

## Grade 5 Informative/Explanatory Writing Standard W.5.2

### Grade 5 Informative/Explanatory

W.5.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- a. Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- c. Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *in contrast, especially*).
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

### The Reading/Thinking/Writing Task

After reading and working with the novel, *Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech students were asked to write an essay about how the main character's feelings about poetry change over the course of the book. Students wrote to the Focusing Question, "*Over the course of the book, how do Jack's feelings about poetry change?*"

This assignment requires that students make inferences about a character, based on his words and actions, and use this understanding to trace the development of one of the major themes of the novel. To support their analysis and develop the focus, students must select and organize relevant quotations from the text and reflect on the significance of the evidence presented.

### Focus of the Writing Task

*Over the course of the book, how do Jack's feelings about poetry change?*

## The Writing Task in the Curriculum

### *How is the writing embedded in curriculum/content?*

- ★ *Class:*
  - heterogeneous 5<sup>th</sup> grade class
- ★ *Curriculum unit*
  - literature unit on *Love that Dog* (focused on character development), poetry and poets
- ★ *Standards*
  - Reading: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.10
  - Writing: W.5.2, W.5.8, W.5.9, W.5.10

### *How did students build the knowledge they needed?*

- ★ *Texts*
  - *Love That Dog* by Sharon Creech
  - copies of poems read by the main character in the novel
  - short biographies of poets referred to in the novel
- ★ *Other Activities*
  - close Reading
  - analysis of poems used in the novel

### *What instructional approaches were used to teach writing?*

- ★ *Craft lessons*
  - students practiced integrating quotes (context, quote, elaboration) through oral activities and games.
  - students worked with expository structures (Painted Essay® in many forms and more)
  - students analyzed a humorous model (Love that Piano) about a fictitious character whose feelings about music change over the course of a novel.
- ★ *Writing approaches*
  - students used a packet to independently guide them through the general process of understanding the focusing question, collecting and recording evidence for the piece, writing a focus statement, orally rehearsing for writing and drafting the essay.

### *What was the timeframe?*

Approximately 2 weeks, 45 minute periods to gather and record evidence and draft the piece. This writing assignment was the culminating task in an 8-week unit on *Love That Dog*, poetry and poets.

***Standard W.5.2***  
***Grade 5***  
***Proficient***

**Jack's Changes**

Love That Dog by Sharon Creech is a story about a boy named Jack. Jack goes through some different changes throughout the book. In the beginning, Jack is overwhelmingly disgusted by poetry, but by the end of the book, Jack adores reading and writing it!

In the beginning of the book Jack explains to us that he loathes poetry. For example, when Jack's teacher assigned him to write about a pet, Jack writes, "I don't have a pet so I can't write about one" (p.12) You can see that Jack wants to try to get out of writing poetry. In Jack's very first journal entry, he wrote, "I don't want to because boys don't write poetry, girls do." (p.1) This is one of Jack's excuses to try to get out of writing poetry. This time he writes, "I tried. Can't do it. Brains empty." This is only the beginning.

In the beginning of the book, you can see that Jack doesn't like poetry at all. But, by the end of the book, he absolutely, positively adores poetry. When Jack's teacher read poems street music, he enjoyed them. Jack said, "I liked the poems about the loud street music in the city". Seeing Jack like those poems really lets us know that he is changing. Another time, Mrs. Stretchberry put poems on yellow paper, he wrote in his journal, "It looks good on yellow paper." Jack is becoming more comfortable with his own poetry. In class that day Jack's teacher read small poems. Jack wrote in his journal, "I liked those small poems by Valerie Worths we read today." This is proof that Jack is beginning to learn that poetry is very delightful. You can see that Jack is definitely seeing that poetry is a joy.

In Love that Dog we see a boy who undergoes a great change. Jack in the beginning of the book doesn't like poetry, but now he completely loves it. You can see that Jack went through changes throughout his school year. I have probably gone through plenty of changes also. Just like a book, you start at the beginning, and go till the end. Jack has shown a great difference in his personality from the [beginning to the end].

***Standard W.5.2***  
***Grade 5***  
***Approaching***

**Jack/Poetry**

Love that dog by Sharon Creech is a book about a boy named Jack. Jack's class are assigned to write poems. In the beginning of the book Jack hate's reading and writing poetry, but by the end of the book Jack likes and under stands poetry.

