



# **2025 Writing Assessment Exemplars and Teacher Rationale**

Grade 5

Spring 2025

Note: This document does not reflect updates made to the year-end rubrics in Spring 2025.

## Using this Resource

### About the Process

In the Spring of 2025, teachers from across the division gathered for two days to participate in a writing calibration protocol. A calibration protocol is collaborative process for bringing teachers together to discuss student work to reach consensus about how to score writing based on set criteria. The calibration process makes scoring student work more consistent among a group of teachers and more aligned to the outcomes upon which rubrics and scoring criteria are based. The purpose of calibration is to ensure that a group of educators evaluate student work consistently and in alignment with the scoring rubric. This increases the reliability of the assessment data.

### About the Exemplars

- Exemplars are samples of student writing selected to represent a range of responses that illustrate the scoring criteria at each level of performance for Grade 5 (*meeting curricular outcomes with an enriched understanding, meeting curricular outcomes, approaching curricular outcomes, not yet meeting curricular outcomes*).
- These exemplars are just a small sampling of successful approaches to the writing task, and the students' edits, misspellings and other idiosyncrasies are retained in the scanned documents.
- In some exemplars the names of people, places or things have been removed to protect the identity of the writer.

### Rationale for the Exemplars

- Teachers may use the rationale for exemplars to apply the scoring criteria consistently and impartially.
  - The rationale for each exemplar consists of "Scoring" and "Evidence of Graded Criteria." Each rationale serves to:
    - provide evidence as to why the writing sample is considered representative of a particular performance outcome.
    - provide evidence representative of a specific grade level.
    - demonstrate the use of criterion-referenced language to explain judgments of student writing.
    - demonstrate that a range of responses are possible within each performance outcome.
  - The rationale that accompanies each response may assist teachers to apply the scoring criteria consistently and impartially.
  - The rationale may include descriptors to describe the quality of the criteria shown in the student response.
  - Scoring rationale about each exemplar is provided by teachers involved in the selection of the student exemplars and serve to:
    - describe qualities of each student sample writing response as it relates to scoring criteria.
    - allow for variation within an outcome.
    - indicate whether the exemplar provided more or less evidence of each criterion and still be representative of the performance outcome.
  - Teachers should use their professional judgment and consider differing levels of evidence when assigning an overall score.
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## Grade 5 Writing Task

### Grade 5 Writing Prompt



*Image Generated with Canva*



*Image from Kids Think Wide*

Look carefully at the picture. What does the picture make you think of?  
You can write about yourself, or others, real or imagined.

#### **DIRECTIONS**

You have 20 minutes to plan **alone or with a partner or small group**.

You will have up to 40 minutes to write.

You may show changes and corrections on your writing, as it is a first draft.

## Grade 5 Level 4: Enriched Understanding – Exemplar A

## THE NIGHT OF THE MAGICAL FAIR

AS SOON AS MIA STEPPED THROUGH THE GATES OF THE FAIR, IT FELT LIKE SHE HAD WALKED INTO A DREAM. LIGHTS DANCED LIKE FIREFLIES IN THE DARK SKY, AND THE SCENT OF POPCORN AND COTTON CANDY FLOATED THROUGH THE AIR. THE FERRIS WHEEL STOOD TALL LIKE A GIANT'S CROWN, GLOWING WITH REDS, BLUES, AND GOWNS THAT SHIMMERED IN THE NIGHT.

"THIS PLACE IS HUGE!" MIA WHISPERED, HER EYES WIDE WITH WONDER. SHE TIGHTENED THE STRAPS ON HER RED BACKPACK AND MOVED FORWARD, HER HEART THUMPING LIKE A DRUM.

BESIDE HER, HER LITTLE BROTHER MAX TUGGED ON HER SLEEVE. "CAN WE GO ON THE SPINNING TEACUPS FIRST?" HE BEGGED, HIS VOICE FULL OF EXCITEMENT.

MIA SMILED. "LET'S EXPLORE A LITTLE FIRST. THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING EVEN COOLER."

