



Grade 4 Writing

Personal Narrative Scoring Guide

April 2014

Grade 4 Writing Personal Narrative Prompt

Look at the picture below.



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Sometimes it can be hard to decide between one thing and another.

Write about a time when you had to make a choice.

Be sure to —

- write about a personal experience
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

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 or present motivations for behavior or actions.

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.
- ❑ 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.

"Beep! Beep! Beep!" My alarm clock went off. I jumped out my bed and went to take a shower. I hopped out the shower to brush my teeth. Suddenly my bus pulled up. I zoomed down stairs, ran out side, and got on the bus. We finally arrived at school. We got off the bus and went to the lunch room. The bell had rung every body had went to class. Hey! Mrs. ^{Green}. I greeted my teacher. The bell rung again. It was time to go home. I got on the bus and headed home. We finally arrived. I went in the house and did my homeworks. My dad finally got off work, we left to go get me a cat. I had to chose one and I chose the right one.

Score Point 1

The focus of this response is the day the writer acquired a pet cat. The writer maintains an appropriate narrative form and develops the response with a step-by-step account of the day's activities. However, the details about getting ready for school, the school day, and arriving home from school are extraneous and do not contribute to an understanding of the choice the writer makes. The lack of meaningful development weakens the unity and coherence of the narrative, resulting in a very limited writing performance.

one time there were two things to do go to the beach
or skating and I said I don't know so then my mom
told me that you have to pick one and I said can I do both
no and I said ok well when I was thinking what to
do I was making some soup and then I told
my mom that I was almost
ready to pick one and she
said ok when I was thinking
what to do I ask my friends
to come over to pick the beach
or the skate park and they
said that is a hard choice
to pick and I said I know so then
my mom told five more minutes and
I was confused which one to
pick and then I said to my mom
I would go to the beach and she
said good choice and I said thanks
when are we going she said right now
ok and that what a hard choice
to pick

Score Point 1

In this very limited personal narrative, the writer focuses on the difficulty of making a decision about whether to go to the beach or go skating. The events of the narrative are ordered sequentially, but repetition about the writer's ambivalence as he talks with his mother and friends about which choice to make slows the progression of the story and limits its effectiveness. In addition, there is an absence of punctuation throughout the response. The lack of sentence boundaries reveals the writer's inability to construct basic sentences, further weakening the response.

As I was down to my last third, my dad said pick, and I chose baseball. "watching" he exclaimed! In baseball, hitting is the most fun thing there is. Home runs are great too. It's thrilling to feel and hear the bat pop after you hit it. Fielding is really exciting. When I'm pitching, no one, and I mean no one can catch up to me. Short stop is my favorite place to play because that's where all of the balls are basically hit. Catchers pretty fun too. You don't get as much hurt than you do in football. The only thing fun about football is that you don't get to get tackled.

As I said before, I don't get hurt much but when I do, it hurts like crazy. Like if you have to dig a ball in the dirt, or a ball hits you. Trust me, you'll want to cry then. Let me give you some catcher's advice, you need to stay hydrated or you'll probably just pass out.

When you get up there to bat, watch out where you stand because you could get pegged. And these hurt. So watch out for those fast pitchers and don't crowd the plate too much.

So know matter what, I'll always make the right choices. Even if there not always what I want, I'll still do it.

Score Point 1

The writer develops the response with general references to his own experiences playing baseball but does not focus on a specific personal experience. Although the opening sentence briefly establishes a narrative setting as the backdrop for choosing to participate in baseball, the rest of the development is focused on the various positions the writer has played, the differences between baseball and football, and the ways in which players can get hurt in baseball. Because the composition is in the expository rather than the narrative form, the response is inappropriate to the specific demands of the prompt. The result is a very limited writing performance.

It was one summer morning at my house. We were going to the petshop.

When we got to the petshop I saw a lot of animals like cats, dogs, fish, birds, gine pigs and a lot more animals. But my favorite was the fish or the dog.

I could only have one pet to take home but I wanted the dog and fish.

But I could pick only one pet. It was a hard choice. So after a long wait I chose the dog. That is a time I had to make a choice.

Score Point 1

In this very limited writing performance, the writer recounts a time she had to choose a pet. While the writer maintains an appropriate narrative form, repetition and wordiness about picking only one pet weakens the narrative presentation. The writer provides very few details about the visit to the pet shop, thereby limiting her ability to adequately portray the experience. In addition, word choice is vague, and sentences are simplistic. Overall, the weak development demonstrates the writer's lack of understanding of the narrative writing task.

