat when all the dinosaurs started coming at us. It was a fun day.*

*All together, the trip was amazing! I had even more fun than I expected. I wouldn't have changed one thing about it. It was my best birthday ever!*

#### Commentary

and some even more than once.”; “I loved [Animal Kingdom] and all the animals were awesome.”), descriptive detail (“[Blizard Beach] was made to look like a snow storm & had one of the tallest drop-of slides in the world!”), and narrative action (“... the Rock in Rollercoaster ... was like you were floating in air!”; “[During the dinosaur ride at Animal Kingdom] I was so scared. My heart throbbed like a mouse who was running ...”). The central idea is illustrated least convincingly where the writer relies solely on broad assertions (“My favorite country we visited was Norway because it had a log ride-like thing. Test track was also a really fun ride.”; “I loved the tram ride & thought seeing all the different movie sets was awesome.”) rather than including description as well.

Although independent clauses are often cobbled loosely together with the conjunction “so,” the response sometimes demonstrates sentence variety. In the second paragraph, for example, the writer mixes sentence lengths and combines simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences to move the reader along smoothly (“The next day was really hot so we decided to go to a water park, Blizard Beach. It was so cool! It was made to look like a snow storm & had one of the tallest drop-of slides in the world! Around 3:00, it started to rain but it just made it funner because the weather was still hotter than ever.”).

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include the frequent use of the ampersand (&) instead of “and,” a mistake in usage (“We went on the perfect day when there *were hardly know* lines at all.”), the use of the vague “so” to indicate “extremely,” incorrect use of the objective pronoun where a subjective pronoun is needed (“Me & my two best friends, Mimi & Breanna, were going to Florida ...”), and an incorrectly formed modifier

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# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

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## Score Point 3 Response

### Student Work Sample One (continued)

### Commentary

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“... it just made it funner ...”). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Although this response provides a series of experiences rather than a plot, the presentation of a central idea that is generally supported by description and narrative action helps make it a score point 3.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 3 Response

### Student Work Sample Two

#### *My Trip to France*

*I am sitting on a plane right now, AIR FRANCE to be exact. As you can tell, I am on my way to France. We are just about to land in the airport at Paris. I can't wait to get off this boring plane! Before I know it, I am on a cab on the way to my hotel. After I get to my room, I leave my bags, grab about 100 euros and catch another cab.*

*Paris is amazing! I have never seen so many tourists in my life! The cab drive stops, I give him about 5 euros, and exit the cab. I cannot believe it! The Eiffel Tower is right in front of me! I stare at one of the most famous largest structures in the world. I snap a few shots at it with my camera, and enter the elevator to go to the top. As I go up in the elevator, I can see some people walking to the top. I feel bad for them, but quickly forget about them as I see the breath-taking view of Paris from the top of the Eiffel Tower. After a few minutes I am back in the elevator on my way down. As soon as I reach the bottom, I catch a cab and am off to do a little shopping. I spend about 50 euros on clothes and then have some lunch. With about 40 euros left, I don't know what to do, so I just go back to my hotel room and rest. At about 5, I go out to this fancy restaurant called Les Escargots and spend my last 40 euros. I eat some escargots for the first time and boy is it nasty! After dinner, I go to my hotel room and sleep the day off.*

### Commentary

This response addresses most of the writing task by presenting an adequately developed narrative that describes the narrator's week in Paris, and it presents a definite setting. The writer demonstrates a general understanding of purpose and audience by developing events with descriptive detail and narrative action.

The response maintains a consistent first person point of view and presents the action consistently in the present tense ("I am sitting on a plane right now ... After dinner, I go to my hotel room and sleep the day off. ... I spend Thursday and Friday sightseeing, ..."). The response also maintains a consistent focus on the narrator's experiences in Paris. Rather than a plot, the response presents a sequence of events that begins with the narrator's first day in Paris and ends with his last day. The writer describes the narrator's first three days in much more detail than he does his last four days, which are briefly summarized. Although the narrative has a breathless quality throughout because sentences are short and because the narrator races from sight to sight, the activities of the last four days seem especially rushed because they are less fully developed.

The response suggests the central idea that the narrator had "wonderful experiences" in Paris. Some description supports this idea by suggesting the exotic quality of the narrator's experiences ("... I see the breath-taking view of Paris from the top of the Eiffel Tower. ... I go out to this fancy restaurant called Les Escargots and spend my last 40 euros. ... I stop at a deli for a snack of croissants with cheese. ... I continue down the road to a candy store called Le Sweet Shop."). Other parts of the narrative, however, support the central idea less effectively because they summarize the narrator's activities in more general language ("I spend about 50 euros on clothes and then have some lunch."; "Today is Tuesday and I am

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

### Score Point 3 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

*Today is Tuesday, and I'm on my way to the Arc de Triomphe. I snap some pictures while in the cab and then ask another tourist to take some of me with it. I spend the rest of the day just loafing around and go to the bank for some more money. I don't eat dinner and go to sleep early.*

*I slept in last night and I just woke up. It's 12:00! I hurry up and get dressed, eat lunch, and am out of the hotel by 1:00. I spend a few hours walking the streets and shopping. I stop at a deli for a snack of croissants with cheese. Then, I continue down the road to a candy store called Le Sweet Shop. I buy a few pounds of candy and meet some other really nice tourists who offer to take me for a little sightseeing trip. By the time I get to my hotel room, I'm pooped. I sleep in the next day till 11:00 .*

*I spend Thursday and Friday sightseeing, and on Saturday finish a little last-minute shopping. On Sunday, I just rest in my hotel room and pack up all of my things. In the night, I leave for the airport, waiting to get home and can't wait to tell my family about my great trip and all the wonderful experiences I went through.*

#### Commentary

off to the Arc de Triomphe. I snap some pictures while in the cab and then ask another tourist to take some of me with it. I spend the rest of the day just loafing around...").

The response demonstrates some sentence variety. In the opening paragraph, for example, the response combines complex and simple sentences to create some flow, even though most sentences are of similar length ("As you can tell, I am on my way to France. We are just about to land in the airport at Paris. I can't wait to get off this boring plane! Before I know it, I am on a cab on the way to my hotel. After I get to my room, I leave my bags, grab about 100 euros and catch another cab."). The brevity of many sentences plus their repetitive subject-verb beginnings ("I spend ... I stop ... I buy...") suggests, either intentionally or unintentionally, the narrator's excitement but also lends a choppy quality to the writing.

The response contains occasional errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include the insertion of commas between compound verbs ("I snap a few shots at it with my camera, and enter the elevator to go to the top."; "I feel bad for them, but quickly forget about them...") and combining loosely related ideas in a single sentence ("In the night, I leave for the airport, waiting to get home and can't wait to tell my family about my great trip..."). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and (except, perhaps, for the error noted immediately above) do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A consistent point of view and a central idea that is generally supported by descriptive detail help make this response a score point 3.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 3 Response

### Student Work Sample Three

*As Joe sat in his room he tried to calm his anger by thinking about where he wished he could go for a week and what he would do. He thought to himself, "Man, I wish I could go to Puerto Rico for a week." "I know exactly what I would do if I went," he thought aloud.*

*"On my first day I would go to Rexville in Bayamon and I would surprise my grandparents and leave my luggage at their house," he contemplated. "The second day, I would leave for Guanica on the other side of Puerto Rico and I would stay there for three days," he planned aloud.*

*During his three days in Guanica he would enjoy the beautiful site and the calm atmosphere that is completely different than that of suburbs in the U.S. On his first day in Guanica he would leave the hotel early in the morning to get a nice spot on the beach. Then he would spend the rest of the day at the beach.*

*"During the second day of my stay on the western coast of Puerto Rico, I would go to the famous 'Caverns of Camuy' in the morning. Then in the afternoon I would go to Tio Willo's house for an hour and after that I would go to Ponce and shop at the Ponce Plaza," he pondered aloud.*

*Third day of his stay on the western coast of Puerto Rico, he would go to the beach one last time in the morning and at noon he would head back to Bayamon. So that he could stop in Canovanas to visit his best friend and still get to his grandpa's house before dark.*

### Commentary

This response addresses most of the writing task by presenting an adequately developed narrative that describes the narrator's trip to Puerto Rico. The writer demonstrates a general understanding of purpose and audience by using daydreams in the form of dialogue to develop a plot in which the narrator imagines visiting Puerto Rico to dispel the anger he expresses early in the narrative.

The response demonstrates a clear organization, with the introduction and conclusion framing the body of the response, which describes events in Puerto Rico. The writer devotes a separate paragraph to each day of the narrator's trip, although the fourth day is left out. The writer maintains a consistent focus on the narrator's experiences and skillfully alternates between the third person point of view, which the narrator uses to describe some of his plans ("Third day of his stay on the western coast of Puerto Rico, he would go..."), and the first person point of view, which he uses to describe others ("On my first day I would go to Rexville in Bayamon and I would surprise my grandparents and leave my luggage at their house," he contemplated.").

The response illustrates the central idea that the narrator is able to resolve his anger by imagining a trip to Puerto Rico. "The whole thought of his dream vacation," he says in the conclusion, "just took away all of his anger." The writer develops this idea by describing the process—the series of events—by which the narrator's anger is dispelled: he would visit his family ("I would surprise my grandparents..."; "... I would spend the whole day at the beach with my family..."; "... I would... visit my dead family members' graves,..."; "... I would go to Tio Willo's house..."), and he would "visit his best friend" in Canovanas and bask in the relaxing

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

### Score Point 3 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

*"On my fifth day in Puerto Rico I would go and visit some of my family and I would go to my grandpa's house in the evening and call all of my family and invite them to go to the beach the next day. So my sixth day in Puerto Rico I would spend the whole day at the beach with my family," he thought to himself.*

*On my last day I would say goodbye to my family and go to the cemetery to visit my dead family members' graves," he contemplated, "Then at night I would fly back to California."*

*The whole thought of his dream vacation just took away all of his anger.*

#### Commentary

ambiance of Puerto Rico ("... in Guanica he would enjoy the beautiful site and the calm atmosphere that is completely different than that of suburbs in the U.S." and he would make several visits to the beach.). Although the response summarizes events through daydreams rather than dramatizing them with strategies such as suspense and characterization, this summary provides adequate support for the narrative's central idea.

The response generally demonstrates control of sentences. Sentences tend to be long but soundly structured. In one paragraph, for example, the response combines a complex and a compound sentence that, despite their length, are tightly structured ("During the second day of my stay on the western coast of Puerto Rico, I would go to the famous 'Caverns of Camuy' in the morning. Then in the afternoon I would go to Tio Willo's house for an hour and after that I would go to Ponce and shop at the Ponce Plaza,' he pondered aloud.").

The response contains few errors in the conventions of the English language. The one error that appears consistently is the lack of a comma after an introductory dependent clause ("As Joe sat in his room he tried to calm his anger by thinking about where he wished he could go for a week and what he would do.") or an introductory phrase ("During his three days in Guanica he would enjoy the beautiful site..."). "On my fifth day in Puerto Rico I would go and visit..."). The response contains one sentence fragment as well ("So that he could stop in Canovanas to visit his best friend and still get to his grandpa's house before dark."). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

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## **Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007**

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### **Score Point 3 Response**

#### **Student Work Sample Three (continued)**

#### **Commentary**

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Although this response summarizes rather than dramatizes events, an imaginative job of framing events and effective use of names, especially place names, to help establish the Puerto Rican setting makes this response a score point 3.

