Authentic Narrative Writing Instruction
in the Months before the 5th Grade Writing Exam
November-December Resource Packet
(packet three of three)

5th Grade
Authentic Writing Instruction:

- demonstrates real-world writing skills to our students;
- teaches the steps of the writing process;
- incorporates a mentor text;
- has students discuss and analyze teacher and student models;
- provides tools for pre-writing;

Acknowledgements:

This packet of materials was created through a collaborative project sponsored by the Northern Nevada Writing Project (http://nnwp.org) and Nevada’s Northwest Regional Professional Development Program (http://nwrpdp.com).

The following Nevada educators were involved in the creation of materials found in this packet: Kimberly Cuevas, Carol Gebhardt, Aaron Grossman, Carol Harriman, Corbett Harrison, Dena Harrison, Kay Henjum, Sue Martin, Karen McGee, Tara Robertson, Nancy Thomas, and Campbell Valle.
# Table of Contents

These materials are not intended to be used in any particular sequence, nor are they provided to serve as a *program* for test preparation. Instead, these are *suggested* resources and techniques for gathering useful data so that our teachers can address students’ writing needs with thoughtful instruction between now and the writing test.

If this instruction happens to occur in the three or four months before our students take their fifth grade writing test, so be it. These are intended as narrative-teaching tools much more than they are test-preparation materials.

Most importantly, we believe if your use of these materials is not helping your students produce process-based writing samples that have taught them authentic writing skills that will transfer to other genres of writing, stop using them. While we’ve seen these materials used effectively at schools that have improved their students’ writing skills, we imagine they could be used in a test drill-like manner, which does little more than help your students dislike the act of writing. If you are unsure how to use these materials in a way that feels effective, work with a professional learning community or a collaborative team to discover and implement new teaching strategies inspired by this collection of resources.

### in this packet...

1. **Practice Narrative Prompt Materials for the Month of November** (provided to help teachers learn to self-score their own student’s samples, using the state’s analytic rubric)
   - a. November’s practice prompt for your overhead or Elmo (page 2)
   - b. A mock test write-up that uses November’s practice prompt (pages 3-6)
   - c. A mock test form where students can write their final draft (page 7)
   - d. Annotated student samples from Nevada 5th graders who practiced in November (pages 9-22)
   - e. Nevada’s analytic trait rubrics (pages 23-26)

2. **Narrative Instructional Materials** (provided for use before, while, or after your students write to September’s practice prompt)
   - a. Discussion tools: Nevada “Sparklers” for November practice prompt (pages 27-31)
   - b. A lesson inspired by a chapter book: Fletcher #1 (pages 32-42)
   - c. A lesson inspired by a chapter book: Fletcher #2 (pages 43-52)

3. **Responding to Student Data** (provided because, should you score your own samples, your students should be taught about their scores and how to set goals based on their scores.)
   - a. Student Goal-Setting Sheet with sample, version 1 (pages 53-54)
   - b. Student Goal-Setting Sheet with sample, version 2 (pages 55-56)

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### Remember...

All materials in this packet can be found in electronic form at the Northern Nevada Writing Project’s resource website: WritingFix. Here is a direct link to the page:

http://writingfix.com/classroom_tools/nevada_writing_exam.htm

However, you can independently find this page on line by going to www.WritingFix.com, by hovering over the words “6 Trait Materials” in the blue navigation bar on the page’s upper left-hand corner, then selecting the bottom choice: “Trait Resources for Nevada’s Writing Exam”
Fifth Grade

Narrative Practice Prompt Three:

Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Pre-Writing Suggestion: Have students read the prompt carefully over two or three times, then have them explain to a partner what specific type of details a scorer would be expecting from in a sample that addresses all parts of the topic.

Then discuss what organization skills a writer would want to remember as they prepared to write a response to the prompt above.
Fifth Grade: Writing Test Practice Prompt #3
Session One: Prewriting and Drafting (approximately 45 minutes)
Student Instructions

Step 1: Introduction to the Writing Test and Prewriting

You should have some lined paper and this instruction sheet on your desk. Today you are going to write about a time when you felt very proud of yourself. On the lined paper in front of you, list as many experiences as you can think of that involve you being proud of an accomplishment. Choose one that you have the most to write about. Neither your teacher nor anyone else can help you. There is to be no talking during this time. (Quiet Work Time)

Now, let's share, as a group, some of your ideas. (The teacher will record the students' responses on the board or overhead).

Now you begin to think about what you will write. Remember, you must write on the following:

Writing Prompt:
Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

You have our class list and you have your own list. Decide what you want to write about. Let's read the prompt one more time to help you focus of your idea. (Teacher reads prompt). Now, choose an idea and write on your paper what you want to write about.

Once you have decided what you want to write about, think of some of the things that you might write about the specific idea that you have chosen. As you think of things to include in your writing, write them down on the paper in front of you in whatever format works for you: a list, a cluster, an outline, a table web, or any other prewriting pattern that helps you think of what to include in your writing. You must do this work on your own. No one can help you with it, nor may you use any other materials beyond this instruction sheet, the paper in front of you and your pencil.

Step 2: Rough Draft

Your teacher and a team of other teachers from our school will be reading and scoring your paper. They will look for the following when they score your paper:

- Ideas: is your writing clear with enough detail?
- Organization: does your story have a beginning, a middle that tells things in order and an end?
- Voice: does your paper sound as if you really understand and care about your writing?
- Conventions: does your paper use sentences and have correct capital letters, spelling and punctuation?

The teachers who score your writing will decide how well your paper does these things.
Now, on the lined paper in front of you, use your ideas to begin your rough draft. Use a pencil so that you can make changes easily. Try to include details about what can be seen, heard and felt. Organize your writing so that your paper has a beginning, middle and an end.

You should write on the idea that you were given. If you do not write on the assigned topic or if your writing is rude or offensive, your paper will not be scored. Writing that is too short (two or three sentences) also may not receive a score.

Remember, your final copy will need to fit on one page.

You will be doing all of your writing here in class during three writing sessions, and no one can help you during that time.

You should begin putting down ideas to use in your writing. Remember that a good piece of writing uses descriptive words to give information.
You should now have in front of you only the following materials:
1. This instruction sheet for Session Two
2. Your prewriting or drafting from Session One
3. Lined paper
4. Pencils

You may also have a regular dictionary or bilingual dictionary for word translations with no other explanatory information. A thesaurus or other specialized dictionary is NOT allowed. Any other writing that you did outside of Session One is also NOT allowed.

First, take a minute to look over your prewriting or rough draft from Session One. Remember, your writing must be on the following idea:

**Writing Prompt:**
Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

If you have not finished the rough draft of your paper, please do so before you go on to Step 3.

**Step 3: Revising and Editing**

First, re-read your rough draft. After you have re-read everything you wrote, think about the following questions. Put a check in the box when you can answer YES to that question.

- □ 1. Is my story or paper about a time I was proud of myself?
- □ 2. Does my writing include details and descriptions?
- □ 3. Does my story or paper have a beginning, middle and end?
- □ 4. Does my writing sound as if I really care about what I wrote?

Make any changes in your writing that will make it better. When you revise, you can change things, move parts around, add ideas, or take things out. Remember, your final draft must fit on one page.

Now, read all of your own writing AGAIN and look for any mistakes that you can fix.

- □ 5. Have I corrected all of my spelling mistakes?
- □ 6. Have I put capital letters and punctuation marks where I need them?
- □ 7. Are all of my thoughts written in complete sentences? Does my paper follow the rules of grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization and sentence structure? Do I start a new paragraph when I introduce a new idea?
Your teacher and classmates are NOT allowed to help you revise or edit. You must do this for yourself.

