

September 2003

1.9

Narrative

Benchmarks

In narrative writing, students organize and relate a series of events, fictional or actual, in a coherent whole. This is evident when students:

Pre K – 4:

- a. Recount in sequence several parts of an experience or event, commenting on their significance and drawing a conclusion from them; or create an imaginative story with a clear story line in which some events are clearly related to the resolution of a problem.
- b. Use dialogue and/or other strategies appropriate to narration; and
- c. Select details consistent with the intent of the story, omitting extraneous details.

5-8:

- d. Establish a situation/plot, point of view, setting, and conflict;
- e. Develop characters through action, speech, relationship to others, etc.; and
- f. Use a range of narrative strategies.

9-12: Evidence 5 – 8 applies, plus -

- g. Engage readers by creating a context that makes clear the significance of the story and of its central idea or tension;
- h. Control both the movement (chronology) and the pace of the story;
- i. Effectively use a range of narrative strategies;
- j. effectively use dialogue; and
- k. unify all narrative aspects of the story.

10th Grade Benchmarks

“Yooooooooou got me feelin”	5 / 3
“White Room”	5 / 3
“Walking the Dog”	4 / 3
“The Roommate”	4 / 3
“The Shot”	3 / 2
“Wax Figures”	2 / 1
“Teenage Driver”	1 / 2

**VERMONT NEW STANDARDS RUBRIC FOR
NARRATIVE WRITING: WRITING TO TELL A STORY**

Standard 1.9 In written narratives, students organize and relate a series of events, fictional or actual, in a coherent whole.

Criteria	Score Point 5 Exceeds the Standards	Score Point 4 Accomplished Writing	Score Point 3 Intermediate Writing	Score Point 2 Basic Writing	Score Point 1 Limited Writing
<p>CONTEXT, PURPOSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes situation, point of view, conflict, and plot, as necessary <hr/> <p>NARRATIVE STRATEGIES: VOICE /TONE AND ELABORATION (Details)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing the character in action Using dialogue to reveal character and advance action Dramatizing scenes Managing time through straightforward chronology, flashbacks, episodes and transition, or foreshadowing Providing character motivation Developing suspense <hr/> <p>ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE</p>	<p>Score point 5 meets all the criteria in score point 4. In addition, a paper receiving this score renders a particularly dramatic recreation of events.</p> <p>Shows insight into the characters' motivation and the significance of the events (purpose).</p> <p>Uses lively and concrete language; e.g., similes and metaphors (detail/ voice & tone).</p> <p>Some language and images may invite readers to reflect on the significance of the events (voice & tone).</p> <p>Reveals a strong individual voice.</p> <p>Uses a variety of sentence structures and length purposefully (voice & tone).</p>	<p>Establishes the situation by setting the action of the story within a clearly defined time and place (purpose).</p> <p>Presents main characters effectively.</p> <p>Maintains clear topic and focus (purpose).</p> <p>Narrator may reflect on the importance of events (purpose).</p> <hr/> <p>Creates a believable world, real or fictional, developing action by dramatizing rather than telling what happens (detail).</p> <p>Develops characters through effective use of dialogue, action, behavior, or relationships with other characters (detail).</p> <p>Shows character growth or change or comments on significance of experience.</p> <p>Relevant, concrete details enable readers to imagine the world of the story or experience.</p> <hr/> <p>Organized in a dramatic /effective way.</p> <p>Has an engaging beginning and moves through a series of events to a logical, satisfying ending (organization).</p>	<p>Establishes adequate context.</p> <p>Presents characters in a somewhat stereotypical fashion.</p> <p>Relies on a narrow range of strategies to develop story line.</p> <hr/> <p>Some strategies, such as dialogue, used with effectiveness (detail).</p> <p>Some details may be generic, but they advance action and describe characters' personalities and actions.</p> <p>Generally uses predictable language (voice & tone).</p> <p>May vary sentence length and type (voice & tone).</p> <hr/> <p>Presents characters and events in such a way that readers can easily follow the story line (organization).</p> <p>Has a clear beginning, middle, and end.</p> <p>Ending may rely on external events rather than on characters' decisions or actions.</p>	<p>May give vague sense of context (purpose).</p> <p>Identifies characters.</p> <p>Establishes story topic; attempts focus (purpose).</p> <hr/> <p>May use some dialogue (detail).</p> <p>May have problems with pacing.</p> <p>May list rather than develop relevant detail or character traits. Characters are often stereotypes, lacking motivation (detail).</p> <p>Some inappropriate word choices (voice & tone).</p> <p>Little variety of sentence structure or length (voice & tone).</p> <hr/> <p>Relies on straightforward "and then" chronology (organization).</p> <p>May lack effective beginning and/or ending or have an abrupt conclusion (organization).</p> <p>May present characters and the sequence of events in a predictable way (organization).</p>	<p>Little or no context presented (purpose).</p> <p>May list characters.</p> <p>Presents topic; no focus.</p> <hr/> <p>May list some generic details in haphazard order.</p> <p>May not describe characters (detail).</p> <p>Little attention to word choice (voice & tone).</p> <p>Usually short, simple sentences (voice & tone).</p> <hr/> <p>May have major gaps in coherence.</p>

Score Point 0 Unscorable There is no evidence of an attempt to write a narrative piece.

NARRATIVES

Narratives: Standard 1.9 In written narratives, students organize and relate a series of events, fictional or actual, in a coherent whole. This is evident when students: (PreK-4) **a.** Recount in sequence several parts of an experience or event, commenting on their significance and drawing a conclusion from them; or create an imaginative story with a clear story line in which some events are clearly related to the resolution of a problem; **b.** Use dialogue and/or other strategies appropriate to narration; **c.** Select details consistent with the intent of the story, omitting extraneous details; (5-8) **d.** Establish a situation/plot, point of view, setting and conflict; **e.** Develop characters through action, speech, relationships to others, etc; **f.** Use a range of narrative strategies; (9 – 12) **g.** Engage readers by creating a context that makes clear the significance of the story and of its central idea or tension; **h.** Control both movement (chronology) and the pace of the story; **i.** Effectively use a range of narrative strategies; **j.** Effectively use dialogue; and **k.** Unify all narrative aspects of the story.

NARRATIVES – Writing that tells a story or recounts an event.

GLOSSARY

Coherence – The arrangement of ideas in such a way that the reader can easily move from one point to another. When all ideas are arranged and connected, a piece of writing has coherence.

Context --The set of facts or circumstances surrounding an event or a situation in a piece of literature.

Elaboration – The words used to describe, persuade, explain, or in some way support the main idea; to be effective details should be vivid, colorful, and appeal to the senses. Details can be descriptive, sensory, and/or reflective.

Focus – The concentration on a specific topic to give it emphasis or clarity.

Pacing – The rate of movement and action of the story. The story may take a long time to build to the climax or end abruptly.

Stereotype – A pattern or form that does not change. A character is “stereotyped” if she or he has no individuality and fits a mold.

Tone – The overall feeling or effect created by a writer’s attitude and use of words. This feeling may be serious, mock-serious, humorous, sarcastic, solemn, objective, etc.

Topic – The specific subject covered in a piece of writing.

Voice – The style and quality of the writing. Voice portrays the author’s personality or the personality of a chosen persona. A distinctive voice establishes personal expression and enhances the writing.

HINTS – A narrative piece usually focuses on story line, plot, setting, characters, problem, and resolution. However, in 8th grade and above, a narrative may have, and is usually more effective with, some reflection.

“Yooooou got me feelin’, eeeeemotiooons, deeper than I’ve ever before...”

She sang with enthusiasm, making her way down the path to her treehouse. The previous year when she was four, her dad helped her “discover” it. It had become a very common play place. Tugging her quilt close behind, it caught on a shrub on the bank.

“Aw, come on.” She whined, yanked again and was on her way.

Oh, oh, you got me feelin’, emotions...” At the base of the tree she placed her foot on top of the 2 x 4, laid up against it, and grabbed a handful of the hammock hanging from the vast branches. Pulling herself up one hand over the other, she made her way to the “base” of the treehouse that overlooked the pond. A swing that resembled that of a trapeze hung from one of the large branches to her left, gently swaying in the breeze. The leaves were florescent green after last night’s rain, creating a giant green umbrella overtop the maple.

“Oh ith real nithe out, perfect day for being in my tree! And Mama thaid ith only eleven o’clock.” Finally at her sanctuary, she began to sing Mariah Carey again, just as loud.

