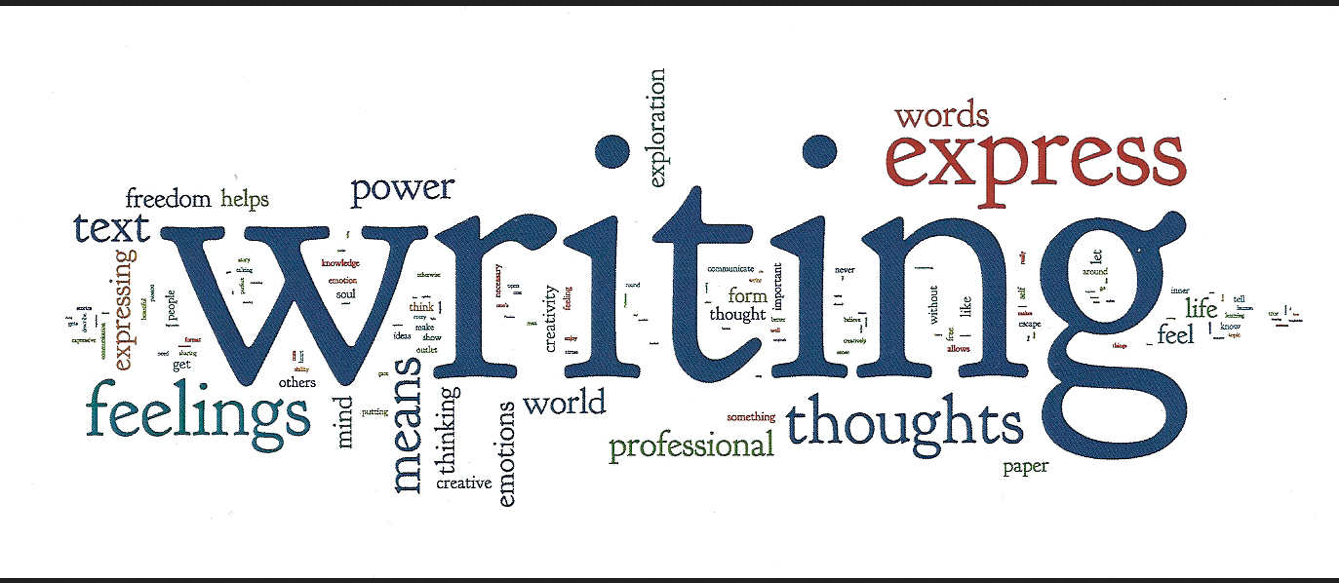
**Narrative Writing: A Resource for**

**English Language Arts Teachers**

**2014**

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**Howard County Public School System**

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**Overview**

*Narrative Writing: A Resource for English Language Arts Teachers,* addresses writing skills, and student expectations regarding narrative writing and provides classroom teachers with a common language necessary for understanding the standards.

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**College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards for Writing**

*The CCR anchor standards and high school standards in literacy work in tandem to define college and career readiness expectations—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity (Common Core State Standards).*

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| --- |
| **Text Types and Purposes\*** |
| 1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. |
| 2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. |
| **3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.\*** |
| **Production and Distribution of Writing** |
| 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. |
| 5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. |
| 6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. |
| **Research to Build and Present Knowledge** |
| 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. |
| 8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism. |
| 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. |
| **Range of Writing** |
| 10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. |

Note:

\*Students’ narrative skills continue to grow in these grades. The Standards require that students be able to incorporate narrative elements effectively into arguments and informative/explanatory texts. For example in history/social studies, students must be able to incorporate narrative accounts into their analyses of individuals or events of historical import. In science and technical subjects, students must be able to write precise enough descriptions of the step-by-step procedures they use in their investigations or technical work that others can replicate them and (possibly) reach the same results. (Common Core State Standards, page 65)

## Common Language Students Know and Use When Writing\*

\*from 6+1 Traits of Writing™

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| --- |
| Word Choice |
| Word choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language. |
| Ideas |
| The ideas are the heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme or topic, together with all the details that enrich and develop that theme. The ideas are strong when the message is clear. |
| Organization |
| Organization is the structure of a piece of writing. A clear beginning, middle, and end should be present |
| Sentence Fluency |
| Sentences vary in length. The writer includes both short and long sentences. A  combination of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences may be present. |
| Conventions |
| Conventions include spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and usage. |
| ****Voice**** |
| The voice is the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to the reader. Voice must be appropriate for the intended audience. |
| **Presentation** |
| Presentation combines both visual and verbal elements- it is the way we "exhibit" our message. Presentation includes formatting elements such as font, proper heading, and spacing. The paper is clean and neat. |

**Explanatory Writing**

**Common Core Glossary**

1. **Atmosphere** is defined as the general mood or feeling that word choice and pacing work to establish within a piece of literature.
2. **Characterization** is the direct and implied or indirect methods used to present the personality of a character within a piece of writing.
3. **Chronological Order or time order** shows how events are arranged in the order in which they occurred. This shows the reader why something happened, why conditions existed or what the results of an action were; uses logic and evidence to show the relationship between an event and its cause or an event and its outcome.
4. **Cohesion** is the arrangement of ideas in such a way that the reader can easily follow one point to the next. Devices for creating cohesion include appropriate transition words and phrases, repetition of words as needed, and the use of appropriate pronouns.
5. **Conflict** is the central, and often life changing, problem that drives the action of the story; some conflicts include individual versus individual, himself/herself, and nature.
6. **Conventions** are commonly accepted rules of language such as spelling, punctuation, complete sentences, subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and usage.
7. **Description and detail** explains how something works; provides sequential directions for how something is done.
8. **Dialogue** is the written exchange between two or more characters.
9. **Discipline-specific content** is text associated with individual subjects or areas of instruction.
10. **Pacing** reflects the rate at which the story moves. It should be clear for the reader to follow and understand.
11. **Plot** is the sequence of events that occur in a story.
12. **Point of View** is the inclusive and exclusive perceptive from which the story is narrated.
13. **Setting** refers to the time and place in which a plot takes place.
14. **Theme** is defined as a distinct yet underlying and universal idea hat forms the basis of the work and serves as a life lesson to people in general, not just characters within a story.
15. **Transitions** are bridges to help keep the reader on the path of the story; elements that require transitions include shifts in time, setting, scenes, moods, characters and pace.

