

## Writing



### REMINDERS

- Write your response to the writing task below.**
- You may give your writing a title if you like, but it is not necessary.**
- You may NOT use a dictionary. If you do not know how to spell a word, sound the word out and do the best you can.**
- You may either print or write in cursive.**
- Write clearly! Any erasures or strike-throughs should be as clean as possible.**

### Writing Task:

**In the story, “The Hiking Trip,” the reader learns about the main character, Jeff. Jeff’s personality and emotions are revealed through the actions and dialogue presented in the story.**

**Write an essay in which you describe the personality and emotions of Jeff, the main character. How do his personal characteristics add to the events in the story? How does the author reveal this information about Jeff in the story? Use details and examples from the story to support your ideas.**

L0157007

### Checklist for Your Writing

**The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you do the following:**

- Carefully read the passage and the description of the task.**
- Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.**
- Use specific details and examples from the passage to demonstrate your understanding of the main ideas and the author’s purpose.**
- Use precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose.**
- Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.**
- Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.**

*NOTE:* Pages 138 through 141 provide a sample student essay for this writing task at each of the four score points with commentary and rationale for the given score. The student responses have been typed with the students’ own content, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. The CAHSEE Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide for this writing task may be found in the Teacher Guide for English-Language Arts.

## 4

**Score Point 4  
Student Response**

*In the story “The Hiking Trip” Jeff had to hike down a canyon and go get help for his brother Mark. Jeff is courageous and loving, and his true character is revealed by his actions.*

*The author gradually reveals Jeff’s bravery through his actions and his decision to save Mark. At first, Jeff is afraid of hiking down the canyon alone. The father tells Jeff to have courage and Jeff exclaims that he doesn’t want it. The father also tells Jeff to have enough love for his brother to save him. Even though he is afraid and doesn’t want to hike down the canyon, Jeff does it anyways. He does it to try to save his brother. This point in the story shows Jeff’s love for his brother and his determination to save him.*

*This is the turning point in the story. If Jeff had not made the decision to hike down the canyon alone the outcome of the story may be entirely different. Jeff’s bravery, love, and perseverance played an enormous role in this story. Without them he may have never tried or been able to save Mark.*

*This story shows how someone can overcome their own fears to help others. Jeff was an example of unselfishness, bravery, and courage. His character traits caused him to do what was right and they (his character traits) may have been the deciding point of his action and later on the outcomes of his story.*

**Commentary**

In this response, the writer addresses all parts of the writing task, which include describing Jeff’s personality and emotions, identifying the way the author reveals Jeff’s personality, and relating Jeff’s personality to the plot. The response also illustrates a comprehensive grasp of the text.

The first paragraph of the response summarizes the main action of the story and states the thesis that Jeff is courageous and loving and that his “true character is revealed by his actions.”

Next, the writer gives more detail about the main action of the story, using evidence from the text to show how Jeff’s actions reveal his courage and love. Specific references to the text are included (e.g., “the father also tells Jeff to have enough love for his brother to save him”).

In the third paragraph the writer focuses on the relationship between Jeff’s personality and the plot, identifying the turning point in the story as Jeff’s decision to go for help alone and tying this decision to Jeff’s love and determination: “Without them he may have never tried or been able to save Mark.”

The use of precise language and a variety of sentence types add to the success of this essay. There are only a few errors in the conventions of written English within this response, and they are generally first-draft in nature. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 4-point response.

## 3

**Score Point 3**  
**Student Response**

*To understand who Jeff is, you have to realize what he has to go through in the story. In the beginning, Jeff is afraid to hike and doesn't want to have the courage to climb the mountain. After Jeff's dad says, "If not courage, fine. Then have enough love for your brother," Jeff realizes that he has to do it to save his brother's life. He becomes determined to find help. He thinks about how badly his brother needs medical attention.*

*Jeff becomes so determined to get help, he begins to climb faster and faster until he passes up his dad. He says to himself "Can't stop, Mark's in big trouble." This shows how his love for his brother has substituted for the courage that he did want to have. Do you think that his love for his brother gives him the courage or the will to climb the mountain and get help for Mark.*

*Hours later after Mark is rescued, Jeff wakes up but doesn't know what had happened. His father tells him that he's a hero and that he saved his brother's life. He had pushed himself to the limits trying to get help for Mark. His love for Mark had given him the will, the determination, and the courage to get over his fear and climb the mountain for help.*

**Commentary**

In this response, the writer explicitly or implicitly addresses all parts of the writing task and shows a good grasp of the text.

