

2016 TEXAS STAAR TEST – GRADE 4 – WRITING

Total Possible Score: 26
Needed Correct to Pass: For 2016 - 14 For 2017 - 14
Advanced Performance: 21

Time Limit: 4 Hours

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The number of correct answers required to "pass" this test is shown above. Because of where the "passing" score is set, it may be possible to pass the test without learning some important areas of study. Because of this, I believe that making the passing grade should not be considered "good enough." A student's goal should be to master each of the objectives covered by the test. The "Advanced Performance" score is a good goal for mastery of all the objectives.

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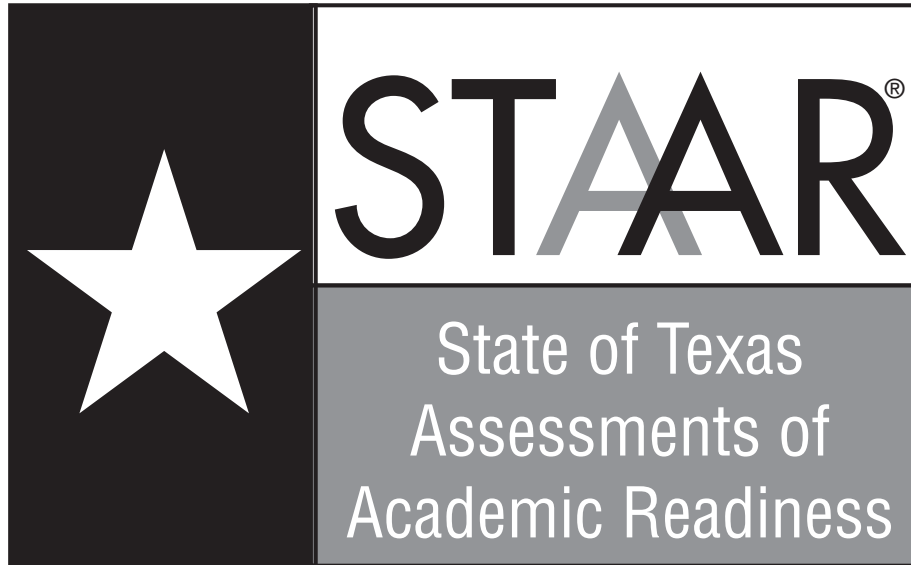
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GRADE 4
Writing

Administered March 2016

RELEASED

WRITING

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

WRITTEN COMPOSITION: Expository

READ the information in the box below.

No matter how old we are, we can always have fun.

THINK about the fun things you get to do as a fourth grader.

WRITE about one reason you like being in the fourth grade. Tell what you like and explain why you like it.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your central idea
- organize your writing
- develop your writing in detail
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE YOUR COMPOSITION ON
THE LINED PAGE IN THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.

USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE YOUR COMPOSITION ON
THE LINED PAGE IN THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.

REVISING AND EDITING

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Claire wrote this story about a boy who overcame a fear. Read Claire's story and look for the revisions she needs to make. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.



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Now or Never

(1) Jared felt dizzy as he looked over the cliff. (2) The ground seemed to be a long way down. (3) His camp counselor, Andrea, smiled up at him. (4) She gave Jared a thumbs-up. (5) Jared gulped. (6) He still wasn't sure he could do this.

(7) All week at camp Jared had eyed the tall cliff. (8) He had seen other campers rappelling down the side of it. (9) It looked so cool—but so scary at the same time! (10) Jared wanted to do it, and it was to rappel.

(11) Now Jared was hooked up to a rope by a complicated mass of straps. (12) He was at the top of the cliff with him, saying something about how strong the rope was. (13) He explained that Jared didn't need to be afraid because the rope and straps would hold an elephant. (14) "Nice to know," Jared said. (15) At the bottom of the cliff, Andrea was also connected to the rope.

(16) It was time. (17) "Now or never," Jared thought. (18) Keeping his eyes on the counselor at the top, he slowly leaned back. (19) He felt the strong, straight rope in his hands. (20) Jared gripped it tightly and leaned out as far as he could stretch. (21) Step, step, step—his feet took turns creeping down the side of the cliff. (22) He was doing it! (23) Jared was actually rappelling! (24) He made his way steadily down. (25) A grin began to spread over his face. (26) He went faster and faster until his last step was more like a jump. (27) Jared suddenly realized that he had made it to the bottom. (28) His legs were still a bit shaky as he gave Andrea a high five. (29) But Jared knew exactly what his first words would be now that he had made it down.

- 1 Claire wants to strengthen the focus of her story. Which of the following is the **BEST** replacement for sentence 10?
- A Being at camp had been a wonderful experience for Jared and the other kids.
 - B Jared was sometimes a little afraid to do things he had never done before.
 - C Today was Jared’s last chance to overcome his fear and give rappelling a try.
 - D Even though the others had been rappelling down the side of the cliff, Jared didn’t want to.
-

- 2 The meaning of sentence 12 is unclear. What change can Claire make to improve the clarity of this sentence?
- F Change **He** to **Another counselor**
 - G Change **cliff** to **spot**
 - H Change **him** to **them**
 - J Change **the rope** to **it**
-

- 3 Which of these sentences can **BEST** follow and support sentence 15?
- A She would help keep the rope tight and make sure Jared was safe coming down.
 - B Andrea had been such a good friend, and looking down at her right now made Jared think of all the fun they had had.
 - C Jared was feeling great and stepped back from the cliff to look around at all the beautiful scenery.
 - D Andrea was right there, connected to the rope that Jared was connected to at the bottom of the cliff.

- 4 What is the most effective way to combine sentences 24 and 25?
- F Since he made his way steadily down with a grin, it began to spread over his face.
 - G He made his way steadily down because a grin began to spread over his face.
 - H As he made his way steadily down, a grin began to spread over his face.
 - J He made his way steadily down a grin began to spread over his face.
-

- 5 Claire forgot to include an important detail in the last paragraph (sentences 16–29).

With trembling legs he took his first step.

Reread the paragraph carefully. Where is the **BEST** place to insert this sentence?

- A After sentence 19
 - B After sentence 20
 - C After sentence 21
 - D After sentence 26
-
- 6 Claire’s paper ends abruptly and leaves the reader wondering what happens next. Which sentence should Claire add to the end of her paper?
- F He had made it down and had actually rappelled.
 - G “Where’s my snack?” he asked the counselors.
 - H He didn’t have a doubt about what he wanted to say.
 - J “Can I do it again?” he shouted with excitement.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Molly's teacher asked her to write a paper about her favorite possession. Molly wants you to read her paper and look for any corrections she needs to make. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.



© S. White/Fotolia

My Prized Possession

(1) Every night as I climb into bed, I whisper, "Good night, guys."
(2) I'm not talking to people who share my room. (3) I'm talking to my prized possession, my favorite red tennis shoes.

(4) These shoes have become more than just footwear to me.
(5) They have become my friends. (6) Because I'm small for a 10-year-old girl, my feet grow slowly. (7) That fact has allowed me to become quite attached to my red canvas sneakers over the last two years.

(8) People say that friendships are formed by shared experiences.
(9) My red sneakers and I have shared many! (10) There were hard times, like when we climbed the backyard tree and fell. (11) I sprained an ankle, and one of my tennis shoes suffered a broken lace. (12) But mostly, we've shared good times. (13) For the fourth-grade class hike, a lot of kids wore new hiking shoes, they were sturdy. (14) I wore my old sneakers. (15) Ashley's fancy new shoes rubbed a blister. (16) Gabby's did, too. (17) My red tennies and I just kept trekking along, comfortable

as could be. (18) Another time my class sponsored a run to help support our school. (19) Friends and family members pledged money for each lap we ran. (20) Because my legs are kind of short, I usually lag behind when I run with others. (21) I thought about skipping the Event altogether. (22) But then I saw my tennis shoes in the corner of my room. (23) Like a true friend, it encouraged me. (24) I decided that with those sneakers on my feet, I could do anything!