**Narrative Writing**

**It is important for students to demonstrate an understanding of elements of narration. Here are several narrative techniques.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Building Characterization** | **Punctuating Dialogue** | **Pacing** | **Stage Directions** |
| There are different ways to develop characters.   * Physical details * Physical environment * Interaction of others * What the character says, does, or thinks | When writing narration**,** the author words spoken by a character are enclosed in quotation marks.  Explanations of actions are not.  1.Begin a new paragraph each time the speaker changes.  2.Enclose a speaker’s exact words in quotation marks.  3.Begin a direct quotation with a capital letter.  4.Set off a direct quotation with a comma when it is preceded or followed by a phrase such as he said or she muttered.  5.Establish the name of each speaker the first time that person speaks in the dialogue.  6.Avoid overusing the word said when writing dialogue. | When addressing pacing, think of the action in the narrative as the accelerator. Whenever action occurs, there is a rapid or quick pace.  When slowing the pace or braking the action, use descriptions.  **To speed pace**:   * Include action * Avoid overusing description * Include short sentences * Include dialogue that is to the point.   **To slow pace**   * Limit action * Include longer sentences * Include more relaxed but purposeful dialogue | When writing a play, the author does not use quotation to signal dialogue; however, all actions, descriptions, and other instructions must be set off in parentheses, in the present tense.  Stage Direction Purposes:   * What we see * What we hear that's not dialogue * Only as much of either as we need to understand the story and characters |
| “The Future of Water”  Using your knowledge from your work in this module, write and deliver a monologue from the perspective of water, sharing your feelings about its use and misuse. | *The Tragedy of Othello*  *.* Following rules of punctuating dialogue in narration and what you know about the characters, add an additional scene to Act 5, that answers- Now what, Emilia, Othello? | *The Great Gatsby*  Using your understanding of the characters in the novel, rewrite the opening of the novel from the perspective of a different character. Be mindful of your pacing. | *A Raisin in the Sun*  Add a scene to the play that focuses on the family’s first meal in their new home. Include purposeful stage directions and dialogue that reflect your understanding of each character. |

**An adaptation of http://www.fiction-writers-mentor.com/pacing.html**

**Narrative Writing Standards**

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| **Grades 6** |
| W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.   1. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. 2. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. 3. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. 4. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. 5. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events. |

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| **Grades 7** |
| W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.   1. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and **point of view** and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. 2. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. 3. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. 4. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. 5. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events. |

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| **Grades 8** |
| W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.   1. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. 2. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description and **reflection** to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. 3. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another and show the relationships among experiences and events. 4. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. 5. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events. |

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| **Narrative Writing and Its Purpose: Grades 9-10** |
| W.9-10.2. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.   1. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events. 2. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and **multiple plot lines**, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. 3. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. 4. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. 5. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative. |

**File Name: N6P Black Mountains of Dust**

**Narrative**

**Grade 6**

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context** for the narrative that follows and **introduces a narrator and characters.** The narrator and her mother needing to escape the storm becomes the central focus /conflict in the narrative.

The need to escape the storm becomes the focus / central problem of the narrative

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**Black Mountains of Dust**

I was sitting at a park bench when I saw the endless black heading towards me. "Mom look!" I screamed. My mom turned around and faced me. A look of pure horror was painted across her face.

**Uses** **narrative technique of dialogue to develop events. Event sequence to follow unfolds naturally and logically.**

"Margaret come on we need to go now!"

She shouted. We ran across roads and dried up cropt fields. We did not dare look back. Suddenly I wasn't running away from the black cloud. Instead I was face down in the dirt. Oh no I had tripped over my shoelace! I slowly looked up where was my mom? The cloud loomed closer and closer. I choked feeling the gritty dust in my throat.

**Uses transitional phrase to signal shift from one setting to another**

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey events** and develop characters

I tryed to crawl forward but needles shot through my legs. Oh great in a time like this my legs fall asleep! A whiff of dust blew toward me, burning my eyes and making everything blury.

**Uses** the **narrative technique** of **dialogue to develop events and characters;** controls **pacing** by slowing down the action

"Mom!" I screamed. "Mom!"

I tryed to yell again but was choked by more dust. "Mom" I whined. Where was she. I started coughing from all of the dust in my lungs and throat.

"Margaret! Darling come on!" My mom motioned me to get up but I shook my head.

My Mom flung me into her arms and ran, soaring farther away from the storm. After what seemed forever, my mom stopped running. Screams and yells echoed off walls. I covered my ears.

**Uses transitional clause to signal shift from one time frame to another**

A person right in front of us said:

"Get inside quickly!"

My mom answered "okay" and then I was carried into a building, that looked like the town hall.

My mom set me down n a corner, in the town hall and sat next to me. "Mom?" I croaked.

**Provides a conclusion which follows from** and then reflects on **the events** and focus / conflict **of the narrative,** the dust storm of the Dust Bowl days

"Yes Sweetie?" She said in a sweet voice, almost like honey.

"Is this going to happen ever again, this storm?" I asked my voice still thick with dust. She did not answer and I knew that she knew this wouldn't be the the last time the black mountains of dust attacked the plain states.

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a girl and her mother being caught in a dust storm during the days of the Dust Bowl. She focuses the narrative around the central conflict of trying to escape the storm. The protagonist/narrator is a girl who is terrified by the storm as she is caught up in it.

The writer organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Some development of the events and characters is done through dialogue. Some precise words and phrases, descriptive details, and sensory language are used as well. At times in the narrative, it would have been helpful to have had a bit more description along with the dialogue, but, in general, the writer controls plot and character development adequately.

Although not required by the Standards, the narrative concludes with reflection / foreshadowing about future dust storms, which follows effectively from the story line.

***Overall, this writer has done a good job creating a story line focused around the dust storm and developing the characters and events in an effective narrative.***

**File Name: N6P Black Mountains of Dust**

**Narrative**

**Grade 6**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**Black Mountains of Dust**

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"Margaret come on we need to go now!"

She shouted. We ran across roads and dried up cropt fields. We did not dare look back. Suddenly I wasn't running away from the black cloud. Instead I was face down in the dirt. Oh no I had tripped over my shoelace! I slowly looked up where was my mom? The cloud loomed closer and closer. I choked feeling the gritty dust in my throat. I tryed to crawl forward but needles shot through my legs. Oh great in a time like this my legs fall asleep! A whiff of dust blew toward me, burning my eyes and making everything blury.

"Mom!" I screamed. "Mom!"

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"Margaret! Darling come on!" My mom motioned me to get up but I shook my head.

My Mom flung me into her arms and ran, soaring farther away from the storm. After what seemed forever, my mom stopped running. Screams and yells echoed off walls. I covered my ears.

A person right in front of us said:

"Get inside quickly!"

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My mom set me down n a corner, in the town hall and sat next to me.

"Mom?" I croaked.

"Yes Sweetie?" She said in a sweet voice, almost like honey.

"Is this going to happen ever again, this storm?" I asked my voice still thick with dust. She did not answer and I knew that she knew this wouldn't be the the last time the black mountains of dust attacked the plain states.

