

Grade 7 Narrative Writing Standard W.7.3

Grade 7 Narrative

W.7.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

- a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view, introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

The Reading/Thinking/Writing Task

Students wrote these narrative pieces as part of a unit on grit, which was defined as having perseverance and good character in the face of obstacles. They watched videos and read biographies, blogs, and short articles on real people who exemplify grit. Learners examined the topic in depth, with particular attention to how actions shape the perceptions of others and how this relates to the choices adolescents face as they develop their sense of identity. They wrote in all three genres: an informative essay on why grit is important before this narrative piece, and finally an argumentative letter asserting their choice on the person studied who most embodied grit. For the narrative piece, students were given the Focusing Question “*How does this person show grit in their daily life? Choose a key moment and develop it into a story to illustrate this.*” They were instructed on explode-the-moment narratives and then independently wrote these pieces from their notes, conferring with peers but not a teacher between drafts.

Focus of the Writing Task

How does this person show grit in their daily life? Choose a key moment and develop it into a story to illustrate this.

The Writing Task in the Curriculum

How is it embedded in curriculum/content?

- ★ *Class: 7th grade ELA curriculum*
 - focus on individual identity and core values for success
- ★ *Curriculum unit*
 - students studied multiple biographies both independently and instructionally, processing these in relation to informative readings on characteristics associated with the core values of the school
 - emphasis on illustrating big ideas with examples that “show not tell” and deeply relate to the larger concept
 - students practiced the choices involved in effective narrative writing, such as selecting the moments, the actions, and the elements of dialogue and description
- ★ *Standards*
 - Reading: RI.7.1, RI.7.3, RI.7.9, RI.7.10
 - Writing: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.8, W.7.10

How did students build the knowledge they needed?

- ★ *Texts*
 - excerpts from *Life Without Limits* by Nick Vujicic
 - multiple short biographies, TED Talks, videos, poems, and informative readings on habits of mind for success and happiness
- ★ *Reading and re-reading*
 - teacher read some texts aloud while students read along in their heads
 - students read and re-read texts independently
 - students took notes on texts in small groups and independently using common graphic organizers

What instructional approaches were used to teach writing?

- ★ *Craft lessons*
 - students worked with a model of an effective short narrative, analyzing it for narrative elements and techniques
- ★ *Writing approaches*
 - students demonstrated understanding of “grit” in informative writing and used this to guide choosing a narrative subject for illustrating that concept further
 - once they had chosen a subject and a key moment, they orally told the story to a partner
 - they wrote and peer conferred, then proofread independently

What was the timeframe?

Long (4 weeks)

Standard W.7.3
Grade 7
Proficient

A Day in the My Little Pony Shoes of Lizzie Velásquez

“Bee-dee-beep, bee-dee-beep! Bee-dee-beep, bee-dee-beep!” I sat up in my bed, yawning, I put my slightly to large, My Little Pony slippers on. Trying to ignore the fact that I was wearing slippers that a six year old might want, I walked out into my kitchen to pour myself some cereal. As I was pouring the milk into my bowl, I started thinking about what it would be like to eat normal amounts of food, to wear normal sized clothes, to *be* normal, but my thoughts were soon interrupted by a cold presence seeping down my leg, I had over filled the bowl! The countertop was crusted in milk and on the floor there was a large puddle with cereal taking a swim in it.

After I had cleaned that disgusting, milky, crusty mess up, I sat down at my table, plopped down my bowl of the remaining Captain Crunch, sat back, and sighed. This was certainly not the best morning, and I kept cursing myself for setting my alarm clock on a Saturday. I decided to go down to the town café and get a box of glazed jelly filled donuts, maybe I’d go do my grocery shopping afterwards. As I walked down the sidewalk to get to my car, I saw a little boy riding his tricycle down the street, I turned to say good morning, but then thought better of it. I didn’t want to scare the little kid.

I hopped into my car and turned on the radio. They were saying something about eating habits and how we shouldn’t eat things like doughnuts all the time. ***I guess I’m cheating the system.*** I thought with a smirk. ***I’m going to get jelly filled doughnuts, with glaze right now.*** I started thinking about how lucky I was that I could eat practically anything I wanted and not gain any unwanted weight.

I walked through the café door, it was surprisingly busy. ***Oh great,*** I thought ***more people get to see my all so beautiful face. At least I can only see the people staring at me from my left side.*** As I sped walked up to the ordering counter, I could feel all heads turn in my direction. I was expecting something to happen, but I didn’t know what yet. I had almost reached the ordering counter when I heard what I’d been waiting for.

“Mama, that lady looks weird.”

“Just ignore her and eat your cookie dear.” the small child’s mother said.

I speed walked the rest of the way up to the ordering counter and demanded an iced coffee with a dozen, glazed, jelly filled doughnuts. I stormed out of the café and drove home with the emotions of annoyance and sadness glued to my face. I wasn't going grocery shopping, I wasn't in the mood. I just wanted to go home, eat my doughnuts, drink my coffee, and go back to sleep. My self-esteem was scarily low and I wanted to curl up and sob.