Fifth Grade: Writing Test Practice Prompt #3

Session Three: Prewriting and Drafting (approximately 45 minutes)

Student Instructions

You should have in front of you all of the following:

1. This instruction sheet for Session Three
2. Your instructions and any prewriting from Session One
3. Your rough draft from Session One
4. Your instructions, including editing checklist, from Session Two
5. An answer sheet where you will copy your writing
6. Pencils

Remember, your writing must be on the following idea:

Writing Prompt:
Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Step 4: Copying Writing to the Answer Sheet and Proofreading

Copy your writing onto the answer sheet. Do not skip lines. Make your final copy as neat as possible so that it is easy for others to read. You will not be scored on your handwriting, but it is important that the readers be able to read what you have written.

After you copy your writing, read it to yourself. Be sure you did not leave out words or punctuation marks. If you need to add a word or cross something out, go ahead. These things will not make your score lower. Ask yourself one more time if everything you have written makes sense.
Practice Prompt #3 for fifth grade: Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Student Sample O:

Crack! There goes the baseball right down the third base line. There it goes right between the third baseman’s legs. “This might be a triple” I said. But the right fielder got it and pegged it to third. I stopped at second. The crowd was roaring because with to men on base (second & third we had the lead 2-1.

Unfortunately I didn’t make it to home plate. The next inning I hit a deep ball to center field. Everybody turned around. “No!” I yelled. It was almost a homerun, but the centerfielder’s arm was so good, he heeved the to third and I stopped at second. I didn’t get up to bat the next two innings, but my coach decided that because my legs were hurting and my coach decided to save me until the end. The bases are loaded are loaded and the comishiner says “Next up to bat the best hitter of the game Omar. The crowd went abousletly nuts. You could hear my dad say “All right Omar lets go!! Then he whistled so loud you could hear him all the away across the field. As I was walking to the batters box I could see beats of sweat coming from the pichter’s head. Not the kind of being hot but the kind of being nervous. Everybody on the field was scooting back. There goes the first pitch. Right down the middle. “Perfect” I said quietly. WHACK!! I crushed it into left field. Going, going, goind...all most gone. A solid triple. A three run triple. Now it’s on I thought. *** It was 6-8 we were losing by two runs and there were two men on base. As put on my helmet everybody was chanting “Lets go Omar. Lets go.” The count was 3-2. The next pitch was right where I wanted it. Shackaro!! Down centerfield. “Going, going, going GONE!! The comishner yelled. A homerun to end the game.

We won the 9-8. After the game the team, the coach, and all the parents had a meeting. There was the. The ball that I hit a homerun off of. “ I’m proud of you son,” said my dad, I was so happy a had a big smile. “That was the best game of my life!” I yelled jumping up.

How would you score this sample:

________ Idea Development
________ Organization
________ Voice
________ Conventions

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Scorer Annotations for Sample O:
Scores: I=5  O=5  V=5  C=3

Ideas
This paper is detailed and well developed about the writer’s greatest baseball game. He adds details which provide insight and interest: *It was almost a homerun, but the center fielder’s arm was so good, he heved the (ball) to third and I stopped at second.* The dialogue also helps develop the piece. *All right Omar lets go.* There is no doubt that the reader is invited to share in this great baseball game and feel the experiences and emotions of the writer.

Organization
This paper moves the reader through the text so smoothly that that you are ready to jump up and cheer along with the writer when you finish the paper. The introduction – *Crack!! There goes the baseball right down the third base line* – draws you in from the beginning. The details help to weave the threads of meaning into a strong, well controlled whole. For example: *As (I) put on my helmet everybody was chanting “Lets go Bryce, Lets go.”*

Voice
The writer uses word choice that makes this paper come alive: *The right fielder got it and pegged it to third. The crowd went abousletly nuts. I could see beats of sweat coming from the pitchter’s head. Not the kind of being hot but the kind of being nervous.* The writer is very convincing about the excitement of the game and his level of commitment to the topic. The expressive and engaging language starts strong with a “Crack!!” and draws the reader through the text allowing a connection to the writer that is very compelling.

Conventions
Many of the convention errors in this paper could be easily caught by the writer with an additional reading of the paper before turning it in. For example: *The bases are loaded are loaded… As put on my helmet… There was the. The ball that I hit a homerun off of.* This student has very few errors with internal punctuation and has a fairly solid grasp of the correct use of apostrophes. Spelling is generally correct, but with mistakes like “to” instead of “two”, and “all most”, along with more difficult words like “abousletly,” “comishiner,” and “pichter,” additional editing would be required. Because this paper is easily readable and strong in other traits, errors can be overlooked. This paper needs work to be higher than a three in conventions.

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Student Sample P:

100 miles per hour acorn path chase!

One comfortibble, warm, evening. I and my sister and my best friend Patty were at the acorn tree path know as the Greenbelt across the black, tar road from our big, cozy house. We were sitting on the cold, bushie, green, grass chatting like finches in the early morning sun... We were very cheerful as the trees’ branches swaying as few fuzzie shimering acorns fell till they hit the gorgeous ground below My sister Pauline’s scooter was thrown sloppilly onto the dirt. I was whearing my dull, black rollerblades that took a long period of time to get comfortable to ...

I listened silently to the wind, carefully blowing in all directions smoothly. As I got up and shook myself off, I allmost tripped over a tiny, stripped acorn! A teen came by whearing a black sweatshirt and jeans with few chains. I figured he was Patty’s friend the was she greeted him... Another teen came by whearing a blue and white long-sleved shirt on a skate-board. “Nahhhh!!!” I said to him and he saw me, grabbed the scooter, & sped off, starting to go 100 mph on his skate board !!! My now angry little sister turning red like a flaming hot cheetoe and screrching like a volchure. tripped over a pile of fuzzy brown acorns! I flaired my nostrills and flew after him on my dull roller-blades going as fast as he was, as the wind stung my face! “Drop It!!!” I screamed at him, as I was only 2 ½ feet away... He looked behind his shoulder, and saw, so, that skateboarding freak got scared and went 5 miles faster! At the end of the path, he gave-up and threw the blue scooter against a chunkey pinetree! I skidded to a halt & screamed “Yeah! You Better Run!!!” and skated back to my friend’s green, fluffy, grassy spot...

How would you score this sample:

_____ Idea Development
_____ Organization
_____ Voice
_____ Conventions

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Scorer Annotations for Sample P:
Scores: I=5  O=5  V=5  C=4

Ideas
This paper is very strong in all traits. The writer establishes the serenity of the scene and then controls the development of the paper as the scene is interrupted by teenagers attempting to steal her sister’s skateboard. The writer shapes ideas in a creative and refreshing manner: I flaired my nostrils and flew after him on my dull roller-blades going as fast as he was, as the wind stung my face! This writer is definitely in control and writes from experience.

Organization
This paper flows smoothly through the tranquility of the park and then transitions very effectively into the scooter chase. The introduction welcomes the reader to the “comfortible, warm, evening” and the conclusion, “I skidded to a halt & screamed “Yeah! You Better Run!!!!” And skated back to my friend’s green, fluffy, grassy spot…” gives a sense of completion and relief at the retrieval of the scooter. The writer controls the pacing throughout the piece.

Voice
The word choice in this paper brings it to life, but threatens, on several occasions, to almost go too far with excessive adjectives and adverbs. For example: “I listened silently to the wind, carefully blowing in all directions smoothly.” “…across the black, tar road from our big, cozy house.” “…sitting in the cold, bushie, green grass…” This writer uses similes appropriately and they add to the voice in the paper – chatting like finches in the early morning sun… My now angry little sister turning red like a flaming hot cheetoe and screeching like a volchure. There is a strong commitment to the topic and the writer invites the reader to share in the details of the experience.

Conventions
This writer attempts many difficult grammatical techniques which add to the stylistic effect of the paper. Despite the complicated usage, the internal and external punctuation contain few errors and the reader can easily skim right over them. Spelling is usually correct, and with the plethora of difficult words used, there are few errors and then mostly on difficult words.

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Student Sample Q:

Have you ever had Bike I have one and a bike is an otimoll bill I had to have traning wills in tale I met to grls. They know me so they know I wonted and they Said why Dont you ride bike. “We will tech you ok. So get on the Bike godit so they grabed the handel and started to puch and I was patling and they let go and I was riding bike. The my mom sall me and she smiled finnly she told me she was happy and so I ride my Bike a lot and I rember this story and I fill so happy.

