

Grade 4 Narrative Writing Standard W.4.3

Grade 4 Narrative

W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- c. Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

The Reading/Thinking/Writing Task

Students were immersed in a multi-week unit learning how to use information from texts to write a narrative. Students first wrote an instructional narrative on a different topic. Together, they listened to texts read aloud and read texts during reading groups to build knowledge. As a class, they discussed the topic and collected relevant information for their class notes. Each student wrote an *instructional* narrative focused on a problem and how the problem was solved.

Students then completed the pieces here as a narrative assessment using the informational text, *Turtle, Turtle, Watch Out* by April Pulley Sayre, and a supplemental slide show that detailed problems sea turtles face. Students were given two to three class periods to independently complete their notes and their first draft pieces. Students worked with the Focusing Task “*Write a narrative about a problem a sea turtle has and how the problem was solved.*”

Note: Some of the pieces in this set did not originally have titles. Each was given a basic title for ease of reference.

Focus of the Writing Task

Write a narrative about a problem a sea turtle has and how the problem was solved.

The Writing Task in the Curriculum

How is it embedded in curriculum/content?

- ★ *Class: 4th grade ELA curriculum*
 - using information from nonfiction texts to write a story
- ★ *Curriculum unit*
 - studied a famous person as a class, wrote a narrative using information from that text, and then completed an independent writing assessment
 - learned to use relevant information from the text to craft a focused narrative
- ★ *Standards*
 - Reading: RI.4.1, RI.4.4 RI.4.9, RI.4.10
 - Writing: W.4.3, W.4.8, W.4.10

How did students build the knowledge they needed?

- ★ *Texts*
 - *Turtle, Turtle, Watch Out* by April Pulley Sayre
 - informational slide presentation on sea turtles (teacher created)
- ★ *Reading and re-reading*
 - teacher read texts aloud
 - students read and re-read texts independently and instructionally
 - students took notes using common graphic organizers

What instructional approaches were used to teach writing?

- ★ *Craft lessons*
 - students were just beginning to be introduced to using information from texts to craft narratives so they worked with story maps, problem/solution charts, and used models of stories from informational texts
- ★ *Writing approaches (independent)*
 - reminded students of the elements that make up a narrative: character, problem, solution
 - after having listened to the text read aloud, discussed the power point, and taken notes, students then independently wrote and proofread a story based on the facts learned

What was the timeframe?

Long (2-4 weeks)

Standard W.4.3
Grade 4
Proficient

Turtle Saved!

One night at a beach in Costa Rica a girl named Maya was having a sleepover with her friend, Emily. Maya heard something weird outside so she went out to find it and that is where the story begins! When she went out she discovered a turtle in a net not moving, she panicked and worried that it was dead. But, when she moved closer it moved a bit and made a sad sound. Maya called Emily “Emily come help me I found a turtle, it is stuck,” she called. Soon Emily came running out of the house. “Oh my,” she said and ran back in without saying what she was going to get or do. Soon Emily came back with scissors. They carefully cut the net and freed the caught turtle. It was free Maya and Emily stood happy as they watched the turtle swam back into the ocean.

Standard W.4.3
Grade 4
Approaching

THE ADVENTURE OF WAFFLES

Waffles the baby sea turtle finally dug out out of the ground after hatching out of his egg. Waffles was underground for 60 days. As waffles wipes the sand out of his eyes, he sees a volcano erupting. Waffles feels like he is going to make it to the sea but then realizes the light is taking him in the wrong direction. Waffles things it is the moon but the lighthouse turns on and he goes in the ocean. Waffles is swimming in the ocean then he sees a shark he swims as fast as he can. Waffles feels scared and then he gets away. Waffles is happy he is safe.

Standard W.4.3
Grade 4
Beginning

Turtle, Turtle, watch out!

Sea turtles go in the ocean and swimming in different regions. They go back when the little sea turtles are 20 years to the same regions. If sea turtles eat plastic they will die because they think it is jellyfish. When turtles get stuck in nets. they got a new fishnets so turtles can get out. when sea turtles first get out of of their eggs they first see the ocean. Sea turtles lay their eggs in the sand then go back in the water. The sea turtles smell selti water. Sea turtles see the ocean. They say go to the ocean. I was thinking that sea turtles should go to the right light. The action sea turtles are moving.

