Writing
GRADE 8

Writing Personal Views or Response

S tudents are frequently asked to write about their thoughts, feelings, and opinions in reaction to current issues, materials they have read or viewed, or their own experiences.

In Grade 8, students often write journal entries, record their responses to reading and viewing, offer views on current issues, and share their experiences. In some cases, these pieces of writing are eventually crafted for an audience; however, most often, they are not revised and edited, and the audience is the teacher or the student himself or herself.

Key Qualities

The following is a summary of the key qualities of each aspect of personal writing in Grade 8. The *Quick Scale* and *Rating Scale* provide more details regarding specific criteria related to these key qualities.

MEANING
◆ comes from thoughts, feelings, opinions, memories, and reflections

STYLE
◆ demonstrates clarity and some variety in language

FORM
◆ begins with a clear introduction and follows a logical sequence through to a conclusion

CONVENTIONS
◆ follows standard conventions for basic spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure; has been proofread

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

The BC performance standards for Grade 8 personal writing reflect the following prescribed learning outcomes from Grade 8 of the *English Language Arts 8 to 10 Integrated Resource Package.* Using the writing performance standards in a comprehensive way will provide teachers with many opportunities to assess these learning outcomes.

PURPOSES (WRITING)

It is expected that students will:

◆ write meaningful **personal texts** that explore ideas and information [C1]

STRATEGIES (WRITING)

[C5-7] Addressing these learning outcomes helps students in using strategies to develop their writing, but the Writing Performance Standards describe the product not the processes used.

THINKING (WRITING)

It is expected that students will:

◆ write and **represent** to explain and support personal responses to texts [C8]

FEATURES (WRITING)

It is expected that students will:

◆ use and experiment with elements of **style** in writing and **representing**, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C12]
◆ use and experiment with elements of form in writing and representing, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C13]
◆ use conventions in writing and representing, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C14]

Quick Scale: Grade 8 Writing Personal Views or Response

The Quick Scale *is a summary of the* Rating Scale *that follows. Both describe student achievement in March-April of the school year. Personal views or response is usually expected to be checked for errors but not revised or edited.*

Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Snapshot	*The writing addresses the topic but is seriously flawed by problems in logic, style, and mechanics. May be very short.*	*The writing presents relevant ideas about the topic but does not develop the topic to any extent. Often vague; parts may be flawed by errors.*	*The writing is clear and logical, with some analysis and development of a central idea. Provides sufficient material to meet requirements.*	*The writing is clear, analytic, and shows some insight. It features some engaging ideas or language.*
MEANING • ideas and information • use of detail • generalizations or connections	• presents some ideas; may be illogical or inappropriate • inaccurate, illogical, or insufficient details • connections may be omitted or confusing	• presents a series of related ideas • generally accurate details, examples, and explanations; may not link to central idea • some difficulty making connections beyond the immediate and concrete	• sense of purpose; tries to deal with complexities • relevant and accurate details, examples, and explanations; includes some analysis • makes connections or generalizations beyond the immediate topic	• purposeful, with some individuality, insight; deals with complexities • some engaging details, examples, explanations; includes analysis, reflection, speculation • puts topic in a broader context; logical generalizations, connections
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	• no sense of fluency or flow; sentences are often short and choppy or long and awkward • limited, simple language	• some sentence variety; uses complex sentences • conversational language; generally appropriate	• uses a variety of sentence types and lengths • language is clear, appropriate, and varied	• flows smoothly; uses a variety of sentence types and lengths effectively • varied and effective language
FORM • beginning, middle, end • organization and sequence • transitions	• often begins with introduction, assuming that the reader knows the topic and context • ending is ineffective • lapses in sequence • may shift abruptly from one idea to another	• beginning introduces the topic • ending is often weak, formulaic • related ideas are together; may be listed rather than developed • simple transitions; sometimes ineffective	• introduces topics and purpose • explicit conclusion (often formulaic) • logical sequence; related ideas are together • transitions connect ideas clearly	• establishes purpose and context in clear and often interesting introduction • logical conclusion • smooth and logical sequence; explicit paragraphing • variety of natural and smooth transitions
CONVENTIONS • complete sentences • spelling • punctuation • grammar	• frequent errors in simple words and structures often interfere with meaning	• errors in basic words and structures are noticeable but do not obscure meaning	• errors in more complex language are sometimes noticeable, but meaning is clear	• may include occasional errors where the writer is taking risks with complex language; these do not interfere with meaning

Rating Scale: Grade 8 Writing Personal Views or Response

Student achievement in writing personal views or response by March-April of Grade 10 can generally be described as shown in this scale.

Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)
SNAPSHOT	*The writing addresses the topic but is seriously flawed by problems in logic, style, and mechanics that make it difficult to follow in places. May be very short.*	*The writing presents relevant ideas about the topic but does not develop the topic to any extent. Often vague; parts may be flawed by errors.*
MEANING • ideas and information • use of detail • generalizations or connections	• presents some ideas about the topic; these may be illogical or inappropriate and often fail to address the task (e.g., may retell rather than analyze or react) • provides weakly related or inaccurate details; may be too short to complete the task • generalizations or connections to personal experience or prior knowledge are often missing or illogical (may contradict own points)	• presents a series of related ideas; topic is clear but purpose may be vague—reader may have trouble inferring the "big idea" • provides generally accurate details, examples, and explanations, but tends to focus on details, without establishing their connection to a central idea; some material may be vague • has some difficulty making connections beyond the immediate and concrete (may offer no generalization at all or overgeneralize, especially about cause-effect)
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	• difficult to read; no sense of fluency or flow; sentences are often short and choppy or long and awkward • language is often highly colloquial and may be inappropriate; appears to draw on a limited vocabulary • no evidence of rhetorical strategies	• some variety in sentence length and pattern; uses complex sentences frequently (sometimes subordination is not effective) • language is conversational and generally appropriate although may lapse in places • may attempt simple rhetorical strategies (e.g., rhetorical questions); these are often inappropriate or ineffective
FORM • beginning, middle, end • organization and sequence • transitions	• often begins in the middle, assuming that the reader knows the topic and context • ending is ineffective (does not provide a conclusion) • sequence is generally logical; may lapse in places or wander into new topics • may shift abruptly from one idea to another, leaving the reader to infer the connections	• beginning introduces the topic • ending is often weak • related ideas are grouped together but tend to be listed rather than having a sense of development • uses simple transitions to connect ideas and sentences; sometimes ineffectively
CONVENTIONS • impact on meaning • complete sentences • spelling • punctuation • grammar (e.g., agreement, verb tense)	• frequent errors in simple words and structures often interfere with meaning • frequent run-on sentences or sentence fragments • frequent spelling errors in basic vocabulary often involving plurals, possessives, contractions, word endings, missing letters, homonyms, and apparent careless errors • includes errors in capitalization and basic sentence punctuation; commas are often omitted or used incorrectly • frequent basic errors in grammar and word choice (e.g., adjective instead of adverb form; wrong pronoun or verb form; illogical shifts in tense)	• errors in basic words and structures are noticeable but do not obscure meaning • most sentences are complete but may be awkward; often includes some run-on sentences or fragments • most words are spelled correctly; however, there are some errors, often involving homonyms, plurals, possessives, contractions, word endings, or complex words • capitalization and sentence end punctuation are generally correct; may have problems with commas • some errors in grammar and word choice (e.g., adjective instead of adverb form; wrong pronoun or verb form; placement of modifiers)

The rating scale may require adaptation when used for different purposes and tasks.

Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
The writing is clear and logical, with some analysis and development of a central idea. Provides sufficient material to meet requirements of the activity.	*The writing is clear, analytic, and shows some insight. It features some engaging ideas or language.*
• presents a clear, logical, central idea or point of view; has a sense of purpose; tries to deal with complexities or abstract aspects • develops central idea through relevant and accurate details, examples, and explanations; includes some analysis • makes connections beyond the immediate topic or issue, drawing on own experiences and prior knowledge to attempt generalizations	• presents a reasonable and purposeful central idea or point of view with some individuality and insight; deals with complexities and abstract aspects of the topic • develops central idea or argument through the use of some engaging details, examples, explanations; includes analysis, reflection, and sometimes speculation • puts the topic or issue in a broader context, making logical generalizations through connections to personal experience, prior knowledge
• uses a variety of sentence types and lengths (attempts at more complex structures may be awkward) • language is clear, appropriate, and varied; appears to draw on a wide conversational vocabulary • may use simple rhetorical strategies (e.g., rhetorical questions) to engage the reader (most often in introduction)	• flows smoothly; uses a variety of sentence types and lengths effectively (sense of deliberation—e.g., choosing inverted sentence for effect) • language is varied, with some evidence that the writer is choosing words to create a deliberate effect • uses some rhetorical strategies (e.g., questions, repetition, humour, "asides") to engage the reader
• introduction establishes the topic and purpose • provides an explicit conclusion • follows a logical sequence and development; related ideas are grouped together but paragraphing may be implicit (i.e., writer may forget to indent.) • uses transitions to connect ideas; relationships are usually clear	• provides a clear and often interesting introduction or thesis statement that establishes purpose and context • provides a logical conclusion • follows a smooth and logical sequence and development; paragraphing is explicit and effective • uses a variety of transitions to connect ideas naturally and smoothly
• errors in more complex language are sometimes noticeable, but meaning is clear • follows basic rules for sentence construction; may include errors in longer or more complex sentences • most familiar words are spelled correctly • punctuation is generally correct, including commas and parentheses • may include minor errors in grammar or word choice (e.g., incorrect pronoun or verb form)	• may include occasional errors where the writer is taking risks with complex language; these do not interfere with meaning • most sentences are correctly constructed; may be some awkwardness and occasional errors in more complex structures • spelling is correct • punctuation is correct • generally grammatically correct; may have minor errors in more complex structures (e.g., pronoun or verb agreement involving a compound subject)

Sample Task: Survival

CONTEXT

Students in this class frequently discussed the television show *Survivor* among themselves. The teacher sought to build on their interest and deepen their thinking with a broader discussion of what survival and surviving meant. After the discussion, students were given this writing assignment.

PROCESS

Students were asked to write an impromptu in-class essay on their thoughts about "Survival." Students completed their work independently. The teacher encouraged them to use classroom resources (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, class posters). Students did not have opportunities to consult with others or to make substantial revisions, but they were encouraged to proofread carefully.

