



Grade 7 Writing

Personal Narrative Scoring Guide March 2015

Grade 7 Writing Personal Narrative Prompt

Look at the picture below.



Sometimes our determination can be the difference between success and failure.

Write a personal narrative about a time when you were determined to do something. Be sure to write about your experience in detail and describe why it was important to you.

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.

One day I hanging out with my friend
then a man asked if I wanted to play football
so then he told me he had his own team so
then I said I was going to try it out so
then I told my mom then she said I
could but I would have to find away there
so then I was determined to play then
we started play but when my mom said I
could play so then I started sneak to
practice so then she said I can start back
play so then that when I tryed to ask the
coach so then he said yea so that whe my
mom came and told that we had to leave

Score Point 1

The focus of this personal narrative is a time when the writer was determined to play on a football team. The use of “So then” in place of end punctuation impedes the progression of ideas and demonstrates the writer’s inability to construct basic sentences. Vague and repetitive development hinders the clarity of the response, and the writer fails to demonstrate any insight gleaned from the experience. These inadequacies are consistent with a very limited writing performance.

Personal Narrative

I am taking the STAAR test to show whether I pass or I fail. I want to pass so I don't get held back a grade. The test would take a long time to complete, so it's always better to take your time. One by one I go through questions taking time to solve them. Some questions are hard but some are easy. I always read the question multiple times to understand what is the answer. Getting an answer incorrect is a chance between passing and failing. I focus on the answer choices then I pick one. I always check if that will be the one I want.

I can't rush to finish or I'm most likely to fail. As I go on answering questions, I get closer to finishing, but I still won't rush. I then get stuck on a question that is quite difficult. Then I get the answer and move on. Finally at the last question, it is the easiest of all, I view the choices, then I chose one, and hopefully I pass the STAAR test and go on.

Score Point 1

Instead of writing about a time when he was determined to do something, the writer offers a general explanation of how to go about taking a test. This explanation is not responsive to the specific demands of the narrative writing task. The piece is organized as a how-to essay, offering advice about taking your time and selecting the correct answer choices. The response as a whole demonstrates a general lack of understanding of the narrative purpose, resulting in a very limited writing performance.

It felt like it was yesterday, it actually was yesterday - but don't mind that so well I was determined to finish a race. I + started with me and my friend seeing how is the fastest out of both of us. But so far we haven't raced yet because we all ways forgot something to do back home or from school or something, like one time both of us got grounded because we forgot to feed our pet's for the first time ever. So we finally went to the park and right when we were about to race my mom called me and said come pick up the trash off the floor. and both of us got frustrated. after the weekend was over because I went out of town both of us were so pumped and I was determined to win. So both of us started running and as we were told the finish line were neck to neck I won. and I was determined to be a champion

Score Point 1

The writer of this very limited response struggles to stay focused on the determination to win a race. The extraneous information about forgetting to do things, being grounded, and picking up trash off the floor does not respond to the specific demands of the prompt. The actual narrative about racing is limited to one sentence and is therefore insufficiently developed. The writer offers no reflection about the importance of the experience. In addition, the writer does not demonstrate an adequate command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling and usage conventions. The variety and density of the errors interrupt the fluency of the writing. Overall, the writer demonstrates a lack of understanding of the narrative task.

When I was 7 yrs. old,
I went to a camp. I don't
remember the name All I know
is that it was in Las Vegas,
Nevada.

I was the strongest,
fastest & smartest one there. We
held some camp competition games
I knew what to do on all the
games.

They really depended on me.
They always trusted me. I
was determined to help them
win the competition games. I was
helpful all the time. It was like
I was the most popular kid.

It was really great,
fun, & a learning experience
for me, a big one.

Score Point 1

In this response, the writer offers only a vague account of the events that took place at an unnamed camp in Las Vegas. The extraneous explanations about the writer's importance to the other campers do not advance the story line or contribute to the portrayal of the experience. Overall, the weak narrative presentation and vague development result in a very limited writing performance.

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.

Were you ever determined to do something. I was determined many times. When I get out of my comfort zone I'm determined to try it.

