

Narrative, Level G, Proficient for End of 4th Grade and Beginning of 5th Grade

Gemstone Mining with Dad

One crisp, cool fall weekend, my father and I went to the Appalachian Mountains to have a father- daughter weekend. Of all the places we visited, the Foscoe Mining Company was my favorite. When we arrived at the mine, we were given a gigantic bucket of dirt. We were hoping to find gemstones buried in the dirt. We were looking for diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and maybe even some gold. It was a real mystery and I couldn't wait to discover what was buried beneath the dirt.

We were given sifters made of a wooden frame with steel mesh stretched across the middle and two shovels. We dug large scoops of dirt and dumped it into the sifters. Next, we placed the sifters into a trough filled with water. My dad and I worked together to shake the dirt back and forth in the water. The water rinsed away the dirt and mud so we could see if there were any gems left.

At first, I only discovered small sapphires and citrines. Then on the last scoop of dirt, I felt something heavy in my sifter. I lifted it up and saw a giant smokey quartz. It was black and shiny. It was almost see-through when I held it up to the light. I thought it was the most beautiful gem I had ever seen.

When our bucket was empty, we took the gems to the manager of the mine. She helped us label our discoveries. It was very exciting to know that I had discovered such a beautiful collection of gems. Maybe one day I can take them and have some jewelry made. Until then, I will just enjoy looking at them and remembering all of the fun and adventure I had gemstone mining with my dad.

Sample Scoring

Gemstone Mining with Dad (Narrative, G2)

Ideas/Content:

1. Writes a personal narrative with a developing theme
2. Includes a series of thoughtfully-explained events

Structure/Organization:

1. Writes an effective recount of a personal experience with a well-developed beginning, middle, and end (including an appropriate title), letting events unfold naturally.
2. Introduces the setting and characters in the beginning
3. Wraps up narrative with an ending that is somewhat predictable, but still effective

Voice/Point of View:

1. Writer's voice is beginning to show, revealing emotion and a personal connection to the topic
2. Writes from a 1st person perspective with no dialogue

Word Choice/Description

1. Creates description with adjectives, but could use stronger verbs and adverbs to aid the description and show rather than tell.

Sentence Fluency/Structure:

1. Uses simple, compound, and complex sentences appropriate to the task
2. Writes engaging topic sentences that allow the reader to understand the division of ideas into different paragraphs
3. Uses appropriate transitional words, phrases and clauses

Please Note: When scoring a paper, begin with the middle column, the Proficient level for the month and grade level. As you look at the bullets for Ideas and Content (for example), if the paper seems to fit the description in the Continuum, then decide if it is Proficient at 1 (minimally developed), 2 (adequately developed) or 3 (thoroughly developed). If you find yourself debating over two levels, choose the lower level.

Read the bullets holistically. It is impossible for any instrument to match bullet by bullet for each paper a student might write. If the Proficient column is more advanced, move to the left to the Basic or even Below Basic levels for Ideas and Content. If the Proficient level isn't adequate, then move to the right to the Advanced or Advanced+ levels.

We have only scored 4-5 features as a demonstration. You will likely choose to score different features on different papers according the genre, purpose for writing, or the draft (1st, continuing or final).