But as soon as I got inside, I saw a group of girl scouts walking around the neighborhood. I grunted and whined, wishing they would go away, hoping they would skip my house. I have always hated answering the doorbell, and today was no exception. "Ding-dong-buzz! Ding-dong-buzz!" My doorbell chimed. I cautiously opened the door and heard the first girl in line suck in her breath.

"O... M... G..." she whispered to herself, looking breathless.

"What? What is it Meggie?" Her companions asked curiously.

"Ya Megs, wazzup? You only get quiet like that when your unbelievably excited."

The girl in the front, apparently named Meggie, started jumping up and down, quietly screaming and muttering to herself. Then she took a deep breath and began to speak.

"Y-Y-You're... L-L-Lizzie... V-V-Velásquez! Oh. My. Gosh. You're her! You really are! You're Lizzie! You're Lizzie! You're Lizzie!" she screamed

"Shhhh! Yes, I am, but quiet down! I bet the whole neighborhood can hear ya." I exclaimed.

The girl took another quick, short breaths and said

"Can I ask you something?"

"Sure" I said "Shoot"

"Okay," she said "What's... what's... what's the name of... of... your condition?"

"Oh," I said "That's easy, it's Marfanoid-projeroid-lipodystrophy."

"Huh zu wa wa?" she asked

"Marfanoid-projeroid-lipodystrophy."

"Marfod-progoid-lipyrophy?"

"Close enough." I said as we both burst out laughing.

"Um, Megs, we're gonna go sell more cookies, you can, uh, stay here if you want."

The girl looked just about ready to leave, but I didn't want her to go quite yet.

"Hey, um..." I started

"You can call me Meggie, or Megan, or Megs, or Meg" she said

“Um, I’ll go with Megan.” I said “So, Megan, would you like to come inside? I have the feeling that you want to know more about me, and you look like you’re about to burst!”

“Ya! Totally!” she exclaimed “It would literally be a dream come true!”

Megan wanted to know a great deal about me. It seemed to me that she was my number one fan. We spent most of the rest of the night talking about me until her mother called her and asked where she was. When her mother came to get her I was introduced and her mother and I became great friends. I have many friends, and even if they can’t fit into my shoes, they understand what it’s like.

Standard W.7.3
Grade 7
Approaching

A Day in the Life of Lizzie

The alarm clock interrupted my sleep. I had a bad dream where nobody wanted to be my friend. I sat up, and remembered something very important: it's my first day of kindergarten. I sprinted down stairs and found a nice big bowl of *Fruit Loops* sitting on the table. "I can't wait to go to school,!" I exclaimed as I ate my food. I packed my lunch and backpack and sprinted to the door.

"Have a good day at school," Mom and Dad said in unison. They smiled at me, and yet, there was something in their eyes, something they were trying to hide from me: fear of what would happen to me at school. But at the time, I didn't notice it. I hugged my parents and climbed onto the bus. As I walked down the aisle, I noticed everyone was staring at me. I sat next to a random girl. The girl, who obviously felt uncomfortable, moved over to avoid contact. I thought, *She's looking at me like a repulsive beast. No one's going to like me.* Shaking off my negativity, I thought about my school.

As I walked through the endless hallways, I realized I could never find my classroom without help. I noticed a kid who looked like he knew what he was doing and asked him where my teacher, Mrs. Finndingerschnaken's classroom was. When he looked at me, his eyes grew wide and his face turned pale. I was thoroughly confused. Why was everybody looking at me like that? Since I didn't know where my classroom was, I turned out being 10 minutes late. As I walked in, everyone looked at me just like the kid in the hallway did. Mrs. Finndingerschnaken, who was in the middle of teaching the other kids the ABC's, looked up and saw me. She masked her surprised face almost immediately, but I had already seen it. I didn't know anyone so I tried talking to people. Just like the kid in the hallway, they ignored me. Looking for a friend but with no luck, I started to feel lonely. And it kept getting worse. As I walked towards one kid, I saw right away that he looked scared. "Can I be your friend?" I asked.

"Aaaahhhh!!!!" he screamed. "A monster!!!!!" I looked back at Mrs. Finndingerschnaken, who was running around the room, helping the other kids with their math. I felt a sharp pain in my stomach. No one wanted me as their friend. I spent the rest of the day in the corner, silently playing by myself, wishing for a friend.

When I got home, I ran right into my parents arms. “Why does nobody like me?” I cried. “What is wrong with me?”

Dad said, “There is nothing wrong with you honey.”

“The only thing that makes you different is how you look. But that doesn’t matter. The only thing that matters is who you are, and who you are going to be,” said Mom.

