

Grade 4 – Personal Narrative Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about insects and ant colonies. You are given two articles about ants and ant colonies. Read the sources carefully so you can **write a story** about shrinking to the size of an ant, falling into a hole in the ground, and becoming part of an ant colony. When writing your story, find ways to use information and details from the sources to improve your story about becoming part of an ant colony.

Scores, Justification of Student Evidence, and Suggested Areas of Student Improvement

Ideas and Content: 5

The student's writing is thorough, creative, and demonstrates strong writing skills with a well-developed plot, rich details, and engaging storytelling.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	
✓ Writer's Purpose and Main Ideas Are Clear and Engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The story is unique and imaginative, immediately drawing the reader in with a dream sequence.○ Example: <i>"One dark night, tucked away in my bed, I dreamed something that was beyond reality. It was something that could never happen to anyone but me."</i>○ This sets up the story well and makes the reader curious about what will happen next.
✓ The Writer Develops a Situation and Events for the Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The sequence of events is logical and well-paced, with a clear beginning, middle, and end.○ Example: <i>"Next, the ant introduced me to many ants including the queen. The ant showed me many chambers like the food chamber."</i>○ The introduction of the ant colony's structure adds realism and depth to the story.
✓ Many Strong, Specific Details Describe Characters and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The student includes vivid descriptions and scientific details from the source material.○ Example: <i>"I saw many aphids producing honeydew. The aphids stepped out of their way to greet me."</i>○ This detail shows the student's understanding of how ants interact with aphids.
✓ Effective Use of Dialogue, Actions, Thoughts, and Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The character's emotions and reactions are well-developed, making the story feel more real.○ Example: <i>"I panicked wildly. I ran around the place in shock, but then I saw a hill."</i>○ The internal reaction (panic) followed by action (running) makes the transformation feel realistic.
✓ A Creative and Thoughtful Ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The ending connects back to the beginning and leaves the reader with a sense of wonder.○ Example: <i>"I woke up. I was in my bed. All that was on my mind was the ants."</i>○ This reflection adds meaning to the story rather than just ending abruptly.

Organization: 5

The student's writing demonstrates excellent organization, with a well-structured sequence of events, smooth transitions, and a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	
✓ The Writing Is Very Easy to Follow; the Sequence of Events Works Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The story follows a logical progression, making it easy for the reader to follow.○ Example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Beginning: The protagonist shrinks and enters the ant colony.○ Middle: The protagonist explores the colony, helps find food, and participates in defending against rival ants.○ End: The protagonist wakes up, but the final moment hints that the experience may have been real.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	
✓ The Beginning Is Interesting and Makes the Reader Want to Keep Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The opening is creative and engaging, setting up the dream-like quality of the story. ○ Example: <i>"One dark night, tucked away in my bed, I dreamed something that was beyond reality."</i> ○ The mystery and suspense in the introduction immediately draw in the reader.
✓ The Ending Supports the Events and Is Enjoyable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The conclusion wraps up the adventure effectively while leaving a bit of mystery. ○ Example: <i>"I did find a colony but, one ant looked like the ant that welcomed me. It trotted up to me and, climbed on my leg. There I knew it was the same ant. I grinned in happiness."</i> ○ The circular ending (starting with a dream, ending with a possible real-world connection) is a great storytelling choice.
✓ Transition Words and Phrases Make the Writing Easy to Follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student uses transitions effectively to guide the reader through the story. ○ Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"Suddenly,"</i> (signals an important change—shrinking) ○ <i>"Next,"</i> (moves the story forward to the colony tour) ○ <i>"Then, making it back to the colony..."</i> (smoothly transitions to the conflict) ○ <i>"Right then, I admired..."</i> (shifts to the final scene in the colony)
✓ Paragraph Breaks Are in Places That Make Sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student breaks up the text logically, making it easy to read. ○ Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each new major event gets its own paragraph, avoiding large blocks of text.

