

Writing Benchmarks, K-6

Acquiring Local Norms on Narrative Writing

OES Writing Committee

Why are writing benchmarks needed?

All writing teachers need to know what the target is when teaching a particular skill.

It can take several years of experience teaching writing to get a sense for average, end-of-year achievement

New teachers (or teachers who are new to a grade level) can teach more effectively when they know what the end-of- year product looks like

What Writing Exemplars Already Exist?

- CCSS supply grade-level writing exemplars
- However, there is a **MISMATCH** between the exemplars and typical grade-level writing
- Reading and writing abilities develop in sync
- Students are not able to write beyond the level at which they read (except in rare circumstances)

CCSS Exemplars are not Developmentally Appropriate: This is a Kindergarten Exemplar

We estimate this child's reading level to be H-ish
Or late 1st grade

Mr. Fox said,
"I can't see any rabbits.
I'll see if I can find
a fat little hen."

He went down the hill
to the farm.

5

I went to Disney World
from the house
I had a fun vacation
at Disney I see lot of rides
I went to the house
Summer January 20, 2010
I went on the water home
I went on for water
I went on a horse go riding
I went on a horse
I went on horse

This is the Writing of an On-Level Kindergartner

End of year reading level: C

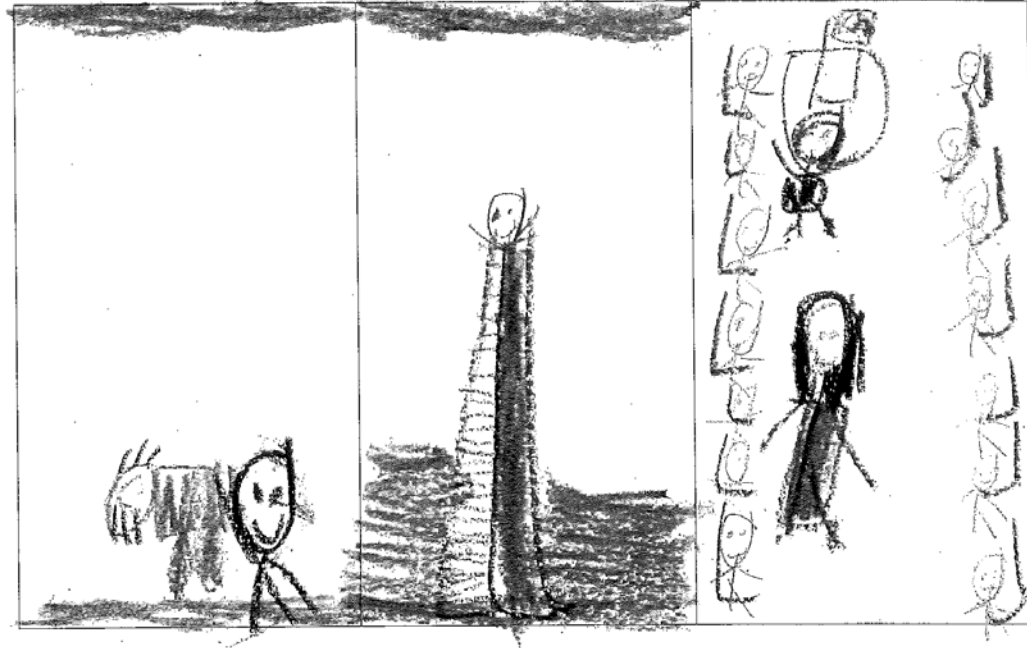


Look at this whale.
This whale is **big**.

Look at the **big** tail.

Sample 3

C/D



My dog is playing with me.

My dog is play with me.

I went to the water park.

I Went to the Water Park.

Soon it is my Jackies is have

son it is my Jack is have

her wedding
her wedding

CCSS 1st Grade Exemplar

This writer is
approximately Level M+

"You're nuts," said Jack.

"Listen, just listen," said Annie.

Jack listened.

The rain *did* seem to be tapping out *Come now! Come now!*

"We *have* to go to the tree house," said Annie. "Something important is about to happen."

"Now?" said Jack.

Jack didn't want to leave his warm, cozy room. But he had a feeling Annie was right. Something important *was* about to happen.

"You coming?" she said.