**Narrative Writing**

**Middle School (6-8)**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| *Develop and organize your narrative so that the reader can easily follow the events, determine the speaker and his or her point of view, develop an understanding of the conflict and plot, and determine the narrative’s theme.* | **Ideas**  Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. | **30 points** |
| **Organization**  Engage and orient the reader by   * establishing a context for the narrative * introducing a narrator and/or characters * organizing an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically * providing a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events |
| *Select language purposefully and deliberately when describing characters, setting, and events and when using dialogue.* | **Word Choice**  Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. | **30 point** |
| *Demonstrate that not only can you tell a story, you understand the essential elements of narration and their specific purposes* | **Narration Development**   * Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. * Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. | **25 points** |
| *This is not the time to show carelessness. Misused words or incorrect spellings and other grammatical errors can get in the way of your narrative.* | **Conventions**  Paper is clear of mistakes in   * + - Spelling     - Punctuation     - Capitalization     - Usage | **10 points** |
| *This is the place to show that you care about a first impression. Does the paper look as though you took pride in what you produced?* | **Presentation**   * Easy to read handwriting * Double spaced typing * Well-defined margins * Use 12 pt. Times New Roman font | **5 points** |

**File Name: N7P Dust Storm**

**Narrative**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context** for the narrative to follow, and by **introducing a narrator and characters:** The arrival of the storm becomes the focus/conflict of the narrative, which is told from the perspective / point of view of a first person narrator

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**Dust Storm**

My family thought our lives were absolutely perfect. My twelve year old mind thought so, too, until our Sunday paper arrived. I heard the clunk of the mail slot, and sprinted to get the first peek of the paper. People on the first page were being interviewed by frantic news reporters, wanting to know reasons for our year long hot weather. I thought they were crazy, until they were right.

**Uses** the **narrative technique** of foreshadowing **to develop events**

Days went by, and the hot temperatures got worse. Hot baths were long gone, replaced with iced cold water. We had all ate the cold foods we could eat, no more ovens or fires, if you were rich enough. Our family had a fire, and a pan. We stopped doing that yesterday. I slipped out of my thoughts as my younger sister, Leesh, yelled out names. "Mom! Dad! Mary! Come see this!"

**Uses** the **narrative technique** of **dialogue to develop events and characters**

**Uses a transitional clause to convey sequence and signal a shift from one time frame to another**

The yell was far distance, followed by a scream so high pitch, I sprinted outside, into the woods to find Leesh. Mom and Dad followed, pale with panic and worry. I smelled my own blood, from all the thorns in our woods. I felt the trickling on my legs, my bare legs, and arms, lucky

**Uses precise descriptive sensory language to convey experience**

my sundress hasn't yet ripped. "Leesh! Leesh - where are you?" I saw our fallen treehouse, and something a little beyond the trees.

"Mom, Dad, get Leesh down. I think I see something beyond the trees!" They opened there mouths to say something, but they were lost for words, as I ran. Tree branches, sticks, thorn bushes, and stumps were my obsticales. I noticed the animals all ran the oppisite way, with fear and shock in their faces and eyes. I got to the end, staring in shock at the terrifying sight in front of me.

**Uses precise descriptive sensory language to convey events**

Over the hills, rather then sun and clouds, I saw it. A big, pitch black cloud, thousands and thousands of feet tall, making any tree look like action figures. It moved with the wind blowing its way towards me. It came up the last hill, the one I stood on. The dust cloud swallowed me, and it whipped me in the face, stinging me like needles piercing every inch of my helpless body. I still sprinted, as fast as my legs could take me, swallowing the dust in my mouth, nose, and burning eyes. I wheezed, coughed, and barely breathed. I felt myself suffocating, rembering my name, will myself I would make it. You can do this Mary, you can get out of this. I opened my mouth to scream, instead filling myself with gallons of dust in my throat and lungs. I realized I was finally back in the woods, almost reaching my terrified family. I took huge rock, and wrote with siliva and dust. My vision blurred and I tripped over tree branches, rocks,

**Provides a conclusion which follows from the events** and focus / conflict **of the narrative,** the dust storm of the Dust Bowl days

**Uses precise descriptive sensory language to convey experience; language captures the action** going on here, as the dust swallows the narrator

and anything in my way. I tumbled, over my head, crashing on the ground. I felt myself suffocate before my head hit the rock, never seeing light or dust, as my body shut down.

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a girl and her family caught in a dust storm during the days of the Dust Bowl. She focuses it around the narrator’s conflict with the huge storm. The protagonist/narrator is a girl who is terrified by the storm as she is caught up in it.

The writer organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically, including a bit of effective foreshadowing at the beginning of the narrative, which strengthens the piece. The writer uses minimal dialogue; most of the detail is provided through description. There is a significant amount of precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive detail, and sensory language used to portray events. The narrative concludes with the narrator falling and losing consciousness—perhaps a bit overly dramatic for an ending but reasonable for this grade level. Because the narrator is losing consciousness, she understandably cannot reflect on the experience (as the Standards require).

**File Name: N7P Dust Storm**

**Narrative**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**Dust Storm**

My family thought our lives were absolutely perfect. My twelve year old mind thought so, too, until our Sunday paper arrived. I heard the clunk of the mail slot, and sprinted to get the first peek of the paper. People on the first page were being interviewed by frantic news reporters, wanting to know reasons for our year long hot weather. I thought they were crazy, until they were right.

Days went by, and the hot temperatures got worse. Hot baths were long gone, replaced with iced cold water. We had all ate the cold foods we could eat, no more ovens or fires, if you were rich enough. Our family had a fire, and a pan. We stopped doing that yesterday. I slipped out of my thoughts as my younger sister, Leesh, yelled out names. "Mom! Dad! Mary! Come see this!"

The yell was far distance, followed by a scream so high pitch, I sprinted outside, into the woods to find Leesh. Mom and Dad followed, pale with panic and worry. I smelled my own blood, from all the thorns in our woods. I felt the trickling on my legs, my bare legs, and arms, lucky my sundress hasn't yet ripped. "Leesh! Leesh - where are you?" I saw our fallen tree house, and something a little beyond the trees.

"Mom, Dad, get Leesh down. I think I see something beyond the trees!" They opened there mouths to say something, but they were lost for words, as I ran. Tree branches, sticks, thorn bushes, and stumps were my obsticales. I noticed the animals all ran the oppisite way, with fear and shock in their faces and eyes. I got to the end, staring in shock at the terrifying sight in front of me.

Over the hills, rather then sun and clouds, I saw it. A big, pitch-black cloud, thousands and thousands of feet tall, making any tree look like action figures. It moved with the wind blowing its way towards me. It came up the last hill, the one I stood on. The dust cloud swallowed me, and it whipped me in the face, stinging me like needles piercing every inch of my helpless body. I still sprinted, as fast as my legs could take me, swallowing the dust in my mouth, nose, and burning eyes. I wheezed, coughed, and barely breathed. I felt myself suffocating, remembering my name, will myself I would make it. You can do this Mary, you can get out of this. I opened my mouth to scream, instead filling myself with gallons of dust in my throat and lungs. I realized I was finally back in the woods, almost reaching my terrified family. I took huge rock, and wrote with saliva and dust. My vision blurred and I tripped over tree branches, rocks, and anything in my way. I tumbled, over my head, crashing on the ground. I felt myself suffocate before my head hit the rock, never seeing light or dust, as my body shut down.