One day in sixth grade, they were asking us what sports we were going to try-out for in seventh grade. The most common was volleyball. So I said "Volleyball + Basketball." I knew with my height they wanted me to try-out for those sports. So when I got in seventh grade I tried-out for volleyball. A week later, I got the letter and they said I made the team. When that season was over I try out for basketball. Four days later, I got the letter and I said I made the team.

So, try-out for these sports was important to me because if I hadn't tried out I wouldn't have all the friends I have. Also wouldn't have figured how athletic I am.

Ok, now you heard mind, can I hear yours. Think back, remember when you were determined to do something in your life. So pick one of the most important one.

Score Point 2

The narrator in this composition is determined to get out of her comfort zone and try out for both volleyball and basketball in seventh grade. Although the writer demonstrates a basic awareness of the narrative purpose, the development of the narrative is minimal. The writer provides very little specific detail about what occurred in the process of trying out or how she felt as these events transpired. In addition, the writer frames the essay with an expository introduction and a persuasive conclusion that add no development to the story line. Some reflection is provided, but overall the general word choice limits the writer's ability to relate the experience clearly, resulting in a basic writing performance.

A time when I was determined to do something is in soccer. Sometimes our determination can be the difference between success and failure. When I started off soccer I was bad at soccer then, I came up to a good soccer player.

First, I all started after school when we had practice. When we first started I was scared of the ball because it was going to hit my face. I was happy to hit the ball up in the sky and I was a defender. Defenders can't let the ball go in the goal.

Then, we had a game and I was showing determination. I was ready to kick that ball up high and I did. I was determined to show her that I would work harder on my kicks. Determined is going to show determination.

Last, I was showing off all my skills I got and I almost made the ball in the goal. My Mom was proud of me and I was proud of myself everyone was cheering for me. My coach said she was proud of me that I was showing determination.

Score Point 2

The focus of this narrative is the narrator's determination to improve her soccer skills. The organizing structure of the piece is evident but not always appropriate to the narrative purpose. Rather than sustaining focus on a particular moment in time, the writer presents a general summary of the events, which are separated by perfunctory transitions (First, Then, Last). The overall surface-level development contributes only marginally to the writer's portrayal of the experience and results in a basic writing performance.

I remember one day in the summer I wanted to learn how to do the doggy Paddle. I knew I couldn't do it. All of my brothers and sisters could do it so I was determined to learn. I told my sister to help me learn and she said "OK."

As I walked over to the new swimming pool I saw that it wasn't really that big and I said to my sister "I can't wait to go swimming." I put my foot in the water and it was so freezing so I went in last because my sister and nephew would probably make it warm by running and swimming in there.

I went in the pool and saw the clear water I wanted to doggy paddle but I just stood there and I thought "I didn't think I couldn't do it. I saw my sisters floating and swimming. but I just watched them."

When I got tired of watching them I asked my sister to help me doggy paddle and she said "OK." when she taught me how to do it I thought "I guess this isn't so hard after all."

That is how I learned how to doggy Paddle last summer.

Score Point 2

The writer of this narrative recalls the summer that he was determined to learn how to doggy paddle. The organizational structure is evident through the use of appropriate transitions; however, the development about the temperature of the water and how the relatives in the pool might alter that temperature do not contribute to the portrayal of the writer's experience. The surface-level development of actually learning to doggy paddle is abruptly summed up in the second-to-last paragraph. In addition, the concluding remark does not reflect any insights that the writer developed as a result of the experience. While the writer demonstrates some understanding of the narrative task, organization and development at this level reflect an overall basic writing performance.

Have you ever been determined to do something? I have! Well here's my story.

I was heading to school like any other day, I was in the 5th grade. And as I was heading to class, I saw students talking about the spelling Bee coming up. And as I entered the class the teacher was handing out words to study for the spelling Bee. And when I got home I was determined to win first place in the spelling bee competition. I studied every day and every night. Until the day came for the contest, I was really excited for. They called up my name and for a surprise I got it right. And I made it to the finals. And by the end I got a little bit upset when I didn't win. But I ended up in second place! And I knew I had tried my best that's why I'm proud of myself. For making it that far in the finals!

Score Point 2

In this personal narrative, the writer is determined to win first place in the fifth-grade spelling bee. The writer is able to convey some sense of the preparation for the event and making the finals, but there is minimal development about the progression of the actual spelling bee. The introduction of the response doesn't contribute to the story line, and the conclusion contributes little thoughtfulness. Although the writer does not reach the desired outcome of winning the spelling bee and comes in second place, the narrative is still responsive to the demands of the prompt. Overall, the organization and development of this response best reflect a basic writing performance.

