

SCORED WRITING BENCHMARK

Narrative: GRADES 7-12

Work Sample 1: PROFICIENT

- “Untitled”

This student work sample meets the criteria for overall proficiency.

Statement of Purpose/Focus –Score: **P**

The student provides the reader with a clear understanding of the setting, narrator, and characters within the first paragraph. The context is strong and the student provides and demonstrates a solid development of characters through.

Organization—Score: **P**

The response has a clear organization and there is support for controlling ideas of setting and imagery to more enhance the plot. There are deliberate transitions, using connecting words. Focus is maintained and clear.

Support/Evidence—Score: **A**

The student uses sufficient evidence to support their claim and provides focus throughout the piece. The story is well thought out allowing for the stop and start of broken thoughts only to start again in the appropriate place. Use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, comprehensive, relevant and concrete.

Craft—Score: **P**

Shows evidence of using writer’s craft: with good use of figurative, sensory, and concrete language.

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As my dad's green, ratty old car pulled around the corner, I could hear the hippy music (I think it's called the *Grateful Dead*) that he always listens to coming through the open window. He pulled up in front of my friends and me and told us to hop into the Scoobaru, as he annoyingly loves to call our car. For such a weird person, he looks like a pretty regular guy with his nerdy glasses and graying Jewfro.

"So how was soccer practice?"

"Decent," said my friend Oscar.

"What did you work on?"

"Mostly passing drills," I responded.

"Cool beans brah. That's what you kids say, right? Brah?"

Then, my dad started singing, "'Shake it, shake it, Sugaree,'" completely out of tune while banging out an imaginary drum solo on the wheel and steering with his knee.

"Come on dad, just steer with your hands," I said.

"Don't worry, I'm the best knee steerer in all of Vermont," he replied.

I glanced back and saw my friends sharing a weird look. I could tell that they were already understanding how weird my dad is.

After a few more minutes of awful crooning, my friends giggling the back, he finally stopped.

"So, Fred, I heard you're dating Justine."

"Yeah," he said cautiously.

"She's a cutie."

That was followed by a long, awkward silence with Fred staring, blushing, at his knees and Oscar covering up a grin. Then, my dad began loudly humming along contentedly to the next song on the album. My friends and I proceeded to pull out our phones and start playing Flappy Bird because there was nothing better to do. When the song ended and my dad saw us playing, he immediately went into his practiced rant on why technology is ruining the children of our generation. "All you know how to do is play 'Jumpy Birds' and 'Candy Crash' on your iWatchemacallits! Teenagers can't even look people in the eye anymore!"

"*Flappy Bird* and *Candy Crush*," I corrected.

"Whatever they're called, they're bad."

After another few minutes of my dad "enjoying his music out loud," and some not quite restrained giggles in the back, he asked what kind of music we like to listen to.

"I like rap and dubstep," said Oscar.

"Dubstep? What the hell is that? It can't be good music with a name like that."

And my dad was off on another one of his rants on how terrible modern music is, how it has no substance, how it takes no talent to make, and how it's "too vulgar for our ears." By the time he was done telling us how we should really listen to more music from the 60s and 70s, we were just about to Oscar's house. As my friends got out, my dad said, "See ya later. You guys can get a ride with me anytime you want." "Definitely, Mr. Smith," Oscar replied sarcastically, although I think my dad was completely oblivious, as he sat there with a contented smile on his face. I'm pretty sure he thinks that he's already best friends with Oscar and Fred.

I turned into the parking lot of the soccer field with my favorite live Grateful Dead show, Winterland '77, cranking and pulled up in front of my son and his friends. "Hop into the Scoobaru."

"So how was soccer practice?" I asked.

"Decent," said my son's friend Fred.

"What did you work on?"

"Mostly passing drills," responded my son.

"Cool beans brah. That's what you say, right? Brah?" I'm always trying to keep up with what the hip youngsters are saying. Right then, my favorite part of *Sugaree* came on, and I had to do my best Jerry Garcia guitar impression and sing along with the guitar solo.

"Come on dad, just steer with your hands," said my son.

"Don't worry, I'm the best knee steerer in all of Vermont," I replied because, you know, I probably am...