(25) Nothing I own means as much to me as those old shoes do. (26) They give me comfort and confidence. (27) Unfortunately, I must admit that they're also starting to give me blisters. (28) Soon I will have to tell my parents that my feet are outgrowing them. (29) I've already reserved a spot on my shelf where my red tennis shoes can retire. (30) I'm glad that I'll still be able to crawl into bed and whisper, "Good night, guys." (31) And I hope I can find a new, bigger pair just like them!

7 How does sentence 4 need to be changed?

- A Change ***have become*** to **has become**
 - B Change ***then*** to **than**
 - C Change ***to me*** to **too me**
 - D Sentence 4 does not need to be changed.
-

8 What change needs to be made in sentence 10?

- F Change ***were*** to **was**
 - G Change ***climmed*** to **climbed**
 - H Change ***fell*** to **falled**
 - J No change needs to be made.
-

9 What is the correct way to write sentence 13?

- A For the fourth-grade class hike, there were a lot of kids they wore new hiking shoes that were sturdy.
- B For the fourth-grade class hike. A lot of kids wore new hiking shoes, and they were sturdy.
- C For the fourth-grade class hike, a lot of kids wore new hiking shoes. That were sturdy.
- D For the fourth-grade class hike, a lot of kids wore sturdy, new hiking shoes.

10 What change, if any, should be made in sentence 21?

- F** Change *I thought* to **Thought**
 - G** Change *skipping* to **skiping**
 - H** Change *Event* to **event**
 - J** Make no change
-

11 How does sentence 23 need to be changed?

- A** Change *it* to **they**
 - B** Change *me* to **us**
 - C** Change the period to a comma
 - D** Sentence 23 does not need to be changed.
-

12 What change should be made in sentence 29?

- F** Change *Ive* to **I've**
- G** Change *already* to **alreddy**
- H** Change *where* to **were**
- J** No change should be made.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Katrina wrote the following paper about three inspiring young people. Read Katrina's paper and look for any corrections she should make. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.

Kids CAN Make a Difference

(1) Some kids think that they're too young to do anything really important, but that isn't true. (2) There are a lot of kids today who are making a big difference in the world. (3) All it takes is a good idea, a caring heart, and a determined spirit.

(4) When Abigail Lupi, of Stockholm, New Jersey, was just seven years old, she wanted to do something special for her great-grandmother's 100th birthday. (5) She learned a few songs and performed them at the assisted-living center where her great-grandmother lived. (6) While she was there, she noticed that some of the elderly residents seemed lonely. (7) Abigail enlisted the help of some friends and formed CareGirlz. (8) Today the members of CareGirlz, who range in age from 6 to 13, sing and dance at assisted-living centers, nursing homes, and children's hospitals. (9) The group has performed in more than 20 different locations, bringing joy to hundreds of people. (10) I like to brighten up people's days and help them have a fun time," says Abigail. (11) "It makes me happy to see that I'm making others happy."

(12) After a terrible earthquake shook Haiti in 2010, 12-year-old Blare Gooch, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, wanted to do something to help. (13) He saw children on television who had lost everything, and it made him sad. (14) That's when he remembered how attached he had been to his favorite teddy bear. (15) His school let him make an announcement asking kids to donate teddy bears for children in Haiti. (16) The local media found out about Blare's plan, and soon many people were donating

teddy bears. (17) All the attention prompted Blare to create an organization. (18) Called Blare's Bears for Haiti. (19) The organization collected and donated about 25,000 bears! (20) Blare wants other kids to know that they, too, can make a difference. (21) "It doesn't really matter how small or old you are," he insists. (22) "If your young and think you can't make a big difference in the world, well, you actually can."

(23) Charlie Coons, who lives in Simi Valley, California, is another example of a kid who made a difference. (24) One year her older brother volunteered at an orphanage in Egypt. (25) When he returned home, he told 11-year-old Charlie that the children at the orphanage were very cold at night. (26) Charlie couldn't bear the thought of other kids suffering. (27) With the help of some friends, she made several fleece blankets to send to the orphans. (28) But Charlie wanted to do more. (29) She began speaking to various community groups to raise money for a new organization, HELP, which stands for Hope, Encouragement, Love, and Peace. (30) HELP has now sended approximately 700 blankets to children in the Middle East, Africa, and Central America. (31) Charlie is excited about helping even more children. (32) "My goal is to touch as many lives as I can," she explains. (33) "I think this is something I will do for the rest of my life. (34) It doesn't pay anything in dollars, but there is no price tag on making a difference in a child's life."

(35) Each of these young people saw a need, and instead of waiting for an adult to address it, they jumped in and filled the need themselves. (36) Their stories show that kids really can make a difference in the world.

13 What change should be made in sentence 4?

- A** Change *special* to *speshial*
 - B** Change *her* to *their*
 - C** Change *great-grandmothers* to *great-grandmother's*
 - D** No change should be made.
-

14 What change, if any, should be made in sentence 10?

- F** Insert quotation marks at the beginning of the sentence
 - G** Delete the comma
 - H** Change *says* to *say's*
 - J** Make no change
-

15 What is the correct way to write sentences 17 and 18?

- A** All the attention prompted Blare to create an organization. Which he called Blare's Bears for Haiti.
- B** All the attention prompting Blare to create an organization called Blare's Bears for Haiti.
- C** All the attention prompted Blare to create an organization, it was called Blare's Bears for Haiti.
- D** All the attention prompted Blare to create an organization called Blare's Bears for Haiti.

16 What change needs to be made in sentence 22?

- F** Change ***your*** to ***you're***
 - G** Change the period to a comma
 - H** Delete the quotation marks at the end of the sentence
 - J** No change needs to be made in sentence 22.
-

17 What change should be made in sentence 30?

- A** Change ***has*** to ***having***
 - B** Change ***sended*** to ***sent***
 - C** Change ***to children*** to ***they have gone to children***
 - D** No change should be made.
-

18 What change needs to be made in sentence 35?

- F** Change ***saw*** to ***seen***
- G** Change ***instead of*** to ***instead off***
- H** Change ***address it*** to ***address them***
- J** Change ***themselfs*** to ***themselves***



**STAAR
GRADE 4
Writing
March 2016**



Item Number	Reporting Category	Readiness or Supporting	Content Student Expectation	Correct Answer
Prompt	1	Readiness	4.18(A)	*
1	2	Readiness	4.15(C)	C
2	2	Readiness	4.15(C)	F
3	2	Readiness	4.15(C)	A
4	2	Readiness	4.15(C)	H
5	2	Readiness	4.15(C)	B
6	2	Readiness	4.15(C)	J
7	3	Readiness	4.15(D)	B
8	3	Supporting	4.22(A)	G
9	3	Readiness	4.20(B)	D
10	3	Readiness	4.15(D)	H
11	3	Readiness	4.15(D)	A
12	3	Readiness	4.15(D)	F
13	3	Readiness	4.15(D)	C
14	3	Supporting	4.21(C)	F
15	3	Readiness	4.20(B)	D
16	3	Supporting	4.22(C)	F
17	3	Supporting	4.20(A)	B
18	3	Supporting	4.22(D)	J

*A scoring guide is used to determine the score for the written composition.

STAAR Grade 4 Writing Assessment

Reporting Category 1: Composition

The student will demonstrate an ability to compose a variety of written texts with a clear, central idea; coherent organization; sufficient development; and effective use of language and conventions.

- (15) **Writing/Writing Process.** Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to
- (B) develop drafts by categorizing ideas and organizing them into paragraphs; **Readiness Standard**
 - (C) revise drafts for coherence, organization, use of simple and compound sentences, and audience; **Readiness Standard**
 - (D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling [using a teacher-developed rubric]. **Readiness Standard**
- (18) **Writing/Expository [and Procedural] Texts.** Students write expository [and procedural or work-related] texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. Students are expected to
- (A) create brief compositions **Readiness Standard**
 - that
 - (i) establish a central idea in a topic sentence;
 - (ii) include supporting sentences with simple facts, details, and explanations; and
 - (iii) contain a concluding statement.

Reporting Category 2: Revision

The student will demonstrate an ability to revise a variety of written texts.

