Writing standards file Harry – low level 5

Biography of a pirate

Should zoos be allowed? – two sides of the argument

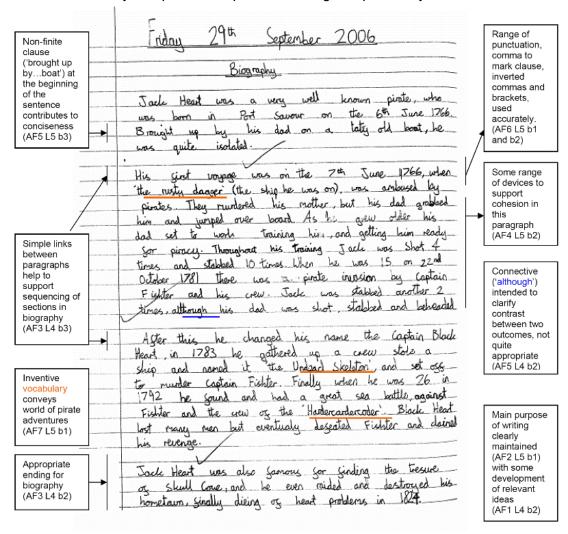
Letter home – cross-curricular writing explaining filtration

Newspaper report about a robbery

Narrative writing - story written in stages

Biography of a pirate

As part of a class unit on biographical writing, children were asked to invent a fictitious pirate and create a biography of the pirate's life, focusing on chronological events from birth to death. Harry completed this piece of writing independently.



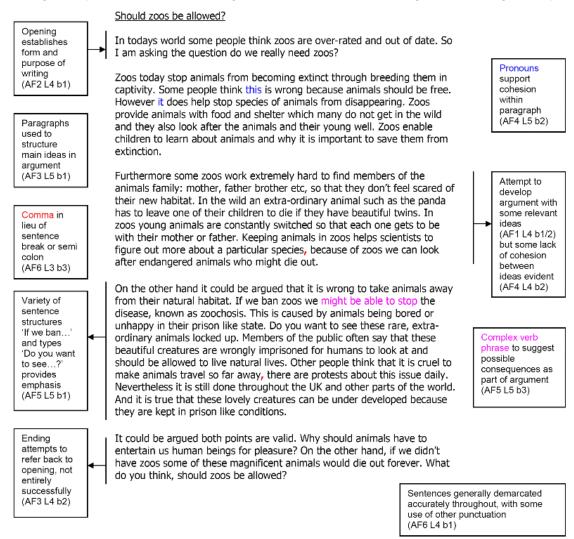
Assessment summary

In this piece, Harry maintains the purpose consistently (AF2) and the text is mostly developed appropriately for the form of a biography, though more detail could have been included in some sections (AF1). The structure is clear and straightforward, supported by paragraphs (AF4) and these are linked by use of connectives, not always successfully (AF3). There is some variety in the sentence structure (AF5) through use of connectives ('when', 'as', 'although'), relative pronouns ('who') and non-finite clauses ('brought up by...') but it is not consistently supported by accurate punctuation (AF6). Vocabulary is both inventive and used with some precision ('ambushed', 'piracy', 'invaded', 'beheaded') (AF7). Spelling is generally accurate, with a few plausible errors (AF8).

Overall, this response meets some of the criteria for level 5 with the exception of AFs 1 and 3, where the evidence suggests level 4.

Should zoos be allowed? – two sides of the argument

Prior to this writing, the class had been studying persuasive texts, which included watching a presentation detailing arguments for and against zoos. They were given a homework task to research some of the issues further. This was followed up with a speaking and listening session, where children were asked to prepare an argument in role. Children were then given some planning time and support with structuring their writing. Harry wrote this piece using his notes from the speaking and listening activity.