From that day forward, I didn’t care how others looked at me. I knew that for my whole life there would be people who looked at me, scared. I knew I would be picked on just because I was different. But I also knew that there are people out there who are nice, and don’t judge people for their looks. There are still good people out there. I just need to find them.

Standard W.7.3
Grade 7
Beginning

Amazing Hair

As a girl with Marfan-Progeroid-Lipodystrophy (MPL) I find it very hard to shop for clothes. I always have to either shop in the kids section or get things custom made. Of course this seems like it would be very difficult and it is but there is some positives for example Stuff in the kids section costs less. One of the worst things about shopping in the kids section is is I can never find stuff that fits my age it all has some random pattern or a kids show character. With getting stuff custom made it usually costs more but is much more fitting to my age. Sometimes people ask me questions like

“Why are you shopping in the kids section?”

Then I reply with a “I’m shopping for my kids.”and then it gets super Awkward it’s very annoying. One time when i saw a shirt, which I thought i liked turned out to have Dora on it. While looking around the store, I finally found something i liked and walking to the changing room, i found something else. I was finally getting lucky i tried them on and i loved them so i bought them. I was so excited. Although this condition has a few cons there is some pros to it like getting clothes for cheaper in the kids section. My favorite thing about MPL is I can eat whatever i want whenever i want it’s AMAZING. Once when i was in college I was eating twinkies late at night and my roommate heard me.

She yelled “I Can hear you eating those twinkies!”

I laughed and Yelled “I need to!” We laugh about ever since. I have to every so often to stay healthy but i can eat whatever i want. The biggest con of having MPL is getting judged by almost everyone I walk past. I also got bullied a lot in school. Although it did get me down i persevered through it and now i'm a happy successful woman.

Im making this story to let you know to keep going, Persevere, Show resilience.
Persevere through those hard times where people judge you and make fun of you don't let them
feel accomplished by letting them hurt you. Show resilience by bouncing back after they stare
maybe flip your amazing hair.

Standard W.7.3
Grade 7
Exceeds

Nothing would ever happen in this world if no one tried.

Flick, flick, flick. Over and over again I've tried this same maneuver and never once in my 12 years of disabled life, have I succeeded. I hadn't even been able to walk until I was six. Right now I'm thinking about the day I took my first step. I already knew how to talk and I was starting to learn to read. You could say that this worked as an advantage for me, having no arms or legs, but really only an optimist would say that. Luckily that is one of my main qualities, optimism. As I think of the feeling of success that I had when I accomplished my first step that day, I am replenished with hope, optimism, and courage. "I'm ready." I say to my mom, who has been there to pick me up every time I've fallen down. We have been going at this for over an hour now and I can tell my mom is tired of it but I decided to look at the bright side that she is still here to hand me the phone.

"Here you go sweetie"

There it is, our landline phone, inches from my foot, just another obstacle I choose to face. I look at its shiny edge. The phone is shiny because it's new. My parents had to purchase a new one after I broke the last one attempting this same thing, and three times before that. There I stand or as it would look from a distance, sit. I contemplate every detail of the phone focusing my full willpower on its shape. It bends slightly, just enough for me to get my "foot" under it. The front is curved inward and there are buttons and a screen there. The back is shiny, clean, and black. So clean I can see my reflection in it. There he is, the man in the mirror. As I look straight into my own eyes, I see the hardened mixture of grit and confidence set in place like concrete on my face. I look at mom. She is doing the tiny smile and slightly furrowed brow face that she does when she thinks I'm not looking. As soon as I look she immediately changes to a full smile but not fast enough. That pushes me to the edge. After an hour my patience is very low. "Why mom? Why do you always have to feel so sorry for me?! I know you think I'll never do this and you're just sitting here and smiling to make me feel better! Well, I'm done with everybody feeling sorry for me. I'm gonna prove them wrong. Everyone, the doctors, you, dad, the kids at school, everyone!" It sounds stupid as I say it but it's the only way I feel like I can get my emotions across right now.

“Honey you know I believe...”

“Just shut up and let me concentrate!”

“Okay”

I try to focus on the phone but I’ve lost it. Everything is muddled by my raw anger, but somewhere in the back of my mind I know anger never helps, and that I will just end up feeling sad later. Still, much more clear in my mind is the fact that I’m going to feel embarrassed if I don’t manage to pull this off. I scoot over to the phone, slide my foot under it like I’ve done many times before, try to concentrate and breath, then flick. With my anger focused on the flick, I overshoot it and I know it right away. I know it’s coming up too fast to wedge in between my shoulder and cheek but I try it anyway. I miss and tip over with the momentum. There I go, off the table. I brace for impact even though I know my mom is going to catch me, I guess it’s just a reflex. I feel myself once again in my mom’s arms. I’m such an idiot. I want to tell her how thankful I feel, but anger and embarrassment are very strong emotions so I’m clouded by them. “Why didn’t you just let me fall?! I have no arms or legs, not even one, so I have no choice over whether I let people down or even myself down, next time, just let me fall.”

