



**BECAUSE WRITING MATTERS**

# **MY Access! Writer's Workshop**

**Middle School Narrative Writing**

**Prompt: Life in Twenty Years**

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## Prompt: **Life in Twenty Years**

You may have wondered what your life will be like twenty years from now. Pretend that you have traveled twenty years into the future in a time machine. How will your life be different in twenty years? How will you be different in twenty years?

Write a narrative about how you and your life will be different twenty years from now. As you write, remember your essay will be scored based on how well you:

- develop a multi-paragraph response to the assigned topic that clearly communicates the purpose of your story to the audience.
- describe the characters, setting, and conflict using meaningful sensory descriptions and details that enable the reader to visualize the experiences in your narrative.
- organize your story in a clear and logical manner, including an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- use well-structured sentences and language that are appropriate for your audience.
- edit your work to conform to the conventions of standard American English.

Use any of the tools available to you, such as the **Checklist**, **Spellchecker**, or **Graphic Organizer**.

### **MY Access! “Life in Twenty Years” Prewriting Group Brainstorming**

Directions:

- Place students into groups of 4 or 5 and give them several markers.
- Hang large pieces of poster paper around the room (make sure they are spread out). Glue the instructions below to the top of each poster paper.
- Have each group find a poster. Give them 5 minutes to write down as many ideas as they can about their topic. They can even have more than one person writing at a time (note: it’s okay if you don’t have enough time for your groups to get to EVERY station. Just make sure they visit at least 4).
- When the five minutes are up, stop students and have them rotate to the right and begin the process again.
- Once students have rotated through all or several stations, share the ideas with the entire class.

**Note:** This prompt is a narrative, so encourage students to shape their vision of the future into a story format. This activity will help them think creatively about what the future will be like. Don’t forget to use the MY Access! Writer’s Models to show them examples.

Setting: What will the world look like in 20 years? How will people get around?

Setting: What will our houses look like in 20 years?

Characters: What will people look like in 20 years? How will they dress? Act? Talk? What will they do?

Conflicts: What types of PROBLEMS will you face in 20 years (think, you'll be around 32 or 33)?

What will be better about the world in 20 years?

What will be worse about the world in 20 years?

### **MY Access! "Life in Twenty Years" Prewriting Individual Brainstorming**

- ***Step 1: In twenty years, you will be around 32 or 33. On a separate piece of paper, jot down ideas for the following:***
  - Where do you live?
  - What is your family life like?
  - Where do you work? What is your job? How do you get there?
  - What is important to you? What do you value? What do you believe in strongly?
  - What are your hopes and dreams now? What do you want to accomplish? In twenty years, have you done this?
  
- ***Step 2: Now for the hard part...how are you going to tell your story? You won't be able to focus on all the ideas you had in Step 1, so which ones will make the best story? Think about and jot down notes on the following:***
  - What is the setting (where is this story taking place)?
  - You are the main character. Are there any others?
  - What conflicts will occur?
  - What will the climax of your story be?
  - How will you SHOW the reader (not tell) what is important to you and what you believe as a 32 or 33 year old?

- **Step 3: Get started! Your first draft doesn't have to be perfect. Think about everything you just wrote and get your ideas out...we'll go back and play with them later on. A good place to begin is by writing a description of you as you are in 20 years...**

## LOOPING

**Looping is an exercise many writers use to narrow the focus of a piece. Often, in early drafts we write anything and everything that comes to mind about our topic (and this is okay!). As we revise, we want to “zoom in” on only the most important and interesting parts of our narrative. We need to discover our PURPOSE for writing.**

**Step 1:** Re-read your entire piece.

**Step 2:** Choose one line that stands out to you. Maybe it is an extremely important moment in your story, maybe it is the most exciting point, or maybe you just like the idea you are trying to express.

**Step 3:** Underline or highlight that line.

**Step 4:** On a blank piece of paper, write ONLY that line at the top of the paper.

**Step 5:** Now, for next ten minutes, write as QUICKLY as you can about only that line.

**Step 6:** Think about what happened. Do you like what you just wrote more than your first draft? If so, you now have a NEW and more specific focus for your story. At the very least, one part of your story has been “exploded.”

## **Narrative Texts: Telling a Story**

### **Characteristics of a Narrative:**

- Narrates (tells) a sequence of events and scenes with sensory details
- Develops plot and character
- Has rising action and conflict that leads to a climax
- Can be in 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person point-of-view

## Purpose of a Narrative:

- To entertain and relate an event within a time sequence
- Can (but not always) share personal reflections or express thoughts and feelings

## Types of Narrative:

- Novels
- Short stories
- First person autobiographical incident
- Personal memoir or essay
- Myths, legends, folk tales, fairy tales, tall tales
- Epic poems

## Features of a Narrative:

- **Setting:** Where and when the story takes place
- **Characters:** Described in detail so reader knows not only what they look like, but also what they think, say, feel, etc.
- **Plot:** What happens—the sequence of events. Strong plots have the following elements:
  - **Conflict:** moments that create suspense or anticipation for the reader. Conflict doesn't always have to be dramatic or scary (even happy stories have conflict).
  - **Climax:** The turning point of the story—the point where the greatest emotional involvement for the reader takes place.
  - **Resolution:** The final outcome of the story. It doesn't have to be happy, but it should give the reader some sense of closure.