Voice: 5

The student's writing is engaging, expressive, and filled with personality, making the story exciting and enjoyable to read.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	
✓ The Writing Is Lively, Sincere, and Exciting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The narrative voice feels authentic, drawing the reader into the protagonist's experience. ○ Example: <i>"One dark night, tucked away in my bed, I dreamed something that was beyond reality. It was something that could never happen to anyone but me."</i> ○ The personal and mysterious tone immediately creates intrigue.
✓ The Writing Allows the Reader to Enjoy the Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The story has a great sense of adventure, making it fun to read. ○ Example: <i>"I panicked wildly. I ran around the place in shock, but then I saw a hill."</i> ○ The word choice ("panicked wildly") and short, urgent sentences make the excitement feel real.
✓ The Writer Is Clearly Interested in the Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student incorporates factual details about ants while keeping the writing engaging. ○ Example: <i>"I saw many aphids producing honeydew. The aphids stepped out of their way to greet me."</i> ○ This shows that the writer enjoyed learning about ants and included this knowledge in a creative way.
✓ Use of Humor and Emotion Enhances the Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The protagonist's reactions add humor and personality to the writing. ○ Example: <i>"I could not do it. I guess it is just their thing."</i> ○ This simple, funny reflection makes the writing feel natural and personal.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	
✓ A Thoughtful and Reflective Ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ending connects the dream back to reality in a meaningful way. ○ Example: <i>"I did find a colony but, one ant looked like the ant that welcomed me. It trotted up to me and, climbed on my leg. There I knew it was the same ant. I grinned in happiness."</i> ○ The sense of wonder at the end makes the reader think about whether the experience was real or not.

Word Choice: 5

The student's writing uses precise, varied, and vivid word choices, making the story engaging and descriptive.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	
✓ Words Are Interesting and Make the Writing Lively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student chooses dynamic words that enhance the excitement of the story. ○ Example: <i>"One dark night, tucked away in my bed, I dreamed something that was beyond reality."</i> ○ The phrase "beyond reality" adds mystery and intrigue.
✓ Words Are Precise and Varied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student avoids repetitive words and keeps descriptions fresh. ○ Example: <i>"We munched and crunched on this elegant fruit until I woke up."</i> ○ Instead of just saying "ate", the more descriptive "munched and crunched" adds imagery and sound.
✓ Concrete and Sensory Words Create Strong Mental Pictures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student paints vivid images through word choice. ○ Example: <i>"I saw many aphids producing honeydew. The aphids stepped out of their way to greet me."</i> ○ The phrase "stepped out of their way" makes the aphids seem animated and alive.
✓ The Words Fit the Purpose and Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The word choices match the fun, adventurous tone of the story. ○ Example: <i>"I panicked wildly. I ran around the place in shock."</i> ○ The repetition of action verbs conveys a sense of urgency.

Sentence Fluency: 5

The student's writing flows smoothly, is easy to read aloud, and contains a variety of sentence structures, demonstrating strong sentence fluency.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	
✓ The Writing Is Smooth and Easy to Read Aloud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The sentences are natural and engaging, making the story enjoyable to read. ○ Example: <i>"One dark night, tucked away in my bed, I dreamed something that was beyond reality."</i> ○ This sentence sets the scene beautifully and flows naturally.
✓ Sentences Have Different Lengths and Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student mixes short, punchy sentences with longer, descriptive ones for a dynamic rhythm. ○ Example of short sentence for emphasis: ○ <i>"I woke up."</i> (Creates a dramatic shift from the dream sequence to reality.) ○ Example of longer, descriptive sentence: ○ <i>"The soldier used an odor to warn the ants just like the other ant did."</i>

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	
✓ Sentences Begin in Many Different Ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student varies sentence openings, avoiding repetition. ○ Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"One dark night, tucked away in my bed..."</i> (sets the scene) ○ <i>"Suddenly the terrarium expanded greatly."</i> (signals change) ○ <i>"Then, making it back to the colony..."</i> (moves action forward) ○ <i>"I woke up."</i> (short and impactful transition)
✓ Sentence Patterns Are Varied	
✓	The student does not rely on the same sentence structures, keeping the writing fresh and engaging.

Conventions: 4

The student's writing demonstrates adequate use of conventions, but some errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar require editing.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	
✓ Capital Letters Are Usually Correct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student correctly capitalizes the first word of each sentence and proper nouns (e.g., <i>Sabrina, Daphne, I</i>).
✓ Dialogue Formatting Could Be Stronger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are no dialogue sentences, but if added, the student would need to practice correct punctuation (e.g., commas before quotation marks).
✓ Common Words Are Spelled Correctly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most words are spelled correctly, with only a few errors.
✓ Most Sentences Contain or End with the Correct Punctuation Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student uses appropriate periods and commas in most places. ○ Example: <i>"I woke up. I was in my bed. All that was on my mind was the ants."</i> ○ The punctuation creates a dramatic pause that enhances the ending.