“I think we should be done for today.”

“Yeah, I agree.”

My mom leaves the room after setting me down on my bed. It’s times like these where I wish I had arms or legs more than ever. Just so that I could let out my anger on something. I start to feel bad about what I said to my mom but something else keeps nagging me. Could I have done the phone thing before I lost my concentration? Although not catching the phone could have just been because I have never done it before, I truly believe that it was because of my emotion.

Sunday morning. The early morning sun shines brightly through my window. I call for my mom to come and help me get dressed. I hear her bare feet on the stairs as I wait in silence, hoping she won’t bring up last night.

“Good morning, Nick.”

“Hey, mom.”

“How did you sleep?”

She looks tired I can tell she isn’t going to bring up last night because if my mom wants to talk about something, she usually puts it out in the open right off the bat.

“Pretty good thanks.”

I get changed, eat breakfast, fix my hair, and get into the car to go to church. I sit in my car seat wondering about the sermon today. Most days I look forward to church. No one at the church has ever judged me or made fun of me. We sit through the hymns, prayers, and condolences while the sun shines through the stained windows behind our pastor. Finally, after we sing “amazing grace”, It’s time for the sermon. Pastor Matthew stands at the podium and the first words out of his mouth are;

“Are you really trying your hardest?”

He goes on to talk about how you are never trying your absolute hardest because once you accomplish something, there is always something more.

When we arrive back home I have a new spirit and I am ready to try the phone again. My mom and I talk about last night and I apologize for my actions. She says that she will help me again as long as I know she believes completely in me.

Finally, I stand on the table with the phone in front of me. I take a few tries and fail but I’m not discouraged, in fact, I’m only warming up. A few more close ones and I think to myself, am I trying my hardest? I take a moment to breathe and concentrate fully on the phone. I’m contemplating its every detail with only one thought in my mind; I can do it. I scoot over to the phone never taking my eyes off it. Coming to a stop inches away from it my brain flits for a second and I see all my attempts leading up to this moment and something clicks, I have no doubt I will do it this time. I slide my foot under the phone as carefully and skillfully as possible, moving my toes slightly to feel every detail of the underside of the phone. The cold, rubber shelled buttons, the metal case, and the same feeling I’ve gotten every time I’ve attempted this, apprehension, but this time much stronger. Flick. The phone goes up and time slows down. The phone is spinning very slightly, a perfect flick. It seems like an eternity that it’s in the air. The phone comes to the climax of the toss and then starts to come down. I adjust my shoulder slightly and, whack, the phone comes down on my shoulder and a millisecond later my cheek on top of that wedging it in place. Everything is silent for a few seconds and then;

“Lets goooooo!” I scream as my mom hugs me.

“Good job sweetie, I knew you could do it.”

“You know me mom, I’m Nick Vujicic, I can do anything.”

Standard W.7.3
Grade 7
Proficient

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After I had cleaned that disgusting, milky, crusty mess up, I sat down at my table, plopped down my bowl of the remaining Captain Crunch, sat back, and sighed. This was certainly not the best morning, and I kept cursing myself for setting my alarm clock on a Saturday. I decided to go down to the town café and get a box of glazed jelly filled donuts, maybe I’d go do my grocery shopping afterwards. As I walked down the sidewalk to get to my car, I saw a little boy riding his tricycle down the street, I turned to say good morning, but then thought better of it. I didn’t want to scare the little kid.

I hopped into my car and turned on the radio. They were saying something about eating habits and how we shouldn’t eat things like doughnuts all the time. *I guess I’m cheating the system.* I thought with a smirk. *I’m going to get jelly filled doughnuts, with glaze right now.* I started thinking about how lucky I was that I could eat practically anything I wanted and not gain any unwanted weight.

I walked through the café door, it was surprisingly busy. *Oh great,* I thought *more people get to see my all so beautiful face. At least I can*

Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context and introduces a narrator and characters: the title helps establish Lizzie Velasquez as the central narrator. She does not eat normal food or wear normal-sized clothes. This coping in the world for Lizzie becomes the focus of the narrative.

Uses narrative technique of description to develop events

Event sequence to follow unfolds naturally and logically

Uses transitional phrase to convey sequence: “as I walked down the sidewalk, I saw a little boy” keeps the focus on the narrator’s experience of the events and her medical condition.

Uses the narrative technique of interior dialogue to develop events and characters and controls pacing by slowing down the action: reflection keeps the focus on narrator’s experience of events/knowing how people will react to seeing her.

only see the people staring at me from my left side. As I sped walked up to the ordering counter, I could feel all heads turn in my direction. I was expecting something to happen, but I didn't know what yet. I had almost reached the ordering counter when I heard what I'd been waiting for.

"Mama, that lady looks weird."

"Just ignore her and eat your cookie dear." the small child's mother said.