At the begining of the book jack hates poetry. At one point Jack asks his teacher about the snowy woods poem. Jack wrote in his journal "what was up with the snowy woods poem we read today." [p.6] This shows that Jack dosen't understand poetry. Another time Jack says to his teacher "I don't understand the poem about the red wheelbarrow and the white chickens." [p.3] This shows how Jack dosen't like reading poetry. Another way Jacks shows he dosen't like poetry is at one point Jack asks his teacher "Do you promise not to read it out loud?" [p.4] This tells the reader that Jack is very self conscious about writing poetry. Gradruley Jacks feelings about poetry begin to change when MS. Strechberry asks Jack if she can put his poem on the board Jack replies "Yes you can put the two blue car poems on the board but only if you don't put my name on them." [p.10] This shows Jack is starting to feel better about poetry. Jack feels so great about writing poetry he's starting to care how it looks Jack even says "But I think maybe it would look better if there was more space between the lines." [p.18] This is how Jack is telling the reader that he cares more about reading and writing poetry. At the end of the book when Jack goes to type his poem he types at the top "I typed this up myself." [p.68] This shows that Jack wants people knowing how good he is at writing poetry.

Now you see how Jack has changed from the beginning of the book to the end. Jack has gone from hating poetry to loving reading and writing poetry.

***Standard W.5.2***  
***Grade 5***  
***Beginning***

No piece available at this level.

**Standard W.5.2**  
**Grade 5**  
**Exceeds**

### **Love that Poem**

Love That Dog by Sharon Creech, is a wonderful book about a boy named Jack that is told through a journal. His class project is poetry, which, at the beginning of the book Jack can't stand. Jack has changed a lot from the start of the book where he refuses to like poetry or write it to the end of the book where he cherishes and writes poetry freely.

Jack's journal entry's at the beginning of the book show how he loathes all kinds of poetry. When Jack writes these lines in his journal he is doing a unit on poetry in his class. Jack writes "I don't want to, because boys don't write write poetry, girls do."(p.1) You can see that Jack is being very uncooperative about writing poems. Another time in the story Jack has just written a poem about a blue car and his teacher wants to see it. Jack is very reluctant to let his teacher have it because he doesn't highly dislikes it. "Do you promise not to read it out loud?...Do you promise not to put it on the board?...I don't like it."(p.4) This shows that Jack is very nervous about having anyone his poetry. This is one last time you can see that Jack loathes poetry. At this point in the story Jack's teacher Miss Stretchberry has asked Jack's class to write a poem about a pet. Jack writes in his journal, "I don't have a pet so I can't write a poem about one."(p.12) Jack is making up excuses of why he absolutely does not want to write a poem. You now know that Jack acts like he allergic to poetry in the beginning of the book.

Although at the start of the book Jack has some major problems with poetry, Jack starts to slowly transition throughout the story. At the end of the book Jack holds poetry close to his



heart. At this point of the story Mr. Walter Dean Myers has confirmed that he is coming to visit Jack's class. Jack is very excited that Mr. Walter Dean Myers is coming. In one of his journal entry's he writes, "That was the best, BEST, BEST news ever..."(p.75) This shows that Jack is realizing that poetry can be a happiness in his life that he can enjoy. Another time in the book Jack has written a poem and is very proud of it. Jack is now asking the teacher to put his name on his poems. "Maybe you could put my name on it."(p.38) You can see that Jack is coming over his embarrassment about writing poems and starting to love poetry. After his teacher Miss Stretchberry has read many, many poems to her class, Jack starts to write poems of his own. Some poems he has written are "My Yellow Dog",(p.37) "My Sky" (p.68) and "Love That Dog"(p.86). Jack has realized now that poetry is a good way to express himself and that it is something he can cherish. All through the end of the book you can tell that Jack now takes poetry seriously and has come to his senses about it.

Although at the end of the book Jack loves poetry, he was not always like that. Jack has changed a lot from the beginning of the book when he loathes poetry to the end of the story where he holds it close to him. Jack has realized that poetry is a joy, passion and happiness that he can and does love.

*Standard W.5.2*  
*Grade 5*  
*Proficient*

### Jack's Changes

Love That Dog by Sharon Creech is a story about a boy named Jack. Jack goes through some different changes throughout the book. In the beginning, Jack is overwhelmingly disgusted by poetry, but by the end of the book, Jack adores reading and writing it!