- (15) **Writing/Writing Process.** Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to
- (C) revise drafts for coherence, organization, use of simple and compound sentences, and audience. **Readiness Standard**
- (18) **Writing/Expository [and Procedural] Texts.** Students write expository [and procedural or work-related] texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. Students are expected to
- (A) create brief compositions that
 - (i) establish a central idea in a topic sentence; **Supporting Standard**
 - (ii) include supporting sentences with simple facts, details, and explanations; **Supporting Standard**
 - (iii) contain a concluding statement. **Supporting Standard**

Reporting Category 3: Editing

The student will demonstrate an ability to edit a variety of texts.

- (15) **Writing/Writing Process.** Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to
- (D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling [using a teacher-developed rubric]. **Readiness Standard**
- (20) **[Oral and] Written Conventions/Conventions.** Students understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to
- (A) use and understand the function of the following parts of speech in the context of reading, writing, and speaking:
Readiness Standard
 - (i) verbs (irregular verbs); **Supporting Standard**
 - (ii) nouns (singular/plural, common/proper); **Supporting Standard**
 - (iii) adjectives (e.g., descriptive, including purpose: *sleeping bag, frying pan*) and their comparative and superlative forms (e.g., *fast, faster, fastest*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (iv) adverbs (e.g., frequency: *usually, sometimes*; intensity: *almost, a lot*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (v) prepositions and prepositional phrases to convey location, time, direction, or to provide details; **Supporting Standard**
 - (vi) reflexive pronouns (e.g., *myself, ourselves*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (vii) correlative conjunctions (e.g., *either/or, neither/nor*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (viii) use time-order transition words and transitions that indicate a conclusion; **Supporting Standard**
 - (B) use the complete subject and the complete predicate in a sentence; **Readiness Standard**
 - (C) use complete simple and compound sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. **Supporting Standard**

- (21) **[Oral and] Written Conventions/Handwriting, Capitalization, and Punctuation.** Students write legibly and use appropriate capitalization and punctuation conventions in their compositions. Students are expected to
- (B) use capitalization **Readiness Standard**
 - for
 - (i) historical events and documents; **Supporting Standard**
 - (ii) titles of books, stories, and essays; **Supporting Standard**
 - (iii) languages, races, and nationalities; **Supporting Standard**
 - (C) recognize and use punctuation marks **Readiness Standard** including
 - (i) commas in compound sentences; **Supporting Standard**
 - (ii) quotation marks. **Supporting Standard**
- (22) **[Oral and] Written Conventions/Spelling.** Students spell correctly. Students are expected to
- (A) spell words with more advanced orthographic patterns rules: **Readiness Standard**
 - (i) plural rules (e.g., words ending in *f* as in *leaf, leaves*; adding *-es*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (ii) irregular plurals (e.g., *man/men, foot/feet, child/children*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (iii) double consonants in middle of words; **Supporting Standard**
 - (iv) other ways to spell sh (e.g., *-sion, -tion, -cian*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (v) silent letters (e.g., *knee, wring*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (B) spell base words and roots with affixes (e.g., *-ion, -ment, -ly, dis-, pre-*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (C) spell commonly used homophones (e.g., *there, they're, their; two, too, to*); **Supporting Standard**
 - (D) use spelling patterns and rules [and print and electronic resources] to determine and check correct spellings. **Supporting Standard**

Grade 4 Writing Expository Prompt

READ the information in the box below.

In the book *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*,
Dr. Seuss writes, "Today is your day! Your
mountain is waiting. So . . . *get on your way!*"

THINK about all the different places you could visit or things you could do in the future.

WRITE about something that you look forward to doing. Tell what you want to do and explain why you want to do it.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your central idea
- organize your writing
- develop your writing in detail
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

Score Point 1

The essay represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the explanatory task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the central idea is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the topic, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer’s progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is weak. The essay is ineffective because the writer uses details and examples that are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient.
- ❑ The essay is insubstantial because the writer’s response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer’s word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

Write about a time that you will want to go to a place and do activities with your family in the future.

I will like go to Disey Land. Disey Land is a place that will like to go to becaus you can see things. Disy Land is a place that I wish I can go to. If I go to Disey Land I will be so happy.

Win or if I go to Disey Land I can see Miney Mase. I can see the prizes. I can go on the loge ride that git you wet as culde be. I can go and see Gote, Donall the duck, Meick Mose and see Bell.

A time the you had a good time with you family that you will like to do in the future. I hope that I can go to Disey Land.

Score Point 1

The writer of this response would like to go to Disneyland. Although the essay is in an appropriate expository form, repetition (e.g., paragraph two; the introduction and conclusion) slows the progression of ideas. The writer attempts to develop the essay by naming some of the Disney characters she wants to see, but the development is vague and insufficient. The primary issue with this response is the lack of control of conventions. Severe and frequent spelling and usage errors create disruptions in the fluency of the response. The combination of weak conventions and insufficient development results in a very limited writing performance.

I am wondering where can I go in the future?
Oh now I realize were I am going to miami!
It is going to be fun am going to go play game
get on rollarcoaster at the carnivile. They
have a lot of fun things they have prizes,
rollarcoasters and games! This time I can
can get anything I want and stuff myself
with food in the future I hope it comes true
in the future for me.

Score Point 1

The writer's central idea is that he hopes to go to a carnival in Miami. The writer attempts to develop this idea by listing the reasons for his choice: it will fun to play games, get on a rollercoaster, and be able to get anything he wants at the carnival. However, these reasons are undeveloped and repetitious (am going to go play game get on rollercoaster; they have prizes, rollarcoasters and games). For this reason, the response represents a very limited writing performance.

If I was in the book *Oh, the Places You'll Go* I would eat candy and I would ride a hot air balloon because... First, I would eat candy because candy is sweet and taste yummy. Caution candy has lots of sugar in it so don't eat too much. I wouldn't eat too much candy I would just eat a few. Studies have shown that candy is not really healthy, so don't eat too much or else you would rotten your teeth.

Next, I would ride a hot air balloon because you can go fly next to the clouds. Caution don't try to reach stuff when in the sky or else you will fall off. It's fun being on a hot air balloon. Studies has shown that hot air balloons are maybe safe.

In conclusion, if I was in the book *Oh, the Places You'll Go* I would eat candy, and I would ride a hot air balloon, and it would be a fun adventure.

Score Point 1

The writer announces that she wants to be in the Dr. Seuss book *Oh, The Places You'll Go*, from which the quotation in the box is taken. Instead of explaining *why* she wants to be in the imaginary confines of this book, she lists what she will do (eat candy and ride in a hot air balloon). The writer focuses the development of these ideas on cautionary statements (Caution candy has lots of sugar in it so don't eat too much) and the findings of studies (Studies has shown that hot air balloons are maybe safe). These details and examples are inappropriate because they are only weakly connected to the prompt. Overall, the writer demonstrates a lack of understanding of this particular writing task.

In the future you want to go some were big like New Yourk or the beach and there are places your family might want to go really bad and you can go to Mexico or Paric.

But Paric might be the one you might want to go to extremely bad and your family might want to go to New York but you can not choose between New York, Mexico, Paric, or beach and you family wants.

To go to all of them at the same time and so your family wants to go to all four of them at the same time. So your family wants to do the beach first so they go to the beach and swim for a littel wigel.

Then they want to go to Mexico then New York then Paric but when they get there one person talkes to them and they said lets go learn how to speak french then they went to go learn how to speak.

French when they were done they said that was fun.

Score Point 1

In the first sentence of this unfocused essay, the writer attempts to establish a central idea (you want to go some were big like New Yourk or the beach. . . Mexico or Paric). However, the writer's inability to manage four possible destinations makes the central idea unclear. The random presentation of these different possibilities weakens the coherence of the essay, and the abrupt shifts from place to place cause serious disruptions in the progression of ideas. The essay is further weakened by awkward, uncontrolled sentences and frequent errors in language conventions. The lack of control at the word, sentence, and idea levels causes this essay to be very limited.

Score Point 2

The essay represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the expository task.
- Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the writer's central idea is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of an effective central idea or the writer's inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.
- The writer's progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is minimal. The essay is superficial because the writer uses details and examples that are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented.
- The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the expository purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

Australia

Have you ever wanted to go somewhere and you just couldn't wait? That's how I feel about Australia.