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

### Score Point 2 Response

#### Student Work Sample One

*I will go to Virginina, USA. I will Leave right After gradutation. I will take a plane to Virginina. In the plane I saw the midwest states. It was all parine gold grass. It was like Farmlands. I thought it was pretty.*

*When the plane arrive at the Airport I was amzame of a huge Airport. When I drove to the hotel I saw the cyress Autame tress covering the road. The fall evening was very pretty.*

#### Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by presenting a minimally developed narrative that describes the narrator's observations during a trip to Virginia. Although the response includes some descriptive detail to help the reader envision the narrator's experience, the absence of plot, characters, and narrative strategies indicates little understanding of purpose and audience.

The response demonstrates an inconsistent organization. The first paragraph, for example, includes both introductory material that explains the narrator's plans ("I will go to Virginina, USA. I will leave right After gradutation. I will take a plane to Virginina.") and the beginning of a narrative sequence that belongs in a separate paragraph ("In the plane I saw the midwest states."). Moreover, in the first three sentences of the first paragraph, the narrator looks to the future ("I will ... I will ... I will After ...") whereas in the fourth sentence he shifts abruptly to the past ("In the plane I saw ..."). Finally, the response lacks a concluding paragraph.

The response suggests the central idea that the sights were "pretty" and impressive. This idea is conveyed both with statements ("I thought [the farmland of the midwest] was pretty."; "The fall evening was very pretty."; "I was amzame of a huge Airport.") and with bits of fairly vivid description ("The midwest] was all parine [prairie] gold grass."; "When I drove to the hotel I saw the cyress Autame tress covering the road.").

The response contains little sentence variety. The first of the two paragraphs consists solely of short simple sentences, and the second paragraph consists of two complex sentences with similar structures ("When the plane arrive at the Airport I was amzame of a huge Airport. When I drove to the hotel I saw the cyress

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

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### Score Point 2 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

#### Commentary

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Autame tress covering the road.”) and a simple sentence.

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include mistakes in spelling (“Virginina,” “gradutation,” “parine,” “though”), errors in verb tense (“When the plane arrive at the Airport . . .”), errors in capitalization (“Airport,” “Leave,” “After”), and grammatical errors (“When the plane arrive at the Airport I was amzame of a huge Airport.”). These errors interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Although this response provides a central idea that is supported with some vivid, if limited, description, the inconsistent organization, lack of sentence variety, and errors in conventions make it a score point 2.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 2 Response

### Student Work Sample Two

*The place I would love to go to is Hawaii. I would go in the airplane and go up to the sky. While we where going I saw a beautiful sky. I saw the towns and ocean while we were flying. I saw birds flying threw the sky. I saw funny shape clouds. Then I saw Hawaii with its beautiful trees and it's beautiful waves. Then the plane stops and we just started to look around. While we were there we saw coconut trees. We saw people surfing. What I liked most was the sunset it was very beautiful. For one week I saw different thing then we got back on the plane and we left that's what I saw on my trip at Hawaii.*

### Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by presenting a minimally developed narrative that describes the narrator's observations during a trip to Hawaii. Although the response includes some descriptive detail to help the reader envision the narrator's observations, the absence of plot, characters, and narrative strategies indicates that the writer has little understanding of purpose and audience.

The response demonstrates an inconsistent point of view reflected in mistaken shifts in verb tense. In the first two sentences, the narrator imagines where he would like to travel, using future tense ("The place I would love to go is Hawaii. I would go on the airplane and go up to the sky."). In the third sentence, the narrator shifts to past tense ("While we where going I saw a beautiful sky."). Later, the narrator shifts briefly to present tense ("Then the plane stops and we just started to look around.").

The writer suggests the central idea that the sights from the plane were "be[a]utiful." The writer supports this idea, however, by repeating that they were beautiful rather than by describing the beauty ("... I saw a beautiful sky. ... Then I saw Hawaii with its beautiful trees and it's beautiful waves. What I liked most was the sunset it was very beautiful."). Other details ("funny shape clouds," "coconut trees," "people surfing") suggest an exotic setting and marginally support the idea of beauty.

The response contains little sentence variety. Sentences are often simple and short ("I saw birds flying threw the sky. I saw funny shape clouds. Then I saw Hawaii with its beautiful trees and it's beautiful waves.") Although the response includes an occasional complex or compound sentence, these too are brief and choppy ("While we where going I saw a beautiful

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

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### Score Point 2 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

#### Commentary

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sky.”; “Then the plane stops and we just started to look around.”).

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. In addition to the unwarranted shifts in verb tense, the response contains a series of run-on sentences (“What I liked most was the sunset it was very beautiful. For one week I saw different thing then we got back on the plane and we left that’s what I saw . . .”) and an incorrect form of an adjective (“funny shape clouds”). It contains occasional spelling errors as well (“where” for “were,” “beautiful,” “threw” for through.”). These errors do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Although this response suggests a central idea, the minimal development of this idea, the lack of sentence variety, and frequent switches in point of view make this response a score point 2.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 2 Response

### Student Work Sample Three

*"Hi my name is Anthony and I going to England." We started are trip around cristmas time. We've been planing this trip for a year now. "We're going to Engaland in an hour!" Yelled my mom in the other room. "OK!" I yelled "I'll be down in a minet." I was in the middle of paking my stuff. An hour later we were on a plane leving the New York were we were staying. Whiel we were on the plane I ate 10 peanut bags. Then my dad and I wached the airline move my brothers were asleep. When we finally got to Eglant It was around midnight and I was wide awake with exitment. We found are hotel, it was huge and very fancy. The next day we went to london brige it was great. Then we went to visit the hotel the Beetls sated on tours. On the last day we didnt do much but we packed up and got ready to go home thats was the greatest trip ever. I hope we can visit England next year.*

### Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by presenting a minimally developed narrative that describes the narrator's trip to England. Although the response mentions other characters and contains some dialogue, the minimal use of strategies to develop the narrative indicates little understanding of purpose and audience.

The response demonstrates an inconsistent organizational structure. Although some of the introductory sentences effectively combine dialogue and background information ("We're going to Engaland in an hour! Yelled my mom in the other room. 'OK!' I yelled 'I'll be down in a minet.' I was in the middle of paking my stuff. An hour later we were on a plane leving the New York were we were staying."), the sentences that precede these sentences contain awkward time shifts ("Hi my name is Anthony and I going to England.' We started are trip around cristmas time. We've been planing this trip for a year now."). Moreover, the relative proportions of the introduction, body, and conclusion of the response are inappropriate: the introductory section is as long as the section describing the narrator's activities in England, and the conclusion only consists of two brief sentences ("... thats was the greatest trip ever. I hope we can visit England next year.").

Although the response suggests the central idea that the visit to England was "the greatest trip ever," the details and narrative action provided to illustrate this idea are minimal. The writer only notes, for example, that when their plane landed, the narrator "... was wide awake with exitment," that the hotel the family stayed at "... was huge and very fancy," that their visit to London Bridge "was great," and that they visited the hotel "... the Beetls sated [stayed at?] on tours."

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

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### Score Point 2 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

#### Commentary

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The response contains little sentence variety. Although it includes some complex, compound, and compound-complex sentences (“Whiel we were on the plane I ate 10 peanut bags.”; “On the last day we didnt do much but we packed up and got ready to go home . . .”; “When we finally got to Eglnd it was around midnight and I was wide awake with exitment.”), the response contains a number of comma splices and run-on sentences that lend a choppy quality to the writing (“Then my dad and I wached the airline move my brothers were asleep.”; “We found are hotel, it was huge and very fancy.”; “The next day we went to london brige it was great.”).

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. In addition to the comma splices and fused sentences, there are errors in spelling (“Engaland,” “paking,” “minet” “wheil” for “while”), errors in capitalization (“cristmas,” “london brige”), and a lack of apostrophes in contractions (“thats”). These errors may interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Although this response contains a brief sequence of events with a central idea, the lack of development, lack of support for a central idea, and lack of sentence variety and a multitude of errors in conventions make it a score point 2.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

## Score Point 1 Response

### Student Work Sample One

*I would like to go to navada. I know that it takes 5 hours just to get there. But I will go to the most funest places in las vegas. I would Buy a lot of stuff for memory that I whent their. I would go to an amusement park and go swimming to the river from Navada. I would like to play the casino But I can't play to play you have to be 18 or older. I am going to live there at the end of this month. I heard that it snowes over there thats why. If you go in sid a shop it is greezing you see rare thins you can not get at CAly.*

### Commentary

This response addresses only part of the writing task by describing where the narrator would visit and listing what the narrator would do. The writer demonstrates no understanding of purpose and audience by failing to develop a plot or sequence of events.

This one-paragraph response lacks an organizational structure. The opening sentence states that the narrator would like to go to “navada,” the next sentence provides somewhat irrelevant information (“I know that it takes 5 hours just to get there.”), and the third sentence returns to the idea stated in the first sentence (“... I will go to the most funest places in las vegas.”). The next few sentences list activities without indicating whether they would be sequential, and the last half of the response presents expository information in random order (“I would like to play the casino But I can't play to play you have to be 18 or older. I am going to live there at the end of this month. I heard that it snowe's over there thats why.”). The final sentence stops rather than concludes the response (“If you go insid a shop it is greezing you see rare thins you can not get at CAly.”).

The writer may intend to suggest the central idea that Las Vegas would be fun to visit, but the few activities listed weakly support this idea (“I would Buy a lot of stuff for memory that I whent their. I would go to an amusment park and go swimming to the river from Navada. I would like to play the casino.”). The response contains several details that are marginal to any central idea (“... you have to be 18 or older [to play in the casino],” the narrator is “... going to live there at the end of this month...,” and “it snowes there...”).

The response demonstrates little sentence variety. Sentences tend to begin with subject-predicate (“I would... I know... But I will go... I would... I

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

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### Score Point 1 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

#### Commentary

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would..."). Transitions are limited to "but" at the beginnings of sentences ("But I will go to the most funest places in las vegas." "But I can't play..."). The response also contains a number of run-on sentences with repetitive rhythms ("... I can't play to play you have to be 18 or older."; "... I heard that it snowes over there thats why." "If you go in sid a shop it is greezing you see rare thins you can not get at CAly.").

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. In addition to a lack of periods between some sentences, there are numerous errors in spelling ("navada," "funest," "whent" for "went," "swiming," "snowes"), errors in capitalization ("las vegas," "navada" "I would Buy a lot of stuff..."), inaccurate prepositions ("... go swimming to the river..."; "... things you can not get at CAly."), and an incorrect modification ("... go to the most funest places..."). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Lacking an organizational structure, description or narrative strategies that illustrate a central idea, and sentence variety and marred by numerous errors in conventions, this response is a score point 1.

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

### Score Point 1 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two

*I will love to AtL for a visit I'll go on a airplane or in a car but not in a ship or a train because after watching the titanic I want get on any boat you can't pay me to get on a boat just to sink sentence I don't go on a boat I will probaly try to take a train. When I do take a trip I want my family and friends to come to for they can visit AtL, because when I have fun they have fun with me but if I'm was grown taking this trip they could not come a less they are buying their own ticket for what ever they catch to get where ever I'm going. If I didn't have a car to get there I just go if the plane is not gone.*

#### Commentary

This response only marginally addresses the writing task by stating where the writer would like to visit. The writer demonstrates no understanding of purpose and audience by failing to provide a narrative with a plot or sequence of events and by failing to incorporate any strategies such as description or narrative action to develop the response.

