

**Florida Treasures**  
**Grade 4 Teacher’s Editions**  
**Unit Writing Workshop**  
**Anchor Papers: Student Writing Samples**

**Grade 4 Unit 1: Personal Narrative**

**Score Point 2**

**A Trip to Grandmas**  
by Stacey J.

We like to visit my grandmothers house. It takes a long time to get to Grandmas. The drive is boring. And it is two days long. I used to think there is nothing to do at Grandmas. I don’t feel that way anymore.

I can’t wait to explore some part of Grandmas house. The basement has a coal furnace. There are shelves filled with Grandmas canned fruit. The best thing is a box filled with soil and worms for fishing. The garden has more herbs growing than I can count. The peach tree is great.

There’s no place I’d rather explore than my Grandmas.

**Focus**—Although the entire narrative is about a visit to a grandmother’s house, the writer does not really share her feelings about the experience. There is no sense of excitement or much emotion at all. The piece needs some descriptive words so it does not read like an outline.

**Organization**—There is a beginning and a middle to the story, but it stops suddenly. The writer could use sequence words to show order and some descriptive words to show place. Transition words are needed throughout.

**Support**—There are very few adjectives to get the reader involved in the story. Color and personal reactions are essentially missing.

**Conventions**—There are errors in punctuation, especially apostrophes in possessives, and in sentence structure. The fourth “sentence” is a fragment and should be combined with the third sentence.

## **What Does a Score Point 1 Paper Look Like?**

**Focus**—The writer does not address the topic and lacks understanding of the writing purpose.

**Organization**—There is little or no evidence of organizational pattern. There are no transitions. The paper would not include a closing sentence such as, “There’s no place I’d rather explore than my Grandmas [grandma’s].”

**Support**—The story uses incorrect or immature words; there are few, if any, supporting details.

**Conventions**—There are significant errors in mechanics, spelling, and usage that interfere with communication of meaning.

## Grade 4 Unit 1: Personal Narrative

### Score Point 4

#### My Big Adventuer

by Tabitha C.

Finally I got to go away to camp. I was very exsited. First we packed stuff for two weeks, clothes and sheets and blankets and soap and tauwels and shampu. Then we drove to a place where I caut the bus.

We all got on the bus and the councelers taught us some songs like the worms go in and the worms go out and other disgusting songs like that. We sang all the way. It was a long trip. We ate lunch at a rest stop. Then we got to camp.

Camp was good. We got our tents and our bunks and we made teams. I was on the red team. Then we ate dinner after we sang more songs around a Kampfire. The councelers lit the fire. We went to sleep. Some of us did. Some pepole whispered a lot at night.

We woke up and ate brekfast and went to arts and crafts and then to swimming. I swam a long way. Then we had lunch and back to our bunks and rest. We had to write letters to our homes and our familys.

We were their for two weeks then we went home on the bus. I had fun at camp.

**Focus**—The writing consistently focuses on the main topic, going to camp. The writer tries to cover most of the experience but actually only tells about the trip to camp and the first day.

**Organization**—The organization is strongest at beginning of the story but seems to fall apart after the discussion of the first day. Some transition words were used—mostly *then*—and an attempt was made at a closing with “I had fun at camp.” Overall, planning was not fully realized as just the first day’s activities were covered.

**Support**—Word choice was pedestrian with few adjectives or defining details. Only two attempts were made at showing the author’s feelings.

**Conventions**—Spelling errors are not corrected. The sentence fragments used are sometimes misleading. Sentence structure is not varied enough to heighten interest.

## What Does a Score Point 3 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—The writer does not stick closely to the topic; the story includes some facts that are not directly about the topic.

**Organization**—There is some evidence of planning and follow through, but it is not always consistent. Some details could have been left out.

**Support**—The story does not have many supporting adjectives or adverbs. Word choice is limited, and the prose is not rich.

**Conventions**—There are some errors in mechanics, spelling, and usage, which could have been eliminated with more careful proofreading.

## Grade 4 Unit 1: Personal Narrative

### Score Point 5

#### My Trip to the Theater

by Jeremy B.

My parents told us we would be going to the live performance of the musical comedy “Kids on Parade!” This meant we had to “dress up” and leave early so we could be there to park and find our seats by 2:00 P.M.

First we listened to the overture. It was played by live musicians. Then the curtain opened, and there was the whole cast dancing. The story was about a talent search for the best singer and dancer under the age of 10 in the United States. It was funny and sad at the same time. Some kids had very mean parents who wanted them to be famous. Some kids worked hard and rehearsed a lot because they loved it. There were two very funny people in the show named Timmy and Tommy Toolittle. They were supposed to be twins, but people thought there was only one kid so that made for some very funny scenes.

At the end of the show it was too hard to pick the best kids out of the whole group so they decided the people in charge of the talent search to put all the kids “On Parade” and let them all show what they could do so that is how it got its name.

**Focus**—The paper is focused on a live performance that the writer has seen. There is a strong attempt to tell the story of the show, and overall the writer does give us a good summary of the show.

**Organization**—The writer starts at the beginning, and a middle and an end follow. The last sentence and the first sentence tie into one another so there is a sense of cohesion in the piece. There is good use of transitions.

**Support**—It is clear that the writer enjoyed the show and had an opinion about it from such sentences as, “It was sad and funny at the same time.” Better variation of adjectives would have made for a livelier piece of writing.

**Conventions**—Spelling errors have not all been corrected. Most sentence structure is correct. Antecedents of pronouns are not always clear.

## Grade 4 Unit 1: Personal Narrative

### Score Point 6

#### A Walk in the Woods

by Raul M.

My backyard ends where the woods begin. Each time I go to the woods with my older brother, Luis, I like to pretend I'm an explorer. Last week I discovered a creek. I was walking with Luis along a dirt trail that winds through the center of the woods when I heard a trickle of water. Then my shoes filled with water as I waded into the creek, but I didn't mind. Explorers have to be tough!

