



Grade 7 Writing

Personal Narrative Scoring Guide April 2014

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Personal Narrative Prompt

Look at the picture below.



Sometimes we have to rely on ourselves to solve problems.

Write a personal narrative about a time when you worked out a problem on your own. Be sure to write about your experience in detail and relate how this experience made you feel.

Score Point 1

The narrative represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the narrative is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies or literary devices that are only marginally suited to the narrative task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. Because the narrative is presented in a random or illogical way, the writer is not able to convey a sense of the experience.
- ❑ Many of the details do not contribute to the narrative. The writer's lack of focus on a specific personal experience weakens the unity and coherence of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer's narrative presentation is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the story line. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections makes one or more parts of the narrative unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of the narrative is weak because the details are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient. They do not contribute to the writer's portrayal of the experience.
- ❑ The narrative is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the narrative as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer fails to establish a realistic situation, present motivations for behavior or actions, or show any awareness of changes or insights that developed as a result of the experience.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the narrative purpose. The word choice impedes the writer's ability to relate the experience clearly or to convey a sense of its importance or meaning.
- ❑ Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, weakening the effectiveness of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

Have you ever been in a small catastrophe?

Let's say you fell off your bike so hard that you broke your ankle and you couldn't get back up. Things like that happen in everyday life. That doesn't mean you just lay there until someone comes to your rescue. NO! that will just make the way you feel about how you are able to handle it; worse.

Remember life has bumps in the road, but there is always another way to get through it. You can either wait for someone to help, or you can be strong and figure out a way to get back up with the other leg. The stronger you are the easier situations are going to get for you. People have faced bigger challenges on their own. That means it's not impossible; hard, but not impossible.

I hope this passage may encourage some readers to have faith in themselves.

Score Point 1

The writer begins this response with a hypothetical situation about falling off a bike and then offers a number of general ideas about the best way to deal with life's challenges. Because the response is an explanation rather than a personal experience, the details are inappropriate to the narrative task, resulting in a very limited writing performance.

It was a very hot day so
I went to ride my bike around
and I was coming down very
very fast that my chain fell I
was mad but thank god my dad
always told me to carry this tool
in case my chain falls, so I start
it fixing it my both hands were
covered with oil and I was
very hot and I was sweating
a lot that I smell like skunk
I was done fixing the bike
I took the bike home to
put more oil and when I
got there my dad told me that
I look like a pig and smell
like a skunk but I fixed the
bike by my own with no
help next time I will always
carry that tool in case
it happen again but I have
fun fixing the bike by my
own with no help from
friend or my dad.

Score Point 1

In this very limited response, the writer focuses on a time his chain broke while he was riding his bicycle. Although he maintains an appropriate narrative form and includes specific details about having the tool he needs to fix the bike, the numerous errors in word usage and absence of sentence boundaries disrupt the fluency of the writing. The student's lack of control at the word and sentence level causes the narrative to be ineffective.

When I was a little kid use to break and make messes a lot.
One day my Mom told me to fix it by myself. that was the
day I learned to fix my problems by myself.

I was playing roughly when my toy went Snap. Luckily
it was a snap on toy. After a few try's I snapped it on
like a dog snaps at you.

I was having so much fun I didn't Relize the mess.
Mom was going to back in 30 minutes. I Rushed Like A-
ndrian peterson to get that mess cleaned up.

I was riding my Scooter when I fell I saw there
was a rock in the chain. I took it off. I felt like
Handy Mandy Fixing things.

I fixed all those problems by myself. It gave me the
Confidence that I can fix anything. no matter what
the problem is.

Score Point 1

In this unfocused response, the writer briefly recounts three times she fixed a problem by herself (snapping a toy back into place, cleaning up a mess, and fixing the chain on a scooter). However, these experiences are unrelated, and the abrupt shifts from one experience to another cause the narrative presentation to be weak. In addition, the lack of details about any of the experiences further weakens the development, resulting in a narrative that is insubstantial. Overall, this response represents a very limited writing performance.