This one-paragraph response demonstrates no organizational structure. It follows a meandering path of free association in which the narrator discusses in the first half of the response why he would not travel by boat and in the second half the conditions under which his family could travel with him. The response does not address the task—'Describe what happens on a trip'—anywhere in this piece of writing.

The narrator states that he would love to visit ATL (Atlanta?), but this idea is not supported in the response. The central idea that emerges, perhaps unintentionally, is that the narrator would severely restrict the conditions under which he would travel.

The response demonstrates no sentence variety. It consists of two long sentences composed of clauses and phrases patched together with "or," "because," and "but," and one final, shorter sentence. The rambling, disorganized sentences mirror the rambling organization and focus.

The response contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. These include a lack of capitalization ("... after watching the titanic..."), an inaccurate article ("... I'll go on a airplane..."), errors in spelling ("a less" for "unless," "probaly," "want" for "won't," "to" for "too"), and run-on sentences ("... I want get on any boat you can't pay me to get on a boat..."). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

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# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

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## Score Point 1 Response

### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

### Commentary

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The lack of a plot or narrative of events, an organizational structure, a central idea, and sentence variety make this response a score point 1.

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

### Score Point 1 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three

*The place that I want to visit is Berlin. I want to visit Berlin, because theres good places to skate over there. Also because there is really good food. I see Berlin all the time in movies like Euro trip. That movie makes me want to go there. I would spend three days skating and two days site seeing. That is where I want to go.*

#### Commentary

This response addresses only one part of the writing task by explaining where the narrator would love to visit. It demonstrates no understanding of purpose and audience. While it explains briefly why the narrator would love to visit Berlin, the response presents almost no narrative about the visit.

This one-paragraph response demonstrates an inconsistent organization that begins with exposition, drifts briefly into narration, and ends with a repetitious summary. The paragraph begins with a topic sentence (“The place that I want to visit is Berlin.”) that is supported by information in succeeding sentences (“... because theres good places to skate... because there is really good food...,” because the narrator sees Berlin “all the time in movies...”). The response then switches to a narrative that briefly explains what the narrator would do in Berlin (“... I would spend three days skating and two days site seeing.”) but fails to develop these declarations further with dialogue, description, or narrative action. The final sentence of the response repeats the opening sentence.

The response presents no central idea about a visit to Berlin. It contains marginally related details (the skating is good, the food is good, the movies make Berlin look good), but these details explain why the narrator wants to visit Berlin rather than providing a narrative about a visit.

Sentences are predominantly short and simple. Nearly all begin in a subject-predicate format, and nearly all are the same length. This repetitiveness produces a choppy and rhythmically monotonous style.

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include a

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# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on March 6 and 7, 2007

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## Score Point 1 Response

### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

### Commentary

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sentence fragment (“Also because there is really good food.”) and, in a single sentence, an unnecessary comma, a lack of subject-verb agreement, and a missing apostrophe (“I want to visit Berlin, because theres good places to skate over there.”). These errors, however, do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

The lack of a narrative, details that might develop a narrative, a central idea, and sentence variety make this response a score point 1.

# Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task

## Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

The writing task below was administered to students who took the CST in writing on May 1 or 2, 2007. Sample student responses and teacher commentaries are presented on pages 36 through 65.

### Fictional Narrative Writing Task

**Directions:**

- In this writing test, you will respond to the writing task on the following pages.
- You will have time to plan your response and write a first draft with edits.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.
- Use only a No. 2 pencil to write your response.

**Scoring:**

Your writing will be scored on how well you

- develop a plot with a beginning, a middle, and an end
- develop a setting and character(s)
- use appropriate strategies; for example: dialogue, suspense, narrative action
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Read the following writing task. You must write a fictional narrative about this topic.

#### Writing a Fictional Narrative

While cleaning out a closet, you discover a treasure map. Write a narrative describing what happens the day you try to find where the map leads.

When you write about this experience, remember

- to develop a plot with a beginning, a middle, and an end
- to develop a setting and character(s)
- to use appropriate strategies; for example: dialogue, suspense, narrative action
- to use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample One

*Once I unrolled the map, I saw a tiny creature. "Hhmmm . . . I wonder what this is?" I asked myself. The creature stretched out her hands and yawned. "Uuumm . . . hi. I'm Karla, and you are?" I asked.*

*"Call me Tara. So you found the map?" Tara asked. I nodded. "I'm a fairy and I'm supposed to help the person find the treasure that's in the map." She continued. "So, you're going to find the treasure or not?"*

*"Of course. Let's go find that treasure." I replied. I sneaked out through the back door. When I was out, everything changed, and my house was gone. I'm now lost in a vast forest.*

*"Ok? What happened now?" I questioned.*

*"We're in another dimension, Karla. This is a rare, magical place. Not a lot of people are allowed to go here. So, you're really lucky." I stood there, appalled at the beauty of the place. I thought that this was just a dream, but it's not. "Okay. So where will we go first?" I asked.*

*"We got to cross a bridge first to be able to get to our destination. Also, you have to watch out, this place is really dangerous," Tara warned me. We had to do a little hike up the mountain. It was so weird because everytime we pass a place in the map, it got erased.*

*Soon enough we reached the top of the mountain. "There's the bridge! But there's a big gap in the middle. How are we gonna cross this? If we fall, we're dead. How are we gonna cross the bridge when we're 25,000 ft. above sea level. We'll never make it." I complained.*

*"Don't worry. You'll think of it," Tara con-*

#### Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task by providing a narrative with major and minor characters and a definite setting. It demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience by presenting a plot that is thoroughly developed with dialogue, suspense, and narrative action.

The response is narrated consistently from the point of view of the narrator, Karla, and maintains a consistent focus on Karla's search for treasure. It presents a well-developed plot and organizational structure that includes a beginning in which Karla unrolls a map and suddenly finds herself in a magical world befriended by a fairy named Tara, a middle in which she and Tara overcome various obstacles while trying to find the treasure, and an end in which Karla wakes up back home with evidence that her adventure was real.

The response conveys the central idea that, at least in the imaginary world of this narrative, one must overcome challenges and enlist the help of friends to receive a reward such as a magical treasure. This idea is illustrated mostly through dialogue ("There's the bridge!" [says Karla] But there's a big gap in the middle. How are we gonna cross this? . . . 'Don't worry. You'll think of it,' Tara confirmed. It took me a while to realize that Tara can do magic. 'Oh my gosh. I got it. Can you fix the bridge?' I ask.") and to some extent through narrative action ("Just throw [the sword]!" Tara yelled. I used all my strength, closed my eyes and threw the sword. The sword went through the dragon's heart and the dragon died."). Although most incidents are well developed, some—the narrator's experience in the cave and the attack by a dragon, for example—are glossed over with brief summaries ("It took us five minutes until we got out of the cave"; "... a big dragon came stampeding out of the courtyard. He stopped and tried killing me and Tara.").

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

*firmed. It took me a while to realize that Tara can do magic. "Oh my gosh. I got it. Can you fix the bridge?" I ask.*

*"Of course." Tara said while using magic to fix the bridge.*

*"Why didn't you tell me earlier that you can fix it?" I questioned. "I like to make people think" Tara replied. We both laughed, while walking across the bridge.*

*As we walked down the mountain, we met a little troll. "Can you help me?" he asked.*

*"Sure why not," I replied. He moved his arm towards the right. Then I saw it. He was bleeding badly. So I tore a long cloth from my jacket and wrapped it around his arm. I can hear him telling himself that he'll be okay. "Thanks. By the way, my name is Ben. Is that you Tara?" he said.*

*"Ya. Hey Ben, can you help little Ms. Karla here to find the treasure?" she asked.*

*"Sure. Okay, first of all you have to go to this cave that has a lot of blood-sucking leeches. Take this, and eat it. It'll keep the leeches from biting on you." He handed us some leaves to eat. "Eeewww. But I guess it'll help. Thanks." I replied. And we moved on.*

*I carefully ate the leaves while approaching the cave "Ok. Here goes" I whispered. As soon as we entered the cave, I felt a cold wind brushed against me. "This is freaky." I said.*

*"It's okay." Tara comforted me. It took us five minutes until we got out of the cave. There was a big relief inside myself. We had one more stop.*

*We just kept on walking until we stopped*

#### Commentary

With the exception of the wind in the cave ("As soon as we entered the cave, I felt a cold wind brushed against me."), descriptive detail is largely absent from this response.

Although the response sometimes falls into a repetitious pattern of sentences that start subject-verb, in places it demonstrates good sentence variety. Toward the end of the narrative, for example, a mixture of sentence lengths and structures creates a fluid progression through a passage that combines dialogue and explanation ("Calm down [says Tara]. There's only one way out of here, but you have to think of the way out. Just think Karla," she said. I thought of several ways but I don't think that it'll work. I walked to the treasure chest and opened it. I saw a gorgeous necklace. 'We came all the way here just for this?' I asked.")

The response contains few errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include unnecessary shifts in verb tense ("... everytime we pass a place in the map, it got erased."; "So I tore a long cloth from my jacket and wrapped it around his arm. I can hear him telling himself that he'll be okay."), comma splices ("Then we saw a little door, we went in and then we found a room full of gold."), and an inaccurate word choice ("I stood there, appauled at the beauty of the place."). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A clear, effective organizational structure and a plot with multiple incidents that are thoroughly developed with dialogue and narrative action make this response a score point 4.

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

#### Commentary

*in front of a castle. "Is this where the treasure is?" I asked.*

*"Yup. Be careful Karla" Tara said.*

*"Okay. I will." I replied. 10 minutes later on, a big dragon came stampeding out of the courtyard. He stopped and tried killing me and Tara." Okay, Karla, this is the protector of the treasure. Use this sword to beat him." Tara said.*

*"I don't know how to use a sword" I told Tara.*

*"Well stab him anywhere" Tara replied. So I did what Tara wanted me to do. "Dragon's not giving up Tara," I said nervously.*

*"Throw the sword at him Karla." She told me.*

*"I can't throw" I whined while fighting the dragon.*

*"Just throw it!" Tara yelled. I used all my strength, closed my eyes and threw the sword. The sword went through the dragon's heart and the dragon died. "Not bad, girl. Why did you close your eyes?" Tara asked.*

*"I have no idea. C'mon let's get that treasure." I said running to the court yard.*

*Then we saw a little door, we went in and then we found a room full of gold. There was a little treasure chest in the middle of the room.*

*"Don't touch the gold, Karla. If you touch it, we'll be stuck here forever. Only touch the treasure chest. Okay?" Tara asked. "Okay." I replied. I carefully walked around the room.*

*Then the door slammed closed. "Oh my gosh, what happened? We're stuck here forever," I said.*

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

#### Commentary

*"Calm down. There's only one way out of here, but you have to think of the way out. Just think Karla," she said. I thought of several ways, but I don't think that it'll work. I walked to the treasure chest and opened it. I saw a gorgeous necklace. "We came all the way here just for this?" I asked.*

*"It's a rare necklace. As long as you wear it, you can wish for anything and it'll come true." Tara replied.*

*"I got it! I can wish us home," I said with a smile. I got the necklace and wore it around my neck. "I wish we're back home," I whispered.*

*"Karla, Karla! Dinner's ready! Time to eat," a familiar voice said. "Mom?" I asked as I sat down on my bed. "Was that just a dream?" I whispered. My mom ran up the stairs and went to my room. "Honey, it's time to eat. You dozed off while fixing your messy closet. You were just dreaming." my mom said. I looked down and saw the necklace with an extra pendant that looked like Tara. "No. I wasn't dreaming. The map!" I exclaimed.*

