

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.

Friday 29th September 2006

Biography

Jack Heart was a very well known pirate, who was born in Port Saviour on the 6th June 1766. Brought up by his dad on a latty old boat, he was quite isolated.

His first voyage was on the 7th June 1766, when the rusty dagger (the ship he was on), was ambushed by pirates. They murdered his mother, but his dad grabbed him and jumped over board. As he grew older his dad set to work training him, and getting him ready for piracy. Throughout his training Jack was shot 4 times and stabbed 10 times. When he was 15 on 22nd October 1781 there was a pirate invasion by Captain Fighter and his crew. Jack was stabbed another 2 times, although his dad was shot, stabbed and beheaded.

After this he changed his name the Captain Black Heart, in 1783 he gathered up a crew stole a ship and named it the Underd Skelator, and set off to murder Captain Fighter. Finally when he was 26 in 1792 he found and had a great sea battle, against Fighter and the crew of the Hambardercoder. Black Heart lost many men but eventually desegated Fighter and claimed his revenge.

Jack Heart was also famous for finding the treasure of Skull Cove, and he even raided and destroyed his hometown, finally dying of heart problems in 1824.

Non-finite clause
(‘brought up by...boat’) at the beginning of the sentence contributes to conciseness (AF5 L5 b3)

Simple links between paragraphs help to support sequencing of sections in biography (AF3 L4 b3)

Inventive vocabulary conveys world of pirate adventures (AF7 L5 b1)

Appropriate ending for biography (AF3 L4 b2)

Range of punctuation, comma to mark clause, inverted commas and brackets, used accurately. (AF6 L5 b1 and b2)

Some range of devices to support cohesion in this paragraph (AF4 L5 b2)

Connective (‘although’) intended to clarify contrast between two outcomes, not quite appropriate (AF5 L4 b2)

Main purpose of writing clearly maintained (AF2 L5 b1) with some development of relevant ideas (AF1 L4 b2)

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.

Should zoos be allowed?

Opening establishes form and purpose of writing (AF2 L4 b1)

Paragraphs used to structure main ideas in argument (AF3 L5 b1)

Comma in lieu of sentence break or semi colon (AF6 L3 b3)

Variety of sentence structures 'If we ban...' and types 'Do you want to see...?' provides emphasis (AF5 L5 b1)

Ending attempts to refer back to opening, not entirely successfully (AF3 L4 b2)

In today's world some people think zoos are over-rated and out of date. So I am asking the question do we really need zoos?

Zoos today stop animals from becoming extinct through breeding them in captivity. Some people think **this** is wrong because animals should be free. However **it** does help stop species of animals from disappearing. Zoos provide animals with food and shelter which many do not get in the wild and they also look after the animals and their young well. Zoos enable children to learn about animals and why it is important to save them from extinction.

Furthermore some zoos work extremely hard to find members of the animals family: mother, father brother etc, so that they don't feel scared of their new habitat. In the wild an extra-ordinary animal such as the panda has to leave one of their children to die if they have beautiful twins. In zoos young animals are constantly switched so that each one gets to be with their mother or father. Keeping animals in zoos helps scientists to figure out more about a particular species, because of zoos we can look after endangered animals who might die out.

On the other hand it could be argued that it is wrong to take animals away from their natural habitat. If we ban zoos we **might be able to stop** the disease, known as zoochosis. This is caused by animals being bored or unhappy in their prison like state. Do you want to see these rare, extra-ordinary animals locked up. Members of the public often say that these beautiful creatures are wrongly imprisoned for humans to look at and should be allowed to live natural lives. Other people think that it is cruel to make animals travel so far away, there are protests about this issue daily. Nevertheless it is still done throughout the UK and other parts of the world. And it is true that these lovely creatures can be under developed because they are kept in prison like conditions.

It could be argued both points are valid. Why should animals have to entertain us human beings for pleasure? On the other hand, if we didn't have zoos some of these magnificent animals would die out forever. What do you think, should zoos be allowed?