I often imagine being in Australia, having fun. By fun, I mean eating delicious foods, seeing animals like kangaroos and koalas, playing with my stepbrothers and sister, and lots more.

There are lots of good things about Australia that I've heard of. It's warm, there are cool animals there, delicious foods, the Great Coral Reef is amazing, etc.

There are also a lot of things to get used to. Jet lag, Australian accents, long flights, and being in a new country.

I really want to go to Australia! I can't wait!

Score Point 2

The writer's central idea is that he looks forward to going to Australia. The explanatory quality of the response indicates an awareness of the expository task, but the development of ideas is minimal. In the second paragraph, for example, the writer simply lists details (eating delicious foods, seeing animals like kangaroos and koalas, playing with my stepbrothers and sister) without explaining any of them. In the third paragraph, the writer attempts to add additional details, but some repetition is evident (cool animals, delicious foods). In addition, the third body paragraph is focused on the possible drawbacks of going to Australia. While the ideas in this paragraph are related to the topic of going to Australia, they do not directly support the central idea. Overall, this essay represents a basic writing performance.

Ash me what is the most fascinating place I would like to visit. That question is a no brainer. You'll soon discover that the place I want to visit is Paris.

Let me explain why I want to visit Paris in the future. One of the reasons why I want to visit Paris is that I'll get to see the Eiffel tower. The Eiffel tower is colossal, beautiful, and the best part is that everyone gets to see it every day. Another reason why I want to visit this beautiful and enormous place is to learn to speak french. I want to learn to speak french because I think by speaking french it will help me learn new things. Did I mention that they serve yummy food. This is another reason why I want to visit Paris. There are lots of reasons why I want to visit Paris and I hope to do them all when I arrive there.

Undoubtedly, you'll see me wandering from place to place, exploring new things, and being happy for finally arriving there. I hope you go to the place you would like to visit too.

Score Point 2

The writer states that she would like to visit Paris and provides three reasons for her choice. Although the writer provides details to explain some of these reasons (The Eiffel tower is colossal, beautiful; I think by speaking French it will help me learn new things), the development overall is superficial. In addition, the writer uses the same phrasing to introduce new ideas and transition from idea to idea (...the place I want to visit is Paris; Let me explain why I want to visit Paris; One of the reasons why I want to visit Paris; This is another reason why I want to visit Paris). This repetitive phrasing causes the writing to be wordy and significantly weakens the progression of ideas. The writer demonstrates an adequate control of sentences and a command of conventions, but the overall effectiveness of this essay is limited and reflects a basic writing performance.

I want to go to a snowy place. With fabulous works of art as far as my eyes can see. Also I would ski down a mountain or two. What place has all this Russia does. Skiing down mountains would be fun. I would ask a person to race. I could see an avalanche. Also I only will do that in Russia to show my mom I can do something dangerous. Russia has unique buildings. Russia has famous swirly top buildings. Their color is so vibrant it seems lively. Also I would visit a Russian museum. The white plush snow looks like an ice cream wonderland. I've always wanted to touch snow. I would also start a snow ball fight. I'll scare people, by hiding snow and then pop out. I've always wanted to see snow in person.

Score Point 2

In this basic essay, the writer identifies Russia as his future destination of choice. He provides a number of reasons to explain this choice and adds some detail (unique buildings...famous swirly top buildings; white plush snow...ice cream wonderland), but the overall development of ideas is minimal. In addition, the progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. The writer's lack of transitions as he moves from imagining works of art to skiing down mountains to describing unique buildings to experiencing snow weakens the sentence-to-sentence connections and causes the writing to be jumpy.

Hawaii

I would like to go to Hawaii. There are three reasons why. Here are my three reasons. It is beautiful, fun, and a great view. The first reason is because it is beautiful. I think that all the flowers are so pretty. Also that all the different insects there are wonderful. I love Hawaii. Also the fish are very colorful. Another reason is because it is fun. you can surf or swim. Or you can just sit and enjoy a smoothie in the sun. I would want to swim with the sharks. I would be excited! The last reason it's because it has a great view. All the volcanos that look like there are going to erop. It would be very cool. Also very scary. I would not want it to erop when I am there. I havn't gone but I have seen pictures. I think it's awesome. Those are my three reasons why I want to go to Hawaii.

Score Point 2

The writer identifies three reasons for wanting to go to Hawaii (it is beautiful, it is fun, it has a great view). She attempts to develop these reasons, but her general word choice causes the development to be superficial (flowers are so pretty; different insects there are wonderful; fish are very colorful). The approach to the writing task is formulaic because of the writer's use of perfunctory transitions throughout the essay (There are three reasons why; Here are my three reasons; The first reason; Another reason; The last reason; Those are my three reasons). The lack of meaningful transitions causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. Because the writer is unable to build meaning from one idea to the next, the coherence of the essay is weakened. Overall, this essay represents a basic writing performance.

Score Point 3

The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the expository task.
- The writer establishes a clear central idea. Most ideas are related to the central idea and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- The writer’s progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is sufficient because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and appropriate, adding some substance to the essay.
- The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer’s response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer’s word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the expository purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.

Does anyone know where I'm going for spring break?!! You guessed it! Oregon! You know what that means, don't you!?

I'm going to go to Bend, Oregon with my friend, Ashley's family! I am going to go snowboarding! It's extremely epic! You can make the white, fluffy, crystal snow fly everywhere with your board! It looks amazing! Once you're done snowboarding, you can snuggle on the couch, by the flaming, hot fire, drinking hot chocolate.

Do you know what else I'm going to do in Oregon? I'm going to visit my grandparents! They are always so cheerful and happy, like someone who has never tasted sugar before!

I'm going to go to the Timbers game with my family and my grandma! GO Timbers!!!

I can already imagine all the laughter and fun that I'm going to have! I think about everything I'm going to do and I know that this is going to be the best vacation ever!!!!

Score Point 3

In this essay, the writer's central idea is that she looks forward to a spring break trip to Oregon. She develops this central idea by presenting two reasons why Oregon will be "the best vacation ever" (getting to go snowboarding and getting to visit her grandparents). In the paragraph about why snowboarding will be so much fun, the details and word choice are specific and add some substance to the development. Although the writer's explanation of her upcoming visit with her grandparents could be more detailed and specific, the development overall is sufficient. The writer attempts to link her reasons by asking a rhetorical question at the beginning of paragraph three (Do you know what else I'm going to do in Oregon?). While this transition could be stronger, it does adequately connect the two reasons.

What I want to do in the future is own a pet. A cute and adorable pet, Not a lion or a tiger. There are many different types of pets. Like a dog, a cat, a hamster, and much, much more. Some pets are just so cute. You can't resist looking at them. Their soft fur, their adorable, little eyes. Who can possibly ignore that? Pets are very interesting. At first I didn't know that cats sleep longer than a human a day. I found that very interesting. If you don't really like pets, try and work with them. They are not mean at all, unless you be mean to them. Of course, Let me tell you about a pet that is incredibly fun, cute, and interesting. Dogs! Dogs are almost like humans, except dogs bark, and they are in the shape of a dog. You can play many games with them, like, ball and throwing a Frisbee, and things like that. Don't they sound so fun to have and work with? Once you get to know these fun, and interesting pets, you might even have a lot in common.

Score Point 3

The writer establishes the clear central idea that he wants to own a pet in the future. To support the central idea, the writer introduces different types of pets, focusing on the characteristics that make them interesting and irresistible. The writer's obvious enthusiasm for his subject makes the essay engaging. Although transitions would make the sentence-to-sentence connections clearer, the relationships between ideas are logical. The tone of the essay is appropriate for expository writing, and the writer's command of conventions is adequate for this age level. Overall, this essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

"I can't believe that you've been to eight states already!" My mom exclaimed as we pasted pictures of my trip to Mississippi into my travel scrapbook. "But I have forty-two more to go if I'm going to reach my goal of all fifty," I answered. I've always wanted to visit all fifty states. I could see all kinds of cool and historic places, like the Liberty Bell and maybe even the White House. I could learn about different cultures, like annual festivals. I could get to try new foods that we don't have here in Texas. I could see animals that live in colder and warmer places, and I could see some different kinds of plants too. I could see some different habitats like a swamp or a beach. Bragging rights also come with visiting all of the states. Sometimes, I imagine going up to my friends and saying, "Guess what? I've been to all fifty states." Visiting the whole U.S.A. would be an adventure. Last but not least, I'd see new sights but have fun while doing it. Maybe someday I'll have a big ten-state trip. But for now, I'm good taking it one at a time.