Luis stayed on the dirt path next to me. I sloshed through the cool, clear water, looking up at the vines hanging from the trees above. I pictured a snake or a giant spider dropping on my head but I knew that wasn't likely.

I had been hiking in the creek for only five or ten minutes when I began to wonder where it would take me. I wasn't ready to turn back. Besides I was finding lots of colorful pebbles in the creek to add to my rock collection. Luis and I kept on hiking until we saw the bright light of the open sky through the treetops. The creek turned and a trail led up a hill. I raced ahead of Luis, up the path, and stared. My mouth dropped open in surprise. In the end, I'd discovered my neighbor's backyard!

**Focus**—The writer focuses on a personal experience, and by using vivid language and interesting details he sweeps his audience into the story. The writer makes clear that his emotions are involved when he sums up his creek wading by saying, "Explorers have to be tough!" The story is very engaging overall.

**Organization**—There is a clear beginning, middle, and end to the story, and one detail leads to another. The writer uses sequence words to show order and descriptive words to give the reader pictures of where he was and how he was feeling during the experience.

**Support**—Many interesting events are described along with the adventure, especially when the writer pictures a snake or a giant spider dropping on his head, even though he knew it wasn't likely. The writer builds up the suspense as to where he is going and where he will end up. The last sentence makes a strong closing for the piece.

**Conventions**—Sentences are complete, complex, and interesting. There are no grammatical errors, and spelling is correct.

## Grade 4 Unit 2: How-to Article

### Score Point 2

#### How to Make a Puzzle Card

by Gabe M.

You need crayons markers two sheets of paper a paintbrush paper tauls sissors and two heavy books. Here is a puzzle card for a get well or birthday.

Fill the paper with a pattern or color to the edge. Draw a design or picture on a sheet of paper. Make your message stand out. Write your message. Put your name.

Squeeze glue on paper. Push papers together. If glue comes out, wipe up with paper tael. Put the card under the books for to make flat.

Wait an hour before removing the books. Cut puzzle pieces. Draw jigsaw puzzle shapes on the card.

Address envelope, drop the pieces inside, and mail the card.

**Focus**—This how-to article is focused on the task of making a puzzle card, but because of awkward construction it is very hard to follow the directions.

**Organization**—There is a list of supplies in the beginning, but lack of punctuation makes it hard to understand. Steps in the process are out of order and cannot be followed sequentially by the reader.

**Support**—Details are included to elucidate the process, but sequence is such a problem that it is not easy to follow the method. The article also needs more transition words to make it understandable.

**Conventions**—Many sentence fragments make the piece difficult to read. Spelling was not checked thoroughly.

### What Does a Score Point 1 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—Focus is only present minimally. There is no introduction of the topic and no clear presentation of steps to make it.

**Organization**—There are not enough materials listed to do the project, and there is very little order to the steps necessary to do the activity.

**Support**—Very few supporting details are included, and there are no operative directions such as “squeeze glue on paper.”

**Conventions**—Many errors in spelling and mechanics interfere with communicating how to make a special card.

## Grade 4 Unit 2: How-to Article

### Score Point 4

#### Make a Globe

By Lateef P.

You can make a beautiful globe out of string or yarn and a balloon. I will give the directions how to do this.

Blow up a balloon and tie a knot in it. Then start to wrap it all around with yarn or string. You don't want to cover the whole balloon, just most of it. Oh, and you should tie a knot in the string at the top of the balloon after you make the first wrap. Continue to wrap the string or yarn around the balloon until you have it mostly covered. Leave some empty spaces. Then tie an end knot in the string and leave a tail that will be long enough to hang the globe.

Put white glue all over the string on the balloon but not the tail end, and let it dry for a few hours. Take a pin or needle and poke the balloon so it collapses. Pull the balloon out of one of the spaces in the wrapped string.

The string should be stiffened to form the globe. You can use the tail to hang it or you can just sit it somewhere and look at it

**Focus**—The whole article is devoted to making a globe out of string or yarn, but the process is not always as informative as it could be. There is no description of the finished product, so it is hard to visualize it.

**Organization**—The steps are not in order and the list of materials needed for the project is scattered throughout the writing, so it is hard to gather the materials at the beginning of the work.

**Support**—There are not many colorful or interesting adjectives. The article would also benefit from some transition or sequence words, such as *first*, *next*, and *then*.

**Conventions**—Spelling and syntax have not been edited carefully, so the writing does not flow smoothly or in recognizable sequence. Antecedents for pronouns are not clear, which also impedes information.

## What Does a Score Point 3 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—While the article covers the topic, it is too loosely connected to be easily read.

Without a good description, visualizing the project is difficult.

**Organization**—Steps are out of order, and the process described is unclear. Materials are difficult to gather because they are not grouped together. The paper may lack a clear opening such as, “You can make a beautifile [beautiful] globe out of string or yarn and a balloon [balloon].”

**Support**—There are not enough details given to make following the instructions easy.

Without descriptive adjectives or adverbs the article is flat and somewhat boring.

**Conventions**—More careful editing and proofreading would have helped this paper be more communicative and also livelier.

## Grade 4 Unit 2: How-to Article

### Score Point 5

#### How To Make Maracas

By McKenzie C.

Maracas are musical instruments, that are usually made from gords, that are played by many Latin bands. You can make maracas yourself, very easily and very inexpensively.

Get two empty plastic bottles with screw on tops. The small size soda bottles are best for maracas. Then get some pebbles, some beans, or some rice. You usually want two different things to go inside the maracas because that will make different sounds.

Put some beans in one bottle and something else, like rice, in another. You could also use popcorn, but I forgot to tell you that before. Shake the bottles with your hand covering the opening so the beans or whatever other things you put in don't fall out.