## Teaching the Elements of a Narrative

1. Distribute the following materials to your students:
  - A professional narrative text
  - A hard copy of the *MY Access! Narrative Topic Outline*
  - A marker, crayon or highlighter
2. Place students in groups of four. Give each student in the group a different colored marker/highlighter and assign each student an “expert” role.
  - Student 1 will read the text and highlight only the **setting**.
  - Student 2 will read the text and highlight details about the **characters**—physical descriptions as well as anything they do, say, or think.
  - Student 3 will read the text and highlight only the **conflicts** they see in the story.
  - Student 4 will read the text and highlight the **climax** and the **resolution**.

3. Read the story as a whole class. Each student is to highlight his or her “expert” area as you read. After, discuss the various elements and how/why they worked. For example, why were the character descriptions important? What did you see the characters doing? What did the setting add to the story? How did the author make the climax exciting?

### **An Extension of This Activity**

This activity can also be used as a form of peer response. This time, however, students in the group will bring their own narratives. They will read the first narrative, and each student will highlight his or her area of expertise. Then, have students pass to the right and read the second narrative doing the same thing. They should also write any questions they have in the appropriate section of the *MY Access! Narrative Topic Outline*. When students get their own narrative back, have them check to make sure they have all colors highlighted. If not, time to revise!

### **Narrative Topic Outline**

**Setting:** Where and when does your story take place? Describe your locations in detail.

**Characters:** Who is in your story? Describe these people in detail. For example, what do they look like? What do they say that is important (dialogue)? What are they feeling?

**Plot:** What happens in your story? Create pictures for your reader to see, hear, and feel by using a great amount of detail in every scene you describe. **Show,** don't tell.

**Conflict:** A good story has to create suspense, anticipation, or a sense of wonder for your reader; otherwise, why would your reader keep reading? Even if your story is about a happy time in your life, remember to include something that will arouse your readers' emotions and make them excited about what will happen. Show your reaction to the conflict.

**Climax:** What is the turning point of your story—the point where you have your readers' greatest interest and greatest emotional involvement in your story?

**Resolution:** What is the final outcome of your story?

**Introducing your story:** How will you begin your story so that your readers will get really excited about reading on?

The following are some suggestions.

**Dialogue**—“It’s perfectly clear why she wants it,” said Marge, as she cut through the store, making sure she would beat out Jessica.

**A flashback**—Erin was a hundred yards from the finish line and knew she shouldn’t look back. The problem was that she couldn’t help herself.

**A startling statement**—My town of Newbridge was a village of fools, fools young and old.

**A puzzling statement**—Across the street lived old Johnson, blind as a bat, but kept my house safe from the zombies who visited every night.

**A description of your main character and your setting**—Erica pulled back her hair and put on her glasses. Now that she was running for class president, she wanted to look the part.

**Putting your story in order:** How will you tell your story? Will you start from the beginning and describe each scene until you get to the end? Or will you start at the end of your story to create interest and then after the first paragraph begin at the beginning?

Most importantly, make an outline of what happens in each scene of your story in the order that it happened before you begin writing. Then follow the sequence of events when you write your story. Otherwise, you can confuse your reader about what is happening.

<u>Words and phrases that can substitute (synonyms) for “then”</u>
--

All of a sudden,	Suddenly,	At that moment,	Later,
Just then,	Meanwhile,	All at once,	After that,
In a few hours,	The next day,	After that,	Sadly,
At that time,	Afterward,	Without warning,	Next,
Unfortunately,	Surprisingly,	For the time being,	Amazingly,
To my surprise,	Unexpectedly,	In the meantime,	At that point

## **Attacking the Prompt**

### **Life in Twenty Years**

You may have wondered what your life will be like twenty years from now. Pretend that you have traveled twenty years into the future in a time machine. How will your life be different in twenty years? How will you be different in twenty years?

Write an essay about how you and your life will be different twenty years from now.

- ❑ Read the prompt again. Underline or highlight exactly what the prompt is telling you to DO.
- ❑ This is a narrative prompt, so it is okay to use a story format (but you don't have to). Be aware, however, that you cannot just write a story about the future. You need to explain how YOU and YOUR life are different in twenty years.

## **Understanding Purpose**

***Part 1: Read Sara's essay with your group and write down answers to the following questions:***

- ❑ What do you like about the essay? What are its strengths?
- ❑ Does the writer effectively explain how her life is different? Does the writer effectively explain how SHE is different? Explain.
- ❑ Does this writer achieve the PURPOSE of this essay—to reveal how HER life and how SHE is different in 20 years? Explain.
- ❑ What score would you give this writer? Explain why.

### **Sara's Essay:**

Ahhhh! I screamed as I hurled through the space vortex. It increased my speed faster and faster I flew, flashing colored lights all around me. Soon I hit the ground like a rock upon its decent after being tossed into the ski amazingly unharmed. As I began to explore the new surroundings I soon realized I was in a firmilar place, a place I visited many time as child. But it seemed so different I couldn't under stand why. I approached a gas station that was only a few feet away. I asked the man there what was date? He replied april 3. Of what year? He looked puzzled of why I asked for the year but quickly answer 2026. At the sound of that number I about fell to my feet.

I then walked down the street to hear a man yelling my name. Bill! Bill! He shouted. As I turn I noticed him running at me I stopped and answered hi to the almost familiar looking face, and then asked who are you? What do you mean who am I relied the stranger I am your brother. My brother I said and at that point I realized I had been sent into the future.

Are you ok Bill, He asked? Not really, I said. I don't know who I am! In a confused state of mind, He said OK!