*"What map, sweetie?" my mom said in confusion. "Anyways I really like your necklace. Did your boyfriend give it to you?"*

*"Mom! Never mind. Thanks by the way. And I don't have a boyfriend." I said. I went to the closet and looked for the map. But the map wasn't there.*

*The End*

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two

*I knew what I was doing was wrong, but I couldn't help it. It all started with Aunt Louisa's will. We were all surprised when we heard that Aunt Louisa had left everything to my mother. My mother was dead so the house and farm came to me. Of course, Aunt Louisa wouldn't know anything about my mother being dead since she hadn't contacted us in 5 or 6 years.*

*Father thought it would be good idea if went to see the house. After a few hours drive we arrived at the quiet countryside village of little Huntington. The house didn't look like a house. It looked more like a mansion.*

*The Brown Hill mansion was built by my great-great grandfather, Albert Brown. Centuries of the Browns had lived there. As we went inside I saw many antiques. "Look Father", I said, "we're in the hall of photos that Mother always talked about."*

*"Yes, we are" my father replied.*

*Each portrait by portrait we walked down the hall and read each of the names and who they were. "Oh Father, look here, the picture of mother!" I exclaimed. "Charlotte Jane Brown, daughter of Amalie Jane Brown. Born in Sept. 9, 1961, passed away on Jan. 16, 1992." I read aloud. "look here's my picture," Eliza Jane Findley daughter of Charlotte Jane Brown. Born in May 19, 1989 (last remaining Brown)."*

*The house was splendid and I loved it from the beginning. Father and I had decided we will move here from the city, so that Fa-*

#### Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task by presenting a narrative about what happens when the narrator tries to find where a treasure map leads. The writer demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience by thoroughly developing a plot with characters, suspense, dialogue, narrative action, and descriptive detail.

The response maintains a consistent focus on the narrator's attempt to discover the secret of the mansion she inherits, and it is narrated consistently from the narrator's point of view. The point of view, however, sometimes shifts awkwardly from past to present ("We had to clear everything out [of the mansion], so here I am sitting in front of the world's dirtiest closets. Well, I might start cleaning now. Finally I cleared everything out when I saw the paper that was lying on the floor."). The organizational structure consists of a clear beginning, which includes two effective opening sentences ("I knew what I was doing was wrong, but I couldn't help it. It all started with Aunt Louisa's will."); a well-developed middle in which the narrator finds the map and learns the lesson the treasure hunt teaches her; and an end that reiterates the lesson. The one weakness of the plot is a discussion of relationships between the narrator and her ancestors that is difficult to follow.

The response presents a clearly stated central idea ("... real treasure is a loving family."). This idea is illustrated by the family portrait the narrator discovers ("On the wall there was a picture of my grandfather's whole family. Underneath the picture it said, "The greatest treasure in the world is family.") and the crumbling letter that explains the narrator's inheritance ("After Louisa dies [says the letter] this house will go to your children.' ... I took in a deep breath, that's why Aunt Louisa had left the house to me."). The description is especially effective in

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

*ther could work on his novel.*

*We had to clear everything out, so here I am sitting in front of the world's dirtiest closets. Well, I might start cleaning now. Finally I cleared everything out when I saw the paper that was lying on the floor. It said "The Secret map to the Brown's farm".*

*I didn't know what to say first was it a treasure map, maybe it was. I am going to find this treasure whatever it is.*

*I started out early in the morning because I didn't know my way around the farm yet. The map said that I had to start in the barn. Inside the barn there was a trapdoor. I went in the tunnel and when I came out at the other end it was a secret room! On the wall there was a picture of my grandfather's whole family. Underneath the picture it said, "The greatest treasure in the world is family."*

*I just stood there and stared at the picture. Everyone looked so happy. Then I started to think what if there was more to the treasure rather than just a family portrait. I pushed the picture back and found a safe hidden behind the portrait. It looked ancient and on top of it was the initials A.B.. The joints had rusted together so it was very hard to open it. Plus I needed the combination to open it.*

*After two hours of trying different combinations it finally hit me. I knew the combination. The day that Albert Brown built the Brown Hill mansion was Oct. 7, 1761. I tried it and it opened. Inside was gold and really old coins, but that wasn't the thing*

#### Commentary

suggesting a gothic setting. The description includes a mansion that "[c]enturies of the Browns" had lived in; a "trapdoor" that leads down a tunnel to a secret room; a "safe hidden behind the [family] portrait"; the "rusted" joints of the safe; the "gold and really old coins" in the safe; and an old letter with fading ink.

The response demonstrates sentence variety. In one paragraph, for example, a mixture of simple, complex, and compound/complex sentences creates a smooth narrative flow ("I started out early in the morning because I didn't know my way around the farm yet. The map said that I had to start in the barn. Inside the barn there was a trapdoor. I went in the tunnel and when I came out at the other end it was a secret room! On the wall there was a picture of my grandfather's whole family.").

The response contains few errors in the conventions of the English language. Besides the unnecessary shifts in verb tense, the few errors include, in a single sentence, independent clauses that are fused together and a comma splice ("I didn't know what to say first was it a treasure map, maybe it was."). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A clear central idea, description that creates an atmospheric setting, and good use of sentence variety make this response a score point 4.

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

#### Commentary

*that caught my eye. It was a letter so old that I could barely read it. "To my darling granddaughter Amelia Jane Brown.*

*Dear Amelia,*

*I know that you love this house, but Louisa will not sell it. After Louisa dies this house will go to your children. You have showed me that you love the city more than this house."*

*From,*

*Grandfather"*

*I took in a deep breath, that's why Aunt Louisa had left the house to me.*

*"Eliza, are you there?" Father called out my name.*

*"Yes father, I am coming", I replied.*

*Eliza, do you like this house?" Father asked me.*

*"No Father, I love this house!" I replied with a grin on my face. I knew that it would take too long to explain that a real treasure is a loving family.*

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

## Score Point 4 Response

### Student Work Sample Three

*"Mom!" I moaned, dismayed at the task ahead of me. "You have to clean your closet; it won't clean itself, you know." She calmly replied.*

*I wish it would," I grumbled, under my breath. A giant heap of discarded clothes, unwanted toys, and useless trash loomed before me. I surveyed the mound, like a mountain climber would survey a mountain. I started to dig through it, grabbing at whatever came into my grasp. It was of little help, for whatever I pulled out of the pile, two more things took its place. It was going to be a long afternoon.*

•••••

*I screamed in exultation. Finally, I was done cleaning out the abyss that was my closet!*

*I started to get up when, out of the corner of my eye, I spotted a small scrap of paper. I glared at it. "How dare you defy me!" I screamed at it. "I cleaned out this entire closet and yet, you still remain!" I ran at the paper, picked it up, and stared at my nemesis.*

*It was like nothing I'd ever seen. The old, brittle parchment looked like it had endured many years, and yet the ink on the paper had no trace of fading. I quickly scanned the paper. "It's a map!" I muttered in disbelief. Suddenly, the map started to shudder. The room started to quake. I screamed, but no sound came from my mouth. The map started to absorb my body. It was impossible to resist its pull, but I tried none the less. The map, finally, sucked my whole body into its depths.*

### Commentary

This response addresses the writing task by providing a narrative that describes what happens when the narrator tries to find where a map leads. It demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience by implementing appropriate strategies to thoroughly develop a plot that includes characters and settings.

The story is narrated throughout from the narrator's point of view and maintains a focus on the discovery of a map and the consequences of that discovery. The clear organizational structure consists of a beginning in which the narrator discovers the map and is "... sucked... into its depths," a middle in which the narrator battles a giant hand, and an end in which the narrator is turned into granite. One organizational weakness is the writer's reliance on ellipses rather than transitional material between some paragraphs to dramatize events and indicate passage of time. Another weakness may be that the beginning is disproportionately long compared to the middle and, especially, the end, but this weakness is pardonable since the beginning is the most engaging portion of the response.

The response conveys the central idea that discovering the map results in a bizarre experience. The writer conveys this idea through concrete nouns and verbs and vivid modifiers when, for example, describing the map ("The old, brittle parchment looked like it had endured many years, ..."), the gloomy room in which the narrator finds himself ("... the only illumination came from two giant brazers on each of the room's sides."), the giant hand ("The under sides of its heads were covered with an intricate pattern of swirling lines."), and the battle ("Now, slay the hand!" I proudly bellowed. ... Then [the hand] gripped the whale by the throat and squeezed the life from it.").

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

*My room was gone, and all that remained was blackness.*

•••••

*Suddenly, the blackness subsided to light. I kissed the sweet ground, praising luck for my safety. I looked around, trying to identify where I was. I was surrounded on all sides by wierd statues of pure black granite. The ground was covered by a giant map. "This is the map that sucked me up!" I realized. The room was filled with a dark, brooding silence, and the only illumination came from two giant brazers on each of the room's sides. A voice broke the silence. "Choose your weapon." From the other side of the room came the wierdest creature I had ever seen. It had 5 faceless heads connected to a large body that had no limbs to support it. It floated through the air without any vissable effort. The under sides of its heads were covered with an intricate pattern of swirling lines. Suddenly, I realized what it was. It was a giant hand!*

•••••

*"Choose your weapon." The giant hand repeated. Its voice was deep and forboding, but it was hard to resist its command. "What weapon?" I asked. fear showed through my voice, although I was trying hard to conceal it. "We will engage in a game," The mouthless hand stated. "Choose one of the statues on the wall." I looked at the statues. "They are all those who have lost to me in my little games!" It coldly replied. "This is the fate*

#### Commentary

The writer also uses dialogue effectively to suggest character ("Mom!" I moaned, dismayed at the task ahead of me. 'You have to clean your closet; it won't clean itself, you know.' She calmly replied. 'I wish it would,' I grumbled under my breath.').

Although sentences tend to follow a subject-verb pattern and although many are simple sentences, the writer achieves a relatively fluid style by incorporating modifying phrases and an occasional compound sentence for variation ("A giant heap of discarded clothes, unwanted toys, and useless trash loomed before me. I surveyed the mound, like a mountain climber would survey a mountain. I started to dig through it, grabing at whatever came into my grasp. It was of little help, for whatever I pulled out of the pile, two more things took its place. It was going to be a long afternoon.').

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. Virtually all are errors in spelling ("replead," "wierd," "untill" "nemisis," "exultion," "disbealer"). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although this response contains some minor organizational flaws, excellent use of strategies like description and dialogue and good control over sentences make it a score point 4.

