

Grade 6 – Personal Narrative Writing Work Sample: Not Yet Meeting

Task: Write a story about getting your own personal robot. In your story, you have just received your new robot. You are excited to turn it on and see how it works. You press the button to turn on the robot.

Write a story about what happens next using information and details from the sources to improve your story.

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

Ideas and Content: 2

The student's story includes a clear narrative idea—a boy receives a robot toy that turns out to be alive—but the development of the story is uneven, overly general, and lacks elaboration. While the main idea is understandable and the story includes a basic sequence of events, it misses opportunities to build suspense, develop characters, or explain the robot's abilities. Specific and relevant details from the sources are not incorporated.

| Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content |
|---|--|
| <p>✓ Purpose and Main Idea Are Clear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The story focuses on Andrew discovering that his new toy robot is alive. This concept is clear and matches the writing prompt. ○ <i>"Then he got the toy and then they went home and he started to play his new toy right away."</i> ○ <i>"He just found out that his robot was alive."</i> | <p>➤ Robot Is Not Developed or Described</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The robot's design, behavior, features, or personality are not explained. ○ We don't know what it looks like, how it moves, or why it might be "alive." <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incorporate features from the informational sources, like sensors, speech functions, or mobility. ○ <i>"The robot had heat sensors in its feet and could scan the room for movement."</i> |
| <p>✓ Events Follow a Logical Sequence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is a beginning (buying the robot), middle (strange behavior), and end (discovery and action). ○ This structure helps the reader follow the story. | <p>➤ Details Are Too General or Repetitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many sentences repeat similar ideas (e.g., going to school, watching TV, going to the store). ○ Key story moments—like the robot going missing or being alive—are told quickly and without depth. ○ <i>"He couldn't find his robot so he looked everywhere and had found his robot in his closet."</i> <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoom in on key scenes and describe them with vivid, specific detail. ○ Instead of: <i>"He found it in the closet,"</i> try: ○ <i>"He opened the closet door slowly, heart pounding. The robot stood there, eyes glowing softly."</i> |
| ✓ | <p>➤ No Emotional or Reflective Moments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Andrew's emotions are stated briefly (<i>"he was shocked"</i>), but not shown or expanded. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add internal thoughts or reactions to help readers feel what Andrew is feeling. ○ <i>"His hands trembled as he backed away. Was this thing really...alive?"</i> |

Organization: 2

The writing shows an attempt at organization, with a basic beginning, middle, and end, but the structure lacks clarity in places. Some transitions are awkward, and ideas shift abruptly without strong connections. Paragraph breaks are inconsistently used, and the ending is rushed, missing an opportunity for reflection or resolution.

| Evidence from Student Work: Organization | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization |
|---|--|
| <p>✓ Basic Sequence of Events Is Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The story follows a logical order: ○ Andrew gets the robot → plays with it → it disappears → it's found → he realizes it's alive. ○ This supports readability and shows understanding of narrative structure. | <p>➤ Beginning Is Too Basic and Doesn't Engage the Reader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The story starts flatly: ○ <i>"One day Andrew was going to school."</i> ○ This doesn't draw the reader in or create curiosity. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begin with an action, a question, or an emotion to hook the reader: ○ <i>"Andrew rushed down the stairs—today was robot release day!"</i> <p>➤ Transitions Between Ideas Are Choppy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Events often jump from one to the next without clear signals: ○ <i>"He went to school and when he got back he went to the toy store."</i> ○ There's no context for why or how the actions connect. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use transition phrases to show changes in time or location: ○ <i>"After school ended, he begged his parents to take him to the store..."</i> ○ <i>"Later that night, strange things began to happen..."</i> |
| <p>✓ There Is an Attempt at an Ending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The final sentence provides closure: ○ <i>"Then Andrew went to bed and never saw the robot again."</i> ○ While this gives a conclusion, it feels abrupt and emotionally detached. | <p>➤ Paragraph Breaks Are Missing or Inconsistently Applied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The story appears in one large block of text, making it harder to follow when the setting or focus shifts. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add paragraph breaks when: ○ A new scene begins ○ Time passes ○ Dialogue or character focus shifts <p>➤ Ending Lacks Emotional Impact or Reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The final line ends the story but doesn't reveal how Andrew felt or what the robot's disappearance meant. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use the ending to reflect or hint at mystery: ○ <i>"He never saw the robot again—but sometimes, late at night, he thought he heard it moving."</i> |

Voice: 3

The writing shows a basic sense of the narrator’s voice, but the tone is mostly flat, and the character’s reactions are limited. While the story is understandable and has a consistent point of view, the narrator doesn’t show strong personality, emotion, or originality. The writing lacks the energy and expressiveness that would help the reader connect with Andrew or feel invested in the events.