He started telling me who I was He said I was a fishing guide on the Salmon River and a well known one at that and that I helped people catch Salmon, Brown Trout, and Steel Head Trout. He also said that I was a local Taxidermist and mounted Fish, Birds, and Big Game animals and that I lived in Palaski, NY. I also owned a twenty-seven acre parcel of land that ran along the Salmon River.

Beep! Beep! Beep! Ring! Ring! Ring! I awoke to the sound of my alarm clock. What a dream I had!

**Part 2: Now read a second essay with your group. Write down answers to the following questions.**

- ❑ Does this writer achieve the PURPOSE of this essay—to reveal how HER life and how SHE is different in 20 years? Explain.
- ❑ How is this essay different than Sara's? What different decisions did the two writers make?
- ❑ How do you feel about the two essays? Which one grabbed your attention more? Why?
- ❑ Would there be away to blend the two essays together? In other words, could a writer use both **narrative** and **expository** writing techniques?
- ❑ What score would you give this essay? Explain.

**Sophie's Essay:**

How would my life be different in twenty years? My life will be different because I will be older and more mature than I am right now. In the next few paragraphs I will tell you how my life will be different in twenty years. This will give you an idea of what I want my life to be like.

After I graduate from high school, I am going to apply to different collages. These are some of the collages that I plan on attending to: UCLA, Harvard, USC, and Cal State Fullerton. Which ever school accepts me? I want to see if they have classes for law school or for massage therapy. While I am in school I am going to get a job so that I am able to pay for my rent, books, clothes, and food. That is unless I am a scholarship student. I am going to visit my family during my vacation. I am going to work very hard during collage. I will probably stay in my room most of the time. I won't be like some kids who go to parties and get wasted.

After I am done graduating collage with that PHD in my hands. I am going to get an apartment with my friend, Rebeca. Weare going to either live in Downey or Norwalk. We plan on sharing the payment on the apartment, food, clothes, and materials for the apartment. We may get a puppy or a kitten for our apartment. To me, this will proibly be a good experience for me.

Then when my career shoots up I will by myself a house. When I have all my supplies are insde my brand new house. I will probably have a house warming party. After I get all of that mombo jombo out of the way, I will probably start dating. I want a man who will be there for me, but someone who will not build

their life around me. Maybe, just maybe I will find my soul mate. When I do find him, I hope that the both of us will want to be married to each other. After 4 to 5 years of our marriage we will have kids. I would want three kids, two boys and one girl, that way my two boys will protect their baby sister. To make sure that my family as at least two cars, one for work and one for the family, we will have the following cars: Nissian Sentra and a Honda Civic.



## MY Access! 6-Point Narrative Writing

	Focus & Meaning	Content & Development	Organization	Language Use & Style	Mechanics & Conventions
	The extent to which the response establishes and maintains a controlling idea (or central idea), an understanding of purpose and audience, and completion of the task.	The extent to which the response develops ideas fully and creatively using extensive, specific, accurate, and relevant details ( <i>plot, setting, characters, conflict, dialogue</i> ).	The extent to which the response demonstrates a unified structure, direction, and unity, paragraphing and transitional devices.	The extent to which response demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose through effective sentence structure, sentence variety, word choice and usage.	The extent the response demonstrates control of conventions, including paragraphing, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
6	<b>Very effective Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>thorough</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are all relevant to the story.	<b>Very Effective Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides a <i>thoroughly</i> detailed and developed plot and setting. Creates complex characters. Clearly establishes tension/conflict/problem that heightens the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used very effectively to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Very Effective Organization.</b> Captures the reader's attention by cleverly opening the story. Story flows very smoothly because of excellent transitions that support sequential development. Has a conclusion that pulls the entire story together.	<b>Very Effective Language Use and Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>precise</i> language and word choice, a <i>defined</i> voice, and a <i>clear</i> sense of audience; uses <i>well-structured and varied</i> sentences.	<b>Very Effective control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Few or no</i> errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling.
5	<b>Good Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are all relevant to the story.	<b>Good Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides a <i>well-developed</i> plot and setting. Creates believable characters. Establishes tension/conflict/problem that heightens the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used effectively to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Good Organization.</b> Opening of story excites readers' to continue reading. Story flows smoothly from one event to another with effective transitions that support sequential development. Conclusion provides reader with a sense of completeness.	<b>Good Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>appropriate</i> language and word choice, with <i>some evidence</i> of voice and a <i>clear</i> sense of audience; uses <i>well-structured</i> sentences with <i>some variety</i> .	<b>Good control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Few errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>do not interfere with the message</i> .
4	<b>Adequate Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>basic</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are relevant to the story.	<b>Adequate Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides a <i>reasonably</i> developed plot and setting. Creates believable characters. Establishes tension/conflict/problem that holds the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Adequate Organization.</b> Provides an interesting opening to the story that keeps the reader reading. Story generally flows smoothly from one event to another with transitions to support sequential development.	<b>Adequate Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>appropriate</i> language and word choice, with an <i>awareness</i> of audience and control of voice; generally uses correct sentence structure with <i>some variety</i> .	<b>Adequate control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> Some errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>do not significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
3	<b>Limited Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>limited</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that may not be relevant to the story.	<b>Limited Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides an <i>adequately</i> developed plot, setting and characters, but lacks sufficient detail to make this more than a summary of what happens in the story. Tension/ conflict or a problem may be stated, but not developed. Some dialogue may be used to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Limited Organization.</b> Provides an adequate opening that may not hold the reader's attention. The flow of the story may be broken by haps in time and sequence. Transitions may be weak. Provides the reader with some sense of closure.	<b>Limited Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>simple</i> language and word choice, <i>some awareness</i> of audience and control of voice; relies on <i>simple</i> sentences with <i>insufficient</i> sentence variety and word choice.	<b>Limited control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Several noticeable</i> errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>may interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
2	<b>Minimal Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>minimal</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that may stray from the point of the story.	<b>Minimal Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides a <i>minimally</i> developed plot and setting. Characters are only described rather than developed. Narrative may include details or information that detracts from the story. Lacks tension or conflict to make the story interesting. Little dialogue is used to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Minimal Organization.</b> Provides an opening that may repeat the title of the prompt. Flow of story may be difficult to follow because of gaps in time and sequence. Demonstrates little evidence of a conclusion.	<b>Minimal Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>poor</i> language and word choice, with <i>little awareness</i> of audience; makes <i>basic errors</i> in sentence structure and usage.	<b>Minimal control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Patterns of errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>substantially interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
1	<b>Inadequate or no Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates <i>almost no</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides very little detail, some of which may not be relevant to the story.	<b>Inadequate or no Content &amp; Development.</b> <i>Lacks</i> an identifiable plot and setting. Characters are introduced but not developed. Lack of tension or conflict makes the story uninteresting to follow. Not much happens.	<b>Inadequate or no Organization.</b> May have an opening that does no more than repeats the title of the prompt. Story lacks basic organization (beginning, middle and end) with serious gaps in sequencing of brief ideas.	<b>Inadequate Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>unclear or incoherent</i> language and word choice, <i>no awareness</i> of audience, and <i>major errors</i> in sentence structure and usage.	<b>Inadequate or no control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Errors so severe</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that they <i>significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.