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 4 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

#### Commentary

*you will suffer if you lose.” The hand said. “But if you win, I will give you treasure beyond your wildest dreams!” The mention of the word treasure made my fear melt away. “That one!” I proclaimed with conviction in my voice. I pointed to the largest statue in the room, a statue of a bull whale. The whale instantly came alive. “Come here!” I yelled. Instantly, the whale complied, and floated to my side. “Now, slay the hand!” I proudly bellowed. Then it went into an all-out charge at the hand. The hand side stepped (or more accurately, floated) away from the attack. Then, it gripped the whale by the throat, and squeezed the life from it. “You lose.” The hand proclaimed triumphantly. I froze, for two reasons. One, fear paralyzed my body, preventing me from moving. Two, my skin was starting to turn into solid granite.*

•••••

*It's an odd feeling, transforming into stone. It feels like one by one, your nerves that help you control the body are being severed, until you have no way to control your body, yet you are still able to think. It is the last feeling I have, and most likely will experience unless someone chooses me to challenge the hand. All I can do now is plan for my next battle. If anyone chooses me, I will be prepared. The hand will not survive if I challenge it again.*

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

## Score Point 3 Response

### Student Work Sample One

*"Go clean your room! NOW!" yelled my mother. Her yelling told me if I did not do as she said, punishment would be coming my way. As I walked up the stairs, I thought which part of my room I should clean first? I finally come to the conclusion I will go from small areas to larger areas. After I had conquered my desk, shelves, and drawers, I decided it was off to my closet. When I opened it up, there was a huge pile of junk from the floor to the ceiling. I start cleaning as much as I can. A hour and a half later my closet is cleaned except a piece of old paper on the ground. I turn it over and find a plan of my house on it.*

*I decided to go on a hunt for this treasure. There is a small number one where my room was and a number two where my parents room was. After 20 minutes of searching their room in every nook and crany I finally found another piece of paper in the bottom of my mother's bottom drawer. There was a number two on my parents room and a number three on the pantry. I looked in the back of all of the shelves, and on the top shelf I finally found a third piece of paper. There was a three on the pantry and a four on my brothers room. I searched his bed, his closet, his desk drawers, and found his piggybank.*

*The nose of the pig was was a cork. I decided to take some money because my friends hadn't paid me back yet. There was only one problem. When I pulled the cork out of the piggy, there was a note that said, "I gottcha! DON'T LOOK FOR MY MONEY AGAIN!!!"*

### Commentary

This response addresses the writing task by presenting a narrative about what happens when the narrator tries to find where a map leads. It demonstrates a general understanding of purpose and audience by providing an adequately developed sequence of events with some dialogue, suspense, and narrative action.

The response focuses consistently on the narrator's attempt to follow the directions on a map. Point of view is mostly consistent, but sometimes shifts inadvertently from past to present ("When I opened it up, there was a huge pile of junk from the floor to the ceiling. I start cleaning as much as I can. An hour and a half later my closet is cleaned..."). The narrative organization is mostly consistent, moving without digression from beginning to end. The response fails, however, to provide an adequate transition between the end of paragraph one, where the narrator discovers "a plan of my house" on a piece of paper, and the beginning of paragraph two, where the reader is suddenly informed that the narrator will "go on a hunt for this treasure."

The response conveys the central idea that taking someone else's money can have embarrassing consequences. This idea is conveyed through a tightly constructed and somewhat suspenseful sequence of events that leads the narrator on a futile treasure hunt to the brother's piggy bank. Although the response contains descriptive detail in places ("... there was a huge pile of junk from the floor to the ceiling."; "the nose of the pig was was a cork.") and brief dialogue to open the response ("Go clean your room! NOW!"), it is the note in the brother's piggy bank that communicates the central idea ("I gottcha! DON'T LOOK FOR MY MONEY AGAIN!!!").

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

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### Score Point 3 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

#### Commentary

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The response demonstrates sentence variety. The opening paragraph, for instance, combines simple and complex sentences that begin with a mixture of main and subordinate clauses to create a fluid progression through the paragraph (“As I walked up the stairs, I thought which part of my room I should clean first? I finally come to the conclusion I will go from small areas to larger areas. After I had conquered my desk, shelves, and drawers, I decided it was off to my closet. When I opened it up, there was a huge pile of junk from the floor to the ceiling. I start cleaning as much as I can.”).

The response contains some errors in the conventions of the English language. In addition to accidental shifts in verb tense, errors include apostrophes missing in possessives (“my parents room”; “my brothers room”) and spelling errors (“comming,” “crany” for “cranny”). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Although this narrative would be strengthened by further use of narrative strategies such as dialogue and descriptive detail, an economical sequence of events with an effective opening and closing sentence, some good sentence variety, and generally sound conventions make it a score point 3.

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 3 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two

##### *The Map*

*I was cleaning my room and my sister Krystal was helping me. I was almost done. I just needed to clean out my closet. While cleaning out the closet, I saw something more like a paper. I took the paper and I opened it. It looked like a treasure map.*

*I called my sister, Krystal and told her.*

*I said, "Krystal look at this, it's a treasure map."*

*She said, "Wow, Lilia, this is a treasure map and the treasure is somewhere in our backyard according to the map."*

*I responded, "You are so right. OK I have a plan."*

*She said, "What is it? Tell me."*

*I said, "OK I'll tell you but only if you promise not to tell anyone else about the map."*

*Krystal said, "I promise."*

*OK then. Here is the plan. You and me go outside and look for the treasure. We'll tell mom that we are done cleaning the room and if we can go outside to play. You got it?*

*Krystal said, "yes I got it."*

*I said, "Let our adventure begin."*

*We told our mom that we had finished our chores and we were going out and play just like our plan. Our mom told us that we could go outside. The map was a little confusing at first, but then we got it. It said to start at a big rock that was, in our backyard and then take 20 steps to the left. That's what we*

#### Commentary

This response addresses the writing task by presenting an adequately developed narrative about what happens when the narrator tries to find where a treasure map leads. The writer demonstrates a general understanding of purpose and audience by using strategies such as dialogue and narrative action to develop a plot with major and minor characters.

The response is consistently narrated from the first person point of view and demonstrates a consistent focus on the narrator's efforts to find the treasure. It has a consistent organizational structure that includes a beginning in which the narrator discovers the map, a middle in which the narrator and her sister search for the treasure, and an end in which the source of the map is revealed. The response contains appropriate transitions between the beginning and middle ("Let our adventure begin.") and between the various stages of the girls' search ("We were getting closer."; "Finally, we hit something.").

The response presents the central idea that selfishness may bring disappointment. This idea is illustrated by dialogue through which the narrator pressures her sister to keep their search a secret ("O.K. I'll tell you but only if you promise not to tell anyone else about the map. ... We'll tell mom that we are done cleaning the room and if we can go outside to play. You got it?") and through their discovery that they had been wasting their time ("It was just a bone. All we found were bones ..."). Since the narrative consists almost solely of events and dialogue and lacks descriptive detail, character development and setting are almost nonexistent.

Although this response contains a variety of sentence types, sentences tend to be repetitive and simplistic because even the compound and complex sentences consist of simple, short clauses connected by a

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 3 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

*did. Next it said to take 15 steps to the right. When we got there a tree was right in front of us and we still had 3 more steps to go so we just went around it.*

*We were getting closer. Then it said to take 25 steps foward. We were heading straight to our dog house. Next thing we knew we had done it. The "X" was marked. My sister and I got a shovel and started digging.*

*Finally, we hit something. I was so excited I wanted to scream but I didn't. When I put my hand in the dirt and got something I screamed. It was just a bone. All we found were bones I couldn't believe it.*

*We told our mom about what happened and she told us that she had drawn that map because my younger brother wanted to play pirate. I was so mad, but that's what happened to me for not wanting to tell anyone, being selfish. What a rip-off.*

#### Commentary

conjunction ("I was cleaning my room and my sister Krystal was helping me. I was almost done. I just needed to clean out my closet. While cleaning out the closet, I saw something more like a paper. I took the paper and I opened it. It looked like a treasure map.").

The response contains some errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include run-on sentences ("All we found were bones I couldn't believe it."), comma splices ("Krystal look at this, it's a treasure map."), use of an objective pronoun where a subjective pronoun is needed ("You and me go outside..."), grammatical errors ("We'll tell mom that we are done cleaning the room and if we can go outside..."), and spelling errors ("foward," "heading"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although this response contains a clear focus, organizational structure, and central idea, the lack of descriptive detail and effective sentence variation makes this response a score point 3.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

## Score Point 3 Response

### Student Work Sample Three

*Have you ever seen any movies that show people finding a treasure map and getting rich? I bet you have. But I also bet you thought they were fake. I did, too. But something happened that would change my mind forever.*

*Well, it All started when I was cleaning out the closet near the stairs of the basement. I had finally taken everything out, when I saw some sort of greenish thing near the bottom of the wall. It seemed to be inside the wall, and it was. I could see it through a crack. I wanted to see what it was, so I quickly went through the stuff until I found a screwdriver. I used it to make the crack bigger and bigger until I could reach in with my hand. I then saw it was a piece of paper inside a glass bottle. I was surprised. I thought it would be some kind of brooch. I wanted to see what the paper said so I tried to get it. But it was too far down to reach. So I put all the stuff away as well as I could. Then I ran into the kitchen and got a pair of tweezers. As soon as I got them, I ran to my room and I sat on my bed. I took out the paper. And I could not believe what saw.*

*It was a map. A map with a green dot and a big, big red dot. I wanted to know where it led to. So I made up my mind and I decided to leave the next day. But I didn't want to go alone. So I told my sister, Cindy to come with me and she agreed. We got a lot of things packed in our backpacks. We told our parents we were leaving and we left.*

*As soon as we were out, I took the map out of my pocket. We headed towards the*

### Commentary

This response addresses the writing task by presenting a narrative that describes what happens when the narrator tries to find where a treasure map leads. The writer demonstrates an understanding of purpose and audience by using dialogue and some descriptive detail to develop a plot with characters, a setting, and some suspense.

The response is narrated consistently from the first person point of view. It demonstrates a clear organizational structure that includes a beginning in which the narrator discovers the map, a middle in which the narrator searches for the treasure, and an end in which the narrator describes what is done with the treasure. Transitions, however, are often weak. The writer sometimes uses the vague transition “well,” for example, (“Well, it all started when I was cleaning out the closet . . .”; “Well, my parents bought a bigger house . . .”) and often begins sentences with “so,” “but,” or “and” to break up a potentially rambling series of clauses (“I wanted to know where it led to. So I made up my mind and I decided to leave the next day. But I didn’t want to go alone. So I told my sister, . . .”).

The response suggests the central idea that resourcefulness and persistence may ultimately be rewarded. This idea is suggested early in the narrative when descriptive detail is used to illustrate the narrator’s determination to secure the map (“I used [the screwdriver] to make the crack bigger and bigger until I could reach in with my hand. I then saw it was a piece of paper inside a glass bottle. . . . But it was too far down to reach. . . . Then I ran into the kitchen and got a pair of tweezers.”). The idea is further illustrated in paragraphs five and six where the narrator and the sister visit a cave day after day until they find the treasure. In these two paragraphs,

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 3 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

*beach, as the map led to somewhere near there. As soon as we got there we made a turn left, where all the rocks were. We were walking until we didn't see anyone. We then stopped when we got to where the red dot was. And we started looking around. Cindy yelled at me to turn. She had found a cave.*

*We went inside. It was dark. "Good thing we have our flashlights!" Cindy yelled. We shone them around the cave. We kept looking until we got tired. We ate lunch. Then we started looking again. We were exhausted, so we left. We were glad to be in the warm again, because it was kind of cold in there. We were sad because we couldn't find anything.*

*The next day, we left again. No luck. So we went again and again and again. Then in a week or so, we found something. It was a wooden box. But it was locked. We ran around the cave until we found the entrance. But first we made sure it was hidden.*

*We ran as fast as we could to our house. We found a saw my dad had in the shed. Then we ran back to the cave.*

*We used the saw to open the box. We sawed the top off. Inside was a whole mess of money in neat little piles and tied with rubber bands. We quickly stuffed them in to our backpacks and ran off.*

*When we got home, Cindy said, "What are we doing with the money?" "I don't know," I replied. We then decided to give the money to our parents. It was the least we could*

#### Commentary

however, the writer abandons descriptive detail for less effective summarization ("The next day, we left again. No luck. So we went again and again and again. Then in a week or so, we found something."). The conclusion describes the girls' reward, "4 million dollars" and "a bigger house."