How would you score this sample:

_____ Idea Development
_____ Organization
_____ Voice
_____ Conventions
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Scorer Annotations for Sample Q:
Scores: I=2  O=2  V=3  C=2

Ideas
This paper is generally on the topic of learning to ride a bike, but the writer has not yet developed the idea in a meaningful way. Support is attempted, but the sketchy details are limited and hard to follow. The writer indicated that he met two girls, but then says that they know him and know what he wants. The reader must make inferences which could be clarified with the writer adding more information to “fill in the blanks.”

Organization
The writer has attempted an introduction and a conclusion, but the introduction, “Have you ever had Bike I have one and a bike is an ottumll bill” is confusing and hard to understand. Although the sequencing is hard to follow, the paper does start with learning to ride a bike and ends with mom being proud and the student riding his bike “alot”. For this paper to get a 3, the writer needs to work on the progression of ideas, working to control the pace of the story and help move the sequence along smoothly and logically.

Voice
Voice is the strength of this paper. The writer seems aware of an audience and works to share how proud he is about learning to ride a bike with the reader. The word choice in this sentence, “We will tech you ok. So get on the Bike godit so they grabbed the handel and started to puch and I was patling and they let go and I was riding bike,” is engaging and interesting, while difficult to read.

Conventions
The convention errors in this paper make it difficult to read. External punctuation is often missing and/or incorrect and internal punctuation is nonexistent. When external punctuation is missing, most sentences are structured in a way that reading the text out loud with the student could allow for the addition of punctuation quite easily. Quotation marks are attempted at one point, but are missing at the end of the quote. Most sentences begin with a capital, but there are other capitals thrown in at random locations. Common words are often spelled correctly, but numerous errors in spelling make the text difficult to read.

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Student Sample R:

The Thing I am proud of is winning in soccer. Because it feels good when you win. It just feels good because you had won some other team. When I score a goal I feel proud of myself because I am good at soccer. and when they kick the ball and I block it I feel good. That is The Thing I am proud of.

How would you score this sample:

______ Idea Development
______ Organization
______ Voice
______ Conventions

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Scorer Annotations for Sample R:

Scores: I=2  O=2  V=2  C=2

Ideas
This paper sticks to the topic of being proud of winning at soccer, but reads like a repetitious list of random reasons. All the reasons for being proud are strung together with each thing being as important and everything else. This paper is higher than a 1 because there is support given, but the information is very limited. To improve this paper, the writer needs to add some details about a time he won, or scored a goal, or kicked the ball.

Organization
The writer starts by explaining that he is proud of winning at soccer and concludes by stating that the reasons given are why he is proud. In between, he lists things he does when he plays soccer. There is not much of an internal structure and the listing is repetitious and obvious. The organization of the paper is logical although strung together. By adding details, the writer could show a progression of ideas which could help move the reader from point to point.

Voice
“I am proud…, I feel good…, I feel proud…” are the only words this writer uses to describe how he feels about his soccer ability. Each sentence uses these words over and over again which flattens all the potential excitement of the topic. The writer seems aware of an audience, but there does not seem to be much of a sense of purpose. For the paper to receive a higher score, the writer could start by finding other words to use instead of good and proud.

Conventions
Although the paper is readable, there are multiple problems with grammar and usage. Even common words are misspelled, such as “em” for “am” and “they” for “they”, although many common words are correct. Sentence structure is seriously flawed, for example: Because it feels good when you win. Tenses are confused and distract the reader. A spelling bookmark of common words would be a good starting point for this writer.

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Student Sample S:

I am proud of myself because I adopted a puppy. I am proud about because her owner didn’t take good care of her, her brothers, and sisters. Her old owner abandoned her because he/she didn’t want to take care of her anymore. I adopted her from SPCA of Reno, Nevada.

Sally is a tan and white lab. She is kind of skinny because her owner didn’t feed her. She also loves to play around.

I wonder where she lived before I adopted her at the animal shelter. I would never treat a dog like that. When I was adopting her she was looking around the room at the cats.

Sally is 10 weeks old, and she loves to sleep on the couch in the loft when I am on the computer or doing my homework. She look’s so cute when she is sleeping.

That is why I am so proud because she lives in a better home now.

How would you score this sample:

[Blank] Idea Development
[Blank] Organization
[Blank] Voice
[Blank] Conventions
Practice Prompt #3 for fifth grade: Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Scorer Annotations for Sample S:
Scores: I=3 O=3 V=3 C=3.5

Ideas
This writer is clearly writing from her experience with her dog. The development is limited, but the ideas are reasonably clear. Although each paragraph seems like a random thought, paragraphs are well developed and coherent on their own. The connection between the paragraphs seems random, and I imagine this writer stopping at the end of each paragraph, wondering what she could tell us next.

Organization
The transitions in this paper are its weak point. The paper doesn’t flow from paragraph to paragraph and we jump from adopting the dog at the SPCA, to a description of the dog, back to the shelter, and then a bit about the dog’s likes and dislikes. The paper does have a recognizable introduction and conclusion which help hold the paper together.

Voice
This paper fits all the bullets of a 3 in Voice. I wonder where she lived before I adopted her at the animal shelter. I would never treat a dog like that. These sentences show the writer’s attitude toward the dog, but then the next sentence, “When I was adopting her she was looking around the room at the cats,” seems abstract and random. This writer seems sincere, but as a 3 indicates, the writer is hidden at times and occasionally stands at a distance. The word choice is unremarkable with potential for more emotion with the love of Sally.

Conventions
The strength of this paper is its conventions. The ending punctuation is correct and most words are spelled correctly. However, the writer uses a very limited range of writing conventions. Sentences are generally structured correctly, but show very little variety. There is only one attempt at internal punctuation, and it is incorrect.

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Student Sample T:

When I was 3 years old I always dreamt of becoming a professional skateboarder. I went into the kitchen to talk to my grandma. The egg’s were popping, the toast was burning. I asked grandma if I could have a skateboard and she said I could have one tomorrow.

The next day as I woke up I saw my brother’s watching tv. As I got dressed my family was waiting in the car. When got to the store I heard car’s beeping, children screaming. When I saw the board I wanted it was $24.00 to buy it, my grandma had enough money for it. This is when I got my first board.

The board is called CBS, the wheels are called Spitfire. I stopped by the skatepark to practise. I could already ballence myself on the board, but the hard part was going up and down ramps.

I practised and practised going down ramps, but I kept. I didn’t care care if I kept falling, I just got up and tried again. Suddenly it was time to go. “Well, there’s tomorrow.” I said, and went into the car.

The next day I went to the skatepark again. I heard boards snapping. As I begun going down ramp’s I didn’t fall. I was so excited that I made it, and from then on I’ve been practicing ever since.

How would you score this sample:

_____ Idea Development

_____ Organization

_____ Voice

_____ Conventions

These annotated fifth grade samples are provided to help fifth grade teachers score their own students’ samples to these same prompts. This document and additional resources can be found on-line at: http://writingfix.com/classroom_tools/nevada_writing_exam.htm
Practice Prompt #3 for fifth grade: Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Scorer Annotations for Sample T:
Scores: I=3  O=3  V=3  C=3

Ideas
This paper is clear and focused on the topic of becoming a better skateboarder. This writer followed the directions in the prompt to a “T.” The prompt indicates that writers should include the “sights and sounds of the moment” and the writer adds these details, almost to a fault. For example: I went into the kitchen to talk to my grandma. The egg’s were popping, the toast was burning. I asked grandma if I could have a skateboard…. Although the eggs and toast add the sights and sounds of the moment, they are details which are irrelevant to the story and distract rather than add. The support that is present in this paper doesn’t always help clarify or balance the paper; the main ideas don’t stand out but are lost in random details. The writer doesn’t seem to be in control of the topic and has trouble going from general to specific, but is definitely writing from experience and the paper shows lots of promise. This is a paper where the writer does as many things wrong as he does right. This could be a higher paper with work on balance, helping the main ideas stand out.