The first paragraph of the response summarizes the main action of the story and suggests the thesis that is later expressed in the final paragraph—that Jeff has determination, courage, and love. The second paragraph summarizes events in the story to show that the author uses the events to reveal Jeff's character, although this connection is not explicitly stated. The final paragraph sums up Jeff's role in the plot: "His father tells him that he's a hero and that he saved his brother's life." Again, this relationship is not explicitly stated.

The response represents a 3-point paper because it addresses all parts of the writing task and shows a good grasp of the story. Also, it makes specific references to the text (e.g., "Can't stop, Mark's in big trouble"). However, it lacks the purposeful control of organization and explicit statement of ideas that characterize a 4-point paper. The observations about Jeff's personality are structured by the story line rather than directed by the writer. The paper also illustrates an inconsistent sense of audience, as shown by the direct address to the reader in the first and second paragraphs.

There are only a few errors in the conventions of written English within this response, but they do not interfere with the meaning. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 3-point response.

## 2

**Score Point 2**  
**Student Response**

*Jeff, the main character shows much of his personality and emotions. He is an understanding and motivating person. He knows what strength he has but he doesn't know how to use it. Although Jeff has many fears and knows he must overcome them to save his brother. His father knows his sons power, but its Jeff who doesn't realize his own. Jeff doesn't have self confidence of self will. His emotions in the story change. He starts off as a boy who doesn't believe in himself, to a boy who's emotions completely change under the circumstances. He must save his brother in order know if he really has inner power inside of him. This was the test. His personal characteristics add to the event of the story by making it more intense. The more intense the better the story. He adds problem to the story line and a resolution He doubts his own strength but he ends up winning.*

**Commentary**

In this response, the writer addresses some parts of the writing task and demonstrates a limited understanding of the main elements of the story. The response begins with three very general statements about Jeff's personality. Then the writer begins to focus on a potential thesis that could be supported by textual evidence: "Although Jeff has many fears and knows he must overcome them to save his brother." This statement also shows the writer's grasp of important ideas within the text. As the response continues, the statement that Jeff must overcome his fears receives additional development with the assertion that Jeff's emotions "completely change under the circumstances." However, these ideas receive no additional development through the use of textual evidence.

The final sentences of the response begin to address the relationship between Jeff's personality and the plot: "His personal characteristics add to the event of the story by making it more intense." One of these sentences uses the vocabulary of plot analysis ("He adds problem to the story line and a resolution") but provides little actual analysis.

The lack of a clear thesis statement and the failure to develop ideas by using evidence from the text are characteristic of a 2-point paper. The response also fails to demonstrate a purposeful control over organization. There is some variety in sentence structure, but there are several errors in the conventions of written English. Overall, this essay is an example of a 2-point response.

## 1

**Score Point 1  
Student Response**

*This story tells about a boy who has doesn't want to go on a trip with his father and learn more about hiking but then, when he gets their he realizes the important thing that is about hiking. His father was really understanding and motovating, one of the things Jeff new it was important to learn hiking was for what happened to his father the accident he had, he knew it was important cause he know what to do during an accident.*

**Commentary**

This response begins to address the writing task in its opening statement: "This story tells about a boy who has doesn't want to go on a trip with his father." However, there is little understanding of the main elements of the story; the response continues by implying that the primary issue is the value of hiking and that Jeff's father (not his brother) has had an accident.

The failure to demonstrate a grasp of the text, the lack of a main idea, the failure to develop ideas using evidence from the text, and the serious errors in the conventions of written English make this a 1-point response.

**Writing****REMINDERS**

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- Write clearly! Any erasures or strike-throughs should be as clean as possible.**

**Writing Task:**

**By the time students enter high school, they have learned about many moments in history that have influenced our world today. Think about a moment in history you studied and consider its importance.**

**Write a composition in which you discuss a moment in history. Share its importance in today's world. Be sure to support the moment with details and examples.**

L0000064

**Checklist for Your Writing**

**The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you do the following:**

- Read the description of the task carefully.**
- Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.**
- Use specific details and examples to fully support your ideas.**
- Use words that are appropriate for your audience and purpose.**
- Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.**
- Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.**

*NOTE:* Pages 143 through 146 provide a sample student essay for this writing task at each of the four score points with commentary and rationale for the given score. The student responses have been typed with the students' own content, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. The CAHSEE Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide for this writing task may be found in the Teacher Guide for English-Language Arts.