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.
- ❑ 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.

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.
- ❑ 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. The narrative conveys little sense of why the experience was important to the writer.

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.
- ❑ 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.

Have you ever had to make a choice? Well I have and it was hard to choose where to go. This is a time I had to make a choice.

One Friday afternoon I had to make a choice. The choice was pretty hard to make. The choices are either going to my friends house to swim or go to a football tournament. I actually wanted to go to both but I could only go to one, so it took time to think and choose one choice. Then I finally made a choice. I decided to go to my friends house to swim. I thought I made a bad choice, but then my sisters said that the tournament was actually pretty boring so I made a good choice.

I was glad to go swimming with my friend but I felt bad for my sisters because they went to the football tournament. This was a time I had to make a choice.

Score Point 2

The focus of this response is the time the writer opts to go swimming instead of to a football tournament. While the writer maintains an appropriate narrative form overall, the formulaic first paragraph, which summarizes what the student will write about, does not contribute to the development of the experience. The writer provides surface-level details about the difficulty of making a choice; however, repetition weakens the narrative presentation. Although the writer reflects briefly on the decision to go swimming, the story line conveys little sense of the experience or its importance to him. Overall, the response reflects a basic writing performance.

Hard Choice

Have you ever made a hard choice? No, well never do so, it's hard to just pick one choice. Especially when you have to go somewhere else or leave someone or something. I had to do a choice like that.

It all began when I was playing my best in a soccer game, until a coach told my dad and cousins if I wanted to play with his team. They were going for classic already! When the game was over, we had won two to zero. Then Alicia, Toni, and my dad came up to me and said if I wanted to play with another team. Then I told him if there was another choice. Then my dad said "or stay in this team. Then I thought for a long time. Maybe even an hour I took. Then my cousin told me to pick already, and then I decided to stay with my old friends. That's the time I made a tuff choice and picked the right one.

Score Point 2

After a brief explanatory introduction, the writer presents a narrative about the time he had to decide whether to join a new soccer team. The writer presents a scenario where his successful playing led to an opportunity to play on a new team. However, the writer repeats the word "then" to move the story line forward, creating some jerkiness from sentence to sentence and weakening the narrative presentation. The writer attempts to develop the response with brief details about the afternoon he made the decision, but the development remains at a surface level. The writer's word choice is sometimes imprecise, and sentences are only somewhat controlled, limiting the effectiveness of the narrative. Overall, the writer is able to convey some sense of the experience, resulting in a basic writing performance.

One day we were going to my cousins house in Dallas. It was scorching hot because it was summer.

When we got there my dad said we had a choice of swimming or playing a board game. we all chose swimming. When we got back we hunted for treasures, and then it was time for bed.

When we woke up it was time for breakfast, and we watched TV.

My cousin came up to me and whispered, "You want to play outside or play WII. I said "outside."

After that my dad said I had another choice. I started going crazy. After I calmed down he said I could either go to a race or stay here. I said, "Nascar."

That was the most choices I've ever made in my whole crazy entire life.

Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance, the writer recalls the time he went to visit his cousins in Dallas and had to make a series of choices. The writer develops the story line by relating several decisions he made about which activities to pursue during the trip. There are adequate transitions between decisions, and the fact that all the choices were made on the same day helps unify the response. However, the lack of focus on one particular decision limits the opportunity for meaningful development. Because the writer attempts to address multiple choices, the details remain at a surface level and reflect little thoughtfulness. Since the details are so brief, the writer is able to convey only some sense of the experience.

"Mom, can you help me decide on which shirt to buy?" I asked. I was at Target deciding on which shirt to buy, "Should I buy this one or that one?" I thought.

I was at Target with my parents and sisters on a clear, bright, sunny, day. My mom told me to pick some shirts to buy. I couldn't find any shirt that looked awesome or cool, but then, I saw two beautiful, awesome, and colorful shirts. One read, "I love Paris" and the other one had Minnie Mouse. Both were cute, but I didn't know which one to buy. I asked my sisters for advice, but they didn't know. Finally, I asked my mom. "Mom, can you help me decide?" I asked. "Both shirts are beautiful!", she exclaimed. "You can buy them both".

Now I have two new shirts, but now I need some pairs of shoes. Can you help me decide? Please.

Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance about making a shopping decision, the writer maintains an appropriate narrative form and focuses on the deliberation involved in making the decision. The writer establishes a realistic situation in the introductory paragraph by asking her mother several questions. However, these same questions are repeated later in the story line, creating some repetition in the narrative presentation. The writer uses description and dialogue to briefly develop the narrative, although her word choice—specifically her use of adjectives—is general (clear, bright, sunny day; beautiful, awesome, and colorful shirts) and does little to further the reader's understanding of the experience. The dialogue with her mother helps advance the story; overall, however, the writer is able to convey only some sense of the experience.

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.
- 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.

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.
- The narrative reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer demonstrates a good understanding of the writing task by establishing a realistic situation and providing reasonable motivations for behavior or actions. The narrative conveys some sense of why the experience was important to the writer.

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.
- 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.

Splat! ^{Nicole} threw a paint ball at my window and yelled, "time for school!" I threw open my window and answered, "Be there in a second." When I came out she said, "Let's take a shortcut." No, I replied, "Let's take the bus, well um. Let me think," and that was a choice I had to make.

I chose to take ^{Nicole's} shortcut. So we went in her backyard and climbed her fence and then we were in a ditch. We walked for a while and came to a grassy green hill. We climbed to the top and standing high on the hill you could see our school.

We didn't want to be late so we kept on walking. Then we came to a flower bed of blue bonnets it was so beautiful. Then we went into garden with trees high above us. Then it got completely dark and started to rain.

Finally we saw students and my friend ^{Kristen} walking to school. I was so glad we took the shortcut it was a fun adventure. Ring the bell rang. We made it on time but both of us forgot something, our backpacks

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory writing performance, the writer chooses to take a short cut to school with her friend and develops the response with a description of their brief adventure. The use of dialogue in the opening paragraph effectively establishes a realistic narrative situation. For the most part, sentence-to-sentence connections guide the reader through the experience, logically moving the story along. Specific details related to the sights and obstacles the girls encounter as they make their way to school—a grassy green hill, a flower bed of bluebonnets, the darkness before the rain—add some substance to the narrative. Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, and the writer demonstrates an adequate command of age-appropriate spelling.

When I made a choice

"Wake up!" my dad screams. Today is the big day. We are going to Academy so I could buy you one thing you like. When I heard my dad say, "anything you want" I jumped out of bed like if snakes were biting me. When we got to Academy, I ran to the electronic section. I saw cool thing there like a control remote helicopter, bikes, and many other things. Suddenly, I saw an xbox 360. I was so excited. I knew that I wanted the Xbox more than anything in Academy. I was about to call my dad so I could tell him that I wanted the xbox, but then he started calling me so I could see something else. I noticed that he wanted me to see a four wheeler. I told myself, "That is one of the coolest four wheelers I have ever seen. My dad asked me do you want the motorcycle?" I shouted "yes!" Then I remembered that he was going to buy me one thing. I knew that I was going to use the motorcycle more, so I told my dad that I wanted the motorcycle. He said, "OK". When me and my dad left so we could go home the first thing I did was ride the motorcycle on a hot, sunny day.

Score Point 3

The writer focuses on the time his father took him to Academy to choose one special present. For the most part, sentence-to-sentence connections support the logical flow of the narrative, as the writer describes waking up, looking at the electronics merchandise, moving to the four wheelers, making his choice, and eventually riding his newly purchased motorcycle. Specific details and concrete word choice contribute to the writer's portrayal of the experience. Sentences are varied and adequately controlled. This narrative represents a satisfactory writing performance.

"Hurry up dad," I said. I am in Maui, Hawaii and I'm about to make a huge decision between surfing and not surfing. It's hard because I saw some surfers wipe out and I thought it would hurt. Whenever I saw those wipe outs I became afraid of surfing.

"I made my decision," I said. "I will surf until the end of sunlight, until the sky is dark," I said again. Then my parents signed me up for some surfing lessons. I started right away with my lessons teacher **Surfer Bob**. We did all of the basics in the sand, which was pretty easy.

Now it is time to go to the waves. So me and **Surfer Bob** went out into the waves. I actually should have picked the other choice because I was very nervous. Then **Surfer Bob** said, "Here comes the perfect wave for you, get ready." Oh no, I thought in my head.