## MY Access! Writing Domains

Type of Writing: \_\_\_\_\_

Your writing will be evaluated on the basis of five domains or trains of writing. Study each domain on the rubric and USE BULLET POINTS to take notes so that you can define each one. The feedback you receive will use the language on this chart.

Focus & Meaning	Content & Development	Organization	Language Use & Style	Mechanics & Conventions
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Piece is paragraphed</li><li>• Grammar errors do not interfere with the message</li><li>• Uses proper punctuation</li><li>• Excellent spelling</li></ul>

Here is the feedback IntelliMetric gave Sara for her essay. After looking at each revision Goal, select one or two that you believe Sara should apply to her next revision.

## Focus & Meaning

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response to **this assignment was rated a 3 for focus**. Focus relates to your ability to present a consistent, unified message and stay on topic.

Your focus is adequate. Typically, a response at this level gives a fairly clear statement of purpose and wanders only slightly from the topic.

Sara, now that you are ready to revise, try some of these ideas to help improve focus and meaning in your writing.

### Revision Goal 1: Understand the purpose, audience, and task.

1. Read the prompt. Find the topic, purpose, and audience. Write them on your focus checklist or on a blank sheet of paper.
2. Read your own writing and think:
  - What is the main event in my story? The topic of YOUR story should be the SAME as the topic of the prompt.
  - Why did I write my story? Am I writing to describe, to inform, to persuade? The purpose of YOUR story should be the SAME as the purpose in the prompt.
  - To whom am I writing? The audience to whom YOU are writing should be the SAME as the audience in the prompt.

### Example:

**Topic:** Write about [a special day in your life](#).

*I wrote about the day I was in the talent show because that was a special day for me.*

**Purpose:** [Describe the day](#).

*I used many details to describe the talent show.*

**Audience:** Write a story for your [friends and family](#).

*I included important details that I think will be interesting to my family and friends like how I felt before the talent show, what I did for my talent, how well I performed, and how I felt afterwards.*

**Revision Goal 2:** Narrow your focus.

1. Highlight the main event in yellow.
2. Underline events and details that are NOT about the main event.
3. Move or remove the events and details that are NOT about the main event.

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** I will always remember the day I sang a song in the talent show. Jake and I watched a scary movie that night.

**Frank's Strategy:** *The topic of my story is the talent show; watching a scary movie is not. I need to delete details that are not related to the main event.*

**After Revision:** I will always remember the day I sang a song in the talent show.

**Frank's Reflection:** *I removed "Jake and I watched a scary movie that night" because it has nothing to do with the main event, the talent show.*

**Revision Goal 3:** Use details to support the purpose of the story.

1. Highlight, in green, details about the main event.
2. Add key details about the main event: Where did the event take place? What did the scene look like? How did people act?

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** The school auditorium was packed for the show.

**Frank's Goal:** *I need to add more important information and details about the talent show, such as: Where did it take place? What did it look like? What happened?*

**After Revision:** The decorated school auditorium was packed with parents and students standing shoulder to shoulder.

**Frank's Strategy:** *I added colorful details about the auditorium, the place where the main event took place.*

## Content & Development

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 2 for content and development**. Development relates to your ability to provide content that supports your main idea or controlling point and your ability to provide supporting details, examples and/or evidence.

Your development is limited. Typically, a response at this level shows support of ideas presented with some use of examples, evidence or other supporting details.

Sara, let's add more detail to your story!