I speed walked the rest of the way up to the ordering counter and demanded an iced coffee with a dozen, glazed, jelly filled doughnuts. I stormed out of the café and drove home with the emotions of annoyance and sadness glued to my face. I wasn't going grocery shopping, I wasn't in the mood. I just wanted to go home, eat my doughnuts, drink my coffee, and go back to sleep. My self-esteem was scarily low and I wanted to curl up and sob.

But as soon as I got inside, I saw a group of girl scouts walking around the neighborhood. I grunted and whined, wishing they would go away, hoping they would skip my house. I have always hated answering the doorbell, and today was no exception. "Ding-dong-buzz! Ding-dong-buzz!" My doorbell chimed. I cautiously opened the door and heard the first girl in line suck in her breath.

"O... M... G..." she whispered to herself, looking breathless.

"What? What is it Meggie?" Her companions asked curiously.

"Ya Megs, wazzup? You only get quiet like that when your unbelievably excited."

The girl in the front, apparently named Meggie, started jumping up and down, quietly screaming and muttering to herself. Then she took a deep breath and began to speak.

"Y-Y-You're... L-L-Lizzie... V-V-Velásquez! Oh. My. Gosh. You're her! You really are! You're Lizzie! You're Lizzie! You're Lizzie!" she screamed

"Shhhh! Yes, I am, but quiet down! I bet the whole neighborhood can hear ya." I exclaimed.

Uses the narrative technique of dialogue to develop events and characters: keeps the focus on the narrator's experience of how people actually do react to seeing her.

Controls **pacing** by slowing down the action to focus on this particular encounter with a new character, which will be significant

Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, sensory language and dialogue to convey events and develop characters, specifically Lizzie's medical condition

The girl took another quick, short breaths and said

“Can I ask you something?”

“Sure” I said “Shoot”

“Okay,” she said “What’s... what’s... what’s the name of... of... your condition?”

“Oh,” I said “That’s easy, it’s Marfanoid-progeroid-lipodystrophy.”

“Huh zu wa wa?” she asked

“Marfanoid-progeroid-lipodystrophy.”

“Marfod-progoid-lipyrophy?”

“Close enough.” I said as we both burst out laughing.

“Um, Megs, we’re gonna go sell more cookies, you can, uh, stay here if you want.”

The girl looked just about ready to leave, but I didn’t want her to go quite yet.

“Hey, um...” I started

“You can call me Meggie, or Megan, or Megs, or Meg” she said

“Um, I’ll go with Megan.” I said “So, Megan, would you like to come inside? I have the feeling that you want to know more about me, and you look like you’re about to burst!”

“Ya! Totally!” she exclaimed “It would literally be a dream come true!”

Megan wanted to know a great deal about me. It seemed to me that she was my number one fan. We spent most of the rest of the night talking about me until her mother called her and asked where she was. When her mother came to get her I was introduced and her mother and I became great friends. I have many friends, and even if they can’t fit into my shoes, they understand what it’s like.

Uses dialogue to convey events and develop characters, specifically a different reaction from people than what Lizzie is used to

Provides a conclusion which follows from and then reflects on the events and focus/conflict of the narrative, the challenge of living with Lizzie’s medical condition

Final Thoughts
(Gr 7 Narrative: Proficient)

This proficient seventh grade narrative shows an understanding of the topic (*living with a handicapping condition in a way that shows perseverance and character*). Written from the perspective of Lizzie Velasquez (a real person), the piece is focused around the conflict of the struggles involved in ordinary living. The narrative begins by introducing the narrator and establishing a situation (*Lizzie is unusually small for her age*). The writer uses descriptive language and reflection (*I didn't want to scare the kid*) to develop events and Lizzie's perspective on her experience. Events unfold naturally and logically, and the writer uses interior dialogue (*oh great, more people get to see my beautiful face*) to develop the action and Lizzie's character. Well-controlled pacing slows down the action in the dialogue between Lizzie and the girl selling cookies. A variety of transitional words, phrases and clauses (*as soon as I got inside, then she took a deep breath and began to speak*) to smoothly manage the sequence and to signal shifts in time frame. The conclusion follows naturally from earlier events and reflects on their importance in resolving Lizzie's coping with her condition.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 7 Narrative: Proficient)

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

Standard W.7.3
Grade 7
Approaching

A Day in the Life of Lizzie

The alarm clock interrupted my sleep. I had a bad dream where nobody wanted to be my friend. I sat up, and remembered something very important: it's my first day of kindergarten. I sprinted down stairs and found a nice big bowl of *Fruit Loops* sitting on the table. "I can't wait to go to school,!" I exclaimed as I ate my food. I packed my lunch and backpack and sprinted to the door.

"Have a good day at school," Mom and Dad said in unison. They smiled at me, and yet, there was something in their eyes, something they were trying to hide from me: fear of what would happen to me at school. But at the time, I didn't notice it. I hugged my parents and climbed onto the bus. As I walked down the aisle, I noticed everyone was staring at me. I sat next to a random girl. The girl, who obviously felt uncomfortable, moved over to avoid contact. I thought, *She's looking at me like a repulsive beast. No one's going to like me.* Shaking off my negativity, I thought about my school.