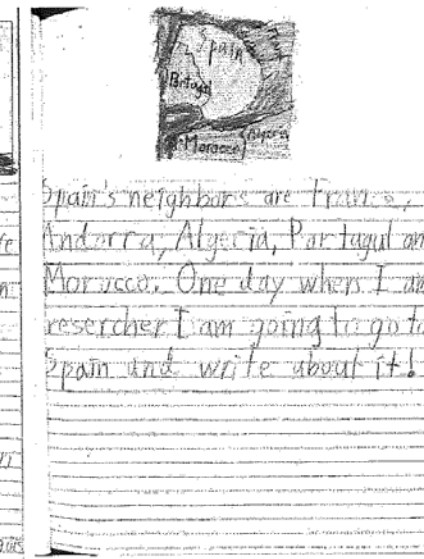
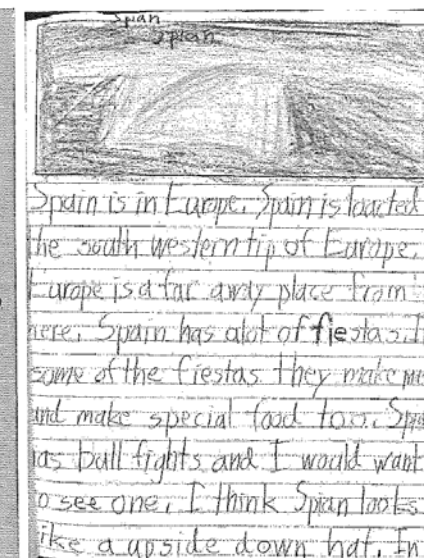
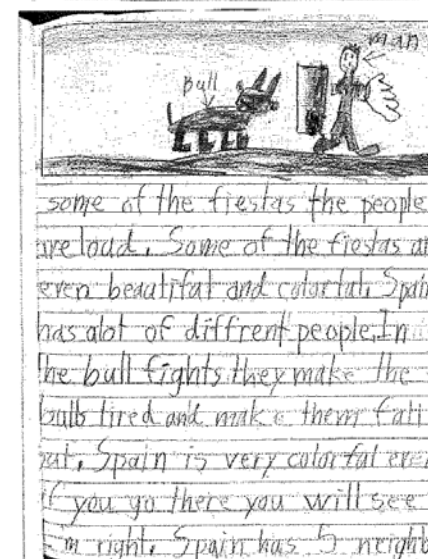
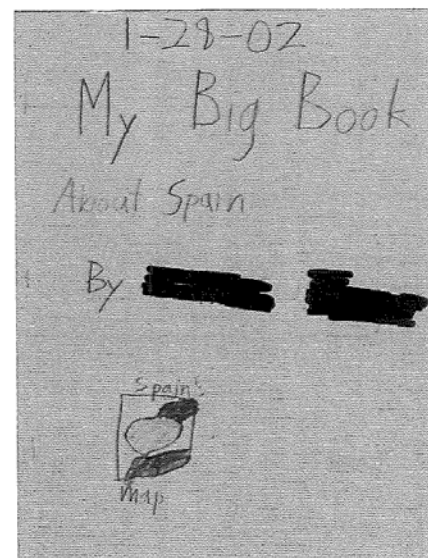
"Yeah, yeah," he said.

He climbed out of bed.

"Just put on your rain poncho," said Annie.

Jack threw his rain poncho over his

Student Sample: Grade 1, Informative/Explanatory
This informative report was produced in class.



Level M is end of 2nd grade

Why CCSS Samples are Not Useful



- Written over many days
- With help from adults
- Considered “published” pieces
- More polished than what typical students can produce independently
- Written by above-average students
- These samples do not help teachers with instruction or feedback

How we collected samples

A common prompt was supplied to all writing teachers, K-6

Students were given time to write, ranging from 20-45 minutes depending on grade level

Students produced writing independently: No teacher assistance was given

Legible, on-reading-level samples were selected

The Lucy Calkins rubrics were used to assess the writing

Samples that scored in the average range for their grade were selected as exemplars

