



COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR  
**English Language Arts**  
&  
**Literacy in**  
**History/Social Studies,**  
**Science, and Technical Subjects**

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Appendix C:  
Grade 3  
Samples of Student Writing



## Samples of Student Writing

Following are writing samples that have been annotated to illustrate the criteria required to meet the Common Core State Standards for particular types of writing—argument, informative/explanatory text, and narrative—in a given grade. Each of the samples exhibits at least the level of quality required to meet the writing standards for that grade.

The range of accomplishment within each grade reflects differences in individual development as well as in the conditions under which the student writers were expected to work. Some of the samples were written in class or as homework; others were written for on-demand assessments; still others were the result of sustained research projects. Where possible, each sample includes information about the circumstances under which it was produced. The samples come from students in kindergarten through grade 12. The students attended school in a number of states and districts across the country.

At the lower grades, the samples include “opinion” writing, an elementary type of argument in which students give reasons for their opinions and preferences. Because reasons are required, such writing helps prepare students for drafting the arguments they will be expected to create beginning in grade 6.

## Acknowledgment

The Standards work group would like to express its appreciation to teachers and students at Monte Vista High School in California and the Randolph Technical Career Center in Vermont; other colleagues in California, Massachusetts, and Washington state; and ACT, Inc., and the *Concord Review*, which helped find and obtain permission for several of the samples included in the set. The group also would like to express its appreciation to the New Standards Project and to the International Reading Association, which allowed the use of several samples from their publications, and to the other student writers who granted permission to reproduce their work here.

**This document contains text excerpted from the CCSS ELA Appendix C.**

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## Permissions

The following student writing samples have been reprinted for the Common Core State Standards Initiative with the express permission of the following organizations and individuals.

ACT, Inc.:

Untitled essay on dress codes

California Department of Education:

“Football”; “Miss Sadie”

The *Concord Review*:

“In the Wake of the Spanish Lady: American Economic Resilience in the Aftermath of the Influenza Epidemic of 1918” by Brooke Granowski, *Concord Review*, 20(1), 203–216 (©2009 Concord Review, Inc.)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

“Dear Mr. Sandler”; “A Pet Story About My Cat . . . Gus”; “Animal Farm”

Monte Vista High School in California:

“The True Meaning of Friendship”; “Lives on Mango, Rides the Whale”; untitled essay on civil disobedience in India; “Marching to His Own Beat”; “Summary of Key Points”

The National Center on Education and the Economy, on behalf of New Standards:

“My fabit Book is do you Want to be my FRIEND”; “Fraggs (Frogs)”; “I Went to Disnand”; “My Big Book About Spain”; “I bot a little cotton ball”; “Owl Moon”; “My first tooth is gone”; “Horses”; “When my Puppys Ranaway”; “Zoo Field Trip”; “Author Response: Roald Dahl”; “Getting Shot and Living Through It”; “A Geographical Report”; “The Old Man and the Sea”; “\_\_\_\_\_ School Bond Levy”

Randolph Technical Career Center in Vermont:

“Wood Joints”; “TIG/GTAW Welding”

Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:

“Glowing Shoes”; “Video Cameras in Classrooms”

Permission to reprint each of the following samples was granted by its author:

“Freedom From Structure”; “Fact vs. Fiction and All the Grey Space in Between”; “The Making of a Human Voice and How to Use It”

## Student Sample: Grade 3, Informative/Explanatory

This informative report is a process piece that was produced in class.

### Horses by Gwen



#### Why I Chose This Animal

I chose horses because I like to ride them. I also like to pet them. At the camp I go to everybody gets to have horses back riding lessons. Horses are so beautiful and fun to ride.

#### Horse Families

A mother or female horse is called a mare. A father or male horse is called a stallion. A foal is a baby horse.

#### Markings

A star is a little white diamond on the forelock. The forelock is a horses forehead. A race is a white line down the middle of the horses face. A blaze is kind of like a race but wider. If the white line on it face spreads out to its eyes it is called a white face. A small amount of white on its muzzle is called a snip. A muzzle is a horses mouth.

#### Breeds and Color Coats

Icelandic and Shetland ponies are very small when they are full grown. Chestnuts are red-brown and Roans have white hairs on their brown coat. Cream is a rare color. Rare means you don't see the color cream very much. Brown horses are brown all over. Blacks are black all over. Piebalds have black and white spots. Skewbalds are brown and white. Duns are a sandy brown with black manes and tails. Palominos have a yellowish coat and a shiny mane and tail. Grays have black and white hairs that make the color gray. Bays are brown with black manes,tails,and legs. Whites are white all over.

#### Breeds I Like

I like thoroughbreds because they are such a pretty brown. I like Arabians because their different coats are very beautiful and they're one of the oldest horses. I like Morgans because they have a beautiful reddish-brown coat. I like Lipizzaners because their white coats are so very pretty. I like Icelandic and Shetland ponies because they are so very cute, pretty and small.