### **Revision Goal 1:** Create a detailed setting.

1. Highlight, in green, the words that tell when and where your story took place. Now, add more specific details about where your story took place and when it happened. For example, you can describe the place, the weather, the time of day or year, or the season.
2. Now use your five senses to describe your setting. How does the setting look, feel, smell, or sound? Use your five senses to add more details to your setting.

### **Example:**

**Before Revision:** On Halloween, we got ready in my house.

**Annie's Strategy:** *I need to add more specific details about where and when my characters are getting ready. I also need to describe how the setting smells, looks, feels, and sounds.*

**After Revision:** On a crisp, fall Halloween night, we put on our costumes in my big, dark, cold kitchen.

**Annie's Reflection:** *I replaced "house" with "in my kitchen" and added "crisp, fall" and "night" to "Halloween" to make the setting more specific. I also added "big, dark, cold" to describe how the kitchen looked and felt.*

### **Revision Goal 2:** Create realistic characters.

1. Underline the people in your story. Give them names if they do not have them.
2. Highlight, in green, details about your characters. Add more details to help your reader "see" and "hear" your characters: How do they look, sound, and act?

### **Example:**

**Before Revision:** On Halloween night, my little brother and I got ready in our kitchen.

**Annie's Strategy:** *I want to add specific details about my characters. What is the little brother's name? I need to describe the little brother. How does he act?*

**After Revision:** On Halloween night, my annoying little brother Mikey and I put on our ghost costumes in our big kitchen. Since we were young, Mikey has always copied everything I do. So, this Halloween, we were both dressing up as ghosts.

**Annie's Reflection:** *I named the little brother, "Mikey," and added "annoying" to describe him. I also gave more details about what the main character and Mikey were doing on Halloween night.*

3. Dialogue (what your characters say) makes your characters seem more real. Find a place in your story where your characters could talk or think out loud. Add dialogue to show what your characters would say to themselves or to each other.

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** My annoying little brother, Mikey, wanted to be a ghost for Halloween just because I was going to dress up as one. Because he is younger than I am, our mom said that he could.

**Annie's Strategy:** *I want to include dialogue to make my characters seem more life-like. What would my characters say? How would they say it?*

**After Revision:** My annoying little brother, Mikey, wanted to be a ghost for Halloween just because I was going to dress as one. When I said I was dressing up as a ghost, Mikey whined, "I want to be a ghost, too!"

"NO! I said I wanted to be a ghost first!" I cried.

"Let your little brother be a ghost too," my mom said.

So, this Halloween, we were both dressing up as ghosts.

**Annie's Reflection:** *I added dialogue to make Mikey and his older brother seem more real and to help the reader know the characters better.*

**Revision Goal 3:** Build a well-developed plot.

1. Highlight the main event (what you most want your reader to know about) in yellow. Add important information about what happened during the event. For example, you can describe how the characters feel, how they act, and what they say.

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** On Halloween, my little brother and I put on our ghost costumes in our big kitchen. Once we were dressed in our ghost costumes, it was time for trick-or-treating. I was excited to go trick-or-treating.

**Annie's Strategy:** *I want to find my main event and add important information to describe it. What is important or interesting about the main event?*

**After Revision:** Once we were dressed in our ghost costumes, it was time for trick-or-treating. I was still excited to go trick-or-treating, even though Mikey and I had the same costume. Nothing would make me less excited to get candy!

**Annie's Reflection:** *I added more details about how the older brother felt and why he felt that way. The reader needs to know this information in order to understand why the main event is important.*

2. Highlight, in green, details about the main event. Highlight your verbs (the action) in red. Add details and strong verbs to make the main event come to life! Use the word bank to help you.

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** Mikey and I **got** our bags for the candy and **ran** outside. It **was** almost **dark**, and there were **a lot of people in costumes trick-or-treating already.**

**Annie's Strategy:** *I want to use sensory details to help the reader picture the setting. I can add strong verbs to make the action exciting.*

**After Revision:** Mikey and I **grabbed** our bags for the candy and **raced** outside. The **sun was setting**, and it was getting **darker and spookier**. The street was already filled with **witches, pirates, and monsters who were already trick-or-treating.**

**Annie's Reflection:** *I replaced weak verbs like "got," and "ran" with strong, exciting words like "grabbed" and "raced." I added more specific and colorful details about the main event; for example, the sights he saw on the street during Halloween.*

## Organization

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 2 for organization**. Organization relates to your ability to present your ideas in a logical and ordered fashion.

Your organization is limited. Typically, a response at this level shows an appropriate organizational structure (beginning, middle and end), but is missing or lacks transitions and is not unified and consistent throughout.

Sara, now that you have some ideas, let's work on putting them in order. Let's work on organization!

**Revision Goal 1:** Put your events in order.

1. Number each event in your story.
2. In the beginning, did you tell what took place first? In the middle, did you tell what took place next? At the end, did you tell what took place last? Make sure nothing is out of order.

## Example:

**Before Revision:** (1) First, Sarah got out of bed. (2) Then, she ate cereal. (3) She ran out the door. (4) She heard her bus coming down the street.

**Oscar's Strategy:** *I need to put my events in the correct order. Sarah heard her bus coming down the street before she ran out the door.*

**After Revision:** First, Sarah got out of bed. Then, she ate some cereal. She heard her bus coming down the street. She ran out the door.

**Oscar's Reflection:** *I put the events in the correct order: Sarah got out of bed, ate some cereal, heard her bus coming down the street, and then ran out the door.*

**Revision Goal 2:** Use transitions to show your reader how events and ideas are connected.

1. Highlight, in orange, the transitions (words such as first, second, last, next, yesterday, today, in addition) in your story.
2. Add more transitions to show how your events go together. Use the word bank to help you!