**File Name: N8P Daydreams of A Migrant Mother**

**Narrative**

**Grade 8**

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context** for the narrative to follow and introducing **a narrator and characters:** The struggle to live at a migrant camp is the central conflict of the narrative, which is told from the perspective / point of view of a first person narrator

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**Daydreams of A Migrant Mother**

The cool afternoon wind brushed against my face. I watched as the kids played with a rabbit they had found in the woods. All around me the sounds of the camp faded in my mind. The sounds of babies crying turned to a soft wail. The yelling of the kids turned to quiet murmurs as I drifted into my mind.

**Uses transitional clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among events**

For the past few weeks since we left Oklahoma, I've been worried. It's been really rough living on the road without a proper home and I just really want the best for my family. The kids have been going to a public school just two miles from where we'd been camping. They've told me that the kids have given them ugly looks and said awful things about them calling them "Okies" or saying they were retarded. I couldn't stand any of my kids having to go through this misfortune. I focused my vision on my two kids Annie and Joey. They were laughing and shoving some grass in the rabbit's mouth. I didn't want them living like this but there was nothing I could do. I felt useless and weak.

**Uses transitional clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among events**

Uses the **narrative technique** of **reflection to develop events,** as well as the **character** of the narrator

The wind blew again and I went back to my daydreaming. My husband had been out for three days looking for any job available. We had

planned to be at least in a home that put a roof over our heads but we accomplished nothing. Most of our close friends that had traveled with us already had a job and housing. The feeling bothered me. I looked around and saw some of the families huddled under their tents. I don't want to be like this anymore I thought. But yet again there was nothing I could do. Sometimes I felt angry with myself. As if I wasn't trying my hardest, but eventually it would just turn to sorrow.

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey events**

Uses the **narrative technique** of **reflection to develop events,** as well as the **character** of the narrator

My thoughts were disrupted by Annie and Joey running up to me smiling. I looked down on them and smiled, wondering how lovely childhood must be with no worries.

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated events**, the struggle to survive at the migrant camp

"Ma, when are we going to eat, I'm starving?" asked Joey.

Even I didn't know the answer to that question, we had completely run out of food. I pondered on how I would say this to them. I gave up and just said, "I don't know Joey."

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a mother watching her children in a migrant camp during the days of the Dust Bowl. She focuses it around the narrator’s internal and external conflicts as she struggles with helping her family survive in the camp. The protagonist/narrator is the mother.

This narrative lacks a real sequence of events, but it still unfolds naturally and logically. The writer uses minimal dialogue; most of the detail is provided through the narrator’s reflection as she watches her young children playing. The mother’s character—caring and overwhelmed—is captured through this reflective detail. The narrative concludes with the mother unable to find a solution to her situation, unable even to find her children something to eat. The lack of tidy resolution is appropriate to this narrative and suggests the maturity of the writer.

**File Name: N8P Daydreams of A Migrant Mother**

**Narrative**

**Grade 8**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**Daydreams of A Migrant Mother**

The cool afternoon wind brushed against my face. I watched as the kids played with a rabbit they had found in the woods. All around me the sounds of the camp faded in my mind. The sounds of babies crying turned to a soft wail. The yelling of the kids turned to quiet murmmurs as I drifted into my mind.

For the past few weeks since we left Oklahoma, I've been worried. It's been really rough living on the road without a proper home and I just really want the best for my family. The kids have been going to a public school just two miles from where we'd been camping. They've told me that the kids have given them ugly looks and said awful things about them calling them "Okies" or saying they were retarded. I couldn't stand any of my kids having to go through this misfortune. I focused my vision on my two kids Annie and Joey. They were laughing and shoving some grass in the rabbit's mouth. I didn't want them living like this but there was nothing I could do. I felt useless and weak.

The wind blew again and I went back to my daydreaming. My husband had been out for three days looking for any job available. We had planned to be at least in a home that put a roof over our heads but we

accomplished nothing. Most of our close friends that had traveled with us already had a job and housing. The feeling bothered me. I looked around and saw some of the familes huddled under their tents. I don't want to be like this anymore I thought. But yet again there was nothing I could do. Sometimes I felt angry with myself. As if I wasn't trying my hardest, but eventually it would just turn to sorrow.

My thoughts were disrupted by Annie and Joey running up to me smiling. I looked down on them and smiled, wondering how lovely childhood must be with no worries.

"Ma, when are we going to eat, I'm starving?" asked Joey.

Even I didn't know the answer to that question, we had completely run out of food. I pondered on how I would say this to them. I gave up and just said, "I don't know Joey."

**Narrative Writing**

**High School (9-10)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Develop and organize your narrative so that the reader can easily follow the events, determine the speaker and his or her point of view, develop an understanding of the conflict and plot, and determine the narrative’s theme.* | **Ideas**  Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using  effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. | **30 points** |
| **Organization**  Engage and orient the reader by   * setting out a problem, situation, observation * establishing one or multiple point(s) of view * introducing a narrator and/or characters * creating a smooth progression of experiences or events. * providing a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced,   observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative. |
| *Select language purposefully and deliberately when describing characters, setting, and events and when using dialogue.* | **Word Choice**  Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to  convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. | **30 point** |
| *Demonstrate that not only can you tell a story, you understand the essential elements of narration and their specific purposes.* | **Narration Development**   * Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection,   and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.   * Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one   another to create a coherent whole. | **25 points** |
| *This is not the time to show carelessness. Misused words or incorrect spellings and other grammatical errors can get in the way of your narrative.* | **Conventions**  Paper is clear of mistakes in   * Spelling * Punctuation * Capitalization * Usage | **10 points** |
| *This is the place to show that you care about a first impression. Does the paper look as though you took pride in what you produced?* | **Presentation**   * Easy to read handwriting * Double spaced typing * Well-defined margins * Use 12 pt. Times New Roman font | **5 points** |

**File Name: N9-10R Walking the Dog**

**Engages and orients the reader by setting out a situation and its significance, establishing a point of view, and introducing a character:** The writer sets the context and focus (relaxing on the couch with the dog, not wanting to go out) for the story to follow. The narrative is told from the perspective of a third person narrator.

**Narrative**

**Grade 9**

**Range of Writing**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**Walking the Dog**

I slouch on the couch, comfortable in my favorite clothes, staring at the news anchor as he drones on about that disaster or this riot. A snow storm is supposed to be moving in tonight, the weatherman preaches. My dog Chloe lays curled up beside my feet, with her head propped on her leg. She’s our pure bred Brittney Spaniel recently adopted and already a special member of the family. As I push myself into the cushions, my feet nudge her a bit too much for her own taste. She then starts the slow process of standing up. She squints her eyes while she stretches out her leg, as if trying to grasp at some imaginary treasure on the floor. With hesitation she pushes herself up with her hind legs first. Walking out of the room as if she had completely forgotten me, she goes to check on her food that is so predictably there. I am amazed at how such an animal can keep to her schedule better than I do mine.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the character** of the dog, who is clearly important to the narrator

I then hear the all too familiar directive from my mother in the adjacent room. I have come to expect it, yet it still gets me agitated. I sink even deeper into the warm embrace of the couch, as if hearing nothing. I always delay as much as possible the dreaded task before me. After her third command, I wearily begin to pull myself away from the comfort that has enveloped me. Out the window the flakes form horizontal streaks as the wind blows furiously. As slowly as possible, I stretch out my arms and legs, not wanting to leave the peace of the room.