Rubric for Narrative Writing--Kindergarten						
	Pre-Kindergarten 2pts	2.5	Kindergarten 3 pts	3.5	Grade 1 4 pts	Score
Structure						
Overall	The writer told a story with pictures and some "writing"	Mid-level	The writer told, drew, and wrote a whole story.	Mid-level	The writer wrote about when she did something.	
Lead	The writer started by drawing or saying something.	Mid-level	The writer showed what happened first.	Mid-level	The writer tried to make a beginning for his story.	
Transitions	The writer kept on working.	Mid-level	The writer put his ideas in order.	Mid-level	The writer put her ideas in order. She used words such as <i>and</i> , <i>then</i> , <i>so</i> .	
Ending	The writer's story ended.	Mid-level	The writer showed what happened last in her story.	Mid-level	The writer found a way to end his story.	
Organization	On the writer's paper there was a place for drawing and a place where she tried to write words.	Mid-level	The writer's story had a beginning, a middle, and an end.	Mid-level	The writer wrote her story across more than one page.	
Development						
Elaboration*	The writer put more and then more on the page.	Mid-level	The writer's story indicated who was there, what they did, how they felt.	Mid-level	The writer put a picture from his mind onto the page. He had details in pictures and words.	*x2
Craft*	In the writer's story, she showed what happened.	Mid-level	The writer drew and wrote some details about what happened.	Mid-level	The writer used labels and words to give details.	*x2
Language Conventions						
Spelling	The writer could read his pictures and some of his words. The writer tried to make words.	Mid-level	The writer could read her writing. The writer wrote a letter for the sounds she heard. The writer used the word wall to help her spell.	Mid-level	The writer used all he knew about words and chunks of words (<i>ap</i> , <i>it</i> , etc) to help him spell. The writer spelled all the word wall words right and used the word wall to help him spell other words.	
Punctuation	The writer could label pictures. The writer could write her name.	Mid-level	Spaces between words, lowercase letters unless capitals needed, used a capital to start every sentence.	Mid-level	Sentences ended with punctuation. Used a capital for names. Used commas in dates and lists	

*double points

Total: _____

No. of Points	Scaled Score	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3	Sample 4	Sample 5	
2-22	2						
22.5-27.5	2.5						
28-33	3	30	30	30.5	32	32	
33.5-38.5	3.5						
39-44	4						

Why Use the Lucy Calkins Rubrics?



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Expectations for young writers and teachers have never been higher.

Using the Calkins Rubrics at Grade Levels Will:

- Clarify shared goals for writers
- Norm expectations across grade levels
- Help teachers become expert at providing effective feedback to writers
- Help establish grade level curriculums in writing

What we learned about our writers

On-level readers are able to write to the expected “average” level on Calkins’ developmental rubrics (although not all did so)

Below-level readers exhibited lower skilled writing

Above-level readers tend to display more skilled writing

Classrooms in which daily writing practice happened produced more skilled writers

Our early elementary students need more handwriting instruction and practice

Daily Writing Produces Tremendous Growth

Beginning of the Year

Student writing will resemble writing from the previous year... or lower

End of the Year

Student writing will resemble the “on-level” skills in the rubric... or higher

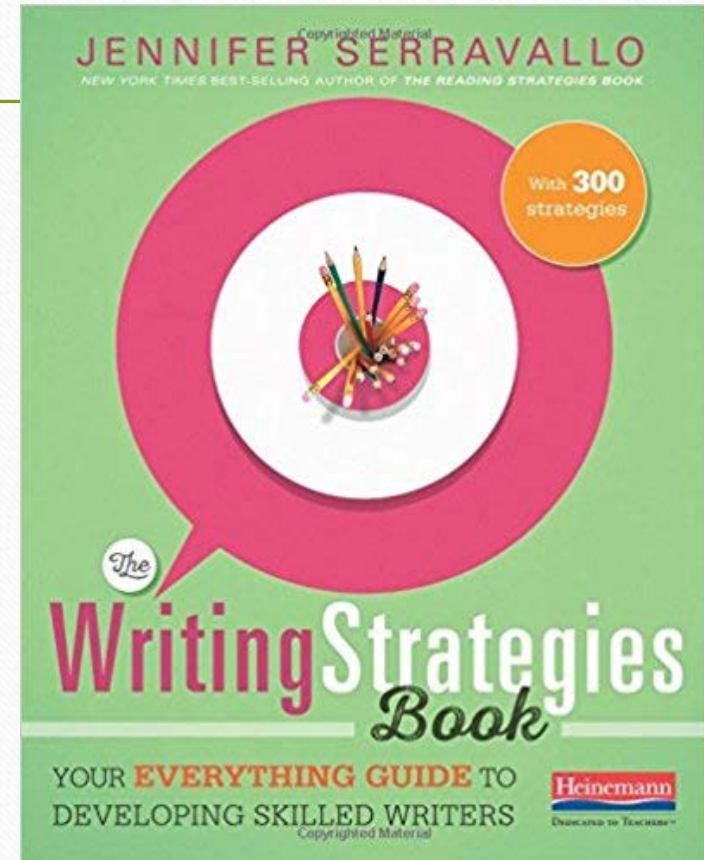
**Unfortunately, summer loss is experienced
with writing as well as reading**

Next steps

Copy and distribute the Narrative Exemplar Booklet to teachers

Collect exemplar samples for Informational and Opinion/Argumentative? Decision needs to be made by the Writing Committee

Continue with our writing study and discussion group



Questions?

