

EXEMPLARS

FROM THE

ELEMENTARY CYCLE THREE COMPULSORY EXAM

JUNE 2007

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STRATEGIC READING AND CRITICAL THINKING

SAMPLE 1 - LEVEL 5

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

There are many differences and similarities in these two advertisements. I believe a very important point is that if both the advertisements were put in front of you, your eyes would probably be more drawn to the Bawks ad. This is because the Bawks ad has more colour, and the writing is bigger and more original. People may also be more convinced by the Bawks ad because it shows that several people's opinion is that Bawks are nice and "cool". The ad for S.S. White Tooth Paste only shows one person who likes it. Also, the Bawks ad takes less time to look at, whereas the S.S. White Tooth Paste takes longer because you have to read a whole story. If by seeing those two ads, I had to choose a product to buy, unlike others, I would choose S.S. White Tooth Paste. This is because tooth paste is essential in our daily lives, whereas Bawks are only needed to look "cool" and be more accepted. I do still think the S.S. Tooth Paste ad should have had more pictures and less writing, because it is rare that people are willing to take the time to read a whole story when they don't need to. My synthesis is: You need to make your ad tempting to read in order for it to be successful.

What's Different?	What's Similar?	What's Different?
Ad from <i>kidCool</i> Bawks (p. 18)	Both Advertisements	Ad # 1 from Booklet of Historical Ads
• Only has a few words written • In colour • Has a photograph of real people • Has two people • It is visible that people are using product • Uses people who are perceived as "cool" • Makes product seem "cool" • Shows how others are envious of product • More than one person is already using product • Shown in 2007 • Slogan is bigger than name of product • Eyes are drawn to lower half of page (because biggest writing is there) • People photographed are looking downwards, to where writing is • Writing is very "fancy" and uses original fonts • Name of product is very clear and emphasized • Generally more attractive	• Selling a product • Are trying to be convincing • Suggest the message that you'll like the product • Show that other people are happy when they use the product • Show that people want to use product • Eyes are immediately drawn to where biggest writing is • Have some writing • Make common products more original • Aimed towards youth and teens • Show how we will benefit from buying their product	• Tells a whole story • In black and white • Has a drawing of a person • Has one person • Is not visible that person is using product • Advertisers aren't trying to make product "hip" or "cool" • Doesn't show that others are envious of product • Shown in 1917 • Suggests that something generally boring can be fun • Title of story is biggest writing on page • Eyes are drawn to top of page (because biggest writing is there) • The writing font is very standard and plain • Name of product is not as big and not as easy to find by simply glancing at advertisement • Generally less attractive

SAMPLE 1 - LEVEL 5

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

Comparison of Two Media Texts, Present-Day and Historical
“KidCool,” page 18 (bawks) and Advertisement #1 (Habit toothpaste)

Comparison

The student was very observant. The similarities and differences are significant and subtle. The student was quite methodical in identifying differences as s/he cross-related each contrast. The mention of “uses people who are perceived as ‘cool,’” compared with “advertisers who aren’t trying to make product ‘hip’ or ‘cool’” relates to the unit’s theme of “coolness”. The choice of vocabulary in expressing similarities indicates a strong knowledge of media techniques and influences: “aimed, immediately drawn, suggest, more original, how we will benefit” and “trying to be convincing”. The student has included an extensive list of similarities and differences.

(5)

Synthesis

The student approaches the synthesis by “looking at” both advertisements simultaneously. S/he notes several “important points” about the ads, e.g. “colour”, “writing”, number of people involved and amount of time to read it. The student feels that most people would prefer the “Bawks” ad, “unlike others, I (the student) would choose S.S. White Tooth Paste”. The choice is made “because toothpaste is essential in our daily lives, whereas Bawks are only needed to look cool and be more accepted”. S/he concludes with an overall opinion: “You need to make your ad tempting to read in order for it to be successful.”

(5)

Global Summary

This student is clearly at a level 5 as s/he has shown strong awareness of the influences of advertising and its advantages and disadvantages.

(5)

SAMPLE 2 - LEVEL 4

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

I noticed that in the olden days the ads are not so addicting as the ones of our days maybe its just me but I like the “you tunes” better then a radionic hearing aid. I noticed that one ad (you tunes) has no story line and it just has a hip slogan “Carry the party in your pocket”, but the other ad (zenith) has no slogan as hip and cool as “you tunes” but it has a story line and maybe the people used to like storys. I also see that the “you tunes” ad has color and its more exciting, but the “zenith” ad is in black and white, no one especially me wouldn’t be interested. I think no one will see a ad like the “zenith” anymore.

What’s Different?	What’s Similar?	What’s Different?
Ad from <i>kidCool</i> you tunes	Both Advertisements	Ad # 3 from Booklet of Historical Ads
• more than 1 person • teens • in a car • picture is colored • looks stoned • its about a cell phone that can be like a party • no story line • not areal ad	• both electronic • same size • hands are holding each product	• 1 person • kid (boy) • in a room • the picture is white and black • looks sad or mad • radionic hearing aid • there’s a story line • real ad from a long time ago

SAMPLE 2 - LEVEL 4

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

Comparison of Two Media Texts, Present-Day and Historical
“KidCool,” page 22 (you tunes) and Advertiesment #3 (Zenith hearing aid)

Comparison

The student has selected a number of differences some of which show a careful perusal of the contemporary and historical ads. The person in the former “looks stoned” versus the person in the historical ad who “looks sad or mad.” The modern work is “not a real ad” while there is “a real ad from a long time ago.” Commonalities could have been extended; for example, there is no mention of the obvious fact that both ads concern hearing.

(3)

Synthesis

The student clearly states personal preferences for advertising techniques: “I noticed that is the olden days the ads are not so addicting as the ones of our days.” S/he elaborates on what makes the you tunes ad “addicting,” citing “the hip slogan,” and the fact that “it has colour and its more exciting.” S/he notes that the modern ad lacks an explicit story line and observes that the story line of the zenith ad may have been appealing in “the olden days” and that “maybe the people used to like storys.”

(4)

Global Summary

There is evidence in this synthesis of engagement with both media texts and musing about techniques used in advertising.

(4)

SAMPLE 3 - LEVEL 4

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

The advertizers are better because even with barely any writing they can convince little children to buy their product, Now they use music, coulours and the term of “cool” to get kids to use their pocket money to buy the product. They Now abuse the young children’s mind to waste their parents money. They used to use the parents minds. Now it has to bee cool it has to be colourful and if there is too much writing kids wouldn’t bother readingit.

What’s Different?	What’s Similar?	What’s Different?
Ad from <i>kidCool</i> Same	Both Advertisements	Ad # 1 from Booklet of Historical Ads
• <i>less writing</i> • <i>white paper</i> • <i>children are more influence</i> • <i>it has to be cool and expensive</i> • <i>coloured</i> • <i>the product is for the nose</i>	• <i>want to sell ther product</i> • <i>on paper</i> • <i>they’re both ads</i> • <i>they are both for the human body</i>	• <i>lots of writing</i> • <i>yellow paper</i> • <i>parents are more influenced by this product</i> • <i>has to be cheap and usefull</i> • <i>black & white</i> • <i>the product is for teeth</i>

SAMPLE 3 - LEVEL 4

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

Comparison of Two Media Texts, Present-Day and Historical
“KidCool,” page 30 (Smell) and Advertisement # 1 (Habit toothpaste)

Comparison

The student has noted rather obvious commonalities: the two advertisements “want to sell their product” and “they are both for the human body.” However, s/he has observed some significant differences. In the “same ad” s/he notes that “children are more influence,” whereas, in the the toothpaste ad “parents are more influenced by this product.”
(4)

Synthesis

A keen awareness of advertising techniques and their effect upon the target audience is evident: “Now they use music, colours and the term of ‘cool’ to get kids to use their pocket money to buy the product.” S/he reflects upon advertising as a form of child abuse: “They now abuse the young children’s mind to waste their parents money.” Implicit is the idea that adults are/were less prone to abuse: “They used to use the parents minds.” S/he also notes the difference in the texts; “barely any writing will appeal to modern children and if there is too much writing kids wouldn’t bother reading it.”
(4)

Global Summary

This student has followed task instructions and produced a thoughtful reflection on advertising then and now.
(4)

SAMPLE 4 - LEVEL 3

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

When you make an ad you can't talk about your ad to much because then it gets boring. You try to put alot of pictures and a catch phrase so people are interested. You can also put things about actors because everyone likes famouse people. This means that the next time a do a project a will put lots of pictures a big words that stand out on my poster to get the class interested, and to not make my info to long. I would put pop ups on and maybe put élétronics or something like that. But I would take a picture of a celebrity and put your ad on the celebrity so it looks like he is holding and make it a big pop up.

What's Different?	What's Similar?	What's Different?
Ad from <i>kidCool</i> Smell	Both Advertisements	Ad # 8 from Booklet of Historical Ads
<i>There alot more pictures. Their facial expression. There is less writing. More color. It has a catch phrase. It looks interesting. The words are bigger.</i>	<i>They both have atleast one pictare. when you look at it you know right away what it's about. They both like go around looking good and cool.</i>	<i>It's smaller. More kind mature. there is only one picture. It talks about the product alot. It used the word favourite star so people would be interested the words are smaller. It's plane</i>

SAMPLE 4 - LEVEL 3

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

Comparison of Two Media Texts, Present-Day and Historical
“KidCool,” page 30 (Smell) and Advertisement #8 (rouge)

Comparison

The student has noted commonalities and isolated a fair number of differences between the media texts. However, fundamental differences in the products being marketed, body spray versus rouge, and the method of marketing, film strip versus celebrity testimonial, have been neglected. There is no evidence of careful reading of the historical ad “as favourite star” is not mentioned in the text.

(3)

Synthesis

Rather than an interpretation of similarities and differences from the media texts, this student has chosen to provide a “to-do” list in a future creation: “the next time a do a project a will put lots of pictures a big words that stand out on my poster to get the class interested.” This could be seen as a general judgment about advertising techniques. Reference to the two media texts is inferred rather than explained.

(3)

Global Summary

This work lies within the acceptable range but there is little evidence of a thorough reading of either the picture testimonial or the written testimonial.

(3)

SAMPLE 5 - LEVEL 3

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

My ideas of what is the same is from you Tunes and The record that money can't buy. Well one thing is that they are showing happy people, not sad just for you to know that they are happy with the product but maybe they don't even like it. They are just doing this because they want to let people know that it is enjoyable but maybe it is not. Another thing is the people are enjoying themselves, but maybe if you would buy the product and you try it, it might not work to well and maybe not work at all. Somme things that aren't similer are one is a cell phone and the other is a record player. Anotherone is that one story happened in the present and the other came from the past. And one is that one happens at someons house and the other happens in a car. Now.