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome,** a change in perspective/mood resulting from the walk with the dog

I trudge up the stairs to change into something appropriate for the task that lay before me. Now fully awake, I bound down the stairs. Searching for me gloves and hat, and finding none, I unwillingly grab my father’s worn knit cap, only to be stopped by my mother holding mine in her hand while she rolls her eyes. Reluctantly I pull the gloves over my hands, and my hat over my head. I stomp towards the door as Chloe bounds after me. Pulling down the leash and snapping it to her collar, I slowly open the door and step out into the dark cold.

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

Just then, the hard driving flakes seem to slow down, and light upon the dust covered world. I take a deep breath of the rich air, revitalizing me. Leaping down the steps, I begin the route that has become routine. With Chloe at the lead, no force but her adventurous spirit pulls me along. Passing her, she takes it as a sign to quicken her own pace. She soon starts into a gallop, pulling me along once again. I then hit full stride, keeping abreast of while running together as if that was all there was to do. We come around the next corner, and see the house in plain view. That quickly? It seems like only a few moments have passed before we begin to slow down. We both reluctantly slacken our pace into a slow trot, and then a flat out walk.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, and characters,** as the narrator’s mood shifts dramatically while she runs with the dog through the snow

Panting, exhausted, we climb the stairs with no real drive. Opening the door I begin the arduous task of drying Chloe off. With an annoyed look on my face and an edge to my voice, I call to my mother to bring a towel. Through the door one sails toward me. Holding her tightly by the collar, I ruffle her with the towel until she is sufficiently dry. As soon as my grasp releases, she runs towards the kitchen to see my mother. I pull my hat and gloves off, and put them both in their proper place together. Removing the now wet boots, I bound up the stairs and change into my old clothes. I am soon back on the couch, with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria. With a pleased smile on my face, I push myself as far as possible into the cushions and change the channel.

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative:** Though so much is the same as at the beginning, the writer is “pleased” now

**Uses precise details** to mirror details from beginning

In this narrative, the writer tells the story of a young woman who is bored at home on the couch. She takes a walk in the snow with her dog, and even though she returns to the same couch at the end, her perspective has subtly changed. The narrative is told from a third person point of view.

The writer uses some dialogue and descriptive detail, which capture her boredom at the beginning (“*drones on”, “preaches”)*, and how much she values the dog (“*squints her eyes while she stretches out her leg, as if trying to grasp at some imaginary treasure on the floor”*). The writer’s words are carefully chosen throughout, and she creates the same scene at the end of the story as at the beginning (“*with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria”)*, with the single word, “pleased”, to make clear that though the scene is similar, the narrator has been changed by the walk with the dog.

To develop the story, the writer uses a clear sequence of events beginning and ending with sitting on the couch, and a run with the dog in between to create a cohesive whole by the end of the narrative.

**File Name: N 9-10R Walking the Dog**

**Narrative**

**Grade 9**

**Range of Writing**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**Walking the Dog**

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I then hear the all too familiar directive from my mother in the adjacent room. I have come to expect it, yet it still gets me agitated. I sink even deeper into the warm embrace of the couch, as if hearing nothing. I always delay as much as possible the dreaded task before me. After her third command, I wearily begin to pull myself away from the comfort that has enveloped me. Out the window the flakes form horizontal streaks as the wind blows furiously. As slowly as possible, I stretch out my arms and legs, not wanting to leave the peace of the room.

I trudge up the stairs to change into something appropriate for the task that lay before me. Now fully awake, I bound down the stairs. Searching for me gloves and hat, and finding none, I unwillingly grab my father’s worn knit cap, only to be stopped by my mother holding mine in her hand while she rolls her eyes. Reluctantly I pull the gloves over my hands, and my hat over my head. I stomp towards the door as Chloe bounds after me. Pulling down the leash and snapping it to her collar, I slowly open the door and step out into the dark cold.

Just then, the hard driving flakes seem to slow down, and light upon the dust covered world. I take a deep breath of the rich air, revitalizing me. Leaping down the steps, I begin the route that has become routine. With Chloe at the lead, no force but her adventurous spirit pulls me along. Passing her, she takes it as a sign to quicken her own pace. She soon starts into a gallop, pulling me along once again. I then hit full stride, keeping abreast of while running together as if that was all there was to do. We come around the next corner, and see the house in plain view. That quickly? It seems like only a few moments have passed before we begin to slow down. We both reluctantly slacken our pace into a slow trot, and then a flat out walk.

Panting, exhausted, we climb the stairs with no real drive. Opening the door I begin the arduous task of drying Chloe off. With an annoyed look on my face and an edge to my voice, I call to my mother to bring a towel. Through the door one sails toward me. Holding her tightly by the collar, I ruffle her with the towel until she is sufficiently dry. As soon as my grasp releases, she runs towards the kitchen to see my mother. I pull my hat and gloves off, and put them both in their proper place together. Removing the now wet boots, I bound up the stairs and change into my old clothes. I am soon back on the couch, with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria. With a pleased smile on my face, I push myself as far as possible into the cushions and change the channel.

**File Name: N9-10P The Day The Tractor Came**

**Narrative**

**Engages and orients the reader by setting out a problem** as the focusfor narrative to follow, **establishing a point of view, and introducing a narrator and characters:** A child’s anguish over the destruction of his home by a tractor is the central focus of the narrative, which is told from the perspective of a first person narrator.

**Grade 10**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**The Day The Tractor Came**

I was four years old when our house was destroyed. I didn't understand why but I could remember when the big red tractor came belching its smoke, gleaming in the hot midday sunshine, and rolling over the landscape plowing long furrows in perfect unison. Years later they told me it was the bank - the monster that lived and breathed profits from the land. We lived on that land and worked it until it was exhausted. I was still in the womb when the drought came with its monstrous black clouds of dust that enveloped the landscape. Pa said that the storms caused the land to be barren of profit. When the profit ceased, the bank found other means to satisfy its never-ending appetite for the financial food known to farmers as profit.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory** and figurative **language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters**

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole**

**Uses sensory details to convey vivid picture of experience**

I'll never forget the day the bank took our house. Pa told me that the bank was cultivating the land because we could no longer sustain the profit ourselves. I did not know nor cared what it meant. I was just a kid playing Indians and Cowboys with my two brothers and sister the day the tractor came. The shiny monster had been plowing the land all day long when it finally got to our small cabin. My father put up a stand, but to no avail. The tractor driver delivered his monotonous address to Pa about the bank's situation and needs. Legally it was fair, but it did not seem fair. Finally, Pa stepped away from the tractor squatted down and buried his head in his hands. Without hesitation, the driver fired up the incredible machine and let its engines roar. Looking back, the tractor driver seemed to have an ultimate connection with his machine because he was an obstinate man controlling an unstoppable force. Slowly, the machine approached the house as if it were not even there. At immediate contact, the wall and roof caved in as if it were a flimsy cardboard box against a freight train. The tractor then proceeded as if there never was a house, without a care in the world, unaware and unconcerned of the devastation left in the dust.