AS THEY WANDERED PAST THE GAME BOOTHS AND CANDY STANDS, MIA NOTICED A RIDE SHE HADN'T SEEN BEFORE. A GLOWING CAROUSEL WITH SHIMMERING HORSES THAT SEEMED TO BREATHE. THE MUSIC COMING FROM IT WAS FITT AND MYSTERIOUS, LIKE THE SOUND OF A LULLABY PLAYED UNDERWATER.

MAX POINTED. "THAT ONE LOOKS... MAGICAL."

JUST THEN AN OLD MAN WITH A CROOKED HAT AND A LONG GRAY BEARD STEPPED OUT FROM BEHIND THE CAROUSEL. HIS VOICE WAS LIKE WIND RUSHING THROUGH DRY LEAVES. "NOT EVERYONE SEES THE MIDNIGHT CAROUSEL," HE SAID WITH A WINK. "ONLY THOSE WITH BRAVE HEARTS AND CURIOUS MINDS."

MIA LOOKED AT MAX, THEN BACK AT THE MAN. "WHAT HAPPENS IF WE RIDE IT?"

## Grade 5 Level 4: Enriched Understanding – Exemplar A

The man chuckled, "The carousel doesn't take you anywhere. It shows you. It shows you what's already inside."

Confused but curious, Mia and Max climbed onto the carousel. The horses began to glide in slow circles, their hooves making no sound at all. Instead of spinning wildly, the ride moved gently, like a rocking chair, and the world around them shimmered like twilight on water.

Suddenly, visions danced before their eyes not dreams, but memories.

Mia saw herself holding Max when he was sick, holding his hand when he was scared, and cheering for him at his first soccer game. Max saw the time Mia gave him the last piece of chocolate, even though it was her favorite.

The music grew stronger, and the air around them felt warm like a hug.

Then everything stilled.

They stepped off the ride quietly. The fair buzzed around them like nothing had happened.

Max looked up at his sister. "That was better than flying."

Mia smiled. "It showed us who we are."

The old man was gone, but in his place was a tiny sign. "The greatest magic is the kind you carry with you."

Grade 5 Level 4: *Enriched Understanding Exemplar A* – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
4	<p><b>Organization and Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flows logically</li> <li>• effectively develops a main idea supported by facts, details, examples, and explanations</li> <li>• paragraphs are effective</li> <li>• effectively creates interest by using a variety of sentence structure and length</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Creative Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it purposefully entertains an audience through the use of plot, characterization, dialogue, and figurative language, such as “lullaby underwater” and “like sunlight on water”</li> <li>• effectively entertains the reader using sensory language, synonyms and antonyms, specific words or phrases, and figurative language such as “shimmered” and “like wind rustling through dry leaves”</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Capitalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• although some errors are present, there were repeated and consistent patterns of proper use</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently applies punctuation to support effective communication</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Grammar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently uses grammar to support communication. Position of adverbs is sophisticated, for example, “spinning wildly,” and “they stepped off the ride quietly,” and “the ride moved gently”</li> <li>• strong use of appositives with conjunctions to connect ideas</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Spelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skillfully applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words</li> </ul>

**Additional Information:**

- Letter formation was discussed when capitalization was discussed. The use of upper and lower case letters throughout is a matter of penmanship. Doesn’t inhibit communication.

**Instructional Next Steps:**

- would benefit from the use of typing or a mechanical pencil or pen when printing
- conference with this student to explore writing options to encourage the love of writing
- introduce the writer to young adult authors with a similar style or new styles
- use student examples of writing as a mentor text when studying figurative language, punctuation, dialogue, and quotation marks.

## Grade 5 Level 4: Enriched Understanding Exemplar B

# LOST Little Girl

A girl named Zoe wanted to go to the huge carnival. She told her parents all about the sign she saw going to school on the bus. Zoe's parents agreed. Her baby brother Ollie was excited too. Zoe started packing. She packed water and some snacks.