“I feel good, I feel nice, I’ve never been tho thatisfied. I’m in love, I’, alive - man if I can thing like her now just imagine when I’m grown up! They would think I’m the betht, and I’d be tho famouth everyone’d know me.

‘And ladeeth and gentlemen, Natalie!’” she cried, thanking her imaginary audience out beyond the pond. After a bow she tucked her head down a bit, batted her little eyes and flashed a radiant smile.

“Thank you, thank you. I’m tho glad you came to hear me thing!” she began modestly. “I just thing for you cuz ith what I love to do!” she paused for applause, and began again.

“Natalie!” a distant voice called. “Leelee! Your lunch is ready, Sweetie!”

“Mama?” she turned her attention from the audience to her mom, standing up on the driveway. Her bright yellow bathing suit next to her khaki shorts revealed her summer tan.

“Who were you singing to, honey?” she asked, smiling to herself?

“No one, Mama. My lunch is ready?”

“Yup, I made your favorite; spaghetti!”

“Oh, yummy! Just a minute, k? I’m almotht done.” She watched her mother until she entered the house, then proceeded to finish the performance.

“Now, where wath I ...” she mumbled. “oh, ya, ok guys, I’m ready now! Ahem. Ooooooooh yooou got me feelin’ emotions! Deeper than I’ve ever before...” She sang it once, twice through, and began a third only to be interrupted by her mother again.

“Leelee!” she called.

“Yeth Mama, I’m comin, I’m comin.” She picked up her quilt and shoved one end into her mouth, reluctantly descending back to earth. Her foot searched for the 2 x 4, but apparently couldn’t find it. Slowly lowering herself again, she went too far and lost her grip, tumbling to the bank.

“Ow!” she shrieked, landing on a raspberry bush. She expertly pulled them out of her skin, removing the deeper thorns.

“How come I alwayth have to do that?” she questioned. Not receiving an answer she swung the quilt over her shoulder and began the journey back to the top of the bank. Reaching the stonewall Natalie climbed carefully over the large rocks so as not to fall again. Pushing her hair out of her eyes, she made her way to the house, singing confidently.

“Oh oh you’ve got me feelin’ eeeeeemotions....”

1.9 Narrative
Effectiveness = 5
Conventions = 3

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Context established by setting the action in a clearly defined time (life of a 5-year-old) and place (treehouse)

Precise and sensory language and concrete details create a believable world

Effective use of dialect develops character and advances action

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“Oh oh you’ve got me feelin’ eeeeeemotions...”

Dialogue develops character and advances action

Circular ending is satisfying

Effectiveness Score 5

This narrative has all the qualities of a Score Point 4. It sets the context and maintains a clear topic and focus. It presents the main character effectively through action, behavior, and dialogue. Relevant, concrete details enable the reader to imagine the world of the story. It is organized in an effective way, taking the reader through an engaging beginning, a series of events, and a satisfying ending. In addition, it reveals a strong individual voice, uses a variety of sentence structures purposefully, and shows insight into the character, all Score Point 5 qualities.

Conventions Score 3

This writing demonstrates overall control of grade-level conventions.

The White Room

Their feet crunched on the gravel as they walked towards the white building. He pulled his hood over his head to protect himself from the harsh fall winds. His blue jeans made a shuffling noise as his legs rubbed together. Stride, *swish*, stride, *swish*. He glanced over. Her light brown hair waved in the wind, as they walked towards the white building. There were no other pedestrians. The people of the city had all said their goodbyes and moved inside to wait--to wait for death, for that bomb that everyone knew was going to hit sometime. The war had come to a climax, and though nuclear weapons had not been used yet, their employment was imminent. Both forces had more than enough warheads to destroy the entire world, and they were in a stalemate, playing a game of chicken waiting for the signal to fire. The signal to end the world.

But Noah and Joan did not want to die that way, waiting for the bomb to hit. As they walked towards the white building, they each pondered their decision. They were going to die an easy death, on a suicide table. An easy death for a hard life. It would be a relief to have no more worries, to relax for eternity.

The revolving door swooshed as they entered the white building. The building's heat struck their frozen faces like a hot tidal wave. The automatic motion tread took them to some sort of staging room. No words were spoken as an aide strapped them each into a table next to each other. The floor opened and the tables carried them down, three floors under the earth, to the lab. A technician was there, filling two syringes with some unknown chemical, some faceless murderer. A syringe was loaded into each robotic arm, one of which was attached to each death table. One

for Noah, one for Joan. No longer were doctors allowed to deliver the fatal shot; there were laws against that. A shiny faceless machine would deliver a shiny, faceless, easy death to the pair. The technician pressed a button and began to walk towards the elevator. There were no doors out of the room; the elevator served as the single exit.

The robotic arms moved with a slow malice. The person who designed the arms must have been very bitter. They had made death be delivered so slowly, as each arm would easily take twenty seconds to inject its medicine. Its cure. Noah became anxious and tried to release himself from the grip of his bonds, but to no avail. He looked around one last time. He saw the technician almost to the elevator, walking between rows of suicide tables. He saw the robotic arm moving slowly towards his neck (five inches, four inches, three inches). His gaze shifted to Joan, on the table beside him. She was looking at him too, the arm perilously close to her neck. And then blackness fell over him. A roaring sound rushed through his ears straight into his brain, as if someone had opened his head and poured boiling water down into his brain and he heard himself screaming, his voice box engaged in a cruel duet with Joan's. And then the technician screamed too. It wasn't a scream of horror, though; it was a scream of pain. A deer being felled by some shadowy foe in the darkness. But Noah didn't have time to wonder, because, just then, the shock wave hit. A deeper pitch of blackness washed over his face. His thoughts ceased.

He awoke to dim lighting and took in the scene around him. The roof had collapsed, and crumbled rock lay strewn around the floor. The technician lay face down, a suicide table pinning his legs, and a robotic arm with a syringe protruding

from his spinal cord. There must have been an earthquake, and the technician had been very unlucky. At least his death was fairly quick. Noah's thoughts turned towards Joan. He saw no sign of her. She had broken the straps on her table. He briefly thought about reaching up and pulling the syringe down into his own neck, to finish the deed that the mechanical arm had started before it had been so rudely interrupted. Then his thoughts turned back to Joan, and he decided that he should at least find her before they finished what had been started. He had been greatly looking forward to death, but death could wait a little while, They could die together.

He struggled with the straps and found that the bolts securing them had been rattled loose by the earthquake. He walked toward the elevator. He crossed his fingers with one hand, and with the other pushed the button to call the lift to the bottom floor. He heard a humming noise, and after a brief pause the metal doors to the lift swished open. A breeze from the elevator brushed across his face. He stepped in and pushed the button for the top floor. He noticed that a light was flicking on and off, indicating that the elevator was on auxiliary power. There must be a generator that wasn't harmed by the quake, he thought.

The doors opened and he gasped. The staging area was utterly and completely destroyed...only bits of rock and metal remained. Every piece of glass that had been in the building seemed to have reversed its development and gone back to sand. The building was a frame of pitted metal, squeaking and swaying, no longer attached to its foundation. They were lucky the elevator had been on the bottom floor at the time of the quake, or else they would have had no exit from the death room.

He then realized that the elevator had not been at the ground floor when he called it. He remembered how it hummed as it descended. Joan must have taken the elevator to the top floor.

He walked through the entrance out into an utterly dark world. He had another shock. When he was inside the building he had been too absorbed in the destruction to notice that the sky was dark. Very dark. It wasn't black like night, but dark gray and full of energy. He looked behind him and could see no end to the clouds. Every structure seemed to be in the same state as the white building. He saw no signs of life. Joan was gone.

He felt the compulsive urge to die, then and there. A poetic ending to a poetic story. He had wanted to find her, to die with someone else. Their struggle to die had taken them to great lengths, and now he seemingly was the only person alive in the entire planet. Everyone had been granted death, except for the man who desired it most. Then he saw her, and she saw him, at the same time. She, in a pile of debris, searching for any sign of buried life, some salvageable cause. And him, wishing death to himself, awash in self-pity. They embraced. Then she said, "Come here, I wanna show you something. I've been waiting for you to wake up."

She scooped through the pile until she found what she had seen earlier. Among the debris was an un-detonated warhead. It was about the size of a small car. Noah realized there was no earthquake. The bombs had been dropped. And by some miracle (or curse) these he and Joan had been spared. The Adam and Eve of humanity, though they were certainly not in the heavenly Garden of Eden.