Uses the **narrative technique** of personification (portraying the tractor as the enemy) **to develop events and characters**

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory** and figurative **language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters:**

Precise, vivid language captures the force of the tractor as it destroys the house.

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole**

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory** and figurative **language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters:**

Precise, telling details contrast the misery of the family with the lack of concern of the tractor

Uses the **narrative technique** of **reflection to develop events,** as well asthe **character** of the narrator

Back then, I was merely a child watching and wondering what his father would do next. Pa had always been a strong man, a man that our family could depend on. However, in five minutes, the tractor was able to reduce Pa to nothing. Never before had I seen my father break down with hopelessness. Seeing him there without a plan made me feel as though we were alone in a desert with nowhere to turn. But the tractor, the arrogant tractor, took my small life, shattered it into million pieces, and left it on the ground in front of me. What few memories still had in that house flashed before me as I watch them knocked to the ground. That was my home, the house where I was born, the house where I learned to walk, and the house my father had built with his own craftsmanship so quickly destroyed returning to the dust from which it came. But what do I care; I was merely a child in a large, dusty, lonely, world.

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative**

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a child watching his home being razed by a tractor during the days of the Dust Bowl. He focuses it around the narrator’s experience of losing the home his father had built. The narrator and main character is the child.

The writer uses a clear sequence of events to develop the story, using some skillfully executed flashbacks to illuminate the present experience with the tractor. The writer uses no dialogue; most of the detail is provided through the narrator’s reflection and through vivid descriptions of events. The narrator’s state of mind—bewildered and shocked—is captured through this reflective detail. The narrative concludes with the narrator reflecting on his powerlessness and aloneness. The lack of tidy resolution is appropriate to this narrative and suggests the maturity of the writer.

**File Name: N 9-10P The Day The Tractor Came**

**Narrative**

**Grade 10**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**The Day The Tractor Came**

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I'll never forget the day the bank took our house. Pa told me that the bank was cultivating the land because we could no longer sustain the profit ourselves. I did not know nor cared what it meant. I was just a kid playing Indians and Cowboys with my two brothers and sister the day the tractor came. The shiny monster had been plowing the land all day long when it finally got to our small cabin. My father put up a stand, but to no avail. The tractor driver delivered his monotonous address to Pa about the bank's situation and needs. Legally it was fair, but it did not seem fair. Finally, Pa stepped away from the tractor squatted down and buried his head in his hands. Without hesitation, the driver fired up the incredible machine and let its engines roar. Looking back, the tractor driver seemed to have an ultimate connection with his machine because he was an obstinate man controlling an unstoppable force. Slowly, the machine approached the house as if it were not even there. At immediate contact, the walls and roof caved in as if it were a flimsy cardboard box against a freight train. The tractor then proceeded without a care in the world, unaware and unconcerned of the devastation left in the dust, as if there never was a house there.

Back then, I was merely a child watching and wondering what his father would do next. Pa had always been a strong man, a man that our family could depend on. However, in five minutes, the tractor was able to reduce Pa to nothing. Never before had I seen my father break down with hopelessness. Seeing him there without a plan made me feel as though we were alone in a desert with nowhere to turn. But the tractor, the arrogant tractor, took my small life and shattered it into million pieces, and left it on the ground in front of me. What few memories I had in that house flashed before me as I watch them knocked to the ground. My home, the house where I was born, the house where I learned to walk, and the house my father had built with his own craftsmanship was so quickly destroyed, returning to the dust from which it came. But what do I care? I was merely a child in a large, dusty, lonely world.

**Narrative Writing**

**High School (11-12)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Develop and organize your narrative so that the reader can easily follow the events, determine the speaker and his or her point of view, develop an understanding of the conflict and plot, and determine the narrative’s theme.* | **Ideas**  Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection,  and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.  Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one  another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and  outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution). | **30 points** |
| **Organization**  Engage and orient the reader by   * setting out a problem, situation, observation and its significance * establishing one or multiple point(s) of view * introducing a narrator and/or characters * creating a smooth progression of experiences or events. * providing a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced,   observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative. |
| *Select language purposefully and deliberately when describing characters, setting, and events and when using dialogue.* | **Word Choice**  Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to  convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. | **30 point** |
| *Demonstrate that not only can you tell a story, you understand the essential elements of narration and their specific purposes.* | **Narration Development**   * Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection,   and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.   * Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one   another to create a coherent whole. and build toward a particular tone and  outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution). | **25 points** |
| *This is not the time to show carelessness. Misused words or incorrect spellings and other grammatical errors can get in the way of your narrative.* | **Conventions**  Paper is clear of mistakes in   * + - Spelling     - Punctuation     - Capitalization     - Usage | **10 points** |
| *This is the place to show that you care about a first impression. Does the paper look as though you took pride in what you produced?* | **Presentation**   * Easy to read handwriting * Double spaced typing * Well-defined margins * Use 12 pt. Times New Roman font | **5 points** |

**File Name: N11-12R All the Roads to Kansas**

**Narrative**

**Grade 11**

**Range of Writing**

**Engages and orients the reader by setting out a situation and its significance, establishing a point of view, and introducing a character:** The writer succinctly sets the context and focus (the mother running off, the child waiting for the grandmother) for the story to follow. The narrative is told from the perspective of a third person narrator.

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**All The Roads to Kansas**

I was six years old when my mother ran off with the pizza delivery boy. She sent a note in the mail to my grandmother that read, “Katie’s at home. Needs food and clothing. Jane.” Gramma drove the one-thousand-seven-hundred-twenty miles from Kansas to pick me up, pulling into the trailer lot in her blue, wood-paneled station wagon, slamming the car door behind her. I was sitting in a rusty hubcap on the from lawn, my chin cupped in my palm and my heart thundering wildly when she said, “Well, I’m here.”

She wore a pink silk handkerchief around the beehive of her blue-tinted hair, a paisley mu-mu and orange scuffs on her feet. Red, plastic-rimmed glasses hung from the chain around her neck and a cigarette dangled from the corner of her pink-painted mouth. She was terrifying.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the character** of the grandmother from the child’s perspective

She was perfect.