I got up really early getting ready for school. we was going on a feild trip and I had to be there at 8:30 a.m. so I got my clothes and went to eat. when I got done eating I want out side to get on my bike. I looked down and my wheel was flat so I had to try to fix. mommys car was massed up and if I walked I would have massed the bus so I had to get my bike fixed by someone that could work fast and time was going by fast so I had just did the best I could. I fixed it rite so I got on my bike and road it to school. I was happy of my self for doing that so when I got to school my teacher said you made it just in time was about to leave I got lucky

Score Point 1

In this ineffective narrative, the writer briefly describes her day, from waking up early to discovering the flat tire on her bicycle to getting the tire fixed to arriving at school in time to catch the bus for a field trip. Although the writer explains why she has to fix the flat tire by herself, the details about the actual event are too vague and insufficient to convey a sense of the experience or its importance. In addition, usage errors and the misspelling of age-appropriate words (I want out side, massed the bus, car was massed up, I was happy of myself) disrupt the fluency of the writing.

Score Point 2

The narrative represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the narrative is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies or literary devices that are only somewhat suited to the narrative task. The writer is able to convey some sense of the experience but may not be able to communicate its importance or meaning.
- ❑ Some details do not contribute to the narrative. The writer may focus on a specific personal experience but may not sustain that focus, limiting the unity and coherence of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer's narrative presentation is inconsistent. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the story line. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the logical movement of the narrative or establish a link between the experience and its meaning.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of the narrative is minimal and remains at a surface level because there are few details, they are not always appropriate, or they are too general. For the most part, the details contribute only marginally to the writer's portrayal of the experience and provide the reader with little or no understanding of why this experience was meaningful.
- ❑ The narrative reflects little or no thoughtfulness. In some cases, the writer's response to the prompt is formulaic and demonstrates only a limited understanding of the writing task. In other cases, the writer establishes some elements of a realistic situation but may provide few motivations for behavior or actions. In addition, the writer may not address changes or insights that developed as a result of the experience.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the narrative purpose. The word choice limits the writer's ability to relate the experience clearly or to convey a sense of its importance or meaning.
- ❑ Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, limiting the effectiveness of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

At 7 o'clock on a Friday I was hungry. It was a Friday in the fall so it was nice and cool outside.

I was home alone while my parents were at a party, and my sister was at a friend's house. I couldn't find my phone to ask what to eat. Then I started searching through the pantry, but there was nothing to eat in the pantry. The next spot I looked was in the fridge, but still nothing. The last place I looked I found pizza rolls. They were in the outdoor fridge.

Now my problem was solved. I solved this problem of being hungry by finding food.

Score Point 2

Focusing on a time when he was home alone and hungry, the writer recounts how he methodically searched for food and where he finally found pizza rolls. The development is minimal because the few details the writer includes about the search for food contribute only marginally to the writer's portrayal of the experience and do not provide the reader with any understanding of why this experience was meaningful. Overall, this personal narrative represents a basic writing performance.

I have always worked out my problems. My parents would always tell me, "work out your own problems, because I'm never going to be here in life to help you out."

I was in 5th grade and my parents weren't home. I didn't have a key to my house. So, what I did, I sat there and I waited, until I got in a bad mood and try to figure a way inside the house. My house was locked like a bullet proof house.

I got really tired of being locked out of my house. When I figure out that my brother always has his window open from his room. So, I had to open the window and throw myself inside and open all the doors. That's why my parents always tell me to always figure out my own problems with out them.

Sometimes problems are hard to figure out. But, all you gotta do is think first and figure your problem out all by yourself.

Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance, the writer describes being locked out of her house, sitting and waiting, remembering her brother's open window, and finally using the window to get into the house. However, the writer's description of her dilemma is somewhat wordy, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sometimes weak. Both of these problems cause minor disruptions in the story line. Details remain at a surface level and reflect little thoughtfulness. In addition, sentences are not always controlled, and some conventions and spelling errors are evident.

A time when I had to solve a problem on my own wasn't a long time ago. Here is the story.