| Evidence from Student Work: Voice | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Point of View Is Consistent<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The story is told in third person and remains focused on Andrew’s perspective throughout.○ <i>“One day Andrew was going to school...”</i>○ This helps the story stay clear and organized. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Tone Is Flat and Lacks Energy or Personality<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Much of the writing is straightforward and report-like:○ <i>“He ate breakfast and watched TV. Then he went to the toy store.”</i>○ These events are told without enthusiasm, tension, or style.➤ Recommendation for Student:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Infuse moments with emotion or curiosity to build voice.○ <i>“Andrew barely touched his cereal—he couldn’t stop thinking about the robot he saw in the ad.”</i>➤ No Humor, Style, or Suspense to Create Reader Interest<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The writing doesn’t use any lively or surprising moments that could add flavor to the narration or help readers care about the character.➤ Recommendation for Student:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Play with voice using sarcastic comments, suspenseful buildup, or quirky personality traits in the narrator or robot. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Some Character Reaction Is Present<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ There is at least one emotional response:○ <i>“Then Andrew was shocked. He just found out that his robot was alive.”</i>○ This shows the narrator is trying to communicate emotion, even if it’s not deeply developed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Emotions Are Stated, Not Shown or Explored<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Andrew is “shocked,” but we don’t know what he’s thinking or feeling in that moment.➤ Recommendation for Student:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Add internal dialogue or sensory reactions:○ <i>“Was it really moving on its own? Andrew’s heart thudded in his chest as the toy turned to face him.”</i> |

Word Choice: 3

The vocabulary used is mostly general and basic, which helps communicate the story clearly but lacks variety and vividness. The writer uses familiar words that do not add energy, imagery, or emotion to the story. Repetition and limited specificity keep the writing from being engaging or memorable, and there’s little use of topic-specific vocabulary related to robots or technology.

| Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice |
|--|---|
| <p>✓ Basic Words Communicate Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most word choices are clear and appropriate for a Grade 6 level: <i>"Then he got the toy and then they went home..."</i> <i>"He went to school and when he got back he went to the toy store."</i> | <p>➤ General and Repetitive Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story repeats common verbs like <i>went, got, found, was</i> without variety or precision. Example: <i>"He went to the toy store and got the toy."</i> These phrases feel flat and don't help the reader visualize or feel the experience. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace general verbs and nouns with more descriptive or specific alternatives: Instead of <i>"got the toy,"</i> try <i>"picked up the shiny robot box from the shelf."</i> Instead of <i>"he was shocked,"</i> try <i>"his jaw dropped as the robot's eyes blinked open."</i> <p>➤ Missing Domain-Specific Robot Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The robot is never described in terms of parts, technology, or functionality, and there's no use of science terms from the sources (e.g., sensors, processors, wheels, commands). <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate specific robot features to make the story more realistic and vivid. <i>"Its motion sensor lit up as Andrew stepped closer."</i> |
| <p>✓ Some Attempts at Emotion Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer uses words like <i>"shocked"</i> and <i>"mad"</i> to describe feelings, showing an attempt to connect the events to emotional responses. | <p>➤ No Use of Sensory or Figurative Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writing lacks sensory detail, comparisons, or creative phrases that could bring scenes to life. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add imagery and comparisons to create a stronger picture: <i>"The robot's head spun like a confused owl."</i> <i>"Its voice crackled like static from a walkie-talkie."</i> |

Sentence Fluency: 2

The writing shows some control of sentence structure, but many sentences are short, repetitive, or similarly constructed. While parts of the writing are easy to read aloud, other parts are choppy or awkwardly phrased. There's limited variety in sentence beginnings and length, and transitions between ideas often feel abrupt. The writing lacks the rhythm and flow of more developed narrative writing.

| Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency |
|---|--|
| <p>✓ Story Follows a Logical Flow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The events are ordered sequentially, so the fluency supports the structure of the plot even if sentence rhythm is lacking. | <p>➤</p> |

| Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency |
|--|--|
| <p>✓ Sentences Are Mostly Complete and Understandable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The writing avoids major fragments or run-ons and generally communicates ideas clearly. ○ <i>"He went to school and when he got back he went to the toy store."</i> ○ <i>"Then he got the toy and then they went home..."</i> | <p>➤ Repetitive Sentence Beginnings and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most sentences begin with <i>"He," "Then,"</i> or <i>"And,"</i> and follow the same pattern: ○ <i>"He went to the store."</i> ○ <i>"He got the toy."</i> ○ <i>"He went home."</i> ○ This repetition makes the writing feel flat and robotic. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use a variety of sentence beginnings, including transitions, prepositional phrases, or dependent clauses: ○ <i>"Later that evening, Andrew unwrapped his new robot."</i> ○ <i>"With the box in his hands, he raced to his room."</i> <p>➤ Little Variation in Sentence Length</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Almost all sentences are medium or short and do not shift in pacing for emotion or suspense. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use short sentences to add tension and longer ones to slow down and describe important moments. ○ <i>"He froze. The robot's eyes moved. Slowly, it turned its head toward him."</i> |

