

Grade 5 – Personal Narrative Writing Work Sample: Meets

Task: Your class is studying about oceans and animals that live in these oceans. You are given three resources about whales. Read the sources carefully so you can **write a story** about a family that goes on vacation to a place right by the ocean. They go out on a boat ride and spot a huge creature coming out of the water. It's a whale! Tell the story of what happens when the family sees the whale. When writing your story, find ways to use information and details from the sources to improve your story.

Scores, Justification of Student Evidence, and Suggested Areas of Student Improvement

Ideas and Content: 4

The student's writing demonstrates a clear and engaging story, includes relevant whale facts, and develops a structured narrative. However, some moments could be expanded with deeper sensory details and character reflection.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	
✓ The Story Has a Well-Developed Beginning, Middle, and End	○ The plot is structured well, following a logical progression: ○ Beginning – Emma and Jake board a boat for a whale-watching tour. ○ Middle – They see a gray whale and then a pod of orcas. ○ End – Emma and Jake reflect on their experience and hope to return. ○ Example: <i>"Emma leaned forward, scanning the horizon. Then, out of nowhere, a tall mist of water shot into the air."</i> ○ This moment builds anticipation and smoothly transitions into the whale sighting.
✓ The Writer Uses Specific Details to Describe the Whales	○ Example: <i>"The orcas swam together in perfect sync, their dorsal fins rising and falling like dancers in a routine."</i> ○ This vivid image helps the reader visualize the movement of the whales.
✓ The Writer Incorporates Whale Facts from the Sources	○ The student integrates research naturally into the narrative. ○ Example: <i>"That's a gray whale. They migrate thousands of miles along the coast, and some stop here in Puget Sound to rest and feed."</i> ○ This factual information enhances the story while maintaining a natural flow.
✓ More Character Reactions Could Strengthen the Emotional Impact	○ Emma and Jake react to the whales, but their emotions could be explored further. ○ Example: <i>"Jake gasped. 'Whoa! It's huge!'"</i> ○ This reaction is effective, but what did Jake feel—fear, amazement, disbelief?
✓ Some Parts of the Story Could Be Expanded for Greater Depth	○ The writing briefly describes events but could provide more sensory details to deepen engagement. ○ Example: <i>"Emma rested her chin on her hands, watching the water shimmer in the golden light."</i> ○ How did she feel at that moment? What thoughts were running through her mind?

Organization: 4

The student's writing follows a logical and engaging structure, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. The events unfold naturally, but some transitions between scenes could be smoother, and the ending could feel more reflective.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	
✓ The Story Has a Strong Beginning That Sets Up the Narrative	○ The introduction establishes the setting and characters effectively. ○ Example: <i>"Emma and Jake stepped onto the boat, their eyes wide with excitement. The salty ocean air filled their lungs as they leaned over the railing."</i> ○ This introduction immediately immerses the reader and sets up the whale-watching adventure.
✓ The Middle Section Builds the Story Well	○ The student progresses smoothly from anticipation to action, with the whale sightings happening in a logical sequence. ○ Example: <i>"First, a gray whale appeared, its massive back gliding across the surface. Then, minutes later, a pod of orcas emerged, their sleek black and white bodies cutting through the waves."</i> ○ This sequence is easy to follow and builds excitement.
✓ Some Transitions Between Scenes Could Be Smoother	○ The story moves from one event to another without always connecting them naturally. ○ Example: <i>"The guide explained about gray whales. Then they saw a pod of orcas."</i> ○ The jump between these two events feels abrupt.
✓ The Ending Provides Closure	○ The student wraps up the story with the characters reflecting on their experience. ○ Example: <i>"That was amazing!" Jake said, still staring at the water. Emma nodded. 'I hope we can come back and see them again someday.'"</i> ○ This gives a sense of completion but could be expanded for greater emotional depth.
✓ The Ending Could Have a More Reflective Conclusion	○ The characters' final thoughts feel brief and could be expanded to make the story feel more meaningful. ○ Example: <i>"I hope we can come back and see them again someday."</i> ○ How did seeing the whales impact them? Did it change how they think about the ocean?

Voice: 4

The student's writing demonstrates enthusiasm and engagement, making the whale-watching experience enjoyable to read. However, some moments could be deepened with more emotional reactions and expressive language.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	
✓ The Writing Shows Genuine Interest in the Topic	○ The student expresses excitement through the characters' actions and dialogue. ○ Example: <i>"Jake gasped. 'Whoa! It's huge!'"</i> ○ This reaction adds liveliness and energy to the moment.
✓ The Writer's Personality Comes Through	○ The characters show excitement and curiosity, making them relatable to the reader. ○ Example: <i>"That was amazing!" Jake said, still staring at the water."</i> ○ This adds a natural, believable reaction to the scene.
✓ Some Parts of the Writing Feel Engaging and Fun	○ Example: <i>"The orcas swam together in perfect sync, their dorsal fins rising and falling like dancers in a routine."</i> ○ This comparison creates a vivid and engaging image.
✓ The Characters Could Interact More with the Experience	○ The story focuses on what happens but not how it personally affects the characters. ○ Example: <i>"Emma nodded. 'I hope we can come back and see them again someday.'"</i> ○ What did she learn or feel in this moment?