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**Writing Task:**

**Write an essay in which you describe the speaker’s view of nature in the poem, “Early Spring.”**

**How is this view revealed in the poem? Include specific references to the poem in your response.**

L224C018

**Checklist for Your Writing**

**The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you do the following:**

- Read the description of the task carefully.**
- Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.**
- State a thesis responsive to the task and support it fully with specific details and examples.**
- Use words that are appropriate for your audience and purpose.**
- Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.**
- Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.**

*NOTE:* Pages 159 through 163 provide a sample student essay for this writing task at each of the four score points with commentary and rationale for the given score. The student responses have been typed with the students’ own content, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. The CAHSEE Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide for this writing task may be found in the Teacher Guide for English-Language Arts.

## 4

**Score Point 4  
Student Response**

Through his observations of the transition of seasons from winter to spring, Shonto Begay begins to see nature on a much grander scale. It becomes clear to Begay that initial outlooks on nature don't even begin to touch on how powerful it really is. First glances don't reveal all of the true mystery behind this miracle. The miracle that involves life, death and rebirth. Nature, he realizes, is magnificent in comparison to individual human lives that walk this earth, it expands so far beyond what our eyes can see and it demonstrates to us the very true meaning of life.

Shonto Begay is not blind to the beauty of the land. Remains of a winter that has just passed are left in the form of soft snow that is melting upon the warming earth. By merely looking upon the outdoors, one could not say whether the winter had been harsh or not, for the sheer beauty of the land is so overpowering. Begay describes the land and remains of winter as a blanket of some sort. One with a gorgeous design created by the "patchwork of snow and earth."

Standing upon the semi snow covered earth, one's naked eye does not take the intricacy of life that is living around them. Nature is so much greater than the visible trees on the ground and the birds flying overhead. Beneath the ground that one walks on there are lives of rodents buried deep within burrows, insects underneath the foliage that scatter the ground, birds in nests high up in the trees. Shonto Begay recognizes this intricate system of nature. Pulling himself away from his own life, he can see the miracle that lives around him.

As spring takes flight, nature experiences a period of rebirth. It didn't necessarily die over the period of winter, but spring will bring it back to a new meaning of life. Begay writes, "Maybe to them we also disappear with the cold. Not to be seen until spring." This further shows that although we aren't seeing, it doesn't mean that they aren't existing. The cold simply brings them underground and the warmth of the spring brings them back. It gives them a period of rebirth.

Stepping away from one's own life and observing the life of nature, opens one's eyes to something far more magnificent than themselves. Nature is a cycle of life that will continue for centuries to come. Nature is "filled with mysteries. They reveal themselves and their stories - if you look very carefully, and listen . . ." Just open your eyes and you will see.

## Commentary

In this response, the writer addresses all parts of the writing task, which includes describing the speaker's view of nature and explaining how the author reveals the speaker's view of nature in the poem. The response also illustrates a comprehensive and thoughtful grasp of the text.

The first paragraph of the response states the thesis that nature is seen "on a much grander scale" when observing the transitions of the seasons. The following sentences of the paragraph elaborate how nature is a miracle, one involving "life, death, and rebirth," demonstrating "the true meaning of life," which cannot be comprehended on initial observances.

Next, the writer creates the metaphor of a blanket from the author's use of "patchwork of snow and earth" to explain how the beauty of the setting can hide the realities that lie beneath, showing that the writer has a clear understanding of the text.

The idea of the blanket hiding what is underneath is extended further in the third paragraph by the writer's careful paraphrasing of the poem. The writer ends with making a relevant observation about the speaker: "Pulling himself away from his own life, he can see the miracle that lives around him."

The last paragraph further illustrates the idea of being selfless and realizing that there is more to see: ". . . although we aren't seeing, it doesn't mean that they aren't existing." This observation is based upon references to the text (e.g. "Maybe to them we also disappear with the cold. / Not to be seen until spring."). The writer ties the observations in the last paragraph with the thesis stating, "Nature is a cycle of life . . . 'filled with mysteries.'"

The use of precise, descriptive language and a variety of sentence types add to the success of this essay. There are only a few errors in the conventions of written English within this response, and they are generally first draft in nature. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 4-point response.

