

Grade 5 – Personal Narrative Writing Work Sample: Approaching

Task: Your class is studying about oceans and animals that live in these oceans. You are given three resources about whales. Read the sources carefully so you can **write a story** about a family that goes on vacation to a place right by the ocean. They go out on a boat ride and spot a huge creature coming out of the water. It's a whale! Tell the story of what happens when the family sees the whale. When writing your story, find ways to use information and details from the sources to improve your story.

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

Ideas and Content: 3

The student's writing demonstrates progress toward meeting grade-level expectations but lacks depth in storytelling, detailed descriptions, and character development. The story includes a whale encounter and some factual details but needs stronger engagement and elaboration.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	
✓ The Writer Identifies a Situation and a Whale Encounter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The student establishes a boat ride and a whale sighting, which aligns with the task prompt.○ Example: <i>"Then there was a whale. Then it jumped then it went back down."</i>○ The key event happens, but it is stated simply without much description or buildup.
✓ Some Relevant Whale Information from the Sources Is Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The student mentions bubble-net feeding, which shows some connection to the research materials.○ Example: <i>"The bubbles were coming up. The bubbles got bigger. There were more bubbles. The fish were there. The fish were in the bubbles. The fish were stuck. The whales ate the fish."</i>○ This correctly describes how whales trap fish using bubbles, but it lacks depth or explanation.
✓ The Story Needs More Descriptive Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The writing lacks sensory descriptions that make the experience feel real.○ Example: <i>"Then there was a whale. Then it jumped then it went back down."</i>○ How did the whale move? What did it look like? What sound did it make?
✓ Minimal Character Reactions and Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The writing states events but does not explore Noah's feelings.○ Example: <i>"Noah was happy. The whales were big. The boat ride was fun."</i>○ Why was he happy? Was he amazed? Nervous? Excited?

Organization: 3

The student's writing follows a logical sequence of events but lacks smooth transitions and a strong sense of pacing. While the story has a beginning, middle, and end, the events feel disconnected, and the conclusion is abrupt.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	
✓ The Story Follows a Logical Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The events progress in a way that makes sense:○ Beginning: The family goes on a boat ride.○ Middle: They see a whale and observe its feeding.○ End: Noah reacts to the experience.○ Example: <i>"Then there was a whale. Then it jumped then it went back down."</i>○ The sequence is clear, but the pacing is too fast.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	
✓ The Beginning Does Not Build Suspense or Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student starts the story abruptly without setting the scene. ○ Example: <i>"Noah and his family got on the boat. Then there was a whale."</i> ○ This does not prepare the reader for the excitement of seeing a whale.
✓ The Events Feel Rushed Without Smooth Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student moves quickly from one event to the next without transitions. ○ Example: <i>"The bubbles were coming up. The bubbles got bigger. There were more bubbles. The fish were there. The fish were in the bubbles. The fish were stuck. The whales ate the fish."</i> ○ This reads like a list rather than a flowing story.
✓ The Story Has an Attempt at a Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student ends the story with Noah's reaction, showing that the experience had an impact. ○ Example: <i>"Noah was happy. The whales were big. The boat ride was fun."</i> ○ While this wraps up the story, it lacks depth and reflection.

Voice: 3

The student's writing shows some personality and engagement, but it lacks vivid emotions, character reactions, and an engaging tone. The story tells what happened but does not bring the reader into the experience.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	
✓ The Writing Shows Some Interest in the Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student includes a basic storyline with a whale encounter. ○ Example: <i>"Noah was happy. The whales were big. The boat ride was fun."</i> ○ This gives a basic reaction but lacks depth in emotions.
✓ Some Excitement Is Implied in the Whale Encounter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student describes the moment the whale appears, which creates a sense of discovery. ○ Example: <i>"Then there was a whale. Then it jumped then it went back down."</i> ○ This moment could be expanded with stronger emotional reactions.
✓ The Writing Lacks Character Emotion and Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Noah does not express excitement, fear, or wonder about the whale encounter. ○ Example: <i>"The whale was big. The boat ride was fun."</i> ○ These statements tell the reader how Noah felt but do not show it.
✓ The Writing Lacks a Sense of Wonder and Adventure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student states facts but does not describe how the moment felt. ○ Example: <i>"The fish were stuck. The whales ate the fish."</i> ○ This explains what happened but does not capture the excitement of witnessing it.