I know every word of that song, so I just had to sing along for the rest of it. Once the song ended, I decided to check in with my son's friends.

"So, Fred, I heard you're dating Justine."

"Yeah."

"She's a cutie."

I thought he'd appreciate that I knew she was a good catch, and I saw him talking to Oscar probably about how cool I am because I didn't make it awkward like most other parents would. I decided not to push that any further, so I started to rock out to the next song in the album. After a while, I looked around the car and saw that all three kids were playing pointless games on their stupid little phones. I like to keep life

simple so all I have is a hip Motorola from 2004. All these kids ever do is play dumb games on their devices, so I had to try and knock a little bit of sense into them.

“All you know how to do is play ‘Jumpy Birds’ and ‘Candy Crash’ on your iWatchemacallits! Teenagers can’t even look people in the eye anymore!” I said.

“Dad, they’re called *Flappy* Bird and *Candy Crush*, and you yourself bought me an *iPhone*,” corrected my son rudely.

“Whatever they’re called, they’re bad.”

Having gotten my point across, I turned my attention back to the Dead. With the kids immediately back to their iThingies, I tried to engage them with something they’re interested in.

“What kind of music do you like?”

“I like rap and dubstep,” said Oscar.

“Dubstep? What the hell is that? It can’t be good music with a name like that.” All these kids ever listen to is trashy music about drugs and girls. By the time I finished telling them about why the 60’s were the renaissance of good music and how it’s all gone downhill from there, we were just about to Oscar’s house. As the boys were getting out, I said, “See ya later. You guys can get a ride with me anytime you want.”

“Definitely, Mr. Smith,” Oscar replied enthusiastically. I think that he’ll want to ride with me all the time now that he knows how hip I am.

Although my son thinks I’m annoying, I’m pretty sure that these boys understand how cool I really am.

As I pulled away, I turned up the music and began to sing along, “I wish I was a headlight on a north-bound train, I’d shine my light through the cool Colorado rain.”

SCORED WRITING BENCHMARK

Narrative: GRADES 7-12

Work Sample 1: PROFICIENT

- “The General”

This student work sample meets the criteria for overall proficiency.

Statement of Purpose/Focus –Score: P

The response is adequately sustained and generally focused. The students’ overall piece is proficient. The context is strong and the student provides and demonstrates a solid narrators point of view.

Organization—Score: P

The response has a clear organization and there is support for controlling ideas of setting and imagery to more enhance the plot. There are deliberate transitions, using connecting words. Focus is maintained and clear.

Support/Evidence—Score: E

The student provides a good use of the song to tie into the theme of the narrative. He/She uses sufficient evidence to support their claim and provides focus throughout the piece connecting to the song. Reflections and character change are based on quotes.

Craft—Score: E

The students sentence structure exhibits little evidence of use, or incorrect use of writer’s craft: commas, mechanics, and vocabulary.

The General

(Inspired by a song with the same title by Dispatch)

In all of my days, I've never been as scared as I am today. It is the eve of a great battle and yet, I sit in my words terrified. I am young and have yet to accomplish my hopes and my dreams. Will I be given victory as dawn nears, I'm not ready to die. Among the others, I'm sure I'm not alone but I wonder if our General knows what the infantry is thinking right now.

Restless in my sleep, I sit outside of my tent and watch the fog on the hill, wondering of the battle that will come. It is too dark to see but I hear movement in a tent, Could it be the General? He never leaves the tent, although it seems as if he is very restless. Restless myself, I can't help but think of what kept him from sleeping.