## 3

**Score Point 3**  
**Student Response**

*In this poem, the speaker seems to enjoy nature very much! The speaker writes passionately about the rebirth of the earth as spring nears. In the poem, it speaks "In the early spring, the snowfall is light upon the mesa. It does not stick to the ground very long." The speaker is inferring that as winter concludes, the snow melts fast, in order to make room for the incoming plants and wildlife. There is such a major transition from winter to spring. All of the plants are starting to grow once again, as the speaker stated in "just below me, young seedlings start their upward journey." While the rodents and other animals are still in their burrows in hibernation for winter, the time is drawing ever so near for them to awake and appear outside once again.*

*The speaker has an idea which states that, just like the animals disappear in hibernation for the winter, the animals we cease to exist until spring comes full force on the earth. To whomever is speaking, to them spring comes so rapidly, that one can imagine from his or her writings that plants shoot up out of the ground and all of the wild animals appear like magic. To the speaker, it seems as though he or she thinks that many people do not take the time to look around and admire nature's natural beauty. It seems that the speaker wants everybody to stop and watch how beautiful nature is and to see nature how he sees it. This seems to be a persuasive yet informative poem.*

**Commentary**

In this response, the writer addresses all the parts of the writing task and shows a comprehensive grasp of the text. The details and examples provided to support the thesis, however, are general.

The first paragraph of the response summarizes the main points of the poem and supports the writer's thesis: ". . . the speaker seems to enjoy nature very much!" The writer uses details from the poem, but only in strengthening the summary. The details used are not thoroughly explained or expounded.

The final paragraph restates most of the ideas presented in the first paragraph, but the writer does include in the beginning of this paragraph that the speaker changes perspective (e.g., "The speaker has an idea . . . the animals disappear in hibernation [*sic*] for the winter, to the animals we cease to exist until spring . . .). The writer, also, includes implicitly in this paragraph the theme of the poem.

The response represents a 3-point paper because it addresses all parts of the writing task and shows a comprehensive grasp of the text. Also, it makes specific references to the text (e.g., "In the early spring, the snowfall is light / upon the mesa."). It, however, lacks the sophistication of organization and precise diction that characterize a 4-point paper. The language is awkward in places, as shown in the second sentence of the final paragraph. The errors in conventions of the English language, however, are few and do not interfere with the meaning of the response. Overall, this essay is representative of a 3-point response.

## 2

**Score Point 2  
Student Response**

*The speakers view of Nature is very interesting. He speaks as if he has become one with Nature. He takes this poem very seriously and smooth.*

*In this poem you can easily tell that he loves Nature and everything about it. He talks about how the snow melts quickly but just slow enough to cover the ground. When he talks about the Animals, and what they are doing, he adds lots of detail that makes you want to read the story again. He also talks about how all the plants are starting to grow, and about the rodent in their tunnels.*

*He tries to tell us, and give us an idea on how beautiful the earth is. If we can listen to the mountains and observe them we will find out what is used to look like before, and how beautiful it was then.*

**Commentary**

In this response, the writer demonstrates a limited grasp of the text providing only a few paraphrased details of text in attempt to support of a very general thesis: “The speakers view of nature is very interesting.”

The second paragraph of the response, also, begins with a very generalized statement that is not fully supported by the details given. The details given are a minimal summarized understanding of the poem and do not add to the writer’s main point or thesis. The last paragraph of the response is more of the same. The sentences do nothing to illuminate the thesis and provide a weak conclusion to the essay.

The lack of organization, failure to develop ideas, and a weak thesis are characteristic of a 2-point paper. The response also contains little variety of sentences and uses basic, predictable language. There are several errors in the conventions of the English language that border on interfering with the understanding of the essay. Overall, this essay is an example of a 2-point response.

1

**Score Point 1  
Student Response**

*A Person is walking in the early spring. He talks about animals and how they are reacting to the snow. A rodent and a Snak are comfortable in their burrows. How a hawk coud see food from the sky and he cannot see it. It is cold but snow dose not stick to the ground for vary long.*

*How beautiful this land is, and how it is filled with mysteries.*

**Commentary**

In this response, the writer simply writes aspects of the poem demonstrating a minimal grasp of the text. There is no thesis, just a summary, which is copied almost verbatim from the poem.

The essay fails to provide a thesis and examples to support one, to use sentence variety, to contain the writer's own thoughts or ideas, and to understand the complexities of the text, making this a 1-point response.