Pronouns support cohesion within paragraph (AF4 L5 b2)

Attempt to develop argument with some relevant ideas (AF1 L4 b1/2) but some lack of cohesion between ideas evident (AF4 L4 b2)

Complex verb phrase to suggest possible consequences as part of argument (AF5 L5 b3)

Sentences generally demarcated accurately throughout, with some use of other punctuation (AF6 L4 b1)

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.

A letter home to your wife

Vocabulary chosen to create context/ character and also for imaginative impact (AF7 L5 b1)

Thought processes of narrator conveyed through range of sentence structures (AF5 L5 b1)

Connectives used to sequence points succinctly in explanation of filtration process (AF4 L5 b2)

Form of letter sustained to the end (AF2 L5 b2)

Dear Sophia,

How are you? I am writing this letter to inform you about what happened yesterday. I'm not hurt in case you're thinking that.

I was **soaring** 35,000 feet in the air, having the time of my life then the dreaded engine cut out and I was left **hurtling** to my **demise**. I hit the eject button. While I was gently floating down I noticed I was going to crash in a **desolate** wasteland. I had brought enough **provisions** to last me a couple of days.

Soon after I came to an old abandoned railroad. I hoped it would lead to civilisation but no it only led to a small dirty river. I knew I was going to die in such immense heat if I did not have any water. My only hope was to make the water cleaner but how?

Luckily I had brought with me some newspaper, a sieve and a cup to help me on my conquest to make the water drinkable.

First I took a glass of muddy water, secondly I put the sieve over the other cup and put the muddy water inside. Next I took my newspaper and folded it into a **sublime** cone. Subsequently I poured the slightly less muddy water into the cone, after that I had to wait for the water to drip through the newspaper into the cup. With that my life was saved!

Soon after that a camel came past, I jumped on its back and it **strolled along** the sand until we reached Cairo. I bid the camel farewell and went on to find hospitality. I came to a small family who let me stay in their hut.

I so long to see my beautiful flawless wife so much, every moment I think of you. I am coming back soon to greet you with a special gift. How is Silas doing Septimus, too? I want to hear the boys are well and have made new friends.

Your eyes are sparkling crystal pools of blue and I shall see you soon my love bird.

Yours Lovingly

Galen

xxxx

p.s Tell the boys I love them and all is fine.

p.p.s my gift will be something beyond your wildest dreams

Clear opening attempts to establish form and purpose of writing (AF2 L4 b1)

Sentences generally accurately demarcated with some lapses (AF6 L4 b1)

Attempt to use **vocabulary** ambitiously but not successful (AF7 L4 b2)

Sustained individual voice conveys impression of character (AF1 L5 b3)

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.

Wednesday 15th November

Simple sentence with dash followed by one word used deliberately for emphatic effect (AF5 L5 b1)

DAILY NEWS

15.11

SMASH AND GRAB

30p

Inventive naming of characters (AF7 L5 b1)

Clear opening paragraph establishes context and purpose of newspaper report (AF2 L5 b1)

Attempt to use appropriate stylistic device, i.e. eye witness account, but overlong (AF2 L4 b3)

Punctuation to mark sentences generally secure, with some lapses (AF6 L4 b1)

On Monday of this week a robber broke into the Halifax on the High street, and made off with three point five thousand pounds.
The motive – Greed.

Mrs Smith, grandma of 6, told us of the incident.

“Well I was sitting in my cottage, doing my usual hobby knitting when I heard crash, bang coming from outside, I got out of my chair and decided to investigate further. Out of my window I could see a figure in black, so I screamed as loudly as I could.

Fortunately for the accountants two heroic children Josh and Jess Bell

Shifts between a range of verb forms managed confidently (AF5 L5 b3)

Some ideas developed in detail in report (AF1 L4 b2)

Paragraphs provide structure key to sections of report (AF4 L4 b2)

Simple assertion lessens impact of ending (AF3 L4 b2)

alerted the police and the robbers were taken away, one of the robbers Keith Checklin waited in the get-away van while the other man, held the cashiers at knife point while they loaded a suitcase with ten pound notes.

“I can’t believe we were caught” says 34 year old Robin Banks.

The robbers face 20 year sentence but are released on bail.

At the trial their evidence will not be strong enough and they will almost certainly be put away.