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.

"That Sounded Great, Bryce!" my mom says.
"Thanks." I reply.
It's the day before my audition for Symphonic Band. At my school, Tyson Douglas Middle School, we have three bands: Concert Band, Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble. I'm currently in concert band, which is the last one.
I have been in Concert Band since the beginning of the year. I like Concert Band, but all the songs are so easy and most of the people here are the kind that like to use their instruments as machine guns while the teacher is talking. Luckily for me Mr. Gonzales, the Symphonic Band Director, has said he wants to have two more trumpets from Concert Band move up to join Symphonic Band and I and my friend Gage want to be the ones to move up.
The next day I'm the first one to test. "Okay Bryce, Pick a song and play when your ready." Mr. Gonzales says. I play the song "The Crowd of Cattle" because out of the three he gave us it's the one I'm most prepared for. Afterwards he says "OK Bryce, thank you." and I go to my next class. The next week me and Gage are accepted into Symphonic band and we couldn't be more excited!
Through this experience I have learned that if I'm determined to do something I can make it happen by preparing and not giving up, and if I'm determined enough and prepared things will usually go my way.

Score Point 3

In this response, the narrator is determined to have a successful audition for Symphonic Band. The writer provides some background information about the Tyson Douglas Middle School bands and expresses a desire to rise above the level of Concert Band. Dialogue advances the story line logically from sentence to sentence, and although the writer misses an opportunity to engage the reader with more detail at the critical moment of the audition itself, overall the development of the narrative is substantive. The writer reflects on the importance of the experience as teaching him to not give up. The writer's word choice is generally effective and reflects an awareness of the narrative purpose. Additionally, the writer's command of conventions strengthens the quality of the narrative.

I was 5 years old when I first tried getting on a bike. It seemed impossible to ride, but I knew I could do it, because I had seen my parents ride bikes.

At this age I was small so even climbing up on the bike was hard, it seemed like a mountain. I had made a commitment to wake up early the next morning, and try out the bike. I stuck to it, because that next morning I was ready to go.

I walked into the garage and faced my enemy "the bike". I walked to it and hopped on. As I took off the kickstand I realized that this was going to be harder than I thought. But I was determined to learn how to ride a bike. It was "Round 1" just me and the bike. I pedaled out to the street, and rode for 5 feet before falling down. As I got up I saw scrapes on my elbows and knees. And then came the pain, but I knew I couldn't quit now. "Round 2". As I pedaled past my falling point the time before, I said to myself "I can do this." That little spark of motivation allowed me to pedal around the whole block! I could finally do it, I was able to ride a bike.

Score Point 3

The writer of this narrative focuses on his determination to ride a bike. Describing the bike as "the enemy" engages the reader and offers insight into how the writer feels about this challenge—i.e., that the bike is something to be defeated. Meaningful transitions enable the writer to convey his experience and to demonstrate a good understanding of the narrative task. Occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization do not hinder the writer's portrayal of the experience. Some thoughtful reflection about not quitting in spite of pain is woven into the story line, which is an acceptable approach.

There I was, on the starting line of the track, waiting for my coach to blow her whistle. It was just three weeks before I would fight for my spot in the 400 at the track meet. I had to beat everyone but two people to make the cut. When the ringing of the whistle hit my ear, I took off. I finished the race in fifth so I just need to work my way up to at least third and I was determined to do it.

Everyday I would go out to the track by my school and train, and every morning I practiced at school. Making this race was important to me because my older brother has always ran it, and I wanted to follow in his footsteps. Since he always did so good in the race, I talked to him about it, he said to stay hydrated so I can become stronger and faster. I trained like this for three weeks and finally, the day had come. I put my heart into the race and ran as fast as I could but only finished in fourth. I would not be running the 400 at the next meet. I was upset about not making it, but I knew that I can always come back next year and fight for my spot back.

I learned that it is good to be determined no matter what. Win or lose you are still pushing yourself to get better and better everyday.