Teacher's Observations

The story is simple and straightforward. It is difficult to read due to serious errors in spelling and sentence structure.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT				
MEANING				
STYLE				
FORM				
CONVENTIONS				

◆ fails to address the task—e.g., retells rather than analyzes or reacts

◆ difficult to read; sentences are often short and choppy or long and awkward

◆ appears to draw on a limited vocabulary

◆ ending is ineffective

◆ sequence is generally logical

◆ frequent errors in simple words and structures interfere with meaning

◆ frequent spelling errors in basic vocabulary, often involving missing letters

◆ includes errors in capitalization
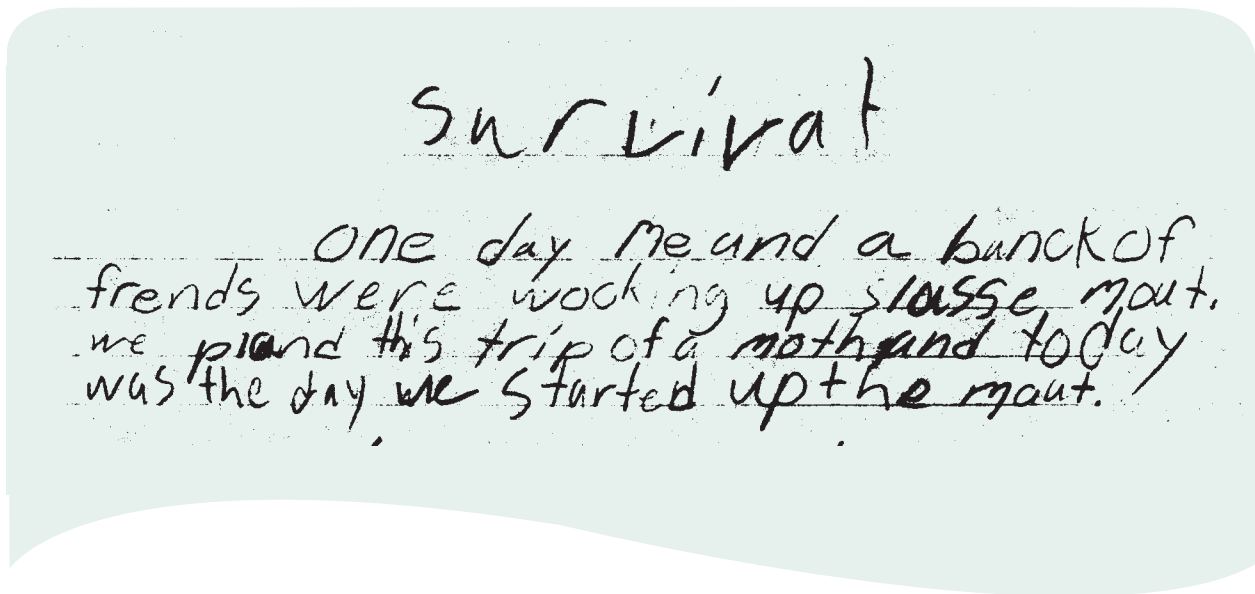
TRANSCRIPT

survival

One day me and a bunck of frends were wocking uo slusse mout. we pland this trip of a moth and today was the dat we started up the mout.

We were planing that it wood tuck abuot a week well that was not we thot it wood tack. but it did not chern out sou good.

The frest nigh it was good, wen we wock up we were all fiting becuase 2 people wunted to go home but we sed no a week later we molmost med it to the top!

we mad it to the top bithen we ran out of food. we were starvin we trid to cume down butt I brock my lug. sow we neded Hlep.

evrey day I trid tocking them in to leving me there because I nuw that I was going to did. two days later thay degred to leven me there. I sied go I Whent to did.

Two years luter.

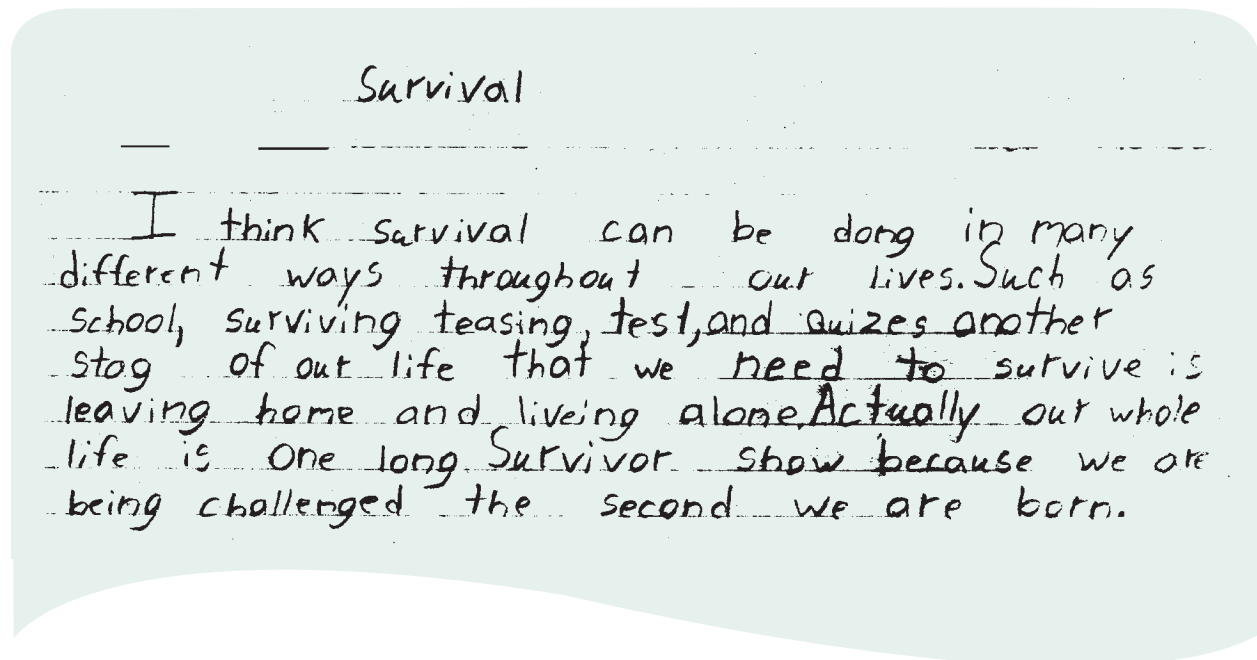I was Liveing on the top of the mout.

The End.

MEETS EXPECTATIONS (MINIMAL LEVEL)

Teacher's Observations

The writing addresses the topic but does not develop it.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT		■		
MEANING		■		
STYLE		■		
FORM		■		
CONVENTIONS	■			

◆ presents a series of events; topic is clear, but purpose is vague

◆ provides details and examples, but tends to focus on details, without establishing their connection to the central idea

◆ has some difficulty making connections beyond the immediate and concrete; overgeneralizes about cause and effect

◆ some variety of sentence length and pattern; uses complex sentences frequently

◆ language is conversational

◆ related ideas are grouped together but tend to be listed rather than having a sense of development

◆ errors in basic words and structures are noticeable but do not obstruct meaning

◆ includes some run-on sentences

◆ frequent spelling errors in basic vocabulary

◆ includes errors in capitalization

> ### Survival
>
> I think survival can be dong in many different ways throughout our lives. Such as school, surviving teasing, test, and quizes another stag of out life that we need to survive is leaving home and liveing alone. Actually our whole life is one long Survivor show because we are being challenged the second we are born.

TRANSCRIPT

Survival

I think survival can be doing in many different ways throughout our lives. Such as school, surviving teasing, test, and quizes another stag of out life that we need

to survive is leaving home and liveing alone. Actually our whole life is One long Survivor show because we are being challenged the second we are born.

The first part of life I would like to talk about is school because thats the part im at right now. The first thing i've had to survive is teasing seeing as i've been teased from practicly the fourth grade. So I know alot on this subject but ill start at grade five. Well at the begining of the year I was at school which wasent very bad because I had lived there since grade one. But like anyone I had some enemies the worst enemie was danial he really hated me but i still havent found out why. I dont hnow if it was my hair, cloths our the way I talked but ohh well because thats over and I dont think I could have survived that without my freind —— as we called him reeses peices. He was my best freind ever we never orguid or even yelled at each other so that was great untill my family moved to and i had to go to Elementry. Now im not very good at making mew freinds so right away I had a challenge luckly in my class there was a person named —— he was my new best freind. Almost as much as reese and as usual all the teachers thought I was great and I guess thats not a bad thing. I alson had very few enemies as I like to call them untill the next year grade six. It actually started as a great year because my grade one and most favorit teach had come to Tyson and was my grade six teacher. This year was also a good year because I got voted secritary in the schools student councell. I was also on all the sports teams then the sutvivavl part starts there were three boys who were really good freinds like they did everything together the liked me at the beggining then it got worse for the rest of the year. Then in grade seven it still went on so after second term I did home school. But now its grade eight and im haveing the best year ever.

So The way I learned to get over teasing is to get more freinds. Also not to take it personally becasuse I think im a good person.

FULLY MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Teacher's Observations

The writing addresses the topic, makes personal connections, and is clear and logical.

- ◆ presents a clear, logical, central idea; has a sense of purpose
- ◆ develops the central idea through relevant details, examples, and explanations
- ◆ draws on own experiences and prior knowledge
- ◆ language is clear and appropriate
- ◆ uses simple rhetorical strategies to engage the reader
- ◆ introduction establishes the topic and purpose
- ◆ provides an explicit conclusion
- ◆ has problems with commas
- ◆ includes minor errors in word choice
- ◆ spelling is correct

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT			▓	
MEANING			▓	
STYLE			▓	
FORM			▓	
CONVENTIONS		▓		

Surviving a Middle School

Many new kids to ▓▓▓▓ *Middle School worry about surviving through the school year. They have questions about: finding your classes, being late, lunch and break, lockers, and being picked on. I an going to answer some common questions, in the following paragraphs.*

TRANSCRIPT

Surviving a Middle School

Many new kids to ——— School worry about surviving throughthe school year. They have questions about; finding your classes, being late, lunch and break, lockers, and being picked on. I am going to answer some common questions, in the following paragraphs.

Finding your classes is not the end of the world. You have maps, teachers, and fellow students to help you. The halls are big but you always find your way. The biggest fear of a new student is, "Where do I go ?" Don't worry you'll find your way.

One of my many fears was, "Will I be late?" The first week teachers are very forgiving. Even for lunch they understand. People are always late for lunch. You will figure out where to be, and when.

"How do I open my locker?" A common question eveybody has. In your advisory, you'll get a big buddy. They'll help you open your locker, and get the feel of it. No you will not get pushed in your locker. I know it happens on movies, but it doesn't happen here. It doesn't happen here because of two reasons; a) our lockers aren't big enough, and b) you don't get bullied unless you ask for it (which doesn't happen very often).

So as you see, the trouble is not surviving, it's believing you can survive.

