California Standards Tests

Teacher Guide for the 2008 California Writing Standards Test in Grade Four

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Available on the STAR Program Resources Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp

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

Acknowledgments

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 eight years, have contributed to the development of the teacher guides for the California Writing Standards Tests (CSTs in writing) for grades four and seven.

Introduction

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 California Writing Standards Tests (CSTs in writing) have been administered annually since 2001 in grades four and seven as a part of the California English–Language Arts Standards Tests (CSTs in English–language arts).

The CSTs in writing address state Writing Applications 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.

The writing test in both of these grades may address any of the writing types identified as appropriate for testing at that grade level. In addition to the CSTs in writing, the 2008 CSTs in English–language arts in grades four and seven contained 75 multiple-choice questions. The CSTs in English–language arts in grades four and seven will continue to include a CST in writing and multiple-choice questions.

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 in English–language arts. Each guide features the writing tasks administered that year, sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics used to score student responses. The guides for the CSTs in writing from 2005 through 2008 provide multiple sample student responses at each score point for all writing tasks administered. Teacher guides from previous years are available on the STAR Program Resources Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp.

Writing Tasks and Scoring Rubric

The writing tasks for the 2008 CSTs in writing in grade four are shown on pages 6 through 8 and pages 34 through 37. Students in schools, tracks, or programs in session on March 4, 2008, responded to the writing task administered on that date or on the makeup date, March 5. Students in schools, tracks, or programs not in session on March 4 or 5 responded to the writing task administered on April 29, 2008, or on the makeup date, April 30. Students had time to read the tasks and to plan, write, and edit their responses. The estimated administration time was 75 minutes, including time for directions.

Student responses to the writing tasks administered in 2008 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. It is important to note that when readers score the CSTs in writing, they take into account that student responses are first-draft writings.

The scoring rubric for grade four is shown on pages 60 and 61. On pages 62 through 67, the grade four rubric is presented in a rearranged format to indicate how all of the scoring criteria are applied to student responses in each genre tested.

In 2008 each student's result on the grade four 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 2008, students in grade four were required to write a response to literature. It should be noted, however, that the type of writing students may be asked to produce can change annually because other genres may be tested in this grade.

Sample Student Responses and Teacher Commentaries

Sample student responses to the writing tasks administered in grade four on March 4 and 5, 2008, are shown on pages 10 through 33, along with teacher commentaries. Sample student responses to the tasks administered on April 29 and 30, 2008, are shown on pages 38 through 59, 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 four in 2008. 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 illustrate. Furthermore, responses demonstrate differing combinations of strengths and weaknesses within a given score point.

Suggested Uses for This Teacher Guide

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 2008 CST in writing in grade four. 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 in the section that follows 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 tasks, scoring rubrics, student responses).

- Examine the released writing tasks to identify distinguishing elements of each writing genre.

- 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-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 in writing programs that may need to be strengthened. 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, but are not limited to, 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 can provide a focus for 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 student 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 Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

The writing task below was administered to students who took the CST in writing in grade four on March 4 or 5, 2008. Sample student responses and teacher commentaries for this task are shown on pages 10 through 33.

Response to Literature Writing Task

Directions:

- Read the story on the following pages.
- As you read, you may mark the story or make notes. Marks and notes will not be scored.
- After reading the story, you will be given directions to write an essay. You will have time to read, plan your essay, and write a first draft with edits.
- You may reread or go back to the story at any time during the test.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.
- Use only a No. 2 pencil to write your essay.

Scoring:

Your writing will be scored on how well you

- show your understanding of the story
- give examples from the story
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

First Choice

by Cheryl Mays Halton

"Hi, Mom," Franny said as she ran into the kitchen. "Sorry I'm late, but I stopped by to see the puppies at Mrs. Morton's. They're the most beautiful little Irish setters I've ever seen."

"How old are they now?" Mother asked.

"Four weeks old today. In just two more weeks I'll be able to bring one home," Franny said, smiling.

"You'll have to work awfully hard to earn enough money in just two more weeks," said Mother.

"Yes," Franny agreed, "but Mrs. Johnson said I could cut her grass Saturday, and Dad promised to have some extra chores for me, too."

Franny had been saving her money for a long time—ever since last summer when her parents had said she could have a dog if she saved enough money to help pay for it. …

The next day Franny stopped in to see the puppies just as she did every day.

Mrs. Morton unlatched the gate to the pen so Franny could play with puppies. "Which one do you want?" she asked. "I have six puppies and eight people wanting them. I've told everyone that you get first choice."

"I haven't made up my mind yet," Franny answered. "But I'll decide tonight, for certain."

Franny walked home slowly along the creek. She needed time to decide which puppy she wanted.

Franny was thinking of the puppies when, suddenly, she heard a soft, high-pitched noise coming from a pile of small branches by the side of the creek.

There it was again. A whimper. It seemed to come from under the pile of brush. Franny lifted a branch carefully and then another and another. Still she didn't see anything. But now the whimpering was louder and more excited. Franny lifted another branch. There was a hole, and at the bottom of the hole was a little black-and-white dog. It was not much larger than a puppy, and it was thin, dirty, and full of burrs.

"I'd better take you home and get you some food and water. You look awfully hungry."

Franny walked toward home, carrying the little dog. As she reached her yard, she saw her mother standing on the porch.

"I thought you wanted an Irish setter," Mother said, "and here you come with a little black-and-white dog."

"I still want an Irish setter, Mom," Franny said, "but I found this dog in the woods, and he looks hungry. I'll feed him, and then he'll probably find his way back home."

"He certainly looks happy that you found him," Mother said. "He hasn't quit licking you for a minute…"

But after dinner Franny looked out the window, and there was the little dog sitting on the porch, just waiting for her to come out again.

Franny opened the door and bent down to pet the little dog. Up he hopped, his tail wagging furiously, and his tongue reaching for Franny's cheek. …

The next morning at breakfast Franny peeked out the kitchen window, and there sat the little dog, waiting patiently for her to come outside.

Franny opened the door and stepped out on the porch. The dog barked happily and ran around and around her, jumping delightedly as Franny tried to pet him. The little dog was having such fun that soon Franny was laughing and coaxing him to greater excitement. She didn't even notice her mother standing in the kitchen door until she said, "Well, Francine, have you decided which puppy you want to buy?"

"I'm not going to buy a puppy, Mom," Franny said.

"But I thought you had your heart set on an Irish setter," Mother said.

"I did—but so do lots of other people. And this puppy has his heart set on me."

"First Choice" from *Highlights for Children*, October 1982, copyright © 1982 by Highlights for Children, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. Used by permission.

Writing the Essay

Why do you think "First Choice" is a good title for this story? Use details from the story to support your answer.

When you write your essay, remember

- to show your understanding of the story
- to give examples from the story
- to use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Response to Literature Writing Task—Grade Four

The student responses shown on pages 10 through 33 and on pages 38 through 59 were scored using the grade four scoring rubric shown on pages 60 and 61. This rubric contains criteria adapted from California's Writing Applications content standards that speak to genres and their characteristics for grade four, including the Writing Applications content standard for grade four response to literature 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)

2.2 Write responses to literature:

a. Demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.

b. Support judgments through references to both the text and prior knowledge.

Grade Four Focus

The best student responses to the 2008 writing tasks exhibited the following characteristics:

- They maintained a consistent organizational structure and clearly differentiated between introductory material, supporting material, and concluding material. Separate paragraphs were usually devoted to each of these sections, often with multiple paragraphs for the supporting material. They used effective transitional devices to bridge ideas between sentences and paragraphs.

- They included an insightful central idea supported by pertinent and specific textual examples. When the connection between the examples and central idea was not obvious, these responses included an explanation that clarified how the examples supported the idea. The responses did not include material extraneous to the central idea.

- They demonstrated sentence variety by the appropriate use of simple, compound, and complex sentences. Through the effective use of sentences with varied lengths and structures, the writer reduced repetition, created interest, and enhanced readability.

- They contained some errors in conventions, but these errors were those expected in first-draft writing in grade four. The errors did not interfere with the effectiveness of the writing or with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample One

First Choice is the story of Franny, who wants a puppy and has been saving up to buy one from Mrs. Morton for a very long time. But, when she finds a lost dog in the woods, she changes her mind about buying an Irish setter from Mrs. Morton!

I think First Choice is a good title for this story because Mrs. Morton, the lady Franny wanted to buy an Irish setter puppy from, said that, even though eight other people wanted one of the six Irish setters, Franny could have first choice of the one she wanted. That all changed when one day, Franny heard a whimper and found a skinny, black and white dog, hidden in a mound of brush. Franny gave it food and water and expected it to then go home, but even after dinner, the dog was sitting there on Franny's front porch.

The next morning, the small dog was still there, so Franny decided to keep the small, lonely dog. Now, someone else who wanted an Irish setter could have first choice. That's why I think First Choice is a good title for this story.

Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task and demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose by using textual details to explain why "First Choice" is a good title for the story.

The response maintains a consistent organizational structure. The introductory paragraph leads gracefully into the body of the response by providing background and foreshadowing Franny's change of heart ("… Franny … has been saving up to buy [an Irish setter] … for a very long time. But, when she finds a lost dog in the woods, she changes her mind about buying an Irish setter …"). The middle and concluding paragraphs provide support for the central idea. Transitional devices throughout the response bridge ideas between sentences and paragraphs ("That all changed when one day …"; "… but even after dinner …"; "The next morning …"; "Now, someone else who wanted an Irish setter …"; and "That's why I think …").