What's Different?	What's Similar?	What's Different?
Ad from <i>kidCool</i> you tunes	Both Advertisements	Ad # 7 from Booklet of Historical Ads
• <i>After</i> • <i>car</i> • <i>sitting</i> • <i>cellyular</i>	• <i>Happy people</i> • <i>hearing</i> • <i>listening</i> • <i>words</i> • <i>enjoying</i> • <i>pictures</i> • <i>people</i> • <i>radeo</i> • <i>seets</i>	• <i>Befor</i> • <i>house</i> • <i>standing</i> • <i>record player</i>

SAMPLE 5 - LEVEL 3

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

Comparison of Two Media Texts, Present-Day and Historical
“KidCool,” page 22 (you tunes) and Advertiesment #7 (Sonora-record player)

Comparison

Commonalities and differences from both media texts are listed perfunctorily. The student does note positive emotion as the first commonality, “happy people,” and the fact that both ads involve “listening.”

(3)

Synthesis

There is a suggestion that this student is media savvy: “They are just doing this because they want to lett people know that it is enjoyable but maybe it is not.” S/he cautions that faith in advertisements may be ill-founded: “...if you would buy the product and you try it, it might not work at all.”

(3)

Global Summary

Obvious similarities and differences have been noted and there is evidence of judgment about how consumers may be duped by false advertising.

(3)

SAMPLE 6 - LEVEL 2

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

I think that cool can mean only one thing be your self don't be someone else be your self. If you think the clotheing is cool it's only how you think it looks it doesn't matter what you wear it counts or how you like the shirt, shorts, T-shirt it doesn't matter how it looks. Be your self.

What's Different?	What's Similar?	What's Different?
Ad from <i>kidCool</i> Just Sweet	Both Advertisements	Ad # 5 from Booklet of Historical Ads
• <i>Sell a drink</i> • <i>less writing</i> • <i>newer picture</i> • <i>less color</i> • <i>atracks more kids</i> • <i>less color</i> • <i>less people</i>	<i>They think it will make you cool but it doesn't make you cool.</i> <i>Both ads use people</i>	• <i>sell soap</i> • <i>older picture</i> • <i>more writing</i> • <i>more color</i> • <i>atracks adults</i> • <i>lots of color</i> • <i>more people</i>

SAMPLE 6 - LEVEL 2

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

Comparison of Two Media Texts, Present-Day and Historical
“KidCool,” page 29 (Just Sweet) and Advertisement #5 (Palmolive soap)

Comparison

The student has noted only two commonalities but the first is pertinent and forms the basis of his/her argument in the synthesis: “They think it will make you cool but it doesn’t make you cool.” Several differences have been noted, including the fact that the target audience is likely “kids” in “Just sweet” and “adults” in the historical ad.

(3)

Synthesis

Unfortunately, the student does not allude to either ad in his/her synthesis, which is that cool means be yourself.

(2)

Global Summary

This student provides a global judgment on the concept of cool, without explicitly mentioning the effects of advertising.

(2)

SAMPLE 7 - LEVEL 2

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

Some of the similarities in my two ads were that they were pictures, they both had a title, they were both very descriptive even though one had more writing than the other, both ads appropriate actors and both ads had one girl and one boy.

Some of the differences were that one was in black and white and the other one was in color. One ad had less writing than the other and one was about shoes and the other about teeth. The pictures were in color in the kidcool and in the old ads the pictures were in black and white. In one story they were teenagers and in the other one there was a little boy. In the ad of Bawks there was a slogan and in the ad of Habit there was no slogan. There are two more differences in these ads one takes place in a school and the other takes place at home. One has real people and the other has a cartoon.

What's Different?	What's Similar?	What's Different?
Ad from <i>kidCool</i> Bawks	Both Advertisements	Ad # 1 from Booklet of Historical Ads
• it is in color • less writing • about shoes • pictures in color • teenagers • slogan • in a school • real people	• pictures • title • both descriptive • appropriate actors • a boy & girl in each story	• it is in black and white • more writing • about brushing teeth • pictures in black & white • a little boy • no slogan • at home • cartoons

SAMPLE 7 - LEVEL 2

Strategic Reading and Critical Thinking

Comparison of Two Media Texts, Present-Day and Historical
“KidCool,” page 18 (bawks) and Advertisement #1 (Habit)

Comparison

The reader has compiled a list of significant differences between the two advertisements. S/he compares the “colour, the writing,” the slogan, the topic, the place, as well as the characters involved and the type of ad: “really people” versus “cartons.” The commonalities are fewer, but included is “appropriate actors,” a more subtle definition. In listing “a boy and girl in each story” one presumes that the mother factors in the student’s understanding of the historical advertisement.

(3)

Synthesis

The student has simply repeated all of the similarities and differences noted in the strategic organizer. There is no synthesis of ideas where the elements are connected.

(2)

Global Summary

The student has given no indication of the ability to form new ideas from the readings. It is an example of Level 2.

(2)

RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

SAMPLE 8 - LEVEL 5
Response to Literature

Starfiel remind be of Pipi Longstockings. Stargirl doesn't fit in, wears strange and sometimes outrageous clothing, she's friendly and smiles at everyone. Just like Pipi she is carefree and doesn't seem to mind what people think about her. Stargirl's head is in the clouds; she asks weird off subject questions. She asked a question about trolls during history class! She doesn't pay any attention to styles or fashions at the school, all the kids are exactly the same, but not her.

Stargirl is very different. This confuses people. Her presence in a room can sometimes make the students uncomfortable. They don't know what to think of her. The kids are sort of impressed by her boldness and courage; she is the only one that dares to express herself and be unique. Because of this they think she's an alien or a nerk or that her parents are brain dead. In a way they fear her because she's not the same, but they probably sense that she's not faking her characteristics and that she's not a freak but just a strange girl.

I don't much like Kevin. He seems to think that popularity and high ratings for the "Hot Seat" are more important than his friendship with Leo. Kevin got angry at Leo because he didn't sign Stargirl up for the "Hot Seat". I think Leo knows that Stargirl's not a nerk or unreal. This is troubling him and at night he gets a bad feeling about putting her on the "Hot Seat". He's trying to protect her.

Jerry Spinelli is a good writer I could never write a book as amazing as this. In the intro he captures your attention by writing poetically and mysteriously. He makes it suspenseful so you want to read more. He doesn't tell you all the details at the start so you have to keep reading to find the meaning of things such as "Did you see her?" and "You know." He doesn't tell you the answers to your questions right away, instead he lets your imagination flow.

When Jerry Spinelli writes about Stargirl he makes us like her and want to defend her.

I think he has a student narrating the book to make it related to life and more dramatic.

SAMPLE 8 - LEVEL 5

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs meaning

Alluding to the text, the student paints a picture of Stargirl as the embodiment of difference and muses on how difference confuses, how it is a source of discomfort, fear, and, perhaps, a secret envy: “The kids are sort of impressed by her boldness and courage; she is the only one that dares to express herself and be unique.” S/he moves from the general to the particular, noting how Stargirl’s presence causes a rift between Kevin and Leo. This leads to a brief analysis of character: naked ambition versus a sense of fairness.

(5)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

The reader connects Stargirl with “Pippi Longstockings” pinpointing a number of similarities in the two characters. The tone of this response and ideas relating to the characters imply connections with experience, lived or vicarious: “In a way they fear her because she’s not the same, but they probably sense that she’s not faking...,” “He seems to think that popularity and high ratings for “Hot Seat” are more important than his friendship with Leo.” A personal connection to Stargirl is clear: “...he makes us like her and want to defend her.”

(5)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

The student shows a keen awareness of the author’s craft, noting how the poetic and mysterious quality of the introduction “captures your attention.” With examples s/he notes techniques for creating suspense and allowing readers’ engagement: “He doesn’t tell you the answers to your questions right away, instead he lets your imagination flow.” S/he suggests that a first person student narrator is a conscious choice “to make it related to life and more dramatic.”

(5)

Criterion 4: Offer Judgment

With clarity and conviction the student supports opinions, referring to the text: “Stargirl’s head is in the clouds...,” “I don’t much like Kevin. He seems...,” “I think Leo knows... He’s trying to protect her.” Personal engagement and an ability to analyze are abundantly evident, as already noted in Criterion 1.

(5)

Global Summary

This response was a joy to read.

(5)

SAMPLE 9 - LEVEL 5

Response to Literature

She was elusive. She was today. She was the faintest sent of a catus flower, the flitting shadow of an elf owl. we did not know what to make of her. In our minds we tried to pin her to a corkboard like a butterfly, but the pin merley went thought and away she flew.

"Did you see her replied kevin" "see who?" "Stargirl Kevin replided"
Stargirl was someone different she laughted when there was no joke. She danced when there was no music. She had no friends but yet she was the friendliest person in school. In class she often spoke about sea horses and stars, but yet she did not no what a football was. She had no television in her house. She was today she elusive she was her own person nobody could really get to her that's why I think it all ties into the last sentence "In our minds we tried to pin her to a corkboard like a butterfly, but the pin merly went thought and away she flew. At school (Mika Area High School) they tried to "pin Stargirl down and change her but instaid of getting changed she just merly flew away." "She's not "normal" she sneered she's and actress it's all a scam hillari kimble said" "why would she want to scam us shouted a student" "School spirit she spat back. They think this place was too dead last year. They think if they palnt some nutcase who stirs things up them maby all the students will go to a game once in a while or join a club. Instaid of making out in the libray"

Nobody thought she was real because she was so different and at Mica hight school wore the same kinds of clothes talked the same ate the same kinds of foods and even listened to the same kinds of music. Even the nerds and dorks had MAHS stamp on them. and if somehow happen to distingus ourselves we quickly snapped back in to place, like rubber bands. They were to afraid to be themselves and get picked on so they blamed it on Stargirl for being different. They wish they had as much confidence as Stargirl. So they mad excuses on why she was so weird. "She was sniffing fumes. she was home schooled gone amok. She was alien. The rat she brought to school was only one of the icebergs. She had hundreds of them at home some as big as cats. She lived in a ghost town in the deserts. She lives on a bus. Her parents were acrobats. Her parents were brain-dead vegetables in Yuma. One day we watched her sit down in class and pull a blue and yellow ruffled curtain that she dropped over three sides of her desk. We wached her set out a three-inch clear glass vase and drop it into a white and yellow daisy. I think she did it because she wanted to fell at home and at home she was happy and not at school where people made fun of her. On Monday her daisys were fresh. By last period the petles were frooping. By Wednesday petles begain to fall, the stem to sag. By friday the flower hung down over the rim of the waterless vase, its dead stump of a head shedding yellow dust in a penci groove. I think the reason why the flower is fres on monday. And dying during the week is because thathow she felt. On monday she was confadent and every day that passes she felt less and less confadent. I like to authors use of language. I really like a lot of quote and I found that the pictures really helped you could really see what her "normal" out fits were. I also liked the shot crisps sentences it was a lot easier to understand the story. I think the authors message was that everybody is different and has different personalities. But the the important thing were the same cloths eat the sam food and listen to the same music. I can connect to this story because I am very different form all of my classmates. Because I am asain I am always different. When I was younger I didn't like being different form everybody. I wished that I was like them and not like me. And unlike Stargirl my classmates didn't try and change me. I tried to change me. I defenatly was not very confadent in myself.