Listen to the sound. Did you know that in some islands maracas are called "shic-shacs"? That's the kind of sound you want. When you have a nice sound, put the tops on the bottles.

You could also paint them with acrylic paints or cover them with paper mache if you know how to make it. Use the neck of the bottles as handels for the maracas.

You can practice making sounds with the maracas when you listen to music.

**Focus**—The article is focused on the topic of making maracas throughout. It stays on target and does not have too many extra details that confuse the issue.

**Organization**—Some of the details, such as using popcorn, are out of order. A phrase such as "I forgot to tell you" should have been a clue to the writer to go back and reorganize the order. There is a strong opening and a strong closing, which make the instructions inviting and interesting to the reader.

**Support**—Details are included that help the reader walk through the process of making maracas.

**Conventions**—Antecedents are not always clear, and run-on sentences and fragments interfere with understanding the directions. The article could have used more proofreading and editing.

## Grade 4 Unit 2: How-to Article

### Score Point 6

#### How to Make a Code Wheel

by Diana J.

It's fun to send secret messages. Here's how you can create a code wheel to write a coded message. You need two paper plates, a scissors, a ruler, a pencil or pen, a paper fastener (also called a brad), and a sheet of paper.

First, cut about two inches from the outside edge of a paper plate. Trim all the way around the plate. Next, use the tip of a pencil or pen to punch a hole in the center of each plate. Be careful not to poke yourself! Place the small plate over the large one and line up the holes. Push the brad through the holes to connect the plates.

Then use the ruler to divide the rim of the large wheel into 26 equal spaces. In each space, write a letter of the alphabet. Go from A to Z. Divide the small wheel in the same way. This time write a number from 1 to 26 in each space.

Now you're ready to use your code wheel. Turn the small wheel so that a number is right under the letter A. Let's say you lined up the letter A with the number 10. Write A=10 on a scrap of paper. This is the key to your code. Look at the code wheel to tell what number to write for each letter. As you write, put a dash between numbers to show that each stands for one letter. Leave a space between words.

Finally, have some fun! Send your secret message to some friends. Share the key with them if they need help.

**Focus**—This is an excellent example of a how-to article. It opens by describing the object to be made, includes a list of materials, and follows through, paragraph by paragraph, with directions for making a code wheel.

**Organization**—The article is arranged in sequential order so that steps can be easily understood and followed. All the steps are included and are clearly defined. There is a strong closing, with lots of enthusiasm.

**Support**—Many details are included to make the writing lively and inviting, as well as to help the reader further understand the process.

**Conventions**—Syntax, spelling, and language flow are all excellent and have been checked carefully.

## Grade 4 Unit 3: Fictional Narrative

### Score Point 2

#### Bunny Blue

by Alexis D.

There was a stuffed animal. Everyone said Bunny Blue, because he had a blue bow. Bunny Blue was sitting on the bed. Marie came in. She seen his bow was missing.

Marie fell asleep. Bunny asked the soldier. The toy soldier said, No, Bunny. I will help you look. Bunny and Soldier looked. They didn't find the bow.

Bunny asked the dolls if they had seen his bow. No, Bunny, the dolls said. but well be glad to look around the dollhouse. They didn't find it.

Marie got up. She saw Bunny on the floor. Marie said, I must of pushed you off bed last night. She saw Bunny's bow peaking out from under the bed.

Marie picked up Bunny and the bow. She tyed on the bow and him back on the bed.

**Focus**—This seems to be a story of a stuffed animal, a girl, and a dream, but there are no transitions to introduce different sections.

**Organization**—There seem to be different time frames, but the writer has not made it clear when the time shift happens.

**Support**— The story lacks enough details to make it easy for the reader to follow. Word choice is immature and lacking variation. The story is dull as a result.

**Conventions**—Lack of punctuation, especially quotation marks for dialogue, and incomplete or run-on sentences make it extremely hard to know what is going on in this narrative.

### What Does a Score Point 1 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—The writer does not stick to a narrative thread that can be followed through the story. There are too many stray ideas because the focus has not been narrowed enough.

**Organization**—The sequence of events in the story are not clear. We do not know when Marie is awake or when she is dreaming. A sentence such as "I must have pushed you off bed last night" would not be in a score point 1 paper.

**Support**—Words are limited to the most basic forms, so there is not much robust vocabulary in the story, which makes it dull.

**Conventions**—Spelling, sentence structure, and syntax have not been closely edited, so the story is difficult to understand.

## Grade 4 Unit 3: Fictional Narrative

### Score Point 4

#### Stuck on the Sand bar

by Ana M.

Liza waded in the waves. The sun was high and the water was shallow. She had her plastic pail for collecting sand dollars. It was a beautiful day, she was going to enjoy it. She could walk home from the beach. She walked they're by herself too.

Liza found many sand dollars. She put each one in her pail unless it was broke. She threw those back. The sun felt warm on her neck. Little fishes nibbled her feet. There were not many others on the beach since it was early.

She played and collected shells for a long time. Suddenly she looked around. There was water rising up all around her. She was on a sand bar. She told her mom she would be back early. The water deep all around it. She is not such a strong swimmer yet. "What am I going to do? she said aloud." The other people had all left. She felt like a lonely grain of sand on this big beach. How would she get back home, the water was so deep?

Then she saw her older brother in the rowboat. He rowd up to the sandbar and she climbed in. "I thought you might need some help, he said. Liza had never been so glad to see her brother before!

**Focus**—The writer understands the purpose for establishing setting and creating a story and is able to develop a plot, although some loosely related information is included.

**Organization**—An organizational pattern is present, with some lapses in sequence. The response exhibits a limited number of transitional devices such as time-order words. The narrative exhibits a general sense of wholeness.

**Support**—The writer attempts to develop description and action with specific details in parts of the response. Word choice is generally adequate but may be somewhat limited. Verbs are not always precisely chosen. Some attempt at using figurative language is made.