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

Teacher's Observations

The writing is clear, analytic, and shows some insight.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT				■
MEANING				■
STYLE				■
FORM				■
CONVENTIONS			■	

◆ presents a reasonable and purposeful central idea with some insight
◆ develops central idea through the use of details and examples; includes analysis, reflection, and speculation
◆ makes logical generalizations through connections to personal experiences and prior knowledge
◆ flows smoothly; uses a variety of sentence types and lengths
◆ uses some rhetorical strategies such as questions and quotations to engage the reader
◆ provides a clear introduction that establishes purpose and context
◆ provides a logical conclusion
◆ occasional errors do not interfere with meaning
◆ punctuation is correct
◆ most familiar words are spelled correctly

Survivor

Survival, everyone talks about it in these days. There has even been T.V. shows about it! Whenever you think "survivor" you either

TRANSCRIPT

Survivor

Survival, everyone talks about it in these days. There has even been T.V. shows about it! Whenever you think "survivor" you either think of the show or being lost in the col barren north or stranded on some island with no food or water. But what is survival really? Well in this essay. I will be answering that age old question. At least I hope I will be.

In each of us is a will to survive. Whether it be in the Amazon or at school; we want to live to see tommorrow. Even though the road of life could be very bumpy with hills and valleys, we keep on going. That's what so amazing about the human race, our determination to live and succeed. For instance, the hardships of Early Man, no one would be here if it wasn't for their determination and will to survive. And that I think is one out of many defination of survival; the will and determination to survive.

Of course that isn't the only type of survival; emotional and mental are also there. I once readsome-where, and I quote, "One must battle the demons within and without to survive." That's just got me thinking because I've been feeling depressed and felt as if I was losing the battle. If you get rid of the funny talk and the mythological aspecs the message is quite clear. Survival of the mind and battling the inner doubts is just as important, if not more, than physical survival.

That doesn't mean that physical survival isn't important. To survive a car crash or a shipwreck is still defined as Survival. For instance, all those poor hungry people in third world countries. That would be physical survivors.

That would be physical survivor but in a way, it would also be mental and emotional. Some poor lady might have to give her child away for the sake of survival and a better life but then have to deal of the sinking feeling of depression that she was a awful mother and not worthy of living, this starting the emotional survival. This could also work the other way around. Going back to the hungry starving people in Africa and other third world countries; why don't they just give up and die? Their will to survive and deciding to try (mental survival) stops them.

So in conclusion, I think that all aspecs of survival are important but in the end, I feel that mental survival is the most. My reason is that you have to decide to survive and work through the problems. If you don't,

You Won't Be A Survivor.

The End

Writing to Communicate Ideas and Information

Students frequently write to communicate ideas, information, and opinions in a variety of curriculum areas. In Grade 8, they are expected to prepare research reports and short essays, write articles, record observations, procedures, and conclusions and share their opinions in editorials and letters.

This type of writing is usually presented to audiences within and outside of the classroom. In some cases, the audience is imagined, as when students are asked to write letters convincing a story character or historical figure to pursue a particular course of action, or when they take on a role to present information and ideas from a particular point of view.

Whenever possible, students benefit from writing for real audiences, such as students in other classrooms, community members, pen pals, or e-pals. School newspapers and yearbooks, community newspapers, school or class web sites, and letters or e-mail (e.g., to authors or public figures) can expand the range of audiences students address. Because this writing is intended for an audience, students should have opportunities to revise, edit, and proofread their work before creating a final copy.

Key Qualities

The following is a summary of the key qualities of each aspect of writing to communicate ideas and information in Grade 8. The *Quick Scales* and *Rating Scale* provide more details regarding specific criteria related to these key qualities.

MEANING
- is focused on a clear purpose
- develops through complete, relevant, and accurate detail that comes from research of all kinds, observation, and logical analysis

STYLE

◆ is generally clear, concrete, and concise, with precise language

FORM

◆ follows "rules" for specific forms (e.g., instructions, letters, essays)
◆ follows a logical sequence
◆ uses appropriate visuals and text features

CONVENTIONS

◆ has been carefully revised and edited
◆ follows standard conventions for basic spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

The performance standards for Grade 8 writing to communicate ideas and information reflect the following prescribed learning outcomes from Grade 8 of the *English Language Arts 8 to 10 Integrated Resource Package.* Using the writing performance standards in a comprehensive way will provide teachers with many opportunities to assess these learning outcomes.

PURPOSES (WRITING)

It is expected that students will:

◆ write purposeful **information texts** that express ideas and information [C2]

STRATEGIES (WRITING)

[C5-7] Addressing these learning outcomes helps students in using strategies to develop their writing, but the Writing Performance Standards describe the product not the processes used.

THINKING (WRITING)

It is expected that students will:

◆ write and represent to interpret and analyse ideas and information from texts [C9]

It is expected that students will:

◆ use and experiment with elements of **style** in writing and **representing**, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C12]

◆ use and experiment with elements of form in writing and representing, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C13]

◆ use conventions in writing and representing, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C14]

Quick Scale: Grade 8 Writing Personal Essays and Opinions

This Quick Scale *is a summary of the* Rating Scale *that follows. Both describe student achievement in March-April of the school year. Essays and opinion pieces are usually expected to be carefully revised, edited, and proofread.*

Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	*The writing consists of loosely connected ideas and details; fragmented and difficult to follow.*	*The writing presents some connected ideas; accomplishes the basic purpose or task. Often does not flow smoothly.*	*The writing is clear, detailed, and well-organized; accomplishes the purpose or task; flows smoothly.*	*The writing is clear, complete, and focused; effectively accomplishes the purpose or task, and may engage the reader.*
MEANING • ideas and information • use of detail • generalizations or conclusions • sense of audience	• purpose is unclear; writing is unfocused • inappropriate, trivial, or simplistic details • generalizations or conclusions omitted, illogical, inappropriate • little sense of audience; tone may be inappropriate	• purpose is clear; may lose focus • some relevant examples and details • may overgeneralize or omit generalizations or conclusions • some sense of audience; tone may be inconsistent	• purpose is clear; focus is generally sustained • specific relevant examples, details • some generalizations and conclusions • sense of audience; appropriate tone (may slip)	• purpose and focus are effective and sustained • uses specific relevant examples and details to elaborate and clarify • logical insights, generalizations, and conclusions • clear sense of audience; appropriate and consistent tone
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	• language is simple • little sentence variety; often awkward	• clear and direct language • some sentence variety	• clear and varied language; some specialized terms • variety of sentences	• language clear, varied, and specific; uses specialized terms • flows smoothly; effective sentences
FORM • introduction • organization • conclusion	• introduction does not clearly identify purpose • lacks organization; often one paragraph of loosely related details and examples • conclusion is missing or inappropriate	• introduction states purpose; not engaging • related material is grouped together, but transitions and paragraphing are weak (reads like a list, leaving reader to make connections) • conclusion is simple or predictable	• introduction clearly establishes purpose; attempts to engage • individual paragraphs or sections are well-organized; overall sequence and transitions may be ineffective in places • logical conclusion; tries to create impact	• introduction effectively establishes purpose; engages • effectively organized; paragraphs or sections are well-developed, logically sequenced, and joined by transitions • conclusion is strong and has an impact
CONVENTIONS • complete sentences • spelling • punctuation • grammar	• frequent errors in simple words and structures often interfere with meaning	• errors in basic words and structures are noticeable but do not obscure meaning	• errors in more complex language are sometimes noticeable, but meaning is clear	• may include occasional errors where the writer is taking risks with complex language; these do not interfere with meaning

Quick Scale: Grade 8 Writing Reports and Procedures

This Quick Scale *is a summary of the* Rating Scale *that follows. Both describe student achievement in March-April of the school year. Reports and procedures are usually expected to be carefully revised, edited, and proofread.*

Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	*The writing consists of loosely connected information; fragmented and difficult to follow.*	*The writing presents some connected information; accomplishes the basic purpose or task. Often does not flow smoothly.*	*The writing is clear, detailed, and well-organized; accomplishes the purpose or task.*	*The writing is clear, complete, and focused; effectively accomplishes the purpose or task, and may engage the reader.*
MEANING • purpose • ideas and information • use of detail	• purpose is unclear; writing is unfocused • information is often inaccurate, incomplete, copied, or from an inappropriate source • inappropriate, trivial, or simplistic details • generalizations or conclusions omitted, illogical, inappropriate	• purpose is clear; may lose focus • information is generally relevant and accurate; may be vague or from limited sources • some relevant examples and details • may overgeneralize or omit generalizations or conclusions	• purpose is clear; focus is generally sustained • information is accurate, complete, from appropriate source(s) • specific relevant examples, details • some generalizations and conclusions	• purpose and focus are effective and sustained • information is accurate and complete; may use multiple sources • uses specific relevant examples and details to elaborate and clarify • logical insights, generalizations, and conclusions
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	• language is simple • little sentence variety; often awkward	• clear and direct language; few specialized terms • some sentence variety	• clear and varied language; some specialized terms • variety of sentences	• language is clear, varied, and specific; uses specialized terms • flows smoothly; effective sentences
FORM • purpose • organization • conclusion • special features, where appropriate	• does not clearly identify purpose, topic, and subtopics • lacks organization; often one paragraph of loosely related details and examples • conclusion is missing or inappropriate • required graphics, visuals, and text features omitted or inappropriate	• identifies purpose and topic • related material is grouped together, but transitions and paragraphing are weak (reads like a list, leaving reader to make connections) • conclusion is simple or predictable • appropriate graphics, visuals, and text features are included but flawed	• clearly identifies purpose, topics, subtopics • individual paragraphs or sections are well-organized; overall sequence and transitions may be ineffective in places • logical conclusion; tries to create impact • appropriate graphics, visuals, and text features are clear and complete	• establishes and engages interest in purpose, topics, subtopics • effectively organized; paragraphs or sections are well-developed, logically sequenced, and joined by transitions • conclusion is strong and has an impact • appropriate graphics, visuals, and text features are clear and effective
CONVENTIONS • complete sentences • spelling • punctuation • grammar	• frequent errors in simple words and structures often interfere with meaning	• errors in basic words and structures are noticeable, but do not obscure meaning	• errors in more complex language are sometimes noticeable, but meaning is clear	• may include occasional errors where the writer is taking risks with complex language; these do not interfere with meaning

Rating Scale: Grade 8 Writing to Communicate Ideas and Information

Student achievement in writing to communicate ideas and information by March-April of Grade 8 can generally be described as shown in this scale.

Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)
SNAPSHOT	*The writing consists of loosely connected ideas and details; it is fragmented and difficult to follow.*	*The writing presents some connected ideas and accomplishes the basic purpose or task; often does not flow smoothly.*
MEANING • purpose • ideas and information • use of detail • generalizations or conclusions • sense of audience	• purpose is unclear; writing is unfocused • information is often inaccurate, incomplete, irrelevant, or copied; may be drawn from an inappropriate source • details may be inappropriate, trivial, or simplistic • generalizations or conclusions are based on own experience or opinions; may be illogical or conflict with other sources • shows little sense of audience; tone may be inappropriate	• purpose is clear, but focus may not be sustained • information generally relevant and accurate but may be vague and drawn from limited sources • includes some relevant examples and details • may offer no generalizations or conclusions, or may overgeneralize • some sense of audience (generally more concerned with form than audience); tone is generally appropriate although may not be sustained throughout
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	• language is simple; few appropriate specialized or technical terms • may have some variety of sentence length; often awkward	• language clear and direct; limited or inaccurate use of specialized or technical terms • some variety of sentence length and pattern
FORM • introduction • organization • conclusion • special features, where appropriate	• introduction does not clearly identify purpose • may lack clear sequence or development; often written as a single paragraph of loosely related details and examples • conclusion is missing or inappropriate (e.g., new information, overgeneralizations) • required graphics, visuals, and text features (e.g., diagrams, title, headings) may be omitted or inappropriate	• introduction states purpose; may not be engaging • related facts, examples, and details are grouped together, but transitions may be awkward, disjointed, or omitted (reads like a list, leaving reader to make connections) • conclusion is often very simple or predictable • graphics, visuals, and text features (e.g., diagrams, title, headings) are included where appropriate but may be incomplete or flawed
CONVENTIONS • impact on meaning • complete sentences • spelling • punctuation • grammar (e.g., agreement, verb tense)	• frequent errors in simple words and structures often interfere with meaning • frequent run-on sentences or sentence fragments • frequent spelling errors in basic vocabulary often involving plurals, possessives, contractions, word endings, missing letters, homonyms, and apparent careless errors • includes errors in capitalization and basic sentence punctuation; commas are often omitted or used incorrectly • frequent basic errors in grammar and word choice (e.g., adjective instead of adverb form; wrong pronoun or verb form; illogical shifts in tense)	• errors in basic words and structures are noticeable but do not obscure meaning • most sentences are complete but may be awkward; often includes some run-on sentences or fragments • most words are spelled correctly; however, there are several errors, often involving homonyms, plurals, possessives, contractions, word endings, or complex words • capitalization and sentence-end punctuation are generally correct; may have problems with commas • some errors in grammar and word choice (e.g., adjective instead of adverb form; wrong pronoun or verb form; placement of modifiers)

The rating scale may require adaptation when used for different purposes and tasks.

Writing to communicate ideas and information is usually expected to be carefully revised, edited, and proofread for presentation to an audience.

	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
	The writing is clear, detailed, and well-organized. It accomplishes the purpose or task.	*The writing is clear, complete, and focused. It effectively accomplishes the purpose or task and may engage the reader.*
	• purpose is clear; focus is generally sustained • information is accurate and complete, drawn from an appropriate source or sources • includes specific relevant examples and details • offers some generalizations and conclusions, often incorporating own experience or prior knowledge; not always well integrated • shows a sense of audience; tone is appropriate	• purpose and focus clear and effectively sustained • information is accurate and complete, often from multiple appropriate sources and well integrated • uses relevant examples and details to elaborate ideas or procedures and increase clarity • offers logical insights, generalizations, and conclusions, incorporating own experience or prior knowledge • shows a clear sense of audience; tone is appropriate and consistent throughout
	• language clear and varied; generally uses appropriate specialized or technical terms • uses a variety of sentence types and lengths; some complex sentences may be awkward	• language clear, varied and specific; uses specialized or technical terms effectively • flows smoothly; uses a variety of sentence types and lengths effectively
	• introduction clearly establishes purpose; may attempt to engage intended audience • individual paragraphs or sections are well-organized, with main ideas and supporting details; however, overall sequence may be logical but ineffective (e.g., may not put strongest argument last) or transitions abrupt • conclusion is logical; may attempt to have an impact • graphic, visuals, and text features (e.g., diagrams, title, headings) are included where appropriate; generally clear and complete	• introduction effectively establishes purpose; often interesting and engaging for intended audience • effectively organized; paragraphs or sections are well-developed, logically sequenced, and joined by transitions • conclusion is strong and has an impact on the audience • required features (e.g., diagrams, title, headings) are clear and effective
	• errors in more complex language are sometimes noticeable, but meaning is clear • follows basic rules for sentence construction; may include occasional errors in longer or more complex sentences • most familiar words are spelled correctly; may be some errors in specialized language • punctuation is generally correct, including commas and parentheses • may include minor errors in grammar or word choice (e.g., incorrect pronoun or verb form; wrong form in technical language)	• may include occasional errors where the writer is taking risks with complex language; these do not interfere with meaning • sentences are correctly constructed; may be some awkwardness in more complex structures • spelling is correct, including most specialized language • punctuation is correct • generally grammatically correct; may have minor errors in technical language or more complex structures (e.g., pronoun or verb agreement involving a compound subject)

Sample Task: Renaissance People Magazine

CONTEXT

Grade 8 students in this school take social studies and English in a combined humanities course. Many of their writing assignments involve social studies content.

PROCESS

As part of their study of the Renaissance, students made *People* magazines about Renaissance writers, artists, government officials, women, and so on. Students created their magazines as partner projects, but each individual student was responsible for a certain number of articles under their "byline." Students were expected to do library research using a number of resources.

NOT YET WITHIN EXPECTATIONS

Teacher's Observations

The writing is fragmented and difficult to follow. Some factual information is incorrect.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT	■			
MEANING		■		
STYLE	■			
FORM	■			
CONVENTIONS	■			

- ◆ writing is unfocused
- ◆ information is inaccurate, incomplete
- ◆ shows little sense of audience
- ◆ some variety of sentence length; often awkward
- ◆ lacks clear sequence or development; written as a single paragraph of loosely related details and examples
- ◆ frequent run-on sentences
- ◆ includes errors in capitalization and basic sentence punctuation
- ◆ illogical shifts in verb tense

A. R. T. S.

Gentileshi was born in 1590- 1647 in the city of Rome on July 8, she was the daughter to the famous painter Orazio Gentileshi. She achieved her fame through art. Her full name is Artemisia, her favorite subject is paint.she traveled as far as England to paint at the assyrain army that invaded Israel in the sixth century (b.c.e.).

TRANSCRIPT

A. R. T. S.

Gentileshi was born in 1590- 1647 in the city of Rome on July 8, she was the daughter to the famous painter Orazio Gentileshi. She achieved her fame through art. Her full name is Artemisia, her favorite subject is paint she traveled as far as England to paint at the assyrain army that invaded Israel in the sixth century (b.c.e.). That one her the respect of the art critics and many other fine painting from the bible. Gentility's painting subject was Judith from the bible. Her emphasis

on strong contrast between light and dark, called Chairoscroro, her style makes her painting so famous. She was the first women to paint historical and religious artwork. Her mother died when she was twelve. Michalangelo, Meris, Oacravaggio, influenced the Chraroscuro style (contrast of light and shadow) in Gentileshis painting's from the bible. The civil war broke out in England in 1641, that caused her to go back and live in Naples were she lived the remainder of her life and painted five pieces of Bethsheba and Judith.

MEETS EXPECTATIONS (MINIMAL LEVEL)

Teacher's Observations

The writing is a straightforward presentation of facts with appropriate illustrations. Serious errors in capitalization make it somewhat difficult to follow.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT		■		
MEANING		■		
STYLE		■		
FORM		■		
CONVENTIONS	■			

- ◆ information is generally relevant and accurate
- ◆ some sense of audience; tone is appropriate
- ◆ language is clear and direct
- ◆ introduction states purpose
- ◆ related facts are grouped together, but transitions are awkward or omitted
- ◆ graphics are included
- ◆ errors in basic words and structures are noticeable but do not obscure meaning
- ◆ most sentences are complete; some run-on sentences
- ◆ most words are spelled correctly; however, there are several errors
- ◆ includes errors in capitalization

John Cabot

He was sitting alone in his map making shop
And was reading an article that said
"Christopher Columbus finds new wrote to the
Indies." John looked around the room at all the
Maps and thought that if he went west it would
Be faster

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And was reading an article that said
"Christopher Columbus finds new wrote to the
Indies." John looked around the room at all the
Maps and thought that if he went west it would
Be faster.
[illustration]

    John Cabot had everything planed
Out except for one thing had no
Money to get him there. So he asked
For King Freudian of Spain and King
John of Portugal to be his sponsor.
But unfortunately they said no. But
King Henry the 7th gave John
Permission to sail,in survace of
England if John would give him a 5th
Of the profits.
[illustration]

    Before he set sail on May 1497, He
Looked around his house wondering
When he would be home again. As
The boat left the docks that cloudy
Morning, He bid farewell h his wife,
Kids, and country.
[illustrations]

    The boat he was traveling on was
called the Matthew. John and the crew
were on the boat for a few weeks
untill they spotted land it was Newfoundland.

    John Cabot and his crew kept going. A few days later they soon discovered a new land called Canada meaning the "VIllage" in the first nation language. After finding Canada John and his crew figured out that they were going the wrong way and headed home.

    When John Cabot got home he had no gifts for the king he only had stories of the new land.

    Two years later John decided to go on another trip but this time he had many more boats and 500 men. Along the way going down south John an his crew were forced to take another wrote because of paths of icebergs flouting down south. John and his crew found a new wrote and sailed around what they thought was the Indies. Sadly they were never seen or heard of again.

Teacher's Observations

The writer sustains a journalistic voice throughout.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT			▨	
MEANING			▨	
STYLE				▨
FORM			▨	
CONVENTIONS				▨

- ◆ purpose is clear, focus sustained
- ◆ information is accurate
- ◆ uses relevant examples and details to increase clarity
- ◆ offers logical insights
- ◆ shows a clear sense of audience; tone is appropriate and consistent throughout
- ◆ language is clear and varied; uses appropriate specialized and technical terms
- ◆ introduction clearly establishes purpose; attempts to engage audience
- ◆ conclusion is logical; attempts to have an impact
- ◆ follows basic rules for sentence construction
- ◆ spelling is correct, including specialized language

Divinity in art

Entering the sculptor's workshop, there is a cloud of dust so thick that my tunic is nearly instantly covered in layers of dust.

Michelangelo gets up to greet me and I notice that his back is still bent,

Divinity in art

Entering the sculptor's workshop, there is a cloud of dust so thick that my tunic is nearly instantly covered in layers of dust.

