

Oakland Unified School District Writing Proficiency Project



Process Writing Assessment

5th Grade Annotated Anchor Papers Fall Prompt: Descriptive Essay “My Home”

Note: Please do not use the anchor papers with students prior to the administration of the Process Writing Assessment

5th Grade PWA: Descriptive Writing Fall Anchor Paper

Score Level: 4

START ESSAY HERE

The Party House

Title and first few sentences establish a clear and engaging controlling idea.

Lively and precise language paint a vivid picture of smells and tastes.

→ In my house there is always laughter playing and music. Why? Because it's the party house. We have partys for birthdays, BBQs and baptisms. In my kitchen you can smell hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken even before you taste the juicy hamburgers and crunchy chicken. You'll see people everywhere when there is a party going on.

Interesting variety in sentence length and type.

My house is very comfortable and you'll feel right at home. I am comfortable in my home and never worry about anything because I know it is safe and sound. We welcome people into our house and right away they sit in the big brown couch or around the yellow kitchen table and they start to have a good time. You can hear them laughing all through the house and even outside.

Once again, sensory details create context for the reader.

Everyone who sees our house wants to come over! It is in a safe and quiet neighborhood. Outside it is brown with

white windows and a red door. You might think it is big or very nice, or an expensive house. No matter what you think, I can tell you that all my friends who lay eyes on it love it and want to come over. When that red door opens it's always big enough for a party.

Lots of different people can be found inside, like neighbors, friends and sometime people we don't even know. My mom, dad, brother and family are there. We always have fun when we are together no matter what happens. Win or lose we love each other very much. When you are at our house you are like part of the family.

I have great memories in my house even when we have a party and scary things happen. Like when we were all watching scary movies and this white ipod radio would turn itself on and off. The first time it happened it was no big deal but when it kept happening we knew we had to do

Links sensory description with controlling idea in a memorable way.

Familiar address invites reader into description of home and creates a sense of specific audience.

Punctuation errors are "first-draft" in nature, as evidenced by punctuation that is largely correct throughout the rest of the piece.

something. So a priest came over and blessed the whole house. We never had that problem again.

Even when we are grandmas and grandpas we will remember the party house. People come hungry and leave happy. That is the story of the Party House!

End of essay extends controlling idea by implying the author's future and aptly characterizing the "Party House."

Fifth Grade PWA: Descriptive Writing

Annotated Anchor Papers Fall

Score Level 4

“The Party House”

What makes it a 4?

In this descriptive essay, the author establishes an engaging controlling idea right away that drives the entire organizational structure of the essay. He begins with a vivid sensory description including what a visitor would immediately see, hear, smell and taste upon visiting the “Party House.” Each subsequent paragraph refers back to and builds upon the controlling idea with convincing details: how the author feels in his home, what it looks like on the inside and outside, the neighborhood, people who inhabit or visit the house and how they feel there. The penultimate paragraph offers an interesting memory that at first seems to contradict the controlling idea but ends up reinforcing it. The concluding paragraph summarizes the controlling idea by stating it in a new way, and extends it by referring to the future.

This writer is mostly in control of his conventions of print. The mistakes he makes are almost entirely of a first-draft nature (missing periods and commas starting on page two). The two misspellings (“partys” and “through”) are not grade-level mistakes, but overall the author’s clear command of conventions do not interfere with meaning. Although the author could make his language livelier by choosing more vivid verbs and precise nouns, he nevertheless describes his subject in an interesting and complete way. The preponderance of evidence indicates a score of four.

5th Grade PWA: Descriptive Writing Fall Anchor Paper

Score Level: 3

Correct use of sophisticated punctuation including quotes around the title of a short essay and use of a semi-colon.

"The Greatest House Around"

The greatest house around, is in our town. It's the big gray house! The one that's home to you and me. We always have company. We treat them like family. We're full of hospitality in the greatest house around.

Parallel sentence structure of last three sentences builds effectively to concluding sentence.

Paragraph includes a topic sentence.

My house, the greatest house around, is full of great rooms; the living room, jam-packed with family and fun; the dining room, stuffed with conversations and computer/video game excitement. Also, the bathrooms, overflowing with relief from full bladders. Then there's the kitchen, packed with full stomachs, from good food. Finally, last but definitely not least, 3 bedrooms.

Specific imagery and sensory details help paint a picture of the scenes described.

First draft errors do not interfere with meaning.

The controlling idea presented in the first paragraph—"My house is the greatest"—is clear although a bit general.

Exclamatory sentence varies sentence structure.

Fails to use the colon to introduce a list, but evidence of editing shows awareness of the need to punctuate this complex sentence in a particular way.

Lively and precise language adds color to description.

exploding from sleepy heads and tired eyes. These are the spectacular rooms in the greatest house around.

Includes a concluding sentence that repeats the main idea of the paragraph.

I love to say I live in the greatest house around. I've lived there since the day I came home from the hospital after birth. I've been there through my ups and downs with my Mom, Grandma, Aunt, and 2½ year old beta fish. I've had some great experiences such as learning how to talk, walk, and ride a bike. I love my house and I know it loves me.

Concluding paragraph extends description by showing how author feels.

Fifth Grade PWA: Descriptive Writing

Annotated Anchor Papers Fall

Score Level 3

“The Greatest House Around”

What makes it a 3?

The author begins with a clear topic and controlling idea. Three well-structured paragraphs each include topic and concluding sentences, and establish a beginning, middle and end to the essay. The second paragraph offers many details in support of the controlling idea. The exceptionally lively and precise language in this paragraph—especially the vivid verbs and well-chosen adjectives—contributes to the reader’s capacity to imagine the place being described.