The central idea shows a clear understanding of the story ("… First Choice is a good title for this story because … Franny could have first choice of the [Irish setter] she wanted … [When] Franny … found a skinny, black and white dog, … someone else … could have first choice."). The middle paragraph provides support for the central idea ("I think First Choice is a good title for this story because Mrs. Morton … said that … Franny could have first choice of the one she wanted.") and begins a succinct summary of the story. The concluding paragraph provides further support and completes the summary ("… Franny decided to keep the small, lonely dog. Now, someone else who wanted an Irish setter could have first choice."). The writer maintains an excellent focus by summarizing only as much of the story as necessary to help support the central idea.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample One (continued)

Commentary

The response includes excellent sentence variety. The middle paragraph, for example, begins with a long, but tightly structured complex sentence that incorporates multiple modifying phrases. The next sentence is a shorter complex sentence with a compound verb, and the final sentence in the paragraph is a longer compound sentence.

Errors in the conventions of the English language include unnecessary commas after a conjunction ("But, when she finds…"), after the indefinite pronoun "that" ("… Mrs. Morton, the lady Franny wanted to buy an Irish setter puppy from, said that, even though eight other people ..."), and between a noun and a past participial phrase ("… black and white dog, hidden in a mound of brush."). Underlining rather than quotation marks is mistakenly used to identify a story's title ("First Choice is…"). These errors are to be expected in first-draft writing in grade four and do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

A clear organizational structure and sophisticated, detailed sentences are among the qualities that make this a score point 4 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample Two

I believe that "First Choice" is a good title for this story and here is why.

At first when Franny wanted an Irish setter she was happy when she knew she was going to get one. She was even happier when she found out she was going to get first choice out of the puppies, just like the title. Another reason the title is good is because she ended up picking a dog first, but not an Irish setter. Mrs. Morton did say that she got first choice and she did. I think that is the best reason. But another one is because the little dog she found in the woods wanted her to be his owner because the dog liked Franny. An example of the little black and white liking Franny would be when the dog did not stop licking her for minutes and also the little dog would not leave her house. After dinner the dog was there waiting for Franny to pet him. Also the same thing happened in the morning. The dog had probably seen many people but Franny was his first choice to be his owner or friend.

The last reason I think that the title fits the story is because after reading the title "First Choice", I was able to predict what the story was about, and because the title sort of just fit because everything or almost everything was about being first or having first choice for something. Just like when Franny was going to have first choice for an Irish setter but picked a different dog first.

This is why I think that the title "First Choice" is a good title for the story.

Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task and demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose by stating that "First Choice" is a good title for the story and by effectively supporting this idea with details.

The response presents a generally consistent organizational structure. It contains one-sentence introductory and concluding paragraphs and middle paragraphs that support the contention that "First Choice" is a good title. The second paragraph begins well by presenting supporting reasons in a logical order (i.e., the first reason is that Franny will get the first choice of the puppies; the second is that Franny did, in fact, choose a dog first; the third is that the black and white puppy "chose" Franny first, and so on). After devoting little discussion to each supporting point early in this paragraph, however, the writer devotes a disproportionate amount of the second paragraph to prove that the dog liked Franny ("An example of the little black and white liking Franny would be when the dog did not stop licking her for minutes and also the little dog would not leave her house. After dinner the dog was there waiting for Franny to pet him. Also the same thing happened in the morning."). Transitional words and phrases throughout the response provide structure and link ideas ("At first …"; "Another reason …"; "But another one is because …"; "An example …"; "After dinner …"; "The last reason …").

The first paragraph introduces the central idea that "First Choice" is a good title. This idea is elaborated through the course of the essay with mostly relevant examples (Franny gets first choice of the Irish setters; Mrs. Morton tells Franny she will get first choice; Franny is, indeed, the first to choose a dog; the black and white puppy "chooses" Franny first; and the title enables the writer to predict what the story will be about). Although all the supporting examples may not

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample Two (continued)

Commentary

be equally relevant, they nevertheless demonstrate a clear understanding of the literary work and, as a whole, provide effective support for the central idea.

The response demonstrates sentence variety. In places, for example, the writer mixes simple and compound sentences ("... The dog had probably seen many people but Franny was his first choice to be his owner or friend."). The response contains numerous complex sentences as well ("At first when Franny wanted an Irish setter she was happy when she knew she was going to get one. She was even happier when she found out she was going to get first choice out of the puppies, just like the title.").

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. The errors include a lack of punctuation between independent clauses ("I believe that 'First Choice' is a good title for this story and here is why."; "Mrs. Morton did say that she got first choice and she did."), the lack of a comma after an introductory subordinate clause ("At first when Franny wanted an Irish setter she was happy when she knew she was going to get one."), and the placement of a comma outside rather than inside quotation marks ("after reading the title 'First Choice', I was able to predict …"). These errors are to be expected in first-draft writing in grade four and do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

A clear central idea that is well supported with examples and a sound grasp of the conventions of the English language are among the qualities that make this a lower-range score point 4 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample Three

I think "First Choice" is a very good name for this story. A lot of people have a first choice, such as the black and white dog and Franny.

Franny gets first choice of the Irish Setters, but chooses the little black and white puppy first instead. Mrs. Morton even says, "A lot of people want the puppies, but I told them you get first choice."

The puppy gets a first choice of humans and chooses Franny. He gets lost in the woods, Franny finds him, and then she feeds, washes, and cares for him. So, he gets his heart set on Franny and, instead of a Irish Setter, Franny wants him. She says, "I did have my heart set on a Irish Setter but so do lots of other people. And this puppy has his heart set on me." So Franny chooses the puppy first, and the puppy chooses Franny first.

As you can see, alot of people got a "first choice" in this story. In the end, Franny gets a puppy, and the dog gets a owner. I think the title suits the story very well.

Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task and demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose by illustrating with textual details why "First Choice" is a good title for the story.

The response maintains a consistent focus on why "First Choice" is a good title and a generally consistent organizational structure that includes introductory, middle, and concluding paragraphs. The opening paragraph begins well by introducing ideas that will be developed later ("I think 'First Choice' is a very good name for this story. A lot of people have a first choice, such as the black and white dog and Franny."). The second paragraph and the first sentence in the third paragraph present information that supports these ideas. The subsequent sentences in paragraph three meander some before reiterating that Franny and the puppy are one another's first choice. The final paragraph repeats the central idea and elaborates on the significance of the story's events ("As you can see, alot of people got a 'first choice' in this story. In the end, Franny gets a puppy, and the dog gets a owner.").

The writer clearly presents the central idea that "First Choice" is a "very good name for this story [because a] lot of people have a first choice . . . ." The second paragraph supports this idea ("Franny gets first choice of the Irish Setters, but chooses the little black and white puppy first instead. Mrs. Morton even says, 'A lot of people want the puppies, but I told them you get first choice.'"), and the first sentence in the third paragraph adds further support ("The puppy gets a first choice of humans and chooses Franny."). The last sentence of the third paragraph helps clarify the point of the paragraph ("So Franny chooses the puppy first, and the puppy chooses Franny first."). Textual references provide effective support for

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample Three (continued)

Commentary

judgments about the central idea and demonstrate a clear understanding of the literary work.

The response demonstrates sentence variety. Although a number of sentences are simple, they demonstrate structural variety by including a modifying phrase ("A lot of people have a first choice, such as the black and white dog and Franny.") or a compound verb ("Franny gets first choice of the Irish Setters, but chooses the little black and white puppy first instead."). The response also contains compound sentences ("He gets lost in the woods, Franny finds him, and then she feeds, washes, and cares for him. So, he gets his heart set on Franny and, instead of a Irish Setter, Franny wants him.") and a complex sentence ("As you can see, alot of people got a 'first choice' …").

The response contains few errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include incorrect articles before vowels ("'I did have my heart set on a Irish Setter …'"; "… the dog gets a owner.") and unnecessary commas ("So, he gets his heart set on Franny …"; "Franny gets first choice of the Irish Setters, but chooses …"). These errors are to be expected in first-draft writing in grade four and do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

A central idea supported with relevant examples from the story and generally sound conventions are among the qualities that make this a lower-range score point 4 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample One

I think First Choice is a good title. It's a good title because Franny does get first choice. First Franny wants a dog. She is gonna get an Irish dog. Franny's gonna get the dog from her neighbor. Franny has been saving money for the dog. When she went to go visit them her neighbor Mrs. Morton said, "I have six puppy's and eight people wanting them." Mrs. Morton said, "Franny you could have first choice." So Franny does get first choice. But something else happened. Franny finds another dog, and she just takes it home for food and water. She didn't even think of keeping the dog. But Franny kept the dog. I think that Franny still got first choice. That's why First Choice is a good title.

Commentary

This response addresses the writing task and demonstrates an understanding of purpose by explaining why "First Choice" is a good title and by supporting it with examples from the story.

The response maintains a mostly consistent organizational structure. The first two sentences serve as an introduction that presents the central idea, the third through the next-to-last sentences support this idea, and the final sentence makes a concluding statement. Transitional devices are used to connect ideas ("First Franny wants a dog."; "When she went to go visit…"; "But something else happened."). The organization would be strengthened, however, with paragraph breaks to differentiate these three sections, and the introduction and especially the conclusion need to be developed more fully.

The response presents a central idea ("['First Choice' is] a good title because Franny does get first choice.") followed by a story summary that provides some support for the writer's judgments. The earlier, more detailed portion of the summary includes a quotation from Franny's neighbor, Mrs. Morton, ("'Franny you could have first choice.'") that, the writer says, shows "Franny does get first choice" in the story. The latter portion of the summary is less detailed and vague but provides some textual support ("Franny finds another dog, and she just takes it home for food and water. She didn't even think of keeping the dog. But Franny kept the dog. I think that Franny still got first choice."). These explanations demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.