SAMPLE 9 - LEVEL 5

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs Meaning

Though this response is dense with quotes from the text (often misspelled,) it also provides evidence of insightful reading: "... she was her won person nobody could really get to her that's why I think it all ties into the last sentence." The reader believes that attempts to "pin Stargirl down" also involved changing her..." "but instead of getting changed she just merley flew away." S/he further observes: "Nobody thought she was real because she was so different..." in an atmosphere of conformity which, s/he suggests, was built on fear: "They were to afraid to be themselves and get picked on... So they mad excuses on why she was so weird." S/he believes that the progressively wilting daisy which Stargirl sets in a vase at teach of her classes reflects Stargirl's own emotional state: "On Monday she was confadent and every day that passes she felt less and less confadent." S/he perceives the author's message that "everybody is different and has different personalities to be juxtaposed with the culture of "sameness" pervading the fictional school and this reader's own life experience.

(5)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

The student makes a very personal connection to the story: "Because I am asian I am always different." S/he contrasts her/his experience with that of Stargirl: "And unlike Stargirl my classmates didn't try and change me. I tried to change me." This is a poignant connection to a piece of literature.

(4)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

The student elaborates on and interprets the metaphor of the daisy, suggesting that its wilting represents Stargirl's waning confidence each week. S/he also suggests a reason for the cloth and daisy ritual: "I think she did it because she wanted to feel at home..." Appreciation of the author's use of language is evident in the numerous quotes selected. S/he also alludes to the illustrations which "really helped you could really see what her 'normal' outfits were." S/he feels that the "shot crisps" sentences aided her understanding of the story.

(5)

Criterion 4: Offers Judgment

The reader reflects upon the effects of difference from the norm. The desire for change clearly resonates for her/him. S/he notes that in Stargirl's case it was the desire of the majority to "pin Stargirl down and change her but instead of getting changed she just merly flew away." S/he contrasts this with personal experience where s/he aimed to change: "I didn't like being different... I defenalty was not very confadent in myself."

(5)

Global Summary

The reader has clearly related deeply to this story, comparing and contrasting its message with personal experience. Her/his own insightful comments are interspersed with carefully selected quotations.

(5)

SAMPLE 10 - LEVEL 4

Response to Literature

My thoughts of Stargirl are basically this: she is definitely odd. I think she might be descendant of hippies. Probably because of her name she was and apparent love of nature that would explain the peculiar name at least. There's something about the name though, I think. It might explain somewhat her origins but that's only a theory. I think that Leo is afraid of Stargirl maybe just a touch because he had described his feelings as warning, like a "leave her alone" attitude like one would have when a stray dog comes up to you in the street who doesn't seem friendly enough to bring home. Maybe that's why Leo refuses to conduct a Hot Seat of her. Her behavior might be an attribute to how she was brought up. Being homeschooled for eleven years could have taught her a very different way of acting with others, whereas being placed in a school environment and being influenced by her peers could inhibit that sort of behavior. People in society today are so close-minded (including me, I'll admit) that we are afraid and sometime threatened by something different. For instance take Leo's sentiments toward Stargirl. I find that the author of this book likes to base his stories upon odd people. For one, Stargirl is very strange, and in another book that he wrote "Maniac Magie" bases itself on a kid exactly downright weird, like Stargirl, but more extraordinary. He is very good at placing himself in his character's minds and expresses how they feel about something. I understand what Leo feels because of the good detailing the author puts in his work.

SAMPLE 10 - LEVEL 4

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs Meaning

Throughout the response the student expresses his/her own thoughts and feelings “of Stargirl” and includes reactions from others towards Stargirl. This leads to the student’s thorough understanding that “People in society today are so close-minded (including me, I’ll admit) that we are afraid and sometimes threatened by something different.”

(5)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

The student justifies Stargirl’s behavior by connecting her family with “might be descendant of hippys”. She also notes that perhaps her address and hippy connection is due to “the clothes she wears and her apparent love of nature”. These would “explain the peculiar name at least.” S/he connects Leo’s attitude of “leave her alone” to “when a stray dog comes up to you in the street who doesn’t seem friendly enough to bring home.” The student also mentions another book written by the author, titled “Maniac Magie” which he “bases itself on a kid not exactly downright weird like Stargirl but more extraordinary.”

(4)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

The student feels that the author has worked successfully on the characters. “He is very good at placing himself in his characters minds and expressing how they feel about something.” S/he also notes the “good detailing the author puts in his work.” This gave the student a better understanding of “what Leo feels” and clarified the story for him or her.

(4)

Criterion 4: Offers Judgment

The student feels that the author “likes to base his stories upon odd people.” S/he says “She is definitely odd” and supports the opinion throughout the response with his/her reasons for this decision. “She might be descendant of hippies,” “being homeschooled for eleven years could have taught her a very different way of acting with others.” The student also felt that by being placed in a high school environment “being influenced by her peers could inhibit that sort of behavior.”

(4)

Global Summary

This student has responded with original ideas and thoughtful explanations.

(4)

SAMPLE 11 - LEVEL 4

Response to Literature

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli is a book about a girl named Stargirl who attends a small highschool called Mica Area HighSchool. Alot of people think Stargirl is fake accept for Leo. As Stargirl attend's school she acts very unique and people think that she is very weird and is just their to bring some school spirit.

After reading the Literature Stargirl I thought of what the author was trying to tell us. After I thought about it Stargirl is judged alot just because she acts different and everyone acts the same. I think the meaning is that you shouldn't judge people when you dont even know them, for example when Hillari Kimble said she was fake. From the text Hillari Kimble was holding court at the door "she's fake" Hillari said. She was sneering. This is a way of saying that Hillari didn't really like Stargirl because she had all the attention and started to judge her but like the quote is said don't judge a book by its cover. So I think Jerry Spinelli was trying to tell us not to judge people and to Appriate changes and differances. I think that Jerry Spinelli used a lot of suspense to keep your attention, for example from the text "Did you see her?" "see who?" "You'll know" "You see her" That built up alot of suspense to keep your attention and also Jerry Spinelli used a rich vocabulary, for example from the text. Elusive, milling, note-worthy, etc.

This literature made me feel unpleasent because everyone was saying she was fake and not real. Also it made me feel unsatisfied because I find that the ending wasnt as good as it could be because I would of liked to know how Stargirl and Leo's year went by. This literature Stargirl also reminded me of 1 of the advertisements, for example the Same ad when its saying to not be yourself to be everyone else and copy them but in the story it says "within pretty narrow limits we all wore the same clothes, talked the same way, ate the same food and listened to the same music". That reminds me of the same ad because they are all the same until Stargirl come's and is all unique and different and everyone starts to pay attention to her. 1 more thing this reminded me of was when it was raining and Stargirl was dancing in the rain it reminded me when it was raining and I was jumping/dancing on my trampoline in the rain.

SAMPLE 11 - LEVEL 4

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs Meaning

Introducing the response with a brief summary, this reader highlights the change in the narrator: “A lot of people think Stargirl is fake except for Leo.” S/he then elaborates upon the “unique” quantities of Stargirl and how she is “judged a lot because she acts different and everyone acts the same.” S/he suggests that Hillari Kimble’s theory stems from jealousy: “She was sneering.” “This is a way of saying that Hillari didn’t really like Stargirl because she had all the attention...” The reader’s observations indicate a thorough understanding of the text and the school scene in which it is set.

(4)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

The reader makes a thoughtful connection between the text and one of the advertisements in the magazine “...in the story it says “Within pretty narrow limits we all wore the same clothes...” “That reminds me of the same ad because they are all the same until Stargirl come...” S/he also makes a personal connection to Stargirl’s dancing in the rain, alluding to her/his own memory of “jumping/dancing on my trampoline in the rain.”

(4)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

Quoting from the text: “Did you see her?...” the reader notes how Spinelli “used a lot of suspense to keep your attention.” S/he also gives examples of what s/he deems to be “rich vocabulary.” Her/his observations about the characters in a school setting (the herd instinct, fear of difference, prejudice and rivalry) show an awareness of how the author has created believable characters.

(4)

Criterion 4: Offers Judgment

The reader shows engagement with the text when s/he alludes to her/his own discomfort: “This literature made me feel unpleasant because everyone was saying she was fake and not real.” S/he also notes that the piece is unfinished and feels “unsatisfied... I would of liked to know how Stargirl and Leo’s year went by.”

(4)

Global Summary

This response provides ample evidence of thoughtful careful reading.

(4)

SAMPLE 12 - LEVEL 3

Response to Literature

Star girl has no friends because she likes to be different. I like this book because that's the only person that I have seen that is different to every body else. In the book the senior kids think her parents are brain-dead vegetables in a hospital because she is different. The whole time they were thinking that she wasn't real because she was acting very different to others. The Hot Seat people group always sing Happy Birthday to people. I also liked this book because the author by how he used his words because there not just simple words they also can be challenging. I like how star girl acted in the book just because she is different and doesn't have she still continues her life like way id she had friends. I also have seen that Stare girl was acting weird but at the same time she can be weird but inside be different. I find it would be to try an introment like her's. I also find that even though they make fun of her they should respect her at the same time.

SAMPLE 12 - LEVEL 3

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs Meaning

This criterion is the main plank used to build this response. The reader demonstrates that s/he has a general grasp of the theme of the text by noting that Stargirl “likes to be different,” and that she “continues her life like the way if she had friends.” In his/her view, Stargirl has chosen to be different, an important observation and s/he is entitled to the respect of her peers. Unfortunately, this reader has not developed nor supported his/her interesting interpretations any further.

(3)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

There are no direct connections among elements of the text nor to other texts.

This reader, however, does make one implicit comparison to another text in the second sentence when s/he says, “I like this book because it is the only person that I have seen that is different to everybody else.” His/her desire to “try and instrument like her’s” is a personal connection to the main character of the story.