In the beginning of the book Jack explains to us that he loathes poetry. For example, when Jack's teacher assigned him to write about a pet, Jack writes, "I don't have a pet so I can't write about one " (p.12) You can see that Jack wants to try to get out of writing poetry. In Jack's very first journal entry, he wrote, "I don't want to because boys don't write poetry, girls do ." (p.1) This is one of Jack's excuses to try to get out of writing poetry. This time he writes, " I tried. Can't do it. Brains empty." This is only the beginning.

In the beginning of the book, you can see that Jack doesn't like poetry at all. But, by the end of the book, he absolutely, positively adores poetry. When Jack's teacher read poems [called] street music, he enjoyed them. Jack said, "I liked the poems about the loud street music in the city". Seeing Jack like those poems really lets us know that he is

Includes a title that reinforces the main idea of the essay

**Introduces the topic clearly** with the title and author of the text **and provides a general observation** about the fact Jack changes

**Focus** is clearly stated and maintained

**Groups related information logically:** the writer separates ideas into two body paragraphs, one for the details at the beginning of the book and one for at the end.

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain** Jack's feelings about poetry

**Develops the topic with relevant concrete details, quotations and examples** that are introduced and explained in relation to the focus

**Conveys information clearly:** paragraphs are tightly focused through the use of topic and wrap-up sentences that remind the reader of the focus of the essay.

**Links ideas within and across categories using transitional words and phrases** to connect the examples in the paragraph to each other and to the topic of the section

changing. Another time, Mrs. Stretchberry put poems on yellow paper, he wrote in his journal, “It looks good on yellow paper.” Jack is becoming more comfortable with his own poetry. In class that day Jacks teacher read small poems. Jack wrote in his journal, “I liked those small poems by Valerie Worths we read today.” This is proof that Jack is beginning to learn that poetry is very delightful. You can see that Jack is definitely seeing that poetry is a joy.

**Examines the topic to convey ideas clearly:** each quote is explained in relation to the prompt.

In Love that Dog we see a boy who undergoes a great change. Jack in the beginning of the book doesn't like poetry, but now he completely loves it. You can see that Jack went through changes throughout his school year. I have probably gone through plenty of changes also. Just like a book,you start at the beginning, and go till the end. Jack has shown a great difference in his personality from the [beginning to the end].

**Provides a concluding section that is related to the information presented:** the focus is restated and the writer leaves us with a personal connection, which provides reflection on the topic.

**Final Thoughts**  
**(Gr 5 Informative: Proficient)**

Overall, this piece of writing shows a solid understanding of a central idea in the book, how a character changes over the course of the story. The focus of the piece is clearly stated at the end of the introduction, and the paper is organized into sections directly related to the focus. The writer uses time as the organizing principle, expressing details about the character at the beginning and then the ending of the book in separate but connected paragraphs to show the main idea of change over time in direct response to the prompt. The writer uses multiple concrete examples from the text to explain the focus in each section that appropriately fit the category of the paragraph. The quotes chosen as proof are embedded in introductory phrases and sentences. Elaboration after each quote explains its relevance and relationship to the main idea.

Transitional phrases used within and across topics make this essay is clear and easy to follow. Precise use of domain specific vocabulary serves to support and maintain the focus of the piece. There are some inconsistencies in the formatting of quotes and citations, but these are expected as fifth graders learn more complex and standardized expectations for referring to texts and outside sources. In all, the writer addresses the focusing question and conveys ideas at a level proficient for 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

**A Word about Language and Conventions**  
**(Gr 5 Informative: Proficient)**

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

**Standard W.5.2**  
**Grade 5**  
**Approaching**

**Jack/Poetry**

Love that dog by Sharon Creech is a book about a

boy named

Jack. Jack's class are assigned to write poems. In the beginning of the book Jack hate's reading and writing poetry, but by the end of the book Jack likes and under stands poetry.

At the begining of the book jack hates poetry. At one point Jack asks his teacher about the snowy woods poem. Jack wrote in his journal "what was up with the snowy woods poem we read today." [p.6] This shows that Jack dosen't understand poetry. Another time Jack says to his teacher "I don't understand the poem about the red wheelbarrow and the white chikens." [p.3] This shows how Jack dosen't like reading poetry. Another way Jacks shows he dosen't like poetry is at one point Jack asks his teacher "Do you promise not to read it out loud?" [p.4] This tells the reader that Jack is very self conscious about writing poetry.