A rain had begun to fall from somewhere high above, turned to mist as each drop hit the hot, fiery mushroom cloud. The mist fell on them, and they moved to the only shelter that they knew. They went back to the lab. Once inside, they assessed the situation:

“How long have you been awake?” Noah asked.

“Just a while, half an hour maybe.”

“Have you seen anyone alive?”

“No one.”

“Are there any buildings left standing?” He glanced around.

“I haven’t seen any.”

“So we are the last human beings on the face of the earth then? Both sides dropped their bombs?”

“Almost certainly.” Her voice dropped.

“It’s funny how we came here to die, but everyone else died and we survived.”

“Funny, in a cruel sort of way.”

“We can still end it.”

“End what?”

“Our life, human life. There is still some of the chemical left, we never got our injections.”

“We have a big responsibility then...do you think that the human race deserves to survive?”

“I don’t know, and I don’t think either of us have the right to make that decision.”

“Who then?”

“I don’t know, just not us.”

“I bet the rain has stopped by now, let’s go back outside.”

“And do what?”

“Look.”

They rose as one and walked to the elevator. They both reached out to hit the call button at the same time, and then drew back their arms, thinking the other was going to push the button. Noah smiled and Joan laughed lightly. Noah made a move to push the button again, but drew back his arm yet again. She shot him a puzzled glance, and he pointed to the small button right next to the elevator button. Neither of them had seen it before.

“Push it,” said Joan.

Noah’s finger pressed the button, and a whoosh of air on the right wall captured their attention. A doorway had opened, revealing a secret chamber much like the one they were standing in. It seemed perfectly intact. It contained two freezers, several test tubes, a microscope, and what seemed to be a metal jug, with the words Mechanical womb emblazoned on it. The words Embryo Freezer, Sperm were imprinted on one freezer. On the other was Embryo Freezer, egg.

They both realized the implications, and drew an audible intake of breath at the same time. It seems that this lab could create life as well as destroy it. They opened each freezer and saw meticulously filed bottles of what seemed to be saline or water.

Joan spoke first: “This may be our solution.”

“How?”

“Well, we both want to die, and the prospect of having children to save our race, a race that destroyed itself, just seems ludicrous. But I don’t want to die with a guilty conscience, I don’t know about you. If we just both take the injections, chances are that the human race will never evolve again. Earth will be void of life. Possibly the only chance for life in the Universe lies here. If we just kill ourselves, then it is over...and I don’t want to die with that on my mind.”

“So what is your plan?”

“We can take one egg and one sperm from the test freezer, and create a baby in the test tube. Heck, we could make twenty! We could start a human race all over gain, and then sleep peacefully forever. They would not even know about violence. Maybe humans could be a compassionate race. We could be doing the world a huge favor. And maybe we could evolve differently this time. With no one alive to speak of violence or hate, humans could be peace-loving. Our civilization could be based on a completely different set of values! Only one of us would have to stay behind, and then just until the baby is born in the mechanical womb. It would be a fresh beginning. One of us could take an injection now, and the other, nine months later.”

“So who stays?”

“If we had straws, we could draw them. I don’t know, I am afraid of sounding selfish if I ask for instant gratification now, to rest forever. Heck, it’s only nine months...you could stand to live that long, right? If you knew you could rest real soon, if the goal was in sight?” She shifted nervously from foot to foot.

“Gosh, we’re deciding who will be the caretaker of the human race, yet we’re acting so casual--can you see how little this means to us? It only matters who gets to feel relief first...we aren’t deciding on the right principles here. We don’t even know how to use this mechanical womb thing!”

“It’s a fool proof operation, designed so that lowly technicians could do it. Pour, stir, bake--presto, instant baby.”

“I don’t know.”

“You just don’t want to be the one who stays.”

“Do you?”

“No, not really.”

“How do we decide?”

She sighed. “Both of us could stay. We could be together in the last few months of our lives. It might not be so horrible to live, if we were together. We could even undertake a project. Make some sort of monument symbolizing our race. A landmark on the human timeline.”

“Yeah, that might not be so bad. I like the idea of a monument, sort of a legacy type of thing. But let’s go to bed now, I am really tired. We can start in the morning.”

“Goodnight then.”

“Good night.”

They each walked to their death tables, which now served as their beds, and slept.

Noah woke, and groggily glanced around. Joan was still asleep on her table, needle resting oh so close to her neck. Her hand was gripping the mechanical arm,

keeping it at bay. He watched her sleep. She seemed very peaceful, almost angelic. He thought of the possibilities of the monument. It would make living fun. Maybe they wouldn't want to die after the nine months, and they could live their lives. Both of them were so bent on dying though. He could never convince her to stay with him in the new world. And he would be content to die with her. At least it would be better than dying alone.

Wow, she is really asleep, he thought. And then he realized something. The needle wasn't just close to her neck, it was in her neck. She had been selfish and greedy. Not waiting for him to wake up, she had pushed the needle into her own neck, and knowing he would feel the obligation to stay and produce the baby, she could rest easy. He sat up and felt a prick in his neck. A trickle of blood ran down his collar. He began to form a thought, but never quite finished. The electrons in his brain shut down, and his head slumped.

Noah and Joan slept in the white room, under the dim lights.

1.9 Narrative
Effectiveness = 5
Conventions = 3

The White Room

Their feet crunched on the gravel as they walked towards the white building. He pulled his hood over his head to protect himself from the harsh fall winds. His blue jeans made a shuffling noise as his legs rubbed together. Stride, swish, stride, swish. He glanced over. Her light brown hair waved in the wind, as they walked towards the white building. There were no other pedestrians. The people of the city had all said their goodbyes and moved inside to wait--to wait for death, for that bomb that everyone knew was going to hit sometime. The war had come to a climax, and though nuclear weapons had not been used yet, their employment was imminent. Both forces had more than enough warheads to destroy the entire world, and they were in a stalemate, playing a game of chicken waiting for the signal to fire. The signal to end the world.

Metaphor establishes conflict

Sets the context of a science fiction story

Uses precise and figurative language to establish the setting and the situation

But Noah and Joan did not want to die that way, waiting for the bomb to hit. As they walked towards the white building, they each pondered their decision. They were going to die an easy death, on a suicide table. An easy death for a hard life. It would be a relief to have no more worries, to relax for eternity.

Concrete details, figurative and sensory language

The revolving door swooshed as they entered the white building. The building's heat struck their frozen faces like a hot tidal wave. The automatic motion tread took them to some sort of staging room. No words were spoken as an aide strapped them each into a table next to each other. The floor opened and the tables carried them down, three floors under the earth, to the lab. A technician was there, filling two syringes with some unknown chemical, some faceless murderer. A syringe was loaded into each robotic arm, one of which was attached to each death table. One for Noah, one for Joan. No longer were doctors allowed to deliver the fatal shot; there were laws against that. A shiny faceless machine would deliver a shiny, faceless, easy

Relevant, concrete details enable reader to imagine the world of the story

death to the pair. The technician pressed a button and began to walk towards the elevator. There were no doors out of the room; the elevator served as the single exit.

The robotic arms moved with a slow malice. The person who designed the arms must have been very bitter. They had made death be delivered so slowly, as each arm would easily take twenty seconds to inject its medicine. Its cure. Noah became anxious and tried to release himself from the grip of his bonds, but to no avail. He looked around one last time. He saw the technician almost to the elevator, walking between rows of suicide tables. He saw the robotic arm moving slowly towards his neck (five inches, four inches, three inches). His gazed shifted to Joan, on the table beside him. She was looking at him too, the arm perilously close to her neck. And then blackness fell over him. A roaring second rushed through his ears straight into his brain, as if someone had opened his head and poured boiling water down into his brain and he heard himself screaming, his voice box engaged in a cruel duet with Joan's. And then the technician screamed too. It wasn't a scream of horror, though; it was a scream of pain. ***Fragment used purposefully for dramatic effect*** A deer being felled by some shadowy foe in the darkness. But Noah didn't have time to wonder, because, just then, the shock wave hit. A deeper pitch of blackness washed over his face. His thoughts ceased.

He awoke to dim lighting and took in the scene around him. The roof had collapsed, and crumbled rock lay strewn around the floor. The technician lay face down, a suicide table pinning his legs, and a robotic arm with a syringe protruding from his spinal cord. There must have been an earthquake, and the technician had been very unlucky. At least his death was fairly quick. Noah's thoughts turned towards Joan. He saw no sign of her. She had broken the straps on her table. He briefly thought about reaching up and pulling the syringe down into his own neck, to

Language and images invite reader to reflect on the significance of the events (a Score Point 5 quality)

Figurative language - simile

Lively, precise language, variety of sentence structures and lengths used purposefully

Thoughtshots develop character and move story forward

finish the deed that the mechanical arm had started before it had been so rudely interrupted. Then his thoughts turned back to Joan, and he decided that he should at least find her before they finished what had been started. He had been greatly looking forward to death, but death could wait a little while, They could die together.

