

***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

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

---

**Narrative****Grade 7****Range of Writing****The Boy**

The young boy stood with the most menacing look he could muster spread across his face. He just stood there watching the endless columns stretch as far as the eye could see down the long, dusty road. The soldiers would turn and look as they went by, and he made sure to look right back. He made sure to stare as far as he could into the dark pupils of their eyes, as if it would raise the house that was now nothing more than a heap of ashes. Only a few charred remains of the walls were left.

As his eyes went from soldiers to remains he saw a small soft lump poking up from the ashes. He knew exactly what it was and he turned away. That teddy bear had been his favorite friend. Not a toy, it was more than a toy to him. For a second he was back on a green lawn, with the shutters of a house tapping softly on the window pane. And there was his bear. They waited for the next pirate ship to come around the bend in the road, so they could board it and make the captain walk the plank. But then he heard a shout and knew he was back on the dusty road with no green lawn and no shutters tapping softly.

He leaped down from his perch on an old dresser, one of the few things that hadn't been pillaged or burned in the fire. He bent down, putting both hands on his knees as his eyes searched the ground intently. He picked up the most deadly rock he could find and hopped back up on his perch to resume his watchful glare. No soldier escaped the watchful eyes as he probed them. The giant snake of blue tails was tapering off, and the boy could now see the end of the tail. The boy once again hopped down from his perch. He could feel the sweat-covered rock in his palm. The last of the blue columns were passing.

The boy took a step forward and leaned back, then whipped his body forward and released the rock at the same moment. The boy heard a

**Engages and orients the reader by establishing context for narrative to follow. Main character is introduced,** the boy. The story will be told from his **point of view**, a limited third person

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory details to capture the action and convey events:** The writer subtly establishes both the setting and focus - the conflict the boy is dealing with.

**Uses transitional clause to signal time shift** back in time (flashback). **Uses precise language** to capture the memory the boy has of his life before the soldiers came

**Uses precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory details to capture the action and convey events,** and to develop the

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated events:** The boy's "hateful eyes with tears rolling forth" are a comment on the events of the story—the boy is angry but helpless in the face of war.

thud as the rock came home and the rear most soldier clutched his side and looked back – but all he saw were those hateful eyes with tears rolling forth.

For this narrative from a seventh-grade social studies class, the student was asked to write a story on the Civil War that focused on the effect of the war on one character at one moment in time. The writer effectively introduces a main character—a child whose home has been burned by the Yankees (“*the giant snake of blue tails*”) and relates events from his perspective.

The writer has organized a well-structured event sequence that unfolds naturally (though not in linear time order). To do this, he develops a structure that shifts the narrative from the main character’s present to a happier past, when the boy could play with his bear, and then back to the narrative present. He uses transitional clauses to signal this time shift. The writer uses precise words and phrases, sensory details, and some metaphoric language (“*giant snake of blue tails*”) to tell the story.

This narrative does not conclude in the traditional sense. The boy is left to throw a rock in helpless fury at the soldiers passing by. The lack of overt reflection is, in fact, an implied reflection on his helplessness in this war.

**File Name: N7R The Boy**

**Narrative**

**Grade 7**

**Range of Writing**

### **The Boy**

The young boy stood with the most menacing look he could muster spread across his face. He just stood there watching the endless columns stretch as far as the eye could see down the long, dusty road. The soldiers would turn and look as they went by, and he made sure to look right back. He made sure to stare as far as he could into the dark pupils of their eyes, as if it would raise the house that was now nothing more than a heap of ashes. Only a few charred remains of the walls were left.

As his eyes went from soldiers to remains he saw a small soft lump poking up from the ashes. He knew exactly what it was and he turned away. That teddy bear had been his favorite friend. Not a toy, it was more than a toy to him. For a second he was back on a green lawn, with the shutters of a house tapping softly on the window pane. And there was his bear. They waited for the next pirate ship to come around the bend in the road, so they could board it and make the captain walk the plank. But then he heard a shout and knew he was back on the dusty road with no green lawn and no shutters tapping softly.

He leaped down from his perch on an old dresser, one of the few things that hadn't been pillaged or burned in the fire. He bent down, putting both hands on his knees as his eyes searched the ground intently. He picked up the most deadly rock he could find and hopped back up on his perch to resume his watchful glare. No soldier escaped the watchful eyes as he probed them. The giant snake of blue tails was tapering off, and the boy could now see the end of the tail. The boy once again hopped down from his perch. He could feel the sweat-covered rock in his palm. The last of the blue columns were passing.

The boy took a step forward and leaned back, then whipped his body forward and released the rock at the same moment. The boy heard a thud as the rock came home and the rear most soldier clutched his side and looked back – but all he saw were those hateful eyes with tears rolling forth.