**Counting Up & Counting Down Stories.** A lesson found on-line at WritingFix ([http://writingfix.com](http://writingfix.com))

The two students featured on this page worked hard on idea development and organization as they wrote and revised these stories. Work with a partner and find each writer’s best examples of quality idea development and organization.

**The Newmarket Race**
by Yazmin, 6th grade writer

My weathered hands rubbed my chestnut colored horse, slicking down her mane and braiding her tail. Next, I carefully rubbed oil into the reins and saddle, breathing in the soft smell of leather. Then, I slipped my jersey on and rode out. The crowds cheered as I rode to my place at the race track. My jersey stuck to my back with sweat, and the sun bleached the number 14 on my back was even whiter than before.

Suddenly, the crowd became silent as a man came up with a red flag and a gun that was not loaded with a real bullet. Then the countdown began.

“5”; horses shifted, eager to start running.
“4”; I nervously patted my horse’s back with sweaty hands.
“3”; my head screamed, “Just start the race!”
“2”; I squint in the bright sun to see the race track.
“1”; I pulled the reins back on my horse to keep her from running and crouch into riding position.  
*Bam!* The gunshot rings in the silence and my horse leaps forward in the midst of thundering hooves.

My horse pulls forward as slow as a turtle and I tense, hoping I will win. I grip the reins tightly to keep from falling off, and finally we pull to the front off the group where I see the finish line. My horse seems to know it is the end, and she runs faster than ever.

As I pass the finish line, I jump off my horse, hands raised, as I drown in the crowd’s cheers. Proudly, I walk up to the stands, leading my horse, to receive the golden Queens Cup, my trophy.

As I walk away, holding my trophy, I think, *I did it!*

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**School’s Out!**
by Matt, 6th grade writer

It’s been 169 days of school, and now the time has finally come! It is the last day of school, and the kids act as if they ate a whole bowl of sugar for breakfast.

My teacher, Mrs. Chazin, promised the class that we would get to count down the last 5 seconds of school. “Okay kids, you may begin,” she said.

“5!” we yelled. It was so loud in my head.
“4!” we screamed. They looked like they were about to run a marathon nonstop.

“3!” I was ready to leave and go swimming at the pool that’s as cool as the inside of the fridge.

“2!” My ears were about to explode because of the class’s voice level.

“1” we screamed. My heart beat so fast that I thought that I was going to have a heart attack!!!

*Riiiiinngg!* The bell rang.

“Ahhhh!” everyone screamed and rushed into the halls. Pieces of papers the kids were throwing out of their backpacks flew in the air like jet planes. Even the teachers shouted and ran outside.

Finally, it was summer.
Parasailing
by Justine, 6th grade writer

“Don’t be scared!” my mom said as we got on the small jet boat. I was going parasailing for the first time. When I saw the boat, I wondered how I would be able to go parasailing attached to that little boat. As the boat took me farther out into the ocean, I saw a much larger boat with a sign painted on its side. I could see the word PARASAILING in big, bold letters. I was relieved to know that this was the boat I was going on.

When we finally got to the boat, there were two men that came to help me on, and away we zoomed. The two men strapped me in different kinds of straps and harnesses. They then attached me to the parachute lying on the deck of the boat. After I was strapped in they said, “On the count of three, we will let go of the parachute, and you will be blown up into the sky.”

“One.” Excitement was going through my mind. I could feel the wind blowing through my hair.

“Two.” I started to think I was going to fall. What if the parachute broke and I fell into the water? Would I be able to swim back to the boat?

“Three.” My heart pounded with terror. My mind was screaming, “Noo!”

I thought, Don’t let me go, but, it was too late. They let go of the parachute, and before I knew it, I was in the air. For about a minute, I kept my eyes closed. Then, little by little, I opened them. I saw the beautiful ocean and the gorgeous beach. I even saw some other people parasailing too. But my favorite thing I saw was the amazing sea life moving in the water below me.

I wanted to stay there all day, but I couldn’t. After 10 more minutes, the men started to slowly bring me down until I finally reached the boat. I will never forget that day I went parasailing, and I hope I can experience that excitement again in my lifetime.

