

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

Appendix C:
Grade 5
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 5, Informative/Explanatory

The informative writing that follows was produced in class.

Author Response: Roald Dahl

By:

Roald Dahl is a very interesting author to me. That's because he knows what a kid wants to hear. He has a "kid's mind". He is the only author that I know that makes up interesting words like Inkland, fizz wizard, and gobblefunking. All his stories are the same type. I don't mean the same story written again and again. What I mean is that they all have imagination, made up words, and disgusting thoughts. Some of his stories that have those things are Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda, The Witches and Danny the Champion of the World. The Witches is the book that I am reading right now, and it is like The BFG, another book that is by Roald Dahl. They are alike because in The BFG, Sophie and the BFG, (the big friendly giant), are trying to stop other giants from eating human beings. The Witches has the same problem. The Boy, (he has no name), is trying to stop the witches from turning children into small mice, and then killing the mice by stepping on them. Both stories have to stop evil people from doing something horrible. Roald Dahl uses a lot of similes. Some similes that he used that I like are: Up he shot again like a bullet in the barrel of a gun. And my favorite is: They were like a chorus of dentists' drills all grinding away together. In all of Roald Dahl's books, I have noticed that the plot or the main problem of the story is either someone killing someone else, or a kid having a bad life. But it is always about

something terrible. All the characters that Roald Dahl ever made were probably fake characters. A few things that the main characters have in common are that they all are poor. None of them are rich. Another thing that they all have in common is that they either have to save the world, someone else, or themselves.

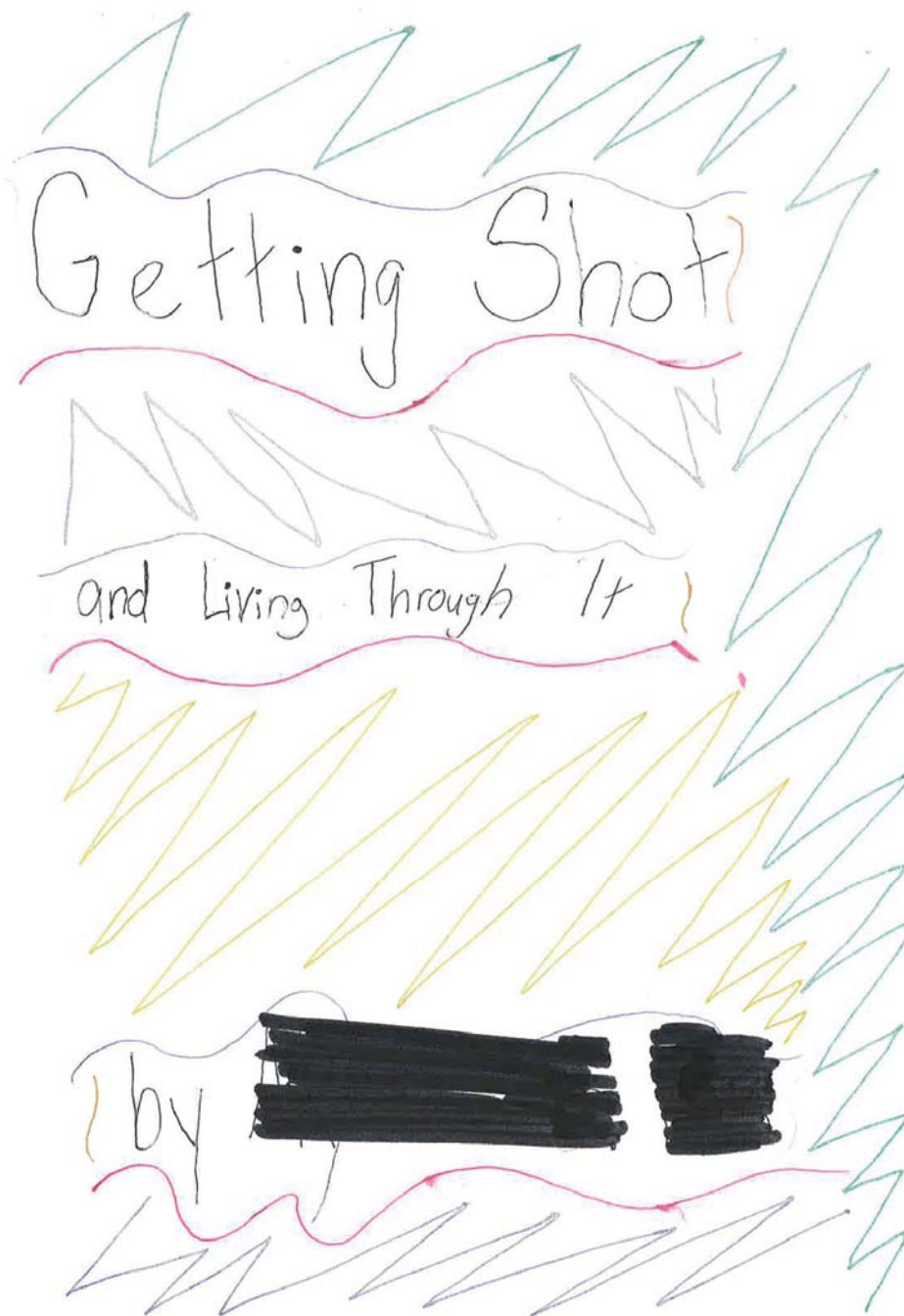
Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces the topic clearly, provides a general observation and focus, and groups related information logically.**
 - *Roald Dahl is a very interesting author to me. That's because he knows what a kid wants to hear.*
- **develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.**
 - *He is the only author that I know that makes up interesting words like Inkland, fizz wizard, and gobblefunking.*
 - *Roald Dahl uses a lot of similes. Some similes that he used that I like are: Up he shot again like a bullet in the barrel of a gun. And my favorite is: They were like a chorus of dentists' drills all grinding away together.*
 - *In all of Roald Dahl's books, I have noticed that the plot or the main problem of the story is either someone killing someone else, or a kid having a bad life.*
- **links ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses.**
 - *The Witches is the book that I am reading right now, and it is like The BFG, another book that is by Roald Dahl. They are alike because . . .*
- **uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.**
 - *Roald Dahl uses a lot of similes.*
 - *I have noticed that the plot or the main problem of the story . . .*
 - *All the characters . . .*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**

Student Sample: Grade 5, Narrative

This narrative was produced in class, and the writer likely received feedback from her teacher and peers.