As the sun slides over the distant mountain tops, the General exits his tent for the first time the whole night. As we line up for battle, my fear has also given me confidence and given me a fire in my stare towards the General, a fire that is matched those among me. The first words that came from the General's mouth are, " The fight in which you are all prepared for is not worth the death that will follow. With that being said, I am asking that you go home because you are too young to live the horrific eye of war". Most of us stood motionless, shocked by the General's words. After few minutes pass, one brave soul steps back from the rest to show that he is not going to fight that day. Some call him a coward until they too, step back and they remain humble for the remaining time being. The General says that he will fight because it is his duty and he will do no more

that. Alone, the General prepares to fight and during that time, he mumbles a tune to himself. I can't make it all out but I faintly hear some.... "I have seen and I have discovered..... this fight is not worth fighting"

Eventually the pieces slide into place and I figure out why the General was so restless in his sleep and why he told us to go home and as I figure this out, he tells us one final thing. He tells us, "You are young men, you must be living, go now, you are forgiven"

The General awoke in the night to discover that he wasn't scared of death or more scars to add under his beard, but that he was scared of death for us rather than himself. He wanted us to live a long and fulfilled life and not a scarred one like his. As the General left the grounds, I slowly made my way to the front of the men walking away from battle. I put up my hand and stopped them. I explain that we can't leave the General to stand alone against a front line and so we decide to prepare for battle ourselves.

When we arrive back at the campgrounds, we notice the the General is already gone and so we moved quickly to follow him. We stand frozen on a hilltop looking down onto the open plain in which the battle took place. The General has been murdered. After moments pass, we have a fire in our stare and rush the open field. We finally we have a reason to fight. Anger of the General's death controls our actions to push the enemy back further and further until their retreat. We fight for the reason that the General did, because it is our duty. We won't extend it further. We fight for us to see the day in which that our children can shine their shoes and take their showers, so that they

can be young and so that they, can live.

"General"

there was a decorated general with
a heart of gold, that likened him to
all the stories he told
of past battles, won and lost, and
legends of old a seasoned veteran in
his own time

on the battlefield, he gained
respectful fame with many medals
of bravery and stripes to his name
he grew a beard as soon as he could
to cover the scars on his face
and always urged his men on

but on the eve of a great battle
with the infantry in dream
the old general tossed in his sleep
and wrestled with its meaning
he awoke from the night
just to tell what he had seen
and walked slowly out of his tent

all the men held tall with their
 chests in the air, with courage in
 their blood and a fire in their stare
 it was a grey morning and they all
 wondered how they would fare
 till the old general told them to go home

[CHORUS:]

He said: I have seen the others
and I have discovered
that this fight is not worth fighting
I have seen their mothers
and I will no other
to follow me where I'm going

So, take a shower, shine your shoes
you got no time to lose
you are young men you must be living
Take a shower, shine your shoes

you got no time to lose
you are young men you must be living
go now you are forgiven

but the men stood fast with their
guns on their shoulders not knowing
what to do with the contradicting orders
the general said he would do his own
duty but would extend it no further
the men could go as they pleased

but not a man moved, their eyes gazed straight ahead
till one by one
they stepped back and not a word was said
and the old general was left with his
own words echoing in his head
he then prepared to fight

[CHORUS]

go now you are forgiven

SCORED WRITING BENCHMARK

Argumentative: GRADES 7-12

Work Sample 1: PROFICIENT

• “The Wild is Born”

This student work sample meets the criteria for overall proficiency.

Statement of Purpose/Focus –Score: P

The response is adequately sustained and generally focused. The ~~students'~~ overall piece is formulaic though solid. The introduction provides adequate content for the claim and the body is clear transitioning into a reflective conclusion. The student demonstrates change and has the ability to go back to the claim.

Organization—Score: P

The response has a clear organization and there is support for controlling ideas. There are deliberate transitions, using connecting words. Focus is maintained and clear.

Support/Evidence—Score: P

The student uses sufficient evidence to support their claim and provides clear explanation of how their position is supported through evidence. Reflections and character change are based on quotes.

Craft—Score: P

The student's ideas are conveyed through use of craft. Although there is some reliance on repetitive stems and strategies there is enough variation in sentence structure. The language level is neutral and grade appropriate. There is a consistent focus on driving ideas of change.

October 4, 2015
Language Arts
Response to Literature

The Wild is Born

The Call of The Wild, by Jack London, is a book full of adventure and the story of a dog finding who he is. In the book there is a dog named Buck who finds himself being transported to Alaska to be sold as a sled dog. In the book London does a great job showing how Buck's character changes, learns, as well as his loyalty and how he becomes wild.