The response includes some sentence variety. All sentences are simple, except for one complex sentence ("When she went to go visit them her neighbor Mrs. Morton said, 'I have six puppy's and

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample One (continued)

Commentary

eight people wanting them.'") and one compound sentence ("Franny finds another dog, and she just takes it home for food and water."). Despite their repetitive subject-verb beginnings, the simple sentences avoid undue monotony largely because transitional devices reduce choppiness ("First Franny wants a dog. … So Franny does get first choice. But something else happened. … But Franny kept the dog.").

The response contains some errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include the use of slang ("Fanny's gonna get the dog …"), the use of underlining rather than quotation marks to indicate a story's title ("… First Choice is a good title."), unwarranted shifts in verb tense ("she just takes it home for food and water. She didn't even think of keeping the dog."), and an unnecessary apostrophe ("… I have six puppy's …"). On the other hand, the response contains no misspellings and demonstrates correct use of contractions ("It's a good title …"; "That's why First Choice …") and of commas to introduce quotations ("… her neighbor Mrs. Morton said, 'I have six …'"; "Mrs. Morton said, 'Franny you could …'"). The errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although this response would be strengthened by combining short sentences, a mostly consistent organization, a central idea supported with examples, and generally clear sentences make it a score point 3 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample Two

First Choice

Franny wanted a irsh-sttler very badly. Mrs. Morton had a dog that gave birth to six baby irsh-settlers, and eight people wanted one. Franny found a stray dog and took it home. Mrs. Morton told Franny that she got first choice. I think "First Choice" is a good title for this story because at the end of the story, Franny's first choice was to keep the stray white and black dog she found. Insteed of an irsh-settler. Plus, the dog had it's heart set on Franny too. Both of their first choice was each other. I could tell that the dog's first choice was Franny because the dog kept on licking her and wagged it's tail a lot. Also because the little dog waited outside on the porch patiently when Franny was inside the house.

Commentary

This writer addresses most of the writing task and demonstrates an understanding of purpose by explaining why "First Choice" is a good title for the story and by supporting this explanation with examples.

Although the response maintains a mostly consistent focus on why "First Choice" is a good title, the focus does not become clear until the fifth sentence, where the writer states the central idea ("I think 'First Choice' is a good title for this story because at the end of the story, Franny's first choice was to keep the stray white and black dog she found."). The four-sentence summary that precedes this sentence lacks focus because it is unclear how it relates to the writer's purpose. The organizational structure lacks consistency as well. The writer identifies two reasons that "First Choice" is a good title (Franny makes the black and white puppy her first choice and the puppy makes Franny its first choice) but devotes a disproportionate amount of the response to the second reason ("I could tell that the dog's first choice was Franny because the dog kept on licking her and wagged it's tail a lot. Also because the little dog waited outside on the porch patiently when Franny was inside the house."). This response also lacks a conclusion.

The writer presents the central idea that "First Choice" is a good title because Mrs. Morton tells Franny she has first choice of the Irish setters and because Franny and the black and white dog are each other's first choice. The writer supports this idea with textual references ("... Franny's first choice was to keep the stray white and black dog she found. Insteed of an irsh-settler. ... I could tell that the dog's first choice was Franny because the dog kept on licking her and wagged it's tail a lot. Also because the little dog waited outside on the porch patiently ...").

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample Two (continued)

Commentary

Although the supporting evidence is sometimes less than specific (where the writer writes, for example, that "Mrs. Morton told Franny that she got first choice" without supplying any clarifying context), the textual references the writer uses to support the central idea demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.

Although sentences early in the response begin with a repetitive subject-verb pattern ("Franny wanted an irsh-sttler very badly. Mrs. Morton had a dog that gave birth to six baby irsh-settlers, and eight people wanted one. Franny found a stray dog and took it home. Mrs. Morton told Franny…"), the response occasionally incorporates a longer complex sentence ("I think 'First Choice' is a good title for this story because at the end of the story, Franny's first choice was to keep the stray white and black dog she found."; "I could tell that the dog's first choice was Franny because the dog kept on licking her and wagged it's tail a lot.").

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. The errors include sentence fragments ("Insteed of an irsh-settler."; "Also because the little dog waited outside on the porch patiently when Franny was inside the house."), the underlining of a story's title ("I think 'First Choice' is a good title…"), an unnecessary apostrophe ("it's), and misspellings ("Insteed," "irsh-settlers"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

A central idea that is supported by textual references and demonstrates an understanding of the story makes this a score point 3 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample Three

I think First Choice is a good title because the black-and-white dog could be the first dog choice for Franny. Franny even could call the dog First Choice. I also think it's a good title because she may have a hard time of choosing the first dog of the choice she wanted or something like that. I also think First Choice is good because this whole story actually is about the choice that she wants and it becomes a problem of her deciding the choice of dog she wants until finally she picks the dog she desires and she liked it. Even the dog even liked her back by not stopping to kiss her. I even think First Choice is a good title because she wants the Irish Settler as her first choice but then, she changes and says that the black-and-white dog as actual first choice for the dog she wants as a pet.

Commentary

This response addresses most of the writing task by explaining why "First Choice" is a good title for the story, and it demonstrates a general understanding of purpose by providing mostly relevant textual references to support judgments.

The response maintains a consistent focus on the significance of the story's title, but it demonstrates an inconsistent organizational structure that presents justifications for the story's title in no apparent order ("… First Choice is a good title because the black-and-white dog could be the first dog choice for Franny … because she may have a hard time of choosing the first dog of the choice she wanted … because this whole story actually is about the choice that she wants … because she wants the Irish Settler as her first choice …").

The response presents the central idea that, for reasons introduced through the course of the essay, "First Choice" is an appropriate title. The response provides some support for this idea with explanations that are mostly relevant. Some supporting evidence, however, is irrelevant ("Even the dog even liked her back by not stopping to kiss her."), unclear ("I also think it's a good title because she may have a hard time of choosing the first dog of the choice she wanted or something like that."), or general rather than specific ("I also think First Choice is good because this whole story actually is about the choice that she wants and it becomes a problem of her deciding the choice of dog she wants until finally she picks the dog she desires and she liked it."). The evidence is nevertheless adequate to demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.

The response includes some sentence variety. The first three sentences, for example, include a complex sentence, a short simple sentence, and another

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample Three (continued)

Commentary

complex sentence ("I think First Choice is a good title because the black-and-white dog could be the first dog choice for Franny. Franny could even call the dog First Choice. I also think it's a good title because she may have a hard time of choosing the first dog of the choice she wanted or something like that."). Sentences tend to begin repetitively, however, ("I also think…"; "I also think…"; "I even think…"), and the longest sentences are loosely constructed ("I also think First Choice is good because this whole story actually is about the choice that she wants and it becomes a problem of her deciding the choice of dog she wants until finally she picks the dog she desires and she liked it.").

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. These include underlining a story's title rather than placing it in quotation marks ("I think First Choice is a good title"), misuse of a preposition ("…she may have a hard time of choosing…"), and random shifts in verb tense ("…it becomes a problem of her deciding the choice of dog she wants until finally she picks the dog she desires and she liked it. Even the dog even liked her…"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A central idea that demonstrates an understanding of the story, supporting evidence that is general rather than specific, and an organization that demonstrates some inconsistency are the main elements that make this a score point 3 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample One

"First Choice"

Here is a essay about why "First Choice" is a great name for a story. "First Choice" is a great title becuse Franny gose and sees Mrs. Morton's puppys she tells her mom that in just two more weeks she can take a puppy home.

The other reason that "First Choice" is a great title is becuse Mrs. Morton's said I've told evreyone that you get first choice. And becuse she choice that puppy! And she choice that one first. That why first choice is a good title.

Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by stating that "First Choice" is a good title for the story and identifying textual elements that support this judgment. The response demonstrates little understanding of purpose, however, by providing limited explanations to support some judgments and no support for others.

The focus of the response is inconsistent. The first paragraph presents the central idea that "First Choice" is a good title, but the information in the paragraph does not relate to this idea ("'First Choice' is a great title becuse Franny gose and sees Mrs. Morton's puppys she tells her mom that in just two more weeks she can take a puppy home."). The second paragraph focuses more consistently on the central idea but provides only limited supporting details and explanation ("The other reason that 'First Choice' is a great title is becuse Mrs. Morton's said I've told evreyone that you get first choice. And becuse she choice that puppy! And she choice that one first.").

Although the second paragraph suggests an understanding of the literary work, that understanding is not demonstrated because so few examples are provided to support the writer's judgments.

Most sentences in this limited response are poorly structured and include errors in conventions. The second sentence in the first paragraph, for example, is a run-on sentence ("'First Choice' is a great title becuse Franny gose and sees Mrs. Morton's puppys she tells her mom that in just two more weeks she can take a puppy home."), and the second paragraph contains two sentence fragments. The first paragraph, however, does contain a complex sentence that is somewhat more soundly structured ("The other reason that 'First Choice' is a great title is becuse Mrs. Morton's said I've told evreyone that you get first choice.").

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample One (continued)

Commentary

In addition to the errors in sentence structure, other errors in the conventions of the English language include an incorrect article ("Here is a essay …"), a lack of quotation marks to identify quoted material ("… Mrs. Morton's said I've told evreyone that you get first choice."), and spelling errors ("gose" for "goes," "becuse," "evreyone"). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although this response suggests some understanding of the literary work, an inconsistent focus and organization, a central idea that is only partially supported, and sentence and conventions errors make it a score point 2 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample Two

First choice is a good title cause the girl had been waiting for a long time for an Irish setter. but when she found the black and white dog she fond in the woods. her first choice was the black and white dog. because it stoll her heart and the Irish setter didn't.

Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by arguing that "First Choice" is a good title and attempting to support this contention with references to the story. It demonstrates little understanding of purpose, however, by providing only limited textual details to support the writer's contention.

This brief response consists of an opening sentence followed by three sentence fragments. The first sentence introduces a central idea ("First Choice is a good title cause the girl had been waiting for a long time for an Irish setter."). The two fragments that follow extend this idea ("but when she found the black and white dog she fond in the woods. her first choice was the black and white dog."). The third fragment implies closure ("because it stoll her heart and the Irish setter didn't."). The response is too limited, however, to demonstrate a coherent organizational structure.

The writer presents a sound, though limited, central idea ("First choice is a good title cause… [Franny's] first choice was the black and white dog."). The details and explanation to support this judgment are so few and general, however, that the response demonstrates only a limited understanding of the literary work.

This response includes little sentence variety. It appears that the writer is striving for compound and complex sentences, but punctuation errors result in one stand-alone sentence followed by a series of fragments.

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. In addition to the poorly structured sentences already noted, the title of the story is not capitalized or placed in quotation marks ("First choice is a good title…"), the

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample Two (continued)

Commentary

second and third "sentences" begin with lower case letters, and several words are misspelled ("cause" for "because," "fond" for "found," "stoll" for "stole"). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Although this response presents a central idea, limited support for this idea and poor sentence structure make it a score point 2 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample Three

I think "First Choise" is a good title for this story because Franny's heart realy is set on Irish setter. She loved the Irish setter like her own. I realy think that "First Choise" is a great title because the dog loves Franny, and Franny loves the dog. This story should be called "First Choise" because your first choise isn't awlways right. That is why this story should be called "First Choise."

Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by stating that "First Choice" is a good title for the story, but it demonstrates little understanding of purpose because it provides few textual details to illustrate why the title is appropriate.

In this limited response, a series of random sentences produces an unclear focus and inconsistent organizational structure. Although a central idea is suggested at the start of the first sentence ("I think 'First Choise' is a good title for this story…"), subsequent sentences read almost like non sequiturs because it is not clear how they support the central idea.

The central idea, as noted above, is at best weakly supported by statements that "Franny's heart realy is set on Irish setter," that "She loved the Irish setter like her own," and that "'First Choise' is a great title because the dog loves Franny, and Franny loves the dog." These statements are only marginally related to the central idea because without further explanation they do not prove "First Choice" is a good title. The statement that the story "should be called 'First Choise' because your first choise isn't awlways right…" could be an interesting central idea, but it is not supported by discussion elsewhere in the response. The response demonstrates a limited understanding of the literary work.

This response contains some variety in sentence length and sentence structure. The first sentence, for example, is a conventional complex sentence ("I think 'First Choise' is a good title for this story because Franny's heart realy is set on Irish setter."), but the third sentence is a complex sentence with a compound clause within the subordinate clause ("I realy think that 'First Choise' is a great title because the dog loves Franny, and Franny loves the dog.").

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample Three (continued)

Commentary

The second sentence is a straightforward simple sentence, while the fifth sentence is a simple sentence that begins with an appropriate transitional device ("That is why this story should be called 'First Choise.'").

This response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. The writer repeatedly misspells "choice" as "choise" and "really" as "realy." "Always" is misspelled as "awlways." The response also contains an unjustified shift from present to past tense ("I think 'First Choice' is a good title for this story because Franny's heart realy is set on Irish setter. She loved the Irish setter like her own."). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

An inconsistent focus and organization and a central idea that is weakly supported make this a score point 2 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample One

I like this story becuse it got nent stuff I like the woulds is a good essay is good actively aint thaing to creek is thaing to mistake she didn't want to by a bog Franny say he Found this dog in the woods

Commentary

This response does not address the writing task and demonstrates no understanding of purpose. It does not address whether "First Choice" is a good title for the story and does not present or attempt to support any judgment about the title's appropriateness.

This response is limited, lacking a focus and providing no organizational structure. After attempting to explain why the writer liked the story ("I like this story becuse it got nent [neat?] stuff I like the woulds …"), the response lapses into an incomprehensible series of words (" … is a good essay is good actively aint thaing to creek is thaing to mistake …") followed by an attempt to recount the plot (" … she didn't want to by a bog Franny say he Found this dog in the woods").

The response lacks a central idea. The statement that the writer likes the story, the jumbled wording that follows, and the attempt at a plot summary fail to present or support any judgment about the story's title and demonstrate no understanding of the literary work.

The response contains no sentence variety. It consists of one rambling, largely incoherent sentence.

The response contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. It consists mostly of words and word groups patched together almost randomly ("… it got nent stuff I like the woulds is a good essay is good actively aint thaing to creek is thaing to mistake …"). The single sentence contains no internal punctuation to separate independent clauses and no period at the end of the sentence ("she didn't want to by a bog Franny say he Found this dog in the woods"). It has incorrect subject-verb agreement and capitalization ("Franny say he Found …") and several misspellings ("becuse,"

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample One (continued)

Commentary

"woulds" for "woods," "by" for "buy"). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A failure to address the writing task, a lack of focus and organizational structure, and sentence incoherence are among the elements that make this a score point 1 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample Two

First Choice is a good title cuase it means that between a pour little dog or a normole little dog. Thats why it is called First Choice. I like the title Frist Choice I don't know why I like it but to me it ment a lot in the story. But to others it means something diffrint beacas I don't have a dog that's why I like this story.

Commentary

This response addresses one part of the writing task by explaining that "First Choice" is a good title, but it fails to support this idea with details from the story. The response demonstrates little understanding of purpose, and although the writer recognizes the need to explain why "First Choice" is a good title, no explanation is provided.

The response lacks a focus and organizational structure. The first two sentences imply that "First Choice" is a good title because the story is about a choice, but this idea is not presented clearly ("First Choice" is a good title cuase it means that between a pour little dog or a normole little dog. Thats why it is called First Choice."). In the remaining two sentences, the focus wanders. The first of these sentences states an irrelevant opinion ("I like the title Frist Choice I don't know why I like it but to me it ment alot in the story."), and the second sentence drifts into an observation about the writer's life ("But to others it means something diffrint beacas I don't have a dog thats why I like this story.").

The response lacks a central idea about why the title is appropriate. It states that "First Choice" is a good title, but the two sentences that best support this idea are vague and the remaining sentences are irrelevant. The response fails to support judgments and, apart from the vague comments in the first two sentences of the response, demonstrates little understanding of the literary work.

The response contains little sentence variety. The first two sentences include a complex and a simple sentence ("First Choice" is a good title cuase it means that between a pour little dog or a normole little dog. Thats why it is called First Choice."), but the remaining two sentences consist of clauses fused together without punctuation, subordination, or

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample Two (continued)

Commentary

articles ("I like the title Frist Choice I don't know why I like it but to me it ment a lot in the story. But to others it means something diffrint beacas I don't have a dog that's why I like this story.").

The response contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include failing to set off a story's title with punctuation marks ("First Choice is a good title …"), the lack of an apostrophe in a contraction ("… thats why I like …"), misspellings ("cuase" for "because," "normole," "ment" for "meant," "diffrint"), and the run-on sentences noted above. These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

The lack of focus and organization, an apparent lack of understanding of the story, and serious errors in conventions make this a score point 1 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample Three

The resron I think that first choice shood be the title of the story becas the girl had chice to pick a puppies but she did know what one to choice and that is why I think first choice shood be the story.

Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by stating that "First Choice" is a good title for the story and by attempting to explain why. It does not use details from the story, however, to support judgments. Although the writer recognizes the need to explain why "First Choice" is a good title, the response lacks enough explanation to demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.

Although this one-sentence response maintains a sequential structure, it is too limited to fully address the writing task.

The response proposes the central idea that "First Choice" is a good title because "… the girl had chice to pick a puppies but she did know what one to choice …" Characterizing the story in this way, however, suggests that it is about the difficulty of choosing rather than about first choice. Although the response minimally supports the idea that choosing is an issue, the writer's failure to explain the significance of first choices demonstrates a limited understanding of the literary work.

Because this response consists of a single sentence, it demonstrates no variety in sentence length or structure. The single sentence contains a subordinate clause and main clauses linked by conjunctions, but these clauses are strung together loosely.

The response contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include misspellings ("reson," "shood," "becas"), the incorrect use of an infinitive verb form ("… becas the girl had chice to pick a puppies but she did know what …"), the lack of capitalization and quotation marks to identify a story's title ("… that is why I think first choice shood be the story."), the lack of commas between independent clauses ("the girl had chice to pick a

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on March 4 and 5, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample Three (continued)

Commentary

puppies but she did know what one to choice and that is why I think first choice shood be the story.”), and the omission of key words (“...first choice shood be the title of the story becas the girl had chice to pick a puppies but she did [rather than ‘did not’] know what one to choice ...”). These errors interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

This response suggests a central idea and demonstrates a limited understanding of the literary work, but a lack of detail to support the writer’s judgment, a lack of organizational structure, and serious errors in conventions make it an upper-level score point 1 response.

Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

The writing task below was administered to students who took the CST in writing in grade four on April 29 and 30, 2008. Sample student responses and teacher commentaries are presented on pages 38 through 59.

Response to Literature Writing Task

Directions:

- Read the story on the following pages.
- As you read, you may mark the story or make notes. Marks and notes will not be scored.
- After reading the story, you will be given directions to write an essay. You will have time to read, plan your essay, and write a first draft with edits.
- You may reread or go back to the story at any time during the test.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.
- Use only a No. 2 pencil to write your essay.