He struggled with the straps and found that the bolts securing them had been rattled loose by the earthquake. He walked toward the elevator. He crossed his fingers with one hand, and with the other pushed the button to call the lift to the bottom floor. He heard a humming noise, and after a brief pause the metal doors to the lift swished open. A breeze from the elevator brushed across his face. He stepped in and pushed the button for the top floor. He noticed that a light was flicking on and off, indicating that the elevator was on auxiliary power. There must be a generator that wasn't harmed by the quake, he thought.

Sensory language; strong verbs

The doors opened and he gasped. The staging area was utterly and completely destroyed...only bits of rock and metal remained. Every piece of glass that had been in the building seemed to have reversed its development and gone back to sand. The building was a frame of pitted metal, squeaking and swaying, no longer attached to its foundation. They were lucky the elevator had been on the bottom floor at the time of the quake, or else they would have had no exit from the death room.

Writing is organized in a dramatic, effective way

He then realized that the elevator had not been at the ground floor when he called it. He remembered how it hummed as it descended. Joan must have taken the elevator to the top floor.

Effective pacing – all action moves the story forward

He walked through the entrance out into an utterly dark world. He had another shock. When he was inside the building he had been too absorbed in the destruction to notice that the sky was dark. Very dark. It wasn't black like night, but dark gray and full

of energy. He looked behind him and could see no end to the clouds. Every structure seemed to be in the same state as the white building. He saw no signs of life. Joan was gone.

He felt the compulsive urge to die, then and there. A poetic ending to a poetic story. He had wanted to find her, to die with someone else. Their struggle to die had taken them to great lengths, and now he seemingly was the only person alive in the entire planet. Everyone had been granted death, except for the man who desired it most. Then he saw her, and she saw him, at the same time. She, in a pile of debris, searching for any sign of buried life, some salvageable cause. And him, wishing death to himself, awash in self-pity. They embraced. Then she said, “Come here, I wanna show you something. I’ve been waiting for you to wake up.”

Writer purposefully uses fragments for effect

Writer conveys significance of the scene

She scooped through the pile until she found what she had seen earlier. Among the debris was an un-detonated warhead. It was about the size of a small car. Noah realized there was no earthquake. The bombs had been dropped. And by some miracle (or curse) these he and Joan had been spared. The Adam and Eve of humanity, though they were certainly not in the heavenly Garden of Eden.

Metaphor conveys ironic significance of scene

A rain had begun to fall from somewhere high above, turned to mist as each drop hit the hot, fiery mushroom cloud. The mist fell on them, and they moved to the only shelter that they knew. They went back to the lab. Once inside, they assessed the situation:

“How long have you been awake?” Noah asked.

“Just a while, half an hour maybe.”

“Have you seen anyone alive?”

“No one.”

“Are there any buildings left standing?” He glanced around.

Effective use of dialogue moves story forward

“I haven’t seen any.”

“So we are the last human beings on the face of the earth then? Both sides dropped their bombs?”

“Almost certainly.” Her voice dropped.

“It’s funny how we came here to die, but everyone else died and we survived.”

“Funny, in a cruel sort of way.”

“We can still end it.”

“End what?”

“Our life, human life. There is still some of the chemical left, we never got our injections.”

“We have a big responsibility then...do you think that the human race deserves to survive?”

“I don’t know, and I don’t think either of us have the right to make that decision.”

“Who then?”

“I don’t know, just not us.”

“I bet the rain has stopped by now, let’s go back outside.”

“And do what?”

“Look.”

They rose as one and walked to the elevator. They both reached out to hit the call button at the same time, and then drew back their arms, thinking the other was going to push the button. Noah smiled and Joan laughed lightly. Noah made a move to push the button again, but drew back his arm yet again. She shot him a puzzled glance, and he pointed to the small button right next to the elevator button. Neither of them had seen it before.

***Reflection on
the significance
of the events
true to the sci-fi
genre***

“Push it,” said Joan.

Noah’s finger pressed the button, and a whoosh of air on the right wall captured their attention. A doorway had opened, revealing a secret much like the one they were standing in. It seemed perfectly intact contained two freezers, several test tubes, a microscope, and what seemed to be a metal jug, with the words Mechanical womb emblazoned on it. The words Embryo Freezer, Sperm were imprinted on one freezer. On the other was Embryo Freezer, egg.

Precise language and concrete details create fully realized scene for reader

They both realized the implications, and drew an audible intake of breath at the same time. It seems that this lab could create life as well as destroy it. They opened each freezer and saw meticulously filed bottle of what seemed to be saline or water.

Joan spoke first: “This may be our solution.”

“How?”

“Well, we both want to die, and the prospect of having children to save our race, a race that destroyed itself, just seems ludicrous. But I don’t want to die with a guilty conscience, I don’t know about you. If we just both take the injections, chances are that the human race will never evolve again. Earth will be void of life. Possibly the only chance for life in the Universe lies here. If we just kill ourselves, then it is over...and I don’t want to die with that on my mind.”

Implicit reflection on significance of events

“So what is your plan?”

“We can take one egg and one sperm from the test freezer, and create a baby in the test tube. Heck, we could make twenty! We could start a human race all over gain, and then sleep peacefully forever. They would not even know about violence. Maybe humans could be a compassionate race. We could be doing the world a huge favor. And maybe we could evolve differently this time. With no one alive to speak of violence or hate, humans could be peace-loving. Our civilization could be based on completely different set of values! Only one of us would have to stay behind, and then just until the

Dialogue effectively develops characters and story line while reflecting on deep issues

baby is born in the mechanical womb. It would be a fresh beginning. One of us could take an injection now, and the other, nine months later.”

“So who stays?”

“If we had straws, we could draw them. I don’t know, I am afraid of sounding selfish if I ask for instant gratification now, to rest forever. Heck, it’s only nine months...you could stand to live that long, right? If you knew you could rest real soon, if the goal was in sight?” She shifted nervously from foot to foot.

“Gosh, we’re deciding who will be the caretaker of the human race, yet we’re acting so casual--can you see how little this means to us? It only matters who gets to feel relief first...we aren’t deciding on the right principles here. We don’t even know how to use this mechanical womb thing!”

“It’s a fool proof operation, designed so that lowly technicians could do it. Pour, stir, bake--presto, instant baby.”

“I don’t know.”

“You just don’t want to be the one who stays.”

“Do you?”

“No, not really.”

“How do we decide?”

She sighed. “Both of us could stay. We could be together in the last few months of our lives. It might not be so horrible to live, if we were together. We could even undertake a project. Make some sort of monument symbolizing our race. A landmark on the human timeline.”

“Yeah, that might not be so bad. I like the idea of a monument, sort of a legacy type of thing. But let’s go to bed now, I am really tired. We can start in the morning.”

“Goodnight then.”

“Good night.”

Characters developed through dialogue as well as behavior and relationship

They each walked to their death tables, which now served as their beds, and slept.

Noah woke, and groggily glanced around. Joan was still asleep on her table, needle resting oh so close to her neck. Her hand was gripping the mechanical arm, keeping it at bay. He watched her sleep. She seemed very peaceful, almost angelic. He thought of the possibilities of the monument. It would make living fun. Maybe they wouldn't want to die after the nine months, and they could live their lives. Both of them were so bent on dying though. He could never convince her to stay with him in the new world. And he would be content to die with her. At least it would be better than dying alone.

Writing shows growth or change in character, and implicitly comments on significance of the events

Wow, she is really asleep, he thought. And then he realized something. The needle wasn't just close to her neck, it was in her neck. She had been selfish and greedy. Not waiting for him to wake up, she had pushed the needle into her own neck, and knowing he would feel the obligation to stay and produce the baby, she could rest easy. He sat up and felt a prick in his neck. A trickle of blood ran down his collar. He began to form a thought, but never quite finished. The electrons in his brain shut down, and his head slumped.

Noah and Joan slept in the white room, under the dim lights.