Buck's character is large and changes with great development through the book. "He was beaten (he knew that); but he was not broken" (p. 6). This shows us how Buck's character is strong minded. He knows his strength of not giving up to something that he knows could kill him. London's writing is prompting us into a world where Buck's changes will be substantial. "Buck got a frothing adversary by the throat, and was sprayed with the blood when his teeth sank through the jugular. The warm taste of it in his mouth goaded him to greater fierceness" (p. 16). In that instance Buck is becoming wild and is becoming well known to fighting in the wildlife, and not just standing around. That is a huge change for Buck because he was domestic before and now he is becoming wild. "And not only did he learn by experience, but instincts long dead became alive again" (p. 14). Buck is now embracing his life outside of ownership. This is a huge part of Buck's character and how he changed. From domestic and stuck up to being almost equal in the sense of wild. Buck is constantly changing throughout the book. But, in order to change, he has to remember and learn.

Another big part of Buck is how he learns and remembers throughout the book, about himself and his ancestors. "...sight and scent became remarkably keen, while his hearing developed such acuteness that in his sleep he heard the faintest sound and knew whether it

heralded peace or peril" (p. 14). Buck is learning the way of the wild. He is no longer an outcast of not knowing the ways. London also tells us how Buck had it in him the whole time. He just had to find that part of him that would let it run free. "And that he should be stirred by it marked the completeness without he harked back through the ages of fire and roof to the raw beginning of life in the howling ages" (p. 21). Buck is remembering his ancestors and what it is to be wild and become what he was born to be. He's remembering what it was supposed to be like for him. He's remembering what he was born to be wild and run free, not be a domestic dog. "He seemed to remember it all, - the white woods, and earth, and moonlight, and the thrill of battle!" (p. 23). London is telling us how Buck is remembering what his wild self once was. Or rather how Buck's ancestors wanted him to be. This is Buck's change from old to new to old again. Buck's learning and remembering are big events through the whole book and these things lead us into Buck's new life. Another large part of Buck is how he may be wild and learning, but he still has a loyal domestic part of him.

At the end of the book Buck meets a wonderful person named John Thornton. In a short amount of time Buck becomes extremely loyal to him, and more than that as well. Buck came to love John Thornton. "When Thornton's partner Hans and Pete arrived on the long raft, Buck refused to notice them till he learned they were close to Thornton" (p. 45). This shows us how Buck knows that he is safe with Thornton, and that he loves Thornton. He won't let anyone hurt him until Buck knows that the people are safe for Thornton to be around. He knows that he is safe with John, so he feels he can protect John. "He had caught contagion at the excitement, and he felt that in some way he must do something for John Thornton" (p. 49). This shows the loyalty Buck has for John Thornton. He doesn't just have loyalty; he actually loves him. It also tells us that Buck knows that he must repay Thornton in some way for all that he has done for him. This next quote expresses how Buck feels after John Thornton dies. "It left a great void in

him, somewhat akin to hunger, but a void which ached and ached, and which food could not fill" (p. 60). This is a huge moment for Buck. He just lost the one person he loved, his master, and his best friend. Buck feels the hurt almost as if he was still domestic. Buck's loyalty to John Thornton moves him all over. But the one thing John Thornton does do for Buck through his death is bring him to his wild life.

Throughout the book Buck has changed, but it has all lead up to him finally being fully wild. "He was running at the head of the pack, running the wild thing down, the living meet, to kill with his own teeth and wash his muzzle to the eyes in warm blood" (p. 22). Buck is becoming wild and really embracing it, enjoying it with all his might. Buck is no longer domestic in the way he used to be. "And Buck ran with them, side by side with the wild brother, yelping as he ran" (p. 62). This quote is from the end of the book. Buck has finally found his wild wolf pack, full of his new family, brothers and sisters. Buck's now wild and will always be wild. But more importantly, he was always hiding that wild within him. "... he may be seen running at the head of the pack through the pale moonlight or glimmering borealis" (p. 62). Buck has now finished his development (retrogression). He's become the wild he was always meant to be and live as. Some may say he is now one with the wild. Buck now lives where and how he was always supposed to be, in the wild with his wild family.