(3)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

This reader mentions the author’s choice of words which s/he describes as “challenging,” but provides no examples. In addition, there may be an implicit reference to characterization in the second sentence when the reader says, “I like this book because it is the only person that I have seen that is different to everybody else,” as well as an implicit comparison to other characters in the story and/or perhaps to characters in other texts s/he has read. The obvious structures of the text are mentioned implicitly and without supporting evidence from the text.

(2)

Criterion 4: Offers Judgment

This reader likes the book, the author’s choice of words, and the main character.

While s/he reacts to the text mainly with likes and dislikes, s/he does offer some limited explanations for his/her preferences. S/he likes the story and Stargirl “because it is the only person that I have seen that is different to everybody else.” In addition, s/he expresses his/her approval of the way Stargirl “continues her life like the way if she had friends.” His/her judgments of the text are logical and somewhat substantiated.

(3)

Global Summary

In order to make a judgment on this reader’s response, it is necessary to look for implicit support for his/her views, to apply the rubric precisely, and to use the same elements as evidence of more than one criterion. This response thus falls within level 3.

(3)

SAMPLE 13 - LEVEL 3

Response to Literature

The story is about a high school and a new girl that comes to the school and is weird she does weird things like dance in the rain, asks about trolls. The author, Jerry Spinelli's message is advertisers don't like people like stargirl because if everyone dressed like her and didn't care about what people say. So nobody would care about cool and dress with expensive things. Jerry is trying to say be like stargirl. People said things about her but she ignored them.

This story reminds me of how the advertisers make kids get all into cool. Like on commercials when they say are you cool enough. Stargirl doesn't care what they say on commercial she thinks she's cool.

I think that a narrative story was a good choice. But you had to really think to find the message. Like when they showed stargirl in the story and how everybody whispered and said she was mental but she didn't care what they whispered, what they said or what they thought of her. I think that more people should be like stargirl.

I thought the story was okay. I like that the 2 kids made a t.v. show. It was interesting seeing how the students reacted when she: danced in the rain, played her ukulele, when she asked about trolls and when she put a tablecloth on her desk. I especially when she sang birthday songs to people. I would rate the text 9/10. The text was amusing to read.

SAMPLE 13 - LEVEL 3

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs Meaning

The response begins with a general explanation of the story. The student reveals the author's message with the statement "Jerry is trying to say be like Stargirl." S/he comments that "advertisers don't like people like stargirl." This is supported with "if everyone dressed like her and didn't care what people say so nobody would care about cool and dress with expensive things." It is obvious that s/he understood that Stargirl was unique. (3)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

The reader is reminded of the influence from advertisements which connects to the central question of the unit. S/he notes that "advertisers make kids get all into cool." The student elaborated on this by saying that if people were like Stargirl they wouldn't care and wouldn't dress in expensive clothes. S/he also says "more people should be like stargirl." This connection refers to life as she knows it. (4)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

The student mentions that the story is a narrative. There is some indication that the notes show the author uses characterization; "she ignored them," "how the students reacted" and "everybody whispered." "But you had to really think to find the message" is an indication of how the reader perceived the author's writing style. (3)

Criterion 4: Offers Judgment

The student contends that "more people should be like stargirl," "she didn't care what they whispered." S/he felt the story was "okay," "interesting" and "amusing" while noting sections that were enjoyable. It was a challenging read for the student, "you had to really think" but it was a "good choice" and the student confidently rated it a 9/10. (3)

Global Summary

The student leads us through his/her interpretive process and meets the overall criterion for Level 3.

SAMPLE 14 - LEVEL 3

Response to Literature

Stargirl was an amazing story to read. Parts of this book have been a life long lesson such as, when Stargirl is in the cafeteria and doesn't care what people say about her and just follows the rythm of her heart. She has proved to me that it doesn't matter what people say in life it matters about how you while doing it. Stargirls braveness was the best part of the story on my behalf and it is a shame no one was able to witness it in the story.

Stargirl had many people who made fun of her clothing, music, etc and peopl such as Hillari and Kevin made fun of her.

A way Kimberly was mean was as follows: "She's not real" or "It's a scam." Ways that Kevin was mean that he cared more about his t.v. production more than Stargirl. Such as Leo said "You want her to be fake, don't you?" "Absolutely. Our ratings will go sky high." It was very cruel for Kevin to think more about his productions than a fellow students feelings.

There is parts were I find Hillari is jealous of "Stargirl". This reminds of a movie I have recently watched "High School Musical." A girl named Sharpey is jealous of a girl named Gabriella who has taken her place in a winter musical.

SAMPLE 14 - LEVEL 3

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs Meaning

The student states, “Parts of this book have been a life long lesson.” Stargirl “has proved to me that it doesn’t matter what people say in life it matter how you (act) while doing it.” This goes beyond a general understanding. The reader sees the “braveness” in Stargirl, and notes that others don’t see that it takes bravery to do what she does; “it is a shame no one was able to witness it in the story.”

(4)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

The student is reminded of a movie called “High School Musical.” S/he compares how “a girl named Sharpey is jealous of a girl named Gabriella” with the jealousy shown by Hillari of Stargirl. Thus connecting with the main theme of the story.

(3)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

The reader alludes the author’s use of characterization by noting sections that influence peoples’ feelings about others. Stargirl “just follows the rhythm of her heart.” Stargirl’s braveness,” Kimberly was mean,” “Kevin cared more for his T.V. production.” It is apparent that the student visualizes Stargirl. There is an implicit mention of the theme.

(3)

Criterion 4: Offers Judgment

The student lists characters as in the above criterion that s/he thinks were mean or cruel and supports these opinions with logical explanations. S/he feels “it is a shame no one was able to witness is (Stargirls braveness) in the story.” S/he also mentions that the story was “amazing.” The student was quite engaged with the story and the characters.

(3)

Global Summary

Although not completed this student’s response falls well within a Level 3 range of competency.

SAMPLE 15 - LEVEL 3

Response to Literature

Stargirl, a new girl in school, was standing out of the crowd. Everyone was talking about her. "Did you see her?" At one point people thought she wasn't read. She was "too different". "She's not real." Everybody wanted to know the truth. "Who is scamming us?" Stargirl entertained people with her weirdness. She wore clothing that was out of this world. "Several times in those early weeks of September, she showed up with something outrageous". Kevin and the "narrator" kept having fights about her. "We fought daily". In the end, people notices Stargirl just wouldn't change. Their lives went on. "In out minds we tries to pin her to a cardboard like a butterfly, but she merely went through and away she flew.

The author, Jerry Spinelli, born in 1941 in a small town called Narristown, was suppose to be a baseball played but then became an author. This author wrote quite a few great books, but I liked one in particular, Stargirl. It was very interesting, humorous and quite real, while making some exceptions. I would like another book created like this one was. It's quite realistic and I can relate to it in quite a few ways.

In our school, when someone is different, they stand out. Not only that, rumours spread around about them and most of the time, make them feel bad. Sometimes, it even hits people back in the face. Like in Stargirl, Kevin and the "narrator" thought of Stargirl differently from everyone else. Afterwords they noticed that they were fighting together about their differences.

I could also relate to Stargirl. She had differences well, so did I. I was having a little problem with people that are now my friends. They didn't really like me for my differences and called me names. Just like people were calling Stargirl fake. In the end, they learned to appreciate me and I learned to appreciate them.

I really think that this story was well made. With thoughtfulness especially! I'm sure that a person that is being left out or that was already left out would appreciate that an author would think about them. They'll really enjoy the story. I find that the story is always loved a little more when someone can connect to it.

I also think that this narrative text was very well formed and will encourage people to be who they are but at the same time not being over exaggerated because bad things may happen. I think this story could have been a touch more humorous. After someone will read this narrative text, they will want to read more and buy more of Jerry's books. Nobody likes to stand out and have people talk bad about them. So, after reading this text, as my own opinion, they'll know to just show them that everyone who they are and it will never change. For example, when I had crutches I went to the mall in a wheelchair and people were laughing at me. I never wanted to go back to the mall, but I noticed that I may have differences and those differences make me who I am, a good child.

SAMPLE 15 - LEVEL 3

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs Meaning

The student's first paragraph is a short synopsis of the excerpt from this book. It clearly defines Stargirl's uniqueness and the effect this has on the other students. In spite of the fact that she was "standing out in the crowd," the student reflects that "in the end, people noticed Stargirl just wouldn't change."

(3)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

The reader continues to elaborate on the theme of being different. S/he recounts the school experience of this. "When someone is different they stand out...rumours spread around about them and most of the time, make them feel bad." For this reason the student believes that "a person that is being left out...would appreciate that an author would think about them." Commenting on the fact that nobody likes to stand out and be talked about, s/he believes that after reading this text such students will "know to just show them that they are who they are and it will never change." Obviously this personal connection of being different is paramount for the reader, as s/he continues with an account of the misery experienced when visiting a mall in a wheelchair.

(3)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

The student goes beyond just identifying structures, explaining how the text reveals the author's purpose. S/he believes that Spinelli had a target audience in mind and that there was a deliberate construction in order to impact on the reader. S/he sees it as a story "well made with thoughtfulness." S/he believes Spinelli sets out to appeal to those persons who are left out and are different. "The text was well formed and will encourage people to be who they are." The student refers to the narrator and to the fact that the story is "quite realistic." For these reasons Criterion 3 is within the level 4 range.

(4)

Criterion 4: Offers Judgment

Although the author has written other "great books," the realistic topic of this text appealed to the reader, making "Stargirl" one of Spinelli's best. So much so, that s/he would like "another book created like this one was."

(3)

Global summary

The student appears to be pre-occupied with his/her own personal experiences. "I noticed that I may have differences and that those differences make me who I am, a good child." However, there is engagement with the text and an awareness of wider social issues involved. This is a well written level 3 response.

(3)

SAMPLE 16 - LEVEL 2
Response to Literature

I dislike the idea of stargirl being all weird and dressing funny because why would they call her stargirl. I find that it has nothing to do with media literacy which is what the exam should be about.

This story reminds me of when I was in Kindergarten. I had no friends but I was still happy and then after a while I made friends. I didn't dress funny or act weird. I think thats the only situation that reminds me about the story stargirl.

SAMPLE 16 - LEVEL 2

Response to Literature

Criterion 1: Constructs Meaning

The student refers to Stargirl “being all weird and dressing funny.” S/he seems to understand that Stargirl was not unhappy being different, going on to link this with her own memories of kindergarten. “I had no friends but I was still happy and then after a while I made friends.”

This indicates a partial understanding of the story.

(2)

Criterion 2: Makes Connections

Besides the reference to her Kindergarten experiences, the student struggles to find some connection and link beyond the immediate text. “I find that it has nothing to do with media literacy which is what the exam should be about.”