I was riding my bicycle to my aunts house. It's only about 30 min. away from my house. I was on a very buisy street when the pedal got stuck. I had to stop and go to a gasoline station to see what was going on. That's when I saw that some pebbles got stuck on the pedal. I used a wood chip to poke them out and a rock to hit the pedal back to it's original space.

I started riding again to my aunt's house. When I got there I realised that I rode for 5 min. and then the pedal got stuck. I had thought I rode for a longer time.

That is the time I had to fix a problem on my own. I hope to learn how to ride a skateboard or a car so I can fix them also. It was a really fun time fixing it. Let's see what other things I can break so I could fix them.

Score Point 2

The writer focuses on a time he used a woodchip to dislodge the pebbles that were stuck in the pedals of his bike so he could ride to his aunt's home. However, the development is superficial because the writer provides few specific details about how he solved the problem. In addition, the details he includes in the last two paragraphs (how long he had ridden; his hopes of learning how to ride a skateboard or a car) do not contribute to his portrayal of the experience. Overall, this narrative is basic because it neither reflects any thoughtfulness nor does it communicate how the experience made the writer feel, except to say that it "was a really fun time."

I can fix lots of things. Such as clocks, staplers, and stuffs like that, but the most that I fix good is probably jewelry.

Say that your necklace broke in half, I can fix it. That happened to me once when I was about 8 years old. I loved my necklace and one day it just broke. I was so upset and was about to put it in the trash can. All of a sudden I thought why throw it away when you can fix it. Then I got what the problem was, and fixed it. I was so happy of myself that I showed it to my mom. My mom told me that she was proud of me and that I had grown up. I got my chin up high with pride.

I learned that some things I can fix myself. Also that you should try something instead before I say that I can't.

Score Point 2

The writer of this basic writing performance tells the story of repairing a necklace rather than throwing it in the trash can. She establishes a realistic situation in the beginning of the second paragraph, but her description of fixing the necklace is general (Then I got what the problem was and fixed it), causing the development to remain at a surface level. However, her description of how she felt when the necklace broke and how her mother's reaction made her feel is stronger, allowing the writer to convey some sense of the experience overall.

Score Point 3

The narrative represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the narrative is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies or literary devices that are adequately suited to the narrative task. The writer is able to clearly convey the experience and adequately communicate its importance or meaning.
- ❑ Most details contribute to the effectiveness of the narrative. The writer focuses on a specific personal experience and generally sustains that focus. The narrative is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- ❑ The writer's narrative presentation is adequately controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the logical movement of the narrative and establish a link between the experience and its meaning.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ Specific details add some substance to the narrative. For the most part, these details contribute to the writer's portrayal of the experience and provide the reader with some understanding of why this experience was meaningful.
- ❑ The narrative reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer demonstrates a good understanding of the writing task by establishing a realistic situation, providing reasonable motivations for behavior or actions, and addressing (at least to some degree) changes or insights that developed as a result of the experience.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is, for the most part, specific and concrete. It reflects an awareness of the narrative purpose. Generally effective word choice allows the writer to relate the experience clearly and to convey some sense of its importance or meaning.
- ❑ Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the narrative.

"Omg! what's that," I asked my little Sister. Out of the corner of my eye I had seen two little fluff balls hopping around. "Aren't they our baby bunnies," asked my little Sister.

"Yes!" I said, "The cage is broken." I ran towards the cage and I checked what was wrong. They had broke the latch were they get in. I got a paper clip and tried to put it all back together. It didn't work.

"^{My} Ian come quick!" my sister shrieked. I sprinted towards her. She couldn't find the bunnies. I searched, and searched but they were nowhere to be seen. Then I problem solved.

They like it when I feed them carrots. So I'll put carrots near the cage and they'll come on their own. we set the trap. Then we waited and waited. Then they approached the cage and "bam" they were in. Then I got rope and tied close the cage.

I then learned to be a responsible owner and to care for my animals. Also to check the latch every now and then.