(boom) the wave hit me and I did my strategies, then we stopped. I did it, I rode the wave, I overcame my fear. I told my parents and they were proud of me. I am proud of my self too. This was a time I made a decision.

Score Point 3

The focus of this satisfactory writing performance is the time the writer decides to try surfing while in Hawaii. Strong sentence-to-sentence connections support the logical movement of the narrative, as the writer relates different facets of his surfing experience: overcoming anxiety, taking lessons, going out into the water, and successfully riding the wave. The specific detail about being afraid of wiping out not only adds some thoughtfulness to the development but also establishes a link between his successful ride and its importance to him. However, the moment when the writer actually attempts to surf is too briefly presented to fully convey the experience. The writer's control of language and effective use of dialogue reflect a good understanding of the narrative task.

As soon as we got into the pet store I was so excited to get my first bunny. All I could see was bunnies jumping around in their cage's. "Which one are you going to pick ^{Erin} ? Sense you did good on your report card you can get whatever you want!" My mom exclaimed. I couldn't choose which one I wanted there was so many cute bunnies. "I can't choose Mom!" I yelled so we held some bunnies to see witch one I wanted. In the blink of an eye I saw those big brown eyes I knew I found the right bunny for me. It was the color of carmel chocolate. I just wanted to kiss it. "Thats it! I know just what to name her Carmel!" I yelled out. Everybody thought it was a great name. I couldn't belive I had a bunny! My brother and step sister both agreed that she was the cuteist thing ever. As soon as I saw her face I knew she was the one. She looked like a chocolate covered carmel candy. Im so happy I got her.

Score Point 3

In this concise, engaging response, the writer recalls the day she selected her pet bunny, Caramel, at the pet store. The opening sentence effectively establishes the setting and the choice being made, reflecting a clear plan for the story. The writer adequately uses dialogue to advance the narrative, and specific details about encountering Caramel for the first time add some thoughtfulness, conveying a sense of why the experience was important to the writer. The writer's use of language and command of conventions reflect an awareness of the narrative purpose and allow the writer to relate the experience clearly. However, in the last three sentences, the writer basically repeats several points she's already made about Caramel, causing the conclusion of the response to be somewhat weak. Overall, though, this narrative represents a satisfactory writing performance.

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.
- ❑ 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.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ Specific, well-chosen details add substance to the narrative. These details contribute significantly to the writer’s portrayal of the experience.
- ❑ The narrative is thoughtful and engaging. The writer demonstrates a thorough understanding of the writing task by establishing a realistic situation and providing plausible motivations for behavior or actions. The narrative conveys a good sense of why the experience was important to the writer.

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.
- ❑ 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.

Menus are overrated. Especially in icecream shops. Ever since I was 8, I just looked at the counter to see the flavors. They have the tubs right on it. But that was after I went to this supercool new icecream shop.

"Woah! This is awesome!" I shouted the second I walked in. Then I saw the line. My face fell. I'd have to explore later. That line was long! I walked to the end of the line, stopping on the squishy carpet that led to the counter. Even though the line moved fast, it was still a ten minute wait. When it was finally my turn, the person who would take my order switched with a bored-looking, tall, bald guy who completely blocked my view of the menu! I looked down at the cold as ice, steel counter and saw all the flavors staring up at me as if begging me to choose them. I don't know how it was possible, but somehow, I managed to choose. I got 1 chocolate and 2 mint scoops. That icecream was good!

Every day I beg to go back to that wonderful place. But it would be nice to not have to wait in line that long. My mouth waters like crazy when I think of that icecream. I HAVE TO go back!!!

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer sustains a narrow focus on the time he had to order ice cream without being able to see the menu. Using strong sentence-to-sentence connections, the writer controls the presentation of the story by carefully focusing on the most significant aspects of the occasion, building anticipation as he inches his way through a long line for ice cream, only to find that he must choose a flavor based on how the ice cream looks because his view of the menu is blocked. This story line supports his opening statement (Menus are overrated), strengthening the unity and coherence of the narrative and showing evidence of a deliberate plan. Varied, well-controlled sentences and strong conventions enhance the effectiveness of the narrative.

I love baseball. Every time I play baseball I forget about everything and just have fun playing the game. The only problem is that when a season ends you have to say adios to your old team and hello to a new one. The part that's tricky is finding a new team.

The Heat baseball team had invited me to try out for them, but I wasn't sure that I wanted to move up to the Big League. I had played in the Draft League for four years. I was not sure if I would be good enough.