Assessment summary

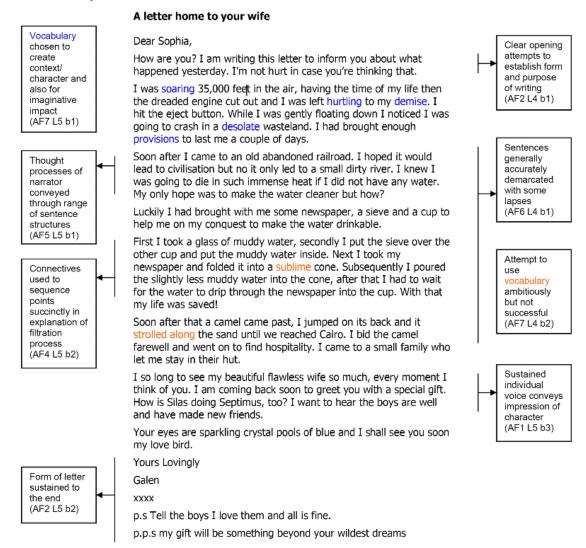
Harry shows that he can use paragraphs to structure a whole text (AF4) and with support, create some effective links both between paragraphs ('Furthermore...') and within paragraphs ('In the wild...'; 'In zoos'). There is evidence of some adaptation to purpose (AF2) in sentence structures and choice of language, and the ideas are mostly developed appropriately for an argumentative piece (AF1). The sentences are reasonably varied and a range of connectives ('on the other hand'; 'meanwhile') is used

to clarify links between them or contrast different ideas in the argument. Punctuation to mark sentences is mostly secure with some use of other punctuation (apostrophe, comma, colon), though there are lapses (AF6), and the choice of vocabulary is generally appropriate to purpose and task, with use of subject-specific language ('species', 'extinction', 'endangered').

In this response, Harry has fulfilled some of the criteria for level 5. There is more secure evidence of attainment at level 5 in AF5, with the use of rhetorical questions ('Why should animals have to...?') and some range of verb forms ('are constantly switched'; 'might be able to stop'). At whole-text level, however, there is some reliance on the support provided with structure and on key phrases, for example 'It could be argued' to manage the development of ideas.

Letter home – cross-curricular writing explaining filtration

The class had been to the theatre to watch a production of *The Little Prince*. At the same time they were studying filtration as part of the science unit on separating materials. The teacher provided a cross-curricular writing opportunity by asking the children to write a letter home detailing how filtration had helped save someone's life, in the style of the main character in *The Little Prince*. He is a typical 'English gentleman' and the story is set somewhere around the 1950s.



Assessment summary

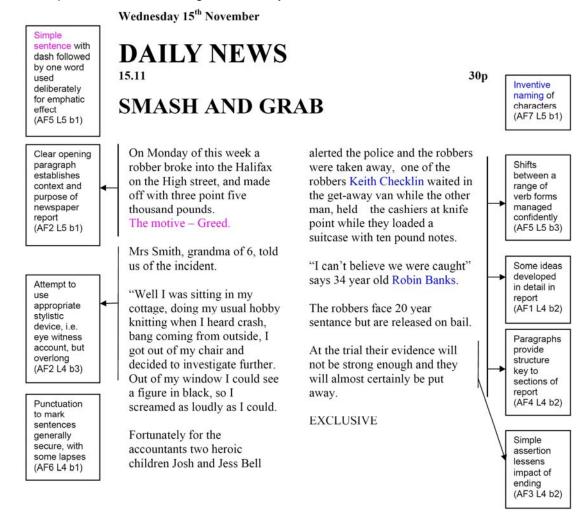
Harry tries to sustain a convincing voice, ranging from dispassionate scientist to Victorian father (AF1), in what is quite a difficult task to manage. The form of a letter is maintained (AF2) and there is an attempt to incorporate relevant, vivid detail (AF1). Harry uses a range of sentence structures and types, including some more colloquial

structures, appropriate to a personal letter (AF5). Syntax and punctuation are generally accurate, though there are lapses in places ('How is Silas doing Septimus, too?'), with evidence of both comma splicing and commas omitted (AF6). The letter is organised into paragraphs (AF3) and there is some linking of ideas within sections (AF4).

The demands of this task are quite complex and although Harry has grasped the context and adopted a role quite successfully, the scientific understanding demonstrated is not secure. Nevertheless, in terms of writing skills, there is evidence that across most of the AFs some of the level 5 criteria are being fulfilled, with AF6 being least secure.