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory essay, the writer uses a conversation with his mother to introduce the central idea that his future goal is to visit all fifty states. He develops this idea by explaining the many ways he would benefit from visiting different states. The progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled, though the movement from sentence to sentence could be stronger. In addition, the development is thoughtful but uneven. In some places, his explanation is enhanced by specific details and examples that add some substance to the essay (I could see all kinds of cool and historic places, like the Liberty Bell and maybe even the White House). However, not all benefits are developed with equal specificity (learning about different cultures, trying new foods). The writer effectively concludes the essay by contrasting a hypothetical future plan (taking a big ten-state trip) with his current strategy (visiting one state at a time).

Let me tell you about a place that I look forward to visiting, The Disney Cruise. I could name 100 reasons why I want to go on the Disney Cruise, but I'm only going to talk about one. This is my favorite reason, 3 words, the water slide.

One reason that probably everyone agrees with me on is that the water slide goes off the boat! It feels like your actually flying. Oh, and looking down at the beautiful ocean water makes it 50 x better. In my opinion it might be the greatest slide of all time.

I don't know about anyone else but I absolutely love fast stuff. I don't know if its the speed or whatever but I love fast stuff. That slide is gonna make me feel like a falcon flying through the sky. If I had guess the water takes you atleast 12mph. Also the water slides have about 10 ramps that give you a big boost. I just cannot wait to go on that slide.

That slide looks very fun and I cannot wait to go on it. I hope everyone will enjoy it as much as I will.

Score Point 3

In this concise essay, the writer uses the introduction to establish her favorite reason for wanting to go on a Disney Cruise. Her narrow focus on the water slide enables the writer to clearly explain and sufficiently develop the reasons why the water slide is appealing. Specific details (the water slide goes off the boat . . . looking down at the beautiful ocean water makes it 50x better) add substance to the essay, and the writer's enthusiasm makes the response engaging (That slide is gonna make me feel like a falcon flying through the sky). Slight repetition about loving "fast stuff" creates a minor lapse in focus, but for the most part, the essay moves smoothly and logically. Overall, the clear word choice, good control of sentences, and command of conventions strengthen the presentation of ideas.

Score Point 4

The essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is clearly appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is skillfully crafted because the writer uses organizational strategies that are particularly well suited to the expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear central idea. All ideas are strongly related to the central idea and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. By sustaining this focus, the writer is able to create an essay that is unified and coherent.
- ❑ The writer’s progression of ideas is logical and well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer’s train of thought easy to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is effective because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and well chosen, adding substance to the essay.
- ❑ The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing or to connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer’s word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the essay. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.

The bombs bursting in air! Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there! Ah! I've always wanted to be there on the big 1st place podium while the star spangled banner was on and playing at the olympics! Probaly bawling my eyes out with pride and joy! And making 16 years of extremely hard training all pay off. And making my friends, family, coach, and country proud! It's always been my dream just to be standing there on that 1st place podium! I have dedicated 8 years of my life so far to training! Sometimes I see my coach more than my own dad! Some people just don't get it! They think it's crazy! But whenever I have a dream, I don't give up! I set my mind to it! If all of the long workouts, falls, blood, sweat, and tears help me achieve my life long dream of making it to the olympics and winning 1st place, then you better believe that's what I will be doing! Without gymnastics I don't know who I would be! And I would never have a dream as big as this!

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer states that she has always dreamed of standing on the 1st-place podium at the Olympics. The writer creates a unified and coherent essay by narrowly focusing on the personal commitment she has made to achieve this dream (I have dedicated 8 years of my life so far to training. Sometimes I see my coach more than my own dad!). The writer's reflections on her own training and dedication add substance to the development and make the writing thoughtful. Specific word choice and well-controlled sentences (including the purposeful fragments that follow the central idea) strongly contribute to the quality of this concise essay.

Palo Duro Canyon

I want to go to the Palo Duro Canyon. There would be lots of fun things to do and amazing sights to see.

Something I dearly want to do is watch a play. The play is about the Lone Star State of Texas. What I've seen in photos of the play that stands out is one thing, the characters' costumes. They seem so colorful and pretty. The set is full of flags big and small, of the state of Texas and our country.

When I am there, I want to take a hike to the Lighthouse Rock. To get to the big rock you have to walk a few painful miles up. You better bring water because you are going to be tired. To keep yourself from cramping later, breathe with your nose instead of your mouth. After you have done all that, you can enjoy the view of the lighthouse rock. The lighthouse rock is a natural boulder that is gigantic and amazing. You may see wildlife like roadrunners and wildflowers. If you have a chance to fly over it with a helicopter, you can see everything at once, which is truly awesome.

I think going to the Palo Duro Canyon would be a wonderful experience. I hope I go soon.

Score Point 4

This accomplished writing performance is focused on going to Palo Duro Canyon. The writer provides specific and well-chosen details about things he will do there (watch a play and take a hike). The writer's explanation of the hike to Lighthouse Rock is particularly effective, as he weaves together various aspects of the hiking experience—from the physical demands of the hike to the appearance of the boulder to the wildlife and flowers that can be seen there. The writer's use of meaningful transitions allows him to build this development from sentence to sentence and makes his train of thought easy to follow. Although the introduction and conclusion are perfunctory, the body of the essay is original and reflects a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

When I learned how to use the computer, I saw people making animations. It looked like they were creating new worlds. I wanted to get in to animating, so that's why I started drawing. I've been practicing my drawing skills, so when I animate it would look better. I wanted to take my animating to a whole new level, so I decided when I grew a little older I would put my animations on YouTube. I wanted to have the joy of making animations while still making people laugh and earning money. I thought working for YouTube was a good idea because I could do what I enjoy doing and at the same time earning a little money for charity and myself. I am also excited that I'll be collaborating with other animators. I think every animation should have a storyline or a point to it. It could probably be made for comedic purposes, drama purposes or even emotional purposes. I think we all have a chance at doing something amazing for the world, all I really want to do is make the world laugh. We all have a purpose in life, mine is to be the best animator. Everyones future is bright and in the future being the best animator is what I want to be.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer states that her purpose in life is to be the best animator. The progression of ideas is logical and well controlled as she explains why achieving this goal is important to her. The writer uses a chronological organizational strategy to develop the first part of her essay, beginning with her early preparation for animating by “practicing [her] drawing skills” to her interest in animating for YouTube and collaborating with other animators. The writer’s ability to reflect on her desire to become an animator makes the essay particularly thoughtful (I think we all have a chance at doing something amazing for the world, all I really want to do is make the world laugh. We all have a purpose in life mine is to be the best animator). In addition, both the introduction and the conclusion add substance to the explanation, and the writer’s purposeful and precise word choice enhances the quality and clarity of the essay.

There are things that, in the future, every wants to see and do. Me, I can't stop thinking about wanting to go to Egypt.