Finally Zoe and her family started leaving for the carnival. Zoe was thinking about how fun it would be to brag to her classmates. Ollie was sleeping the entire car ride. When they got there, it took them 20 minutes to find a parking spot because of how packed it was. Once they found a spot, Zoe was ecstatic! Her parents had to hold her by the collar of her shirt.

Zoe got bored because she only rode the kiddie rides because of Ollie. Zoe got so mad she wandered off into the carnival. She was going to ride the Ferris Wheel and Rollercoaster. After riding the rollercoaster, Zoe had wished that she would've just stayed with her family. She got so scared, she froze. She sat down crying wishing that her family were there.

The carnival started to end and cops showed up to look for Zoe. She ran away because she thought she would be in trouble for wandering off. Eventually, Zoe gave in and got taken to her family. They were worried about her and happy she was found. She was happy to be back.

Grade 5 Level 4: *Enriched Understanding Exemplar B* – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
4	<p><b>Organization and Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effectively develops a main idea supported by facts and details such as, “Ollie was sleeping the entire car ride”</li> <li>• effectively expresses ideas logically</li> <li>• effectively creates interest by using a variety of sentence structure and length</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Creative Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses plot and characterization to entertain an audience</li> <li>• does not yet use dialogue and figurative language</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Capitalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently applies capitalization to support effective communication</li> <li>• names are capitalized correctly. A few errors are present in words such as “Rollercoaster”</li> <li>• beginning of sentences are capitalized</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently applies punctuation to support effective communication</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Grammar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequently uses grammar to support communication using appropriate tense, subject-verb agreement, noun-pronoun agreement, and conjunctions to connect phrases</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Spelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skillfully applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words, including prefixes and suffixes</li> </ul>

**Additional Information:**

- capitalization was discussed at length, specifically letter formation

**Instructional Next Steps:**

- specific word choice could be enhanced
- opportunity for a use of figurative language and dialogue

## Grade 5 Level 3: Meeting – Exemplar C

# Lost and Found!

One time, Skye's family went to a Carnival. Skye has curly hair, blue eyes, and always gets into trouble. She is also a single child, so she has no siblings. Back to the story.

Skye wants to go to the mirror maze!

"I want to go in the mirror maze, mirror maze, mirror maze!" Skye says as she jumps up and down nonstop.

She blasts into the crowd! "Stop! Wait for us, Skye!" her parents scream, but Skye can't hear them because she wants to get to that mirror maze! She made it! Skye is so happy that she ran into a mirror!

"Opps! Ow! I forgot mirror mazes are confusing!" She says. She expects her parents to come rushing to check if she's ok!

"I'm fine!" she says as she turns around to see her parents standing there. Skye's bright blue eyes are getting watery. Her parents aren't there. Suddenly, Skye hears soft booms. "Boom, Boom, Boom!"

Skye is terrified to see that they closed the maze, with her in it. Luckily, she has a flashlight in her backpack she brought along. She hears something small hit the floor. Skye turned to see a knife with red on the blade on the floor. Skye screams.

"Oh my goodness! I'm stuck in here with a murder!" Skye thought, as she tried to find the person

## Grade 5 Level 3: Meeting – Exemplar C

in the spotlight. "Excuse me!" someone said behind her.

"Eck!" she shrieked. Skye picked up the knife and pointed it at the person. It was a boy.

"Whoa! What are you doing?" said the boy covered his eyes when the bright light hit his face.

"Hey, my pocketknife! Thanks for ripping it! I need it to make my jelly sandwiches!" The boy said.

"Phew!" said Skye with relief. I know a way out," says the boy. "I'm Mike."

"Skye!"

"Cool!"

To be continued.

Book 2 almost here!