Scoring:

Your writing will be scored on how well you

- show your understanding of the story
- give examples from the story
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

One day, in a West African forest, a rabbit and a monkey were sitting under a tree by a river. Every few minutes the monkey scratched himself with his long finger. First he scratched his neck. Then he scratched his ribs. Stretching his long arms around him, he even scratched his back. Scratching like this is a habit of monkeys.

The rabbit, close by, was no quieter. Every few minutes he sniffed the air. His nose wrinkled and twitched. His long ears flopped as he turned his head from one side to the other. This is the way of all rabbits. They seem always afraid that some danger is near.

Each animal noticed the movements of the other. And at last the rabbit could stand the monkey's scratching no longer.

"Why do you keep scratching yourself, Friend?" he said to the monkey who was then rubbing an ear. "You are not still a minute. Always, oh, all the time your nails are digging away at your hide. This is a most annoying habit you have."

Now nobody really enjoys being scolded. And so the monkey replied in the same tone of voice.

"My habit is no more annoying than yours, my good Rabbit. You do not keep still either. Your nose wrinkles and twitches. Your long ears keep flopping. Every few minutes you turn your silly head from one side to the other as if you were afraid."

"Well, perhaps I do twitch my nose and turn my head. But I can easily stop," the rabbit declared.

"I'll bet that you can't. Although I myself could easily keep from scratching, if I really wanted to." The monkey clasped both of his forepaws together.

They argued back and forth.

"I can stop my habit, but you cannot."

"If you can, I can." So it went until at last the monkey broke off.

"We'll make a test," he suggested. "We'll see which one of us is strong enough to break his bad habit. I'll bet you I can keep still for the whole afternoon. And I'll bet you cannot."

"Good!" There was nothing the rabbit could do but agree. "The one who moves first will lose the bet." He gave his head one last turn, and his nose one last twitch.

There they both sat, under the tree by the West African river. Not one move did either make. But each looked very unhappy.

Never in all his life did the skin of that monkey feel so dry and itchy. The rabbit's heart was cold with his fear of the unseen danger that might be behind him. But the monkey did not scratch. The rabbit did not turn his head.

It was not really very long. A beetle passing by had crawled only a few yards along the riverbank. But it seemed to the two animals that they had not moved for a whole day.

"What shall I do?" the poor rabbit was thinking hard. "I cannot keep still very much longer. If I could only sniff once! If I could but turn my head halfway round! Then it would not be so bad."

At the same time the monkey's hide was burning and itching.

"I cannot keep from scratching much longer," the beast said to himself. "If only I could scratch without the rabbit seeing me."

It was the rabbit who spoke first.

"The time is long, Friend Monkey. Of course I am quite comfortable. I am entirely easy in my mind, Monkey. But the sun is still high in the sky. Why should we not tell each other a story to make the afternoon pass more quickly?"

"Well, why not?" The monkey suspected the rabbit was thinking of playing some trick. But he only added, "Yes, Rabbit, let us, each one, tell a story."

"I'll begin, Monkey. I will tell you of one day last month when I was far out of this forest. I was alone in a clearing, and there was not one bush to hide me."

Here the monkey broke in. He did not yet know what trick the rabbit had thought of, but he knew he should be prepared.

"Oh, Rabbit," he cried, "that very same thing once happened to me."

"Now don't interrupt." The rabbit was impatient to get on with his tale. "I heard a noise in the tall grass on this side of me." Like any storyteller he naturally turned his head to show how it was. "I saw some hyenas running toward me. One came from this side. One came from the other side." Again and again the rabbit's head was turned to illustrate his tale.

"Other hyenas came after them. From the right; from the left; from behind; and before me." Oh, now the rabbit was having a fine time, turning his head and twitching his nose. Anyone telling of so many dangers would have to do the same thing.

The monkey soon saw what his friend was up to. The moment the rabbit stopped to get breath, he began his own story.

"One day," he cried, "I went to the village on the other side of the forest. Some boys saw me there. And they began to throw stones at me."

"One stone hit me here." The monkey reached up and rubbed his neck to show where the stone hit. Oh, it did feel good to get in just that one little scratch.

"Another stone hit me here." The monkey reached up and rubbed his neck to show where the stone hit. Oh, it did feel good to get in just that one little scratch.

"Another stone hit me here." The monkey rubbed his shoulder. "Another! Another! And another stone came." Now the creature's paw was flying from one itching place to another.

The rabbit burst out into a laugh. He laughed and he laughed. The monkey laughed too. Each guessed the other's reason for telling his story that way.

The two animals laughed so hard that they had to hold on to each other to keep from rolling into the river.

"Well! Well!" the monkey cried. "I have not yet lost the bet."

"No more have I," said the rabbit. "We were each of us only telling a tale as it should be told."

"But we must agree, Friend," he continued, "it's very hard indeed to break a bad habit. No one ever easily changes his ways. Let us worry no more."

So the rabbit's nose wrinkled and twitched again as often as he wished. His long ears flopped as his round head turned every few minutes from one side to the other.

The monkey's paws scratched his hide wherever it itched. And from that day to this no member of either of these animal families has kept still very long unless he was asleep.

"Who Can Break a Bad Habit?" from *African Wonder Tales* by Frances Carpenter Huntington, copyright © 1963 by Francis Carpenter Huntington. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

Writing the Essay

In the story, two good friends are annoyed with each other's bad habit. What would be a good title for this story, and why? Use examples from the story to support your answer.

When you write your essay, remember

- to show your understanding of the story
- to give examples from the story
- to use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample One

I think the title should be "I Can Do Everything Better Than You." I think that should be the title because it is exactly what the two animals are trying to say to each other. Think about it. The monkey said, "I'll bet that you cant, although I, myself, could easily stop myself from scratching," The rabbit said, "Well, I do perhaps turn my head and twitch my nose. But I could easily stop." In the end they found a loophole and found a way out of their problem, but still acted stubborn and believed each other was better than the other.

Also, the monkey and the rabbit obviously don't get along. You can tell by the way they talk to each other.

They each think the same way. They think they can prove their point. But they couldn't. Monkey got a scratching excuse from telling a story about when he got bombarded with stones.

Rabbit got an excuse to twitch and turn his head from his story about getting cornered with no place to go by predators.

At the end, the monkey and the rabbit didn't suck up to each other.

Monkey said, "Well, well. I have not already lost the bet."

Rabbit said, "No more have I,"

This is why I think the title should be "I Can Do Everything Better Than You."

Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task and demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose by proposing a title for the story and by supporting it with textual evidence.

The response maintains a consistent organizational structure. The first two sentences state the central idea ("I think the title should be 'I Can Do Everything Better Than You' … because it is exactly what the two animals are trying to say to each other."), the middle of the response presents evidence to support this idea, and the final paragraph provides a concluding statement ("This is why I think the title should be 'I Can Do Everything Better Than You.'"). Some supporting evidence included in the opening paragraph could be moved to subsequent paragraphs.

The clearly presented central idea is supported with evidence that is generally effective ("The monkey said, 'I'll bet that you cant, although I, myself, could easily stop myself from scratching.' The rabbit said, 'Well, I do perhaps turn my head and twitch my nose. But I could easily stop.'"). In the second paragraph, however, the writer makes a claim that is not supported ("I Can Do Everything Better Than You" is a good title because the animals "obviously don't get along."). The writer does not explain why an inability to get along helps justify the title, and the reader can only surmise how the paragraph supports the writer's claim. The response demonstrates an understanding of the literary work. Some partial explanations require the reader to guess how evidence relates to the central idea.

The response contains sentence variety. Early in the essay, for example, the writer mixes sentence lengths and types effectively ("I think the title should be 'I Can Do Everything Better Than You.' I think that should

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample One (continued)

Commentary

be the title because it is exactly what the two animals are trying to say to each other. Think about it. The monkey said, 'I'll bet that you cant, …'"). Later, parallel structures emphasize comparisons and contrasts between the monkey and rabbit ("Monkey got a scratching excuse from telling a story … Rabbit got an excuse to twitch and turn his head …"; "Monkey said, 'Well, well. I have not already lost the bet.' Rabbit said, 'No more have I,'").

The response contains very few errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include commas where periods should be ("Rabbit said, 'No more have I,'") and modifying phrases placed inappropriately ("Rabbit got an excuse to twitch and turn his head from his story about getting cornered with no place to go by predators."). These errors are to be expected in first-draft writing in grade four and do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

A clearly presented central idea, sound sentences, and excellent control of conventions are among the qualities that make this a score point 4 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample Two

Hard – to – Break Habbits

I think Hard-to-Break Habbits would be a good title for this story because the story teaches you that habbits are very hard to break.

There are two animals annoyed with each other's habbits. The monkey can't stop scratching and itching himself all over and the rabbit can't stop wrinkling and twitching his nose, turning his head sharply, searching for danger.

So these two animals both think each other's habbits are very anoying, so they bet each other that the monkey couldn't stop scratching and the rabbit couldn't stop turning his head from side to side and stop sniffing the air. The animal who didn't scratch or sniff until dusk won.

The animals could not resist. The monkey's skin had never felt so dry or itchy in his entire life. The rabbit had never felt more in danger.

The day seemed like it went on for hours. So, the animals decided that they would each tell a story. The two animals made up stories so they could both do their habbits. Both of them realized what the other was doing and broke into laughter.

This shows that habbits are hard to break. Both of those animals realized that. That's why I think Hard-to-Break Habbits would be a great title for this story.

Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task and demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose by proposing a title for the story and by supporting it with textual evidence.

The response maintains a consistent focus and organizational structure. The opening paragraph leads into the essay effectively by presenting a central idea. The second through fifth paragraphs summarize events from the story that support the writer's judgment. The final paragraph explains the significance of the preceding discussion ("This shows that habbits are hard to break."). Paragraph breaks appear at appropriate stages of the response.