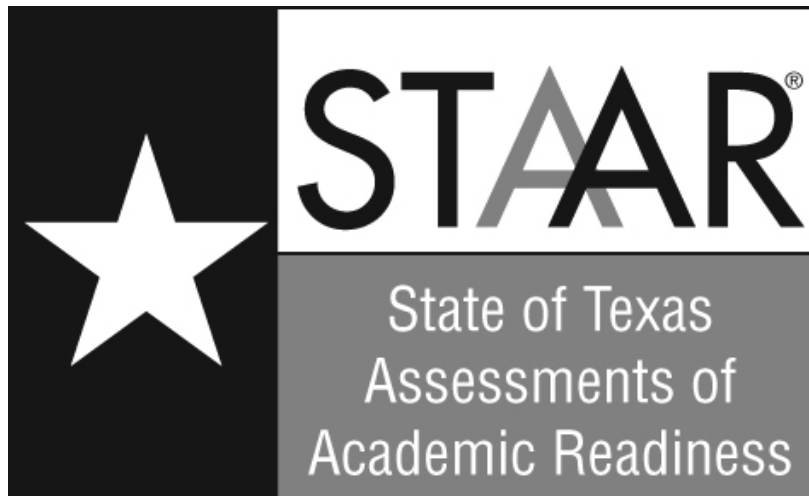
If I want to Egypt, the first thing I would do is see the tombs and pyramids archeologists have uncovered. King Tutankhamen, or King Tut, has always interested me. His pyramid was the only one that still had its gold, silver and jewelry. Learning how to read hieroglyphics would help if I want in a pyramid. I only remember a few from Mrs. Christopherson's SPIRAL class. A is a lion, which is really hard to draw. You have to be a good artist if you want to have good hand writing. I'm a long way away from reading the hieroglyphics, but that makes me want to go even more!

I would also like to learn about the history and mythology. In the mythology, there was the sun god Ra, Horus, the war god, and Osiris the underworld god. They were all kings. Isis, the magic goddess was queen. There was also Neith, the hunting goddess and Hapi, the god of the Nile. Khufu, Ramses I and Tut are the only real kings I know about, but I don't know much about them. Even so, it's all really interesting.

I'm always going to want to go to Egypt, no matter what happens here. The pyramids, hieroglyphics history and mythology will never get boring.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished essay, the writer “can’t stop thinking about wanting to go to Egypt.” The writer sustains focus by explaining the appeal of Egypt and sharing his unique experiences of learning hieroglyphics and assorted other facts about the country’s history and mythology. The writer’s zeal for the subject matter is evident throughout. The specific, well-chosen examples and the writer’s reflections and insights make the essay unique and engaging. The writer’s precise and purposeful word choice and strong conventions further contribute to the overall quality of the essay.



Grade 4 Writing

Personal Narrative Scoring Guide

March 2015

Grade 4 Writing Personal Narrative Prompt

Look at the picture below.



Sometimes we can do anything if we are determined.

Write about a time when you tried your hardest.

Be sure to —

- write about a personal experience
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

STAAR Grade 4 Personal Narrative

Score Point 1

The narrative represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the narrative is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies or literary devices that are only marginally suited to the narrative task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. Because the narrative is presented in a random or illogical way, the writer is not able to convey a sense of the experience.
- ❑ Many of the details do not contribute to the narrative. The writer's lack of focus on a specific personal experience weakens the unity and coherence of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer's narrative presentation is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the story line. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections makes one or more parts of the narrative unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of the narrative is weak because the details are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient. They do not contribute to the writer's portrayal of the experience.
- ❑ The narrative is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the narrative as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer fails to establish a realistic situation or present motivations for behavior or actions.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the narrative purpose. The word choice impedes the writer's ability to relate the experience clearly.
- ❑ Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, weakening the effectiveness of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

"One time I tried my hardest just to play basket ball. It was a very hard sport but I tried and tried again. Basket ball was my favorite sport. I like to practice it play it, also planning it. However I like to play basket ball. I like playing outside basket ball, playing in the park, playing the basket ball video game, in addition I like playing basket ball in school at recess.

Most of the time I practice basket ball. I'm practicing shooting into the goal, steering the ball away from the other team, passing it to one of my teammates,

Score Point 1

Although the writer briefly establishes a narrative intent in the opening sentence (One time I tried my hardest just to play basketball), he does not write about a specific personal experience. Instead, he develops the response with a series of general statements about playing basketball, focused mostly on where he likes to play and what he does during basketball practice. Because the composition is written as an expository piece rather than as a personal narrative, the development is inappropriate to the specific demands of the prompt. For this reason, the response represents a very limited writing performance.

I was playing soccer in the front yard when my friend came in his go cart and he said do you want to ride it and I said yes.

So then we got on the go cart I was scared so I kept trying and trying into I new how to drive it then I wint by my own self and I all most crashed.

Then I went back to my friends houes my friend said keep on trying all over origine into you get it so I did and I all most got it.

Then my friends dad said let me tieh you and so he tote me then I lerned so when he said letes go tack me on a ride.

I wish that I had a go cart to.

Score Point 1

This response is focused on a time the writer learned how to drive a go-kart. Although the response is written in a narrative form, the development is general, and the transitions used to move through time are limited to “so” and “so then.” However, the most serious problems are at the sentence and word levels. The lack of sentence boundaries within paragraphs reveals the writer’s inability to construct basic sentences, which seriously weakens the narrative. In addition, the errors in word usage (“into” for “until”) and the misspellings of basic words further contribute to the weak control of conventions. The result is a very limited writing performance.

Lalala I was breve when i got on stage and
dared. I was eghit when this happend
Get in your places!! "One day i ned to go to
my dance resoltel and i was so so so ex sidet to go! but
then i got to NEREVEST get in your places! NEVES-
I oh my oh my OH my! I cant do this! WHY WHY
Im... NEVEST Thoughts in my Hade or going
"I can do it" "I cant do it" "omg" "they look so
cute" someone yell's loudly! I DID IT "Omg
omg I did it! i did it!" "I dance and dance like
it was my last time dance,ng ever" NOW WE
can have fun" Yha best day) in my life

Score Point 1

In this very limited response, the writer focuses primarily on her anxiety about doing well at her dance recital at age eight. While this approach is appropriate to the narrative task, a lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections leaves the reader without the context or direction necessary to navigate the internal monologue that comprises most of the story (NEVEST oh my oh my OH my! I can't do this! WHY WHY Im...NEVEST Thoughts in my Hade or going "I can do it"). Because these gaps create disruptions in the story line, the response conveys only a vague sense of the writer's experience. In addition, the lack of appropriate punctuation between sentences causes sentence boundary problems, and errors in the spelling of basic words further detracts from the fluency of the piece.

Have you ever tried your hardest on something?
I was at school I was taking a test. I wanted to
pas the test. I was trying my best to pas and
hardest. I took a long time taking the test.
I was not finish onto it was to go home. I was
talking my time on the test. The test was really
hard and I was trying my best to pas the test.
I was thinking hard on the test because it
was very hard. First, I was using my Brain for
the test. I was trying my best on the test so I
can pas it and it was trichy. The test was the
most hardest thing but I still tryed my best.
Next, I was almost done with my test. I was
Reading the last story from the test and im
done with the test. I was ansewring the
Questions and I was done with the test.
Then, I was wating for my Grade and
the teacher was saying the Grades and
I finally herd mine I past the test. I
was so glad that I past. That was
the time I tried my hardest on
something.

Score Point 1

The writer recounts a time when passing a test was hard. While the response does move through time, repetition and wordiness about the test being very hard stalls the narrative presentation. In addition, the details the writer includes about taking the test are insufficient, preventing him from even minimally portraying the experience. The disruptions in the storyline and weak development, along with vague language and simplistic sentences, result in a very limited personal narrative.

Score Point 2

The narrative represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the narrative is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies or literary devices that are only somewhat suited to the narrative task. The writer is able to convey some sense of the experience.
- ❑ Some details do not contribute to the narrative. The writer may focus on a specific personal experience but may not sustain that focus, limiting the unity and coherence of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer's narrative presentation is inconsistent. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the story line. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the logical movement of the narrative.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of the narrative is minimal and remains at a surface level because there are few details, they are not always appropriate, or they are too general. For the most part, the details contribute only marginally to the writer's portrayal of the experience.
- ❑ The narrative reflects little or no thoughtfulness. In some cases, the writer's response to the prompt is formulaic and demonstrates only a limited understanding of the writing task. In other cases, the writer establishes some elements of a realistic situation but may provide few motivations for behavior or actions. The narrative conveys little sense of why the experience was important to the writer.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the narrative purpose. The word choice limits the writer's ability to relate the experience clearly.
- ❑ Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, limiting the effectiveness of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

I can do this, I thought to myself. I was swimming!
I did my best and achieved my goal!
We had just arrived at Ms. Blake's swim school. I was very
excited! I met Ms. Blake and she was very nice. We
then got in the pool. The beautiful blue water was
very cold. Ms. Blake took hold of my arm and legs and
showed me how to swim. Soon I got the hang of it. It was
time to learn how to dive. I was very nervous. Ms. Blake
threw some toys into the pool. Ms. Blake showed me how
to dive for the toys. I kept trying and eventually got
all the toys! It was time to go. I toweled off and said bye.
I then got in the car. I had a lot of fun.
That was my swimming story and I hope you liked it. Bye!