**Conventions**—Basic knowledge of conventions is demonstrated. The writer does not consistently use quotation marks correctly and sometimes fails to include full sentences in the story. Some commonly used words are misspelled.

## What Does a Score Point 3 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—The writing is generally focused and creates setting and action, with some extraneous information. The story may be sketchy but on the whole presents and maintains a unifying idea.

**Organization**—The organizational pattern is somewhat undeveloped. Events are not always presented in a logical order. The story may be composed of loosely related events and details and does not exhibit the clear chronology of a story with a score of 4.

**Support**—Word choice is adequate but predictable; nouns and verbs may be chosen without precision. The writing does not contain many details such as “The sun felt warm on her neck. Little fishes nibbled (nibbled) her feet.” The writer has not employed figurative language in contrast to the paper with a higher score: “She felt like a lonely (lonely) grain of sand on this big beach.”

**Conventions**—Knowledge of the conventions of capitalization and punctuation is demonstrated. Some commonly used words are spelled incorrectly. The writer has attempted to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions. Some errors of syntax occur.

## Grade 4 Unit 3: Fictional Narrative

### Score Point 5

#### The Golden Treasure

by Jim N.

Two explorers wandered through the jungle. The rain pounded down... One of them clutched a torn up map in his hand. The other explorer had a lether bag on a string around his neck. In the tiny bag was a folded up piece of paper. It had been raining for two weeks. The men were completely soaked.

The first explorer said in a tired voice, "Just read me that rhyme one more time, Frank."

Frank knew the words by heart. "In the wild jungle deep, you will find golden treasure where you sleep."

"I don't see what kind of clue that is supposed to be," John complained. "This trip was a mistake. The sky is so dark and the jungle is so thick. We would not see the treasure even if we fell over it."

They hacked through the jungle for a few more hours. The rain was making them miserable. Finally John muttered "Let's stop and put up our tent here. I'm too tired to worry about treasure anymore today."

They set up their camp and went to sleep after eating some food. In the morning, Frank crawled out of the tent. The sun was finally shining like gold.

"Let's start looking for the treasure right away," John said.

"We have found it already," Frank laughed. "This sunshine is our golden treasure."

**Focus**—The writer understands the purpose for writing a story and adequately develops the plot, with few loose threads.

**Organization**—An organizational pattern is present, with a firm beginning, middle, and ending; few lapses are evident. The writer employs transitional devices such as time-order words to move the plot forward. The narrative exhibits a sense of wholeness.

**Support**—The writer develops description and action with sufficient detail in most areas of the response. Word choice is generally adequate but may be somewhat limited. Verbs and nouns are usually specific. The writer employs figurative language to create description. Dialogue is used to advance the plot.

**Conventions**—Knowledge of conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated. The writer consistently uses quotation marks correctly to set off dialogue. Most commonly used words are spelled correctly.

## Grade 4 Unit 3: Fictional Narrative

### Score Point 6

#### Hitching a Ride

by Sunil K.

The sky was gray, and wind as cold as ice rustled through the trees. Ruby puffed up her feathers to keep out the chill as she flew toward the red blossom. She poked her long, thin bill inside the flower. Ruby started to cry. All the nectar was gone. "The plants are dying. I should have gone south before Thanksgiving."

"Eat this acorn, little hungry hummingbird," a fluffy brown squirrel insisted from a nearby tree.

Ruby sat on another tree. She didn't want to be rude, but she didn't dare get too close. "Thank you very much, Squirrel. But I can't eat anything so big," Ruby said.

"I'd be happy to help," a huge, menacing tabby cat purred with a sneaky smile. "I could bring up a little snack."

Ruby flew off without answering, but hunger soon forced her down to a bird feeder. "It's empty," Ruby sobbed. "I'll never have the strength to fly south. I'm in hot water."

"Honk, honk, honk." Ruby looked up and saw a gigantic goose. "I overheard what you said," Goose explained politely. "I'm headed south myself. Want to hitch a ride?"

All her life Ruby had heard tales of hummingbirds riding south on the backs of geese. She'd just never believed them. "Wow! I'll be, you're my lucky star," Ruby gasped in surprise. So Ruby flew to the goose, grabbed tight to its neck, and they soared south together.

**Focus**—This excellent example of a fictional narrative is completely focused on a hummingbird's migration to the south for the winter. It is a poignant and sympathetic piece of writing. There is adventure and suspense as well as resolution.

**Organization**—The whole story follows a logical order from one paragraph to another. Each succeeding encounter furthers our awareness of how desperate the hummingbird is

becoming as she grows hungrier and weaker. There is an inspiring strong closing which solves her problems and gives an insight into the way animals depend on one another.

**Support**—The story is full of lively, colorful details which further the reader’s understanding and pleasure. Word choice, which makes the story very interesting, is varied and sophisticated and further enhances the plot and helps to describe the characters. The reader understands that the “huge menacing tabby cat with the sly smile” is definitely up to no good.

**Conventions**—Everything about this story is carefully crafted, and the spelling and other mechanics of writing are as nearly perfect as can be expected.

## Grade 4 Unit 4: Persuasive Essay

### Score Point 2

#### Good Dogs

by Trent L.

Do you want a new puppy? Do you have a dog? You should pay attention to what I'm going to say.

Each year millions of pet owners give up on their bad dogs. They don't need to. Puppy preschool classes and obedience classes can teach a dog. How to behave.

A trained dog won't be bad as much and have to be separated from people. It won't have to be alone. Dog training is also good for dog owners.

Classes take time. Animal shelters have free ones. Classes at other places may charge a so-so fee. They are good. You and your dog will have happier lives!

**Focus**—This essay is focused on training dogs to make them better and happier pets, but the tone is not attractive, so it does not invite the reader to explore training options in a positive way. The phrase “You should pay attention to what I'm going to say” may turn off readers. This means that the essay is not going to persuade many readers to consider training their animals.