The writer presents a clear central idea in the first sentence of the response ("… Hard-to-Break Habbits would be a good title for this story because the story teaches you that habbits are very hard to break.") and effectively supports it with relevant details ("The animals could not resist. The monkey's skin had never felt so dry or itchy in his entire life. The rabbit had never felt more in danger … The two animals made up stories so they could both do their habbits."). The detailed summary of the story supports the central idea and demonstrates a clear understanding of the literary work.

The response contains sentence variety. Sentences range from simple to compound to complex and are soundly structured and detailed ("I think Hard to Break Habbits would be a good title for this story because the story teaches you that habbits are very hard to break. There are two animals annoyed with each other's habbits. The monkey can't stop scratching and itching himself all over and the rabbit can't stop wrinkling and twitching his nose, turning his head sharply, searching for danger.").

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample Two (continued)

Commentary

The response contains few errors in the conventions of the English language. The errors include misspelled words ("habbits" and "anoying"), a lack of quotation marks to indicate a story's title ("I think Hard to Break Habbits would be a good title…"), and the lack of a comma before the coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence ("The monkey can't stop scratching and itching himself all over and the rabbit can't stop wrinkling and twitching his nose, turning his head sharply, searching for danger."). These errors are to be expected in first-draft writing in grade four and do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

A consistent focus and organizational structure, sound sentences, and a clearly presented central idea supported with specific textual references make this a score point 4 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample Three

I think the title of the story should be The Bad Habit Test because two friends, Monkey and Rabbit, are so annoyed with each other's habits that they decide to have a test. The test is to see who can break their bad habits and who cannot. Rabbit's bad habit is the fact that he can't stop twitching his nose or moving his head side to side. Monkey's habit is that he can't stop scratching himself. The test started after Rabbit and Monkey were done arguing.

A little while into the test, Rabbit and Monkey started to burn and itch and want to twitch. Rabbit then thought up something clever, he would try to tell a story to Monkey without being caught twitching, but Monkey was thinking the same thing. They both told their stories and did their bad habits.

Then they both caught on to what they were doing and rolled over laughing saying, "You lost the bet! You lost the bet!!" They both lost the test. They also apoligized to each other and said they would stop forever and start being friends. The two became friends, and they lived bad habitly ever after.

Commentary

This response clearly addresses the writing task and demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose by proposing a title for the story and explaining why the title is appropriate by describing events from the story.

The response maintains a consistent organizational structure. The opening paragraph presents the central idea ("I think the title of the story should be The Bad Habit Test because two friends, Monkey and Rabbit, are so annoyed with each other's habits that they decide to have a test."), and it provides background information from the text ("The test is to see who can break their bad habits and who cannot. Rabbit's bad habit is …. Monkey's habit is …. The test started after Rabbit and Monkey were done arguing."). The middle paragraph describes the animals' attempts to trick one another, and the final paragraph summarizes what their experience taught them ("They both lost the test. They also apoligized to each other and said they would stop arguing forever and start being friends."). Transitional devices bridge ideas between sentences and between paragraphs ("A little while into the test, …"; "Rabbit then thought up something clever, …"; "Then they both caught on …"; "They also apoligized …").

The response clearly presents the central idea that the story should be called "The Bad Habit Test." The writer maintains a consistent focus by describing only as much of the story as relates to that idea (i.e., in paragraph one, the animals' bad habits are described; in paragraph two, their efforts to outwit each other; and in paragraph three, their acknowledgement that neither of them passed the test [although the animals do not admit this in the story]). The summary of events provides effective support for the central idea and demonstrates a clear understanding of the literary work.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 4 Response

Student Work Sample Three (continued)

Commentary

The response includes sentence variety. It contains complex sentences ("I think the title of the story should be The Bad Habit Test because two friends, Monkey and Rabbit, are so annoyed with each other's habits that they decide to have a test."), compound sentences ("The two became friends, and they lived bad habitly every after."), and simple sentences ("The test started after Rabbit and Monkey were done arguing."). The writer also achieves variety by varying sentence lengths and by alternating between one- and two-verb simple sentences ("Then they both caught on to what they were doing and rolled over laughing saying, 'You lost the bet! You lost the bet!!' They both lost the test. They also apoligized to each other and said they would stop arguing forever and start being friends.").

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include comma splices ("Rabbit then thought up something clever, he would try to tell a story to Monkey without being caught twitching, …"), a single misspelled word ("apoligized"), and underlining a story's title instead of using quotation marks (The Bad Habit Test). These errors are to be expected in first-draft writing in grade four and do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

The consistent organization and focus, strong sentences, and a clear central idea supported by evidence make this a score point 4 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample One

I think it should be called Bad Habits. I think it should be called Bad Habits because of the rabits and the monkeys bad habits. They do not like each others bad habits. They do not like each others bad habits because it bugs them. They are annoyed of each others bad habits. They are annoyed of each others bad habits because they do it all the time. They have a test on who can stop there bad habit first by standing still. Rabit tells a story and does his bad habit but pretends its in the story so he can do it. Then monkey tells his story so he can do his bad habit. They stop telling each others story because they find out that they did that so they can do there bad habit. They laugh and they can do there bad habit whenever they want to. I think that would be a good title because of there bad habits.

Commentary

This response addresses the writing task and demonstrates a general understanding of purpose by proposing a title for the story and by supporting it with a summary of the story's events.

The response maintains a mostly consistent organizational structure. The first two sentences present the central idea ("I think it should be called Bad Habits. I think it should be called Bad Habits because of the rabits and the monkeys bad habits."). The middle of the response supports this idea with a brief summary of the story (The writer says that the animals are annoyed by each others' habits so they decide to have a test. When they realize they are being tricked, they laugh and stop the test). The final sentence reiterates the writer's belief that "Bad Habits" would be a good title. The organizational structure would be strengthened if the two introductory sentences and the plot summary intended to support them were placed in separate paragraphs.

After stating the central idea in the first two sentences, the writer supports it with references to the text. These references, however, tend to be general rather than specific ("They have a test on who can stop there bad habit first by standing still. Rabit tells a story and does his bad habit but pretends its in the story so he can do it. Then monkey tells his story so he can do his bad habit."). Although the references provide some support and demonstrate some understanding of the literary work, they do not provide effective support or demonstrate a clear understanding of the literary work.

The response contains some sentence variety, including complex sentences ("They are annoyed of each others bad habits because they do it all the time.") and simple sentences ("They do not like

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample One (continued)

Commentary

each others bad habits."). The content of sentences is repetitious, however, because the beginnings of several sentences repeat a preceding sentence ("They do not like each others bad habits. They do not like each others bad habits because it bugs them."), and sentences are rhythmically monotonous because their structural patterns are repetitious ("I think it should be called Bad Habits. I think it should be called Bad Habits because of the rabits and the monkeys bad habits. They do not like each others bad habits. They do not like each others bad habits because it bugs them. They are annoyed of each others bad habits. They are annoyed of each others bad habits because they do it all the time.").

The response contains some errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include the lack of quotation marks to identify a story's title ("I think it should be called Bad Habits."), a misspelling ("rabits"), the lack of apostrophes to indicate the possessive form ("…each others bad habits…"; "…the rabits and the monkeys bad habits…"), the failure to use the correct possessive form ("They have a test on who can stop there bad habit…"), and incorrect prepositions ("They are annoyed of each others…"). These errors are to be expected in first-draft writing in grade four and do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

A mostly consistent organizational structure, a central idea supported by general evidence, and limited sentence variety are among the qualities that make this a score point 3 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample Two

Moving Habits

I think the story should be called "Moving Habits" because the rabbit and the monkey both had bad habits that involved moving. Also they stopped moving to see who didn't do their bad habit the longest. Both of them caved in and made up a story that allowed them to do their moving habits.

Both of them have a habit that they have to do. I think they were born with those habbits. Rabbit twitched and sniffed to know if danger was coming and Monkey scrathed his neck, stomach, and everywhere because bugs would crawl onto him to bite him. Both need those habits! By the way, it's a great story!

Commentary

This response addresses most of the writing task and demonstrates a general understanding of purpose by proposing a title and by supporting it with general examples from the story.

The response maintains a mostly consistent focus and organizational structure. The first sentence states the central idea, the middle of the response presents evidence to support this idea, and a summary statement at the end provides a conclusion ("Both of them have a habit … Both need those habits!"). At one point the focus drifts when the writer speculates on the origin of the animals' habits ("I think they were born with those habbits."). The response would be strengthened by paragraph breaks to identify introductory, supporting, and concluding sections.

The response presents the central idea that "Moving Habits" is a good title because the animals move uncontrollably when indulging their habits. The first sentence presents this idea and one supporting example ("I think the story should be called 'Moving Habits' because the rabbit and the monkey both had bad habits that involved moving."). The next two sentences support the central idea less directly, but the fourth sentence returns to the idea more directly ("Both of them have a habit that they have to do."). Sentences later in the second paragraph provide the most concrete examples of the animals' habits but do not make clear their connection to the central idea ("Rabbit twitched and sniffed … Monkey scrathed his neck, stomach, and everywhere …"). The evidence presented in the response demonstrates some understanding of the literary work.

The response includes a combination of sentence types, such as simple ("Both of them have a habit that they have to do.") and complex ("I think the story should be called 'Moving Habits' because the rabbit

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample Two (continued)

Commentary

and the monkey both had bad habits that involved moving.”). The response also includes some variation in sentence lengths (“I think they were born with those habbits. Rabbit twitched and sniffed to know if danger was coming and Monkey scrathed his neck, stomach, and everywhere because bugs would crawl onto him to bite him. Both need those habits!”).