Score Point 3

The writer faces a problem when his two pet bunnies break the latch on their pen and escape. The writer uses dialogue and specific details to establish a realistic situation and move the story line forward. His concrete word choice reflects an awareness of the narrative purpose and allows him to clearly relate the experience. At the end of the narrative, the writer briefly reflects on the lessons he's learned. Overall, the writer demonstrates a good understanding of the narrative writing task.

It was a dark and gloomy night. My mom had went to the grocery store and left my sister and I alone. I was sitting on my bed while my sister was laying down on the couch in the living room. There was still alot to be done that night. One of the things that needed to be done was rearranging my room. I figured since I was technically all alone anyways why not trying to rearrange it myself.

First I started moving my bed, which by the way is huge. I then moved my dresser, couch, table, chairs, TV, and my desk until it was all fitting into place. I was proud of what I did. I felt like something wasn't right but I knew it had nothing to do with my room. I walked out of my room and into the kitchen. It was trashed. Somehow my dogs had destroyed the garbage can, sending trash throughout the house. I was furious. I thought to myself "If I could rearrange my room by myself I could clean my house by myself".

I quickly picked up all the trash and put it in a garbage bag. Again I became proud of myself. To my surprise my mom had walked inside. she was so happy to see what I had done. This was the time when I worked out a problem on my own.

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory writing performance, the writer focuses on a time when she rearranges her room and cleans up her house after her dogs destroy a kitchen garbage can. She links these experiences in two ways: by placing them in the same time span (when her mother is at the grocery store) and by providing a transitional sentence in which she applies what she's learned from the first experience to the second (If I could rearrange my room by myself I could clean my house by myself). Because the writer links these experiences, she is able to add some substance to the essay. Overall, the writer includes details that contribute to the portrayal of the experience, and the narrative conveys a sense of why the writer was proud of herself.

My dad drives off to work, leaving my mother and I at home for the day. I stretch myself across the couch, playing my phone over my head. Our dog ^{Lucky} begins her 'YAPPING' in the kitchen. Figuring she's hungry I walk into the kitchen. Just in time to see my mom collapse. I'm at her side in almost a second. Her attacks have been often but none like this, ever. With my phone still in my left hand, I begin to punch the numbers for my dad. It rings once. It rings twice. There's no time. I pull myself from her tightening grip and run into the restroom closet. Frantically, I search for her inhaler, my eyes begin to fog in. Focus. I was going to have to solve this problem on my own. After what seems like hours my hand wraps around the inhaler. No time to hesitate now. I hand it to my mom, who is shaking so much I have to help her use it. Relief sways over me as my mom turns back to normal color. This was a problem I solved on my own, and I was proud of myself!

Score Point 3

The writer recounts the time he has to figure out how to help his mother when she collapses during an asthma attack. The narrative is narrowly focused, and the sentence-to-sentence connections sufficiently support its logical movement and establish a link between the experience and its meaning. Sentences are controlled, and specific language and details add some substance to the narrative (I pull myself from her tightening grip; After what seems like hours...Relief sways over me). In the last paragraph the writer provides an extension that is separate from the narrative; however, this paragraph is unnecessary since the writer has woven the extension into the narrative itself by clearly conveying how he felt at each point during the experience.

Years ago when I was seven, my mom and I went to Walmart to buy groceries. While she was busy browsing, I wandered off looking for the candy aisle. I walked around for about five minutes until I realized I was lost. Somehow, I ended up near the shoes section and my mom was nowhere in sight. Being the little kid I was, I panicked.

At that moment, I had two choices. I could either wander around aimlessly looking for her or I could find another adult to help me. I trusted my instincts and walked up to the closest cashier to tell her I was lost. However, a couple seconds later I saw my mom rushing toward me. A wave of relief washed over me. I was safe.

Even though I was in trouble for wandering off, I was proud. I had solved my problem all on my own. That day I learned that there is one person who will always be there for you no matter what and that person is you. This lesson is of great value to me because of the problem it helped me solve. This experience left me feeling proud and also gave me the courage to trust my instincts because all I really had to do in that situation was trust myself. I had to believe.

