

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

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

**Sixth Grade**  
**Range of Writing - Narrative Writing**  
**Writing Samples**

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**File Name: N6R How the Great Saltwater came to be****Narrative****Grade 6****Range of Writing****How the great Saltwater came to be**

A long, long time ago, there were many gods. Two were Sarias the salt god, and Walior the water god. They argued quite a bit and all of the other gods were sick of it. So was a newt named Yellow-Belly. I was the middle of the summer and one day when the gods were on a ship, Yellow-Belly had also snuck aboard. Once again, they were arguing and Yellow-Belly decided to put a stop to it once and for all.

“Sarias how can you put up with that insolent Walior? You guys should have a battle and whoever loses will be dead and you won’t have to worry about arguing anymore.”

Meanwhile up in the sky the other gods are trying to figure out a way to get the two gods to stop arguing but they didn’t want it to be in a violent way. They have no idea what the shrewd newt Yellow-Belly was up to.

Yellow-Belly gets Walior alone and now he want Walior to have a battle too. “Walior why are you just sitting here you guys should have a battle to the death so that you won’t have to argue about who’s right anymore.”

“Well Yellow-Belly I don’t know what if I lose and get killed?”

“Walior are you really asking me that? Of course you won’t lose and get killed. I mean you are the better of the two. You are more handsome and way stronger. You have nothing to lose by having a battle because Sarias is sure to lose.”

“Of course you are right Yellow-Belly and that is a great idea.”

Now Yellow-Belly has Walior eager to do battle with Sarias, but what if Sarias doesn’t agree?

“So Sarias have you made up your mind on whether you will have a battle with Walior?”

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing context for narrative to follow. Main characters are introduced** – Sarias the salt god, Walior the water god, and the most important character (protagonist) the newt Yellow-Belly. The arguing between the two gods becomes the focus / conflict of the narrative.

**Uses dialogue to develop characters and events,** so that the plot develops.

**Uses transitional clause** to signal shift in setting

**Uses dialogue to develop character,** which shows the reader how clever Yellow-Belly is

“No not really because I am worried that Walior might win.”

“Oh you mean that great buffoon. He couldn’t beat you if your eyes were shut and your hands tied up my lord. You have no need to worry about him because YOU are sure to be the winner. You are smaller sure but you have cunning and fearlessness on your side. I mean, have you lost a battle yet? No, because you are the best god ever.”

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details to develop action, events, and characters**

“I guess you are right and I will do as you suggest. But what about Walior?”

“Oh don’t worry about him my lord I have already taken care of him. He will die at your hand.”

“All right you gods are you ready for your battle? You know who will win and you don’t need to worry about it.”

**Uses dialogue to develop character.** This time, the dialogue is between the two gods, which again shows the reader how clever Yellow-Belly has been in setting up this action.

“So Sarias, you sure you want to do this? You know that I will win because I am much more handsome and I am way stronger.”

“Even so Walior I am more cunning and I haven’t lost to any beast yet.”

“There’s always a first time Sarias.”

There was a great battle that lasted 8 days and 8 nights. Eventually Sarias emerged victorious. As he was standing over Walior and gloating: “Ha ha I have killed you W...”

**Uses transitional clauses and words to signal shifts from one timeframe to another**

As he said this Walior reached up and slashed him in the stomach. As Sarias fell from the pain, his great-sword plunged into Walior’s heart. And so the great Sarias won the battle but he died in the end from his stomach wound because Walior had been very vicious and had cut a major artery. And so they both died because of a newt who was fed up with their antics. After they died, they both had left behind great quantities of both salt and water. The other gods saw it and they had to figure out what to do with all of that salt and water.

**Uses precise sensory language**

They were smart and they did the smartest thing that they could think of. They mixed all of the salt with all the water, and they made salt water. Then they picked a HUGE place to distribute all of it and there is now salt water because of that crazy newt, Yellow-Belly.

**Provides a conclusion which follows from the events and focus / conflict of the narrative**

But of course, Yellow-Belly had to be punished. However, the other gods were so happy because they didn't have to deal with arguing between the deceased, that they didn't want to punish Yellow-Belly very much. They just sentenced him and all of his descendants to a life in pond water with NO talking.

In this narrative, the writer tells the story of how the seawater became salty, in the manner of a myth or legend. She focuses it around the conflict between two gods, the god of salt and the god of water. The protagonist is the newt, whose interests and actions to get the gods to stop arguing drive the plot of the narrative.

The writer has organized a well-structured event sequence that unfolds naturally to develop the story line. She uses transition words, phrases, and clauses to move the plot along, and to signal shifts in time frame and setting ("*meanwhile*", "*up in the sky*").

The writer makes the tricky and clever character of the newt very clear throughout. Most of the action and character development is done through dialogue. There is some precise descriptive sensory language used, as well. At times, it would be helpful to have a bit more description or "narrator voice" along with the dialogue, but in general the writer controls this plot and character development well.

The narrative concludes with "how we got salt water," which follows well from the narrated events.

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**Narrative**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **How the great Saltwater came to be**

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