Score Point 2

The writer begins her narrative by stating that she did her best to achieve her goal of learning how to swim and dive. Minimal details about this experience (the beautiful blue water was cold; Ms. Blake took hold of my arms and legs; Ms. Blake showed me how to dive for the toys) provide some surface-level development. In addition, the writer briefly addresses both her excitement and nervousness, which conveys some sense of the experience. However, the conclusion does not contribute to the storyline, and briefly presented details as well as the writer's use of general language (very nice, had a lot of fun) result in a basic writing performance.

One For The Team

"Son, wake up," said my dad while he was pulling my blanket. "It's a big day," he exclaimed. I got up, walked to the sink, put toothpaste on my toothbrush, and started brushing my teeth.

As I was doing all of these things, I was remembering today was the final day of summer so it is time to play soccer until next year. As I finished brushing my teeth, I went outside to eat breakfast. I finished breakfast, changed clothes, got in the car with my dad, and drove to the soccer field. The game started with me playing defense. My team scored first. But the other team scored 1 too. The scores stayed the same for half an hour. Then the goalkeeper gave the ball to me and told me to score. I said ok. I ran as fast as I could while my whole team was covering me. I got through the defense of the other team then shot the ball, and I scored!

Everyone was so happy that we won the game.

Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance, the writer recalls scoring the winning goal in the last soccer game of the season. The writer maintains an appropriate narrative form, developing the response with a step-by-step account of the day's activities. However, most of the details the writer includes in the first half of the response (waking up, brushing his teeth, eating breakfast, changing clothes) do not contribute to an understanding of his performance in the soccer game. This problem limits the unity and coherence of the narrative and causes the development to remain at a surface level.

I am going to write about a time when I tried my hardest. One day me and my dad wanted to go and play baseball. So we went to a field to play baseball. Then we got all of our equipment on. Then me and my dad started to play catch I had the bat and he threw the ball and I tried my hardest to hit the ball and I did. Then I hit the ball again and again until it was my dad's turn to hit the ball. Next I threw the ball to my dad and he hit it to. Next me and my dad were playing catch for the rest of the time. Me and my dad spread out far and my dad threw it to me and I caught it. Then I threw it back and he caught it too. Have you ever played catch with your dad?

Score Point 2

The writer presents a basic narrative about the time he and his dad went to a baseball field to work on their skills. The writer describes how they played catch, took turns batting, and played catch some more, but his descriptions of these activities are general and superficial. In addition, the movement from sentence to sentence is not smooth because of the writer's repetitive use of the perfunctory transitions "Then" and "Next," weakening the narrative presentation. General word choice and simplistic sentence structures also limit the effectiveness of this response.

Splash, swim, I'm doing it, I'm doing it! "Wow I never felt that alive before". I said. That was the first time I ever swam by myself". I said, wait, wait, wait am I going to fast let me tell you the whole story when I learned how to swim by myself. It was in August I have no idea what day it was because I was only about six or seven years old. So we were going to the pool and my family came. We just wanted to go to the pool because it was really hot. It was so hot it felt like an old which was boiling me! That's how hot it was. but one thing I wanted to swim but I don't know how to swim. So I asked my mom to teach me how to swim. she said yes. so she said Paddle, Paddle, Paddle with your feet. and as soon as possible I could swim as fast as a shark. I was so proud of myself. I was trying my best and my hardest. So if there's a swimming competition call me!

Score Point 2

The writer begins the narrative in the middle of the action—specifically, at the moment she learns to swim—but then immediately backtracks into setting up the story. This set-up is both wordy and repetitive, slowing the movement of the narrative from sentence to sentence (So we were going to the pool and my family came. We just wanted to go to the pool because it was really hot. It was so hot it felt like an old which was boiling me! That's how hot it was). In addition, the inclusion of details that contribute only marginally to a portrayal of the experience hinders meaningful development (It was in August I have no idea what day it was because I was only about six or seven years old). Overall, this narrative represents a basic writing performance.

Score Point 3

The narrative represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The form or structure of the narrative is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies or literary devices that are adequately suited to the narrative task. The writer is able to clearly convey the experience.
- Most details contribute to the effectiveness of the narrative. The writer focuses on a specific personal experience and generally sustains that focus. The narrative is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- The writer’s narrative presentation is adequately controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the logical movement of the narrative.

Development of Ideas

- Specific details add some substance to the narrative. For the most part, these details contribute to the writer’s portrayal of the experience.
- The narrative reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer demonstrates a good understanding of the writing task by establishing a realistic situation and providing reasonable motivations for behavior or actions. The narrative conveys some sense of why the experience was important to the writer.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer’s word choice is, for the most part, specific and concrete. It reflects an awareness of the narrative purpose. Generally effective word choice allows the writer to relate the experience clearly.
- Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the narrative.
- The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the narrative.

Why can't I do it?! My brother can do it, my sister can do it. Why can't I? I just want to skate backwards.

My brother tried to teach me. My sister tried to teach me. I just couldn't do it, so I said "what ever I'll try again after I do one lap."

After I did one lap I tried again and again and again until I decided to take a break and do another lap to cool off.

Then after I cooled off. I tried and tried and tried. Then when I was just about to give up...

I did it! That inspired me to keep trying so I tried to do it and, I fell. I tried again and, I almost did it yet, I still fell again, but that didn't stop me from trying again. That time I did it!

Even if I can skate backwards now, I learned two very important lessons that day and, they were never give up and, if you put your mind to something you can accomplish any thing.

The End

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory writing performance, the writer is determined to learn to skate backwards. Although he repeatedly expresses the initial idea of trying and failing, each successive paragraph adds a slightly new dimension to his earlier efforts, allowing the writer to build some depth by emphasizing the persistence it took to learn to skate backwards. In addition, the reflection about the lessons he learned from this experience provides a thoughtful conclusion. Although some minor spelling and punctuation errors are evident, they do not affect the clarity of the narrative.

I've been practicing for months, and I couldn't believe it when it was the day of the UIL competition. I said good bye to my mom as she wished me luck, and my dad took me to school. I went into the classroom and immediately they called the UIL kids to the cafeteria. I went to my Music Memory UIL team they were all there. We got on the bus and almost the whole time I was studying. But I also played games such as the ABC game, rock paper scissors, and I Spy. I got off the bus with the rest of my team. I played with my friends until it was time to take the test. I was shaking all over thinking "I can do it." When I heard the music I just started writing down names. When I left the room I played and then went to see the scores. I got 1st place! I guess all that hard work paid off.

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory narrative, the writer focuses on a time she was determined to do well at a UIL Music Memory competition. Much of the writing in the first half of the paper is background information. However, the writer's descriptions of practicing for months, getting on the bus at school, and studying on the bus are all linked to the UIL competition and, therefore, contribute to the writer's portrayal of the experience. In addition, specific details add some substance to the narrative, and sentences are adequately connected and controlled, allowing the writer to clearly convey the day's events.

A.A.U. Tryouts

Have you ever wanted something so badly and tried so hard to achieve it. Well I have. But I did it in a sweetly and smelly way to be exact

I was on my way to an A.A.U. basketball tryout. It was at H.B.U. On the way to the tryout I was amazingly nervous. I was already sweating in my seat. While I was shaking around my mom asked if I was okay. I answered with a straight up "NO!"

We did a few warm ups like running and going through a few drills to loosen ourselves. After that we began playing a real game. The instructors did this to see how good we were in game situations. I played as hard as I could. I ended up with a lot of points, assists, and rebounds.

When the tryouts ended I was dripping with sweat. The instructors said that they would tell who made the team in 2 days. 2 days later my mom got an email saying I made the team. I was filled with joy. I guess all my hard work payed off after all, because only 8 kids made the team out of thirty something kids. I was very proud of myself.