Organization
The introduction, “When I was 3 years old I always dreamt of becoming a professional skateboarder.” sets the stage for the paper. The conclusion, “….and from then on I’ve been practicing ever since,” leaves the reader with a sense of completion. The sequencing is sometimes confusing, but doesn’t interfere with the storyline. The progression is generally well controlled, but the random details create some confusion and impede the smooth movement from point to point.

Voice
The word choice in this paper reveals the writer’s attitude but becomes abstract and confusing in other points of the paper. The determination of the writer to become a better skateboarder is earnest and interesting. For example: “I didn’t care if I kept falling, I just got up and tried again.” However, the writer seems to hide as much as he reveals.

Conventions
External punctuation is correct, but the writer generally uses simple sentences. The few times when a comma or quotation marks are called for, they are also correct. The writer doesn’t take any risks. He spells most common words correctly but more difficult words are sometimes misspelled – practising, professional, skateboard. Although some apostrophes are correct, there are apostrophes in words like “car’s” and “ramp’s” where they are not needed. Capitalization is almost always correct, and the writer has reasonable control over a limited range of grade appropriate standard writing conventions.

These annotated fifth grade samples are provided to help fifth grade teachers score their own students’ samples to these same prompts. This document and additional resources can be found on-line at: http://writingfix.com/classroom_tools/nevada_writing_exam.htm
Practice Prompt #3 for fifth grade: Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Student Sample U:

What I think i’m proud of is how i earned to play football. And that is what i’m proud of, What happend was that we had two get a football gear like a hemet, Jersey, pad, and pants. The most of all is the coach and the team players. Spectator are the other reson, like my mom, daddy G, and the rest of the family When they cheer me on, or unnecessary spirt with yelling, screming my name and number but whats really fun is the partys and the possession I play which is tighten. And when I ran three touchdown and one interceptoin. And those are the thing that made me proud.

How would you score this sample:

_____ Idea Development
_____ Organization
_____ Voice
_____ Conventions

These annotated fifth grade samples are provided to help fifth grade teachers score their own students’ samples to these same prompts. This document and additional resources can be found on-line at: http://writingfix.com/classroom_tools/nevada_writing_exam.htm
Practice Prompt #3 for fifth grade: Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Scorer Annotations for Sample U:
Scores: I=3 O=2 V=3 C=2

Ideas
This paper is written from the experience of learning to play football, but the writer suddenly is listing the required football gear, like a helmet, jersey, pad, and pants, which tends to blend the original and the predictable. The ideas are reasonably clear, but the writer needs to expand and personalize to show more in-depth understanding.

Organization
This paper jumps around between minor details and spends too much time on the obvious. The writer makes hard to follow leaps from point to point which are not helped by the troubles in conventions. The lack of organization makes it hard to follow the storyline, and some of the connections between ideas are weak. There is a recognizable introduction and conclusion.

Voice
Word choice is a strength of this paper. For example: …when they cheer me on, or unnecessary spirit with yelling, screaming my name and number…OR…what’s really fun is the party and the possession (position) I play which is tightened. The writer communicates in an earnest manner, but the writing hides as much of the writer as it reveals.

Conventions
Spelling is the strength of this writer’s conventions, even spelling difficult words like unnecessary, spectator, and touchdown correctly, although there are many words misspelled as well. The serious errors with conventions in this paper relate to struggles with sentence structure and punctuation. There are a few randomly placed periods on the page, but this student needs to spend time on constructing complete sentences. Capitalizing “I” consistently would help this paper as well.
IDEAS AND CONTENT (DEVELOPMENT)

5: This paper is clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader’s attention. Relevant anecdotes, details and/or evidence enrich the central theme or story line. Ideas are fresh and engaging.

- The writer seems to be writing from experience and/or knowledge showing insight/creativity.
- The writing has balance; main ideas stand out.
- Supporting, relevant details give the reader important information that he or she could not personally bring to the text.
- The writer works with and shapes ideas, making connections and sharing insights.
- The writer controls and develops the topic in an enlightening way.

3: The paper is clear and focused. The topic shows promise, even though development is still limited, sketchy, or general.

- The writer seems to be writing from experience and/or knowledge but has some trouble going from general observations to specifics.
- Ideas are reasonably clear and purposeful, even though they may not be explicit, detailed, expanded, or personalized to show in-depth understanding.
- The writer is developing the topic. Even though it is fairly easy to see where the writer is headed, more information is needed to “fill in the blanks.”
- Support is present but doesn’t go far enough yet in expanding, clarifying, or adding new insights.
- Themes or main points blend the original and the predictable.

1: As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy details. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- The writer may restate the topic but has not yet begun to develop it in a meaningful way.
- Information is very limited or unclear.
- The text is very repetitious or reads like a collection of random thoughts from which no central theme emerges.
- Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what's critical.
- The writer lacks a sense of direction.

*The Nevada State Department of Education gratefully acknowledges Vicki Spandel, the teachers of Oregon, and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory who developed and revised the original trait scoring guides, as well as Nevada teachers who have contributed to the final revisions.

Revised 7/05/05
THE NEVADA STATE WRITING PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
ANALYTIC SCORING GUIDE

ORGANIZATION

5: The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or thesis. The order or structure is compelling and moves the reader through the text.

- Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it.
- An inviting introduction draws the reader in, and a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of completion.
- Details seem to fit where they’re placed; sequencing or structure is logical and effective.
- Transitions are smooth and weave the separate threads of meaning into a cohesive whole.
- Progression of ideas is very well controlled; the writer delivers needed information at just the right moment and then moves on.

3: The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader from point to point with minimal confusion.

- The organization, despite a few problems, does not seriously get in the way of the main point or storyline.
- The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not create a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not leave the reader with a sense of completion.
- Sequencing or structure is usually logical. It may sometimes be too obvious or create some confusion.
- Transitions often work well; however, some connections between ideas may be weak or may call for inferences.
- Progression of ideas is fairly well controlled, although the writer sometimes spurts ahead too quickly or spends too much time on the obvious.

1: The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a random, haphazard manner or list, or else there is no identifiable internal structure at all. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- Lack of organization makes it hard for the reader to understand the main point or storyline.
- The writer has not yet drafted a real lead or conclusion.
- Sequencing of details is limited or nonexistent.
- Transitions are vague or missing; connections between ideas are confusing or incomplete.
- Progression of ideas is not controlled; too much time is spent on minor details, or there are hard-to-follow leaps from point to point.

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Revised 7/05/05
NEVADA STATE WRITING PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
ANALYTIC SCORING GUIDE*

VOICE

5: The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text, and the writing is writing to be read.

- The writing is appropriate to purpose and audience.
- The paper is honest. It has the ring of conviction.
- The word choice brings the topic to life and clarifies the writer’s attitude towards the subject.
- The writer establishes a strong connection with the reader and clearly convinces the reader of the writer’s commitment to the topic.

3: The writer seems sincere, but not genuinely engaged, committed, or involved. The result is earnest, but short of compelling.

- The writer seems aware of an audience but stands at a distance to avoid risk.
- The writing communicates in an earnest manner and may occasionally interest or move the reader.
- The word choice reveals the writer’s attitude toward the topic in some places but may become general, vague, tentative, or abstract in other places.
- The writer establishes a connection with the reader and demonstrates some commitment to the topic; however, the writing hides as much of the writer as it reveals.

1: The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the writing is flat, lifeless, or mechanical. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- The writer does not connect with the audience or have a sense of purpose.
- The writing communicates on a functional level. There is no presence of the writer on the page.
- The word choice tends to flatten all potential highs and lows of the message.
- The writer is not yet sufficiently engaged to take risks or make a commitment to the topic.

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Revised 7/05/05
CONVENTIONS

5: The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, sentence structure, paragraphing) and uses them effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few and minor the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them. Only light editing would be required to polish the text for publication.

- Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style.
- Internal punctuation and external punctuation contain few, if any, errors and guide the reader through the text.
- Spelling is almost always correct, even on more difficult words.
- Sentence structures are varied with few, if any, run-ons or fragments.
- Capitalization is correct.

3: The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. The writer handles some conventions well, but noticeable errors still exist that may distract the reader. The paper would require moderate editing prior to publication.

- Problems with grammar and usage are not serious enough to distort meaning.
- External punctuation is almost always correct; internal punctuation may be incorrect or missing.
- Spelling is usually correct on common words and reasonably phonetic on more difficult words.
- Sentences are generally structured correctly; run-ons and fragments, if present, do not impede meaning.
- Capitalization is usually correct.

1: Errors in spelling, punctuation, usage and grammar, capitalization, sentence structure and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. Extensive editing would be required to polish the text for publication. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- Errors in grammar and usage are very noticeable and interfere with meaning.
- Punctuation is often missing or incorrect.
- Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.
- Sentence structure is seriously flawed; run-ons and fragments may impede meaning.
- Capitalization is incorrect or missing.

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Revised 7/05/05
We invite teachers to show these ‘sparklers’ before, during, or after their own fifth graders write to the same practice prompt.

A Fifth Grade Nevada “Sparkler”

A sparkler is not a perfect piece of writing, but it “shines” in small ways that all students can both identify and discuss. When students analyze sparkling techniques used by other student writers, they are more likely to try these techniques in their own drafts.

Daisy, a Nevada fifth grader, prepared for her state writing examination by composing and revising the following piece of narrative writing one month before taking her test. This was the third practice prompt Daisy’s teacher assigned her.

Read the prompt carefully. Then read Daisy’s response. Be prepared to talk about where her writing techniques sparkle as well as where Daisy might make the writing even better if she wrote just one more draft.

Daisy’s Practice Prompt: Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Daisy’s writing: “Hooray!” I shouted as we were entering the super-cool, awesome and fun carnival. I instantly knew it would be the best and most awesome night ever. I skipped excitedly to the ticket booth so we can get our tickets since I couldn’t wait! I think we got about twenty tickets which I think is weird since my dad paid with a hundred dollar bill.

First, we went to play a carnival game where you have to catch as many small, cute & rubber ducks as you can in a toy net to win.

Next, we went to the super-cool, super small and super scary roller-coaster. Even though it’s small, it still scared me so much that I almost wet my pants!

Finally we went to the really tall, really scary and really awesome Ferris-wheel. I looked up at it and thought it was as high as a skyscraper! My sister & I gave the man our tickets, buckled ourselves in, then 3…2…1… LIFT OFF!!! We went up so high I was able to see the whole carnival & my parents! When we got off I was so proud of myself because I conquered my fear of heights & had an epic feeling afterwards!

An interactive task for other fifth graders: Daisy worked hard to improve her idea development and organization skills with this practice prompt. Throughout her writing, she includes very specific details about the carnival, the games, and its rides. It is also very easy to follow the story because Daisy uses simple but effective transition words. Highlight (in two colors, if you can) some specific details and some transition words in Daisy’s writing. Talk about what you highlighted with a partner.

Challenge: Look at your brainstorm or rough draft and find two places to add some specific details and two places where a transition word would help the reader know the writing has moved forward to a new idea or event.
We invite teachers to show these ‘sparklers’ before, during, or after their own fifth graders write to the same practice prompt.

A Fifth Grade Nevada “Sparkler”

A sparkler is not a perfect piece of writing, but it “shines” in small ways that all students can both identify and discuss. When students analyze sparkling techniques used by other student writers, they are more likely to try these techniques in their own drafts.

Nicholson, a Nevada fifth grader, prepared for his state writing examination by composing and revising the following piece of narrative writing one month before taking his test. This was the third practice prompt Nicholson’s teacher assigned him.

Read the prompt carefully. Then read Nicholson’s response. Be prepared to talk about where his writing techniques sparkle as well as where he might make the writing even better if he wrote just one more draft.

Nicholson’s Practice Prompt: Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Nicholson’s writing: On October 23rd, I competed in a national martial arts competition. It’s called the Bay Area Sport Karate Association competition. Or better known as the BASKA competition. Worldwide champions competed! It was my first competition!

It took place at the Grand Sierra Resort at 5:00 p.m. The room it was in was huge! It had six rings and a stage. People all over were screaming and cheering wildly! I was nervous to my full extension.

I had made up a kata to perform with in front of three judges. A kata is a series of movements used to defend against two or more opponents. There were nine competitors including me. I was the last one up. My hands were so sweaty I had to dry them several times on my uniform. Then, as I stepped onto the stage, every nervous feeling I had went away and I ignored everything. I put all of my energy into my kata. I was so tired when I finished that I didn’t notice that one of the judges had given me a perfect score!

When I left the ring I felt so proud of myself! It was my first competition and I had won! I was amazed with myself. I was so amazed, that I started practicing for the next BASKA tournament in January!

An interactive task for other fifth graders: Nicholson does two powerful things with details in order to strengthen his writing’s idea development. First of all, he explains ideas that the test scorer might be unfamiliar with. Second, he includes unique and memorable details throughout the writing. Highlight two places where he explains something the scorer might need to understand, and two places where Nicholson’s details are unique and memorable. Compare your highlights to a friend’s.

Challenge: Look over your brainstorm or rough draft and find several places where your details might be presented in a more unique or memorable way. Then ask yourself, “Would a test scorer need more information in order to make sense of what I am writing about here?”
A Fifth Grade Nevada “Sparkler”

We invite teachers to show these ‘sparklers’ before, during, or after their own fifth graders write to the same practice prompt.

Emily, a Nevada fifth grader, prepared for her state writing examination by composing and revising the following piece of narrative writing one month before taking her test. This was the third practice prompt Emily’s teacher assigned her.

Read the prompt carefully. Then read Emily’s response. Be prepared to talk about where her writing techniques sparkle as well as where Emily might make the writing even better if she wrote just one more draft.

Emily’s Practice Prompt: Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

Emily’s writing: I want to take you back in time to April twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth 2009! When I tested for my black belt! My black belt test was in San Jose, California. When my family and I got there, on April 24, it was roasting outside and I wanted to swim. So my dad and I went to the hotel’s pool. After about an hour or so, I felt tired and like I was about to collapse.

Then, it was time to get ready for my first test, for my black belt test, which is my writing test! A writing test is a thirty page folder that you have about an hour to finish! We have a writing test so we know about self defense, self confidence, respect, self control, and so much more. When I walked in, I noticed it was a high school gym that was loud, crowded, and stuffy. There were about 100 kids and 200 parents! The families got to sit on bleachers and the kids had to sit on a dirty, yellow floor. After about forty-five minutes, I was feeling rushed and then, “boom”! I was out of time and I didn’t finish!! But I still passed.

Then, on the twenty-fifth it was time for my physical test! I woke up about 5:30 to get ready. I loved the physical test because it was fun and hard. We have a physical test to make sure we know our self defense (boxing everyone your age, boxing combo, kick combos, and my favorite thing, wrestling). My physical test was long, hard, sweaty, and crowded too! After my physical test was the worst thing – conditioning! It was at about 9:00 until midnight! All you did was run back and forth, push ups, and sit ups! Boy, was I tired after that!!

So my black belt test was long and hard, but it was worth it. Now I know all about self defense! Sadly, I had to quit karate because it cost too much money!! Hey, but I will always have my self defense with me!

An interactive task for other fifth graders: Emily’s writing is certainly excellent, but pay close attention to how she excelled with her organization skills. Her introduction and her conclusion are both solid. Between the introduction and conclusion, she uses transitions that move her story along from event to event. Highlight five different transitions she tries out as her narrative moves forward. See if you highlighted the same as your partner.

Challenge: Can you borrow an idea from Emily’s writing that might improve your own introduction and conclusion? Can you skillfully use transition words between your narrative’s events?
We invite teachers to show these ‘sparklers’ before, during, or after their own fifth graders write to the same practice prompt.