As I walked through the endless hallways, I realized I could never find my classroom without help. I noticed a kid who looked like he knew what he was doing and asked him where my teacher, Mrs.

Finndingerschnaken's classroom was. When he looked at me, his eyes grew wide and his face turned pale. I was thoroughly confused. Why was everybody looking at me like that? Since I didn't know where my classroom was, I turned out being 10 minutes late. As I walked in, everyone looked at me just like the kid in the hallway did. Mrs.

Finndingerschnaken, who was in the middle of teaching the other kids the ABC's, looked up and saw me. She masked her surprised face almost immediately, but I had already seen it. I didn't know anyone so I tried talking to people. Just like the kid in the hallway, they ignored me.

Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context and introduces a narrator and characters: the title helps establish Lizzie Velasquez as the young central narrator. She is facing the conflict, on the first day of kindergarten, of going to school with a handicapping condition. Her parents are trying to hide their fear, establishing something may go wrong for Lizzie.

Uses the narrative technique of interior dialogue to develop events and characters: reflection keeps the focus on the narrator's experience of events/seeing how people react to seeing her.

The sequence of events seems off here. The narrator's interior dialogue is confusing: here she seems confused, even though she has already experience a negative reaction.

Looking for a friend but with no luck, I started to feel lonely. And it kept getting worse. As I walked towards one kid, I saw right away that he looked looked scared. “Can I be your friend?” I asked.

“Aaaahhhh!!!!” he screamed. “A monster!!!!” I looked back at Mrs. Finndingerschnaken, who was running around the room, helping the other kids with their math. I felt a sharp pain in my stomach. No one wanted me as their friend. I spent the rest of the day in the corner, silently playing by myself, wishing for a friend.

When I got home, I ran right into my parents arms. “Why does nobody like me?” I cried. “What is wrong with me?”

Dad said, “There is nothing wrong with you honey.”

“The only thing that makes you different is how you look. But that doesn’t matter. The only thing that matters is who you are, and who you are going to be,” said Mom.

From that day forward, I didn’t care how others looked at me. I knew that for my whole life there would be people who looked at me, scared. I knew I would be picked on just because I was different. But I also knew that there are people out there who are nice, and don’t judge people for their looks. There are still good people out there. I just need to find them.

Uses transitional phrase to convey sequence and shifts in time frame: ““looking for a friend, I started to feel lonely”; “when I got home”

The writer attempts **to control pacing**, but this is a big jump for a **conclusion**. It could benefit from more dialogue and character reflection to arrive at this resolution.

Final Thoughts
(Gr 7 Narrative: Approaching)

This seventh grade narrative is approaching being proficient. It does show an understanding of the topic (*living with a handicapping condition in a way that shows perseverance and character*). Written from the perspective of Lizzie Velasquez (a real person), the piece is focused around the conflict of going to school for the first time. The narrative begins by introducing the narrator and establishing a situation (*Lizzie is about to go to school, her parents seem worried*). The writer uses some descriptive language and interior dialogue (*repulsive beast, nobody is going to like me*) to develop events and Lizzie's perspective on her experience. However, the sequence of events is a bit confusing (*Lizzie encounters a negative response, then is confused*). A variety of transitional words, phrases and clauses (*I started to feel lonely; when I got home*) are used to smoothly manage the sequence and to signal shifts in time frame. The conclusion does follow naturally from earlier events, but seems like a big jump. The writer could benefit from including some additional dialogue between Lizzie and her parents and reflection from Lizzie to develop this insight.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 7 Narrative: Approaching)

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

Standard W.7.3
Grade 7
Beginning

Amazing Hair

As a girl with Marfan-Progeroid-Lipodystrophy (MPL) I find it very hard to shop for clothes. I always have to either shop in the kids section or get things custom made. Of course this seems like it would be very difficult and it is but there is some positives for example Stuff in the kids section costs less. One of the worst things about shopping in the kids section is is I can never find stuff that fits my age it all has some random pattern or a kids show character. With getting stuff custom made it usually costs more but is much more fitting to my age. Sometimes people ask me questions like

The writer attempts to **engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introduces a narrator and characters.** However, this is not dramatizing the information as a narrative; rather, it reads more like informative writing.

“Why are you shopping in the kids section?”

Then I reply with a “I’m shopping for my kids.”and then it gets super Awkward it’s very annoying. One time when i saw a shirt, which I thought i liked turned out to have Dora on it. While looking around the store, I finally found something i liked and walking to the changing room, i found something else. I was finally getting lucky i tried them on and i loved them so i bought them. I was so excited. Although this condition has a few cons there is some pros to it like getting clothes for cheaper in the kids section. My favorite thing about MPL is I can eat whatever i want whenever i want it’s AMAZING. Once when i was in college I was eating twinkies late at night and my roommate heard me.