**Organization**—There is an attempt at organizing the arguments for training dogs, but there is no cohesive argument that runs through the essay.

**Support**—Facts and details to support the writer's thesis (trained dogs are happier and so are their owners) are not strong enough to make a winning argument. The writing is flat.

**Conventions**—Incorrect spelling, grammar, and weak syntax and sentence structure make the essay hard to follow and do not contribute to the writer's stated purpose.

### What Does a Score Point 1 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—A score point 1 paper does not have enough focus on the persuasive idea, such as that dogs need to be trained to be happy in the score point 2 paper.

**Organization**—Arguments are not marshalled strongly or in a logical order, so they appear weak. The essay is difficult to read.

**Support**—There are not enough details to support the points the writer wants to make in favor of training for dogs. The paper may have even fewer supporting reasons than the score point 2 paper.

**Conventions**—Spelling errors, and mistakes in syntax and in sentence structure will interfere with the message.

## Grade 4 Unit 4: Persuasive Essay

### Score Point 4

#### Cleaning Up Our Act

by Will S.

Earth should be a safe place for all living things, and there are things you can do about it. One major problem of today is the greenhouse effect the greenhouse effect can axsually change earth's climate.

What is the greenhouse effect? It happens when gases from fule gets into the air. This happens all the time but we are making the problem worse. Every time we use apliance more gases in the air. A lot is from factries, but there's a lot we can do at home. Otherwise the air is getting hotter and dirtier. Climate sometimes changes anyway, like in the Ice Age.

Here are some things that you can do. Think of how many machines and apliance your running. They run on electriscity. Some you need, like a clothes washer, but how you use it makes the difference. In the old days they washed them in tubs. Save up cloths until you have a big pile, don't just run small loads.

Turn off lights and television. Don't ride in cars if you could walk or ride a bike. The exercise good for you anyhow. Use a fan, not the air conditioner, unless you can't stand it.

So you should think about what you do in daily life. If people are willing to change, we can help our planet.

**Focus**—The paper demonstrates an adequate sense of purpose and audience. The response is directly related to the topic, and the focus on making a persuasive appeal is consistently maintained.

**Organization**—A sense of an organizational structure is evident, with some noticeable lapses. The writer presents supporting reasons in reasonably coherent order. The paper demonstrates a sense of wholeness.

**Support**—The writer uses a number of facts, reasons, and persuasive words to support the appeal. Vocabulary is adequate although lacking in precision.

**Conventions**—Most frequently used words are spelled correctly. The writer uses capitalization and punctuation properly. Various sentence structures are employed. Syntactical errors occur but do not impede communication.

## What Does a Score Point 3 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—The writing is generally focused on the topic with some extraneous or irrelevant information. The main focus of the argument may not be clearly presented as in “One major problem of today is the greenhouse effect (effect.) the greenhouse effect can axsuually change earth’s climate. (The greenhouse effect can actually change earth’s climate.)” The response does include a unifying idea, however loosely established.

**Organization**—An organizational pattern has been attempted, although lapses are evident. Ideas are not always presented in a logical order, or transitional devices may be lacking. In some areas, the exposition is composed of loosely related details and does not exhibit the logical sequence of a paper with a score of 4.

**Support**—Word choice is adequate but may seem vague or immature. Details to support the central argument, such as “Save up cloth[e]s until you have a big pile, don’t just run small loads” and “Turn off lights and television “ are sparse. The response does not feature persuasive language as often as the paper with a score of 4: “...you should think about what you do in daily life. If people are willing to change, we can help our planet.”

**Conventions**—Basic knowledge of the conventions of capitalization and punctuation is demonstrated. In general, commonly used words are spelled correctly. There is some variety of sentence structure, although most sentences are simple constructions. Some sentence fragments occur.

## Grade 4 Unit 4: Persuasive Essay

### Score Point 5

#### Adopt a Pet and Save a Life

by Gina V.

Do you ever stop to look in a pet store window as you think about buying a puppy or kitten? Sure, you could take home one of those fluffy animals. But there's another way to get a pet. That is by adopting an animal who needs a good home.

Thousands of animals are abandoned every day. Some of them are taken to animal shelters. Others are just left on the road. This is a terrible thing.

These animals are just as cute and friendly as the animals in pet shops. The difference is, without you, they will not have a chance. So why not get your pet from an animal shelter? You will be doing a good deed and making a new friend.

Adopting homeless animals also sends a message to pet shops and animal mills. Those are businesses where they breed animals to sell. Would it surprise you that some of these animals are not any more healthy than the ones in the shelters, well that is often the sad case. If you adopt, you tell greedy business people "Stop breeding animals when there are so many homeless ones already!"

So to sum up, it is right to adopt your pets, not to buy them. Next time you or a friend are looking for a pet, try the nearest animal shelter.

**Focus**—The essay demonstrates adequate understanding of the purpose of persuasive writing. The response relates directly to the topic, and focus is maintained throughout the paper.

**Organization**—The writing exhibits an organizational structure appropriate to the persuasive mode. Ideas are presented in a logical order, and transitional devices signal the connection between points and reasons. The essay demonstrates a sense of completeness.

**Support**—Specific details support main ideas and reasons throughout the paper. Word choice is adequate although sometimes lacking precision or becoming repetitive. Persuasive language supports the argument.

**Conventions**—Commonly used words are spelled correctly, and grammatical usage is generally correct. The writer uses basic capitalization and punctuation properly, and there is variety in sentence structure.

## Grade 4 Unit 4: Persuasive Essay

### Score Point 6

#### It's Time to Require Bike Helmets

by Kayla S.

Do you want all students who ride bikes to be safe? For many years Ashford School has had a bike policy. Bike riders must register their bikes, park at the bike racks, and lock their bikes. It's a good policy, but it's incomplete. The school should require that students wear bike helmets when they ride their bikes to school.