Standard W.4.3
Grade 4
Exceeds

Turtle

Turtle hatched from her egg only two days ago. So did all 120 of her brothers and sisters. This will be Turtle's last day spent diffing out of the sand. Finally, she breaks through. Her first instinct is to crawl towards the light. She finds a light and crawls toward it. Slowly she makes her way to the light. It is coming from the seafood restaurant across the street called Fishies Galore. The clock strikes eleven o'clock. Fishies Galore closes. Yet Turtle is in the middle of the road. A car comes in the distance. Turtle crawls towards the moon over the ocean. She smells the fresh, salty ocean air. The car is approaching Turtle. By a fraction of a second, Turtle escaped the car and got off the road. Then she continued to crawl toward the ocean with all her siblings following her. After that, she crawled into the ocean, and began her ocean life as a sea turtle.

Standard W.4.3
Grade 4
Proficient

Turtle Saved!

One night at a beach in Costa Rica a girl named Maya was having a sleepover with her friend, Emily. Maya heard something weird outside so she went out to find it and that is where the story begins! When she went out she discovered a turtle in a net not moving, she panicked and worried that it was dead. But, when she moved closer it moved a bit and made a sad sound. Maya called Emily “Emily come help me I found a turtle, it is stuck,” she called. Soon Emily came running out of the house. “Oh my,” she said and ran back in without saying what she was going to get or do. Soon Emily came back with scissors. They carefully cut the net and freed the caught turtle. It was free Maya and Emily stood happy as they watched the turtle swam back into the ocean.

Orients the reader by establishing a situation and introduces characters

Uses a variety of transitional words to manage the sequence of events

Uses sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely

Uses dialogue and description to develop experiences and show the response of characters to situations

Organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally

Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events

Final Thoughts
(Gr 4 Narrative: Proficient)

This fourth grade story shows solid understanding of the topic and is clearly connected to the assigned text. This piece begins by introducing the main characters (*Maya and Emily*) and establishing a situation (*a sea turtle is caught in a net*). The story revolves around a central problem (*I found a turtle, it is stuck.*) and organizes a sequence of events that unfolds naturally toward the resolution of freeing the turtle. Description and dialogue help the reader understand how the characters respond to the situation. More precise use of temporal words and phrases would improve the piece, but the writer does use some transitions (*when, soon*) to manage the sequence of events. The conclusion (*watching the turtle swim off into the ocean*) offers a satisfying ending that follows from the narrated events.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 4 Narrative: Proficient)

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

Standard W.4.3
Grade 4
Approaching

THE ADVENTURE OF WAFFLES

Waffles the baby sea turtle finally dug out out of the ground after hatching out of his egg. Waffles was underground for 60 days. As waffles wipes the sand out of his eyes, he sees a volcano erupting. Waffles feels like he is going to make it to the sea but then realizes the light is taking him in the wrong direction. Waffles things it is the moon but the lighthouse turns on and he goes in the ocean. Waffles is swimming in the ocean then he sees a shark he swims as fast as he can. Waffles feels scared and then he gets away. Waffles is happy he is safe.

Establishes a situation and introduces a main character

Uses description to develop experiences and show the response of the main character to the situation

Uses transitional words (*finally, as, but then*) to manage the sequence of events

Uses some concrete words and phrases to convey experiences

Although the sequence of events is, at times, imaginative, the writer does establish an understandable storyline.

Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated events

Final Thoughts
(Gr 4 Narrative: Approaching)

Overall, this fourth grade story shows an understanding of the topic and incorporates an understanding of some of the problems baby sea turtles face. The piece begins by introducing the main character (*Waffles*) and establishing a situation (*Waffles hatches and needs to get to the sea*). The story revolves around a series of problems (*a volcano, artificial light and a shark*). The writer uses concrete language and description (*Waffles wipes the sand out of his eyes*) to develop experiences and includes details about how Waffles responds to each situation (*...he swims as fast as he can/Waffles feels scared...*). The story concludes with Waffles escaping the shark and swimming away.