Word Choice: 3

The student's writing uses basic words to describe the story, but lacks variety, vivid descriptions, and sensory details that would make the whale encounter more engaging.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	
✓ Some Words Accurately Describe Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student uses basic vocabulary to describe what happens. ○ Example: <i>"The fish were stuck. The whales ate the fish."</i> ○ This explains the event correctly, but it lacks engaging language.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	
✓ The Student Includes Some Words Related to the Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student mentions bubbles, fish, and whales, which connect to the sources. ○ Example: <i>"The bubbles were coming up. The bubbles got bigger. There were more bubbles."</i> ○ This shows understanding of bubble-net feeding but lacks depth.
✓ The Writing Uses Simple, Repetitive Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student relies on basic words that do not create vivid images. ○ Example: <i>"The whale was big."</i> ○ How big was it? What did it look like? ○ Example revision: ○ <i>"A massive humpback whale, as long as a school bus, soared out of the ocean, its dark blue skin glistening under the sun."</i>
✓ Lack of Sensory Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student does not include sensory details (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell) to enhance the setting. ○ Example: <i>"The boat ride was fun."</i> ○ How did the boat feel? What sounds were there? Was the water rough or calm?
✓ Stronger Action Words Would Improve the Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student uses basic verbs like 'was,' 'jumped,' and 'ate' instead of stronger, more engaging action words. ○ Example: <i>"Then there was a whale. Then it jumped then it went back down."</i> ○ This does not capture the excitement of the moment.

Sentence Fluency: 3

The student's writing contains some sentence variety, but many sentences are short, choppy, and repetitive. The fluency of the story would improve with smoother transitions and more varied sentence structures.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	
✓ The Story Is Easy to Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student writes in a way that can be followed without confusion. ○ Example: <i>"Then there was a whale. Then it jumped. Then it went back down."</i> ○ While clear, the sentence structure is repetitive.
✓ Weak Transitions Between Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The story jumps from one event to the next without smooth transitions. ○ Example: <i>"The whale was there. Then it jumped. Then it went back down. The vacation was fun."</i> ○ There is no logical flow from one idea to the next.
✓ Some Sentences Flow Smoothly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student uses complete and logical sentences to tell the story. ○ Example: <i>"Noah and his family got on the boat. Then there was a whale."</i> ○ These sentences are grammatically correct but feel robotic due to their simplicity.
✓ Short, Choppy Sentences Reduce Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student writes many sentences that are too short and do not connect well. ○ Example: ○ <i>"The bubbles were coming up. The bubbles got bigger. There were more bubbles. The fish were there. The fish were in the bubbles."</i> ○ These sentences could be combined for a smoother flow.
✓ Repetitive Sentence Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student begins sentences in the same way, making the story sound monotonous. ○ Example: ○ <i>"The whale was there. The whale jumped. The whale ate fish. The whale went down."</i> ○ The repeated use of "The whale..." makes the writing feel flat.

Conventions: 3

The student's writing demonstrates some understanding of conventions, but spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors affect readability.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	
✓	Some Sentences Use Correct Capitalization and Punctuation <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The student capitalizes the first letter of sentences and some proper nouns correctly.
✓	Basic Sentence Structure Is Used Correctly <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Example: <i>"Noah and his family got on the boat."</i>○ This is a grammatically correct sentence.
✓	Missing or Incorrect Punctuation <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Some sentences lack commas or end punctuation.○ Example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>"The boat was wet The water was blue The whale was big"</i>○ This should have periods or commas to separate ideas.
✓	Spelling Mistakes Affect Readability <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Several words are misspelled, making sentences difficult to understand.○ Examples:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>"vacashun"</i> → <i>"vacation"</i>○ <i>"resuce"</i> → <i>"rescue"</i>○ <i>"antanea"</i> → <i>"antennae"</i>
✓	Run-On Sentences and Missing Commas <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Some sentences run together without proper punctuation.○ Example: <i>"Then there was a whale then it jumped then it went back down."</i>○ This sentence is confusing without commas or conjunctions.