Bike helmets can reduce the risk of head injuries by as much as 85 percent. Hundreds of children die each year from bike accidents. Thousands more end up in the hospital with head injuries. A change to the school bike policy could save lives and prevent brain damage!

Another reason the school should change its policy is to put an end to student's worries over how he or she looks. Lots of kids are afraid that others will make fun of them for wearing a helmet. If everybody has to wear one, kids will stop teasing each other.

Changing the school policy will also get students in the habit of wearing helmets. Pretty soon strapping on a bike helmet will be just as natural as putting on a coat or tying your shoes before you ride.

Changing the bike policy improves safety, ends concerns about looking different and builds an important safety habit. Let's use our heads! Let's require bike helmets here in Centerville, Missouri.

**Focus**—This is a convincing argument in favor of a local school requiring all bike-riding students to wear helmets. The writer clearly states her opinion in the first paragraph, and uses opinion words such as *should* to strengthen her case. Her last paragraph includes a summary of her arguments and makes a strong closing.

**Organization**—Kayla organizes her arguments in a logical order, from most important (reducing the risk of head injuries) to least important (getting students in the habit of wearing helmets). Every argument is designed to persuade the reader to agree with her opinion.

**Support**—The writer supports her arguments with facts and details that buttress her case for wearing bike helmets.

**Conventions**—Kayla’s use of excellent syntax, word choice, and spelling help her persuasive essay to be strong and completely understandable to her audience.

## Grade 4 Unit 5: Compare and Contrast Essay

### Score Point 2

#### Pets Near and Far

by Jessie L.

I have pets at home. I help at an animal clinic. In some ways, taking care of both pets is the same and in some ways it is different.

You know the pets at home better. You wake up in the morning. You see them. They sleep in your home at night. You see the pets at the animal clinic. When they have an appoyntment.

I clean up after my pets at home, but I clean a lot more at the clinic. I am always cleaning something at the clinic.

The pets at the clinic are nervus. I try to make them calm. The owners are worried about their pets. I play with my pets at home. They are not nervus. I can play with them because they are not nervus.

I really like pets because they are cute and they need someone to take care of them all the time.

**Focus**—The writer attempts to compare and contrast two activities, but there are not enough specific facts and details to make a good contrast or a good comparison.

**Organization**—Information does not flow easily in this essay. The writer seems to jump from one idea to another; there are no transition or comparative words that help the reader follow the reasoning. The conclusion needs a good summary.

**Support**—Word choice is poor, and sentences are short and uninteresting.

**Conventions**—Spelling is incorrect; sentence fragments interfere with the flow of the essay. Transition words and more complex sentences would make the piece more interesting.

### What Does a Score Point 1 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—The writer makes an attempt at comparing and contrasting two activities, but there is not enough of a central theme or a narrowed focus to allow the essay to work.

**Organization**—Ideas and facts are not organized into a cohesive piece of writing. Facts and details are too scanty to make either a comparison or a contrast between the two activities.

**Support**—Word choice is sparse and uninteresting. Interest in the subject seems lacking.

**Conventions**—Poor spelling, grammar, and syntax makes this a hard paper to read and understand.

## Grade 4 Unit 5: Compare and Contrast Essay

### Score Point 4

#### Song and Dance

by Luisa G.

Two ways I express my feelings are song and dance. Both of these arts are set to music. But they are very different if you think about it.

When your singing, your putting feelings and ideas into words. These words come from your throat but they are not you're own words. Unless you wrote the song yourself of course. They say your voice is your instrument. That is true. You have to keep it in good shape or you won't sing too good. That is also true of your body when your dancing. Then your body is your instrument. You must be in good health and strong or you will not dance very good. If you have a cold you will not sing clearly.

In singing a song, you put all the energy into making the sounds. Its like sound just pooring out of you. Your whole body to go into this song. In dance your body is feeling the melody, the rithems. I sing from my stomach on up but dance with the arms, legs, the whole body. In song you make the music, in dance on the other hand you inturpret the music. I started taking dance when I was five.

So while both of these beautiful arts let me I express myself with music, they are also very different.

**Focus**—The response demonstrates an understanding of the purpose for writing. Some information irrelevant to the comparison/contrast is included. Overall, focus is maintained throughout the response.

**Organization**—The exposition shows some appropriate comparison/contrast organization but is repetitive. A few lapses occur. In some areas, the response includes transitional devices between points of comparison or contrast.

**Support**—The paper supplies adequate information with additional details in some areas, while in other areas supporting ideas are not as well developed. Word choice is generally

adequate but may lack precision. The writer expresses an opinion about the value of each art form.

**Conventions**—The writer generally demonstrates mastery of the conventions of capitalization and punctuation, with some lapses. Most frequently used words are spelled correctly. Occasional errors in noun and verb forms are noted but the writing is generally fluent. Some errors of syntax occur but do not significantly impede communication.

## What Does a Score Point 3 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—The writing is generally focused on the topic with some extraneous information. The paper may lack a controlling sentence such as “Two ways I express my feelings are song and dance” or a concluding sentence such as “So while both of these beautiful arts let me I express myself with music, they are also very different” yet generally maintains focus.

**Organization**—There is some evidence of an organizational structure, but lapses in the comparison/contrast pattern are evident. Facts and elaborative details may not directly support specific points. Organizational pattern is weaker overall than in a response scored at 4 points.

**Support**—Word choice is adequate but tends to be vague. The response offers fewer supporting details than does the score point 4 paper [“In dance your body is feeling the melody (melody) the rithems (rhythms). I sing from my stomach on up but dance with the arms, legs, the whole body.” The writer may not express an opinion about the topic.

**Conventions**—Knowledge of the conventions is demonstrated, although lapses occur more frequently than in the score point 4 paper. Commonly used words are generally spelled correctly. The writer attempts to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions. Syntactical errors occur more frequently than in the paper with a score of 4.