Score Point 3

In this personal narrative, the writer is determined to earn a spot running the 400 meter race on the track team. The writing is focused and concise, with specific details about preparing for the competition, staying hydrated, and training relentlessly. To convey the importance of making the cut to run the 400 meter race in the next track meet, the writer reflects about wanting to follow in his brother's footsteps. Ultimately, the writer came in fourth place and did not make the team. This is an acceptable approach to the prompt, which does not require writing about succeeding, but about being determined. The conclusion adds some thoughtfulness to the essay as the writer reasons that determination is beneficial because you are pushing yourself to get better, even if you do not win.

"L-E-T-S-G-O, lets go Bucks!" All fourteen of us, cheerleaders, shouted. It was the first pep rally, for the first football game, and I could feel the hundreds of eyes on us. This is the moment I had been waiting for. The moment that all of our hard work and determination had paid off.

During the summer, after we made the squad, is when the real work begins. "Point your toes on your jumps!" Kate screams.

Kate is one of our coaches, and she shows no mercy for our exhaustion. After four hours a day for three weeks, it is time to go to cheer camp.

Camp, the most exhausting part of being a cheerleader, is here. Eight ours a day, for three days, of solid cheer. We learned a variety of dances, chants, and cheers. Finally it is time to come home!

After a month of downtime, it is time to start practice again. We had two weeks to prepare for the first pep rally, and the pressure was on. We were back to practicing for four hours a day. After two weeks of this, it was finally time!

As I stood in that gym, I realized why cheer was so important to me. It was important because I put so much hard work and effort into it. All summer I had been so determined to do well at the pep rally. That is the moment I realized, that with hard work and determination, the sky is the limit.

Score Point 3

This narrative is focused on the writer's determination to succeed at cheerleading camp and to perform well at pep rallies. Using effective transitions to switch from the present in the introduction to the practices at school and camp leading up to the pep rally enhances the effectiveness of the narrative. Some ideas about the activities at camp are not as developed as the timeline of the practices, but overall the writer has a good understanding of the narrative writing purpose. The reflection about hard work and determination being the keys to success (the sky is the limit) reveals some thoughtfulness and contributes to 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 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.

My dad's voice filled the room. "Whoever completes this challenge gets twenty bucks," he said. Our eyes widened and our mouths hit the floor. Slowly I turned to look at my brother and he did the same. "I'm getting those twenty dollars," I thought. "No matter what the challenge..." My dad cut me off mid-thought. "Clean your room the quickest," he said. I face palmed heavily. "You have got to be kidding me," I thought.

I bolted up the stairs and nearly broke through my bedroom door in the process. I pulled the covers up on my bed and neatly placed the pillows. I threw all my rotten clothes in a basket and folded my laundry. I re-arranged my toys, books, and pencils and checked every nook and cranny for food crumbs. I took a look at my room and noticed that it didn't look like a pig pen anymore. A door slammed shut behind me. I realized it was my brother and dashed out the door. I whizzed past him and almost ran over my dad. "William is the winner," he said.

I threw my hands up in the air and screamed "Yes!" before collapsing onto the floor. I will never forget this moment because everytime I want to give up I remind myself of my win and strive to keep pushing onward.

Score Point 4

The writer of this accomplished narrative is determined to win Dad's challenge to see who can clean his room the fastest in exchange for the grand prize of twenty dollars. By narrowing the focus to a specific moment in time, the writer is able to craft a coherent story with a unified purpose. All details contribute to the effectiveness of the narrative. The writer skillfully incorporates dialogue and imagery into the narrative to establish a realistic situation and to move the action forward. Specific, well-chosen details and the writer's reflections convey why this event was meaningful. The varied and controlled sentences and vivid word choice enable the writer to recreate a true-to-life experience that reflects a keen awareness of the narrative purpose.

I twisted my sweaty hands together as I waited in the waiting room for my number to be called. A month ago, I had submitted my application for the region orchestra. The moment I handed in my application I was determined to make it into the region orchestra. I practiced like a mad man thinking about nothing else. Negative thoughts swirled around me as I waited. What if I didn't make it? What if —

"Number 204, please come in."