In the book London does a wonderful job telling and showing us how Buck goes through a rollercoaster ride, with changes, and love, and the wild. As you can tell Buck never stops. Are you like Buck or completely different from him? How do you think you would survive in the wild?

SCORED WRITING BENCHMARK

Informative: GRADES 7-12

Work Sample 1: PROFICIENT

• “Ben Franklin”

This student work sample meets the criteria for overall proficiency.

Focus/Opinion—Score: P

The response is adequately sustained and generally focused. The student uses adequate analysis and reflection throughout the piece. The opinion is clearly stated. The student demonstrates understanding of the topic.

Organization—Score: P

The response has a clear organization and the student uses sufficient evidence to support their claim and uses strong sequence of events from beginning to end. The paragraph transitions are deliberate and evidence used throughout the piece is relevant.

Support/Evidence—Score: E

Evidence and quotes from sources are weakly integrated and citations, if present, are uneven.

Craft—Score: P

The student’s ideas are conveyed through use of craft; particularly through use of voice.

Language and Vocabulary—Score: P

The student’s use of vocabulary is appropriate for the audience and works to enhance the writing.

Grammar, Usage, Mechanics—Score: P


The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions. The sentence structure is varied, citations are needed. The errors are minimal and do not distract the reader.

Benjamin

Franklin



Due: 2/13/15




In 1706, America was a patchwork of loose colonies who were all independent of one another. Everyone was happy and finding good fortune in this new world. Many years later, 1776 to be exact, there was a big fight between these colonies and England. This conflict started with England taxing the colonies for many goods. On January 17 1706, a famous American named Benjamin Franklin was born. Benjamin Franklin loved England until he realized that England wasn't treating the colonies right. So Benjamin decided that he would do something about it.

When Benjamin Franklin was growing up he had seventeen siblings. He was the youngest of all of them but he was the fifteenth child of the seventeen. He was the youngest but the fifteenth because Benjamin's father had been married to another woman before Benjamin's mother. Benjamin Franklin's father was named Josiah Franklin and his mother was Abiah Franklin. Abiah Franklin was Josiah Franklin's second wife.

Benjamin's father ran of soap and candle making shop. When Benjamin Franklin was around age ten, he began helping his father in the candle shop. His jobs were filling molds and and cutting candle wicks. Benjamin Franklin went to school for only two years in his life. He spent most of his time reading books because they fascinated him. He was also a very good swimmer. When Benjamin was in his early years of being an inventor, one of his first inventions were paddles to help him swim faster.

When Benjamin Franklin was twelve years old, he began working at his half-brother James's shop as an apprentice printer. Benjamin studied arithmetic, navigation and grammar. He also studied by reading the great classic authors and writers after work every night. Benjamin Franklin enjoyed studying articles and then rewriting them in his words. Soon Benjamin became a very talented printer. Soon though, he was having second thoughts.

Benjamin wanted to be on his own instead of an apprentice but he had signed a contract saying that he had to work for at least nine years and then he could do whatever he wanted. Benjamin decided that he couldn't wait any longer and he broke his contract. He wrote humorous letters about Harvard College Boys, silly girls, and at bad poets. Benjamin




signed the letters as "Mr. Silence Dogood." Once James found out that the letters were written by Benjamin, he was very angry. He was angry because he was forbidden to publish any more articles because he was tricked into printing articles that weren't approved by his sixteen year old brother. Benjamin's contract was canceled for what he had done. Although Benjamin's contract was canceled, he thought of this as a good thing because it meant that he could leave and be a printer on his own like he had wanted.

After Benjamin had decided to go on his own, the first place that he went was New York and he decided to start his own business. As Benjamin Franklin was getting older he became very wealthy. As he had wished, he opened his own print shop. He had a partner who was a woman and her name was Hugh Meredith. The Pennsylvania Gazette was the name of the weekly newspaper that Benjamin and Hugh published. Benjamin Franklin bought the part of the business that was Hugh's share. In 1730, Benjamin Franklin married the daughter of his landlady, Deborah Read. Deborah wasn't very much like Benjamin but she was very cheerful and was very devoted to Ben. Benjamin and Deborah had three children. Their names were Francis, Sarah, and William. Francis had died from smallpox in his childhood, Sarah grew up and married a merchant, and William became the governor of New Jersey.