(2)

Criterion 3: Notes Structures

There are no references to any structures.

(1)

Criterion 4: Offers Judgment

The student reacts to the story, disliking “the idea of Stargirl being all weird and dressing funny.” She gives a logical reason for this thought “because why would they call her Stargirl.”

(3)

Global Summary

Although a personal viewpoint is evident, the student has demonstrated only a partial understanding of the text. The written response is brief, shows lack of engagement and s/he does not explore any ideas beyond the initial reaction.

This falls within the Level 2 range.

SAMPLE 17 - LEVEL 2

Response to Literature

I have just read a part for "Stargirl" by Jerry Spinelli. I enjoyed the book because it was really but it was not. In the story there was a bold girl called Stargirl and two boys Leo and Kevin.

In the end when it said "she was the flitting shadow of an elf owl." I thought it mean that she was like an elf owl. An elf owl is small, graceful and mysterious. So when I read that I got that she was small graceful and mysterious. In another part when they said "In our minds we tried to pin her to a corkboard like a butterfly, but the pin merely went through and away when she flew." I got that they tried to hold her down, but she went away.

The things Jerry used to get people's attention is that he put in phrases, he put in idioms like "marooned in a sea of faces." I think it means that she was lost. Jerry also put in big and difficult words. There are some elusive, (means difficult to find or catch.) ukulele, (means small instrument) plant, (this means to put something or one somewhere) narcs (is someone that goes in school like a spy) and hoax (a trick played on someone).

I think she was brave to sing in front of everyone. I think that the other people were mean because they called her weird, strange and goofy and because they made up stories about her like "she was trying to get herself discovered for the movies." "she was sniffing fumes." "she was home-schooling gone amok." "she was an alien." "she lived in a ghost town in the desert." "she lived in a bus." I think that they were cruel and mean for doing this.

SAMPLE 17 - LEVEL 2

Response to Literature

Criterion 1 – Constructs Meaning

The reader seems to be struggling towards an understanding of the text but, instead of viewing it as a whole, s/he isolates parts and tries to make meaning: “I get that she was small grasful and mesterises.” “I get that they tried to hold her down but she when away.”

(2)

Criterion 2 – Makes Connections

No obvious connections to the text are offered in the response. Perhaps there is a loose connection to other fiction in the observation that “it was realy but it was not.”

(1)

Criterion 3 – Notes Structures

The student notes how the author attracted readers’ attention when “he put in pichers(and) ideams like ‘marooned in a sea of faces.’ I think that I means that she was lost.” S/he alludes to the difficulty of the vocabulary and provides dictionary definitions for some of the challenging words.

(3)

Criterion 4 – Offers Judgment

The reader claims to have “enjoyed the book” but offers no explanation of this. S/he notes that Stargirl was “brave to sing in front of everyone” and that “the other people were mean” to indulge in name calling but does not elaborate on these opinions.

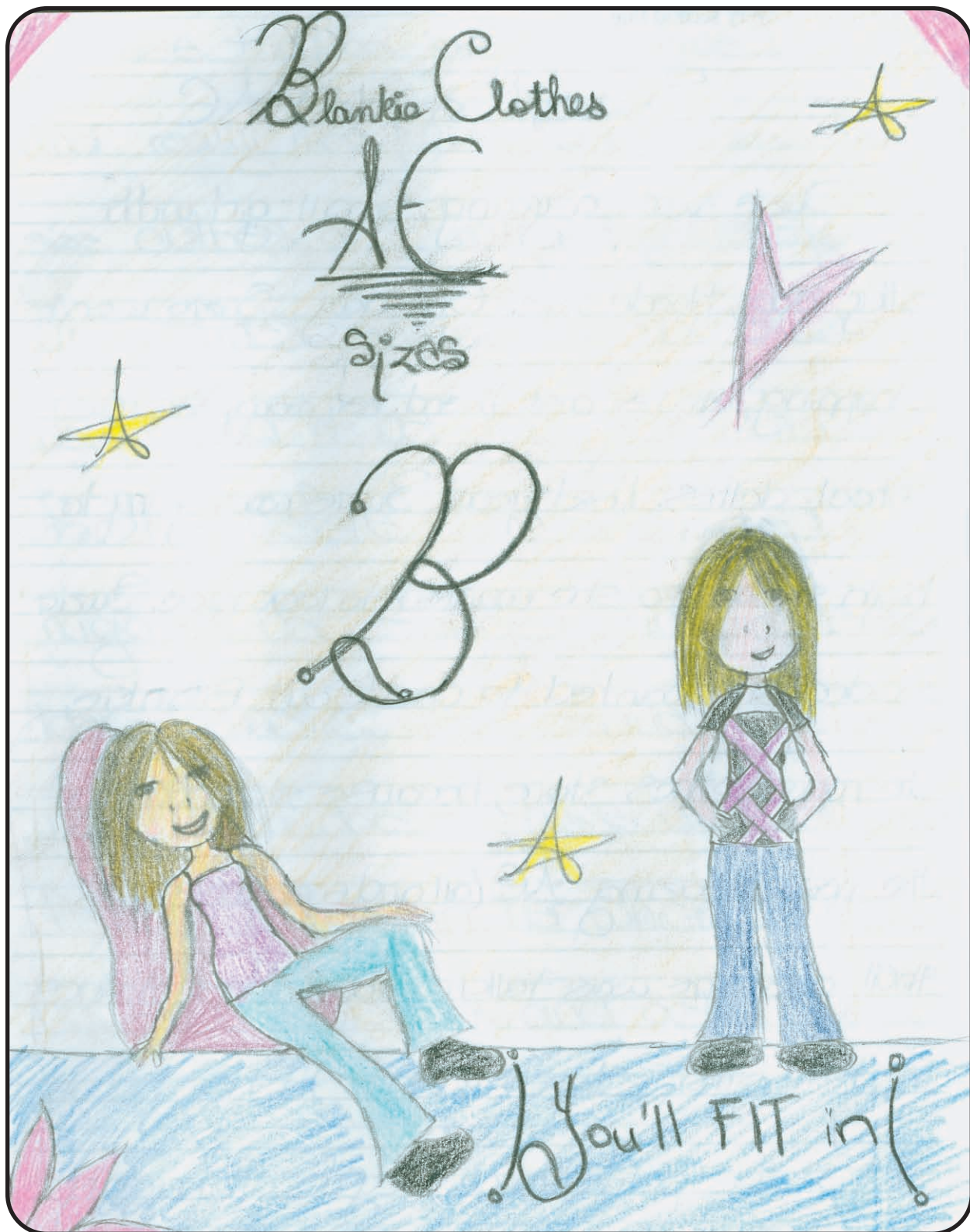
(2)

Global Summary

While there is evidence of engagement with text and task, this student appears to need guidance in supporting and explaining her/his views.

(2)

MEDIA PRODUCTION AND NARRATIVE WRITING



SAMPLE 18 - LEVEL 5

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

This advertisement is clearly aimed at young girls who want clothes that “FIT” and also want to “fit in” with the peer group. “AE” is not clear until the story has been read.

(5)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

The cheerful tone of the poster suggests that “Blankie Clothes” would be a social asset. The product name, Blankie Clothes is prominent and its logo “B” is central. The stars that are sprinkled over the ad suggest glamour. Both women in the ad appear to be stylish and happy.

(5)

Criterion 3: Narrative

The connection between story and advertisement is strong. The poster is almost an illustration for the story.

(4)

Global Summary

This student shows a clear understanding of how advertisements are structured and has created an engaging media text.

SAMPLE 19 - LEVEL 5

Narrative Writing

Suzie, Mom and AE

Suzie was a young, small girl with silky, long, blonde hair. One day, Suzie went shopping with her best friend, her mom, for new school clothes. Next year Suzie was going to high school, so she wanted to look nice. Suzie decided she wanted to check out Blankie, the new clothes store, because she heard of the new amazing AE (all and everyone) sizes that everyone was talking about. Most clothes in the other stores don't fit her because she's so "petite", and they're all baggy on Suzie.

Suzie tried on this really cute T-shirt, and really nice jeans from the new AE size clothes, and they fit perfectly! The clothes shrunk to her size! How could it be? They looked to big for her before! The shirt and pants hugged her snuggly and made her look fantastic! Suzie smiled at her mom, who doesn't have nice, stylish, fitting clothes on her, which makes her mom look poor, and asks HER to try them on!

"Will it fit?" Suzie's mom thought to herself. So she tried the stuff on anyways. The weird thing is though, the same clothes that Suzie tried on, fit her mom to!

Her mom usually wore baggy stuff because she was a realitively tall woman, and could never find clothes that fit! So when she put on Blankie's AE clothes, they hugged her body so well, and it really brought out her shape that she never knew she had, and made her look totally "in"!

Without a doubt, they bought adorable matching outfits, and different stuff to. Now they look cute, stylish, trendy and comfortable together in their new clothes. They have never been happier about themselves and ALWAYS shop there now.

Suzie is ready for her big new year in high school, and prepared for popularity!

SAMPLE 19 - LEVEL 5

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

The idea of clothes that expand and contract to fit the wearer is a clever one. The student sustains the focus on the “AE (all and everyone) sizes” throughout this entertaining tale of Suzie and Mom on their shopping spree, which culminates in joy: “They have never been happier about themselves and ALWAYS shop there now.”

(5)

Criterion 2: Voice

The writer’s tone is confident in addressing the intended audience of young shoppers. The name “Blankie” may be an allusion to an infant’s favourite blanket for we learn that the clothes “hugged her snugly.”

(5)

Criterion 3: Structures

The writer describes a dream world of clothes which not only change to fit the wearer but transform life itself, much as Cinderella’s ball gown and glass slippers did. The image of the “realitively tall,” unstylish mother suddenly revealed in a “shape that she never knew she had” is very funny. It is a fitting end that “Suzie is ready for her big new year in high school, and prepared for popularity!” Exaggerations enhance the story and engage the reader.