## Grade 4 Unit 5: Compare and Contrast Essay

### Score Point 5

#### Out in Nature

by Bruce L.

Fishing and hiking are both outdoor activities. That is a big part of their appeal to me. The more time I spend outside the happier I feel. These two activities take different levels of energy though. Which one I'll choose, depends on my mood.

Fishing is a peaceful activity, at least most of the time. Nothing too restful about a good hike til you stop to catch your breath. Of course if you have a fish fighting you at the end of the line, that's not too restful. Most of the time I spend fishing, though, is standing in a river or sitting on a dock. Hiking you're always on the move pretty much. It's up hill and down, over rocks and through trees.

How they're alike is an interesting question. They make you really look carefully at the world around you. The natural world, that is. When you fish, your eyes follow the tiny bubbles left by a frog or fish. You watch the current and the way water swirls. In hiking, you are aware of the ground under your feet, the way the shape of the earth changes. And the sky overhead, the birds in trees, small animals peek out of bushes.

So fishing and hiking are both similar and different. I recommend both of them to anyone with a love of nature.

**Focus**—The response demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose for expository writing. Most of the information included is directly related to the points of the comparison/contrast, and the focus is consistently maintained.

**Organization**—The appropriate organizational pattern for comparison/contrast is apparent with few lapses. There is evidence of a logical progression of ideas. The response demonstrates a sense of completeness.

**Support**—The writer uses facts and relevant details to support ideas throughout the response. Word choice is adequate but may lack precision. The writer expresses an opinion as to the value and appeal of the two activities.

**Conventions**—Commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. Conventions such as capitalization and punctuation are generally observed. Sentences are mostly complete and grammatical, and sentence combining strategies are used.

## Grade 4 Unit 5: Compare and Contrast Essay

### Score Point 6

#### Community Sports

by Gerard H.

Soccer and swimming are both fun community sports, but they are unique in many ways. The biggest difference is where each sport is played. Soccer takes place on a green, grassy field. The players wear shorts and T-shirts. Swimming takes place at the community pool. It is best to wear an outfit, such as a bathing suit, that can get wet.

Both soccer and swimming are fast-paced sports. In soccer, players run like hurricane winds up and down the field. They can use only their legs to dribble and kick the ball. Swimmers use their legs to advance as well, but they also use their arms. They swim laps back and forth like speeding submarines.

The best thing about soccer and swimming is that they are equally challenging, though in very distinct ways. The challenge in soccer is to score goals and to keep the other team from scoring. Soccer players work together as a team. Each player has a specific position. The challenge in swimming is to swim faster than all the other swimmers. You also try to beat your own best record. The ticking clock might be your toughest opponent!

While they are very different activities, soccer and swimming are both fun sports that are fast-paced and challenging. They are both fantastic ways to have a good time and take part in the community.

**Focus**—The writer of this paper introduced both topics at the beginning and told how they were alike and how they were different. He stayed focused on the topic throughout the essay and closed with a strong summary of his ideas.

**Organization**—Gerald H. talks about the activities in an organized and logical way. He describes the costumes worn, the actions used, the settings where they take place, and the kind of physical exertion required. He compares and contrasts the sports throughout the essay.

**Support**—Details about the two sports are included and the writing is lively and varied. Players “run like hurricane winds” and “swim laps . . . like speeding submarines.”

**Conventions**—The essay has been carefully written and edited, and the spelling, syntax, and other mechanics are excellent.

## Grade 4 Unit 6: Research Report

### Score Point 2

#### Hummingbirds

by Tracy W.

The bee hummingbird weights less than a penny. The smallest bird in the world. Not all hummingbirds are that small. They are interesting.

Hummingbirds have long wings. A hummingbird can move its wings faster than the eye. The wings make a humming noise. It got its name.

The hummingbird can hover in midair. The hummingbird can fly straight up. Straight down. Backwards. It is the only bird in the world that can do that. Flying takes lots of energy. Hummingbirds eat often. They feed on nectar. They get it in flowers. They drink sugar water from hummingbird feeders. The bird doesn't need to perch on a plant or feeder as it eats. It hovers in midair to eat.

The hummingbird is a neat bird. Maybe you will see one sometime.

**Focus**—The writer discusses hummingbirds but has not narrowed the focus of her research report so that it has a main idea or a topic sentence. As a result of the weak focus, the paper is not cohesive and does not flow smoothly.

**Organization**—Two ideas, flying and feeding, are grouped together in the third paragraph. They need to be separated, and each topic could be expanded upon. There is a very weak conclusion.

**Support**—Facts and details do not always support the ideas in this report. There is a lack of transition words, which makes it hard to understand the material.

**Conventions**—Spelling, sentence structure, syntax, and other mechanics are incorrect and interfere with communicating the research for this report.

### What Does a Score Point 1 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—Little or no focus is evident in a score point 1 paper.

**Organization**—There is no topic sentence, clearly stated main idea, or conclusion. Facts that have been revealed by research are not stated in a logical way.

**Support**—The writer does not use transition words so the writing is disconnected. Facts appear at random and are not backed up by details.

**Conventions**—Spelling, grammar, and other mechanics are not up to grade level expectations and do not help the communication of ideas.

## Grade 4 Unit 6: Research Report

### Score Point 4

#### Pluto, No Longer a Planet

by Martin M.

It is a strange thing to know Pluto is not really a planet. For a long time, people thought there were nine planets. Then a group of scientist decided that Pluto is just a dwarf planet. This group called the International Astronomical Union. There are certain reasons why it was decided about Pluto not being a real planet.

To begin, scientists say dwarfs are made up of different materials than true planets. It is rock and ice like the Moon. Not a gas or earth-type planet. Thats how they classify the other true planets. They think Pluto is surrounded by a layer of marsh gas, also called methane.