Michelangelo gets up to greet me and I notice that his back is still bent, probably forever, from painting the Sistine Chapel.

Four years laying down with your back arched can leave a permanent mark on a person. The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is the largest fresco painting ever made by this man. For some reason or other, Michelangelo insists that he is a sculptor , not an artist. His art is comparable to Leonardo Da Vinci's and his statues to Donatello's.

At the age of twenty-five, Michelangelo came to be known as the best sculptor in Italy. This came around as a result of his sculpting "David". "David" was made for the city of Florence. It is meant to be a symbol of city freedom.

The *pieta is* also another fine piece of holy sculpture. It is amazing to think he could carve this piece at such a young age and display such perfect grace and divinity in one piece of work.

Apart from several outbursts at comments quoted from other sculptors and artists, the Divine Michelangelo is a very nice man. As I leave the workshop, I hear him yell out in anger at something he must have done wrong.

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

Teacher's Observations

The writer sustains a convincing voice and point of view for her character throughout the article.

◆ purpose and focus clear and effectively sustained

◆ information accurate and complete; may be from multiple sources

◆ uses relevant examples and details to elaborate ideas

◆ offers logical insights, generalizations, and conclusions

◆ shows a clear sense of audience; tone is appropriate and consistent throughout

◆ flows smoothly, uses a variety of sentence types and lengths effectively

◆ introduction is interesting and engaging for intended audience

◆ conclusion is strong and has an impact on the audience

◆ grammatically correct

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT				
MEANING				
STYLE				
FORM				
CONVENTIONS				

Bloody Mary

Officially I am Mary, Wife of Philip II, Queen of England and France, Naples, Jerusalem and Ireland, Defender of Faith, Princess of Spain, and Sicily, Archduchess of Austria, Duchess of Milan, Burgundy, and Brabant, and finally the Countess of Flanders, Hapsburg, and Tyrol. As much as all those titles may lead you to believe, I am not powerful. I am nothing but a lonely, childless, sick and unloved girl at heart. I am Mary, and this is my story.

TRANSCRIPT

Bloody Mary

Officially I am Mary, Wife of Philip II, Queen of England and France, Naples, Jerusalem and Ireland, Defender of Faith, Princess of Spain, and Sicily, Archduchess

of Austria, Duchess of Milan, Burgundy, and Brabant, and finally the Countess of Flanders, Hapsburg, and Tyrol. As much as all those titles may lead you to believe, I am not powerful. I am nothing but a lonely, childless, sick and unloved girl at heart. I am Mary, and this is my story.

I awoke into this dark and dreary world on February 18, 1516. Opening my eyes, I faintly remember my mother's weary smile and my father's dismal scowl. Later I was to learn that my father, King Henry VIII of England wanted a son not *just some girl!* Then, because I wasn't a boy, father tried to divorce my mother, Catherine of Aragon. He complained that he had married his brother's widow and that just wasn't right. Of-course, the wise Pope didn't agree with the claims since Lady Catherine's first marriage wasn't consummated. Then, because the Pope wouldn't allow this atrocity, father turned the whole country upside down. He declared himself the Head of the Church of England and switched our beloved Catholic religion for that heathen crap, Protestantism. All this so he could marry that witch, Anne Boleyn. I watched my oversexed pig of a father treat my mother like a whore, make a mockery of my beloved church, and virtually slap me and my mother in the face for all of England to see.

I was born and raised a Catholic and more than that, I stayed a Catholic.Even through all the hard times and threats of imprisonment and death. I must confess that it was partly out of respect of my dead mother. I learned to play the virginals while I was just still a young child. Of-course I was very well educated as I learnt Greek, Latin, French, Italian, science and music. I was even sent away from Court to study under several philosophers including Linacre and Vives. Unfortunately, most of my childhood mentors were killed by my father.

Even as a young girl, I was buried up to my neck in political intrigue. Trust me, it was not fun as I was but a pawn in the wild scheme of things. I have had many marriage proposals from France, Austria and others places as well. Finally, when I was just 2, I became engaged with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. The marriage never happened. Why? Well when I was 15, I was sent away to Wales as the Princess of Wales where I was not allowed to see my beloved mother, *even when she was dying!* Then in 1533, I was declared illegitimate and my baby half-sister, Elizabeth was named the Princess of Wales. I guess the Holy Emperor didn't want to marry just any common royal bastard. Plus then he just had to name me *Princess* Elizabeth's *Lady-in-Waiting?* That's just a nice way to say maid! I am the granddaughter of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain and the true heir to the English Throne! And now I'm a nursemaid?! I was humiliated, all my pride and honour gone! Just poof, but as if "beloved" father even cared! That is something I will never forget. Soon my religion and my mother merged into one. Catholicism was my dream, my one hope that keeps me going through this retched life; my taste of revenge.

I am stubborn, strong-willed and I hate compromises. Compromises are a sign of weakness. I refused to follow the new prayer book and instead followed the Catholic mass. What is faith if you could change it at a whim?

Then Cromwell realized that I was in danger and sent me this statement I was to sign. Well statement is putting it nicely, really it was a formal submission! It said such awful things like begged pardon of the king whom she had "obstinately and

disobediently offended", renounced "the Bishop of Rome's pretended authority", and acknowledged the marriage between her father and mother to have been contrary to the law of God. Cromwell made me sign it, I had no choice. I didn't read it though, I couldn't stand all the dreadful things that he made me say. At lease now I'm the heir to the Throne once more.

Soon my sinfill and completely immoral father beheaded the witch, Anne Boleyn, to marry Jane Seymour. With her he had a son named Edward VI. He was the first real obstacle I ever faced, well, except for the threatened life imprisonment by my own father. Soon Jane Seymour died as well and he married once again,- this time to Cathrine Parr. Out of them all, I must say she was the nicest. I think I might have even liked her! At least at the Court of Parr, I had enough money to buy the proper clothes for a princess. Soon my father died and Edward VI acceded to the throne. Edward, though, had always been a sick and frail boy, and he soon got this disease of lung rot. I prayed for him to recover, but secretly waited for him to die.

The people of England, or at least most of them, supported me rot that cow, Lady Jane Grey, whom Edward VI had chosen on his deathbed. Edward had always been weak nd Northumberland, the Lord President of the Council, thought that the young king should disinherit both his sisters in favour of Northumberland's own daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey. The Lord President, backed at first by the Council, made a resolute attempt to secure the succession for Lady Jane, but I acted promptly and courageously, setting up my standard at Framingham, where the men of the eastern counties rallied round me. Soon, I was joined by some members of the Council. By the 19 of July, I was in London and in power. A few days later Northumberland was arrested. My success was very popular and resistance was hopeless. On July 20, 1553, I was made Queen at the old age of 37. This how I began my "Reign of Terror" as people call it behind my back. I prefer to call it a reign to right the wrongs my terrible father made. It was a reign entirely devoted to restoring Catholicism to England and papal supremacy.

Soon came the problem of husbands. What's the problem? Well the fact that I needed one. I was promised to Charles V, the Holy Emperor but he's married now. I guess I'll just have to be happy with his son, Philip II, who is l1 years younger then me. This was totally against the advice of my counsellors and totally against the will of the people. Evidently, they worried about a threat to the English freedom and their right of self-governing. That's completely absurd! It was just my first step in my masterplan! Marriage to a Catholic prince was just a part of restoring Roman Catholicism to England! Unfortunately, it's been about 20 years of Protestantism, a whole new generation has practically been raised on it. Nevertheless, Philip and I were married in July, 1554, in the Winchester Cathedral.

Philip wasn't much of a husband. Now I can tell that he married me solely for the alliance between Spain and England, not love. In fact, I've heard that he despised and hated me. I loved him! Ofcourse, the Parliament did help when they refused to name him the King of England. About 14 months after arriving in England, he left again. He returned in 1557 and just to get support for his meaningless war against France. I happily obliged, sending him armies, food and supplies. This, unfortunately, enraged my people as we were short on food at the time.

They became even madder when Calais was lost. Calais was our last possession on the mainland and now it was lost. Philip, my dear Philip, never came back.

Then I guess I went a little crazy on my Mission. I thought I had displeased God and all my misfortune was my punishment. Plus it was a good way to forget about Philip. In a very short time, I brought back the Latin Mass, the rituals of worship and clerical celibacy. In the March of 1554, I issued the Royal Injunction which ordered bishops to remove married clergy from office, suppress the awful and now very common heresy, restore Holy Days and attendant ceremonies. Many of the bishops happily agreed and one of them named Gardiner began an efficient purge of married clergy. This practice eventually claimed almost a quarter of parish clergy. In April, Parliament reluctantly agreed to pass my heresy laws, but only if there is no restoration of monastic lands. I reluctantly agreed to this condition. Parliament met again and passed a 2nd Act of Repeal. This Act I think was the best. It makes all religious legislation since 1529 uncountable! In other words, the Henrician Reformation never occurred! I am the most proud of that one.

In the May of 1555, I though I finally became pregnant! Preparations and announcements were made, but after 9 months, no baby. This has happened numerous times before I remember myself weeping, surrounded by a swarm of doctors all whispering to each other. I could only hear fragments of sentences and words like "menopause…" and "convinced herself so much that she was pregant……body believed it too……"and stuff like that! They all looked at me not like the powerful Queen of England, but a look of pity! I wanted to just slap them! But I knew the reason. I knew why I couldn't have a baby. It was proof of divine displeasure that heretics still practised in England. Fires were lit and in the next 3 years, 300 Protestants were burned. I even burned several mock bishops, including Latimer and Cranmer. This, though, just made me even more unpopular and feared. Even though this was rather common in the rest of Europe, I guess it hasn't happened in England before. They nicknamed me Bloody Mary, a nickname I find totally unfair. Didn't they do the exact same thing when the Protestants took over?

Now I am dying, with no friends in the world. Twice I've been abandoned, once by my husband and the other by my own father. I am lonely, ill and childless, and forsaken by my own family and my country. I was made wretched by Philip's absence and a series of false pregnancies. I failed in the only hope and dream I had. Let it be known that "when I am dead and opened, you will find the words 'Philip' and 'Calais" engraved upon my heart." I am Mary, Queen of England, and that is my story.

Literary Writing

Students learn to appreciate the power and beauty of language as they create their own literary works, often modelled on those they have read or viewed. As they revise and edit to create the effects they want, students develop in the craft of writing.

Grade 8 students often write in a variety of literary forms that may include short stories (e.g., about relationships), traditional stories (e.g., fables, folk tales), special genres (e.g., mysteries, science fiction), memoirs, parodies and other humour, and poems. They explore an increasing variety of literary techniques, such as figurative language, imagery, and mood to create specific effects.