(5)

Criterion 4: Conventions

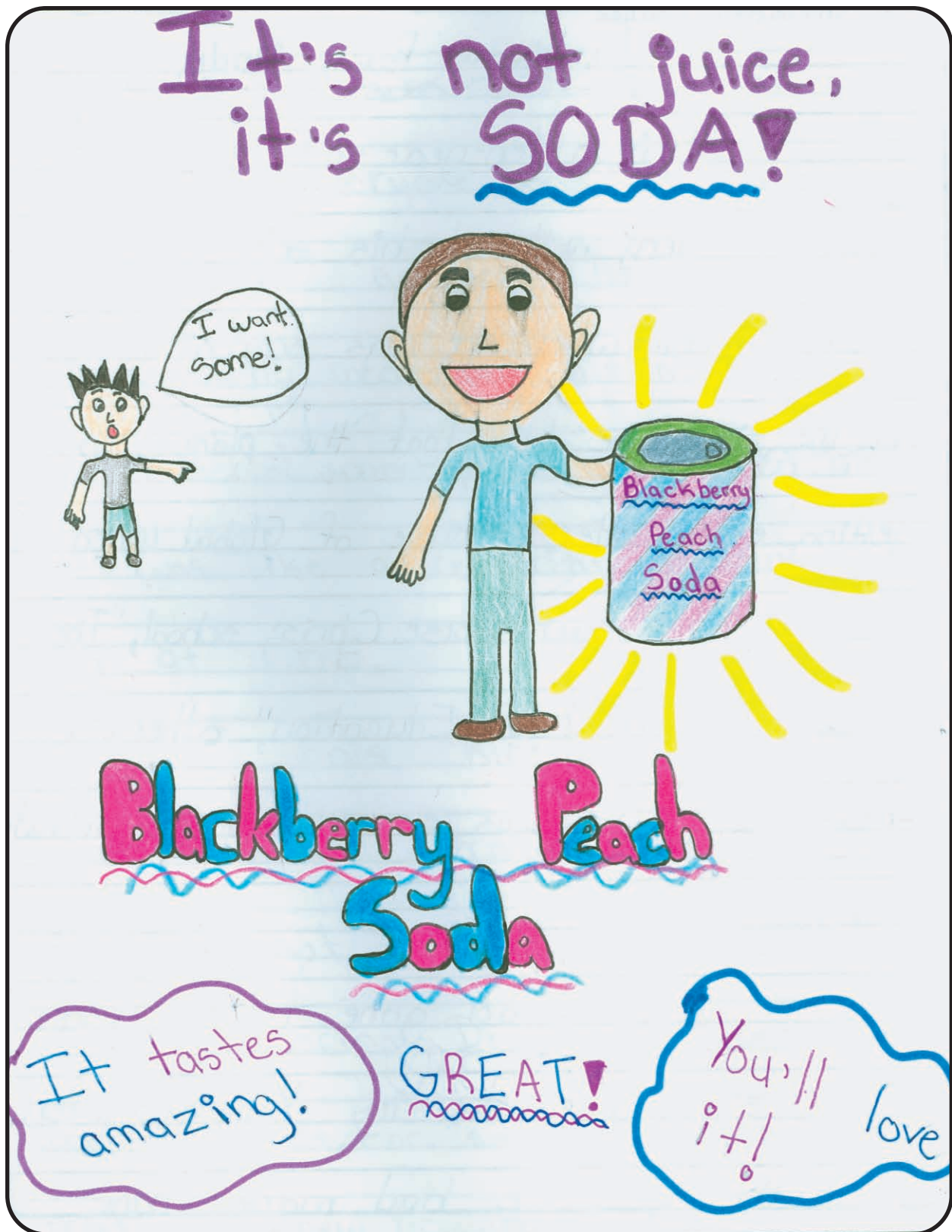
The student’s writing flows smoothly and easily.

(5)

Global Summary

This is the work of a writer with an ability to expand ideas confidently.

(5)



SAMPLE 20 - LEVEL 5

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

The product in this ad, Blackberry Peach Soda, is the focal point. It appears twice in the centre of the layout in both words and image. The target audience for the ad is evidently tweens and teens in that they are the major consumers of soda, rather than juice, and the people in the images are clearly in those age groups.

(5)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

The producer of this ad has used several persuasive techniques to sell the product. There are several testimonials in the form of slogans: It tastes amazing! Great! and You'll love it! The image shows one teen without a drink looking enviously at the other who has the soda saying, "I want some!" in a speech bubble. The font used for the name of the product is colourful and prominent. Another advantage of the soft drink is proclaimed boldly across the top of the ad, "It's not juice, it's soda!" This feature of the drink is apparently not aimed at the nutrition-conscious, but at those who wish to be cool.

(5)

Criterion 3: Narrative

The connections between the ad and the story were appropriate and satisfying. While a fizzy drink is rather a prosaic product, the writer was able to create a familiar context, a classroom, in which Blackberry Peach Soda had an extraordinary effect on the social relationships of the students. The slogan at the top of the ad, "It's not juice, it's soda!" is explained more fully in the story where it is decidedly not cool to drink juice. This is a strong and effective link between the two works.

(5)

Global Summary

This ad was well conceived and designed and also relates seamlessly to the student's story.

(5)

SAMPLE 21 - LEVEL 5

Narrative Writing

Blackberry Peach Soda

Chris, a ten-year-old boy in 4th Grade, did very well at his school. He lived in California, where it was scorching hot, all the time. The fact that the planet was getting even hotter (because of Global Warming) made matters much worse. Chris' school, "The Californian School of Education", otherwise known as CSE, was a well-known private school.

Chris had gone to the same school since he was in Kindergarten. Over the years, he had made many friends... and enemies.

There had always been the school bully. He was huge, powerful, and very scary. Everyone was afraid of him, even the 6th graders. Though he was tremendously mean and intimidating, everyone at school worshipped and envied him. He was like a celebrity, or even a king at CSE.

This "king's" name was Drake. Whenever Drake wanted something, he got it. In fact, people raced to bring Drake whatever he wanted first. For some reason, they thought that if they brought it to Drake, Drake would like them. Everybody wanted Drake to like him/her, because that meant that Drake wouldn't beat them up; and everyone else would like them.

Chris, however, was never one of the people who brought Drake what he wanted. He believed that the way everyone treated Drake was ridiculous. Chris couldn't argue with Drake being strong and scary, but the whole school together was stronger than him. Chris hated Drake, and knew that the school should stand up for themselves (and each other).

Chris' animosity towards Drake created countless conflicts between them. Drake would make Chris seem like a horrible, "weird" person at every opportunity he had, and Chris did the same to Drake. Unfortunately, Chris wasn't successful in encouraging people to stand up to Drake. As the year continued, more and more people decided to hate Chris.

Chris eventually got fed up with everyone hating him, and decided to call a truce with Drake. On one searing hot day, Drake said, "It's so hot and I'm so thirsty, I think my throat might just crack open!"

Drake didn't even need to ask. Within a second, he had about 20 chilled water bottles staring up at his face.

He ungratefully replied with, "You guys are so dumb. I don't want boring water. It has no taste at all. Get me something good."

SAMPLE 21 - LEVEL 5

Narrative Writing

Chris looked down at his desk. He had an unopened juice box lying in the corner. The juice box was his favourite flavour : Blackberry Peach. Normally, he had two juice boxes, but today he had only one left, so had only gotten one juice box.

Chris didn't bring any water bottles to school, only juice boxes. He was also extremely thirsty, but decided to sacrifice his juice box and take the opportunity to call a truce with Drake.

Chris walked over to Drake's desk and nervously said, "You can have my Blackberry Peach juice box if you want."

Drake didn't even look surprised that Chris had offered. Instead of accepting it, Drake said, "You have a juice box? You are so weird! Juice boxes are for babies, so you're a baby!"

Everyone looked at Chris and pointed to his juice box. They all laughed at Chris and repeated the insults Drake had just said to him. Chris walked back to his desk, head down and juice box in his hand.

Despite Chris' tremendous thirst, he didn't dare drink from his juice box for the rest of the day. He knew that if he did, the other students would taunt him even more.

Chris didn't want to give in to peer pressure to seem cool, but he knew he would be even more miserable if everyone continued to make fun of him for the rest of the school year.

When Chris got home, he said to his mom, "I don't like juice boxes anymore. Don't ever buy them again."

His mom was surprised and confused; but decided that whatever happened to Chris at school was his own business. She knew if he wanted to share it with her, he would. Rather than asking what had happened, she said, "Well, that's alright, because I just bought a new drink. I tasted it and fell in love!"

"What's it called?" demanded Chris.

"Blackberry Peach Soda", replied his mom.

"Are you sure it's not juice?" Chris questioned.

"Yes, I'm positive", assured his mom.

Chris went over to his fridge to look at a Blackberry Peach Soda. It was in a soft drink can. The can was colourfully decorated and looked extremely... cool. Chris couldn't wait to bring it to school the next day!

SAMPLE 21 - LEVEL 5

Narrative Writing

Without even tasting it, Chris packed two Blackberry Peach Sodas in his lunch-box to bring to school. At school, Chris opened his Blackberry Peach Soda and took a sip. It was DELICIOUS! The flavor of blackberries and peaches were even stronger than in the juice; and it had the fantastic “soda bubbles” as well!

Chris couldn’t help but take another sip... and another... and another! Within one minute, his can of Blackberry Peach Soda was completely empty!

When Drake demanded a thirst quenching drink, almost everyone immediately presented him with juice, making sure it wasn’t in a juice box.

Chris decided to be the “bigger person” once more. He walked over to Drake’s desk and confidently said, “You can have my extra Blackberry Peach Soda if you’d like.”

Rather than making more “juice box jokes”, Drake said, “Let me try some.”

Chris handed over the can.

To Chris’ astonishment, Drake said, “Hey, this stuff is pretty good... It’s really good! What’s it called?”

Chris, still shocked from Drake’s reaction, said, “Um... It’s called Blackberry Peach Soda. I’m glad you like it.”

Drake said, “Thank you! Today I’m going to buy some, right after school!”

The rest of the class was also shocked by Drake’s reaction. They had never seen Drake act so nice! Suddenly, everyone stopped hating Chris and became his friend!

Within a day, Chris was the most popular person at CSE. Everyone worshipped him for showing them a Blackberry Peach Soda can!

Drake was no longer mean and intimidating, but nice and polite! Everyone believed that the Blackberry Peach Soda had somehow changed his personality! Therefore, Blackberry Peach Soda is an extraordinary drink that improve your life tremendously!

SAMPLE 21 - LEVEL 5

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

The student has created a realistic story context that is also familiar and relevant to his/her peers in which to sell a product. At the same time, his/her use of humour shows that s/he understands the shallow values of the advertising world by creating a life-transforming product. “Blackberry Peach Soda” not only “tastes great,” it also “will improve your (social) life tremendously.” In addition, this product has the power to tame the class bully and win the main character the respect and friendship of his/her peers. As the plot unfolds, readers are given just the right amount of convincing information and detail about the characters and the social context which contribute to the unfaltering pace of the story.

(5)

Criterion 2: Voice

Both the writer’s purpose and target audience are clear. The story is told with a measured assurance and moves steadily and smoothly to its amusing and predictable conclusion. His/her sardonic tone is engaging and humorous, and this writer appears to know his/her audience well.