We were in the darkness filled, mountain-top cold, waiting room. We were preparing for the shots of our lives. Getting shots for malaria and more.

There were many benches all shoved to the right. It was hard to see the color in the murky dark but it seemed to be some sort of faded brown. The room was big, no, huge which gave it all the more reason to be terror bringing. Who knew what would be lurking in the corner: rats, monsters, anything! There were also doors. Three doors, which were also brown and also faded. One was the way in. Not the way out unfortunately. Another was the way to the other evil places. With the evil hallway and the evil office. The last door was the most evil, The Shot Room.

The rest of the room was filled with families. Including my family of five. My five year old self,

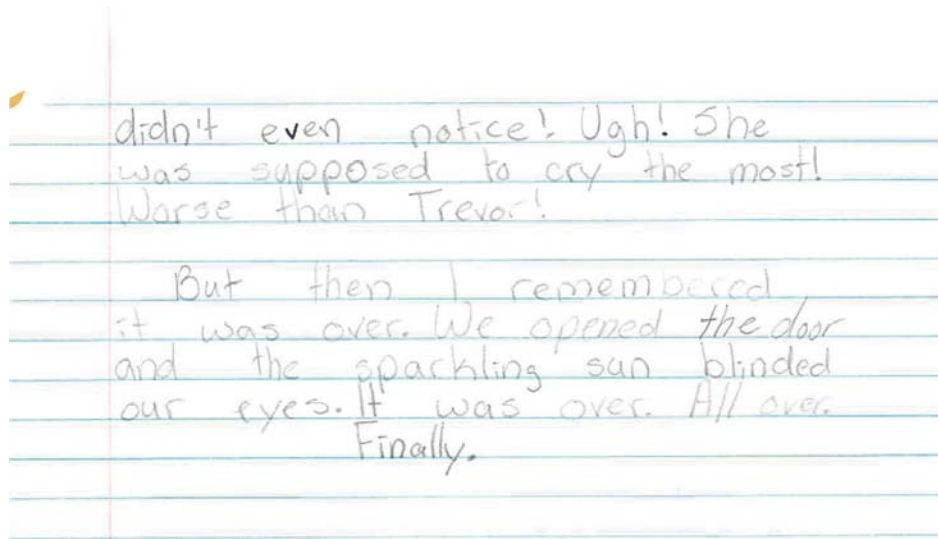
my three year old brother,
and my one year old sister. Then
there was my mom and dad.
Some of the other children were
screaming or crying or not knowing
what would happen to them. So
they would just be playing. I was
in the middle of both. I was
playing with fear, playing, knowing
what would happen, knowing that the
worst moment of my life was
coming ever closer. It was like knowing
you would be put to sleep, sent to the
dementors, waiting to take a ride in the
Electric Chair.

I had had shots before. They
were not your best friend. After
a long while a nurse said, "Alyssa, Trevor,
and Taryn, your turn." It was our turn.
I got half dragged and I half walked.
The door creaked open. It was the
room of no return. The door slammed
shut. There was no way out. Grown-ups
guarding every outway, making sure
we couldn't escape. Seeing there was
no way out we gave up and
went for it.

Trevor went first. Before the shot was even touching him he was already howling. When it did hit him he was yelling loud enough to deafen you. He was done. It was my turn (he was still crying so a nurse tried to calm him down).

I was paralyzed with fear, I was death-defyed, I was scared. My mom and dad told me to "just be brave."
"Just be brave?!" How could I "just be brave?!" But I had no time to think. It was coming. Just waiting to pounce, just waiting to penetrate my skin! I saw why Trevor had screamed so loud. I couldn't hear anything, I could just see it coming, closer, closer!

It touched, entered my flesh, and fulfilled its job. I started with a whimper then, BOOM! Blast cry.
When Taryn had her turn she



Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **orients the reader by establishing a situation and introducing the narrator.**
 - *We were in the darkness filled, mountain-top cold, waiting room. We were preparing for the shots of our lives.*
- **organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and uses a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.**
 - *Trevor went first. . . . It was my turn. . . . When Taryn had her turn . . .*
- **uses narrative techniques to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.**
 - *Humor through exaggeration: Before the shot was even touching him he was already howling. When it did hit him he was yelling loud enough to deafen you.*
 - *Reporting a character's thoughts: I was paralyzed with fear, I was death-defyed, I was scared.*
 - *Pacing: It touched, entered my flesh, and fulfilled it's job. I started with a whimper then, BOOM! full blast cry.*
- **uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.**
 - *We were in the darkness filled, mountain-top cold, waiting room. We were preparing for the shots of our lives.*

- *There were also doors. Three doors, which were also brown and also faded. One was the way in. Not the way out unfortunately.*
- *The rest of the room was filled with families. Including my family of five. My five year old self, my three year old bother, and my one year old sister.*
- **provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events (emphasizing closure by the use of sentence fragments).**
 - *We opened the door and the sparkling sun blinded our eyes. It was over. All over. Finally.*
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**