## Example:

**Before Revision:** First, Sarah got out of bed. Then, she ate some cereal. She heard her bus coming down the street. She ran out the door.

**Oscar's Strategy:** *I need to add transitional words or phrases to help my reader follow the events in my story.*

**After Revision:** First, Sarah got out of bed. Then she ate some cereal. A few minutes later, she heard her bus coming down the street. She ran out the door.

**Oscar's Reflection:** I added the transitional phrase, "A few minutes later" to show when the events took place and to make the sequence of events flow together.

### Language Use & Style

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 3 for language use and style**. Language use relates to the decisions you make as a writer to create "style" in your writing. Style is created through sentence variety, word choice and usage.

Your language use and style is adequate. Typically, a response at this level is readable, but shows errors in sentence structure, usage and word choice.

Sara, let's work on your style and language use. Try some of these ideas to make your story more interesting!

**Revision Goal 1:** Choose words carefully.

1. Underline the nouns (people, places, and things) in your story. Use specific words to tell how people, places, and things look, sound, feel, or smell.

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** Because it was cold out, he didn't buy the ice pops. Instead he bought hot chocolate, marshmallows, and cookies.

**Larry's Strategy:** *I need to add sensory details to describe the things in my story.*

**After Revision:** Because it was cold out, he didn't buy the ice pops. Instead he bought hot chocolate, fluffy marshmallows, and chocolate chip cookies.

**Larry's Reflection:** *I added "fluffy" to describe the marshmallows and "chocolate chip" to describe the cookies. Specific details will help my reader picture my story.*

2. Highlight your verbs in red. Use strong verbs (for example, run, walk, scream, cook, bolt, jump). Tell when and how people and things act: Did they act now, yesterday, this afternoon? Did they act slowly, loudly, quickly? Use the word bank to help you.

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** The boy **put on** his gray wool coat **to walk** to the grocery store. When he got to the store, he **looked** at the ice pops. Because it was cold out, he didn't buy them.

**Larry's Strategy:** *I need to replace weak action words with strong action words. I also need to add details about when and how characters acted.*

**After Revision:** The boy slipped into his gray wool coat to walk quickly to the grocery store. When he got to the store, he stared at the ice pops. Because it was cold out, he didn't buy them.

**Larry's Reflection:** *I replaced my weaker action words, "put on" and "looked," with stronger, specific action words "slid into" and "stared." I also added an adverbs (-ly word), "quickly," to describe how the boy walked.*

**Revision Goal 2:** Write short and long sentences.

1. Highlight short sentences in pink. Highlight, in purple, long sentences that include more than one idea. Be sure to use both long and short sentences.
2. Combine short sentences with conjunctions, such as "and," "but," and "or."

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** He paid for the food. Then he walked home.

**Larry's Strategy:** *I need to combine ideas in short sentences using connecting words like "and" or "but."*

**After Revision:** He paid for the food and walked home.

**Larry's Reflection:** I connected two sentences by replacing "then he" with the conjunction "and."

**Revision Goal 3:** Make the beginnings of your sentences more interesting.

1. Underline the first three words in each sentence. Do all of your sentences start the same way?
2. If sentences begin the same way, add details such as *when* or *where* something happened to change how some of your sentences begin.

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** He paid for the food and walked home. He was thinking about his yummy winter snack.

**Larry's Strategy:** *Variety is the key to interesting writing. I need to change the beginnings of sentences that sound the same.*

**After Revision:** After he paid for the food, he walked home. He was thinking about his yummy winter snack.

**Larry's Reflection:** *I added the transition word "after" to tell when the action took place and to change the beginning of my first sentence.*

**Mechanics & Conventions**

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response **was rated a 3 for mechanics**. Mechanics has to do with your ability to apply the rules of standard American English, including grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Your use of mechanics is satisfactory. A response at this level contains few errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and spelling.

Sara, the better the mechanics, the easier it will be for the reader to enjoy and understand your writing.

**Revision Goal 1:** Eliminate errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and spelling.

1. Read your writing. You may want to read out loud (to yourself) so that you can hear many of your mistakes and correct them.
2. Correct any spelling errors using the spell checker. Then, make your reader SMILE by doing the following:

**Sentences:** Make sure each sentence has a subject and an action.

**Before Revision:** My house on Halloween.

**Marcy's Strategy:** *I noticed that this sentence does not have an action. I need to add a verb to make this fragment a sentence.*

**After Revision:** We put on our costumes in my house on Halloween night.

**Marcy's Reflection:** *I added a verb to make the sentence fragment a complete sentence.*

**Marks:** End each sentence with a punctuation mark.

**Before Revision:** My five-year-old brother and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen how funny Mikey looked wearing his costume, which was too big for him what was my mom thinking when she bought it

**Marcy's Strategy:** *I noticed that this paragraph does not have any punctuation. I need to put punctuation marks at the end of each sentence to make my writing clearer.*

**After Revision:** My five-year-old brother and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen. How funny Mikey looked wearing his costume, which was too big for him! What was my mom thinking when she bought it?