I did as said while unknitting my sweaty, trembling fingers. And then, I started. I played the intro smoothly with perfect rhythm and intonation. My fingers and bow were perfectly in sync. Suddenly, my finger hit a C natural instead of a C sharp. I got in a fix and started losing my tempo. Finally, my A string couldn't take it anymore and snapped. It hit my finger like a whip, making a wound on my left index finger. I got out of the room and received a band-aid. But no matter how big the band-aid is it could never cover up my mistake.

After a few hours, they posted the people who got in. No surprise, I didn't get in. But I was only 5 ranks below! This was important to me because without my determination to practice I would have been at least 20 ranks below. I won't let 5 ranks stop me so I will try again.

Score Point 4

The focus of this composition is the narrator's determination to make it into the regional orchestra. The writer sustains focus on the critical moments of the audition, strengthening the unity and coherence of the narrative. The introductory paragraph establishes a realistic situation, clearly conveying what is at stake for the narrator and the nervousness he endured before being called into the audition. A balanced use of precise and figurative language creates suspense as the writer conveys the moment when a string broke and injured his finger, demonstrating a keen awareness of the narrative writing task. The magnitude of the experience is portrayed in the narrator's thoughtful reflection that "no matter how big the band-aid is it could never cover up my mistake." Even though the writer does not make it into the regional orchestra, this narrative is still highly responsive to the specific demands of the prompt.

I am not one to lose and I do not accept failure. So, when my friend's older brother, **Mason**, challenged me to a bike race around the block, I immediately accepted. We placed our bikes just behind the stop sign and waited for my friend to say 'go'. The second the word left her mouth, we bolted down the road. **Mason** was ahead, and I pushed myself to go faster, faster, faster. I refused to lose this race, and I would not back down. The second stretch was downhill, and I finally passed him. He saw me and forced himself to go faster. Legs burning, heart pounding, I went faster and faster, knowing that the next stretch was uphill and knowing that I would slow down tremendously.

I rounded the corner, with **Mason** hot on my heels. I refused to let my legs give out, refused to fall behind, refused to lose. My lead slowly got larger as I rounded the last corner, leading to the last stretch. **Mason** was a few feet behind, but I didn't slow my pace. I came to the stop sign and rolled into the grass. I climbed off my bike and collapsed on the lush lawn. **Mason** arrived a few seconds later and said one word. Rematch. But I am not one to lose, and I won't back down, so I accepted.

Score Point 4

In this personal narrative, the writer makes every word count. The word “determination” is never used, but there is overwhelming evidence of the writer’s determination to win the bike race. The writer demonstrates a thorough understanding of the narrative writing task and uses specific, well-chosen details and varied sentence structures that all combine to enhance the effectiveness of the essay. This accomplished narrative is engaging and thoughtful, clearly conveying the writer’s perspective and the significance of the bike race. The concluding sentence further defines the depth of the writer’s determination to win.

Sweat trickled down my face as I stepped in the batters box. With one foot out, I looked at the third base coach for my sign. He clinched his hands together which meant hit away. I then gathered myself up and looked at the pitcher in fury.

The world seemed like it was going in slow motion and all I was thinking about was the cruel comments I had always lived with. "Hey Shorty" one person would yell, "come on Shortstack" by the other. Although it doesn't affect me any more, I use it to get determined and motivated.

Confident but not anxious, I saw the pitcher nod his head. He smirked in a devilish way and I could tell he thought it was an easy out. However, he should've been nervous because the game was on the line with one out and a runner on second and third.

His leg rocked in the air then he strided out toward home. The ball seemed as if it floated at me asking me to crush it. My eyes got huge as I started my motion. As I flung the bat at the ball with a powerful but smooth swing, I heard "ding." The ball soared like a rocket as it found the gap in left-center field. I bolted around first base and found my self standing on second with the go-a-head run scored.

Proud, my teammates banged on the dugout knees cheering in triumph. We ended up winning the game by one after shutting them down on defense.

Score Point 4

This accomplished narrative begins in the heat of the action of an emotionally-driven baseball game. By sustaining focus on a specific personal experience, the writer is able to fully examine the situation with clarity and depth. Reflections about the derogatory comments other players expressed to the narrator indicate that much more is at stake than merely winning the game. The writer's motivations are clearly conveyed, and the writer is able to skillfully capture the intensity of the duel between batter and pitcher using purposefully-chosen details. In addition, the use of figurative language to describe the ball coming toward the writer reflects a keen awareness of the narrative task.