She crossed the front lawn without saying a word, opening the door to the trailer as she looked back, once, for me to comply. I followed her, remaining stubbornly, apprehensively, at the front door. She bustled around the house, bundling up all my clothes and tying them with a piece of twine she found heaped in the back of her Buick. Before she decided it was time to leave, she trussed me up in my snow gear, explaining tersely, “It’s cold in Kansas this time of year.”

I had been sitting inside the trailer, alone, for three days. Leaving for Kansas was the most spectacular adventure I could imagine, so wondrous I could barely believe it was real. She hauled me into the Buick, grunting at the dead weight of my tense body, and we sat on the leather bench seat of her car as she let it idle in the lot. She was flicking cigarette ashes out the open window when I mustered up the nerve to pinch her, just to make sure I wasn’t dreaming.

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome—**leaving home behind and going to Kansas

“What--?” she narrowed her gaze at me, dragging on the cigarette so the tip gleamed in a bright orange “O” between her lips.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, and characters**

“You’re real,” I whispered in wonder.

“As much as you are,” she huffed, tossing the cigarette from the car and cranking up the window. “Just don’t make a habit of pinching people to test out that theory, ‘kay, Sugar?” She rammed the car into reverse and sped away from the lot. The pieces of my childhood were fading as fast as the scenery, and yet I was filled with a sense of bone-deep elation. For the first time in three days, I smiled.

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

I saw Gramma cut a look at me out of the corner of her eye, and nod. She glanced back at the road when she pulled the slip of paper from her pocket, and said, “It’s all you’ve got of your momma, so I figured you’d want to keep it.”

I was six, and I couldn’t read the words my mother had hastily scrawled on a grocery receipt, but I kept that piece of paper fisted in my hand all along the roads to Kansas. “Gramma,” I whispered after a few hours, barely awake and suddenly terrified, “are you ever gonna bring me home?”

I could see her eyes in the passing lights of oncoming cars, watching them fill up with giant, watery tears, saw them go soft and achy. “Oh, Katydid,” she murmured gently, reaching out in the darkness to clutch the fist that held my mother’s letter. “We’re getting there.”

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative:** the grandmother recognizing the sadness and importance of this moment for the child, whose old home and mother are now gone

In this narrative, the writer tells the story of a young child who has just been abandoned by her mother, and whose grandmother has come from far away to claim her. The narrative is told from a third person point of view, the young child, but the grandmother is the most significant character in the story.

The writer uses some dialogue and descriptive detail, which capture the hardscrabble existence of the child (“*sitting in a rusty hubcap on the from lawn”*) and the commanding presence of the grandmother (“*She was terrifying. She was perfect.”).*

To develop the story, the writer uses a clear sequence of events beginning with the grandmother coming to pick up the narrator, to create a cohesive whole by the end of the narrative.

Beginning with the first sentence (“*I was six years old when my mother ran off with the pizza delivery boy”),* the writer builds carefully toward the outcome that this child will not see her mother or her home again, and that the grandmother is in fact rescuing her.

**File Name: N 11-12R All the Roads to Kansas**

**Narrative**

**Grade 11**

**Range of Writing**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

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She wore a pink silk handkerchief around the beehive of her blue-tinted hair, a paisley mu-mu and orange scuffs on her feet. Red, plastic-rimmed glasses hung from the chain around her neck and a cigarette dangled from the corner of her pink-painted mouth. She was terrifying.

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I had been sifting inside the trailer, alone, for three days. Leaving for Kansas was the most spectacular adventure I could imagine, so wondrous I could barely believe it was real. She hauled me into the Buick, grunting at the dead weight of my tense body, and we sat on the leather bench seat of her car as she let it idle in the lot. She was flicking cigarette ashes out the open window when I mustered up the nerve to pinch her, just to make sure I wasn’t dreaming.

“What--?” she narrowed her gaze at me, dragging on the cigarette so the tip gleamed in a bright orange “O” between her lips.

“You’re real,” I whispered in wonder.

“As much as you are,” she huffed, tossing the cigarette from the car and cranking up the window. “Just don’t make a habit of pinching people to test out that theory, ‘kay, Sugar?” She rammed the car into reverse and sped away from the lot. The pieces of my childhood were fading as fast as the scenery, and yet I was filled with a sense of bone-deep elation. For the first time in three days, I smiled.

I saw Gramma cut a look at me out of the corner of her eye, and nod. She glanced back at the road when she pulled the slip of paper from her pocket, and said, “It’s all you’ve got of your momma, so I figured you’d want to keep it.”

I was six, and I couldn’t read the words my mother had hastily scrawled on a grocery receipt, but I kept that piece of paper fisted in my hand all along the roads to Kansas. “Gramma,” I whispered after a few hours, barely awake and suddenly terrified, “are you ever gonna bring me home.”

I could see her eyes in the passing lights of oncoming cars, watching them fill up with giant, watery tears, saw them go soft and achy. “Oh, Katydid,” she murmured gently, reaching out in the darkness to clutch the fist that held my mother’s letter. “We’re getting there.”

**File Name: N11-12P (Better Than the Sunset.)**

**Narrative**

**Engages and orients the reader by setting out a situation and its significance, establishing a point of view, and introducing a character:** The writer delays the introduction of the problem of the dust storm, instead focusing on a setting. The narrative is told from the perspective of a third person limited narrator.

**Grade 12**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

*From: http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing-list-pg*

**(Better Than the Sunset.)**

Adam sat on the porch and watched the clear blue sky. Today was his sixth birthday and all he wanted was to watch the sunset. It was only noon and he had hours to go. Inside the house his mother was cooking and his father was out in the fields. He didn't mind being alone on his birthday. He liked the quiet.

Establishes the **problem** (coming of the dust storm) and **its significance,** using narrative technique of **suspense**

He sensed it before he saw it. Something felt wrong. Everything was too quiet, much the same as the minutes before a hurricane. Those moments were magical. The world seemed to stand still; the air charged with electricity.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and character**

Waiting to explode into chaos.

Today was no different. A cloud that had not been present only seconds before covered the sun. Adam looked up and squinted into the still bright sky. The cloud covering the sun was alone. It would not be a thunderstorm. Suddenly a huge shadow loomed before him. It sped forward from the tree line and deftly made its way towards him.

**Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome,** the coming of the storm

Time slowed down and he watched as animals exploded from their hiding places. The wide yard was chaos as a hundred tiny bodies ran for cover. His breath caught in his throat and while he *was* afraid he could not tear his eyes away. There was something beautiful about the way the cloud of black dust crept towards him, swallowing everything in its path. To him it looked like a monster. Big and ugly and destructive and yet somehow extraordinary at the same time.

**Uses** **description and reflection to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome,** how the child will experience the storm

He vaguely registered that his name was being called, but there was nothing urgent enough to tear him away from the havoc unfolding before his eyes. He ignored the voices and watched as his mother's flowerbed was swallowed in seconds. Next were the tractor and then the shed. His big blue eyes grew wide as the cloud of angry, swirling black dust drew ever closer. His heart pounded now not from fear, but from something else. Adrenaline sang through his veins. It was exhilarating to watch his own death approach. He had no intention of dying today, but he couldn't bear to run inside and lose sight of this beautiful destruction.