**Marcy's Reflection:** *I put punctuation marks at the end of each sentence. If the sentence was exciting, I added an exclamation point. If the sentence was a question, I added a question mark.*

**Indents:** Indent when you begin a new paragraph.

**Before Revision:**

As my five-year-old brother, Mikey and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen, Mikey yelled, "I can't wait to go trick-or-treating!" Yesterday, we mapped out the entire neighborhood and planned where we wanted to go trick-

or-treating. We better get started soon or we will never make it to all of the houses.

**Marcy's Strategy:** *I noticed that I did not indent the beginning of this paragraph. I need to indent each paragraph.*

**After Revision:**

\_\_\_\_\_As my five-year-old brother, Mikey and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen, Mikey yelled, "I can't wait to go trick-or-treating!" Yesterday, we mapped out the entire neighborhood and planned where we wanted to go trick-or-treating. We better get started soon or we will never make it to all of the houses.

**Marcy's Reflection:** *I indented the beginning of the paragraph.*

**Letters:** Start each sentence with a **capital letter**.

**Before Revision:** it was Halloween night. my brother and i got ready in the kitchen.

**Marcy's Strategy:** *These sentences do not begin with capital letters. I need to capitalize the words at the beginning of sentences.*

**After Revision:** It was Halloween night. My brother and I got ready in the kitchen.

**Marcy's Reflection:** I changed all of the lowercase letters in the beginning of sentences to capital letters. I need to remember that I always have to capitalize the pronoun, "I."

**Editor:** Click on MY Editor for more ways to improve your writing.

### It's your turn to evaluate the writing:

**Directions:** Read the following stories. Based on our discussion that centered on the elements necessary for writing a good story, are these good stories? Do they achieve the PURPOSE of the prompt?

#### Crystal:

In twenty years I will go to collage and I will have my future job.I live in a house with my friends and my dog and cat.I have a car.My jobs are training dogs and then after I am going to work in a zoo and I am going to work with wolves because I like them.I am going to get a diploma and a college degree.Im going to live somewhere were it snows and there are new places to see and go. My car will be a mustang, but firsts I must take a driver's tests so I can pass then I will get my mustang but it will a convertible mustang. The house that I live at with my friends is a two store house with three rooms and two bathrooms and a back yard. My dogs name is Brandon and he is a Siberian husky and my cats name is Princesses and she is a short hair Siamese cat.

Before I become a dog trainer first I have to be a veterinarian so I can help sick animals and if one of the dogs gets sick I can help them get better.

**Your Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Mike:

"Hey Ken, let's get this little gizmo working!" my friend Cesar said. I looked for the little button on this weird box my dad gave me. He said that he bought it off some old person at a shop called Weird Items. He was trying to look for an old typewriter because our computer broke down and he needed to type something to give to his boss for work. The shop owner gave my dad this free box because no one was buying it and it was mysterious. The shop owner said it was a time traveling machine from the future weirdly enough. My dad gave me this box because I've always had a liking to weird things and I always loved to test new things out. I found the button on the box and a huge rush came towards me. I was covered in light with my best friends Luis and Cesar next to me. The next minute everything went black.

"Hey Ken wake up" my friend Luis said with a hint of scaredness in his voice. My eyes opened up and I lifted my body upright. Whoa, everything a saw was looking happy and light in this new world. I found the box next to me and it was smashed. There was a number twenty on the top of it. No way I couldn't have gone twenty years in the future! However at that moment I saw a hovercar come by real quick. "Ohhhh man, I guess that means we aren't in in 2005 any more..." my friend Cesar said. " Gee I wonder what made you think that!" Luis replied in a sarcastic tone. " Quit it you two we are in deep trouble unless we find a way out of here." I said. I spotted a police officer come by. "Hello you three tiny young ones why are you out so late?" The police man said. I couldn't hear what he was saying because at that time I was staring at his laser gun. Luis and Cesar were staring at it too. Me and Luis had enough sense not to talk about this to the police officer for it might get us in trouble but Cesar of course didn't.

"Whoa nice gun Mr. Police officer man!" Cesar said as he reached to touch it. "Hey kid watch it!" the police officer said. Too late Cesar touched it and pulled the trigger. I thought it might have blown up the police officer's head but it didn't. We ran as fast as we could out of

there. I could hear a radio trying to talk to him but we didn't hear anything we were too busy running away. Outside of the alley we were mesmerised by bright lights of the city.

We all saw the video game store but me and Luis didn't mention it but Cesar did. He started running towards the store. "Cesar why are you going to the video store!" I yelled. "Let's look for Xbox games Ken!" he replied. I sighed at his thoughts, I bet our money in our pockets would be obsolete at this point in time but I went to follow him anyway. Inside were so many games filled to the top and bottom, it was a gamer dream come true! We looked everywhere for games that we, if we were lucky could buy, but however there were no games compatible with our primitive systems. We did find a computer and we thought that maybe since we are in the future we could look for my twenty year old self. The internet was so much better than what we have now! I could access a website in a blink of an eye! Cesar and Luis said that since I brought them here in the future it was only right that we look for me in this future. We found a website where we could find people with just using their name. We found out where my future self lived at we printed a map on how to get there.

We trudged on and on walking through the city. When I looked around it looked as if I were in a futuristic movie, or the television show Futurama, just without the aliens. Finally we found where I lived in this future. After taking a long time to find it we finally found it! It took us forever and we were tired, too tired to walk. We collapsed and fell to the ground. We slept and waited for the next day.