Newspaper report about a robbery

At the end of a unit of work on journalistic writing, children were asked to write their own report based on an imagined robbery.



Assessment summary

In this succinctly written newspaper report, Harry shows he is able to select and use an appropriate form (AF2), with some adaptation to purpose. Some relevant and interesting details are included (AF1), though these could be more fully developed in places. While there are some appropriate stylistic features (AF2) such as comments from people involved, these are not always well judged. Paragraphs are mostly used effectively to clarify main ideas but although the opening is strong, the piece tails off towards the end and the conclusion is less effective (AF4). There is some range in the sentence structures (AF5) and punctuation is generally secure, though there are lapses (e.g. commas are omitted) (AF6). The vocabulary choices are appropriate (e.g. 'motive', 'cashier', 'bail', 'heroic'), and amusing (Robin Banks) (AF7).

In this piece, the level 5 criteria for AFs 5 and 2 are clearly met and there is some evidence of level 5 across the other AFs, but it is not consistent or secure.

Narrative writing – story written in stages

Following an exploration of effective story openings, children wrote story openings independently, choosing their own narrative type. Then, with support and feedback from the teacher, they wrote the rest of the story. Only the opening and the ending are given here.

Opening

Two short simple sentences used consecutively for effect (AF5 L5 b1) It was a cold dull saturday, when me, Danny and Jack set out into the woods. We sped along an un-even dirt patch that cut through the middle of the forest like a vein. A branch protruding from the side of the patch, caught the side of my bike. I slowed. They sped. It took a while to catch up but as I rounded a final bend I couldn't believe what I found.

Imaginative use of metaphor and simile catches reader's interest immediately (AF2 L5 b3)

Vocabulary chosen to create vivid detail for reader (AF7 L5 b1) The two bikes were strewn along the ground, the frames mangled. One wheel was still spinning. I gently stopped the wheel and glared at the trail of shrapnel scatted along the ground. There was a cave to the right and next to it a piece of fabric caught on the bush. There was a heavy silence on me as the mind seemed to halt. I was alone.

Use of short sentence at the end of paragraph creates tension (AF5 L5 b1)

Range of sentence structures, simple, compound and complex, helps to manage the pace of the narrative (AF5 L5 b1) I felt panicked, my heart was racing. I glanced over my shoulders, reassuring myself that it was all a joke. I froze with worry, seeming unable to move my limbs. I decided that it was time to stop worrying and do something after while.

me, as I picked my way over to the cave. As I crouched down to avoid

the caves low, overhanging lip I saw something that made me jump. A

huge row of razor sharp stalagtites, and directly below them a row of

stalagmites. This huge formation almost resembled teeth and as I

climbed carefully through it I began to hear a voice. It whispered

something in a harsh, dry tone, sounding like some ritual, then there

My only option seemed to be the cave. A feeling of dread swept over

Exploration of narrator's thoughts and feelings conveys state of mind, not wholly consistently (AF1 L5 b1)

Effective build up to the end of the opening section (AF2 L5 b2) was a blue light ahead and I began to walk towards it.

Every few moments the whispers would halt and the light would flare momentarily. A few minutes of walking later I slammed into a large stalagtite. The huge rock-fang leapt from the cave roof and landed next to me with a crash as I ran a large chunk of rock hit me in the back of the head. My vision clouded and I fell unconsious

Expanded noun phrases add relevant descriptive detail (AF5 L5 b3)

Ending

Most sentences accurately demarcated (AF6 L4 b1)

Some loss of control of sentence structure and punctuation (AF6 L3 b1) When me and Jack reached the domed cave my eyes widened and my jaw dropped. Danny was clinging upside down to the rim of the cauldron. Almost on cue there were light-slow footsteps from a small tunnel to the right. Me and Jack hurriedly pushed over the cauldron with a hard metallic crash the footsteps hastened as we hastened out of the dome, we passed the teeth and the mouth of the cave and finnally sped out into a thunderstorm. One thing was for sure we were never going there again.