This writer would benefit from support in revising to establish a focused event sequence that unfolds naturally. Shifting from a series of somewhat unlikely problems to a central problem would clarify the storyline and also offer an opportunity for this writer to apply their skill in using detail and description more effectively.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 4 Narrative: Approaching)

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

Standard W.4.3
Grade 4
Beginning

Turtle, Turtle, watch out!

Sea turtles go in the ocean and swimming in different regions. They go back when the little sea turtles are 20 years to the same regions. If sea turtles eat plastic they will die because they think it is jellyfish. When turtles get stuck in nets. they got a new fishnets so turtles can get out. when sea turtles first get out of of their eggs they first see the ocean. Sea turtles lay their eggs in the sand then go back in the water. The sea turtles smell selti water. Sea turtles see the ocean. They say go to the ocean. I was thinking that sea turtles should go to the right light. The action sea turtles are moving.

The writer begins with a collection of facts about sea turtles, but does not **establish a situation or introduce characters.**

The sequence of events is unclear.

Minimal use of **transitional words**

Attempts to use some **sensory details to convey the turtle's experience**

The writer does not use **narrative techniques like dialogue and descriptions:** the events are listed rather than developed.

Ending is unclear

Final Thoughts
(Gr 4 Narrative: Beginning)

This story shows a good understanding of the topic, but the purpose of the piece is unclear. The first part reads like an informative piece, offering some basic facts about sea turtle migration. Midway through, the piece seems to be telling a story about sea turtles making their way back to the sea, but the situation and characters are not firmly established and the sequence of events is unclear. The writer does attempt to use sensory details to describe the turtle's experience (*The sea turtles smell selti water/Sea turtles see the ocean.*) and seems knowledgeable about sea turtles.

Instruction on how narratives work and the difference in purpose and style between informative and narrative pieces would help this writer learn to use this knowledge to write an effective story. This writer would also benefit from using a narrative planner to support plot and character development. In addition, comparing models of narratives and expository texts might help the writer to better understand key differences in purpose and style between writing types.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 4 Narrative: Beginning)

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

Standard W.4.3
Grade 4
Exceeds

Turtle

Turtle hatched from her egg only two days ago. So did all 120 of her brothers and sisters. This will be Turtle’s last day spent diffing out of the sand. Finally, she breaks through. Her first instinct is to crawl towards the light. She finds a light and crawls toward it. Slowly she makes her way to the light. It is coming from the seafood restaurant across the street called Fishies Galore. The clock strikes eleven o’clock. Fishies Galore closes. Yet Turtle is in the middle of the road. A car comes in the distance. Turtle crawls towards the moon over the ocean. She smells the fresh, salty ocean air. The car is approaching Turtle. By a fraction of a second, Turtle escaped the car and got off the road. Then she continued to crawl toward the ocean with all her siblings following her. After that, she crawled into the ocean, and began her ocean life as a sea turtle.

Orients the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a main character

Effectively **uses descriptions of actions and thoughts to develop experiences** and to **show the response of the main character to situations**

Uses a wide variety of well-chosen transitional words, phrases and sentences to manage the sequence of events

The writer focuses the **event sequence** around a central problem: the “moment in time” organizational structure contributes to the development of the events of the story.

Uses concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and

Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events

Final Thoughts
(Gr 4 Narrative: Exceeds)

This fourth grade story shows solid understanding of the topic and is clearly connected to the assigned text. This strong piece of writing begins by introducing a main character and establishing that Turtle is in a dangerous situation. The story revolves around a central problem (*getting to the ocean*) and describes a sequence of obstacles and Turtle's response to them in a sequence that unfolds naturally. Perhaps the greatest strength in this piece is the effective use of a wide variety of words and phrases to link events and manage time in the sequence. These range from simple (*then, after that*) to sophisticated (*By a fraction of a second...*). The narrative is highly focused and uses description, as well as rich sensory details (*The clock strikes eleven...She smells the fresh, salty ocean air...*), to convey experiences and events precisely. Effective use of narrative techniques, as well as a solid, focused plot, bring this piece above the threshold of proficient.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 4 Narrative: Exceeds)

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