The writer's tendency to begin sentences with conjunctions sometimes produces choppy, rhythmically monotonous sentences. At other times, however, sentences are varied effectively even when they begin with coordinating conjunctions. In the opening paragraph, for example, a mixture of sentence types and lengths produces an effective lead-in to the narrative ("Have you ever seen any movies that show people finding a treasure map and getting rich? I bet you have. But I also bet you thought they were fake. I did, too. But something happened that would change my mind forever.").

The response contains few errors in the conventions of the English language. Conventions for incorporating quotations, for example, are sound and spelling is accurate. The weak transitions noted above are the most common errors ("Well, . . ."; "I mean, they always . . ."). These errors are to be expected in a first draft and do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although transitions are somewhat weak and result in some choppy writing, a plot that is adequately developed with description and dialogue and a clear organizational structure make this response a score point 3.

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

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### Score Point 3 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

#### Commentary

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*do. I mean, they always bought us what we wanted, fed us, and took us to a lot of neat places. They deserved it.*

*Well, my parents bought a bigger house so my 3 sisters, Cindy, who's 12, Diana, who's 7, and cute little Gabriela, who's nearly 6 months old, could have our own rooms. They even had money left over. A lot of money. There was probably 4 million dollars in total. It was enough so my parents didn't have to work anymore. And we stayed together forever.*

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 2 Response

#### Student Work Sample One

*First, One day in the morning, I woked up, and I was cleaning out a closet, and I discover a treasure map. I said to myself "I wonder where the map is going to take me." I was so happy cause that map will take me where nobody knows.*

*Then, I went to get the treasure it was on the volcano. I hadded to dig and finally I got the box of treasure out. When I opened it with a gold key, their was a lot of bright light going through my eyes.*

*Finally, I said "I WILL BE RICH AND HAVE ALOT OF MONEY!!!" That was really cool but it was only a dream. But that day I woked and I saw a bright light under the bed and it was the treasure under the bed. I was so happy cause I was going to be rich. So I went to tell my mom as she didn't believe after I showed her one of the gold coins. We moved from that little to a big Manchien. I went to buy clothes that I always wanted and after that I only hadded a billion gold quarters left over. When I wasted somes more money their was only 45,000 million gold coins I bought 2 cool cars for me a cadillac, Escalade but I only had one gold coin left. So I went to eat. That was really cool. Finally, I lived with my family happily ever after!.*

#### Commentary

This response addresses most of the writing task by describing what happens after the narrator discovers a treasure map. Gaps and inconsistencies in the sequence of events, however, as well as a lack of characters, setting, and narrative strategies demonstrate little understanding of purpose and audience.

The response contains a somewhat dual focus because it provides a short account of the narrator's discovery of a treasure and a longer account of how the narrator spent the money he found. The organizational structure is inconsistent. After a beginning that explains that the narrator found a treasure map, the response describes the search for the treasure in a single, general sentence ("Then, I went to get the treasure it was on the volcano."). The narrator decides that this discovery is only a dream but then seems to contradict this realization ("[The fact that I would be rich] was really cool but it was only a dream. But that day I woked and I saw a bright light under the bed and it was the treasure under the bed."). The response also ends with an apparent contradiction when, after squandering the treasure, the narrator concludes, "... I lived with my family happily ever after!" These inconsistencies might be eliminated with transitional material to help smooth over and explain the apparent contradictions.

The response suggests the central idea that getting rich was "really cool." This idea is conveyed by the narrator's statement that being rich was "really cool" and by descriptions of this wealth ("... a billion gold quarters..."; "... 45,000 million gold coins...") and what it bought ("... a big Manchien"; "... clothes that I always wanted..."; and "... a cadillac, Escalade..."). The central idea appears to be contradicted, however, by the narrator's statement that the spending represented money "wasted."

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

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### Score Point 2 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

#### Commentary

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The response demonstrates little sentence variety. Although the response contains an occasional complex sentence, most sentences are either simple or compound with clauses connected by “but,” “and,” or “so.” (“That was really cool but it was only a dream. But that day I woked up and I saw a bright light under the bed and it was the treasure under the bed. I was so happy cause I was going to be rich. So I went to tell my mom...”).

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include run-on sentences (“Then, I went to get the treasure it was on the volcano.”), errors in verb form (“I hadded to dig and finally I...”; “... after that I only hadded a billion gold quarters...”; “But that day I woked and I...”), failure to use commas to set off an inserted modifying phrase (“... I bought 2 cool cars for me a cadillac, Escalade but I only had one...”), and misspellings (“their” for “there,” “Manchien”). These errors may interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Organizational inconsistencies, minimal sentence variety, and errors in conventions make this response a score point 2.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

## Score Point 2 Response

### Student Work Sample Two

*One day in the summer my mom told me to clean my closet. Well I ask her why and she said because it was to messy that I couldn't even find my shoes well I didn't clean it. The next day I was cleaning my closet when I found a treasure map. I was thinking were it will lead to well I finished cleaning my closet. Then I started reading the map to see were it is leading.*

*The next day I started following were the map was lead to. First the map started outside in the park and it said to dig in the middle of the park. When I started digging I found another paper this time it was a clue. It said to walk 100 spaces West of the park. Then walk 30 spaces to the north of the park and stop when you hit 29 and the 30 space you have to look left and you will find a wooden box.*

*Next the wooden box had another paper but this one was a picture of a family together. In the back of it said go to the school in back of the family. Then go in the office and there will be a red bag. In the bag will be a journal red the journal and go to the place it said to go. Then take the journal with you so you wont get lost.*

*Then when I went in the school it was dark and confusing. I turn on the light I just noticed that the school was Stephens Middle school. That was my old school*

### Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by providing a partially developed narrative about what happens when the narrator tries to find where a treasure map leads. It demonstrates some understanding of purpose and audience by presenting a series of events. These events, however, do not include characters or a definite setting, and they are not developed with descriptive detail, dialogue, or other narrative strategies.

The response is consistently narrated from the first person point of view, but the organizational structure is inconsistent. Although the response contains a clear beginning and a middle that enumerates events, these events seem to end abruptly part way through the narrative. Moreover, the beginning contains the extraneous information that the narrator did not clean his room the first day (“... well I didn't clean it.”) and the middle contains irrelevant information about a family (“... a picture of a family together. . . . the school in back of the family.”). The response includes numerous transitions, but because the narrative is merely a spare recounting of events, these transitions function only as repetitious signposts of another step in the process (“The next day ...”; “Then ... Next ... Then ...”).

Perhaps because the narrative is, apparently, unfinished, it does not convey a central idea. The response does suggest that the narrator was persistent in following the map and the clues, but this idea is only weakly implied by the narrator's pursuit of the clues rather than by description and explanation that might more fully illustrate it.

Although the response contains simple, complex, and compound sentences, many are so cluttered with repetitious transitions, structural errors and unintended switches between declarative and

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# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

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## Score Point 2 Response

### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

### Commentary

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imperative, that the sentences in general seem rough and clumsy. The third paragraph, for example, begins with a clear compound sentence, but the sentences that follow include a run-on sentence, repetitive transitions (“Then . . .”), and a drift from declarative to imperative statements (“Next the wooden box had another paper but this one was a picture of a family together. In the back of it said go to the school in back of the family. Then go in the office and there will be a red bag. In the bag will be a journal red the journal and go to the place it said to go. Then take the journal with you so you wont get lost.”).

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. In addition to the run-on sentences, errors include misspellings (“red” for “read,” “were” for “where,” “to” for “too”), incorrect shifts in verb tense (“... I finished cleaning my closet. Then I started reading the map to see were it is leading.”; “... it was dark and confusing. I turn on the light ...”), and grammatical errors (“In the back of it said go to the school in back of the family.”). These errors interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Although this response addresses some of the writing task by providing a sequence of events and although it demonstrates some sentence variety, the lack of a clear central idea, the lack of sentence control, and errors in conventions make this response a score point 2.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

## Score Point 2 Response

### Student Work Sample Three

*When I was cleaning the closet I found a map. I was trying to figure out where the map leads to. But it was old and I couldn't read it. So I called my best friend if she could help me to find the lead she said yes. So I put my glasses so I could read it and it was very hard. In an hour it just was too hard to find out. So I carefully started reading but slow and I got more clues. So then I told my friend if she could draw it exactly like the map but so I could read it better so she drawing it was very hard but she did it well in this hour that has passed she drew the map. Then I asked what if we finish finding the lead and go find the treasure. So we finally finished we were happy that we had finish. So then I told her. Should it just be us two or do we call our friend? We should call them cause we are a group so we said sure. Well my friends name is Amy. While I went to call the others she stayed with the map. She asked who did you call? I called Alex, Ricky, Joe, David, and Molly, Megen, and Liz. I called them so we could go in a big group so nothing could happen to us. So they all came to my house. We told them to eat first so they wont be hungry but then I told all the girls. Why don't you guys pack sandwiches and juice while I clean up and tell them what had happen. So I explaind everything they were so happy but they were did you find a map. Then we were inside in the living room and the girls were making food. When they were done when we were walking I said were is the map so we*

### Commentary

This response addresses the writing task by describing what happens the day the narrator tries to find where a treasure map leads. It demonstrates little understanding of purpose and audience because it presents a narrative that, though long, is minimally developed with characters, a setting, descriptive detail, and fictional narrative strategies.

The response is narrated consistently from a first person point of view and maintains a focus on attempts to begin the treasure hunt. The response, however, demonstrates little organizational structure. Although it presents a series of events that might be considered a sequence since they occur after one another, the response never progresses to a search for treasure because the efforts to begin the search are repeatedly frustrated. The lack of organizational structure also is reflected in the absence of paragraphing.

The central idea that is suggested, perhaps unintentionally, is that inviting too many people to participate in an endeavor like a treasure hunt produces frustration. This idea is illustrated by the impediments that develop—making sandwiches, starting the hunt but forgetting the map, looking for a copy of the map, finding it but discovering the dog has chewed it up, looking for the original map, recopying it, putting on makeup, eating all the food, realizing the map has been copied wrong, and then realizing they have wasted the day—when the narrator invites her friends to help with the hunt. The frustrations are comical, but the narrative never becomes more than a slow-paced chronicle of false starts because the response lacks developed characters, a setting, descriptive detail, and strategies such as dialogue.

Sentences show little variety. Most are rambling strings of independent clauses in the form of either

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 2 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

*went back inside try to look for it were had it gone we were saying how had it last well we gatherd. Was it Joe and David but they said no. Was it Alex but they said no so I asked every person that was in the house and they said no. But then Alex and David remberd that they had it last and I asked them were had they left it. They said my room. I went to check and my room was a mess so we started looking in the floor in the table inside a cabint but we could not find it anywhere so we talked to David and Alex were had they left it at. They said I think we left it under the desk. We looked and nothing was there then Alex said didn't we left it outside when we ran outside the dog ate it there was like half of the paper left then I looked at it but this is the drawing we could just make another one. So the girls said were is the real map they didn't know but Joe said it was in the closet were they were last at. They went back running inside trying to look for it. Was it in a box or inside my drawer they asked why don't we just take the real one because it might rip because its old so then I remberd. It's in the box were I have all my baseball cards so they went running and got the map and started drawing. It took alot of time just drawing it it took like two hours putting all the details. When we were finished we were tired and hungry we ate what we were going to take and everything all the fruit all the juice everything then we rested a bit more then we were just getting dressed in black so we*

#### Commentary

simple sentences, compound sentences connected by coordinating conjunctions, or run-on sentences with a number of confusing phrases (“I put my glasses so I could read [the map] and it was very hard. In an hour It just was too hard to find out. So I carefully started reading but slow and I got more clues. So then I told my friend if she could draw it exactly like the map but so I could read it better so she drawing it was very hard but she did it well in this hour that has passed she drew the map.”).