The writer attempts to **use dialogue and description to develop events.** However, most of the writing still reads like informative writing.

She yelled “I Can hear you eating those twinkies!”

I laughed and Yelled “I need to!” We laugh about ever since. I have to every so often to stay healthy but i can eat whatever i want. The

There is no real **sequence of events** here in the narrative, again because it is largely an informative focus and structure. It lacks narrative coherence.

Uses very few **transitional phrases to convey sequence and shifts in time frame**

biggest con of having MPL is getting judged by almost everyone I walk past. I also got bullied a lot in school. Although it did get me down i persevered through it and now i'm a happy successful woman.

Im making this story to let you know to keep going, Persevere, Show resilience. Persevere through those hard times where people judge you and make fun of you don't let them feel accomplished by letting them hurt you. Show resilience by bouncing back after they stare maybe flip your amazing hair.

The writer attempts a **conclusion** by connecting/reflecting on a lesson related to the writing.

Final Thoughts (Gr 7 Narrative: Beginning)

This seventh grade narrative is not yet proficient. It does show a very basic understanding of the topic (*facing the handicapping condition of MPL with resilience*). However, the writer is mostly using informative writing techniques instead of narrative writing elements. Brief events are interspersed with information. The narrative does use some transitional words, phrases and clauses (*although this condition has a few cons*) to manage the sequence. In the conclusion, the writer attempts to reflect on the big idea of the piece.

The piece would benefit from a conference helping the writer to identify one or two key places in the piece that could be told more as a narrative and less like a report. Oral telling of those key spots as a story would be helpful before writing.

A Word About Language and Conventions (Gr 7 Narrative: Beginning)

Minimal Control of Conventions: The writer shows little control over language and conventions. The lack of control of conventions and language interferes with the reader's understanding of the piece.

Standard W.7.3
Grade 7
Exceeds

Nothing would ever happen in this world if no one tried.

Flick, flick, flick. Over and over again I've tried this same maneuver and never once in my 12 years of disabled life, have I succeeded. I hadn't even been able to walk until I was six. Right now I'm thinking about the day I took my first step. I already knew how to talk and I was starting to learn to read. You could say that this worked as an advantage for me, having no arms or legs, but really only an optimist would say that. Luckily that is one of my main qualities, optimism. As I think of the feeling of success that I had when I accomplished my first step that day, I am replenished with hope, optimism, and courage. "I'm ready." I say to my mom, who has been there to pick me up every time I've fallen down. We have been going at this for over an hour now and I can tell my mom is tired of it but I decided to look at the bright side that she is still here to hand me the phone.

"Here you go sweetie"

There it is, our landline phone, inches from my foot, just another obstacle I choose to face. I look at its shiny edge. The phone is shiny because it's new. My parents had to purchase a new one after I broke the last one attempting this same thing, and three times before that. There I stand or as it would look from a distance, sit. I contemplate every detail of the phone focusing my full willpower on its shape. It bends slightly, just enough for me to get my "foot" under it. The front is curved inward and there are buttons and a screen there. The back is shiny, clean, and black. So clean I can see my reflection in it. There he is, the man in the mirror. As I look straight into my own eyes, I see the hardened mixture of grit and confidence set in place like concrete on my face. I look at mom. She is doing the tiny smile and slightly furrowed brow face that she does when she thinks I'm not looking. As soon as I look she immediately changes to

Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context and introduces a narrator and characters: The narrator shows insightful understanding into the deep complexities of remaining optimistic with a seriously handicapping condition of no arms or legs. Trying to use a phone is the focus/major conflict of the narrative.

Event sequence unfolds naturally and logically

Uses exceptionally precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey events and develop characters: the writer uses reflection to keep the focus on narrator's experience of trying to use the phone.

a full smile but not fast enough. That pushes me to the edge. After an hour my patience is very low. “Why mom? Why do you always have to feel so sorry for me?! I know you think I’ll never do this and you’re just sitting here and smiling to make me feel better! Well, I’m done with everybody feeling sorry for me. I’m gonna prove them wrong. Everyone, the doctors, you, dad, the kids at school, everyone!” It sounds stupid as I say it but it's the only way I feel like I can get my emotions across right now.

“Honey you know I believe...”

“Just shut up and let me concentrate!”

“Okay”

I try to focus on the phone but I’ve lost it. Everything is muddled by my raw anger, but somewhere in the back of my mind I know anger never helps, and that I will just end up feeling sad later. Still, much more clear in my mind is the fact that I’m going to feel embarrassed if I don’t manage to pull this off. I scoot over to the phone, slide my foot under it like I’ve done many times before, try to concentrate and breath, then flick. With my anger focused on the flick, I overshoot it and I know it right away. I know it’s coming up too fast to wedge in between my shoulder and cheek but I try it anyway. I miss and tip over with the momentum. There I go, off the table. I brace for impact even though I know my mom is going to catch me, I guess it’s just a reflex. I feel myself once again in my mom’s arms. I’m such an idiot. I want to tell her how thankful I feel, but anger and embarrassment are very strong emotions so I’m clouded by them. “Why didn’t you just let me fall?! I have no arms or legs, not even one, so I have no choice over whether I let people down or even myself down, next time, just let me fall.”