The response contains few errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include misspellings (“scrathed,” “habbits”) and unjustified shifts in verb tense (“Both of them caved in and made up a story that allowed them to do their moving habits. Both of them have a habit that they have to do.”). These errors are to be expected in first-draft writing in grade four and do not interfere with the reader’s understanding.

A central idea that is reasonably well supported, clear sentences, and generally sound conventions are among the qualities that make this a score point 3 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample Three

A good title for this would be "Habits" because in this story the two animals both have a annoying yet natural habit which the other friend finds it annoying. Also another reason is because the story is basically about two friends each annoyed with the others ones natural, but annoying and bad habit and that is why I think the title "Habits" would go fine with this story. Another example from the story is when the two friends are suppose to stay still, but end up making stories and doing their annoying habit which is another reason why the story called "Habits." Another reason this story should be called "Habits" is because in the story it shows that you can not break a natural habit. Also, this story should be called, "Habits" is because in this story the main thing the two friends are trying to do is resist doing their natural habit which very hard to do because it is natural for both animals to do their habits, which seem normal for themselves but annoying for the other friend.

Commentary

This response addresses the writing task and demonstrates a general understanding of purpose by proposing a title for the story and by supporting it with general explanations.

The response maintains a consistent focus on evidence that supports the proposed title and a mostly consistent organizational structure. Following an opening sentence that proposes "Habits" as a title, the writer presents relevant supporting evidence. Some of this evidence, however, is repetitious ("… both have a annoying yet natural habit which the other friend finds it annoying. … another reason is because the story is basically about two friends each annoyed with the others ones natural, but annoying and bad habit … this story should be called 'Habits' … because in this story the main thing the two friends are trying to do is resist doing their natural habit which very hard to do because it is natural for both animals … but annoying for the other friend."). The response lacks a conclusion.

The response presents a broad central idea (i.e., "Habits" would make a good title) with relevant, though repetitive, explanations. Although the explanations provide some support for the central idea, they do so in general rather than specific language ("Another example from the story is when the two friends are suppose to stay still, but end up making stories and doing their annoying habit …"). The generality of the examples may account for their repetitiveness. The response demonstrates an understanding of the literary work.

Sentences are repetitious because similar transitional devices are used repeatedly ("Also another reason is because …"; "Another example …"; "Another reason this story should be called …"). Despite their repetitive beginnings, however, sentences vary from simple

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 3 Response

Student Work Sample Three (continued)

Commentary

("I think the title 'Habits' would go fine with this story.") to complex ("A good title for this would be 'Habits' because in this story the two animals both have a annoying yet natural habit which the other friend finds it annoying.") to compound-complex ("Also another reason is because the story is basically about two friends each annoyed with the others ones natural, but annoying and bad habit and that is why I think the title 'Habits' would go fine with this story.").

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include an incorrect article and inclusion of an unnecessary pronoun ("… both have a annoying yet natural habit which the other friend finds it annoying."), incorrect usage ("… the two friends are suppose to stay still, …"), and punctuation mistakes ("Also, this story should be called, 'Habits' is because in this story the main thing the two friends are trying to do is resist doing their natural habit which very hard to do because it is natural for both animals to do their habits, which seem normal for themselves but annoying for the other friend."). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A mostly consistent organizational structure, a central idea with general supporting explanations, and generally sound conventions are among the qualities that make this a score point 3 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample One

I think that this story should be called the two annoyed friends because it is about two best friends that are annoyed, there was a monkey and a rabbit. They bet that if they wouldn't move for a whole day, they will lose the bet. They bet if the one who lose's will be notty. Then they both moved and they lost the bet they said, "I will never bet again and they had a good laugh the end."

Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by proposing a title for the story but neglecting to provide relevant supporting examples. The lack of relevant examples to support the writer's contention indicates little understanding of purpose.

The response maintains an inconsistent focus and organizational structure. Following an opening statement that suggests why the proposed title is appropriate ("I think that this story should be called the two annoyed friends because it is about two best friends that are annoyed, …"), the writer continues with a summary of the story. The summary is intended to illustrate the appropriateness of the title but fails to demonstrate that the two friends were "annoyed" ("… there was a monkey and a rabbit. They bet that if they wouldn't move for a whole day, they will lose the bet. They bet if the one who lose's will be notty."). The organizational structure would be strengthened if the plot summary were located in a separate, supporting paragraph.

The response proposes the central idea that "Two Annoyed Friends" would be a good title, but because the textual references and details are only marginally related to this idea, the response demonstrates little understanding of the literary work.

Although the four sentences vary in length, they are poorly structured. The first two sentences, a complex sentence and a simple sentence, are spliced together with a comma ("I think that this story should be called the two annoyed friends because it is about two best friends that are annoyed, there was a monkey and a rabbit."). The last sentence is a compound sentence that consists of independent clauses run together without punctuation and a pair of clauses loosely connected by "and" ("Then they both moved and they

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample One (continued)

Commentary

lost the bet they said, 'I will never bet again and they had a good laugh the end.'").

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. In addition to the comma splice and run-on clauses noted above, the response contains a misspelled word ("notty"), an incorrect shift in verb tense ("They bet if the one who lose's will be notty. Then they both moved …"), an unnecessary apostrophe ("lose's"), and the incorrect placement of quotation marks ("Then they both moved and they lost the bet they said, 'I will never bet again and they had a good laugh the end.'"). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

An inconsistent focus and organizational structure, weak support for the central idea, and poor sentence structure are among the qualities that make this a score point 2 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample Two

A good title for this story would be "Bad Habits" becaue it is about to friends that start to annoy each other with there bad habits. For example the monkey scratches himself every single second and the rabbit twiches his hears and nose just as much as the monkey scratches his body. But luckely they becaue friends at the end.

Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by proposing a title for the story and suggesting why it is appropriate. It demonstrates little understanding of purpose, however, because it fails to support the appropriateness of the title with textual examples.

Despite its extreme brevity, this response maintains the outline, at least, of an organizational structure. The opening sentence proposes the central idea ("A good title for this story would be 'Bad Habits' becaue it is about to friends that start to annoy each other with there bad habits."). The second sentence presents an example intended to support this idea, and the last sentence suggests a conclusion. The focus of the response is inconsistent. It begins to wander with the second sentence, and the last sentence only seems to accentuate the lack of focus.

The writer presents the central idea in the first sentence, but this idea is, at best, weakly supported. Only one sentence appears to support the central idea ("For example the monkey scratches himself every single second and the rabbit twiches his hears and nose just as much as the monkey scratches his body."), and this sentence establishes that the animals have nervous habits rather than bad or annoying habits. Lacking effective support, the response demonstrates a limited understanding of the literary work.

The response demonstrates variety in sentence structure and some variety in sentence length. The first sentence is complex ("A good title for this story would be 'Bad Habits' becaue it is about to friends that start to annoy each other with there bad habits."), the second sentence is a fairly long compound sentence ("For example the monkey scratches himself every single second and the rabbit twiches his hears and nose just as much as the monkey

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample Two (continued)

Commentary

scratches his body."), and the last sentence is a short simple sentence ("But luckely they becaue friends at the end.").

Considering its brevity, this response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. These include spelling errors ("becaue"; "to" instead of "two"; "there" instead of "their"; "hears" instead of "ears"; "twitches"; luckely") and a mistaken shift in verb tense ("… the rabbit twitches his hears and nose just as much as the monkey scratches his body. But luckely they becaue friends at the end."). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A lack of focus, a lack of support for the central idea, and an abundance of spelling errors make this a score point 2 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample Three

Cunning Monkey and Clever Rabbit would be a good title because the rabbit and the monkey both could not move but, they both thought of a tricky story to make them both scratch and twitch. They both can always think of something cunning to do something.

Commentary

This response addresses some of the writing task by proposing a title for the story and by suggesting why it would be appropriate. The response demonstrates little understanding of purpose because it provides few examples to justify the title.

The response lacks a clear organizational structure. It begins by stating the central idea ("Cunning Monkey and Clever Rabbit would be a good title because the rabbit and the monkey both could not move but, they both thought of a tricky story to make them both scratch and twitch."). Rather than supporting this idea, however, the second sentence restates it more generally ("They both can always think of something cunning to do something."). Following a promising beginning, the response provides no middle or end.

The first sentence of the response presents an interesting central idea, but support for this idea is weak. Except for the limited information in the second half of the sentence ("… the rabbit and the monkey both could not move but, they both thought of a tricky story to make them both scratch and twitch."), this response lacks facts, details, or explanations to illustrate why "Cunning Monkey and Clever Rabbit" would be a good title.

The response includes a compound-complex opening sentence and a second sentence that is apparently unfinished. These sentences are not enough to demonstrate sentence variety.

The response contains errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include a comma placed after rather than before a conjunction that connects two clauses ("… the rabbit and the monkey both could not move but, they both thought of a tricky story …") and a sentence that appears either to lack a period at the end or that is the start of a run-on sentence

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 2 Response

Student Work Sample Three (continued)

Commentary

("They both can always think of something cunning to do something.").

Although this response presents a promising central idea, the lack of organizational structure and lack of support for the central idea make it a score point 2 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample One

One day, in a West African a ribbit and a monkey was friend. then five day they start to be bad habit they was not moving for the day ribbit was poor went he was small. then ribbit told a story about went he went to a house but some thing about to hide him and money said me to then ribbit told him about a story went the boys trow ston at him then rabbit came to help him then They start to be Friend and they unless.

Commentary

This response does not address the writing task. It does not propose a title for the story or use examples to illustrate why a proposed title would be appropriate. It demonstrates no understanding of purpose. Rather than proposing and supporting a central idea, it attempts to retell the story.