Most often, classmates and teachers are the primary audiences for students' stories and poems. School newspapers and yearbooks, web sites, and community publications can expand the range of audiences.

Key Qualities

The following is a summary of the key qualities of each aspect of literary writing in Grade 8. The *Quick Scales* and *Rating Scale* provide more details regarding specific criteria related to these key qualities.

MEANING
- ◆ comes from imagination, memories, and observations
- ◆ develops through engaging detail; has some emotional impact

STYLE
- ◆ is expressive, with descriptive and figurative language

FORM
- ◆ narratives develop in a logical sequence, with a beginning, middle, and end
- ◆ poems follow the "rules" of the chosen form and feature figurative language and imagery

CONVENTIONS
- ◆ has been carefully revised and edited
- ◆ follows standard conventions for basic spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structures

Prescribed Learning Outcomes

The BC performance standards for Grade 8 literary writing reflect the following prescribed learning outcomes from Grade 8 of the *English Language Arts 8 to 10 Integrated Resource Package.* Using the writing performance standards in a comprehensive way will provide teachers with many opportunities to assess these learning outcomes.

PURPOSES (WRITING)

It is expected that students will:

◆ write effective **imaginative texts** to explore ideas and information [C3]

STRATEGIES (WRITING)

[C5-7] Addressing these learning outcomes helps students in using strategies to develop their writing, but the Writing Performance Standards describe the product not the processes used.

THINKING (WRITING)

It is expected that students will:

◆ write and **represent** to **synthesize** and extend thinking [C10]

FEATURES (WRITING)

It is expected that students will:

◆ use and experiment with elements of **style** in writing and **representing**, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C12]
◆ use and experiment with elements of form in writing and representing, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C13]
◆ use conventions in writing and representing, appropriate to purpose and audience, to enhance meaning and artistry [C14]

Quick Scale: Grade 8 Writing Stories

This Quick Scale *is a summary of the* Rating Scale *that follows. Both describe student achievement in March-April of the school year. Stories are usually required to be carefully revised, edited, and proofread.*

Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	*The story is an attempt at the required type but is seriously flawed by problems in logic, style, and mechanics. May be very short.*	*The story is direct and complete, with some detail, although ideas are not fully developed, and parts are flawed by errors. Attempts required form.*	*The story is clear and logical; develops a theme, central idea, or problem with some detail. Uses the required form.*	*The story is expressive, featuring some engaging ideas or language. Form and style help to develop and enhance meaning; some emotional impact.*
MEANING • ideas and information • use of detail • sense of audience	• creates a story around a very simple and direct idea; may be very short, illogical, or based on another work • little relevant detail and description to develop characters, events, and images • little sense of audience; may include inappropriate material	• relatively simple, concrete story; often predictable, with parts modelled on other works • some detail and description to develop setting, characters, events, and images; development is uneven • limited sense of audience; focuses on form rather than impact	• creates a straightforward story; may feature some complexity or originality • uses detail and description to develop setting, characters, events, and images • some sense of audience; ideas and language have some impact	• creates a story with some complexity, originality, and creative development • uses detail and description to develop setting, characters, events, images, themes • sense of audience; creates an emotional impact or makes a point
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	• little sentence variety; sentences tend to be short and choppy or long and awkward • language is conversational and may be inappropriate	• some sentence variety; uses complex sentences, but some problems with subordination • language is generally clear, appropriate, and direct; often imprecise	• variety of sentences; more complex structures may be awkward • language is clear, appropriate, and varied	• flows smoothly; uses a variety of sentence types and lengths effectively • language is varied and often precise; experiments; may "play" with language
FORM • beginning • development • ending • characters • dialogue	• beginning does not establish the problem or situation • series of weakly connected events without a clear problem or resolution • ending is often abrupt and may be illogical • characters are identified; description tends to focus on physical traits • needed dialogue is often omitted or confusing	• beginning describes the problem or situation and introduces the main character(s) • story develops through a series of related events; the connections among some events may be unclear • ending often seems forced or unlikely • characters are described; stereotypic • often overuses or underuses dialogue	• beginning introduces problem, characters; tries to engage • generally predictable events are believable within story context • ending is logical • characters are partly revealed through their words and behaviour; they may be somewhat stereotypic • dialogue may add to plot, characterization	• engaging beginning reveals the story problem and introduces the character(s) • develops conflict through events that are believable within story context • ending is plausible; may be surprising, humorous • characters have some individuality, revealed by what they do and say • dialogue may add interest and develop plot and character
CONVENTIONS • complete sentences • spelling • punctuation • grammar	• frequent errors in simple words and structures often interfere with meaning	• errors in basic words and structures are noticeable but do not obscure meaning	• errors in more complex language are sometimes noticeable, but meaning is clear	• may include occasional errors where the writer is taking risks with complex language; these do not interfere with meaning

Quick Scale: Grade 8 Writing Poems

This Quick Scale *is a summary of the* Rating Scale *that follows. Both describe student achievement in March-April of the school year.*

Poems are usually expected to be carefully revised, edited, and proofread.

Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	*The poem is an attempt at the required type but is seriously flawed by problems in form, style, and mechanics. May be very short.*	*The poem is direct and complete, with some detail, although ideas are not fully developed. Attempts required form; parts often flawed by errors.*	*The poem is clear and develops a theme or central idea with some detail and imagery. Uses the required form.*	*The poem is expressive and features some engaging ideas or language. Form and style help to develop and enhance meaning; some emotional impact.*
MEANING • ideas and information • use of detail • sense of audience	• creates a poem around a very simple and direct idea; may be very short, illogical, or based on another work • little relevant detail and description • little sense of audience; may include inappropriate material	• creates a poem around a relatively simple, concrete idea or topic; often predictable, with parts modelled on other works • some detail and description to develop ideas and images; development is uneven • limited sense of audience	• creates a poem around a straightforward, controlling idea; may feature some complexity or originality • uses detail and description to develop ideas and images • some sense of audience; ideas and language have some impact	• creates a poem around a key or controlling idea with some complexity, originality, and creative development • uses detail and description to develop ideas, images, and themes • sense of audience; creates an emotional impact or makes a point
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	• language is conversational and may be inappropriate • little figurative language or other techniques; may attempt required elements such as rhyme	• language is generally clear, appropriate, and direct; often imprecise • may attempt simple figurative language (e.g., similes) and poetic techniques (e.g., rhyme) that have been recently taught	• language is clear, appropriate, and varied • takes risks to create effects with figurative language and other techniques (e.g., rhyme, repetition); results may be uneven	• language is varied and often precise; experiments; may "play" with language • experiments with figurative language and increasingly sophisticated techniques (e.g., irony, rhythm)
FORM • poetic form* • imagery	• does not follow the "rules" of the chosen form; may appear to be prose written in short lines • little attempt to create images; these may seem illogical	• attempts to write in the chosen form, but flawed; (ideas and language are often contrived to fit form) • some attempts to create images, often through literal, concrete description	• follows "rules" of chosen poetic form; may be somewhat contrived • uses some sensory and figurative language to create images (often predictable)	• follows "rules" of chosen form; tries to make form and meaning work together • uses figurative language and imagery with some originality and impact
CONVENTIONS • spelling • punctuation • grammar	• frequent errors in simple words, punctuation, and grammar often interfere with meaning	• errors in basic words, punctuation, and grammar are noticeable but do not obscure meaning	• errors in more complex words, punctuation, and grammar are sometimes noticeable, but meaning is clear	• may include occasional errors in words, punctuation, or grammar where the writer is taking risks with complex language; these do not interfere with meaning

* In the space below, teachers may want to list "rules" for the specific type of poem students are to write for a particular assignment.

Poetic form: _____

Key "rules": _____

_____

Rating Scale: Grade 8 Literary Writing

Student achievement in literary writing by March-April of Grade 8 can generally be described as shown in this scale.

Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)
SNAPSHOT	*The writing addresses the task and attempts to use the required form but is seriously flawed by problems in logic, style, and mechanics. May be very short.*	*The writing is usually direct and complete, with some detail, although ideas are not fully developed and errors are noticeable. Follows some conventions of the required form.*
MEANING • ideas and information • use of detail • sense of audience	• creates a story or poem around a very simple and direct idea or topic; may be very short, illogical, or based on another work • little relevant detail and description to develop characters, events, and images • shows little sense of audience; may attempt to shock reader by including inappropriate material	• creates a story or poem around a relatively simple, concrete idea or topic; often predictable ("trite") with parts modelled on other works • uses some detail and description to develop characters, events, and images; development is uneven • occasional evidence that writer has an audience in mind
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	• sentences tend to be short and choppy or long and awkward; repeats two or three sentence patterns • language may be inappropriate; few sensory details; appears to draw on a limited vocabulary • little evidence of figurative language or other techniques (in poetry, may attempt required elements such as rhyme)	• some variety in sentence length and pattern; uses complex sentences frequently (sometimes subordination is awkward or ineffective) • language is generally clear, appropriate, and direct, with some variety; frequently relies on broad concept words (e.g., "cute") • may attempt simple figurative language (e.g., similes) and other techniques (e.g., rhyme)
FORM STORIES • beginning • setting • development • paragraphing • ending • characters • dialogue	• beginning does not establish the problem or situation • setting is often not identified • attempts to tell a story, but often seems to be a series of weakly connected events without a clear problem or resolution (may seem to be a retelling of an action television program or movie, without the visual detail) • paragraphing may be illogical or omitted • ending is often abrupt and may be illogical • characters are identified; description tends to focus on physical traits • dialogue, when needed, is often omitted or confusing; tends to sound unnatural	• beginning describes the problem or situation and introduces the main character(s) • the setting is often identified but may not contribute to the story • story develops through a series of related events; the connections among some events may be unclear • some problems with paragraphing • ending often seems forced or unlikely • characters may be described rather than portrayed through their behaviour; they tend to be stereotypic • often overuses or underuses dialogue (does not flow naturally into the story)
POEMS • poetic form • imagery, figurative language	• does not follow the "rules" of the chosen poetic form; may appear to be prose written in short lines • little attempt at figurative language or imagery; these may be illogical or inappropriate	• clear attempts to write in the chosen form; (ideas and language are often contrived to fit form); often flawed • includes some attempts at creating images, often through literal, concrete description; may attempt figurative language that has been recently taught
CONVENTIONS • impact on meaning • complete sentences • spelling • capitalization and punctuation • grammar (e.g., agreement, verb tense)	• frequent errors in simple words and structures often interfere with meaning • frequent run-on sentences or sentence fragments • frequent spelling errors in basic vocabulary often involve plurals, possessives, contractions, word endings, missing letters, homonyms, careless errors • includes errors in capitalization and basic sentence punctuation; commas are often omitted or used incorrectly • frequent basic errors in grammar and word choice (e.g., adjective instead of adverb form; wrong pronoun or verb form; illogical shifts in tense)	• errors in basic words and structures are noticeable but do not obscure meaning • most sentences are complete but may be awkward; often includes some run-on sentences or fragments • most words are spelled correctly; includes errors with homonyms, plurals, possessives, contractions, word endings, or complex words • capitalization and sentence-end punctuation are generally correct; often problems with commas • some errors in grammar and word choice (e.g., adjective instead of adverb form; wrong pronoun or verb form; placement of modifiers)

The rating scale may require adaptation when used for different purposes and tasks.