EXCLUSIVE

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.

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)

My only option seemed to be the cave. A feeling of dread swept over 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 stalagmites**, 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 was a blue light ahead and I began to walk towards it.

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

Ending

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 finally sped out into a thunderstorm. One thing was for sure we were never going there again.

Most sentences accurately demarcated (AF6 L4 b1)

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, 'eventually' 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.

Writing assessment guidelines: levels 4 and 5

Pupil name Harry

Class / Group Yr 6

Date _____

Primary

National Strategy



	AF5 - vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect	AF6 - write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences	AF3 - organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events	AF4 - construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs	AF1 - write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts	AF2 - produce texts which are appropriate to task, reader and purpose	AF7 - select appropriate and effective vocabulary	AF8 - use correct spelling
Level 5	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a variety of sentence lengths, structures and subjects provides clarity and emphasis wider range of connectives used to clarify relationship between ideas, eg <i>although, on the other hand, meanwhile</i> some features of sentence structure used to build up detail or convey shades of meaning, eg variation in word order, expansions in verb phrases 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> full range of punctuation used accurately to demarcate sentences, including speech punctuation syntax and punctuation generally accurate including commas to mark clauses, though some errors occur where ambitious structures are attempted 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> material is structured clearly, with sentences organised into appropriate paragraphs development of material is effectively managed across text, eg closings refer back to openings overall direction of the text supported by clear links between paragraphs 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> paragraphs clearly structure main ideas across text to support purpose, eg clear chronological or logical links between paragraphs within paragraphs / sections, a range of devices support cohesion, eg secure use of pronouns, connectives, references back to text links between paragraphs / sections generally maintained across whole text 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant ideas and material developed with some imaginative detail development of ideas and material appropriately shaped for selected form, eg nominalization for succinctness clear viewpoint established, generally consistent, with some elaboration, eg some, uneven, development of individual voice or characterisation in role 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> main purpose of writing is clear and consistently maintained features of selected form clearly established with some adaptation to purpose appropriate style clearly established to maintain reader's interest throughout 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vocabulary chosen for effect reasonably wide vocabulary used, though not always appropriately 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> correct spelling of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grammatical function words almost all inflected words most derivational suffixes and prefixes most content/lexical words likely errors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occasional phonetically plausible spelling of unstressed syllables in content words double consonants in prefixes
Level 4	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some variety in length, structure or subject of sentences use of some subordinating connectives, eg <i>if, when, because</i> throughout the text some variation, generally accurate, in tense and verb forms 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sentences demarcated accurately throughout the text, including question marks speech marks to denote speech generally accurate, with some other speech punctuation commas used in lists and occasionally to mark clauses, though not always accurately 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ideas organised by clustering related points or by time sequence ideas are organised simply with a fitting opening and closing, sometimes linked ideas or material generally in logical sequence but overall direction of writing not always clearly signalled 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> paragraphs / sections help to organise content, eg main idea usually supported or elaborated by following sentences within paragraphs / sections, limited range of connections between sentences, eg over-use of 'also' or pronouns some attempts to establish simple links between paragraphs / sections not always maintained, eg <i>firstly, next</i> 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant ideas and content chosen some ideas and material developed in detail, eg descriptions elaborated by adverbial and expanded noun phrases straightforward viewpoint generally established and maintained, eg <i>writing in role</i> or <i>maintaining a consistent stance</i> 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> main purpose of writing is clear but not always consistently maintained main features of selected form are clear and appropriate to purpose style generally appropriate to task, though awareness of reader not always sustained 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some evidence of deliberate vocabulary choices some expansion of general vocabulary to match topic 	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> correct spelling of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> most common grammatical function words, including adverbs with -ly formation regularly formed content/lexical words, including those with multiple morphemes most past and present tense inflections, plurals likely errors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> homophones of some common grammatical function words occasional phonetically plausible spelling in content/lexical words
BL								
IE								

Overall assessment (tick one box only)

Low 4

Secure 4

High 4

Low 5

Secure 5

High 5

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Key: BL – Below level IE – Insufficient evidence