Benjamin became very successful with his work between the years of 1730 and 1748. Benjamin was even made the official printer for Pennsylvania. He was also the official printer for New Jersey and Delaware by 1734. A little later on he was the official printer of Maryland too! In 1732, Benjamin Franklin's most popular book that he published was Poor Richard's Almanack. This book was a calendar and a weather forecast for the year. It was full of funny stories, jokes, and a lot of advice. Benjamin Franklin used the pen name Richard Saunders to sign his published work. Benjamin's pen name made him very famous. In Benjamin's book Poor Richard's Almanack, "Poor Richard" had said, "Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." Benjamin was very hard working and had been a printer for quite a long time.

After working in the printing business for a long time, in 1748 Benjamin Franklin decided to retire as a printer because he had earned enough money through his printing




career. After that he bought a 300-acre farm near Burlington, New Jersey. After Benjamin retired from printing he had many other things that he did. He was a scientist, an inventor, a philosopher, an educator, and a public servant. Many years later there was a conflict between the British and the French called the French and Indian war.

This war was called the French and Indian war because the British named it that way because they were fighting the French and Indians. The Indians were joining both sides of the war. Benjamin Franklin warned the people of Pennsylvania ahead of time that danger was coming their way. In the summer of 1755, British troops landed in Virginia. When the British troops arrived, Benjamin also set up wagons to carry weapons in. Benjamin Franklin had weapons such as guns put along the Delaware River and organized the companies of volunteered soldiers. The Pennsylvania Assembly sent Benjamin to the border of the developed land to find the building of forts and to create troops. The people in Pennsylvania that had to pay taxes were paying for the French and Indian war.

The Pennsylvania Assembly sent Benjamin Franklin to London in 1755 to try and bribe the Penn family who were a rich family that did not have to pay any taxes for the French and Indian war. The Penn family did end up having to pay a tax for their land through a bill with some help from Benjamin. Benjamin Franklin stayed in England for the next five years and then went back to Pennsylvania in 1762. When Benjamin returned, a year later in 1763 the French and Indian war ended and England had defeated the French. The Pennsylvania Assembly sent Benjamin Franklin back to England near the end of 1764 to go to King George the third and show him their petition. When Benjamin Franklin landed in England in 1765, Parliament had passed something called the Stamp Act.

Before the Stamp Act was passed, England didn't even let the colonies vote on it. The Stamp Act put taxes on things such as newspapers, diplomas, and even dice. Benjamin Franklin was the man who persuaded Parliament to cancel the Stamp Act. Benjamin Franklin was a very important American representative to go to and represent in England for the next ten years. Benjamin Franklin liked to write stories that were exaggerated to tease the British about ignoring the Americans. After Benjamin Franklin's long stay in England he came home to Philadelphia in 1775.



After Benjamin Franklin returned home, he returned just after the Battle of Lexington and Concord had ended and he found out that his wife, Deborah, had died the year before he returned on December 19, 1774. Benjamin Franklin was around 70 years but he was still helping with the wars. Benjamin Franklin quoted, "I am but a fag end, and you may have me for what you please." Congress chose Benjamin Franklin to go to George Washington's head quarters in the fall of 1775.

In 1776 the colonies declared their independence. Benjamin Franklin was sent by Congress in 1776 to try and persuade France to help the Americans win their independence. Benjamin Franklin gave Congress about 4,000 pounds of his own money for the war. Benjamin Franklin ended up persuading the French king, King Louis XVI, into helping the colonies fight for their independence. The Treaty of Paris stated the end of the Revolutionary war and made the independence of Americans recognized by England. Benjamin Franklin later went back home to Philadelphia.

Benjamin Franklin returned to Philadelphia on September 14, 1785 and was getting quite old too. When he arrived the whole city celebrated his return. Even though Benjamin Franklin was very old he became the president of Philadelphia for only three years. Then two years later on April 17, 1790 Benjamin Franklin died at the age of 84 and about 20,000 people attended his funeral which was public.