The next day we confronted the massive gates of the mansion that the future me now lived in. We knocked but as soon as we were on a red security television screen the man denied our entrance. "Hey it's those kids who stunned me the other day!" said the police officer. We didn't even turn around to groan at him or talk to ourselves. "Ken now what do we do!" Luis said. I heard more sirens come in. I thought carefully and thought of a plan. It wasn't a good plan but it was either this or nothing. "We hop the fence guys. We must do it quickly or we'll get stunned." I said. "All right" Cesar and Luis said in unison. We hopped it and almost got stunned but once we passed it the stun guns couldn't get past the bars of the massive fence. We ran all the way to the doors of the mansion.

We didn't even need to open the door someone opened it for us. Once we saw who opened it we stood in amazement at the man. "Hey little me! Glad you could get here." said my twenty year old self. "Come in there is not much time before the police officers open the doors." said the older me pointing at the police officers. "Wow nice place you got here mister!" said Cesar. "Thanks kid but here we go." he said handing me a black box. It was the time traveler.

"Wow how did you do it older Kenneth?" I asked. "Hey remember I was you, I know where you are all this time. "Now here's a paper on how to be successful like me." he said handing me a paper. "Thank you." I said. The door busted open but I already pressed the black button.

Back on our normal time I read the paper with Luis and Cesar over my shoulder reading it. It said that all I needed to become successful was to be myself. I took this comment wisely and stayed just like how I always act, all the time.

**Your Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Karen:**

In twenty years, I would be a successful doctor and owning my own little place working with families when they are sick. Two of my best friends is my nurse, and my friend who went

through the training of being a doctor with me. I got a degree at Biola College and I also took a six-week course of hair cutting. My life is surrounded by work except around the holidays.

I live with my husband and my new member of the family, Tommy, in a big fancy apartment. It is clean enough for us to live in, but my mother thinks it's a pigsty. It's not as bad as she says, it's just that not everything has a place yet since I am moving out into our new house we are hoping for a girl and to name her Ashley or Taylor. My husband is a lawyer and loves mysteries.

My parents are healthy and happy with their retirement still at our house. My cousins are working at busy stores and getting a good wage. Friday nights I go out to the movies with whoever and still have my tradition with milk duds candy every time I go. I am not skinny, not fat but in the middle, I work out regularly and eat plenty of junk food!!! I read a half hour before I go to sleep when I am older will be much healthier than I already was now.

**Your Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Revision Plan (Sample)

**Name:** Sara Mills

**Class:** Narrative Writing

**Prompt:** Life in Twenty Years

#### My Goals:

##### Focus and Meaning:

I must focus more on how I am different in the future.

##### Content and Development:

I will write more about how I achieved my goals and dreams.

#### Writing Strategy:

##### Focus and Meaning:

I will begin my story the same, but instead of only spending a few sentences on what I'm doing in the story, I will really go into detail.

##### Content and Development:

In my revised story, I will first describe the time machine and how exciting it is. When I meet my brother Bill I will really develop his character and spend time describing how he is different. Then I will describe how I changed—I never thought my dream would come true but it did.

## Reflection:

I started writing without planning. Next time I will outline my ideas and select the details before I start writing my story. I want to include more details about how I am different and less about the time machine—because that is not the topic of my story.

### **WRITER'S WORKSHOP: testing your writing on an audience**

Assemble in groups of three (3) - a writer and two editors. Print 3 copies of your paper, one for you and one for each of your two editors

**Goal: To strengthen your introduction, conflict and conclusion of your story**

### **Helping your readers find meaning in your writing**

**Before** reading your writing, let your readers know

1. what you wanted to accomplish in your introduction and conclusion of your story
2. what you wanted your readers to feel as a result of the conflict/suspense in your story

### **The Process**

- Read your writing out loud...slowly. Your editors should not comment on your writing while you are reading aloud.
- Your editors should read your paper at least once more to themselves. During the second reading, they may mark up your paper with questions/comments that they will share with you verbally.
- During the time your editors are commenting on your paper, you are to take notes, NOT SPEAK.
- Once they are completely finished, you may ask your editors questions to further clarify their comments, as needed.

### **The Revision Plan, the Revision and the Reflection (3Rs)**

- Write a revision plan that reflects the goals and strategies suggested by your peers.
- Revise your essay
- Highlight the changes and describe the reasons for those changes
- Write a reflection that describes your thinking throughout the writing process
- Reassemble with your group to share your revised draft and your reflection
- Submit the revised draft, revision plan with a reflection to your teacher for credit

### **Suggested comments:**

You have an engaging introduction. I like the way...

Your introduction tells or informs rather than excites. Perhaps you can...

I like the way you used conflict to .....

Consider adding a scene in your story where.....

Consider adding more emotion to your characters so that readers can identify with what characters are feeling

Consider adding more dialogue so that your readers can hear the characters thinking.

Tell me what you mean by "....."

I would suggest that you .....(add, remove, rearrange, reword, rephrase, etc)  
Consider concluding your story by leaving your reader with a strong impression of the main point or message you are expressing. You may even want to end with dialogue.

**Questions to address in a “Reflection”**

1. What thoughts did you have about your paper before the writers’ workshop?
2. What did you become aware of during the session?
3. What did you change? Why?
4. What did you keep the same? Why?
5. Which suggestions were most helpful? Least helpful?
6. What thoughts do you have about your revised draft?
7. What have you learned about yourself as a writer that you will take into consideration for your next focused writing?

Revision Plan (you can complete this in MY Access!)

My goals:

My strategy:

Reflection (complete after you revise your story)