A Fifth Grade Nevada “Sparkler”

A sparkler is not a perfect piece of writing, but it “shines” in small ways that all students can both identify and discuss. When students analyze sparkling techniques used by other student writers, they are more likely to try these techniques in their own drafts.

Joshua, a Nevada fifth grader, prepared for his state writing examination by composing and revising the following piece of narrative writing one month before taking his test. This was the third practice prompt Joshua’s teacher assigned him.

Read the prompt carefully. Then read Joshua’s response. Be prepared to talk about where his writing techniques sparkle as well as where he might make the writing even better if he wrote just one more draft.

**Joshua’s Practice Prompt:** Remember a time when you did something that made you feel proud of yourself. Think about what you did and how you felt about it. Try to remember the details clearly in your mind. Then write about what you did, including the sights and sounds of the moment.

**Joshua’s writing:** “The Fishing Trip”

One Friday afternoon, my parents called my brother and me into the kitchen. They said “We are going camping to Almanor Lake!” I was very ecstatic after hearing that because that means I might be able to go fishing, and maybe even catch my first fish! They said, “We will leave next week on Friday.” I was too excited to wait though, so I dashed out to the car, but that changed nothing. We would still leave Friday, next week.

When we were getting ready to leave, the first things I packed were a fishing pole, some bait and some hooks and line. When we got there, I was raging mad when I heard the news. We weren’t allowed to go fishing til tomorrow.

So I waited one week just to be told I can’t go fishing for another day. I sat at the mossy, wet, slippery rock wondering, “If I do catch a fish, I wonder what I will catch.” I sat there for a very long time.

The next day at the dock, my brother and I casted out. Then “Splash!” I had a bite! I yanked and pulled with excitement! My brother scurried to get my parents. By the time they got back, I was holding a seven inch shiny rainbow belly trout. I was very excited because this was my first fish, and we would eat it tonight!

**An interactive task for other fifth graders:** Joshua includes two types of details in this piece of writing: physical and emotional details. The physical details help a reader see the things the writer saw. The emotional details help a reader to understand how the writer was feeling. Using both types of details can improve both your idea development and voice scores. Highlight both types of details in Joshua’s writing, perhaps in two different colors. Compare your highlights with a partner.

**Challenge:** What type of details did you use more of in your rough draft? Can you find places in your writing where both types of details can be added or improved upon?
A narrative writing lesson inspired by a picture book and a chapter book:

Teacher's Guide for the Lesson:

What makes you Rich Beyond Measure?

A pre-writing alpha-box assignment to be used before the “What Your Room Says About You” Lesson

Mentor Texts that inspired this Lesson:

Old Black Fly
an alphabet book
by Jim Aylesworth

Boy’s Life
just the first two pages of chapter one of Boy’s Life by Robert McCammon

A note for teacher users: These lessons are posted so that you may borrow ideas from them, but our intention in providing this resource is not to give teachers a word-for-word script to follow. Please, use this lesson’s big ideas but adapt everything else. And adapt it recklessly; that’s how one becomes a true writing teacher.

Overview of This Lesson: This lesson is a pre-writing activity designed to help students create a stronger first draft when they are assigned the “What Your Room Says about You” lesson, which follows this write-up in this packet. For this activity, Students will create an illustrated notebook page for their writer’s notebooks or their journals. The page will show Old Black Fly (from the mentor text) landing on 4 – 6 items in their bedrooms or houses that are some of their “personal treasures.” These treasures will be written about in the “What Your Room Says about You” lesson.

6-Trait/Skill Overview for this Lesson: Idea Development is the focus trait of this activity; specifically, students are creating a large list of items to possibly write about, so they can carefully select just a few items that will be the most memorable to their readers when included in the actual piece of writing. In addition, the notebook page challenges students to include a specific detail about each special item they can use in their rough drafts.

Thinking before sharing the Mentor Text: Tell students that in a few days/weeks they are going to be reading a well-written piece of narrative writing wherein a fifth grader describes the “treasures” in his own bedroom. Explain that one of the nice things about the writing is that many of the boy’s treasures are not purchases from a store, nor do they really have any monetary value. A “personal treasure” is not necessarily something worth money. Ask, “Do you know any treasures like that in your house? Do you know of any treasures like that in your own rooms?”

Share a story about a treasure you own that mostly has value to you, not monetary value. Ask students about their own “treasure.” Record a few answers shared right off the bat. Be brave if you receive an answer—like a video game system—that doesn’t follow the criteria you set up; there’s always a student who shouts that answer out because he/she wasn’t listening. Tell them no. They need to think beyond things that have monetary value to start this lesson. Allow students to discuss this with each other. Only record those types of example.

Pass out the Alpha-box Worksheet (see appendix). Challenge them to record five or six personal treasures that they own that are not worth any or much money. Tell them they will be allowed to add treasures that are worth money, but to start, you only want this first type
of treasure. Give students a few minutes to record some initial treasures in the appropriate box (based on the first letter of the treasure’s name) of the worksheet.

Encourage talk during this. Ask students to partner up once or twice and share the story of one of the personal treasures they have written on their alpha-boxes. Encourage them to ask questions of each other about the stories they tell. Good conversations before pre-writing lead to better pre-writing.

**Sharing from the Mentor Text:** Now read Jim Aylesworth’s *Old Black Fly*. This alphabet book, complete with a fun repeating chorus, has a fly land on 26 items around the house, all beginning with a different letter. Don’t tell your students it’s an alphabet book. See how long it takes them to figure out that it’s moving through the letters. When they do notice this, challenge them with, “So what’s the next letter he’ll land on? Who can guess first what noun he might land on for the next page?”

Put away the alphabet book and have students bring out there alpha-boxes again. Inform them that they are now allowed to list any of their other personal “treasures,” including ones that are worth money. Their goal is to have ten to twenty items listed in the various boxes of the alpha-box list; they do not need to fill in every box with a word, and they do not need limit themselves to just one item per box.

After a few minutes, allow students to share new items they recorded with a partner or small group. Then allow them some more quiet time to continue thinking and recording. The talking should inspire them to keep adding to their own alpha-box. You want them to have lots of choices, so they can think hard about which items would be the best to include in their actual drafts.

**A Writer’s Notebook/Journal Page in honor of this Topic:** Now tell students that they will be using their alpha-box worksheets to inspire an illustrated page for their notebooks, journals, or just on a piece of paper. For this page, they are to choose 4 or 6 of the very best and most unique treasures from their lists, and they are going to draw a cartoon where Old Black Fly lands on all of them.

Show them a sample page that you created, or use our model as your own (see appendix), but we bet your students would much rather see a real one from you! Before they begin illustrating, make sure they see how each comic-strip box has enough space to include a memorable or interesting detail about the item that Old Black Fly will land on.

The goal of this pre-write is for students to form a real connection with these six items, so they feel really comfortable describing them in the piece of writing they will do about their bedrooms with the “What Your Room Says about You” lesson. It might not be a bad idea to require a rough draft of the comic on some scratch paper.

With the cartoons drawn, have students add memorable and interesting details about each of the items. Show the model notebook page again to see how you can add details in different, interesting ways.

With the notebook pages complete, next have students share their work with several other students. The more they can tell the stories out loud of these “treasures,” the better the rough drafts will be.

Put the notebook pages away in a safe place until you are ready to do the “What Your Room Says about You” lesson.
## Attachments for the

### What makes you Rich Beyond Measure?

A pre-writing alpha-box assignment to be used before the “What Your room Says About You” Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Black Fly</th>
<th>Boy’s Life</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an alphabet book by Jim Aylesworth</td>
<td>just the first two pages of chapter one of Boy’s Life by Robert McCammon</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Online lesson link: http://www.writingfix.com/Chapter_Book_Prompts/boys_life1.htm

## Pre-writing Lesson

- Alpha-box worksheet
- Notebook Page Worksheet
- Teacher Model of Finished Notebook Page
# Personal “Treasures” Alpha-box Worksheet

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<td>Pp</td>
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<td>Ss</td>
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<td>Uu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vv</td>
<td>Ww</td>
<td>Xx, Yy, Zz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Planning your Old Black Fly/Personal Treasure Notebook Page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In this box, draw the personal treasure Old Black Fly will land on. Save enough room to add a sentence with details about the item.</th>
<th>In this box, draw the personal treasure Old Black Fly will land on. Save enough room to add a sentence with details about the item.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
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<td>In this box, draw the personal treasure Old Black Fly will land on. Save enough room to add a sentence with details about the item.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OLD BLACK FLY ON MY PERSONAL TREASURES

He landed on the baby tortoise that I hatched from an egg.