Conventions: 2

The student shows some control of basic writing conventions, including capitalization and end punctuation, but there are frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure that distract the reader. While the meaning is generally clear, the writing requires significant editing to improve clarity, flow, and correctness.

| Evidence from Student Work: Conventions | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions |
|---|---|
| <p>✓ Capitalization Is Generally Consistent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proper nouns (like Andrew) and sentence openings are mostly capitalized correctly. | |

| Evidence from Student Work: Conventions | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions |
|---|---|
| <p>✓ Most Sentences Are Complete with Correct End Punctuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The student uses periods at the end of most sentences, helping clarify where thoughts begin and end. | <p>➤ Frequent Run-On Sentences or Missing Commas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many sentences are long and lack necessary punctuation: ○ <i>"He went to school and when he got back he went to the toy store because he saw it on the news."</i> ○ Needs commas or division into two sentences for readability. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Break long sentences into shorter, clearer ideas, or use commas to separate clauses: ○ <i>"He went to school. When he got back, he asked his parents to take him to the toy store."</i> <p>➤ Spelling Errors and Homophone Confusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Words like <i>"wich"</i> (should be which) and possibly others (e.g., tense issues or phrasing like <i>"mad and got grounded"</i>) show confusion or lack of revision. <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use a spell checker, peer editor, or reference chart for common homophones and commonly misspelled words. <p>➤ Dialogue or Quoted Speech Not Properly Formatted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The story would benefit from punctuating spoken lines or internal thoughts more clearly (even though there isn't much dialogue here). <p>➤ Recommendation for Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learn and practice the basic format for dialogue: ○ <i>"It's alive!" Andrew shouted.</i> ○ <i>"What should I do?" he thought.</i> <p>➤ Verb Tense Shifts and Awkward Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tense is mostly consistent, but some sentences are awkward or grammatically off: ○ <i>"He was shocked. He just found out..."</i> ○ These could be revised for smoother phrasing and correct tense alignment. |

Suggestions for Teaching Strategies to Support the Student Sample:

The following contain suggestions for teaching strategies and do not encompass a complete list of possible strategies.

Ideas and Content:

Story “Zoom In” Practice

- Teach students to pick one event and expand it into 4–5 detailed sentences, using description, thought, and emotion.

Robot Feature Brainstorm

- After reading sources, students can make a list of robot parts or functions and choose two or more to include in their story.

Emotion & Action Pairing

- Practice writing pairs like: *“He felt scared. He hid behind the door.”* → then revise to combine emotion + action in stronger ways.
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Organization:

Story Map Graphic Organizer

- Have students plan their story using boxes for *Beginning – Middle – Climax – Ending* to clarify structure before writing.

Transition Word Toolkit

- Provide a reference chart with varied time-order and cause-effect transitions, and challenge students to use at least three in their draft.

Paragraph Sorting Activity

- Give students a cut-up version of their own story (or a model) and ask them to break it into logical paragraphs to reinforce when to start a new one.
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Voice:

Character Thought Bubbles

- Have students insert thought bubbles at key story moments to practice writing inner thoughts and reactions from their character’s point of view.

Voice-Tone Rewrite Exercise

- Choose a paragraph and ask students to rewrite it in a different tone (funny, scared, excited) to explore how voice can shift the feel of a scene.

“Show the Feeling” Anchor Chart

- Teach emotion through action and body language rather than direct statements:
 - Instead of *“He was scared,”* try *“He stepped back, eyes wide, knees trembling.”*

Suggestions for Teaching Strategies to Support the Student Sample:

The following contain suggestions for teaching strategies and do not encompass a complete list of possible strategies.

Word Choice:

“Blah Word” Swap

- Create a list of “blah” words (e.g., went, got, nice, good, big) and challenge students to replace them with more descriptive or topic-specific options.

5 Senses Description Practice

- Choose a scene (e.g., robot activation) and have students describe it using what the character sees, hears, feels, smells, and even tastes (if relevant).

Robot Word Bank

- After reviewing informational sources, build a classroom robot vocabulary bank and encourage students to use at least 3–5 tech-related words in their stories.
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Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Starter Shuffle

- Provide a list of alternative ways to start a sentence and challenge students to revise three “He/Then” sentences using different openings.

Short + Long Sentence Practice

- Have students write one short sentence for suspense, followed by one long sentence for description, to feel the pacing difference.

Read-Aloud Fluency Check

- Have students read their story aloud and mark any areas that feel “choppy” or “monotone” — then revise for flow and rhythm.
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Conventions:

Sentence Fix-It Mini-Lessons

- Show students examples of their own run-on or awkward sentences and model how to fix them using punctuation and grammar corrections.

Peer Editing with a Conventions Checklist

- Use a student-friendly checklist that includes spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar to support focused revision.

Grammar & Spelling Stations

- Rotate through activities focused on fixing homophones, correcting run-ons, and editing for comma use and subject-verb agreement.