(5)

Criterion 3: Structures

The student applies many writing techniques to enhance the flow and impact of his/her story. There is an effective use of humour and exaggeration throughout the piece; for example, when the class bully said he was thirsty, “Within a second he had 20 chilled water bottles staring up at his face.” The student’s vocabulary is rich and varied and sustains his/her readers’ interest; for example, “Chris’ animosity towards Drake created countless conflicts between them.”

(5)

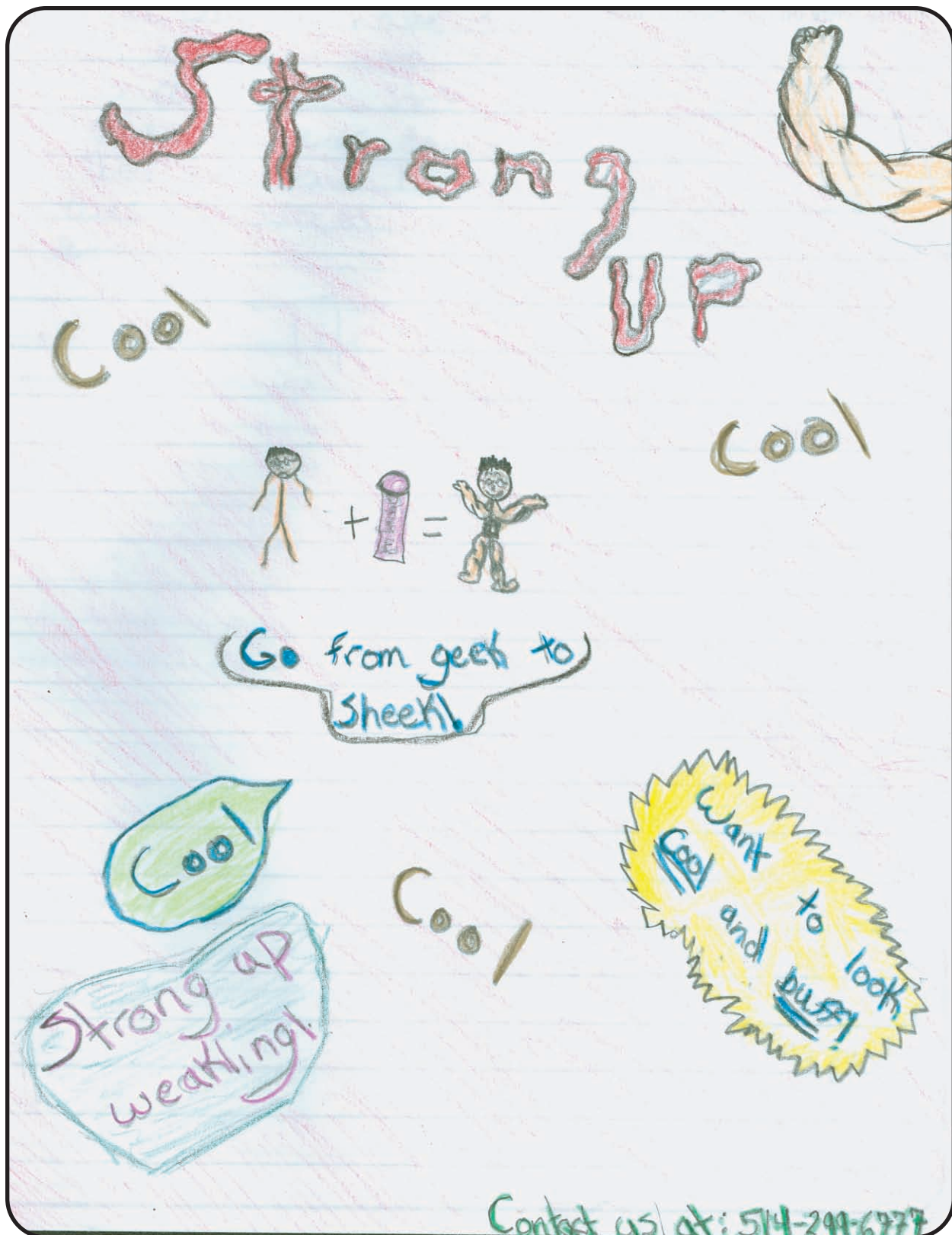
Criterion 4: Conventions

This piece is well written and shows evidence of revision and editing. There is good use of paragraphs, and the spelling and syntax errors are few and minor.

(5)

Global Summary

This student writes with strength and subtlety. His/her well conceived and well constructed work is a pleasure to read!



SAMPLE 22 - LEVEL 4

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

The intended audience is clearly addressed in this advertisement. The product, “Strong Up” is written to echo the muscular arm in the top right corner. Central to the page is the sum: stick figure plus product equals muscular person, echoed by the words: “Go from geek to sheek!”

(4)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

A less “busy” design would have produced more impact. However, as mentioned above, persuasive techniques, including the repetition of “cool,” do create a message.

(4)

Criterion 3: Narrative

There is a fitting connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing: use the product to become “cool and buff,” as Marvin and the cheerleader did.

(4)

Global Summary

This student’s work is well within the acceptable range.

(4)

A Weaklings Life

Once upon a time there was a kid, named Marvin. He wore glasses and geaky clothes. He was captain of the chess club. He did not play any sports because he was weak and everybody laughed. He got bullied a lot at school becaus he was a geek and that he couldn't stand up for himself, because he is to weak. He went home every day feeling like a loser, a weakling. But today was different.

A homeless man stopped him, and asked him if he wanted to buy this strange cream. The man begged, Marvin didn't want to get into anythin so, he walked away. When he got home, he felt bad for the homeless man. People made fun of him because he had no home, a ugly clothes. The Marvin realized it's the same thing for him, kids make fun of him too, but for different reasons. So Marvin went back and apologized to the homeless man and bought the cream. When he got home he looked at the cream. "Strong Up, never heard of it." He put it on, then he went to sleep. The next morning, he woke up with muscles 100 times bigger than yesterday. When he went to school, everybody complimented him, they said he looked cool and buff.

He met a girl, she is the head cheerleader. He invited her to his house "Are you thirsty." he asked. "Yes, can I have some water." she answered. As he went to get the water, she ran in his room and stole his Strong up, then she ran home. He never saw her again that week, but then a month later he saw her on TV, she was announced the best athlette in the world.

THE END

SAMPLE 23 - LEVEL 4

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

After a very strong beginning with an acute description of the unfortunate Marvin and his encounter with the homeless man, this story falters. As his muscles increase, Marvin's character fades and the abrupt conclusion is unsatisfying.

(3)

Criterion 2: Voice

The intended audience is carefully addressed in this story of miraculous change from "geek" to muscleman, surely a dream shared by many young boys. The student appears to be a confident writer.

(4)

Criterion 3: Structures

The student is clearly familiar with the elements of fairy tale, using them to good effect: "Once upon a time..." and the pithy description of Marvin which leads up to "But today was different." The meeting with the homeless man is reminiscent of Jack's encounter with the seller of beans in Jack-and-the-Beanstalk, the miraculous growth of muscles overnight is a fairy-tale event, similar to the growth of the beanstalk. Though the student has not maintained her/his initial focus throughout the tale, "A Weaklings Life" does provoke reader interest.

(4)

Criterion 4: Conventions

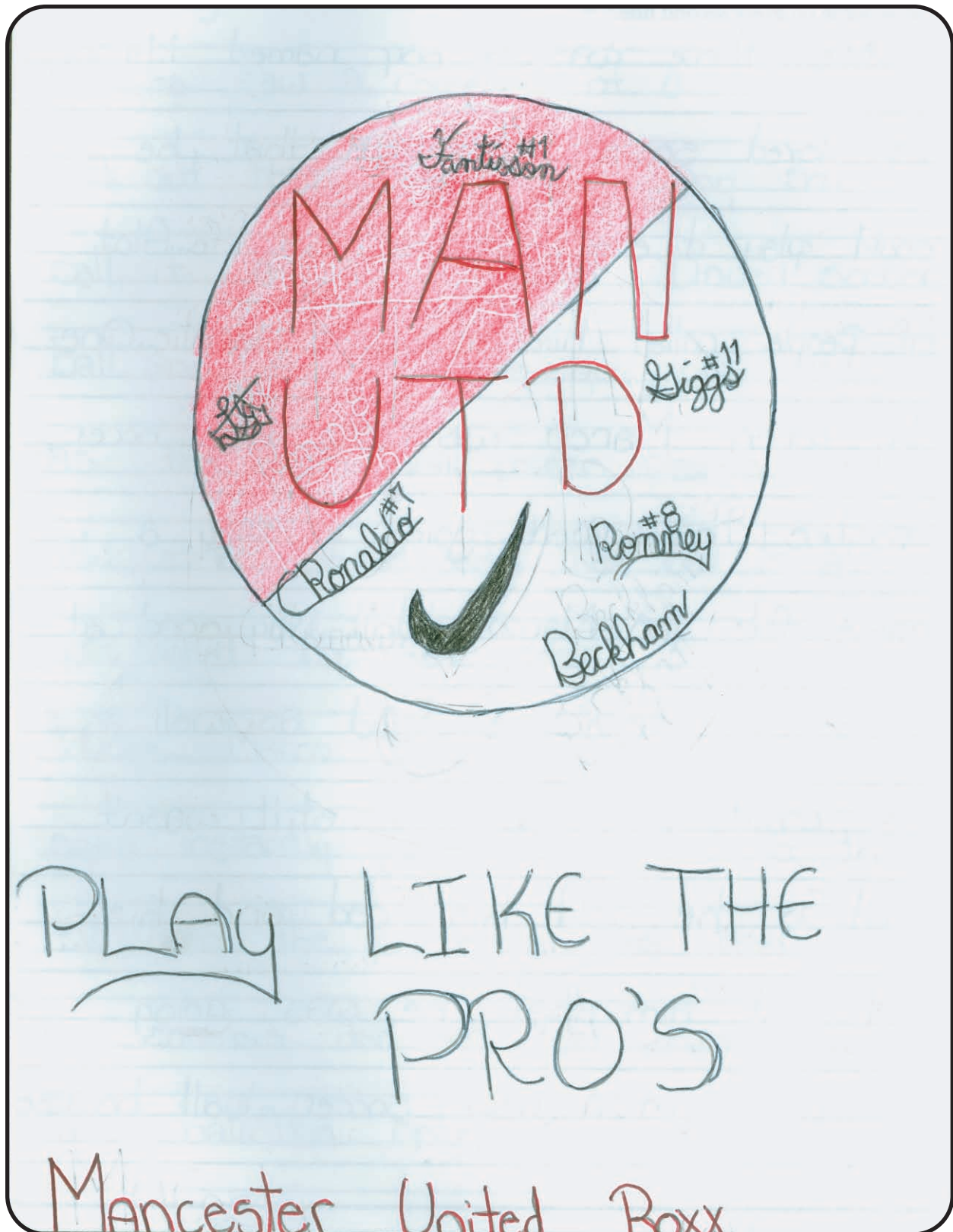
Paragraphing might be more consistent (eg. page two) but errors are minimal.