Gradruley Jacks feelings about poetry begin to change when MS.

Strechberry asks Jack if she can put his poem on the board Jack replies "Yes you can put the two blue car poems on the board but only if you don't put my name on them." [p.10] This shows Jack is starting to feel

**Introduces the topic** with the title and author of the text

The author does not provide a **general observation**, but the idea that Jack changes can be implied from the **focus** statement.

**Focus** is clearly stated

**Groups related information logically:** the writer separates ideas into two body paragraphs, one for the details at the beginning of the book and one for at the end.

Attempts to develop the topic using **concrete details, quotations and examples:** however, the relationship between the evidence chosen and the idea that Jack hates poetry is often unclear.

**Links ideas across categories using phrases**

**Uses precise language** (gradually, replies, *self-conscious*)

better about poetry. Jack feels so great about writing poetry he's starting to care how it looks Jack even says "But I think maybe it would look better if there was more space between the lines." [p.18] This is how Jack is telling the reader that he cares more about reading and writing poetry. At the end of the book when Jack goes to type his poem he types at the top "I typed this up myself." [p.68] This shows that Jack wants people knowing how good he is at writing poetry.

Now you see how Jack has changed from the beginning of the book to the end. Jack has gone from hating poetry to loving reading and writing poetry.

**Examines the topic but ideas are not always conveyed ideas clearly:**

each quote is analyzed, and helps develop the focus, but the relationship between the quote and the focus is not always clearly expressed.

**Concluding paragraph is related to the information presented,**

but is weak--a simple restatement of the focus

### **Final Thoughts**

**(Gr 5 Informative: Approaching)**

Overall, this piece is close to proficient for 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The writer shows an understanding of the text, and provides a clear focus statement that addresses the prompt. The piece is well organized and the writer uses precise language. Quotations from the text generally support the focus, but often the writer fails to make these connections clear. For example, most of the evidence used in the second paragraph supports the idea that Jack does not *understand* poetry in the beginning of the story (rather than the idea that he hates poetry). While it is reasonable to assume that Jack does not initially like poetry *because* he doesn't understand it, this connection is not clearly made by the writer. In many places, the reader must infer the relationship between the evidence and the focus, and this weakens the piece. In addition, the introduction and conclusion in this essay are very brief; more context and reflection are expected by grade 5.

This writer would benefit from oral practice in explaining why each piece of evidence was chosen as well as in analyzing model essays that clearly express the relationship between a quote and the point it is meant to prove. Adding clear and relevant elaboration is a common challenge for writers at this age, and students often require explicit instruction in the selection and analysis of details related to a focus, along with opportunities to orally clarify their own thinking before attempting to express ideas in writing.

### **A Word about Language/Conventions**

**(Gr 5 Informative: Approaching)**

Partial Control of Conventions: Although the writer has some control over language and conventions, the student could benefit from instruction in the following skills:

- capitals
- spelling
- subject-verb agreement/person-number agreement
- noticing and editing mistakes
- formatting of essays, quotations and citations

***Standard W.5.2***  
***Grade 5***  
***Beginning***

No piece available

**Standard W.5.2**  
**Grade 5**  
**Exceeds**

### **Love that Poem**

Love That Dog by Sharon Creech, is a wonderful book about a boy named Jack that is told through a journal. His class project is poetry, which, at the beginning of the book Jack can't stand. Jack has changed a lot from the start of the book where he refuses to like poetry or write it to the end of the book where he cherishes and writes poetry freely.

Jack's journal entry's at the beginning of the book show how he loathes all kinds of poetry. When Jack writes these lines in his journal he is doing a unit on poetry in his class. Jack writes "I don't want to, because boys don't write write poetry, girls do."(p.1) You can see that Jack is being very uncooperative about writing poems. Another time in the story Jack has just written a poem about a blue car and his teacher wants to see it. Jack is very reluctant to let his teacher have it because he doesn't highly dislikes it. "Do you promise not to read it out loud?...Do you promise not to put it on the board?...I don't like it."(p.4) This shows that Jack is very nervous about having anyone his poetry. This is one last time you can see that Jack loathes poetry. At this point in the story Jack's teacher Miss Stretchberry has asked Jack's class to write a poem about a pet. Jack writes in his journal, "I don't have a pet so I can't write a poem about one."(p.12) Jack is making up excuses of why he absolutely does

Includes an insightful and creative title that reinforces the main idea of the essay

**Introduces the topic clearly** with creative phrases and details **and provides a general observation** that successfully orients the reader to the text and prompt with context clues

**Focus** is clearly stated and maintained

**Groups related information logically:** the writer separates ideas into two body paragraphs, one for the details at the beginning of the book and one for at the end.