### Horses from Different Countries

Hocaidos are from Japan, Sumbas are from Indonesia, and Pintos are from America.

### Horse Movement

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

### Friendly Horses

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

### Foals

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

### How Long a Horse Lives

They live about 12 to 14 years.

### Horses Habitat

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

### What Horses Eat

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

### The Most Dangerous Horse

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



### The Fastest Horse

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

### The First Horses

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

### Horse Survival

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

### My Description of a Horse

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

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

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## Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a topic.**
  - *I chose horses because I like to ride them. . . . Horses are so beautiful and fun to ride.*
- **creates an organizational structure (using headers) that groups related information together.**
  - *Horse Families; Markings; Breeds and Color Coats; Horses from Different Countries*
- **develops the topic with facts and details.**
  - *Hocaidos are from Japan, Sumbas are from Indonesia, and Pintos are from America.*

- *A horse can walk, trot, canter, and gallop.*
- *They [horses] live about 12 to 14 years.*
- *The most dangerous horse is the Percheron.*
- **uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information.**
  - *I like Morgans **because** they have a beautiful reddish-brown coat.*
  - ***When** a foal is ready to be born, the mare (the mother horse) lies down.*
  - *The first horses were no bigger than a fox **and** looked like a donkey.*
  - *Most horses live on farms or ranches, **but** some horses are wild.*
- **provides a concluding section.**
  - *I like horses and I know a lot about them. I like to ride them and they're so beautiful! Their coats are beautiful, I wish I had a horse of my own!*
- **demonstrates growing command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**



**Student Sample: Grade 3, Narrative**

This narrative was produced in class, and the writer likely received support from the teacher.

When my Puppys Ran away  
ONE night when the air was warm, my puppys were sleeping on the back porcho. Me and my sisters were getting ready for bed. When I was in bed, I read a chapter from my Nancy Drew book. When I finished the chapter I turned out my lamp. I wuldnt go to sleep.  
I went into the living room. I saw my mom geting ready to walk out the door. I asked "where are you going?" "Just for a drive" she replied. She had a worried exspression on her face.  
I knew somthing was wrong. I thought maybe if I went outside and played with my puppys, I would forget about moms worried exspression and go to sleep.  
When I opened The back door I expected my puppys Maggie and Tucker to jump up on me. They didn't come at all. I called, they still didn't come.  
Now I knew somthing was wrong. I went and woke up my dad, he said moms got it under control. I thought mom had taken them to the vet because somthing was really wrong. Dad woulnd't tell me anything else. I went to my room and cried. Thats all I rembered about that

night because I fall asleep.  
The next day I still worried.  
I worried all through school.  
When I got home from me  
and my mom made a snack for  
sisters.  
I asked my mom, "So were are  
the puppies?" Her eyes started to  
fill with tears as she answered  
my question with 3 words, "I don't  
know," she burst into tears. So did I.  
She hugged me. "If we never find  
them I am sure they will have  
a good home."  
I went outside and sat in moms  
rocking chair. I cried some more.  
Mom came out I got up. She  
sat down and motioned me by waving  
her hand to come and sit on her lap.  
I went over and cried on her  
shoulder.  
After dinner that night we went  
looking for them, we couldn't find them  
at all.  
My dad after work each day went  
to the pound to see if they had  
picked them up. They didn't at all.  
I've got over them leaving because  
mom says we can get 2 new puppies  
very soon.

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## Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **establishes a situation and introduces the narrator.**
  - *ONE night when the air was warm, my puppys were sleeping on the back porch. . . I turned out my lamp. I wuldn't go to sleep. . . . I saw my mom geting ready to walk out the door. . . . She had a worried exspression on her face. I knew somthing was wrong.*
- **organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and uses temporal words and phrases to signal event order.**
  - ***When** I opened The back door I expected my puppys Maggie and Tucker to jump up on me. They didn't come at all. I called, they **still** didn't come. **Now** I knew something was wrong.*
- **uses dialogue and description of characters' actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.**
  - *I asked "where are you going"? "Just for a drive" she replied. She had a worried exspression on her face.*
  - *I knew somthing was wrong.*
  - *I went to my room and cried.*
  - *The next day I still worried. I worried all through school.*
  - *Her eyes started to fill with tears as she answered my question with 3 words, "I don't know," she burst into tears. So did I. She hugged me.*
  - *I went outside and sat in moms rocking chair. I cried some more.*
  - *I've got over them leaving because mom says we can get 2 new puppys very soon.*
- **provides a sense of closure.**
  - *I've got over them leaving because mom says we can get 2 new puppys very soon.*
- **demonstrates growing command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**