So remember anything you want to achieve you can achieve, but only if you try.

Score Point 3

The writer focuses on the time he participated in A.A.U. basketball tryouts. The writer adequately controls the narrative by using simple transitions that move the reader smoothly from sentence to sentence and show how different parts of the day impact the experience as a whole. For example, he methodically recounts his nervousness on the way to the tryout, the warm ups at the tryout, his success in the game, and his feelings after he learned he had made the team. Although the description of how hard he tried is brief and general, specific details about the day's events contribute to the writer's portrayal of the experience and convey some sense of why the experience was important to him. In addition, the writer's specific and concrete word choice allows him to relate the experience clearly.

A time when I was determined was when I shot the winning baskets. "Beep!" the whistle yelled someone fouled me. "Damn it!" I said, "I never make free throws." I was so nervous. When they were done lining up, the ref gave me the ball. "Two shots," he said. We were down by one. If I make these two shots I could win the game, I said to myself. The ref bounced the ball towards me. I dribbled the ball twice. Then, swoosh! It went in! "Last shot," said the ref. If I make this, we could win. He passed the ball back to me again. Again I dribbled the ball. It hit the backboard, bounced on the rim.... And went in! I was so proud of myself. With five seconds left they passed the ball in. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. "Beeeeep!" The buzzer screamed. We won the game.

That was a time when I was determined and won our game. Have you had a time like that?

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory narrative, the writer describes shooting the winning baskets in a game. Although neither the introduction nor the conclusion adds substance to the narrative, relevant details about the game's sequential action (dribbled the ball, bounced on the rim, buzzer screamed) combined with an internal monologue that reveals the writer's motivation to succeed add to a concrete portrayal of the experience. Her control of language and use of effective dialogue help her establish a link between the experience and its importance and demonstrate a good awareness of the narrative purpose.

STAAR Grade 4 Personal Narrative

Score Point 4

The narrative represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The form or structure of the narrative is appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies or literary devices that are particularly well suited to the narrative task. The writer is able to skillfully convey the experience.
- All details contribute to the effectiveness of the narrative. The writer focuses on a specific personal experience and sustains that focus, strengthening the unity and coherence of the narrative.
- The writer’s narrative presentation is well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the logical movement of the narrative.

Development of Ideas

- Specific, well-chosen details add substance to the narrative. These details contribute significantly to the writer’s portrayal of the experience.
- The narrative is thoughtful and engaging. The writer demonstrates a thorough understanding of the writing task by establishing a realistic situation and providing plausible motivations for behavior or actions. The narrative conveys a good sense of why the experience was important to the writer.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer’s word choice is vivid and expressive. It reflects a keen awareness of the narrative purpose. Effective word choice enables the writer to recreate the experience in a way that conveys its importance.
- Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the narrative.
- The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency or clarity of the writing. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the narrative.

I stepped up to the plate, scared as a turkey on Thanksgiving. I looked at the scoreboard, 9th inning, 2 outs, down by 3, bases loaded. "It's all up to me," I whispered. I took my stance. "Strike one!" The umpire called. "Strike two!" The umpire called again. "UGH!!" I said in my mind, "I've worked so hard for this, why is it so hard?"

I stepped back, took a few swings and stepped up to the plate. "Come on, just a homerun!", I said angrily. I looked at the pitcher, I could feel the rubbery bat touching my fingertips. The pitcher winded up and threw the ball. SMASH!, I ripped the ball so hard, it went over the fence!, my sandpaper-like mouth dissolved. The people cheered as soon as I started running, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Home!, "YES", I screamed, "I did it, we won the Championship!"

My team started running on the field, they gathered around me lifting me up and cheering, "Ruben!" "Ruben!" "Ruben!" "I've worked so hard for this and it finally payed off!"

Score Point 4

In this concise, engaging narrative, the writer describes the time he worked hard during a championship game to hit a homerun and lead his team to victory. By narrowing the action to the game-winning at bat, the writer is able to focus on the climax of the narrative. He paints a vivid picture of that moment through the use of particularly effective dialogue and well-chosen details. The purposeful word choice (the rubbery bat touching my fingertips; my sandpaper-like mouth dissolved) helps the writer recreate the experience, demonstrating that he has a keen awareness of the narrative task.

"Oh, boy it's gardening day!" I said joyfully. I was thrilled to get started. I was going to work extra hard for my mom to be proud of me. I promised her I would do the gardening this year. I ran to the storage room to get the gardening tools and seeds. I got started right away.

"How's the gardening going?", my sister asked. "It's going good." I replied busily. I worked all day long over the past few days. My hands were throbbing with pain from all of the digging, but I didn't give up. The garden was growing, and growing. My mom was watching with disbelief. In fact my whole family came to watch as I worked too! "I can't believe the flowers are almost done growing!" I exclaimed. Spring finally came. The flowers had grown so beautiful! "We know you tried very hard to make the garden look great, and we love it!", my mom said happily. "I'm so glad you all love the garden. I really did work hard," I said.

Score Point 4

The writer recalls working hard to take care of the family garden so that her mother would be proud of her. The writer wastes no space, launching right into the narrative from the first sentence. The writer's use of dialogue is skillful: it helps move the storyline forward and communicates not only her mother's appreciation of her efforts but also her own personal pride in her accomplishment. The narrative is coherent and well controlled because every sentence contributes to the reader's understanding of the experience. Overall, this narrative represents an accomplished writing performance.

I timidly tiptoed into a high-school with my hands clutching the fake rose in my hair. The thought of going on stage that night gave me the chills. I wasn't scared of performing on stage, I was scared because I had to do a colossal leap in front of everyone. If I failed I would be extremely embarrassed.

I walked into a giant room with black walls and joined a group of my friends. The room was packed with people in different costumes. My costume was a flowery, gray and red dress with lots of roses on it. A few minutes later, a lady came in with a clipboard and told our group to perform. By then I was trembling in fear.

We marched up some stairs that led to the stage and the music began. That was our cue to start. Then it was time for my big leap. I backed up, took a running start, and jumped in the air. The people in the audience stared and started clapping like thunder as I touched the ground. I was proud of myself that day, and I knew I tried my hardest.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer recounts the time she successfully performed a “colossal leap” on stage in front of an audience. The narrative flows well from beginning to end and is easy to follow. She effectively sets the scene in the first paragraph by focusing on her fragile emotional state before she takes the stage. Specific, well-chosen details about her fear of failure, the black walls of the “giant” waiting room, and the climactic big leap add substance to the narrative and contribute significantly to her portrayal of the experience. In addition, the expressive word choice and well-controlled sentences further strengthen the response and reflect the writer’s ability to skillfully craft an engaging narrative.

Vroom! We speed by in our shiny blue MG on a beautiful summer night. We slowed down at the stop sign then leached forwards, but Boom! Our MG had just broken down. "Mom, what's going on?" I blurt out, "Well the car probably just broke down, so we're going to have to push it back to the house unless you want to leave it here." "NO!" My sister and I shout back. "Well get out and start pushin." My sister and I slipped out of the car and began to push with all our might. "This is going to take a while." I mumbled to my sister. "Well then stop chatin and focus, push!" We pushed and pushed until I began to descend to the ground. "Ow!" I shout. "What was that for?" "Well aren't you thirsty?" "yes." "Well there's a water bottle for you right there." I jump up and grab the water bottle chugging it down. "Let's do this thing!" I started to charge the car hoping it would go faster, but it only made me more weak. All of us started to get really tired, but we were almost there! I looked up and saw a sign that said Southwestern. "Push!" I yelled "we're almost there!" Then in the distance I saw our little house. I pushed with all my might and we finally got there. I ran to my house and thought, that was really hard.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer recalls the challenging day when his family worked hard to push their broken-down car all the way home. He effectively moves the storyline forward through the use of dialogue. Although written in one paragraph, the writer's dialogue exchanges with his mother and sister are not difficult to follow. They add substance to the narrative by revealing how difficult the experience was and why it remains memorable to him. The specific and concrete language the writer uses (blurt out, leached forwards, began to push with all our might, mumbled to my sister) demonstrates that he has a thorough understanding of the narrative writing task.