Nevertheless I decided to try out. While my dad and I were driving I said, "I wonder what the team will be like." He told me not to worry.

When we arrived I introduced myself to my team. During practice we did fielding and batting. The whole time my teammates were yelling, "Two outs! Infield go one! Outfield go two!" And other things like that.

After practice ended I was amazed at how good the team was, but I didn't think I had made it. So while the other boys were talking with coach I was getting my bag and walking to the car. Then I heard a voice behind me. It said, "Congratulations welcome to the team."

Derek

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer recounts the time he successfully tried out for a more advanced baseball team. The writer uses an engaging introduction to establish his personal connection to the sport and effectively transitions to his first encounter with the new team during tryouts. In a display of skillful storytelling, the writer introduces a sense of self-doubt early in the story and makes several references to this self-doubt throughout the response. This strategy effectively builds anticipation and results in a satisfying conclusion, when the writer finds out that he made the team. Specific, well-chosen details about the tryouts as well as the writer's inner reflections add substance to the narrative, contributing significantly to the portrayal of the experience.

In or Out?

"Ow!" I yelled as I tried to pull my tooth out. "Why can't I do it!? I'm such a wimp," I cried.

I ran to the mirror. I just knew it was ready to come out! I tried again. Now it was hanging out of my mouth!

I pulled, and pulled, and then... "OUCH!" I screamed. It just hung there like a sloth on a tree.

My mom's friend ^{Don} offered to pull it out. "Please," I answered.

He reached in. "Wait, wait!" I cried. "Will it hurt?" I asked. He said no. He reached back in. "Hold on, hold on!" I yelled.

"In or out?" He asked. I couldn't take it anymore. I was shaking more than a puppy. My eyes started to water. "Just get it over with," I thought. "Out," I gulped scaredly.

Pop! My pain was all gone. (So was some of my blood.)

I will never forget the time I lost my tooth. I can still feel my hand pulling on it. From that day on, I will make more wise choices.

Score Point 4

In this engaging and well-controlled piece, the writer sustains a tight focus on the brief span of time when she must decide whether to pull out a loose tooth. The writer effectively controls the narrative presentation through the skillful use of both internal and external dialogue, conveying her ambivalence about which choice to make. Every detail contributes to the effectiveness of the narrative (e.g., the simile comparing the dangling tooth to a sloth) and adds significantly to the writer's portrayal of the experience. The writer's precise word choice and varied sentence structure further strengthen this response. These strengths reflect a thorough understanding of the narrative task and result in an accomplished writing performance.

Purr-fect Choice

One hot sunny day, I was walking home from school, when I heard a noise. Purrurr! What was that? Startled, I turned around and saw a kitten!

"Come here kitty, kitty! Come here!" I called softly. Quickly, the kitten jumped off of a log and ran to me! Carefully, I eased him off the ground and settled him in my totebag. I ran home to show my mom the kitten, when I heard a growl behind me!

GRRR! I ran home quickly, with excited barks following.

Once I was in my yard, I quickly turned around. A Labrador puppy followed me home! I ran inside my house yelling, "Mom, come here! Mom! Quick!" and ran back outside, with my mom following.

I showed my mom the cat and the dog. But mom said I could only keep one of them. So I began to think. We had a girl Labrador, who was about to have puppies. And we had zero cats.

This was a hard choice, but I had to do it. I dared to open my mouth.

"I made my choice," I replied. "I want to keep the cat!" So my mom and I gave the puppy to Erica. I decided to name the kitten, Pumpkin. I was on top of the world because this would be our first cat!

I took Pumpkin outside to play and after a few hours, I realized Pumpkin was a female! I was excited because she would have kittens in a few months. I decided that this was a very purr-fect day!

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer recounts the day she encounters both a stray cat and a stray dog and has to choose which one to keep. The writer uses strong sentence-to-sentence connections to enhance the logical flow of the narrative as she describes finding the kitten, discovering that a puppy had followed her home, deliberating about which choice to make, and finally deciding to keep the kitten. Meaningful transitions and varied sentences result in a narrative that flows well from one event to the next. Specific, well-chosen details about the walk home and her reasons for making the choice add substance to the narrative and contribute significantly to the writer's portrayal of the experience. In addition, the expressive word choice and consistent command of conventions further strengthen the response and reflect the writer's ability to skillfully craft a good story.