What keeps this essay from earning a score of 4 is the failure of the controlling idea to offer a compelling organizational structure; “greatness” is a little too general to direct the author’s ideas in a clear line of thought. Also, the essay’s relatively short length (just three paragraphs) means that the author has not completely anticipated her reader’s questions and interests about the topic. Finally, although the errors in convention do not interfere with meaning, they do indicate that the author has not yet achieved clear control of grade level standards in spelling and punctuation. The preponderance of evidence indicates a score of three.

5th Grade PWA: Descriptive Writing Fall Anchor Paper

Score Level: 2

First sentence introduces topic.

Controlling idea very vague.

Immediately strays from topic of house by including friends.

Subject and verb do not agree.

Clear transition indicates new idea.

Misspells common sight word.

Misspells common compound word.

I choose to write about this house because it is a cool house, I feel about this house it make me happy. why? Because it is cool friends. They have my back.

I like my house because it look good. when ever my mom cook I can smell the food she will cook. when I go to see what she cook I will smell it first my mom will say if I got it right or if ~~it~~ got it wrong.

→ When I go outside to play with my friend I can hear cars going by. You can hear police siren going off. sometime I go by my friend his name is Damon I go by his house but some time he will be there sometime he won't.

Sentence fragment.

Ideas are grouped in paragraphs, offering some organizational structure.

However, details do not support topic sentence.

Sensory details add interest.

Confuses purpose of essay by substituting narrative for description.

If my friend Damon is not there
I go back to my and play with my dog
in my back yard. My back yard is not
that big it is like in the middle of
small and big. I have a big tree my
tree is about 1000 years old. My tree
has been there for a long time.

Run-on sentence.

Capital letters in the middle of sentences.

I have the second big house
on my block. The biggest house on my
block is my friend he has the biggest
house on the block. His back yard is
bigger than my house.

Ends by referring to topic only obliquely.

THE END

Fifth Grade PWA: Descriptive Writing

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Score Level 2

“I choose to write about this house...”

What makes it a 2?

The author starts off with an attempt to define the topic, but the controlling idea is vague and immediately drifts from house to friends. Ideas are grouped in paragraphs—introduction, food, neighborhood, and the yard—but the ongoing confusion between the topics of house and friends persists throughout the piece. The author fails to provide a decisive conclusion, ending by referring to his friend’s house rather than his own.

Some attempt is made to describe the house, but the piece rambles and sounds more like the author talking to himself than addressing an audience. The use of specific sensory details is limited to the mention of traffic sounds in paragraph three and the detail about the big, old tree in paragraph four; the descriptions provided are not terribly evocative. Overall, the language of the piece is clear but simple, with few adjectives and only common verbs and nouns. Sentence types do vary, including long and short, declarative and interrogative sentences. The author also offers variety by changing the subject of consecutive sentences.

By far the author’s greatest weakness is in conventions of print and academic English. He makes frequent grammatical errors, including: subject/verb agreement, verb tense, and pluralization of nouns. The essay includes sentence fragments and run-on sentences. Sight words and compound words are misspelled throughout the piece (frind, when ever, some time, biggest, bigger). Frequent errors in capitalization—capital letters in the middle of a sentence, randomly alternating between the upper- and lower-case letter B—do not meet the fifth grade standard 1.4 for Written English Language Conventions: “Use correct capitalization.” Errors do sometimes give the reader pause when attempting to decipher the author’s meaning. The preponderance of evidence indicates a score of two.

5th Grade PWA: Descriptive Writing Fall Anchor Paper

Score Level: 1

Begins without topic sentence or controlling idea.

My houses is big and I get a
Sum pool and I like my houses and I want
and I was and my Sum pool and my houses
is ptis, and my people and my houses is
happy and I like to play and I like the Sum
pools

Phonetic spelling often unclear.

Frequent grammatical errors.

Misspells common sight words.

Spelling errors confusing to reader.

I like my ctis and I
play Football and my houses and
I Be playing with my Partner
and with him I tete him he
to Sum and I like him
and I told him that he was

Frequent run-on sentences.

Thoughts often left incomplete.

Loses formatting—margins imprecise.

I like my houses becas
I get a sum pool and I
like my houses becas I
like my houses and I get a
Pool too and I play pool
and

Changes topic
from house to
playing.

my house is important to
me and I like my house and I play
and I play Basketball with I like to play
with people and I like to play and I like
to play and I like to play and was playing
with my brother and I like to play and I like to
and.

Repeats ideas
over and over.

Repetitive
phrasing.

And I like to play and I
like to play Basketball and I like to
play with my and I play Football and
I play pool and I swim and I play
and I was play with people and
I like to play.

Sloppy
penmanship
interferes with
reader's
understanding.

Fifth Grade PWA: Descriptive Writing

Annotated Anchor Papers Fall

Score Level 1

“My house is big...”

What makes it a 1?

This writing sample demonstrates skills well below grade level. The essay lacks any kind of controlling idea, and this unravels the organization of the entire piece. Although ideas are vaguely grouped in paragraphs (swimming pool, brother, swimming, playing, playing), the paragraphs themselves are incoherent, lack topic sentences, repeat ideas from one to the next, and skip from one topic to another with no transitions or logic. Furthermore, it's apparent that the author failed to grasp the purpose or audience of the prompt. She includes no sensory details and the description of her house is therefore unspecific and unrealized.

Serious errors in conventions of grammar and print frequently interfere with the author's meaning. She misspells common sight words, and other misspellings make it difficult for the reader to decipher the text, since the author's use of phonetic patterns is often underdeveloped. In addition to frequent run-on sentences, several times throughout the piece the author seems to lose her train of thought and simply trails off without completing a sentence. The author's phrasing is extremely repetitive and she seems to rely overmuch on familiar sentence structures and words such as “I like...” “I play...” and “I like to play...” The preponderance of evidence indicates a score of 1.