Ironic conclusion

Score Point 5

This narrative displays each quality of a Score Point 4: it moves from an engaging opening, through a series of effectively dramatized events, to a logical, satisfying, and meaningful ending. It creates a believable world, developing action through showing rather than telling. A strong sense of "so-what" permeates this serious story of a struggle to sustain a sense of meaning in the face of apocalypse. It uses strong verbs, precise and figurative language, and concrete details. Because of its strong sense of insight into characters' motivation and the significance of the events, this story is a Score Point 5.

Conventions Score

This writing demonstrates consistent control of grade-level conventions.

Walking the Dog

I slouch on the couch, comfortable in my favorite clothes, staring at the news anchor as he drones on about that disaster or this riot. A snow storm is supposed to be moving in tonight, the weatherman preaches. My dog Chloe lays curled up beside my feet, with her head propped on her leg. She's our pure bred Brittany Spaniel recently adopted and already a special member of the family. As I push myself into the cushions, my feet nudge her a bit too much for her own taste. She then starts the slow process of standing up. She squints her eyes while she stretches out her legs, as if trying to grasp at some imaginary treasure on the floor. With hesitation she pushes herself up with her hind legs first. Walking out of the room as if she had completely forgotten me, she goes to check on her food that is so predictably there. I am amazed at how such an animal can keep to her schedule better than I do mine.

I then hear the all too familiar directive from my mother in the adjacent room. I have come to expect it, yet it still gets me agitated. I sink even deeper into the warm embrace of the couch, as if hearing nothing. I always delay as much as possible the dreaded task before me. After her third command, I wearily begin to pull myself away from the comfort that has enveloped me. Out the window the flakes form horizontal streaks as the wind blows furiously. As slowly as possible, I stretch out my arms and legs, not wanting to leave the peace of the room.

I trudge up the stairs to change into something appropriate for the task that lay before me. Now fully awake, I bound down the stairs. Searching for my gloves and hat,

and finding none, I unwillingly grab my father's worn knit cap, only to be stopped by my mother holding mine in her hand while she rolls her eyes. Reluctantly I pull the gloves over my hands, and my hat over my head. I stomp towards the door as Chloe bounds after me. Pulling down the leash and snapping it to her collar, I slowly open the door and step out into the dark cold.

Just then, the hard driving flakes seem to slow down, and light upon the dust covered world. I take a deep breath of the rich air, revitalizing me. Leaping down the steps, I begin the route that has become routine. With Chloe at the lead, no force but her adventurous spirit pulls me along. Passing her, she takes it as a sign to quicken her own pace. She soon starts into a gallop, pulling me along once again. I then hit full stride, keeping abreast of her while running together as if that were all there was to do. We come around the next corner, and see the house in plain view. That quickly? It seems like only a few moments have passed before we begin to slow down. We both reluctantly slacken our pace into a slow trot, and then a flat out walk.

Panting, exhausted, we climb the stairs with no real drive. Opening the door I begin the arduous task of drying Chloe off. With an annoyed look on my face and an edge to my voice, I call to my mother to bring a towel. Through the door one sails towards me. Holding her tightly by the collar, I ruffle her with the towel until she is sufficiently dry. As soon as my grasp releases, she runs towards the kitchen to see my mother. I pull my hat and gloves off, and put them both in their proper place together. Removing the now wet boots, I bound up the stairs and change into my old clothes. I am

soon back on the couch, with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria. With a pleased smile on my face, I push myself as far as possible into the cushions and change the channel.

1.9 Narrative
Effectiveness = 4
Conventions = 3

Walking the Dog

I slouch on the couch, comfortable in my favorite clothes, staring at the news anchor as he drones on about that disaster or this riot. A snow storm is supposed to be moving in tonight, the weatherman preaches. My dog Chloe lays curled up beside my feet, with her head propped on her leg. She's our pure bred Brittney Spaniel recently adopted and already a special member of the family. As I push myself into the cushions, my feet nudge her a bit too much for her own taste. She then starts the slow process of standing up. She squints her eyes while she stretches out her legs, as if trying to grasp at some imaginary treasure on the floor. With hesitation she pushes herself up with her hind legs first. Walking out of the room as if she had completely forgotten me, she goes to check on her food that is so predictably there. I am amazed at how such an animal can keep to her schedule better than I do mine.

Precise verbs establish boredom of the narrator

Dog's actions mimic the attitude of the writer

Focus is narrator's reluctance to leave his/her routine

I then hear the all too familiar directive from my mother in the adjacent room. I have come to expect it, yet it still gets me agitated. I sink even deeper into the warm embrace of the couch, as if hearing nothing. I always delay as much as possible the dreaded task before me. After her third command, I wearily begin to pull myself away from the comfort that has enveloped me. Out the window the flakes form horizontal streaks as the wind blows furiously. As slowly as possible, I stretch out my arms and legs, not wanting to leave the peace of the room.

Writer introduces character of the mother, who causes a conflict by forcing narrator from the routine

I trudge up the stairs to change into something appropriate for the task that lay before me. Now fully awake, I bound down the stairs. Searching for my gloves and hat, and finding none, I unwillingly grab my father's worn knit cap, only to be stopped by my mother holding mine in her hand while she rolls her eyes. Reluctantly I pull the gloves

Details and precise language contrast writer's attitude with mother's expectations

over my hands, and my hat over my head. I stomp towards the door as Chloe bounds after me. Pulling down the leash and snapping it to her collar, I slowly open the door and step out into the dark cold.

Transition marks beginning of character change

Just then, the hard driving flakes seem to slow down, and light upon the dust covered world. I take a deep breath of the rich air, revitalizing me. Leaping down the steps, I begin the route that has become routine. With Chloe at the lead, no force but her adventurous spirit pulls me along. Passing her, she takes it as a sign to quicken her own pace. She soon starts into a gallop, pulling me along once again. I then hit full stride, keeping abreast of her while running together as if that were all there was to do. We come around the next corner, and see the house in plain view. That quickly? It seems like only a few moments have passed before we begin to slow down. We both reluctantly slacken our pace into a slow trot, and then a flat out walk.

Writer reminds reader of focus by referring to the walking of the dog as a new routine. Actions establish relationship between narrator and dog

Writer returns to language of boring routine; mother's actions give a clear picture.

Panting, exhausted, we climb the stairs with no real drive. Opening the door I begin the arduous task of drying Chloe off. With an annoyed look on my face and an edge to my voice, I call to my mother to bring a towel. Through the door one sails towards me. Holding her tightly by the collar, I ruffle her with the towel until she is sufficiently dry. As soon as my grasp releases, she runs towards the kitchen to see my mother. I pull my hat and gloves off, and put them both in their proper place together. Removing the now wet boots, I bound up the stairs and change into my old clothes. I am soon back on the couch, with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria. With a pleased smile on my face, I push myself as far as possible into the cushions and change the channel.

Has the writer changed his/her routine, or not? Slightly ambiguous ending leaves reader with question to ponder.

Score Point 4

The writer uses precise language to enhance the focus of the piece (the struggle to leave routine and the resulting freedom when one does.) The actions of the characters develop the relationship between the writer and the dog, and the writer and the mother. A circular structure establishes the writer's reluctance at the beginning to leave a routine and leads to an ending in which the writer has gone full circle.

Note: the writing does not suffer from a lack of dialogue; rather, the depth of detail in a small time frame creates a believable world for the reader.

Conventions – Score Point 3

This writing demonstrates consistent control of grade-level conventions.

The Roommate

Alex lay on her bed, staring at the white cement wall, with tears forming in her eyes. God, she thought, this isn't even my bed. The springs of the cheap regulatory dorm bed dug at her stomach. Nothing was hers. She was stuck living in a small, dimly lit prison room for four years, with someone she had only met a month ago. She couldn't stand college life already, yet she knew she had to endure it. She couldn't let herself down, but more importantly, she couldn't disappoint her parents. She didn't want them to think she was a failure.

Thinking about her situation just depressed her, and sadly she licked a salty tear as it slid near her mouth. She wanted her high school life back.

The key glided into the lock and the door of the suite was swung open. Alex had her bedroom door closed, but she knew who it was. Her roommate. She had almost controlled her tears, but sniffled loudly, gasped for air and buried her head in her pillow as she burst. She was going to be alone again tonight, even though it was a Friday. Alex had tried so hard to impress everyone, but still the phone calls were never for her, and she hadn't even gotten to wear the skirt she had specifically bought for the night life. She wanted to be one of the girls that everyone loved. The ones the teachers respected and the guys went after. She didn't think it would ever happen. Her roommate was going out tonight. She was always doing something and would never come home until early morning.