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	
✓ More Emotional Depth Could Strengthen the Writing	○ The characters express excitement but not much deeper reflection. ○ Example: <i>“That was amazing!” Jake said.</i> ○ Why did he think it was amazing? What emotions did he feel?
✓ Some Moments Could Have More Expressive Language	○ Some descriptions feel factual rather than filled with emotion. ○ Example: <i>“Emma and Jake watched the whale swim.”</i> ○ This tells the reader what happened but doesn’t make them feel the excitement.

Word Choice: 4

The student’s writing uses clear and effective words, but some descriptions could be more vivid and sensory-rich. Stronger, more precise word choices would enhance the whale encounter and make the story even more engaging.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	
✓ Some Vivid and Interesting Words Are Used	○ The student chooses some strong words to describe the whale encounter. ○ Example: <i>“The orcas swam together in perfect sync, their dorsal fins rising and falling like dancers in a routine.”</i> ○ This creates a clear mental image for the reader.
✓ More Precise and Descriptive Words Could Enhance the Story	○ Some phrases are basic and could be replaced with stronger, more vivid words. ○ Example: <i>“The whale was big.”</i> ○ How big was it? What did it look like?
✓ Some Sensory Words Are Included	○ The student adds a few details about what the characters see and hear. ○ Example: <i>“A tall mist of water shot into the air.”</i> ○ This helps the reader visualize the whale’s movement.
✓ More Sensory Details Would Improve Engagement	○ The story includes some sensory details but could use more to fully immerse the reader. ○ Example: <i>“The boat rocked on the water.”</i> ○ What did the water sound like? How did the movement feel?
✓ Dialogue Helps Express Excitement	○ Example: <i>“Whoa! It’s huge!” Jake gasped.</i> ○ This reaction adds liveliness to the moment.

Sentence Fluency: 4

The student’s writing flows well and is easy to read, with a mix of sentence lengths and some varied structures. However, some sentences could be restructured for smoother readability, and transitions between ideas could be improved.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	
✓ Sentences Flow Naturally and Are Easy to Read Aloud	○ The student avoids overly choppy or robotic sentence structures. ○ Example: <i>“First, a gray whale appeared, its massive back gliding across the surface. Then, minutes later, a pod of orcas emerged, their sleek black and white bodies cutting through the waves.”</i> ○ This sentence flows smoothly and maintains a nice rhythm.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	
✓	Some Sentences Could Be Combined for Better Flow - Some moments have several short sentences that could be combined for a smoother reading experience. - Example: <i>"The boat rocked. The wind blew. The waves crashed."</i> - This makes the writing feel choppy instead of fluid.
✓	Some Sentence Variety Is Present - The student mixes short and long sentences, making the writing more dynamic. - Example: <i>"Jake gasped. 'Whoa! It's huge!'"</i> - This short sentence adds emphasis and excitement, breaking up longer descriptions.
✓	Few Run-On Sentences or Fragments Most sentences are correctly structured, making the story easy to follow.
✓	Transitions Between Ideas Could Be Stronger - The student moves between events without always using smooth transitions. - Example: <i>"The guide explained about gray whales. Then they saw a pod of orcas."</i> - This transition feels abrupt and could be improved.

Conventions: 4

The student's writing demonstrates a solid understanding of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization, with some minor errors that require editing.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	
✓	Correct Use of Capitalization The student capitalizes the first word of each sentence and proper nouns (e.g., Emma, Jake, Puget Sound).
✓	Minor Spelling Errors - A few words are misspelled or could be double-checked for accuracy. - Example: <i>"We're going to see wale's today!"</i> → <i>"We're going to see whales today!"</i>
✓	Most Sentences Are Grammatically Correct - The student uses correct subject-verb agreement and sentence structure. - Example: <i>"A tall mist of water shot into the air."</i> - This sentence is clear and grammatically correct.
✓	Occasional Run-On Sentences - Some sentences could be split into two or rewritten with proper conjunctions. - Example: <i>"The boat rocked on the waves it was hard to stand still."</i> - This should be split into two sentences or connected with a conjunction.
✓	Punctuation Is Mostly Correct - The student uses quotation marks correctly in dialogue. - Example: <i>"'Whoa! It's huge!' Jake gasped."</i> - This is punctuated correctly, with the exclamation point inside the quotation marks.