“I think we should be done for today.”

“Yeah, I agree.”

My mom leaves the room after setting me down on my bed. It’s times like these where I wish I had arms or legs more than ever. Just so that I could let out my anger on something. I start to feel bad about what I said

Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, dialogue and sensory language to develop the character of the mother, while still using reflection to keep the focus on the narrator’s own experience

Precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language control **pacing** to slow down events: the writer also uses reflection to keep the focus on the narrator’s experience.

to my mom but something else keeps nagging me. Could I have done the phone thing before I lost my concentration? Although not catching the phone could have just been because I have never done it before, I truly believe that it was because of my emotion.

Sunday morning. The early morning sun shines brightly through my window. I call for my mom to come and help me get dressed. I hear her bare feet on the stairs as I wait in silence, hoping she won't bring up last night.

“Good morning, Nick.”

“Hey, mom.”

“How did you sleep?”

She looks tired I can tell she isn't going to bring up last night because if my mom wants to talk about something, she usually puts it out in the open right off the bat.

“Pretty good thanks.”

I get changed, eat breakfast, fix my hair, and get into the car to go to church. I sit in my car seat wondering about the sermon today. Most days I look forward to church. No one at the church has ever judged me or made fun of me. We sit through the hymns, prayers, and condolences while the sun shines through the stained windows behind our pastor. Finally, after we sing “amazing grace”, It's time for the sermon. Pastor Matthew stands at the podium and the first words out of his mouth are;

“Are you really trying your hardest?”

He goes on to talk about how you are never trying your absolute hardest because once you accomplish something, there is always something more.

When we arrive back home I have a new spirit and I am ready to try the phone again. My mom and I talk about last night and I apologize for my actions. She says that she will help me again as long as I know she believes completely in me.

Uses transitional clause to convey sequence and control **pacing** and keep focus on narrator's experience

Turning point of the plot: going to church and listening to the sermon is important to Nick, helps create his resilience

Uses transitional clause to convey sequence and control **pacing** and keep focus on narrator's experience and resilience

Finally, I stand on the table with the phone in front of me. I take a few tries and fail but I'm not discouraged, in fact, I'm only warming up. A few more close ones and I think to myself, am I trying my hardest? I take a moment to breathe and concentrate fully on the phone. I'm contemplating its every detail with only one thought in my mind; I can do it. I scoot over to the phone never taking my eyes off it. Coming to a stop inches away from it my brain flits for a second and I see all my attempts leading up to this moment and something clicks, I have no doubt I will do it this time. I slide my foot under the phone as carefully and skillfully as possible, moving my toes slightly to feel every detail of the underside of the phone. The cold, rubber shelled buttons, the metal case, and the same feeling I've gotten every time I've attempted this, apprehension, but this time much stronger. Flick. The phone goes up and time slows down. The phone is spinning very slightly, a perfect flick. It seems like an eternity that it's in the air. The phone comes to the climax of the toss and then starts to come down. I adjust my shoulder slightly and, whack, the phone comes down on my shoulder and a millisecond later my cheek on top of that wedging it in place. Everything is silent for a few seconds and then;

“Lets goooooo!” I scream as my mom hugs me.

“Good job sweetie, I knew you could do it.”

“You know me mom, I'm Nick Vujicic, I can do anything.”

Provides a conclusion which follows from and then reflects very briefly on **the events** and focus of **the narrative**, the determined attempt to use a telephone

Final Thoughts
(Gr 7 Narrative: Exceeds)

This seventh grade narrative exceeds proficiency in several ways. It shows a deep understanding of the topic (*having to cope with life with a severely handicapping condition and the resilience that requires*), focusing on Nick Vujicic who was born with no arms or legs. Written from the perspective of Nick, the piece is focused around the tension of trying to use a phone. The narrative begins by introducing the narrator and establishing a situation (*trying again to use a phone*). The writer shows insightful depth of understanding about how difficult this is (*only an optimist would say that*). The writer controls the pacing effectively by using precise description and dialogue to focus on Nick's attempt to pick up the phone, both early in the narrative and later, comparing his lack of success with his final success. The events of the narrative unfold naturally and logically, with a turning point when he goes to church. A variety of transitional words, phrases and clauses (*Sunday morning; everything is silent for a few seconds and then*) help to smoothly manage the sequence and to signal shifts in time frame. The conclusion follows naturally and elegantly from earlier events. The reader is left with a rich understanding of Nick, his own determination, the key role his mother plays, and a recognition that resilience here is a complex achievement.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 7 Narrative: Exceeds)

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