The response demonstrates some organizational structure, but this structure is not appropriate for the writing task. The task asks the student to propose a title for a story and explain why it would be appropriate. This response attempts to retell the story in the form of a narrative ("One day, in a West African a ribbit and a monkey was friend. then five day they start to be bad habit they was not moving for the day…"), much of which is inaccurate ("… ribbit was poor went he was small. … then ribbit came to help [monkey] then They start to be Friend and they unless.").

The response lacks a central idea. It presents marginally related details in narrative form ("then ribbit told a story about went he went to a house but some thing about to hide him and money…"), but these details do not demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.

The response includes no sentence variety. Sentences are typically independent clauses that are largely incomprehensible and are run together without punctuation.

The response contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include the inappropriate sentence structures described above, the lack of capitalization at beginnings of sentences ("One day, in a West African a ribbit…"; "then ribbit told a story…"), inappropriate capitalization ("… then They start to be Friend and

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample One (continued)

Commentary

they…"), inappropriate verb tense ("…they was not moving for the day…"), and misspelled words ("went" for "when," "ribbit"). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

The inappropriate organizational structure, lack of a central idea, lack of sentence variety, and serious errors in the conventions of English make this a score point 1 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample Two

That their was a rabbit and a monkey and a boy couldn't take it anymore so he told the Rabbit & the monkey to move and then minutes later they wanted to move so bad that the monkey got itchyer and rabbits heart was getting colder and then the boy left and they didn't get to move for a whole day then the next day the both started to move around and they liked it.

Commentary

This response fails to address the writing task and demonstrates no understanding of purpose. Rather than proposing a title and demonstrating why it would be appropriate, the response attempts to retell the story.

The response lacks an organizational structure appropriate for a response to literature. Rather than stating a position and supporting it with evidence, the writer presents a chronological organizational structure that combines retelling the story with fictional narrative (e.g., the boy who is in the writer's response is not in the original story). Even this attempt at narrative lacks a clear organizational structure and is incomplete.

The response conveys no central idea and presents no facts, details, or explanations to support a central idea. It proposes no title for the story and demonstrates little or no understanding of the literary work.

This one-sentence response includes no sentence variety. It consists of a rambling series of clauses unbroken by punctuation. Most clauses are stitched together with conjunctions ("the monkey got itchyer and rabbits heart was getting colder and then the boy left and they didn't get to move …"). Other clauses run together without conjunctions or punctuation.

The response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language, including the lack of an apostrophe to indicate the possessive form ("… rabbits heart was getting colder …") and misspellings ("their" rather than "there," "itchyer"). Some of these errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

A lack of organizational structure, lack of a central idea, lack of understanding of the literary work, and serious sentence errors make this a score point 1 response.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Response to Literature Writing Task Administered on April 29 and 30, 2008

Score Point 1 Response

Student Work Sample Three

I think it should be Bad Habaits.
I think it should be bad habaits because it tells about the magficsic story.
In conclusion I hope you take my avice.

Commentary

This response addresses one part of the writing task by proposing a title for the story and by attempting to suggest why it is appropriate. The response demonstrates little understanding of purpose because it provides no examples to illustrate why the title would be appropriate.

The response maintains a rudimentary organizational structure consisting of brief introductory, middle, and concluding paragraphs of one sentence each. However, without adequate explanation to support the proposed title and to help provide transition between paragraphs, the organizational structure is inconsistent.

The writer attempts to present a central idea, but that idea is unclear ("I think it should be bad habaits because it tells about the magficsic story."). Except for the statement "because it tells about the magficsic story," the response lacks any details, facts, or explanations that might support a central idea and consequently demonstrates little or no understanding of the literary work.

This response lacks sentence variety. It consists of two simple sentences and one complex sentence ("I think it should be bad habaits because it tells about the magficsic story."), but half of the complex sentence repeats the simple sentence that precedes it ("I think it should be Bad Habaits. I think it should be bad habaits because it tells about the magficsic story.").

Given its brevity, this response contains many errors in the conventions of the English language. The errors are mainly misspellings ("Habaits," "magficsic," "avice"). At least one of these errors, "magficsic," interferes with the reader's understanding of the writing.

Lack of a clear central idea, supporting evidence, an understanding of the literary work, and sentence variety are among the qualities that make this a score point 1 response.

2008 Grade Four Scoring Rubric

The scoring rubric shown below is used to assign scores to students' written responses on the grade four 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 and for their use of supporting evidence, sentence variety, and written conventions. The criteria under "Narrative writing," "Summary writing," and "Response to Literature writing," adapted from the grade four Writing Applications content standards for these genres, are used to evaluate student writing in the specific genres to which they apply.

On pages 62 through 67, the grade four 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.
- Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate.
- 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.

Narrative writing—

- Provides a *thoroughly developed* sequence of *significant* events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories.
- Includes *vivid* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences.

Summary writing—

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

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of the literary work.
- Provides *effective* support for judgments through *specific* references to text and/or prior knowledge.

3

The writing—

- Addresses most of the writing task.
- Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose.
- Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate.
- 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.

Narrative writing—

- Provides an *adequately developed* sequence of significant events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories.
- Includes *some* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences.

Summary writing—

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

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates an understanding of the literary work.
- Provides *some* support for judgments through references to text and/or prior knowledge.

2

The writing—

- Addresses *some* of the writing task.
- Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose.
- Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may lack appropriate paragraphing.
- *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.

Narrative writing—

- Provides a *minimally developed* sequence of events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories.
- Includes *limited* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences.

Summary writing—

- Summarizes text with some of the main idea(s) and details, minimal use of the student's own words.

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates a *limited* understanding of the literary work.
- Provides *weak* support for judgments.

1

The writing—

- Addresses *only one part, if any,* of the writing task.
- Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose.
- *Lacks* a clear point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may contain inappropriate paragraphing.
- *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.

Narrative writing—

- *Lacks* a sequence of events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories.
- *Lacks* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences.

Summary writing—

- Summarizes text with few, if any, main idea(s) and/or details, little or no use of the student's own words.

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates little or no understanding of the literary work.
- *Fails* to provide support for judgments.

Grade Four Scoring Rubric in Rearranged Format

In the following charts, the grade four 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 state 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 four 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 four content standards for Writing Strategies. The column under "Sentence Structure" contains the scoring criterion derived from the subset of Sentence Structure standards within the grade four 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 four 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 four.

2008 Grade Four Scoring Rubric: Narrative Writing

	Genre (Narrative Writing)	*Organization and Focus*	*Sentence Structure*	*Conventions*
4	■ Provides a *thoroughly developed* sequence of significant events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. (Gr. 4 WA 2.1 a, d) ■ Includes *vivid* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences. (Gr. 4 WA 2.1 b, c)	■ *Clearly* addresses the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1; 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 4 WS 1.2 b, c)	■ Includes sentence *variety*. (Gr. 4 WC 1.1; 1.2)	■ 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. (Gr. 4 WC 1.3–1.7)
3	■ Provides an *adequately developed* sequence of significant events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. ■ Includes *some* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences.	■ Addresses most of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. ■ 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.

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

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre (Narrative Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
2	■ Provides a *minimally developed* sequence of events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. ■ Includes *limited* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences.	■ Addresses *some* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may lack appropriate paragraphing. ■ *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.
1	■ *Lacks* a sequence of events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. ■ *Lacks* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences.	■ Addresses *only one part, if any,* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose. ■ *Lacks* a clear point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may contain inappropriate paragraphing. ■ *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.

2008 Grade Four Scoring Rubric: Summary Writing

	Genre (Summary Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
4	■ Summarizes text with clear identification of the main idea(s) and the most *significant* details in the student's own words. (Gr. 4 WA 2.4)	■ *Clearly* addresses the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1, 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 4 WS 1.2 b, c)	■ Includes sentence *variety*. (Gr. 4 WC 1.1; 1.2)	■ 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. (Gr. 4 WC 1.3–1.7)
3	■ Summarizes text with the main idea(s) and *important* details, generally in the student's own words.	■ Addresses most of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. ■ 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.
2	■ Summarizes text with some of the main idea(s) and details, minimal use of the student's own words.	■ Addresses *some* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may lack appropriate paragraphing. ■ *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.

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

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre (Summary Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
1	■ Summarizes text with few, if any, main idea(s) and/or details, little or no use of the student's own words.	■ Addresses *only one part, if any,* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose. ■ *Lacks* a clear point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may contain inappropriate paragraphing. ■ *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.

2008 Grade Four Scoring Rubric: Response to Literature Writing

	Genre (Response to Literature Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
4	■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of the literary work. (Gr. 4 WA 2.2 a) ■ Provides *effective* support for judgments through *specific* references to text and/or prior knowledge. (Gr. 4 WA 2.2 b)	■ *Clearly* addresses the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1; 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 4 WS 1.2 b, c)	■ Includes sentence *variety*. (Gr. 4 WC 1.1; 1.2)	■ 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. (Gr. 4 WC 1.3–1.7)
3	■ Demonstrates an understanding of the literary work. ■ Provides *some* support for judgments through references to text and/or prior knowledge.	■ Addresses most of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. ■ 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.
2	■ Demonstrates a *limited* understanding of the literary work. ■ Provides *weak* support for judgments.	■ Addresses *some* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/ or organizational structure; may lack appropriate paragraphing. ■ *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.

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

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre (Response to Literature Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
1	■ Demonstrates little or no understanding of the literary work. ■ *Fails* to provide support for judgments.	■ Addresses *only one part, if any,* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose. ■ *Lacks* a clear point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may contain inappropriate paragraphing. ■ *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.