Score Point 3

In this concise narrative, the writer focuses on a time when he became lost while shopping with his mom in Walmart. In the first two paragraphs, the writer recounts the experience itself. Specific details provide the reader with a sense of the writer's panic at being lost and his relief at being reunited with his mom. In the last paragraph, the writer "steps back" from the details of the experience to reflect on the insights he gained from it. The combination of the experience and reflection demonstrates that the writer has a good understanding of the writing task. In addition, his word choice and control of sentences and conventions contribute to overall effectiveness of the narrative.

Score Point 4

The narrative represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the narrative is appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies or literary devices that are particularly well suited to the narrative task. The writer is able to skillfully convey the experience and communicate its importance or meaning.
- ❑ All details contribute to the effectiveness of the narrative. The writer focuses on a specific personal experience and sustains that focus, strengthening the unity and coherence of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer's narrative presentation is well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the logical movement of the narrative and reinforce the link between the experience and its meaning.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ Specific, well-chosen details add substance to the narrative. These details contribute significantly to the writer's portrayal of the experience and provide the reader with a clear understanding of why this experience was meaningful.
- ❑ The narrative is thoughtful and engaging. The writer demonstrates a thorough understanding of the writing task by establishing a realistic situation, providing plausible motivations for behavior or actions, and revealing changes or insights that developed as a result of the experience.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is vivid and expressive. It reflects a keen awareness of the narrative purpose. Effective word choice enables the writer to recreate the experience in a way that conveys its importance or meaning.
- ❑ Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the narrative.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency or clarity of the writing. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the narrative.

The Grocery Store looked as busy as ever. I could see people in every aisle, every section, bustling about. Of course, I was used to this, because I had been here many times before with my Mom.

This time, we had come to buy milk, eggs, Bisquick, and some apples. Mom explained that we were getting these items in the order that they were on the list this time. So first we went to the Dairy Aisle to get our milk and eggs. She always lets me check the eggs for cracks. As Mom put the eggs in the cart, I admired the Ice Creams. Oh, they looked so delicious! I turned my head to ask Mom if we could get one box of Fudge Bars.

She wasn't there. I looked in the other direction; no such luck. Panic struck me like lightning. I ran out of the aisle, but she was nowhere to be found. I was lost! I tried to calm down and think of how I could find her.

Hang on a moment. What else were we getting? Bisquick... and apples! Mom would have gotten the Bisquick by now, so I hurried to the Produce section. Five seconds after I got there, Mom appeared and ran to me. She immediately hugged me and kissed me with happiness.

So from then on, when we went to the store, we looked out for each other more carefully. We also always followed the order of the items on the list. So if I ever got lost again, I could do what I did that day.

Score Point 4

This accomplished writing performance focuses on the day the writer got lost in a grocery store. She wastes no space, launching right into the narrative from the first sentence. Vivid, expressive word choice and well-controlled sentences add substance and a sense of authenticity. During the time she is lost, the writer uses internal monologue to reveal her emotions as well as her thought process, allowing the reader to visualize the entire experience. In the concluding paragraph, she offers a brief but thoughtful reflection on the impact of the experience on her and her mother.

It was a hot summer day, I was with my best friend Isabel . We were super excited to explore the big backyard of my wonderful and new house. We hadn't been in the tree house yet so we decided to take a look inside.

It was a nice size tree house, but had graffiti all over the walls. Isabel and I were enjoying the beautiful view of my huge backyard when we started to get hungry. I was about to open the door when Isabel yelled "STOP." I gave her a confused look and she pointed at the door. Right then I knew immediately what she was talking about. She had seen the massive wasps nest right beside the door. The wasps nest that I was oblivious to. I absolutely hate wasps. I think they are disgusting, scary, and just plain gross. So when I saw all of those wasps on that one nest, I flipped out. We couldn't open the door or we would get attacked. So I went for the window. Luckily my trampoline was right next to tree house, so when I jumped I landed right on the trampoline and ran as fast as I could to the house. Isabel quickly followed behind me.

When I jumped out of the tree house I was scared because I'm afraid of heights, but I'm more afraid of wasps. Although, I also felt very courageous because even though I was scared I still found a way to get Isabel and I safely out of the tree house!