Second, is the small size of Pluto. There are moons bigger than Pluto. A planet has to be a certain size. New telescopes give scientists more information about the size and materials planets are made of. That helped them decide Pluto is not a planet.

Another point is where Pluto is found, it is the furthest in our Solar System. It is in the Kuiper Belt named after Gerard Kuiper. Now Pluto is being grouped with other bodies in the Kuiper Belt, comets, asteroids and meteoroids.

Knowing these facts about Pluto can help people see why Pluto is not a true planet. One day science will discover more planets.

**Focus**—The response demonstrates an understanding of the purpose of factual writing. Some loosely related information is included, but, overall, focus is maintained.

**Organization**—The writing exhibits an organizational pattern with noticeable lapses. The report includes some transitional words and phrases to connect supporting ideas and details. A brief conclusion is supplied, and there is a sense of completeness to the report.

**Support**—Supporting ideas are developed with elaborative details in some parts of the report. At times the writing has a disjointed quality. Word choice is usually adequate but repetitious, and the tone is uneven in some sections of the response.

**Conventions**—The writer generally demonstrates mastery of conventions of spelling and capitalization, although some frequently used words are misspelled. Sentence fragments and run-ons are noted, along with some instances of awkward or confusing syntax.

## What Does a Score Point 3 Paper Look Like?

**Focus**—The writing is generally focused on the topic with some extraneous information. The paper lacks the clear introduction of the score point 4 paper [“It is a strange thing to know Pluto is not really a planet. For a long time, people thought there were nine planets.... ”] and may also lack a strong conclusion, but generally maintains a degree of focus.

**Organization**—Some evidence of an organizational pattern is demonstrated, although facts and supporting details may be randomly positioned in the writing. The organizational pattern is generally weaker than that of a score point 4 paper.

**Support**—Word choice is adequate but may be vague or repetitious. A response scored as a 3 offers fewer details than does the score point 4 paper, and includes few supporting details such as “Pluto is sur(r)ounded by a layer of marsh gas, also called methane” or “Now Pluto is being grouped with other bodies in the Kuiper Belt [such as] comets, asteroids and meteoroids.”

**Conventions**—Knowledge of the conventions of spelling and capitalization is demonstrated. Commonly used words are generally spelled correctly with some errors. The writer attempts to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions. Sentence fragments and other errors of syntax are noted.

## Grade 4 Unit 6: Research Report

### Score Point 5

#### Why the Dinosaurs Disappeared

by Leigh N.

Billions of years ago, dinosaurs roamed the earth. They were the mightiest creatures on our planet. So what happened to the dinosaurs?

There are different ideas about why dinosaurs disappeared. Some experts believe that a huge comet or meteor hit Earth about 65 million years ago. This would stir up a huge amount of dust. The dust could make the land very cold. This change in climate could have killed off the main animals, the dinosaurs.

Another thing that could have changed the climate was the eruption of volcanoes, this happened at around the same time. This would have put a lot of poisonous matter into the air. It could have killed off many life forms.

Others say that extinction, that means life forms dying out, is always happening. After all, other life forms died out the same time the dinosaurs disappeared. Certain changes in the environment made it hard for some animals to survive. Dinosaurs are cold-blooded animals. It might be that the animals that did survive were warm-blooded, this helped them to adapt to the changes on earth.

Finally, some scientists believe that it was germs that killed the dinosaurs. If their systems couldn't fight off the germs. It would have killed them off.

Scientists do not agree on this subject. With so many different views, we can expect to hear about the mystery of the dinosaurs for many years.

**Focus**—The response demonstrates adequate understanding of the purpose for factual writing. Information included is directly related to the topic, and the focus is consistently maintained.

**Organization**—An organizational pattern is apparent with few lapses. There is evidence of a logical progression of ideas and supporting points, leading to a thoughtful conclusion. A sense of wholeness is evident.

**Support**—The writer uses verifiable facts and details to support statements throughout the response. Word choice is adequate but sometimes lacks precision or may be repetitious. Transitional or connecting words show the relationship between ideas.

**Conventions**—Frequently used words are usually spelled correctly. Conventions such as capitalization and punctuation are generally observed. Minor grammatical errors do not impede communication. Sentences are mostly complete, and the writer has used various structures.

## Grade 4 Unit 6: Research Report

### Score Point 6

#### Bats

by Emmy K.

The bat, which lives on all continents except Antarctica, is one of the world's most amazing animals. It is also among the most misunderstood.

Bats fly, but they are not birds. Bats are mammals. In fact, bats are the only mammals that really fly. Like other mammals, bats have hair. Unlike birds, which hatch from eggs, bats are born alive. They feed on milk from their mothers.

In spite of all the saying "blind as a bat," bats aren't blind at all. Most see very well, even though they depend on their ears more than their eyes. Bats make high-pitched noises that humans can't hear. When these sounds hit something, an echo bounces back. Bats use echoes to help them find food and avoid flying into objects.

Many people worry that bats are harmful because they carry rabies. But bats are no more likely to get rabies than any other mammal. Actually, bats are quite helpful. One way bats help is by eating insects that can cause disease or that harm farm crops. Some bats eat half their weight in mosquitoes in a single night! A final contribution comes from bat waste. People in many parts of the world use it as fertilizer.

Learning more about these flying mammals will help humans appreciate these interesting and important animals.

**Focus**—Every part of this paper is focused on the subject of bats. There is a topic sentence which explains the main idea in the introductory paragraph. Facts and details are connected by transitions that make sense and make the paper clear.

**Organization**—The writer has organized the many details and facts in this report so it is connected, but each paragraph has a topic sentence and the facts are related to each other in the paragraphs.

**Support**—Emmy has organized facts and details to support her main ideas in this report. She has probably used reliable sources for her information, which is varied and very interesting.

**Conventions**—Careful attention has been paid to syntax, structure, spelling, and punctuation. It is an excellent example of a research report.