Alex heard voices and she quieted down to listen. She recognized the smooth voice of her roommate and some other chattering thing, obviously her roommate's friend.

Footsteps grew nearer. Alex grabbed for a Kleenex and wiped her eyes so furiously her skin burned as if she was rubbing it raw.

Alex looked warily at the door, waiting for someone to enter. She saw the chunky oxfords belonging to her roommate, and finally her face. Her roommate was someone Alex wanted to be. To Alex, she was beautiful. Her blonde highlighted hair was styled in a way Alex could never get hers, no matter how hard she tried. Her appearance was immaculate; she even had her nails done professionally. Her blue eyes always shone, and even her teeth were perfect. She was always sweet, laughable, charismatic and outgoing. She was the one person Alex strived to gain respect from. Alex strived to be her roommate's equal.

The roommate was about to give a cheery "Hi", but stopped short. Alex could see her face change and automatically become sympathetic.

"Alex, honey, what's wrong?", she softly questioned.

"Oh, I don't know, everything", sputtered Alex.

The roommate walked over to where Alex lay sprawled out on the bed, and sat down. The bed creaked in response. She lightly placed her hand on Alex's back, and in her most soothing voice, she whispered.

"It's okay, whatever's the matter will be just fine. You can tell me what's bothering you."

Alex's mind wasn't on feeling depressed anymore. Actually she was Surprised. She couldn't believe the compassion her roommate was showing. For weeks Alex had been convinced that she hated her. Maybe Alex's attempts were working. Maybe all those extra loads of laundry she had done, or the pizzas she had spent her cash on were

paying off. Or maybe it was how hard Alex had tried to be perfect every time her roommate was around. Alex was hoping that finally her roommate liked her and thought she was worthy enough to be seen with around campus.

“Well,” Alex finally answered, “I hate school. Maybe I should drop out. Maybe I’m just not meant to be in college. I just sit around the room and I never am invited anywhere by anyone.”

“Oh, don’t say that,” the roommate said, “just because the beginning of school is rough doesn’t mean it’s going to be like this the whole way through. It’ll get easier, you’ll see.”

Alex rolled over to look at her roommate. She looked at her, questioning her words of advice. She noticed how good her French manicure looked on the hands of her roommate, and she reminded herself of her ugly hands, and wished she had enough money to go to the mall and get fake nails like her roommate’s. She sighed.

“I know!”, continued the roommate, “Tomorrow night I’m going out with a bunch of people. You can come with us! It’ll be fun!”

“You sure?” asked Alex a little timidly, “I don’t want to intrude or anything.”

“No, silly! Of course you’re welcome! It’s a date then! Feeling better? I gotta go, Leah’s waiting. See you later.”

“Thanks a lot.” Said Alex.

“Oh, do you think Leah could borrow that skirt of yours? She doesn’t really have anything to wear.”

“Yeah, no problem, it’s right over there”, said Alex happy she could do anything for her roommate.

The roommate got up off the bed. She walked past her bureau, past the box of hair color that sat on top of it, and over to Alex’s closet. She pulled out a short black skirt.

“Bye Alex, thanks a ton. Cheer up!”

Alex’s eyes followed her roommate out the door, and watched her long nails pull the door shut.

Alex laid on the bed staring at the ceiling, smiling to herself. She was so happy. Finally, she was sure her roommate liked her. She had been so kind, and she really had cared about Alex. Plus, she invited her out tomorrow. Alex was excited, she was going out on the town with a friend.

She got up off her bed and walked across the thin, stained carpet to her friend’s bureau. She picked up the box of strawberry blonde hair color, and looked at the label. A new tint would look good on her hair, and she didn’t want to look like her usual self tomorrow. Anyway, she would buy her friend another box. She grabbed a towel and prepared for the change.

* * * * *

Leah was sitting, waiting for her friend. Finally she appeared. Yes, thought Leah, she got the skirt.

“God, that was fun,” said the roommate sarcastically, “hope you think it was worth it.”

“Yeah, that girl’s a little strange, but the skirt’s nice”, said Leah, “You should really consider a room switch.”

“I really want to. Guess what, when I walked in she was bawling. What a weirdo.”

Through the closed door of her room, Alex couldn’t hear the snicker that followed.

1.9 Narrative
Effectiveness = 4
Conventions = 3

The Roommate

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Context set in a clearly defined place and time

Precise word choice as well as concrete language (underlined)

Thinking about her situation just depressed her, and sadly she licked a salty tear as it slid near her mouth. She wanted her high school life back.

The key glided into the lock and the door of the suite was swung open. Alex had her bedroom door closed, but she knew who it was. Her roommate. She had almost controlled her tears, but sniffled loudly, gasped for air and buried her head in her pillow as she burst. She was going to be alone again tonight, even though it was a Friday. Alex had tried so hard to impress everyone, but still the phone calls were never for her, and she hadn't even gotten to wear the skirt she had specifically bought for the night life. She wanted to be one of the girls that everyone loved. The ones the teachers respected and the guys went after. She didn't think it would ever happen. Her roommate was going out tonight. She was always doing something and would never come home until early morning.

Effectively presents and develops the main character through "thought shots"

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Effective character development

The roommate was about to give a cheery “Hi”, but stopped short. Alex could see her face change and automatically become sympathetic.

“Alex, honey, what’s wrong?”, she softly questioned.

“Oh, I don’t know, everything”, sputtered Alex.

Effective use of dialogue develops characters and their relationship

The roommate walked over to where Alex lay sprawled out on the bed, and sat down. The bed creaked in response. She lightly placed her hand on Alex’s back, and in her most soothing voice, she whispered.

“It’s okay, whatever’s the matter will be just fine. You can tell me what’s bothering you.”

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Character development; relevant, concrete details enable the reader to imagine the world of the story

“Well,” Alex finally answered, “I hate school. Maybe I should drop out. Maybe I’m just not meant to be in college. I just sit around the room and I never am invited anywhere by anyone.”

*Effective
use of
dialogue*

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*Descriptive
details
develop
character
motivation*

“I know!”, continued the roommate, “Tomorrow night I’m going out with a bunch of people. You can come with us! It’ll be fun!”

“You sure?” asked Alex a little timidly, “I don’t want to intrude or anything.”

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*Use of
effective
dialogue*

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Believable character change

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Leah was sitting, waiting for her friend. Finally she appeared. Yes, thought Leah, she got the skirt.

"God, that was fun," said the roommate sarcastically, "hope you think it was worth it."

"Yeah, that girl's a little strange, but the skirt's nice", said Leah, "You should really consider a room switch."

"I really want to. Guess what, when I walked in she was bawling. What a weirdo."

Use of ironic, surprise ending for a strong conclusion

Through the closed door of her room, Alex couldn't hear the snicker that followed.

Effectiveness Score 4

This narrative has effective character development through dialogue, action, and the interaction and relationship of characters. It maintains this clear focus of the two roommates throughout and is well organized in a dramatic way.
It has an engaging beginning and moves quickly yet thoroughly (pacing) to a satisfying (and surprising) end.

Conventions Score 3

The writing demonstrates consistent control of grade-level conventions.

The Shot

In a little town in Belgium people were bustling about, the men loading their rifles and women and children scurrying into houses to hide. In a short time the little town would be going to battle against the great German army. Two young men were crouching behind a stone wall, talking. Philip, one of the young men, was shaking with excitement. Every since he was a little boy he had loved the idea of going to war to fight for his country. When he was younger he had set up his miniature iron soldiers and fought many battles. But that was childish play, now he was going to do the real thing. He was going to fight for his country of Belgium, he felt he would do any thing for his country even give his life. “What if we won this battle, what a glorious moment that would be”, he said to his best friend Claude.

“Philip our little town beating the strong and powerful German army? What a dream that is.”Said Claude.

“Claude! Have a little hope,”Claude, who was kneeling right next to Philip, didn’t share the same excitement. He was silent and glum looking, there was a slight trace of fear in his pale blue eyes. Unlike Philip, Claude had always despised the idea of war. He thought it was a horrible, stupid thing. He was also afraid. Claude had lost his dad when he was a little boy and had always been very protective of his family. Philip knew Claude would be devastated if his family got hurt in this battle. But there Claude was, fighting like every other man in the town. He didn’t have much choice, if he sat out and hid with the women and children he would be looked down upon by everyone in the village. For he would be betraying his town and country by not fighting.