**Uses varied precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform and explain** Jack's feelings about poetry

**Develops the topic with relevant concrete details, quotations and examples** that are skillfully introduced and well-explained in relation to the focus

**Includes formatting** (underlines "can't" and "absolutely" here) **to aid comprehension** of key ideas related to the focus



not want to write a poem. You now know that Jack acts like he allergic to poetry in the beginning of the book.

Although at the start of the book Jack has some major problems with poetry, Jack starts to slowly transition throughout the story. At the end of the book Jack holds poetry close to his heart. At this point of the story Mr. Walter Dean Myers has confirmed that he is coming to visit Jack's class. Jack is very excited that Mr. Walter Dean Myers is coming. In one of his journal entry's he writes, "That was the best, BEST, BEST news ever..."(p.75) This shows that Jack is realizing that poetry can be a happiness in his life that he can enjoy. Another time in the book Jack has written a poem and is very proud of it. Jack is now asking the teacher to put his name on his poems. "Maybe you could put my name on it."(p.38) You can see that Jack is coming over his embarrassment about writing poems and starting to love poetry. After his teacher Miss Stretchberry has read many, many poems to her class, Jack starts to write poems of his own. Some poems he has written are "My Yellow Dog",(p.37) "My Sky" (p.68) and "Love That Dog"(p.86). Jack has realized now that poetry is a good way to express himself and that it is something he can cherish. All through the end of the book you can tell that Jack now takes poetry seriously and has come to his senses about it.

**Conveys information clearly** and creatively: paragraphs are tightly focused through the use of topic and wrap-up sentences that remind the reader of the thesis of the essay.

**Links ideas within and across categories using transitional words and phrases** to connect the examples in the paragraph to each other and to the topic of the section

**Includes formatting** (font sizes for "best" and underlines "asking" here) **to aid comprehension** of key ideas related to the focus

**Examines the topic to convey ideas clearly:** each quote is well chosen and explained deeply in relation to the prompt.

Although at the end of the book Jack loves poetry, he was not always like that. Jack has changed a lot from the beginning of the book when he loathes poetry to the end of the story where he holds it close to him. Jack has realized that poetry is a joy, passion and happiness that he can and does love.

**Provides a concluding section that is related to the information presented:** the focus is restated, the main idea summarized, and a big lesson reflected upon to show deep understanding of the topic.

**Final Thoughts**  
**(Gr 5 Informative: Exceeds)**

Overall, this piece exceeds the standard for proficient. It meets all the criteria for proficient, showing solid understanding of the topic of how a character changes in the course of a book. The writer sticks consistently to that focus, supplying and explaining evidence from the text to elaborate on the thesis. The writer also analyzes the evidence, explaining it in terms of the focus to elaborate on the central idea. All of this thinking is done within a clear structure including varied and precise transitions that makes the writing easy for the reader to follow.

In addition, the essay exceeds the level of proficient for 5<sup>th</sup> grade in several ways. First, the writer includes an awareness of the audience by choosing key points to format for emphasis and voice. By making these ideas visually different, the writer reveals a sophisticated grasp of what a reader will benefit from noticing in trying to follow the logic of the essay. In addition, the evidence supplied is carefully chosen to address the thesis/focus and is developed in unusual depth for independent work at this grade level. The writer uses varied domain-specific and creative vocabulary to make ideas precise and clear, and the essay is a cohesive whole in terms of thinking and language. Writers at this level are ready for increased subtlety (for example, not including “This shows that...” in elaboration and instead trimming sentences to the essential, which requires clarity and precision in word choice) and individuality brought about by working with models that flex the structures and language of expository essays.

**A Word about Language and Conventions**  
**(Gr 5 Informative: Exceeds)**

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors (formatting of citations, self-correction of errors), the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.