

## Writing Work Sample Exemplar: Personal Narrative

Task Prompt: "Tell a true story about a time you were either well prepared or not well prepared."

### SCORES AND COMMENTARY

(Phrases in bold are taken from the Revised Writing Scoring Guide)

#### Ideas and Content: 5

**The writing is clear, focused and interesting. The topic is thoroughly developed to present real or imagined experiences or events.** These include insights into the mother's source of protectiveness, the differences between the narrator and his friend, and the writer's own mix of caution, curiosity and willingness to take risks. The thesis or main idea, which appears at the end of the first paragraph ("This story is about a boy conquering his fear of trampolines"), is not as subtly introduced as it might be, but it still works to provide the paper's focus.

#### Organization: 5

**Sequencing and paragraph breaks are effective** (keep in mind that paragraph breaks for dialogue are scored under conventions, not organization). **The order and structure are strong and move the reader through the text.** The first two paragraphs are "philosophical," followed by a narrative story with dialogue, then back to philosophizing in the conclusion. The conclusion echoes the introduction ("A trampoline is an inanimate object."), and provides a **satisfying sense of closure.**

#### Voice: 5+

**The writer has chosen a voice appropriate to the events, experiences, or observations of the narrative.** The **writing is sincere**, and readers feel that the author is "**writing to be read**" as he describes his experience of jumping on a trampoline. Readers may get the sense that they can **discern the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction.** The writing shows elements of **liveliness, conviction, excitement, and humor.**

#### Word Choice: 5

**Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. Accurate, specific word choices energize the writing.** Some examples: "unpredictable jello-like bounces," "gravity defier," "Casey was adventurous and a risk taker while I was reserved and cautious," "freed me from my mother's protective bubble."

#### Sentence Fluency: 4

Fluency is perhaps the weakest trait of this paper overall, but the paper still meets in this trait. Paragraph one has instances of awkward sentences ("What is more to this gravity defier is people try to do tricks on these trampolines"), and a mildly ineffective fragment. However, the fluency improves as the paper progresses and **sentence patterns are varied, contributing to ease in oral reading. Dialogue sounds natural, for the most part.**

#### Conventions: 4

**The writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions. End punctuation is generally correct** except for the fragment noted above. The apostrophe is misplaced in "mother's hearts" in line 2 (should be "mothers' hearts"). There are several missing commas, and there is an unclear antecedent for "them" in paragraph 2. There are a couple misspellings (*aid*, *recieved*), and paragraph breaks for dialogue are missing. Still, the paper shows enough strengths to be a 4 in this trait.