Score Point 4

In this accomplished narrative, the writer recounts the resourceful way she and her friend Isabel avoided a nest of wasps in the tree house. The writer establishes a realistic situation and provides specific, well-chosen details to reveal her reaction to the discovery of the nest and the reason for her motivation to escape. Strong sentence-to-sentence connections allow the writer to craft a skillfully paced narrative that is engaging and thoughtful. In addition, a consistent command of conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the narrative presentation.

The TV turned on with a loud "Click." I was flipping through the channels when a commercial caught my attention. "Please donate to Saint Jude Hospital. All the money you donate will go straight towards our cancer research. Please help the people in need." This was followed by some pictures of sick children, and families crying. It really touched me. I knew I had to do something about it.

After thinking long and hard about all the fundraisers I could do to help, I decided to go old school. I was going to have a lemonade stand!

The day of the stand came. I was so excited to be able to help people, and have fun while doing it. I dragged my little plastic table outside, and set it up at the end of the drive way. Then I brought out the sweet lemonade. It was so cold, with ice-cubes floating at the top. I plopped it down and waited for business. People came, and went. I had to refill my pitcher a couple of times. It was great.

Night was quickly approaching so I packed up, and went back inside. I ran to my room and slipped on some comfortable clothes. I then speeded towards the kitchen, and dodged any obstacle that crossed my path. I dumped out all my money and began to count.

"Twenty-five dollars!" I shouted! I got up, and spun around. I had did it! I raised money for the hospital all by myself! It felt great. I ran to go get a crisp new envelope from the drawer. I shoved the money in and licked it closed. I put a stamp, and a address in the corner. I ran as fast as I could to the Mail box, and put it in.

It felt wonderful to do something for someone else who needed it. I will definitely do it again!

Score Point 4

The writer tells about the time he was inspired to help sick children by selling lemonade to raise money for St. Jude Hospital. The specific description of the TV commercial in the opening paragraph establishes the writer's motivation to make a donation. The specific details he includes—from setting up the lemonade stand to counting the money he made to sending off his donation—contribute significantly to his portrayal of this experience and communicate why it was so meaningful to him. Overall, this narrative represents an accomplished writing performance.

"Three weeks? Oh no. Oh no. Oh no. Is this a joke?" My mind raced. I had just been informed of a piano recital that was coming up. Normally, I wouldn't be the least bit fazed by a recital, except for the small, petty fact that I had absolutely no idea how to play my song. Different thoughts kept flooding my head. I would look crazy up on stage playing notes completely different than what was in my song. I would embarrass my siblings, and disappoint my parents. Thoughts like these kept popping into my head like popcorn in a microwave as I rode home from class.

I walked into the house and stared at the piano. Its keys shook as I closed the door. The pedals eerily chanted, "practice, practice, practice..." I knew it was what I needed to do. There was no way I would be able to get anyone to solve this problem for me. It was all on me. I sat down on the cool bench and pulled out my music. "An hour," I told myself. "I'll practice for an hour." I set goals for myself each day like this one and made sure I followed through on all of them. And I did. Each day I worked harder than the last, up until the day of the recital.

The day of the recital came, and I worried I would forget everything I worked on. But I confidently walked up onto the stage. I played my song, and I played it perfectly.

After I played, I felt proud. Not only had I played perfectly, but I was only able to do it because of my hard work and motivation to practice each day. This problem was solved by me and me alone. I didn't rely on anyone else to help me get out of a hole I dug myself, and that made me feel proud.

Score Point 4

This skillfully crafted narrative focuses on a predicament the writer has created for herself by failing to learn the performance piece for her piano recital. In the first paragraph, she conveys the seriousness of her problem by imagining herself attempting to play a song she does not know. The narrative presentation is well controlled, with strong sentence-to-sentence connections that reinforce the relationship between the experience and its meaning. Specific, well-chosen details, such as the personification of the piano pedals, contribute significantly to the writer's portrayal of the experience. In addition, her purposeful sentences and strong conventions enhance the overall effectiveness of the narrative.