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. In addition to the run-on sentences, errors include misspellings (“explaind,” “were” for “where,” “gatherd,” “cabint,” “remberd”), contractions that lack apostrophes (“wont”), errors in verb tense (“... tell them what had happen.”), and use of singular forms where plural forms are required (“We got ready and the guy [instead of “guys”] got mad...”; “... and they were saying thing...”). These errors interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Although this response presents a sequence of occurrences that conveys an apparent central idea, the rambling organization and sprawling sentences along with numerous errors in conventions make this response a score point 2.

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

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### Score Point 2 Response

#### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

*could go out. The girls were talking forever to get ready. We were saying what are we going to do with our hair so we put makeup when we got all done. We got ready and the guy got mad because we took all this time and they got mad at us and they were saying thing then I said let's go let's look at the map for one more time but something was wrong we had the map upside down so we had just wasted time doing nothing and the rest of the night we were mad and trying to find the new and right leads to the treasure all this time we had wasted for nothing. We found the lead but there is a problem. It is ten o'clock we have to wait to the next time we have all day.*

#### Commentary

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# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

## Score Point 1 Response

### Student Work Sample One

*Cleaning out your closet you can find a treasure map that would show you were to go for you wont get lost. or to get there easy and fast. for you wont get lost the map shows you were to lead. the day you try to find were the map was at. the leads find out wear the map was at to show were they want to go because they need to go some were. were ever they want to go they all ready fund the map.*

### Commentary

This response fails to address what happens the day the narrator tries to find where a treasure map leads. It demonstrates no understanding of how to use narrative strategies to develop a sequence of events with characters and a setting.

The response lacks a consistent point of view. It begins by addressing the reader (“... the map shows you were to lead...”) but midway through shifts to the third person (“... the map was at to show were they want to go...”). The response also lacks a focus and a sequential organizational structure. Rather than developing a narrative sequentially, it simply repeats that the map will indicate where to go and ends by reiterating that, as the prompt points out, the map has been found (“were ever they want to go they all ready fund the map.”).

Although the response repeatedly states that the map indicates where to go and keeps one from getting lost, it suggests no central idea about what happens when the narrator tries to find where the map leads. It contains no characters, setting, dialogue, or other narrative strategies or descriptive detail. All language is general rather than specific (“for you wont get lost the map shows you were to lead. the day you try to find were the map was at. the leads find out wear the map was at...”).

The response demonstrates no sentence variety. Although it contains an occasional period following a group of words, the response reads as if it were a single rambling sentence.

The response contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include a lack of capitalization to indicate beginnings of sentences (“the day you try to find were the map was at. the leads find out wear the map was at...”), unclear

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

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### Score Point 1 Response

#### Student Work Sample One (continued)

#### Commentary

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connections between subject and predicate (“... the leads find out wear the map was at to show were they want to go...”), dependent clauses awkwardly attached to independent clauses (“for you wont get lost the map shows you were to lead.”), and misspelled words (“were” for “where”). These errors interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

The lack of a narrative structure, a consistent point of view, a focus, and a central idea and sentences that are almost incomprehensible on first reading make this response a score point 1.

## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

### Score Point 1 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two

*One day when I was cleaning out my closet, All the way at the bottom under all of my shoe boxes I found a treasure map. I looked at it and examined it. The map was dated 1980, 27 years ago! I thought that I had nothing better to do so I tryed to explore the map. Its location said start at the park. When I got there I followed the map when it said go east soon I found the tresure but it was nothing*

#### Commentary

This response addresses part of the writing task by briefly describing what happens when the narrator finds a treasure map. It demonstrates little understanding of purpose and audience because it fails to provide a plot with characters, a setting, descriptive details, or narrative strategies.

The response maintains a consistent first person point of view and a consistent focus on the narrator's attempt to understand the map. It lacks an organizational structure, however, because it fails to develop either a middle or an ending after a promising introductory section that describes the narrator's attempt to decipher the map. Instead, it summarizes the narrator's search for the treasure in a single, very general, run-on sentence ("I followed the map when it said go east soon I found the tresure but it was nothing").

The response contains no central idea about the narrator's search for the treasure. It suggests that the treasure hunt was disappointing ("[the treasure] was nothing"), but this statement cannot be considered a central idea because no plot, sequence of events, description, dialogue, or other narrative strategies illustrate, elaborate upon, or support it.

The first three sentences of the response do contain marginal descriptive details (When the narrator is "cleaning out [the] closet," the narrator finds a treasure map "... under all of my shoe boxes ..."; the map "... was dated 1980, 27 years ago!"). After this relatively interesting beginning, however, the narrative lapses into summary writing that is presented in general, colorless language ("I thought that I had nothing better to do so I tryed to explore the map. Its location said start at the park. When I got there I followed the map when it said go east soon I found the tresure but it was nothing").

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## Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

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### Score Point 1 Response

#### Student Work Sample Two (continued)

#### Commentary

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The response contains sentence variety. It opens with a long complex sentence, followed by two simple sentences, followed by a compound sentence, followed by another simple sentence, and finally followed by a complex sentence fused with a compound sentence. The drift into a run-on final sentence seems to mirror the decline into summary writing and vague language at the end of the response.

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include misspelled words ("tryed," "tresure"), and the run-on sentence cited above. These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although this response lacks an organizational structure, a sequence of events, and a central idea supported by a plot, description, and narrative strategies, the presence of some effective description and sentence variety early in the response makes it an upper-range score point 1.

# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

## Score Point 1 Response

### Student Work Sample Three

*"Mom." "What." I am going to check if the last pepole left anything good. OK Chris. So I am Chris 13 and I Live with my mom down in Los Angeles cali and I bodybored. I was looking if I could find anything in the attic becaus we just moved hear from Sandiego. As I am looking through this box of food junk I get a Paper out. So I pull out this rolled up Pease of Paper and wen is was runing down the stares a note falls out I stop pickt up the note and read*

*Dear whoever finds this note and find the loction of the secreat spott Please dont tell anyone exsept the ones you trust the most.*

*I open the rolled up pease of paper "Amap" I said very loudly thats crazy. I call up my best freands Steven and nicky I say get ofer to my hose now, I show them the map there like "darn that crazy." and we relized were ware that Beach is so we went to go skate*

*The end*

### Commentary

This response only marginally addresses the writing task. Although it describes what happens on the day the narrator discovers a map, there is no indication this map is a treasure map. The writer demonstrates some understanding of purpose and audience by using characters and dialogue to initiate a plot, but rather than developing the plot, the writer abruptly terminates it.

The response lacks an organizational structure. It includes a long beginning that provides background information about the narrator and explains where the narrator discovers the map, but it stops immediately after the beginning when the narrator and his friends decide to go skating rather than follow the map. The plot ends inexplicably when the narrator dismisses the map because he is already at the beach where the treasure is located.

Since the narrator does not follow the map, the response suggests no central idea about a search for treasure. It contains marginally related background information about the narrator (He and his mother moved from San Diego to Los Angeles, he likes to body board, and he has friends named Steven and Nicky.), and it contains dialogue that is marginal to a search for treasure (His friends say the map is "crazy."), but it includes no narrative strategies that help illustrate a central idea.

Although the sentences contain structural errors and errors in conventions, they demonstrate some variety in types and lengths. A series of sentences in the introduction, for example, includes compound, complex, and simple sentences ("So I am Chris 13 and I Live with my mom down in Los Angeles cali and I bodybored. I was looking if I could find anything in the attic becaus we just moved hear from Sandiego. As I am looking through this box of food junk I get a

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# Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Fictional Narrative Writing Task Administered on May 1 and 2, 2007

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## Score Point 1 Response

### Student Work Sample Three (continued)

### Commentary

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Paper out. So I pull out this rolled up Pease of Paper and wen is was runing down the stares a note falls out I stop pickt up the note and read"). The errors are so abundant and the sentences often so awkward, however, that the sentence variety adds little fluidity to the response.

The response contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include a lack of quotation marks around quoted material. (OK Chris [says Chris' mother]), unwarranted shifts in verb tense ("... we just moved hear from Sandiego. As I am looking through this box of food junk I get a Paper out."), numerous spelling errors ("pepole," "bodybored," "hear" for "here," "Pease" for "piece," "hose" for "house," "exsept"), a lack of apostrophes in contractions ("thats"; "dont," "were" for "we're"), a lack of commas in a series ("... I stop pickt up the note and read"), and incorrect capitalization ("Pease of Paper," "nicky," "Beach"). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although this response lacks development, an organizational structure, and a central idea and contains numerous errors in conventions that impede understanding, a promising introduction that includes some dialogue and concrete details makes this response an upper-range score point 1.

## 2007 Grade Seven Scoring Rubric\*

The scoring rubric that follows is used to assign scores to students' written responses on the grade seven writing tests. This rubric includes two sets of criteria. The criteria under "The writing" are adapted from the state English-language arts content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions of English. These criteria are used to evaluate on-demand, first draft written responses in all genres. Student responses are evaluated on their clarity of purpose, central idea, and organization; their coherence; and their use of supporting evidence, sentence variety, and written conventions. The criteria under "Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing," "Response to literature writing," "Persuasive writing," and "Summary writing," adapted from the grade seven content standards for Writing Applications for these genres, are used to evaluate student writing in the specific genres to which they apply.

On pages 68 through 75, the grade seven scoring rubric is presented in a rearranged format to indicate how all the scoring criteria are applied to student responses in each genre tested.

### 4

#### **The writing—**

- Clearly addresses the writing task.
- Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose and audience.
- Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of transitions.
- Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations.
- Includes sentence variety.
- Contains *some errors* in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do **not** interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

#### **Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing—**

- Provides a *thoroughly developed* plot line, including major and minor characters and a *definite* setting.
- Includes *appropriate* strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).

#### **Response to literature writing—**

- Develops interpretations that demonstrate a *thoughtful*, comprehensive grasp of the text.
- Organizes *accurate and coherent* interpretations around *clear* ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.
- Provides *specific* textual examples and details to support the interpretations.

#### **Persuasive writing—**

- *Authoritatively* defends a clear position with precise and relevant evidence and *convincingly* addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

#### **Summary writing—**

- Summarizes text with clear identification of the main idea(s) and most significant details, in student's own words, and clearly reflects underlying meaning.

\* The English-Language Arts Assessment Review Panel reviewed the scoring rubric for grade seven and made slight adjustments to ensure that it was being applied holistically. This rubric was used to score the 2007 CST in writing.

**3** **The writing—**

- Addresses most of the writing task.
- Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose and audience.
- Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including use of isolated and/or single word transitions.
- Presents a central idea with *mostly relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations.
- Includes some sentence variety.
- Contains *errors* in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do **not** interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

**Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing—**

- Provides an *adequately developed* plot line, including major and minor characters and a *definite* setting.
- Includes *appropriate* strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).

**Response to literature writing—**

- Develops interpretations that demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the text.
- Organizes accurate and *reasonably* coherent interpretations around *clear* ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.
- Provides textual examples and details to support the interpretations.

