

In Common: Effective Writing for All Students
Collection of All Student Work Samples, K-12

By The Vermont Writing Collaborative, with Student Achievement Partners and CCSSO

Ninth Grade
Range of Writing - Narrative Writing
Writing Samples

File Name: N9-10R Walking the Dog**Narrative****Grade 9****Range of Writing****Walking the Dog**

I slouch on the couch, comfortable in my favorite clothes, staring at the news anchor as he drones on about that disaster or this riot. A snow storm is supposed to be moving in tonight, the weatherman preaches. My dog Chloe lays curled up beside my feet, with her head propped on her leg. She's our pure bred Brittney Spaniel recently adopted and already a special member of the family. As I push myself into the cushions, my feet nudge her a bit too much for her own taste. She then starts the slow process of standing up. She squints her eyes while she stretches out her leg, as if trying to grasp at some imaginary treasure on the floor. With hesitation she pushes herself up with her hind legs first. Walking out of the room as if she had completely forgotten me, she goes to check on her food that is so predictably there. I am amazed at how such an animal can keep to her schedule better than I do mine.

I then hear the all too familiar directive from my mother in the adjacent room. I have come to expect it, yet it still gets me agitated. I sink even deeper into the warm embrace of the couch, as if hearing nothing. I always delay as much as possible the dreaded task before me. After her third command, I wearily begin to pull myself away from the comfort that has enveloped me. Out the window the flakes form horizontal streaks as the wind blows furiously. As slowly as possible, I stretch out my arms and legs, not wanting to leave the peace of the room.

I trudge up the stairs to change into something appropriate for the task that lay before me. Now fully awake, I bound down the stairs. Searching for me gloves and hat, and finding none, I unwillingly grab my father's worn knit cap, only to be stopped by my mother holding mine in

Engages and orients the reader by setting out a situation and its significance, establishing a point of view, and introducing a character:
The writer sets the context and focus (relaxing on the couch with the dog, not wanting to go out) for the story to follow. The narrative is told from the perspective of a third person narrator.

Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the character of the dog, who is clearly important to the narrator

Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome, a change in perspective/mood resulting from the walk with the dog

Creates a smooth progression of events

her hand while she rolls her eyes. Reluctantly I pull the gloves over my hands, and my hat over my head. I stomp towards the door as Chloe bounds after me. Pulling down the leash and snapping it to her collar, I slowly open the door and step out into the dark cold.

Just then, the hard driving flakes seem to slow down, and light upon the dust covered world. I take a deep breath of the rich air, revitalizing me. Leaping down the steps, I begin the route that has become routine. With Chloe at the lead, no force but her adventurous spirit pulls me along. Passing her, she takes it as a sign to quicken her own pace. She soon starts into a gallop, pulling me along once again. I then hit full stride, keeping abreast of while running together as if that was all there was to do. We come around the next corner, and see the house in plain view. That quickly? It seems like only a few moments have passed before we begin to slow down. We both reluctantly slacken our pace into a slow trot, and then a flat out walk.

Uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, and characters, as the narrator's mood shifts dramatically while she runs with the dog through the snow

Panting, exhausted, we climb the stairs with no real drive. Opening the door I begin the arduous task of drying Chloe off. With an annoyed look on my face and an edge to my voice, I call to my mother to bring a towel. Through the door one sails toward me. Holding her tightly by the collar, I ruffle her with the towel until she is sufficiently dry. As soon as my grasp releases, she runs towards the kitchen to see my mother. I pull my hat and gloves off, and put them both in their proper place together. Removing the now wet boots, I bound up the stairs and change into my old clothes. I am soon back on the couch, with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria. With a pleased smile on my face, I push myself as far as possible into the cushions and change the channel.

Uses precise details to mirror details from beginning

Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is resolved over the course of the narrative: Though so much is the same as at the beginning, the writer is "pleased" now

In this narrative, the writer tells the story of a young woman who is bored at home on the couch. She takes a walk in the snow with her dog, and even though she returns to the same couch at the end, her perspective has subtly changed. The narrative is told from a third person point of view.

The writer uses some dialogue and descriptive detail, which capture her boredom at the beginning (“*drones on*”, “*preaches*”), and how much she values the dog (“*squints her eyes while she stretches out her leg, as if trying to grasp at some imaginary treasure on the floor*”). The writer’s words are carefully chosen throughout, and she creates the same scene at the end of the story as at the beginning (“*with Chloe snuggled at my feet, I watch someone new talk about that political fiasco or this outbreak of malaria*”), with the single word, “pleased”, to make clear that though the scene is similar, the narrator has been changed by the walk with the dog.

To develop the story, the writer uses a clear sequence of events beginning and ending with sitting on the couch, and a run with the dog in between to create a cohesive whole by the end of the narrative.

File Name: N 9-10R Walking the Dog

Narrative

Grade 9

Range of Writing

Walking the Dog

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