He landed on the book of poems my Grandma self-published.

He landed on my 34-year-old Star Wars lunchbox (in mint condition).

And he landed on my private box of Crayons.

He landed on my favorite picture of me and my wife.

He landed on my loyal dog’s collar that I saved. I miss you, Butchie.

I AM RICH BEYOND MEASURE!

(teacher model from Corbett Harrison, NNWP)
### A Narrative Writing Lesson Inspired by a Chapter Book Excerpt:

**Descriptive Writing:**

**What Your Room Says about You**

This lesson was created by NNWP Teacher Consultant Karen McGee.

### Mentor Text that inspired this Lesson:

![Boys's Life](http://writingfix.com)

Just the first two pages of chapter one of *Boy's Life* by Robert McCammon

### A note for teacher users:

These lessons are posted so that you may borrow ideas from them, but our intention in providing this resource is not to give teachers a word-for-word script to follow. Please, use this lesson’s big ideas but adapt everything else. And adapt it recklessly; that’s how one becomes a true writing teacher.

### Overview of this Lesson:

Robert McCammon’s novel--*Boy's Life*--captures the magic of everyday life, filled with adventure, discovery, fear, joy, and heartache. In the first two opening pages of the book, we meet Cory, an eleven year old boy, whose character we begin to understand based on the personal treasures he keeps in his room. This lesson has students reflect on their own rooms (and their personal treasures) to write short narrative descriptions which will allow readers to know the writer better by the details he/she chooses to show about his/her room.

### 6-Trait/Skill Overview for this Lesson:

- **Focus trait** in this writing assignment is *idea development*; the writer’s goal is to “show himself” through the specific, relevant details he chooses to “show his room.”
- **Support trait** in this assignment is *organization*; the writer will follow the model of Robert McCammon, using the lead and conclusion exactly and following the form of the mentor text.

### Sharing from the Mentor Text:

Inform the students that they are going to read just one page from a great chapter book and analyze it to discover what they might know about the book’s main character, Cory. Put a copy of the two paragraphs (from chapter 1) about Cory’s room on the overhead or Xerox it for the students to read from. This passage begins with the sentence: “Here is my room: Indian rug red as Cochise’s blood, a desk with seven mystic drawers, a chair covered in material as velvety blue-black as Batman’s cape, an aquarium holding tiny fish so pale you could see their hearts beat…” The passage ends with the sentence, “I am rich beyond measure.”

Read the passage a second time, looking closely at how the author constructed the text. Draw the students’ attention to the fact that the first part of the text is a description of the room, while the second part focuses more on the important things in the room. Point out the rich language: *seven mystic drawers, material as velvety blue-black as Batman’s cape*.

Tell students they will be borrowing from McCammon’s idea and writing style to write a narrative about their own bedrooms or homes and the personal treasures they hold dear.

Before that happens, hand each student a blank alphabox worksheet. Conceal the McCammon text from them by turning off the overhead or collecting back the Xeroxes. Alone, have them work for two minutes trying to remember as many nouns/objects that the
author listed as his “personal treasures” in the piece. Then allow them to partner up, share, and work for two or three more minutes.

In groups of four, have them read over their own alpha-box lists, and challenge them to remember out loud to the group any specific details (or modifiers) the author used to describe those nouns. If they wrote “fish” in their ‘F’ box, give them an opportunity to orally add “so pale you could see their hearts beat” out loud to the group. Discuss the idea development skill of using memorable and specific details. A good piece of writing is usually about things (like objects), and a great piece of writing uses plenty details that will be remembered after the paper has been put away.

Today, your students will be using inspiration from the mentor text excerpt and the Old Black Fly comic they created during the “Rich Beyond Measure” lesson to create a piece of writing that uses specific and memorable details.

**Analyzing Student Models before Writing:** Distribute to students the “Olympic Committee Task” worksheet (see lesson attachments). Have them work with partners to award two medals to the three pieces of student writing. Students are to image these piece of writing have competed in the finals of the “Writing Olympics.” All three samples will win a medal in both events (since there are only three of them), and students have to work together to decide where the gold, silver, and bronze medals are deserved.

The first event is “Use of specific and memorable details in writing.” Students need to analyze all three pieces and decide gold through bronze placements.

The second event is “Strong personality comes through because of the word choice and writing style.” Students need to analyze all three pieces of writing and decide gold through bronze placements.

If there is time, have student partnerships shuffle themselves (at least once) so that students can share their different or similar Olympic Committee rankings with each other.

Tell students they are to try and incorporate some of the techniques and style from their favorite student model into their own writing when they draft.

**Drafting a Structured Piece of Writing:** Have students place their writer’s notebook pages, their alpha-boxes about their own personal treasures, the analyzed student samples, and the mentor text where they can refer to them as they draft. Their drafts—like the mentor text—are to begin with “Here is my room.” And they are to end with “I am rich beyond measure.” In between, they are to describe—using specific and memorable details—the treasures they want people to know about. You can use the drafting sheet provided in this appendix to help them maintain the structured frame of the piece, but you can choose to have them write on lined paper as well.

For students who may not have their own rooms, they can begin with “Here are my treasures” or some variation of that idea that better matches their situation.

Remind them to use their pre-writing notebook page to help them draft. Strongly suggest that they will have better pieces of writing if they choose a limited amount of items and describe those really well, rather than try to put every item from their original alpha-box into the draft.

Move around the room, reminding students, at point of need, to use rich language and to choose details which really tell readers important things about themselves. If you spot a really great description or a strong simile used in a student’s draft, write it on the board up front and draw everyone’s attention to it.
Response & Revision: Once students have created rough drafts about their rooms and treasures, put them away for a few days. Give those students who struggled a chance to recover from that struggle.

Then, have students self-rank their use narrative writing skills in their draft using WritingFix's Narrative Writing Post-its (see appendix for a class sheet). The verb here is “rank.” Not “rate” but “rank.” This means the student must determine which skill from the Post-it is the strongest skill in the writing and give it a “5.” The weakest skill receives a “1.” When ranking, students can only use each number one time. Ranking is harder than rating for most students. It pushes students to the analysis and evaluation level of Bloom’s taxonomy.

My favorite technique for using the Post-its for meaningful response is having the students rank their own writing first, then work with a partner who also ranks their narrative skills on a fresh Post-It. While the partner is ranking, the writer keeps his/her self-ranking scores a secret. When the partner is done ranking, have them talk about the similarities and differences in both Post-its. From the conversation, each writer should walk away with some skills they can focus on as they prepare to improve their narrative skills in a revised draft.

You can learn how to print these revision tools on actual Post-It notes by visiting the Post-It Homepage at WritingFix. You can also hand each student a blank 3” x 3” Post-it, and have them create a recreation of the Post-it (at right) on their own.

Students can use their rankings to self-determine some revision techniques. They can also “rank” each other, if you’ve already taken steps to train them as a community of learners or a writer’s workshop.

Editing: After students apply their revision ideas to their drafts and re-write neatly, require them to find an editor. If you’ve established a "Community of Editors" among your students, have each student exchange his/her paper with multiple peers. With yellow high-lighters in hand, each peer reads for and highlights suspected errors for just one item from the Editing Post-it. The "Community of Editors" idea is just one of dozens and dozens of inspiring ideas that is talked about in detail in the Northern Nevada Writing Project's Going Deep with 6 Trait Language Workbook for Teachers. (http://nnwp.org)

Publishing Ideas: Why not publish online? The WritingFix website is actively seeking student samples (from all grade levels) inspired by this lesson. The samples will be posted as a trait-inspired discussion tool for future classes using the lesson. We always send Free NNWP Print Resources to teachers who help us publish student samples. If you visit the online version of this lesson, you will find a link to where you can post your student samples that you’re really proud of.