**Persuasive writing—**

- *Generally* defends a position with relevant evidence and addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

**Summary writing—**

- Summarizes text with the main idea(s) and important details, mostly in the student's own words, and generally reflects underlying meaning.

**2** **The writing—**

- Addresses *some* of the writing task.
- Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose and audience.
- Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include *ineffective or awkward* transitions that do not unify important ideas.
- *Suggests* a central idea with *limited* facts, details, and/or explanations.
- Includes *little* sentence variety.
- Contains *many errors* in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors **may** interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

**Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing—**

- Provides a *minimally developed* plot line, including characters and a setting.
- *Attempts* to use strategies but with *minimal* effectiveness (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).

**Response to literature writing—**

- Develops interpretations that demonstrate a *limited* grasp of the text.
- Includes interpretations that *lack* accuracy or coherence as related to ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.
- Provides *few, if any*, textual examples and details to support the interpretations.

**Persuasive writing—**

- Defends a position with *little, if any*, evidence and *may* address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

**Summary writing—**

- Summarizes text with some of the main idea(s) and details, which may be superficial, minimal use of the student's own words and minimal reflection of underlying meaning.

**1** **The writing—**

- Addresses *only one part, if any*, of the writing task.
- Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose and audience.
- *Lacks* a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas.
- *Lacks* a central idea but may contain *marginally related* facts, details, and/or explanations.
- Includes *no* sentence variety.
- Contains *serious errors* in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

**Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing—**

- *Lacks* a developed plot line.
- *Fails* to use strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).

**Response to literature writing—**

- Demonstrates *little* grasp of the text.
- *Lacks* an interpretation or *may* be a simple retelling of the passage.
- *Lacks* textual examples and details.

**Persuasive writing—**

- *Fails* to defend a position with *any* evidence and *fails* to address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

**Summary writing—**

- Summarizes text with *few, if any*, of the main ideas and/or details, *little or no* use of the student's own words, *little or no* reflection of underlying meaning.

## Grade Seven Scoring Rubric in Rearranged Format

In the following charts, the grade seven scoring rubric is presented in a rearranged format to indicate how all the scoring criteria in the rubric—those derived from the state content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions as well as those derived from the content standards for Writing Applications—are applied to student responses in each genre tested.

The column under “Genre” contains the scoring criteria derived from the grade seven content standards for Writing Applications. The column under “Organization and Focus” contains scoring criteria derived from the subset of Organization and Focus standards within the grade seven content standards for Writing Strategies. The column under “Sentence Structure” contains the scoring criterion derived from the Sentence Structure standard within the grade six content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. The column under “Conventions” contains the scoring criteria derived from the subsets of Grammar, Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spelling standards within the grade seven content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. Although some columns contain more bullets than others, this is not meant to imply that columns with more bullets are more important in the scoring than the other columns. References to the writing content standards from which each scoring criterion is derived are presented in coded form following each criterion for score point 4.

### 2007 Grade Seven Scoring Rubric: Fictional or Autobiographical Narrative Writing

<b>Genre</b> <i>(Fictional Narrative Writing)</i>	<b>Organization and Focus</b>	<b>Sentence Structure</b>	<b>Conventions</b>
<p><b>4</b> ■ Provides a <i>thoroughly developed</i> plot line, including major and minor characters and a <i>definite</i> setting. (Gr. 7 WA 2.1 a, b)</p> <p>■ Includes <i>appropriate</i> strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action). (Gr. 7 WA 2.1 c)</p>	<p>■ <i>Clearly</i> addresses the writing task.*</p> <p>■ Demonstrates a <i>clear</i> understanding of purpose and audience.**</p> <p>■ Maintains a <i>consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the <i>effective</i> use of transitions. (Gr. 7 WS 1.1)</p> <p>■ Includes a <i>clearly presented</i> central idea with <i>relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 7 WS 1.2)</p>	<p>■ Includes sentence <i>variety</i>. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)</p>	<p>■ Contains <i>some errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do <b>not</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)</p>

\* Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.

\*\* This criterion is based on content standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required at grade seven.

Genre (Fictional Narrative Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<p><b>3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provides an <i>adequately developed</i> plot line, including major and minor characters and a <i>definite</i> setting.</li> <li>■ Includes <i>appropriate</i> strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses most of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ Maintains a <i>mostly consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including use of isolated and/or single word transitions.</li> <li>■ Presents a central idea with <i>mostly relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes some sentence <i>variety</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do <b>not</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provides a <i>minimally developed</i> plot line, including characters and a setting.</li> <li>■ <i>Attempts</i> to use strategies but with <i>minimal</i> effectiveness (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses <i>some</i> of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates <i>little</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ Maintains an <i>inconsistent</i> point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include <i>ineffective or awkward</i> transitions that do not unify important ideas.</li> <li>■ <i>Suggests</i> a central idea with <i>limited</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes <i>little</i> sentence <i>variety</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>many errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors <b>may</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> a developed plot line.</li> <li>■ <i>Fails</i> to use strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses <i>only one</i> part, if any, of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates <i>no</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas.</li> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> a central idea but may contain <i>marginally related</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes <i>no</i> sentence <i>variety</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>serious errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>

## 2007 Grade Seven Scoring Rubric: Response to Literature Writing

	Genre (Response to Literature Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develops interpretations that demonstrate a <i>thoughtful</i>, comprehensive grasp of the text. (Gr. 7 WA 2.2 a)</li> <li>■ Organizes <i>accurate</i> and <i>coherent</i> interpretations around <i>clear</i> ideas, premises, or images from the literary work. (Gr. 7 WA 2.2 b)</li> <li>■ Provides <i>specific</i> textual examples and details to support the interpretations. (Gr. 7 WA 2.2 c)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Clearly</i> addresses the writing task.*</li> <li>■ Demonstrates a <i>clear</i> understanding of purpose and audience.**</li> <li>■ Maintains a <i>consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the <i>effective</i> use of transitions. (Gr. 7 WS 1.1)</li> <li>■ Includes a <i>clearly presented</i> central idea with <i>relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 7 WS 1.2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes sentence <i>variety</i>. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains some <i>errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develops interpretations that demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the text.</li> <li>■ Organizes <i>accurate</i> and <i>reasonably</i> coherent interpretations around <i>clear</i> ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.</li> <li>■ Provides textual examples and details to support the interpretations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses <i>most</i> of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ Maintains a <i>mostly consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including use of isolated and/or single word transitions.</li> <li>■ Presents a central idea with <i>mostly relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes some sentence <i>variety</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do <b>not</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develops interpretations that demonstrate a <i>limited</i> grasp of the text.</li> <li>■ Includes interpretations that <i>lack</i> accuracy or coherence as related to ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.</li> <li>■ Provides <i>few, if any</i>, textual examples and details to support the interpretations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses <i>some</i> of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates <i>little</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ Maintains an <i>inconsistent</i> point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include <i>ineffective</i> or <i>awkward</i> transitions that do not unify important ideas.</li> <li>■ <i>Suggests</i> a central idea with <i>limited</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes <i>little</i> sentence variety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>many errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors <b>may</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>

\* Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.

\*\* This criterion is based on content standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required at grade seven.

Genre (Response to Literature Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<p><b>1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demonstrates <i>little</i> grasp of the text.</li> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> an interpretation or <i>may</i> be a simple retelling of the passage.</li> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> textual examples and details.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses <i>only one</i> part, if any, of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates <i>no</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas.</li> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> a central idea but may contain <i>marginally related</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes <i>no</i> sentence variety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>serious errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>

## 2007 Grade Seven Scoring Rubric: Persuasive Writing

Genre (Persuasive Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<p><b>4</b> ■ <i>Authoritatively</i> defends a clear position with precise and relevant evidence and <i>convincingly</i> addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations. (Gr. 7 WA 2.4 a, b, c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Clearly</i> addresses the writing task.*</li> <li>■ Demonstrates a <i>clear</i> understanding of purpose and audience.**</li> <li>■ Maintains a <i>consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the <i>effective</i> use of transitions. (Gr. 7 WS 1.1)</li> <li>■ Includes a <i>clearly presented</i> central idea with <i>relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 7 WS 1.2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes sentence <i>variety</i>. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>some errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do <b>not</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b> ■ <i>Generally</i> defends a position with relevant evidence and addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses most of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ Maintains a <i>mostly consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including use of isolated and/or single word transitions.</li> <li>■ Presents a central idea with <i>mostly relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes some sentence <i>variety</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do <b>not</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> ■ Defends a position with <i>little, if any</i>, evidence and <i>may</i> address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses <i>some</i> of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates <i>little</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ Maintains an <i>inconsistent</i> point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include <i>ineffective</i> or <i>awkward</i> transitions that do not unify important ideas.</li> <li>■ <i>Suggests</i> a central idea with <i>limited</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes <i>little</i> sentence <i>variety</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>many errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors <b>may</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>

\* Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.

\*\* This criterion is based on content standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required at grade seven.

Genre ( <i>Persuasive Writing</i> )	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<b>1</b> ■ <i>Fails</i> to defend a position with any evidence and <i>fails</i> to address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.	■ Addresses <i>only one</i> part, if any, of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates <i>no</i> understanding of purpose and audience. ■ <i>Lacks</i> a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas. ■ <i>Lacks</i> a central idea but may contain <i>marginally related</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.	■ Includes <i>no</i> sentence variety.	■ Contains <i>serious errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

## 2007 Grade Seven Scoring Rubric: Summary Writing

Genre (Summary Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<p><b>4</b> ■ Summarizes text with clear identification of the main idea(s) and most significant details, in student's own words, and clearly reflects underlying meaning. (Gr. 7 WA 2.5 a, b, c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Clearly</i> addresses the writing task.*</li> <li>■ Demonstrates a <i>clear</i> understanding of purpose and audience.**</li> <li>■ Maintains a <i>consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the <i>effective</i> use of transitions. (Gr. 7 WS 1.1)</li> <li>■ Includes a <i>clearly presented</i> central idea with <i>relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 7 WS 1.2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes sentence <i>variety</i>. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>some errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do <b>not</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b> ■ Summarizes text with the main idea(s) and important details, mostly in the student's own words, and generally reflects underlying meaning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses most of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ Maintains a <i>mostly consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including use of isolated and/or single word transitions.</li> <li>■ Presents a central idea with <i>mostly relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes some sentence <i>variety</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do <b>not</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> ■ Summarizes text with some of the main idea(s) and details, which may be superficial, minimal use of the student's own words, and minimal reflection of underlying meaning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses <i>some</i> of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates <i>little</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ Maintains an <i>inconsistent</i> point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include <i>ineffective</i> or <i>awkward</i> transitions that do not unify important ideas.</li> <li>■ Suggests a central idea with limited facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes <i>little</i> sentence variety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>many errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors <b>may</b> interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>

\* Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.

\*\* This criterion is based on content standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required at grade seven.

<b>Genre (Summary Writing)</b>	<b>Organization and Focus</b>	<b>Sentence Structure</b>	<b>Conventions</b>
<p><b>1</b> ■ Summarizes text with few, if any, of the main ideas and/or details, little or no use of the student's own words, little or no reflection of underlying meaning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses <i>only one</i> part, if any, of the writing task.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates <i>no</i> understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas.</li> <li>■ <i>Lacks</i> a central idea but may contain <i>marginally related</i> facts, details, and/or explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Includes <i>no</i> sentence variety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contains <i>serious errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.</li> </ul>