Philip looked out across the fields of grass swaying in the wind, he spotted a speck moving towards them; they were coming. He leaned against the wall, all he could do

now was wait. Men were readying themselves behind trees and around houses. He checked to see if his gun was properly loaded. The speck was getting closer and closer every minute now, it seemed like there were hundreds of soldiers. For a fleeting second he felt like a tiny fly that was about to be swatted. Then he drew a deep breath, mustered all the courage he could find, and waited for the command in silence. He was ready to fight, every muscle in him tensed.

The command came as the soldiers entered the village. “Fire!” Yelled a man. Philip urged his clammy hand to the trigger and pulled, the bullet flew out of his gun and hit a soldier in the chest. Seeing the blood gush from the bullet hole, Philip looked away not wanting to realize what he had just done, and tried to reload his gun. Other soldiers dropped to the ground with a last cry of pain. For a second the German soldiers didn’t know what happened, but soon figured it out. The battle had begun! Claude had not fired yet, still frozen with fright which he was trying to over come. Philip heard screams of people being shot and wounded, but he kept loading and reloading his gun as though he was some sort of robot. Then he saw it, a soldier had pointed his gun towards them and fired. It was as though every thing had gone into slow motion, Philip knew, he knew that bullet was coming straight toward Claude, about to take his life. He wanted to scream, to shove him out of the way but he couldn’t. He couldn’t speak, or move. He sat there frozen, horrified at the thing streaking toward his best friend, his soul mate, the one he talked in to fighting in the first place. WHAMMMMMMMMM! It was as though he had been shot too. He let out a shriek, but the bullet had gone right through Claude’s chest. Claude’s body fell to the hard dirty ground. “Oh God, God nooooooooooooo! Not him, you can’t take him!” He screamed but it was too late. Claude was dead and there was nothing he could do about it. Tears started streaming down his face as he knelt over his friend. He held the picture of Claude in his mind, those pale blue eyes filled with horror and pain. Claude was gone. Philip felt as though he could not go on. He heard the shouts and gun shots, but he didn’t care anymore, all he could think about was Claude. The joyous war and fighting he had always dreamed to be part of was only a

stupid, horrible thing in his mind now. Claude had been right, war was just a cruel, pointless thing that you get tricked into. He had been right all along.

1.9 Narrative
Effectiveness = 3
Conventions = 2

The Shot

In a little town in Belgium people were bustling about, the men loading their rifles and women and children scurrying into houses to hide. In a short time the little town would be going to battle against the great German army. Two young men were crouching behind a stone wall, talking. Philip, one of the young men, was shaking with excitement. Every since he was a little boy he had loved the idea of going to war to fight for his country. When he was younger he had set up his miniature iron soldiers and fought many battles. But that was childish play, now he was going to do the real thing. He was going to fight for his country of Belgium, he felt he would do any thing for his country even give his life. “What if we won this battle, what a glorious moment that would be”, he said to his best friend Claude.

Writer establishes adequate context

“Philip our little town beating the strong and powerful German army? What a dream that is.”Said Claude.

Dialogue establishes contrast between characters

“Claude! Have a little hope,”Claude, who was kneeling right next to Philip, didn’t share the same excitement. He was silent and glum looking, there was a slight trace of fear in his pale blue eyes. Unlike Philip, Claude had always despised the idea of war. He thought it was a horrible, stupid thing. He was also afraid. Claude had lost his dad when he was a little boy and had always been very protective of his family. Philip knew Claude would be devastated if his family got hurt in this battle. But there Claude was, fighting like every other man in the town. He didn’t have much choice, if he sat out and hid with the women and children he would be looked down upon by everyone in the village. For he would be betraying his town and country by not fighting.

Characters are stereotypically black and white in their attitudes towards war

Philip looked out across the fields of grass swaying in the wind, he spotted a speck moving towards them; they were coming. He leaned against the wall, all he could do now was wait. Men were readying themselves behind trees and around houses. He

Descriptive language builds suspense

checked to see if his gun was properly loaded. The speck was getting closer and closer every minute now, it seemed like there were hundreds of soldiers. For a fleeting second he felt like a tiny fly that was about to be swatted. Then he drew a deep breath, mustered all the courage he could find, and waited for the command in silence. He was ready to fight, every muscle in him tensed.

The command came as the soldiers entered the village. “Fire!” Yelled a man. Philip urged his clammy hand to the trigger and pulled, the bullet flew out of his gun and hit a soldier in the chest. Seeing the blood gush from the bullet hole, Philip looked away not wanting to realize what he had just done, and tried to reload his gun. Other soldiers dropped to the ground with a last cry of pain. For a second the German soldiers didn’t know what happened, but soon figured it out. The battle had begun! Claude had not fired yet, still frozen with fright which he was trying to over come. Philip heard screams of people being shot and wounded, but he kept loading and reloading his gun as though he was some sort of robot. Then he saw it, a soldier had pointed his gun towards them and fired. It was as though every thing had gone into slow motion, Philip knew, he knew that bullet was coming straight toward Claude, about to take his life. He wanted to scream, to shove him out of the way but he couldn’t. He couldn’t speak, or move. He sat there frozen, horrified at the thing streaking toward his best friend, his soul mate, the one he talked in to fighting in the first place. WHAMMMMMMMMM! It was as though he had been shot too. He let out a shriek, but the bullet had gone right through Claude’s chest. Claude’s body fell to the hard dirty ground. “Oh God, God nooooooooooooo! Not him, you can’t take him!” He screamed but it was too late. Claude was dead and there was nothing he could do about it. Tears started streaming down his face as he knelt over his friend. He held the picture of Claude in his mind, those pale blue eyes filled with horror and pain. Claude was gone. Philip felt as though he could not go on. He heard the shouts and gun shots, but he didn’t care anymore, all he could think about was

Some description of actual battle is generic and predictable

Attempt to explode the moment; action happens too quickly to be convincing

Claude. The joyous war and fighting he had always dreamed to be part of was only a stupid, horrible thing in his mind now. Claude had been right, war was just a cruel, pointless thing that you get tricked into. He had been right all along.

Character change happens too quickly to be believable

Effectiveness Score 3

The writer has created somewhat stereotypical characters caught in a war situation. The story line is clear, with a beginning, middle, and end, but the predictable character change in the conclusion relies on an external event. The writer uses some dialogue effectively and attempts to dramatize the climax of the story, but the elaboration lacks depth and originality.

Conventions Score 2

The writing demonstrates inconsistent control of conventions with errors in comma use, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure.

WAX FIGURES

Says;” What’s your name,” Shawn bolted around and to his amazement is was a security guard.

“My, my name is Shawn and yours, Mr?”

“My name is Officer Orlily.” There was a long period of silence. Finally Officer Orlily broke the silence by asking why Shawn was here?

“ I was reading through a pamphlit and then I just dozed off, and and when I woke up I found myself in this weard room. But when I saw you I was relieved to know that I wouldn’t have to spend the night.”

“Well Shawn we won’t be getting out of here tonight because I sort of locked us in.”

“WELL ISN’T THERE ANYWAY YOU CAN GET US OUT?”

“Nope the only way were going to get out is when the other officer comes at 6:00 in the morning.”

“WE HAVE TO SPEND THE NIGHT HERE!!!” “Relax Shawn its only one night.”

“But I heard this place is haunted.”

“That’s just an old ghost story. Now I’m going to bed because we have to be up early in the morning. I’m going to sleep over here, you can sleep by me if you want.” Shawn didn’t didn’t want him to know he was scared so he slep on the bench.

It took a long time but Shawn got to sleep. All of a sudden Shawn heard whispers, and then it came to loud conversations. Shawn couldn’t quite tell what they were saying. “Mr. Orlily do you hear that? No response. MR. OLRILY DO YOU HEAR THAT?” There was still not response. Shawn got up and looked around. To his amazement all of the wax figures had come to life. Out of all the ugly figures Shawn’s

eye caught on to one. It was a man that looked like a priest. All of a sudden the figures started to attack the priest. The priest started to talk.

“The only way you can kill is with heat.” Those were the priest’s last words. After the figures were done with the priest they started to break out of the glass. Shawn ran over to Mr. Orlily but he still wouldn’t wake up. By the time Shawn turned around all of the figures were out. Shawn remembered the priest last words. He started to scurry around the room looking for something that would give off heat. Right as the figures were about to kill Shawn a sign caught the corner of Shawn’s eye. It read janitors room. Shawn knew there would be something he could use. He was right. On top of a tool box lied a blow torche. Is there gas in it, is there gas in it started to race across Shawns mind. By that time all of the figures were surrounding him. Shawn turned on the torche, it lit. Shawn started to laugh with joy. It took a long time but Shawn managed to melt all of the figures.