## Grade 5 Level 3: Meeting Exemplar C – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
3	<p><b>Organization and Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adequately arranges and expresses ideas logically, using details and transitions. Transitions between paragraphs are lacking.</li> <li>• sufficiently creates interest by using a variety of sentence structure and length</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Creative Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficiently entertains an audience using plot, characterization, dialogue and figurative language</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Capitalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently applies capitalization to support effective communication</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequently applies punctuation to support effective communication - excellent use of dialogue</li> <li>• the overuse of exclamation marks distracts the reader</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Grammar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequently uses grammar to support communication.</li> <li>• sometimes uses appropriate tense</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Spelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skillfully applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words, including prefixes and suffixes</li> </ul>

**Additional Information:****Instructional Next Steps:**

- learning how to play with excitement and enthusiasm within a character without the overuse of exclamation marks.
- using consistent tense throughout

## Grade 5: Level 3 Meeting – Exemplar D

## The Girl who is never alone

It was my birthday and my parents took me to a fair on our way there I said, "Mom come on a fair? I'm way too old, this is for babies!" Well what happen to my baby? Is she too old to enjoy things?" Said my mom. "Whatever!" I shot back. Once we got there, My mom wanted me to go to a funhouse. "Why don't you go in the fun house?" "Mom, I'm 14 not 5!" I yell. "I'll let you go to that party." Well now I had too, I ran in faster than lightning. as I was making my way through the maze I looked back and my parents weren't there. When I finished the maze I started to look for them. "Mom! Dad!" I screamed, but no answer. I looked around no one was there.

Soon I noticed that a shadow of a clown was in front of me, I looked back but no one was there. Soon I found a girl sitting on a bench. When she saw me she jumped up, "listen closely, a clown is following you, don't let him catch you!" I nodded "Don't be scared I killed mine!" She whispered "Whats your name?" "Chloe" I said while shaking "I'm Sara!" "I'm trapped too!" Chloe looked back. her clown is closer. "Run" yelled Sara as they sprinted for a tent. "all you have to do is go on the ferris wheel and say I'm sorry to the clown." "oh." I said. I ran to the ferris wheel as I was getting on the wheel I screamed "I'm Sorry!" A fun house appeared! as soon as I got off I ran for it. I made it through and saw my

## Grade 5: Level 3 Meeting – Exemplar D

parents. "I'm so sorry!" I screamed and they took me home. I was sitting in my bed then I saw Sara at my window with a sign that said "tricked you!" Then I got teleported back to the other world and Sara replacing me, trapped forever with my clown skill following every one of my foot step perfectly.

THE END

## Grade 5 Level 3: Meeting Exemplar E – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
2	<b>Creative Expression</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inconsistently arranges and expresses ideas logically</li> <li>• partially creates interest</li> </ul>
3	<b>Creative Expression</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficiently entertains an audience</li> <li>• the plot is difficult to follow and an overreliance on dialogue to move the story</li> <li>• thoughtfully entertains the reader through the use of figurative and sensory language</li> </ul>
3	<b>Capitalization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequently applies capitalization to support effective communication</li> </ul>
3	<b>Punctuation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequently applies punctuation to support effective communication</li> </ul>
3	<b>Grammar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequently uses grammar to support communication through appropriate tense, conjunctions to connect phrases, and appositives</li> </ul>
3	<b>Spelling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficiently applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar</li> </ul>

**Additional Information:**

- markers discussed that the paragraph structure was not simplistic, and it wasn't quite sufficient

**Instructional Next Steps:**

- organization - support to help structure the story and organize ideas logically

Grade 5: Level 2 Approaching – Exemplar E

The picture makes me think of the time I went to the circus. One time I went to a circus with Nash and my Dad. Nash is my brother. My Mom is at home so it was just me my Dad and Nash. There was a big tent and in the tent there were lots of people! Someone was giving out popcorn so my Dad got some for me and my brother. There were people doing cool tricks on bicycles and people doing gymnastics. It was very fun to watch. After the show was done we went to the car and went back home. When we got home I told mom what we saw at the circus. My favorite part was when someone was walking on a ball when the ball was moving.

