Grade HS – Personal Narrative Writing Work Sample: Meets

Task Prompt: Your class has been discussing different types of adventurous activities: kayaking, surfing, hiking, and many other hobbies. You are given three resources about geocaching, a hobby described as involving hiking and treasure hunting.

Write a story about your own adventures of geocaching. In your story, tell what happens when you find something interesting during one of your treasure hunts. When writing your story, find ways to use information and details about geocaching from the sources to improve your story.

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

Ideas and Content: 4

The narrative has a clear purpose and relevant details, with a logical sequence of events. Development is sufficient but remains general in places, with moments that could be expanded for deeper insight or complexity.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear, Understandable Purpose** o The narrator establishes the purpose early: trying a new cache called "Skyline Box." o The story maintains focus on a single geocaching experience from start to finish.
✓ **Relevant but Underdeveloped Details** o Geocaching elements appear, such as "coordinates," "logbook," and the clue "Look up before you leave." o However, several details stay general and could be expanded (e.g., "old concrete pieces," "small opening under it," "a short plastic tube").
✓ **Some Development of Plot, Setting, and Characters** o The setting is described through quick snapshots ("dry grass," "chain-link fence," "peeling paint"), but not deeply developed. o Plot events follow a predictable pattern: go to location, then find cache, then follow clue, then find bonus, then reflect.
✓ **Limited Insight** o The narrator reflects mildly at the end ("turns places you think you know into something slightly new"), but the reflection is brief and not fully explored.
✓ **Some Use of Narrative Techniques** o Pacing is steady but mostly linear. o Clues ("Look up before you leave") add mild intrigue but do not create substantial tension or complexity.

Organization: 4

The narrative follows a clear and predictable structure. Events unfold in a logical sequence with transitions that make the story easy to follow. The pacing is steady but mostly linear, and the ending provides closure without adding significant depth. Overall, the organization is coherent but lacks the complexity or sophistication seen in higher-scoring narratives.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear Beginning That Establishes Context** o The introduction sets up the narrator's purpose: trying a new cache called "Skyline Box." o The setting and situation are immediately understandable ("old water tower," "hill behind the library").

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Logical Order and Sequencing** o The story progresses chronologically: approaching the tower to discovering the cache to following the clue to finding the bonus. o No major jumps, gaps, or confusing shifts.
✓ **Adequate Transitions** o Phrases like "At the bottom of the hill," "When I reached the fence line," and "About twenty steps down the path" guide the reader. o Transitions keep the narrative coherent but remain basic and predictable.
✓ **Consistent but Predictable Pacing** o Movement through each stage of the hunt is even and clear, but rarely varied for tension or emphasis. o Scenes progress without noticeable acceleration or slowing for effect.
✓ **Controlled but Limited Closure** o The ending restates the insight from the note ("Look up before you leave") and offers a simple reflection about noticing familiar places. o Closure is clear but not layered or strongly resonant.

Voice: 4

The voice is generally consistent and appropriate for a personal narrative. The narrator shows some engagement with the experience, but the tone remains steady and somewhat plain. While moments of personality and sincerity appear, the voice does not fully develop a distinctive or expressive style across the narrative.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Consistent Point of View** o First-person narration is steady: "I had only been geocaching for a short time…" o The perspective never shifts, and the narrator's viewpoint is clear.
✓ **Some Sense of Audience** o The narrator explains unfamiliar details in simple terms, such as how they interpret clues ("a small opening under it—just big enough to hide something"). o Tone is accessible and straightforward.
✓ **Occasional Expressive or Engaging Moments** o Lines like "I wasn't looking for anything complicated" add personality. o Curiosity appears mildly when noticing the cloth on the tower.
✓ **Limited Emotional Depth** o Emotional reactions are present but brief ("I wasn't about to climb the tower"). o Internal thinking is minimal, which limits the sense of intimacy or strong connection.

Word Choice: 4

The wording is clear and functional, offering enough detail for readers to visualize events. Some descriptive language strengthens key moments, but vocabulary remains mostly straightforward. While a few sensory details appear, the narrative lacks the vivid, precise, or original language expected at higher levels.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Functional but General Vocabulary** o Many words are clear but basic: "dry grass," "old concrete pieces," "small plastic tube." o Descriptions provide clarity but not strong imagery.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Occasional Sensory Detail** o "Warm but breezy" and "peeling paint" help readers picture the setting. o Sensory language is limited and could be expanded.
✓ **Mostly Literal Language** o Figurative or vivid expression is minimal; the narrative relies on direct description. o No strong metaphors or images enhance meaning.
✓ **Appropriate Use of Geocaching Terms** o Terms like "coordinates," "logbook," and "micro-caches" are used correctly.

Sentence Fluency: 4

The writing is generally smooth and readable, with mostly clear sentence structure. Some variation in length and structure supports the flow, though overall fluency remains basic. Moments of awkwardness or simplicity prevent the narrative from achieving the sophistication seen in higher-scoring pieces.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Mostly Smooth Flow** o Sentences read easily and consistently: "At the bottom of the hill, my phone buzzed…" o Few disruptions to readability.
✓ **Some Variation in Sentence Structure** o Mix of shorter action sentences and longer descriptive ones ("I wasn't about to climb the tower…"). o Variation is present but not extensive.
✓ **Limited Complexity** o Complex sentences appear but remain straightforward without layering ideas. o No advanced stylistic control or expressive rhythm.
✓ **Clear Dialogue and Phrasing** o Internal messages like "You are 35 meters away" are formatted correctly.

Conventions: 4

The student demonstrates general control of conventions. Errors are minimal and do not impede meaning. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation are mostly correct, though the writing lacks the stylistic manipulation or flawless accuracy expected at higher levels.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Mostly Correct Grammar and Usage** o Verb tenses remain consistent; pronouns and agreement are correct.
✓ **Generally Accurate Punctuation** o Commas, quotation marks, and internal punctuation ("You are 35 meters away") are used correctly. o No major errors affecting readability.
✓ **Correct Spelling and Capitalization** o All geocaching terms ("coordinates," "micro-caches") are spelled correctly. o Capitalization of proper nouns is accurate.
✓ **Limited Range of Demonstrated Skills** o The writing does not attempt complex punctuation structures or show sophisticated command.