

Opinion/Informational, Level E₁, Proficient for Middle of 2nd Grade

This informational piece is a good example of what some teachers might consider to be an *opinion* due to the opening and closing statements (“Nature is a wonderful thing in life” — could be considered to be an opinion stated as a fact; and “If you read this story, maybe you will like nature as much as I do.”). However, we considered the piece informational because it has a classic report structure with the overall topic of Woodland Nature and subtopics of Squirrels and Deer followed by a concluding statement. This was a first draft and the writer likely would have made many corrections on conventions in later drafts. However, if conventions were scored on this draft, the paper would have holistically been scored lower.

NACHR IN THE WODS

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The above is an unedited writing piece from the child's writing journal.

Nature in the Woods (edited for our readers)

Nature is a wonderful thing in life. For instance, let's start with the squirrel. The squirrels gather nuts and acorns for the winter. In the summer, the mother has babies. The babies grow fast. Pretty soon, the babies are grown up.

And now, let's go to the deer. The deer is a very shy animal, and they have babies in the summer. If you read this story, maybe you will like nature as much as I do.

Sample Scoring

Ideas/Content (D):

1. Includes a title (*Nature in the Woods*).
2. Includes 2-4 details for each of two subtopics.
3. Facts are from general knowledge or restated from some recall of information from a book read, not researched for piece.
4. Provides closure.

Structure/Organization (D):

1. Introduces a topic and provides facts and closure related to the topic.
2. Uses a report structure with a transition between topics. This could be considered an opinion piece with the opinion stated as a fact (Nature is a wonderful thing in life.) and a conclusion that ties back to the opinion (If you read this story, maybe you will like nature as much as I do.). However, the sentences in the middle are informational about the squirrel and deer.

Voice/Point of View (E):

1. Writes in book language directly to the audience (*The squirrels gather nuts and acorns for the winter. In the summer, the mother has babies. The deer is a very shy animal....*).
2. Intentionally adds some phrases for interest. (*Nature is a wonderful thing in life; For instance*).
3. Writes in 2nd and 3rd person.

Word Choice/Description (E):

1. Does not allow limited spelling ability to limit the use of precise vocabulary.
2. Uses interesting transitions (*For instance; in the summer; Pretty soon; and And now, let's go to the deer.*) in the form of introductory phrases.

Sentence Fluency/Structure (E):

1. Uses conjunctions
2. Transitions are phrases and sentences.
3. Beginning to write compound and complex sentences (Compound: The deer is a very shy animal, and they have babies in the summer. Complex: If you read this story, maybe you will like nature as much as I do.)

4. Uses prepositional phrases, adverbs and adjectives.

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). If we had scored conventions on this unedited piece, the holistic score would have been lower.