Stories and poems are usually expected to be carefully revised, edited, and proofread for presentation to an audience.

Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
The writing is clear and logical and develops a theme, central idea, or problem with some detail. Uses the required form.	*The writing is expressive and features some engaging ideas or language. Form and style help to develop and enhance meaning; some emotional impact.*
• creates a story or poem around a key or controlling idea that is generally straightforward but may feature some complexity or originality • uses detail and description to develop characters, events, and images • some sense of audience; evidence that ideas and content have been selected or developed to create an emotional impact or make a point	• creates a story or poem around a key or controlling idea with some complexity, originality, and creative development • uses detail and description to effectively develop characters, events, images, and themes • sense of audience; creates an emotional impact or makes a point
• sentences generally flow smoothly, with a variety of patterns and lengths (attempts at more complex structures may be awkward) • language is clear, appropriate, and varied; may attempt to match diction to context/subject (e.g., rap language; Shakespearean) • takes risks to create effects with figurative language and other techniques (e.g., irony, repetition); results may be uneven	• flows smoothly; uses a variety of sentence types and lengths effectively (sense of deliberation—e.g., choosing inverted sentence for effect) • language is varied and often precise, with some evidence that the writer is choosing words to create a deliberate effect • experiments with figurative language and increasingly sophisticated techniques (e.g., irony, satire, rhythm, "asides"); may "play" with language
• beginning tries to engage the reader in the story problem or conflict and introduces the characters • usually describes some aspects of the setting; may attempt to develop mood or atmosphere • develops through generally predictable events that are believable within the context of the story (may attempt some plot twists) • paragraphing is generally appropriate • ending is logical (may be somewhat contrived) • characters are partly revealed through their words and behaviour; they may be somewhat stereotypic • dialogue, where appropriate, contributes to plot and characterization; attempts to use the voices of the characters	• engaging beginning reveals the story problem and introduces the character(s) • often uses elements of the setting to create mood or atmosphere and to further the story • develops conflict through events that are believable in story context; heightens interest by creating uncertainty and introducing plot twists • paragraphing is effective • ending is satisfying and leaves reader with a sense of resolution; may be surprising, humorous • characters have some individuality and are revealed by what they do and say • dialogue, where appropriate, adds interest and helps to develop both plot and character; main characters have individual voices
• follows the "rules" of the chosen poetic form; may be somewhat contrived in places • uses some sensory and figurative language to create images (often predictable)	• follows the "rules" of the chosen form; tries to make form and meaning work together • uses figurative language and imagery with some originality and impact
• errors in more complex language are sometimes noticeable, but meaning is clear • follows basic rules for sentence construction; may include occasional errors in longer or more complex sentences • most familiar words are spelled correctly • punctuation is generally correct, including commas, parentheses, and dialogue conventions • may include minor errors in grammar or word choice (e.g., incorrect pronoun or verb form)	• may include occasional errors where the writer takes risks with complex language; these do not interfere with meaning • sentences are correctly constructed; may be some awkwardness in more complex structures • spelling is correct • punctuation is correct • generally grammatically correct; may have minor errors in more complex structures (e.g., pronoun or verb agreement involving a compound subject)

Sample Task: Adventure Stories

CONTEXT

In this classroom, students write frequently for a variety of purposes using a wide range of forms. They discuss the criteria for effective writing, they complete self-evaluations, and they track their progress over time with portfolios.

PROCESS

These stories were developed as part of a unit on short fiction. The teacher presented a number of mini-lessons on the development of short stories. Students selected their own topics and developed their stories independently. They completed several draft stories from which they chose one to further refine. They were encouraged to revise and edit carefully, but they did not receive direct assistance from the teacher.

Teacher's Observations

The story consists of a series of events that are loosely connected and not developed.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT	■			
MEANING	■			
STYLE	■			
FORM	■			
CONVENTIONS	■			

- ◆ creates a story around a simple idea
- ◆ little relevant detail to develop characters, events, and images
- ◆ shows little sense of audience
- ◆ sentences tend to be short and choppy or long and awkward
- ◆ beginning does not establish the problem or situation
- ◆ attempts to tell a story, but often seems to be a series of weakly connected events without a clear problem or resolution
- ◆ ending is abrupt
- ◆ frequent run-on sentences
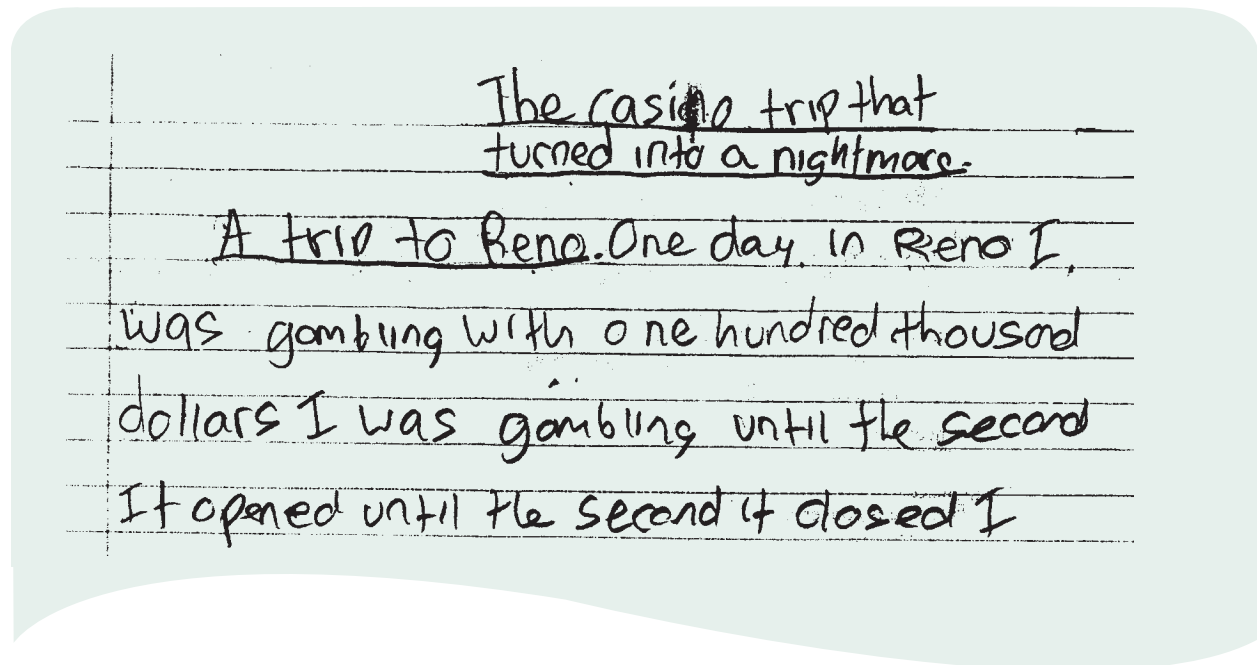
TRANSCRIPT

The Casino trip that turned into a nightmare

A trip to Reno. One day, in, Reno i was gambling with one hundred thousand dollars I was gambling until the second It opened until the second it closed I Lost about fifty-thousand dollars. I won 82 dollars, When I left the casino I went to california and met some friends. They tried to con ne into going to a casino I laughed and said ya right I'm never going there again. They said ok we won't go

the casino we'll go to disneylad. When we got to disneylad we went on all the rides there. Then when we left disneylad we went to a hotell and there was a casino down stairs we went upstairs and we slept in the hotel. Then we woke up and got ready and we were on our way to the plain station to go home on the way out the door, I seen the casino and I got sucked into going. At the casino I spent all of my money, and was stranded In disney world. For the next Five years I was a bum on te streets by the casino. The next year a car drove by me in the car was my uncle. He pulls over and gets out of the car. He says Whet are you doing down here I said I was gambling. He said you should not be gambling I said to him I Had way too much money and I needed to spend It. He says yaa Right, Well then why are you a bum then I said because casino's are money scamers, and I lost all of my money ouviously because I'm living on the streets. My Uncle said OK well then I'll drive you home. Thank you lifesaver. I get home I walk in and I see my mom and I give her a big hug. And that is the casino trip that turned into a nightmare. I do not Like casino's

!!!!Warning stay away from!!!!!
casino's
The End

Teacher's Observations

The writer tells a direct and complete story, although ideas and characters are not developed.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT		■		
MEANING		■		
STYLE		■		
FORM		■		
CONVENTIONS		■		

◆ creates a story around a relatively concrete topic; predictable
◆ uses some detail to develop events and images; development is uneven
◆ language is generally clear and direct, with some variety
◆ beginning describes the problem or situation and introduces the main character
◆ story develops through a series of related events
◆ most words are spelled correctly; includes errors with homonyms
◆ capitalization and sentence punctuation are generally correct

> ## Problems at Home
>
> "You Know Kelly, I used to be daddy's little girl, we never faught, we used to be able to talk abou anything and everything." Emily was a tall blonde girl with alot of family problems. Her best friend Kelly was the exact same. Emily was

TRANSCRIPT

Problems at Home

"You Know Kelly, I used to be daddy's little girl, we never faught, we used to be able to talk about anything and everything." Emily was a tall blonde girl with alot of family problems. Her best friend Kelly was the exact same. Emily was caught in the middle of her parents divorce. She faught with her parents day in and day

out. Her life seemed like a really bad broken record. "We'll what about your mom ?" Kelly asked "What about her ?" "Well are thing just as bad ?" "Yes and sometimes worse." Every Saturday the two girls sat in Emily's room, ate ice cream and cookie dough and talked about that weeks biggest jerk or newest crush. Emily head darted towards her bedroom door, Kelly looked to, standing there was a short, brown haired woman. "Hi mom." Emily quickly said. "Hi, so I got a phone call from your principal today he wants to see us on Monday." "Oh well it can't be about my grades." "We'll than what is it about ?" Emily mother voice was getting colder with every word she spoke.