## Grade 5 Level 2: Approaching Exemplar E – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
2	<p><b>Organization and Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adequately arranges and expresses ideas. Does not yet write paragraphs – single paragraph response</li> <li>• ideas are logically arranged</li> <li>• uses a variety of sentence beginnings</li> <li>• partially develops a main idea</li> <li>• partially creates interest</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Creative Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simplistic beginning, middle, end</li> <li>• does not yet use characterization, dialogue, and figurative language</li> <li>• use of “biceles” and “gymnastics” and “popcorn” in specific word choice</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Capitalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequently applies capitalization to support effective communication</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sometimes applies punctuation to support effective communication</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Grammar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequently uses grammar to support communication</li> <li>• sometimes uses appropriate tense. Tense change at the beginning</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Spelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficiently applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words</li> </ul>

**Additional Information:**

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**Instructional Next Steps:**

- organization - support to help structure the story and organize ideas logically

## Grade 5 Level 1: Not Yet Meeting – Exemplar F

It has been a long day of school and I am almost home. Stan stole my lunch again for the 6th time and I am starving. I was just turning the corner to my house and I don't see my mom's car. I get in our house and I see our family photo. I miss dad, it's been a year since the car crash and he sadly didn't make it. The house is silent and I call out for mom, no answer. I call once again mom, still no answer. I go upstairs in her room, no one there but then I see a note on the bed. It's from mom. It says: Dear Lilly, I have went out to get some stuff. I will be home in an hour or so. From mom. I go down stairs to make a snack and then I hear a knock on the door. I feel my heart skip a beat. I look at the door and thank fully it's my friend. I let her in and

she says hi. I say hi back

## Grade 5 Level 1: Not Yet Meeting Exemplar E – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
2	<p><b>Organization and Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>partially creating interest with varying sentence length, “I was just turning the corner to my house, and I don’t see my mom’s car”</li> <li>follows logical idea and timeline. Is lacking paragraphs and is in the process of developing a main idea</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Creative Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses sensory language, creates feelings of loneliness “no ancer”, “I see our famaly photho”</li> <li>developing the complexity of some sentences</li> <li>the writing entertained the audience and used some sensory language and synonyms. Lacks aspects of figurative language</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Capitalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sometimes applies capitalization to support effective communication</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not yet apply punctuation to support effective communication</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Grammar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sometimes uses grammar to support communication - tense was mostly present except for “have went out” therefore, we went with <i>sometimes</i></li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Spelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rarely applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words</li> <li>mistakes such as “dident” and “hes” (meaning has), still working on vowels and blends within word patterns</li> </ul>

## Additional Information:

## Instructional Next Steps:

- paragraph development
- punctuation and spelling
- aspects of figurative language

## Grade 5 Level 1: Not Yet Meeting – Exemplar F

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
a Big Family Trip  
in my house when I was watching  
tv my dad called me and my brother  
and mom we went upstairs you guys  
go change your clothes my dad said why  
I ask because where going on a trip  
my mom said what! I didnt know we  
where going on a trip I said my brother  
rs were going crazy when my dad said where  
e going on a trip.

well this is going to be awesome I  
thought in my mind. we all went  
to the car and drive of while  
in the car my brother name jeremiah  
pull up a camera. whooh! we did it  
you get that camera in the  
basement jeremiah said

## Grade 5 Level 1: Not Yet Meeting Exemplar F – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
1	<p><b>Organization and Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inconsistently arranges and expresses ideas logically</li> <li>• lacks interesting facts, details, examples, and explanations</li> <li>• rarely creates interest by using a variety of sentence structure and length</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Creative Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simplistically attempts to use dialogue</li> <li>• attempts to entertain the reader</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Capitalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rarely applies capitalization to support effective communication</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not yet apply punctuation to support effective communication</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Grammar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not yet apply subject-verb agreement, noun-pronoun agreement, position of adverbs, connections to connect phrases</li> <li>• present tense was maintained throughout</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Spelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partially applies knowledge of spelling patterns with words like “camera”</li> </ul>

**Additional Information:**

- scorers felt that the voice in this piece was strong

**Instructional Next Steps:**

- use of quotation marks and/or spacing of dialogue
- use of storyboard or plot map to support organization of ideas