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

**Reflection builds towards the outcome** of how child will experience this storm

The voices grew more and more frantic and the swirling mass of dust threatened closer and closer. And still Adam sat, watching and waiting for what was to be swallowed next. The shadow of this beast loomed over the house and he craned his head back to watch the hurricane of dust descend upon him. If possible time slowed even more. The door behind him burst open, the wood creaking and groaning in protest at the force shoved against it. The span of seconds in which his father ran towards him, shouting his name, stretched and seemed to become years. His footsteps pounded against the rotting planks of the porch, the noise exploding in Adam's ears. He looked between his father and the black monster, which had now reached the bottom step.

**Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters:** Here, the writer conveys the danger of the moment

His father's strong arm reached towards him and closed around is body like a metal vice. His small bones jarred from the impact. He watched over his father's shoulder as the storm wailed closer.

**Creates a smooth progression of events**

*I'll catch you,* it seemed to be mocking.

As suddenly as time had slowed, it began again. The dust exploded around them just as his father slammed the door, shutting out the world. Black dust curled under the door and shifted forward in fury. His mother shoved a wet towel in the crack and pressed another to Adams face. Together, the three of them huddled in the middle of the room, gasping and hacking and choking for air. But Adam didn't mind. He had only one thought as the black dust wormed its way into his lungs and stole his breath.

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative:** The writer contrasts the danger of the storm with the child’s experience of it to establish an ironic ending.

*That was better than the sunset.*

In this on-demand narrative, the writer tells the story of a child experiencing a dust storm during the days of the Dust Bowl. He focuses it around the irony of such a dreadful thing being such a magical experience for the child. The main character is the child, and the narrative is told from a third-person limited point of view.

The writer uses a clear sequence of events to develop the story, beginning with the main character watching the sunset and using the notion of the sunset to create a cohesive whole by the end of the narrative. The writer uses no dialogue; most of the detail is provided through reflection on the part of the child and through vivid description of events. The child’s state of mind—shocked but also thrilled—is captured through this reflective detail. The narrative concludes with the child thinking, *“That was better than the sunset,”* an ironic resolution that is appropriate to this narrative and that suggests the maturity of the writer.

**File Name: N 11-12P (Better Than the Sunset.)**

**Narrative**

**Grade 12**

**On-Demand Writing - Uniform Prompt**

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*That was better than the sunset.*

**Narrative Writing Tasks**

**6th Grade English**

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| **Common Core State Standard:**  W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. |

*Red Scarf Girl*

The novel, *Red Scarf Girl*, is set in China during a time of great Cultural Revolution. If the story took place in Modern Day America, how and what would change? Take one impactful scene and rewrite it with a new, modern twist. Be sure to show understanding of the novel within you modern revision.

Choose a scene to recount an event from the story from the perspective of another character. Suggested scenes include Old Qian’s experience with the Red Guard; Six Fingers’ experience during the raid of the family’s home, Ji-Yun’s experience with teasing at school, a day in the life of Ji-Young, etc.

*Roll of Thunder Hear my Cry*

After T.J. and Stacy’s fight, the Logan family responds by leading a boycott of the Wallace store. Write a narrative that Ms. Logan would say to her neighbors in order to urge them to boycott despite the Wallace’s store being the only place to shop.

**7th Grade English**

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| **Common Core State Standard:**  W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. |

*And Then there were None*

After reading the novel, we discover who the organizer of the event was. Now, select another character to be the antagonist. Using a timeline with a brief narrative as to how and why the character was killed, create a new version of “Ten Little Indians” from this perspective.

*The Pearl*

Music plays a very important role for Kino and within the novel. Based on this fact, compile a playlist of 5 popular, appropriate, songs and explain in Kino’s dialect and tone why he selected these songs to represent him based on the events within the novella.

**8th Grade English**

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| **Common Core State Standard:**  W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. |

*Romeo and Juliet*

Throughout Act II, letters, lies and deceptive behaviors are happening in order to hide true feelings. As such, you are to pick one conflicted relationship and construct a letter that is appropriate for the situation within the play in which you address the issues that are being avoided or retract the lie.

*The Giver*

Suppose that instead of leaving, Jonas decides to talk to the people and allow them to choose to keep the life they have or to endure both pleasure and pain in the world that once was and could be again. In a narrative essay, construct a script with what Jonas would say to the people in his society.

**9th Grade English**

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| **Common Core State Standard:**  W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. |

*A Raisin in the Sun*

Imagine one year has passed since the Youngers moved into their new house. Compose a journal entry from Beneatha’s point of view explaining the current family dynamics. What struggles and celebrations has the family experienced? How has each family member’s life changed in the one year that has passed?

*To Kill a Mockingbird*

In Chapter Three, Atticus advices Scout, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view.” Share a time in your life when you applied this advice. What lesson did you learn by considering a situation from someone else’s perspective?

**10th Grade English**

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| **Common Core State Standard:**  W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. |

*Catcher in the Rye*

Imagine that Holden has been transferred to our high school in the here and now. Compose a journal entry from Holden’s point of view describing his impressions of day-to-day life at our school.

Theme: Leadership & Power

Consider the various novels that illuminate power struggles and poor leadership: *Animal Farm, Lord of the Flies*, and *Macbeth*, to name a few. Select one character, and compose a speech from his point of view espousing his leadership philosophy(ies) to his followers.

**11th Grade English**

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| **Common Core State Standard:**  W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. |

*The Crucible*

Compose a monologue from either Elizabeth Proctor or Rebecca Nurse’s point of view protesting / explaining her innocence.

*Of Mice and Men* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Manslaughter is defined as the unlawful killing of another person without premeditation or malice. Imagine that you are the defense attorney for George Milton in *Of Mice and Men* or Janie Crawford in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Compose a summation for the jury defending your client against the charge of manslaughter.

*Of Mice and Men*

Although originally a novella, *Of Mice and Men* has been adapted for both the stage and screen many times. Choose a scene between two characters and compose a dialogue, as well as stage directions for either stage or screen.

**12th Grade Literature**

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| **Common Core State Standard:**  W.6-8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. |

*The Things They Carried*

In “How to Tell a True War Story,” Rat Kiley composes a letter to Curt Lemon’s sister regarding Curt’s death. Recreate the letter that Rat sends.

In “How to Tell a True War Story,” Rat Kiley becomes enraged because Curt Lemon’s sister never responds to his letter. Imagine that you are Curt Lemon’s sister. How would you respond to Rat’s letter?

*Hamlet*

Revise Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy replacing Hamlet’s dilemma with one of your own; for example, “To get a job or not to get a job. . . .” or “To go to Homecoming or not to go to Homecoming. . . .”