Basketball Championship
by Peter, 6th grade writer

There I was, sitting on the bench, waiting for some playing time. It was the 4th quarter with 3 seconds left, and the score was 69 to 70. We were losing.

The coach called a timeout. I never thought it would happen, but the coach told me to get on the court and score a basket. As I nervously looked at the crowd, the adrenaline was pumping in my body. They all had piercing looks on their faces. My heart was throbbing.

My teammate rolled the ball until the half court line so time wouldn’t run out. I got the ball and the clock was running. The seconds were ticking away.

Three. I thought in my head, Am I going to make it? as I quickly dribbled to the free throw line.

Two seconds left! It’s all up to me! I quickly glanced at the sidelines seeing the coach and my teammates with worried looks.

One second. Uh-oh, I thought as I took the jump shot.

Buzzzzzz! Time ran out as the ball was in mid-air. I watched as it went through the hoop. I’d made it!

The crowd went wild, chanting my name. I was thrilled. My teammates picked me up by the arms and legs and gave me the winning trophy.
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The Big Race
by Claudia, 6th grade writer

“You can do this, boy. I've been training you for the past five months,” said Mandy.

Mandy brushed her fingers through her brown hair and remembered Sam's last greyhound race. Sam had won 3rd place at his last race and brought home $1,000.00 and a bronze trophy. Mandy was still proud of Sam, and she still loved him. Now she wanted Sam to win the $100,000 prize, so Sam could be Champion Dog of the Year.

“Sam, sit!” shouted Mandy. “I need to fix your vest so it doesn’t move.”

Mandy was busy fixing Sam's vest when she heard “The race begins in five minutes.”

“Ok, Sam you look awesome,” Mandy said.

Mandy took Sam to the starting line. She told Sam to sit down and wait till he heard the order “Go!” Mandy sat right next to Sam and patted him.

“Get your hounds ready. One,” said a man standing in front of Mandy and Sam.

When Mandy heard “One,” she hugged Sam and said, “Good Luck.”

“Two!” shouted the man. Mandy felt Sam's heart beating while she was hugging him, and she started to get nervous.

“Three!” screamed the man.

Mandy started to whisper “Go, Sam. Go!” She anxiously watched him……

“Let your hounds GO!” screamed the man. Sam ran as fast as he could. Sam won the race! Mandy was so proud of him. She just knew her dog could win, and she was right.

Jump!
by Ravi, 6th grade writer

In Manhattan, the New Yorkers were getting ready for the annual diving competition. My mom had signed me up even though I didn’t want to dive, because I hated being in competitions. I tried to argue, but it didn’t help. It just made it worse. I got grounded for a week and still had to go to the diving competition.

On the day of the competition, I put on my Hawaiian diving shorts, and my mom drove us to the diving competition. I slowly got out of my Nissan Altima, hoping to miss my turn.

Once I was inside, I couldn't see how long the pool was, but it was a deep pool. I heard a man on the P.A. system say, “Tom McKinzy is going to be next to dive.” I was shaking a lot, because I had to do what I didn’t want to do. Again the man on the P.A. system said, “Tom McKinzy, our newcomer, is going to finish off our diving competition.”

I said to myself, “Here I go.” I climbed up the 20 foot ladder, and I could see the diving board. I knew I had exactly four steps before the dive.

I took my first step. My legs were trembling hard as possible and my teeth were clicking together.

I took my second step. My mind was racing. Was I going to make it alive? Was I going to mess up? Was I going to hit my head on the board?

My third step. I could feel my heart pounding faster than a timpani.

My final step. Should I stop? Should I go? What do I do?

I jumped! I did a 2 ½ summersault with 2 cartwheels and got the perfect landing with the perfect splash that the judges look for. I got out of the chilly water to see my score. All 5 judges held the number 10 above their heads. Excitement filled my body. I heard the P.A. system once more, “Tom McKinzy has a perfect score, which no one has ever done in the history of our diving competition.”

I saw my mom in the bleachers waving at me. I rushed to her and said two words: “Thank you.”