Online lesson link: http://www.writingfix.com/Chapter_Book_Prompts/boys_life1.htm

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## Attachments for the Descriptive Writing:

**What Your Room Says about You**

Online lesson link: [http://www.writingfix.com/Chapter_Book_Prompts/boys_life1.htm](http://www.writingfix.com/Chapter_Book_Prompts/boys_life1.htm)

### Writing Lesson

- Alpha-box worksheet for responding to the mentor text
- Three student samples with a discussion prompt (The “Olympic Committee Task”)
- Narrative Revision/Response “Post-it Notes”
Cory’s Personal Treasures I Remember from the Mentor Text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aa</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>Cc</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Dd</td>
<td>Ee</td>
<td>Ff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vv</td>
<td>Ww</td>
<td>Xx, Yy, Zz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Imagine these three writers were the three finalists in the Writing Olympics. Imagine these writers competed in two different events with the writing samples you see below: 1) the Using Specific and Memorable Details event; and 2) the Showing Strong Personality with Word Choice and Style Choice event.

Work with a partner to serve as an Olympic Committee, which means you get to decide who wins what color medals. If there is a gold, silver, and bronze medal for both events, which writer should receive which medal?

Each writer will receive two medals; your job is to fairly decide which medal belongs to which competitor. Have a really good discussion as you decide which medals these writers will win.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event #1: Using Specific and Memorable Details</th>
<th>Event #2: Showing Strong Personality with Word Choice and Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gold Medal Writer: __________________________</td>
<td>Gold Medal Writer: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Medal Writer: __________________________</td>
<td>Silver Medal Writer: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze Medal Writer: __________________________</td>
<td>Bronze Medal Writer: __________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing Finalist #1: **Kannon, fifth grade writer**

Here is my room: trophies and medals I’ve won and collected since I was five, some pictures, and a rug. They’re nothing too exciting. But, then there is my most prized possession: my great grandfather’s Winchester 12 Gauge Lever Action shotgun. Of course it doesn’t work, but to me it is still cool to look at. I also have a buffalo horn that is actually a horn. Coming soon will be a mounting of an antelope head that I hunted for with my dad. I don’t have many things, but the things I do have, I cherish very much. I am rich beyond measure.

Writing Finalist #2: **Tyler, fifth grade writer**

Here is my room: My Nintendo DSI sitting high in the air on my shelf above my bed. My big T.V. on the shelf above my PS2--the things that keep me busy throughout the day. My big soft bean bag made of corduroy, sitting like a rock on the left side of my room. My video games, resting on the bottom shelf whenever I’m not using them. My soft bed, lying with the indentation marks still present from when I was sleeping on it this morning. And my most prized possession yet, the necklace I wear every day from the first time I went to Hawaii. I am rich beyond measure!

Writing Finalist #3: **Jonah, fifth grade writer**

Here is my room: the bed sits in the corner like a stump. My play table is in another corner like a little planet for my Legos. My shelves on the wall are like cargo ships carrying supplies like my coin collection, my Lego ships and cars, my trophies and medals, and my books. My T.V. and X Box are a perfect match to keep me busy all day. But, the most important thing is my old dirty stuffed animal, my monkey. I’ve had it since I was born, but it is my most special thing in my room. I am rich beyond measure.

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Rank Your Writing Skills:
Rank each skill from 1 (low) to 5 (high) in the following:

___ I used a balance of showing and telling. (Idea Development)
___ My details are specific and memorable. (Idea Development)
___ My introduction grabs my reader’s attention. (Organization)
___ I used transition words to move from idea to idea. (Organization)
___ If read aloud, it sounds like something I might really say. (Voice)

Directions for printing these on actual post-it notes can be found online at all WritingFix lessons.
Goal-setting sheet for the Writing Test: 1-5 Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea Development</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me:</td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me:</td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me:</td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me:</td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me:</td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me:</td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of #1 &amp; #2:</td>
<td>Average of #1 &amp; #2:</td>
<td>Average of #1 &amp; #2:</td>
<td>Average of #1 &amp; #2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your idea development score!</td>
<td>Your organization score!</td>
<td>Your voice score! Graph it below:</td>
<td>Your conventions score! Graph it below:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<td>5</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important!** Now…choose two traits you plan to score better with on the next practice prompt and write them below.

**Trait #1:**

**Trait #2:**

How will you improve upon this trait for your next practice prompt?

How will you improve upon this trait for your next practice prompt?
Name: Suzy Sample  
Teacher: Mrs. Wright

### Goal-setting sheet for the Writing Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea Development</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me: 3</td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me: 3</td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me: 4</td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me: 3</td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me: 2</td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me: 3</td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of #1 &amp; #2: 3</td>
<td>Average of #1 &amp; #2: 2.5</td>
<td>Average of #1 &amp; #2: 3.5</td>
<td>Average of #1 &amp; #2: 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your idea development score!  
Graph it below:  

Your organization score!  
Graph it below:  

Your voice score!  
Graph it below:  

Your conventions score!  
Graph it below:  

---

**Important!** Now…choose two traits you plan to score better with on the next practice prompt and write them below.

**Trait #1:** Conventions  
How will you improve upon this trait for your next practice prompt?  
I will triple check my spelling next time (especially the word wall words)!

**Trait #2:** Idea Development  
How will you improve upon this trait for your next practice prompt?  
In every other sentence, I will try to add an important detail that is memorable!
### Goal-setting sheet for the Writing Test: High, Medium, Low Ratings

#### Idea Development
- Scorer #1 gave me:_______
- Scorer #2 gave me:_______
- Average (H, H-M, M, M-L, or L):_______

Your idea development score!
Graph it below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>H-M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M-L</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H-M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-M</td>
<td>H-M</td>
<td>H-M</td>
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<td>M-L</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Organization
- Scorer #1 gave me:_______
- Scorer #2 gave me:_______
- Average (H, H-M, M, M-L, or L):_______

Your organization score!
Graph it below:

#### Voice
- Scorer #1 gave me:_______
- Scorer #2 gave me:_______
- Average (H, H-M, M, M-L, or L):_______

Your voice score!
Graph it below:

#### Conventions
- Scorer #1 gave me:_______
- Scorer #2 gave me:_______
- Average (H, H-M, M, M-L, or L):_______

Your conventions score!
Graph it below:

---

**Important!** Now…choose two traits you plan to score better with on the next practice prompt and write them below.

**Trait #1:**

**Trait #2:**

How will you improve upon this trait for your next practice prompt?

How will you improve upon this trait for your next practice prompt?
Name: Suzy Sample  
Teacher: Mrs. Wright

### Goal-setting sheet for the Writing Test: H, M, L Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea Development</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me: <strong>M</strong></td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me: <strong>M</strong></td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me: <strong>M</strong></td>
<td>Scorer #1 gave me: <strong>L</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me: <strong>L</strong></td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me: <strong>M</strong></td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me: <strong>H</strong></td>
<td>Scorer #2 gave me: <strong>L</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your idea development score!  
Graph it below: 

Your organization score!  
Graph it below: 

Your voice score!  
Graph it below: 

Your conventions score!  
Graph it below: 

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H</th>
<th>H-M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M-L</th>
<th>L</th>
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<tr>
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<td>H</td>
<td>H-M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M-L</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Important!** Now…choose two traits you plan to score better with on the next practice prompt and write them below.

**Trait #1:** Conventions  
How will you improve upon this trait for your next practice prompt?  
I will triple check my spelling next time (especially the word wall words)!

**Trait #2:** Idea Development  
How will you improve upon this trait for your next practice prompt?  
In every other sentence, I will try to add an important detail that is memorable!