“Shawn wake up, wake up Shawn.”

“Huh who’s there die, die, die.”

“Calm down Shawn its me Mr. Orlily the doors are unlocked we can leave.”

“Your awake”

“Of course I’m awake.”

“I had the weardest dream. Well I think it was a dream.” Shawn examined the figures. There was something wrong, the priest was gone. To this day that night still haunts Shawn.

**1.9 Narrative
Effectiveness = 2
Conventions = 1**

WAX FIGURES

Says;” What’s your name,” Shawn bolted around and to his amazement is was a security guard.

Identifies characters

“My, my name is Shawn and yours, Mr?”

“My name is Officer Orlily.” There was a long period of silence. Finally Officer Orlily broke the silence by asking why Shawn was here?

“ I was reading through a pamphlit and then I just dozed off, and and when I woke up I found myself in this weard room. But when I saw you I was relieved to know that I wouldn’t have to spend the night.”

Writer gives a vague sense of context

“Well Shawn we won’t be getting out of here tonight because I sort of locked us in.”

“WELL ISN’T THERE ANYWAY YOU CAN GET US OUT?”

“Nope the only way were going to get out is when the other officer comes at 6:00 in the morning.”

Dialogue shows characters as stereotypical

“WE HAVE TO SPEND THE NIGHT HERE!!!” “Relax Shawn its only one night.”

“But I heard this place is haunted.”

“That’s just an old ghost story. Now I’m going to bed because we have to be up early in the morning. I’m going to sleep over here, you can sleep by me if you want.” Shawn didn’t didn’t want him to know he was scared so he slep on the bench.

Predictable events; straightforward “and then” chronology

It took a long time but Shawn got to sleep. All of a sudden Shawn heard whispers, and then it came to loud conversations. Shawn couldn’t quite tell what they were saying. “Mr. Orlily do you hear that? No response. MR. OLRILY DO YOU HEAR THAT?” Shawn got up and looked

around. To his amazement all of the wax figures had come to life. Out of all the ugly figures Shawn’s eye caught on to one. It was a man that looked like a preist. All of a sudden the figures started to attack the preist. The preist started to talk.

Dialogue serves purpose of moving predictable action forward

“The only way you can kill is with heat.” Those were the priest’s last words. After the figures were done with the priest they started to break out of the glass. Shawn ran over to Mr. Orlily but he still wouldn’t wake up. By the time Shawn turned around all of the figures were out. Shawn remembered the priest last words. He started to scury around the room looking for something that would give off heat. Right as the figures were about to kill Shawn a sign caught the corner of Shawn’s eye. It read janitors room. Shawn knew there would be something he could use. He was right. On top of a tool box lied a blow torche. Is there gas in it, is there gas in it started to race across Shawns mind. By that time all of the figures were surrounding him. Shawn turned on the torche, it lit. Shawn started to laugh with joy. It took a long time but Shawn managed to melt all of the figures.

Little variety of sentence structure; attempt to establish suspense within the action

“Shawn wake up, wake up Shawn.”

“Huh who’s there die, die, die.”

“Calm down Shawn its me Mr. Orlily the doors are unlocked we can leave.”

“Your awake”

“Of course I’m awake.”

“I had the weardest dream. Well I think it was a dream.” Shawn examined the figures. There was something wrong, the priest was gone. To this day that night still haunts Shawn.

Ending is abrupt and predictable

Effectiveness Score 2

This narrative has all the qualities of a Score Point 2. The writer attempts context, identifies characters, and establishes a story line. The events are listed chronologically with little variety of sentence structure. It lacks both an effective beginning and conclusion. However, the piece could be improved substantially with work on these areas.

Conventions Score 1

This writing demonstrates minimal control of conventions with multiple errors of many types (formatting, spelling, dialogue, comma, omission,...) that interfere with meaning.

TEENAGE DRIVER

It all started on a cold winter day perched in the green mountains of Vermont. Zeck and his buddies Joe and Mike were planning a 7 day trip to North Carolina. They were going to watch a college basketball game. The three decided on taking Zeck's BMW. The three talked to their parents and got clarification. They would set out tomorrow. The boys planned three stops on the way. Their first stop will be in Albany NY, then Lancaster PA and then to Charlotte NC for the game.

When the boys were packed and ready to go they turned on the country tunes and were on their way. It was snowy and the roads were slick. The car had summer tires on so they went about 55mph. They traveled for about two hours before they arrived in Albany. They would spend the night in a Motel.

Then next morning they were not very awake so Joe who had coffee drove to New Jersey. Then they stopped to get gas and ate lunch. At this point they switched drivers to give Joe a rest. It then took about two and a half hours to get to Pennsylvania. They were still about two hours away from Carlisle PA.

When they were near Carlisle PA it started to snow very hard again. They then slowed down to about 45mph. They then stopped to fill up for gas at the Mobil station. They did not know it would be their last stop.

Once they filled up they were off again. Mike was driving now and about 10 miles from Carlisle a big truck cuts them off forcing them to roll over the bank and hit the trees along the way. Zeck and Joe were thrown from the car and died instantly. However, Mike was the only one who had a seat belt on was trapped.

Mike had been sitting there for hours not being able to move and was freezing. Mike's only chance of survival was for someone to see him. But nobody did. Mike who had been trapped for about 5 hours died of hypothermia.

At about 2am the next morning the police discovered the car and found the boys. The three had frost all over them. The police found their identification and notified the parents. Zeck's mom died of a heart attack while the other stood in sorrow.

The boys had a wonderful funeral and are now resting in peace today.

Three Years Later:

Now that some of the victims' parents pain has gone away they joined together to form a club call S.T.D. The law is now enforced in Pennsylvania that any teenager under the age of 18 can not have a license. The parents goal is to make every state stop teenage driving. However, as much as they try the pain will never go away.

1.9 Narrative
Effectiveness = 1
Conventions = 2

TEENAGE DRIVER

It all started on a cold winter day perched in the green mountains of Vermont.

Zeck and his buddies Joe and Mike were planning a 7 day trip to North Carolina. They were going to watch a college basketball game. The three decided on taking Zeck’s BMW. The three talked to their parents and got clarification. They would set out tomorrow. The boys planned three stops on the way. Their first stop will be in Albany NY, then Lancaster PA and then to Charlotte NC for the game.

Trite context; characters are listed

When the boys were packed and ready to go they turned on the country tunes and were on their way. It was snowy and the roads were slick. The car had summer tires on so they went about 55mph. They traveled for about two hours before they arrived in Albany. They would spend the night in a Motel.

Listed detail; no elaboration

Then next morning they were not very awake so Joe who had coffee drove to New Jersey. Then they stopped to get gas and ate lunch. At this point they switched drivers to give Joe a rest. It then took about two and a half hours to get to Pennsylvania. They were still about two hours away from Carlisle PA.

Repetitious, generic language

When they were near Carlisle PA it started to snow very hard again. They then slowed down to about 45mph. They then stopped to fill up for gas at the Mobil station. They did not know it would be their last stop.

Once they filled up they were off again. Mike was driving now and about 10 miles from Carlisle a big truck cuts them off forcing them to roll over the bank and hit the trees along the way. Zeck and Joe were thrown from the car and died instantly. However, Mike was the only one who had a seat belt on was trapped.

No elaboration of action

Mike had been sitting there for hours not being able to move and was freezing. Mike’s only chance of survival was for someone to see him. But nobody did. Mike who had been trapped for about 5 hours died of hypothermia.

At about 2am the next morning the police discovered the car and found the boys. The three had frost all over them. The police found their identification and notified the parents. Zeck's mom died of a heart attack while the other stood in sorrow.

This sentence lacks coherence

The boys had a wonderful funeral and are now resting in peace today.

Three Years Later:

Now that some of the victims' parents pain has gone away they joined together to form a club call S.T.D. The law is now enforced in Pennsylvania that any teenager under the age of 18 can not have a license. The parents goal is to make every state stop teenage driving. However, as much as they try the pain will never go away.

Actions of parents are not a logical conclusion: the action was caused by the truck, not the teenage drivers

Effectiveness Score 1

This minimal attempt at a narrative has a topic, teenage drivers, but no focus. The plot and language are generic; there is no dialogue or effort to produce suspense. The lack of logic in the conclusion constitutes a gap in coherence.

Conventions Score 2

This writing demonstrates inconsistent control of conventions with errors in capitalization, comma use, and verb tense consistency.