That Monday was just like anyother, with the exception of that meating with her principal. When lunch was over she walked to the principals office, when she got there she was shocked to see a police officer and her aunt...... crying, but her parents we're not there. "Auntie whats a matter ?" Emily sat down in a chair and looked at the three of them waiting for an explination. " there has been an accident, Your parents were involved." the police officer answered one of her questions but now she had a new one... were her parents O.K.ay ? "Your parents didn't make it... I'm very sorry " The police officers voice cut threw her like a knife cutting threw butter.

That Saturday were the funerals. Emily gave a small speach. She moved in with her aunt that Sunday.

FULLY MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Teacher's Observations

The writer tells a straightforward story, with some detail and description. Some aspects of setting are described.

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT				
MEANING				
STYLE				
FORM				
CONVENTIONS				

- ◆ creates a story around an idea that is generally straightforward
- ◆ uses detail and description to develop characters, events, and images
- ◆ sentences generally flow smoothly, with a variety of patterns and lengths
- ◆ beginning tries to engage the reader in the story problem and introduces the character
- ◆ describes some aspects of the setting
- ◆ develops through generally predictable events
- ◆ most familiar words are spelled correctly
- ◆ punctuation is generally correct, including commas

The Night Stalker

As we embarked upon the Yukon border, our tenth annual hunting trip was about to unfold. One guide named Clark, one helper named Ken and nine horses awaited us at the registration booth. The horses were bundled with everything you could imagine from sleeping bags to flashlights. Bill, Brian, Rocco, and Dave were so ecstatic to get going, but little did they know what was in store for them.

TRANSCRIPT

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It was such a cold morning that you could see our breath in the air. Clark requested that Ken check the horses horseshoes one last time before they were off to hunt elk. Clark was a husky man who wore a racoon hat, had a long beard

and looked like a person who you wouldn't like to cross. On the other hand, Ken was of a smaller stature and very pleasant to associate with. It was a four day ride there and back, so off they began their adventure.

The scenery was beautiful as we rode through the alpine country. You have to appreciate the wildness of this country, because it was not long before Ken spotted a ten-foot grizzly near a cabin that he would be staying in. When we arrived at the cabin, we crashed out for the night. During the night, Rocco crept outside quietly to use the washroom and never returned.

Early the next morning, we woke up and discovered that Rocco was no where to be found. Ken and Clark went to find Rocco, but demanded that Bill, Dave and Brian stay in the cabin for safety until they returned. Six hours later we heard a series of gun shots going off which sounded like a war zone. We thought that Ken and Clark had got what they were in pursuit for and would return shortly.

The night came and went and we were extremely scared to death. We would have to make a decision in the morning whether we would search for the three missing people or go back home and get assistance. We decided the best thing to do would be to go back and get help.

As we headed back, we could hear a faint calling. We thought it might be one of the missing three, so we went to where the cry was coming from. It wasn't long before we came across Ken bracing himself up in the tree with one of his legs was bleeding terribly. Ken demanded that we go down the trail and see if Clark was okay.

The trail went up and down twelve foot rain canals like a roller coaster ride. There he was buried in a heap of sticks and mud with one of his legs sticking out. We went to unbury him when we discovered that Rocco was under him half eaten. They had both been killed by a grizzly because of the distinguished paw prints next to them.

We went to get Ken down from the tree and control his bleeding. Lord knows how long he managed to stay up there all night perched on a limb. Ken explained that Clark and himself were travelling through the twelve foot rain canals on their horses, when a grizzly pounced on Clark. Ken got bucked off his horse and scrambled to get away from the bear. He shot a series of gun shots, missed the bear and soon discovered that he was out of bullets. The bear ferociously took Clark away and buried him. The bear then came back and grabbed one of Ken's legs so he played dead hoping the bear would leave. The bear finally left as suddenly as he appeared. Ken climbed the tree for safety and continuously cried for help.

The team tarped the two bodies up and headed home. It was a long journey home, but we eventually made it back to town. We reported to the police what had happened. The hardest thing next to finding Rocco's body, was to tell Rocco's wife and kids that he was dead.

Vocabularv

1)embarked: arrived
2)ecstatic: excited
3)alpine: a place with sparse trees and lots of moss on the ground
4)in pursuit: looking

Teacher's Observations

The writer experiments with irony and presents a surprise ending.

◆ creates a story around an idea with some complexity, originality, and creative development
◆ sense of audience; creates an emotional impact and makes a point
◆ language is varied and often precise
◆ develops conflict through believable events; heightens interest by introducing plot twists
◆ ending is believable, surprising
◆ dialogue adds interest and helps to develop both plot and character
◆ sentences are correctly constructed
◆ generally grammatically correct

	Not Yet	Meets	Fully	Exceeds
SNAPSHOT				■
MEANING				■
STYLE				■
FORM				■
CONVENTIONS				■

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Merriam Pipe. She had lots friends. Her best friend's name was Jenny. Merriam, Jenny, and their other good friends, Petra, Taylor and Cathy loved to gossip. They would gossip about anything and everything. The girls especially loved to gossip about Jackie. Jackie was an unpopular girl in their class at school without many friends. They could always find something new to gossip about Jackie. They would talk about the clothes she would wear, the way she did her hair, they would even talk about what she would bring for lunch! The girls thought every aspect of Jackie was funny.

TRANSCRIPT

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find something new to gossip about Jackie. They would talk about the clothes she would wear, the way she did her hair, they would even talk about what she would bring for lunch! The girls thought every aspect of Jackie was funny. They couldn't wait until Jackie got to school every morning to see what Jackie was wearing so they could gossip about it later.

Every Thursday the girls would get together to talk and gossip about different things, but mostly about Jackie. One average Thursday, the topic of mind reading came up. "I wonder what it would be like to be able to read minds?" said Petra "Wow! That would be awesome!" exclaimed Taylor. "Then we could read Jackie's mind!" squealed Cathy. "I'd love to know what she thinks about," said Jenny. "I have no idea what she thinks about, but I bet it's weird!" cried Merriam. The girls erupted in laughter. That night, Merriam lay in bed thinking about reading minds. It would be great to be able read minds thought Merriam with excitement. I would be able to tell if people liked me or not, or if they liked my clothes or hair. I could also get the answers for tests! "I wish I could read minds," thought Merriam out-loud Merriam sighed, rolled over, closed her eyes and went to sleep.

Thc next few weeks came and went, with nothing out of the ordinary. Though, every night, before she went to sleep, Merriam wished that she could read minds, then every morning she would test her brain to see if her wish had come true. She would stare at her mother and try with all her might to see what she was thinking. Every day was the same. Merriam just could not read minds! She was getting very frustrated; but do you think that stopped Merriam? Never! Every night Merriam continued to wish that she could read minds.

One morning Merriam woke up feeling extra lucky. Her mother came in and Merriam stared at her with all her strength. "I wish that lazy girl would get up" she heard in her mother's voice. Merriam's mother's lips did not move. Merriam's mother did not say a word. Merriam's mother did not speak at all. Merriam had read her mother's mind! Merriam sprang out of bed and raced downstairs. Her little brother, Jeffery, was eating his favorite cereal. Her father was eating oatmeal and reading the newspaper. Merriam stared hard at her brother. "I wish mommy and daddy would get me a puppy!" heard Merriam in Jeffrey's voice. Jeffery had a mouth full of cereal. He did not speak "It works" screeched Merriam (only half believing herself). "What works, honey?" Merriam's father said. "Oh!" Exclaimed Merriam, escaping from her thoughts "nothing, dad". Merriam grabbed her lunch bag and headed to school.

It was silent reading time at school. Merriam had read a few thoughts of strangers and people in her class but no thoughts were very interesting. I think I'll read Petra's thoughts thought Merriam. She starred hard at Petra. "Cathy's hair is sooo ugly!" She heard Petra think Merriam was astonished. How could Petra think that about her friend? "She looked at Petra again and heard "I like Merriam's hair" Oh well, thought Merriam, at least she isn't thinking bad thoughts about me. Hey, thought Merriam all of the sudden, I never had to think hard at all to read Petra's thoughts. I'm getting better!

The next morning when Merriam woke up she went downstairs. When she walked into the kitchen she was bombarded with thoughts from her brother, father, and mother. Merriam was astonished. Her powers were getting stronger

by the hour! Merriam jumped up and down, grabbed her lunch, and took off early to get to school. She was very excited as she walked down the sidewalk to school. As she skipped past people and passing cars she could hear a jumble of different thoughts that were very hard to understand Merriam walked into the class and heard a very loud blast of words like walking into a concert right beside the speakers, except there were words instead of music. Merriam could make out some of the words but it was to hard to put them together to make sentences or even groups of words. Merriam even heard her own name a few times.

It was very hard to concentrate in class because of the noise. Finally it was recess. Merriam decided to get Jackie alone with her so she wouldn't be interrupted while reading Jackie's mind. She secretly followed Jackie into the washroom and listened very hard Jackie was very upset about something. Jackie's parents were getting a divorce and she had no friends to talk to about it. This was great thought Merriam. This will be great gossip for this Thursday! The girls will love it! Maybe we can even bug Jackie about it later. I can't wait until Thursday, I have to tell the girls about it now! Merriam raced out of the bathroom to find her friends. She found them on the playground taking turns on the seesaw. "Hey!" called Merriam. "What is it Merriam?" called Taylor. "Come here, I have the best dirt on Jackie." Merriam said but less loudly this time. The girls ran over and crowded around Merriam waiting to hear what she had to say. "Jackie's parents are getting a divorce!" whispered Merriam. There was an awkward pause then Merriam's mind was irrupted with her friend's angry voices "LOOSER! STUPID! HOW COULD YOU! MEANIE! BULLY!" What was wrong? Why were her friends angry? Wasn't her gossip funny? Jenny was the first person to actually speak "That's mean. How could you think it was funny that Jackie's parents were getting a divorce! None of us may like Jackie very much, but it would be just plain wrong to rub that in her face!" All her friends walked away leaving Merriam alone in the playground. Merriam's mind was pulsating with thoughts of children on the playground. Her mind started to ache. The noise in her head was too much! She had to get away! Merriam began to run. She ran off the school grounds and near the road. She kept on running past houses, her mind in pain. As she ran past homes she could hear the thoughts of the people inside. Merriam thought her mind would burst. Her powers were getting stronger by the second! All of the sudden the pain got one million times worse! "Ahhhhhhh!" Merriam let out a tremendous cry. The pain was almost unbearable! The thoughts that were in her mind right now weren't like any she had heard before. They were thoughts of pain, hatred and fear. Merriam was very confused. Then Merriam realized what had happened. Merriam had stepped on an ant.