Ending attempts link with opening (AF3 L4 b2)

Assessment summary

In the opening of his story, Harry shows he can sustain a narrative voice (AF1) and make straightforward adaptations to narrative form to maintain the reader's interest (AF2). Paragraphs are used effectively to structure main ideas (AF3) and links between paragraphs are well managed (AF4). The punctuation is mostly secure, though there are lapses, and a wide range is not in evidence here (AF6). The strengths of this response are the range of sentence structures in the opening section (AF5) and the choice of stylistic features to create interest (AF2).

The central sections of the story (not given here), while yielding similar evidence in relation to AFs 5, 6, 3 and 4, show some loss of control of narrative form, with too many events included at the expense of realism. This is carried through to the slightly hurried ending which, while providing some link with the opening, is not altogether convincing. Overall, Harry shows that he can write an effective narrative opening and has some flair in his use of language to develop his own voice and for imaginative effect. His control of a complete narrative text, however, even with support, is less secure. There is evidence, therefore, that while the criteria for AFs 5, 4, 1, 7 and 8 are fulfilled at level 5, for the other AFs, they are only partially secure.

Overall assessment summary for Harry

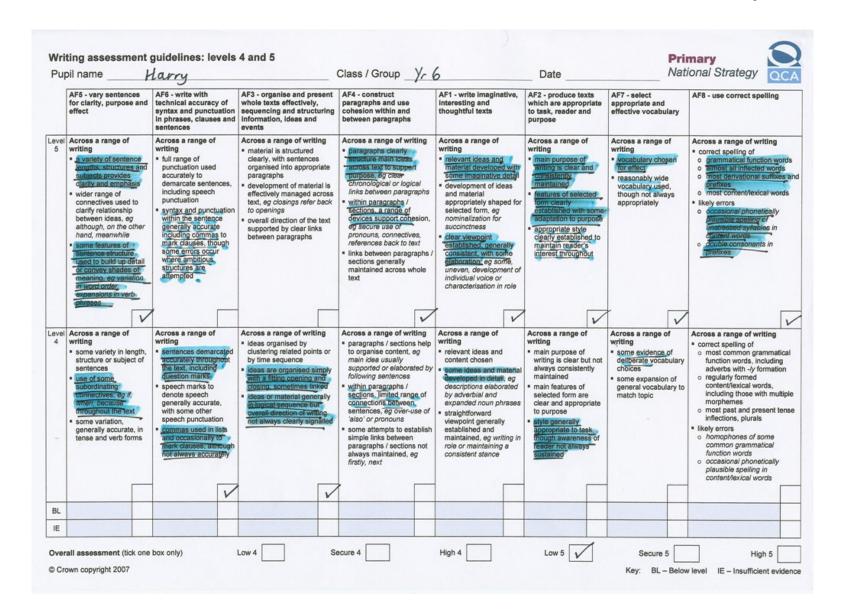
This collection shows that Harry is competent at tackling different forms of writing (AF2), establishing some relevant features and generally maintaining purpose consistently. There is some development of ideas (AF1), though there are places where points could have been elaborated further (pirate biography and newspaper report). He is able to adopt different voices and choose an appropriate style (AF2), with vocabulary often used precisely and inventively (AF7).

Harry is also able to structure texts, showing some sense of a whole piece, though his openings are stronger than his endings. Paragraphs are used well to shape meaning (AF3) and there is evidence of some range of cohesive devices used both across and within paragraphs (AF4).

There is some range of sentence structures, mostly chosen appropriately for form and purpose (AF5). Sentences are generally demarcated and some other punctuation is used (AF6), though as he attempts a more ambitious range of structures in his writing, the control of punctuation is sometimes lost.

His spelling is generally sound, though there are weaknesses as demonstrated in the pirate biography, where he misspells, among other words, 'eventualy' and 'dieing' (AF8).

Across all the AFs, Harry shows that he can fulfil some of the criteria for level 5, particularly where support has been given with form or content. In the last piece, where there is evidence of a more independent voice, the AFs for level 5 are more securely fulfilled, except in AF6, AF2 and to some extent AF3. To progress further through the level, Harry needs to develop his ideas in more detail (AF1) and with greater independence in a range of text types, including those where the form is less clearly specified. He also needs to gain greater control over the whole text, including endings, and a range of punctuation.



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