(4)

Global Summary

This student uses language with aplomb, applying story devices effectively.

(4)



SAMPLE 24 - LEVEL 4

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

The message to a group of soccer fans is clear: the purchase of a signed soccer ball will enhance performance, to the level of “Manchester United”.

(4)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

Famous soccer players’ names and an encouragement to “PLAY LIKE THE PRO’S” provide a concise message in this simple advertisement.

(4)

Criterion 3: Narrative

The student makes a satisfying connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing: after Marco has made the “Lucky catch,” he does, indeed, play like a professional.

(3)

Global Summary

This work is beyond the acceptable range.

(4)

The Lucky Catch

Once there was a boy named Marco he loved soccer so much that he could play it every day of his life. A lot of people called him a soccer fanatic. One day when Marco went to his soccer practice they were going to play a game for fun. Marco didn't play good at all. So this time he tried as well as he could play and he still wasn't good. So he told his dad and his dad told him that he was going to buy him a new soccer ball because he thought that was the cause of it all. That night when Marco was watching t.v. he saw a commercial of a new soccer ball, but that wasn't just any soccer ball it was a Manchester United soccer ball and it would make you play as good as the professional soccer players from Manchester United and the ball is also autographed by their best 3 players. When Marco saw the commercial his eyes instantly glued themselves to the t.v. When the commercial was over he ran to his dad and told him about the ball. The only problem was that the ball was \$150 dollars. Marco's parents found it too expensive and didn't buy it for him. Marco's birthday was coming up in one week so his father asked his friend for Manchester tickets and the friend gave him 2 free tickets. 1 week passed and it was Marco's birthday and he wondered what could be in such a small box. When Marco opened the box he saw the tickets and was very, very happy. He ran to his parents and gave them a big wet kiss. The next day it was time to go to the soccer game. Near the end of the game a player kicked the ball. The ball was heading straight for Marco and all of a sudden the ball is in Marco's hands. Marco was very excited because it was a Manchester United soccer ball. One week later Marco had a soccer game and they won 3-0 and Marco got a hat-trick and he really played like the professionals.

SAMPLE 25 - LEVEL 4

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

The student sustains her/his focus throughout the story to its happy conclusion. Marco, the “soccer fanatic,” is a believable character as are the parents who found the \$150 dollar soccer ball “too expensive and didn’t buy it for him,” despite the imminence of his birthday. The plot twist of free tickets leading to “The Lucky Catch” adds substance to the story.

(4)

Criterion 2: Voice

The writer’s voice is unfaltering in its sincerity. Personal experience may have fuelled this story.

(4)

Criterion 3: Structures

The student varies sentences to some degree and employs figurative language: “When Marco saw the commercial his eyes instantly gleued themselves to the t.v.” The “Lucky Catch” of the “Mancester United” ball and its magical effect on Marco’s game are designed to provoke reader interest.

(4)

Criterion 4: Conventions

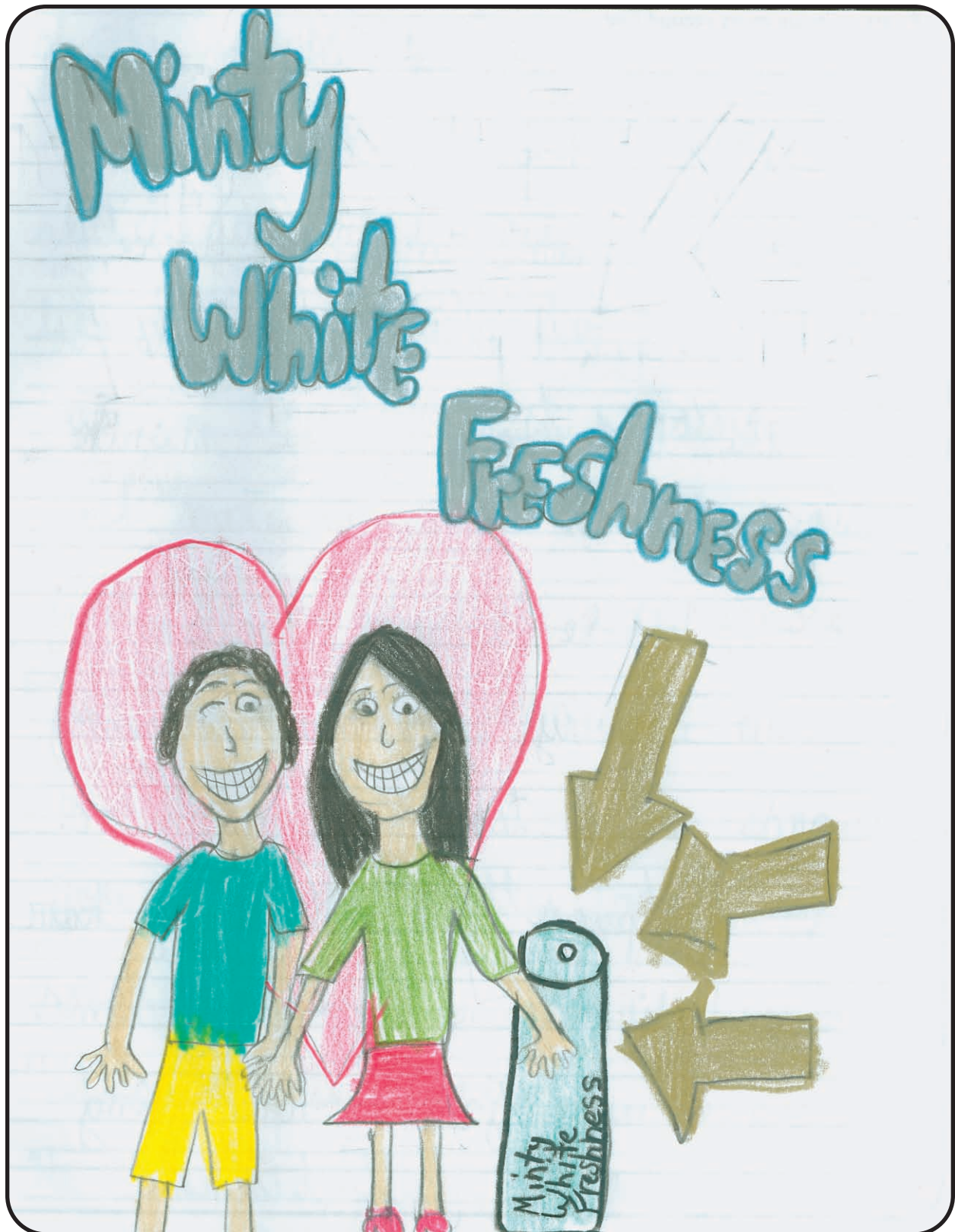
Errors are minimal but paragraphing is absent.

(3)

Global Summary

The student has produced a focussed story, well connected to her/his advertisement.

(4)



SAMPLE 26 - LEVEL 4

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

The message of the ad is made clear through the picture. The placement of the heart behind the couple holding hands and smiling provides evidence that the use of the product may bring happiness to your love life.

(4)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

The use of bold lettering “Minty White Freshness,” the three large arrows pointing to the enlarged product and the broad smiles revealing white teeth indicate that careful attention has been given to develop the message.

(4)

Criterion 3: Narrative

There is a strong connection between the advertisement and the story. The student has created and developed the mood within both pieces.

(5)

Global Summary

The global level of performance is 4

SAMPLE 27 - LEVEL 4

Narrative Writing

Minty White Freshness

On saturday I went outside it was a sunny day. There were no clouds. The birds were singing. It was the best day of the month so far.

While I was walking I saw a very cute guy comming towards me. I took out my miror from my purse and fixed my hair and put lipstick on. I knew him. His name was John. He was going out with the most popular girl of the school. Her name was Josie. She had blond hair, was very tall, and had perfect white teeth. She looked like a super model, but I had been in love with him since I first met him. For him I was just a friend, that was all.

"Hi Sarah", said John.

"Hi John", I said.

"You are very pretty today Sarah", said John.

"Thank you", I said.

He blinked at me. Forgetting of my yellow teeth, I smiled. A big smile we could almost see my thirty-two teeth. John got terrified.

He screamed, "Eww you have yellow teeth that's disgusting".

"What an idiot I am", I tought.

Then he ran away laughing. That is very humilating. I think my face was as red as a tomato. I ran home, went in my room and started to cry.

"I will never be loved", I said.

"No one will go out with me because of my yellow teeth."

The next morning was sunday. I went to the groceries for my dad. I went to the fruits and vegetables row. At the next row I saw John. He was with Josie. I hid behind a big pile of apples. They were comming towards me. They stopped right in front of the apples pile. They were kissing in front of me. I was feeling very angry. I took out my gro-cerie list and saw that I had to buy three apples. I took one, then two, and the last one I took made the whole pile of apples fall. John and Josie were staring at me. I didn't know what to do or say.

"Fifty cents for three apples, that's a great deal", I said.

SAMPLE 27 - LEVEL 4

Narrative Writing

Then I ran to my house. My sister heard me crying. She came in my room. I explain her everything that happened.

“Go to the pharmacie and buy some toothpaste that make your teeth white”, she said.

“Great idea, I will go now, I said.”

I went to the pharmacie, but they were tons of whitening toothpaste. I didn’t know which one to choose.

“Excuse me sir I am looking for the best whitening toothpaste”, I said.

“We have a new product that has just arrived”, he said. “It’s called the Minty White Freshness”.

“I’ll take it”, I said.

I went home. Just before going to bed, I brushed my teeth with the Minty White Freshness. I felt so much better after. On the box it said that it works after you brush your teeth twice.

The next morning was monday. After eating breakfast I brushed my teeth and went to school. I saw John. I smiled. He was surprised because my teeth were all white. He went to talk to Josie. I was to far to hear what he said, but I saw Josie slap him. I think I know what he said. John came back.

“I broke up with Josie”, he said.

“Oh I’m so sorry”, I said.

“Do you want to be my girlfriend?”, said John.

“Yes”, I said.

We hold hands and walk in the hall to go to our class.

SAMPLE 27 - LEVEL 4

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

The beginning of the story creates a feeling of suspense. “It was the best day of the month so far.” The student then develops the story by providing encounters with “a cute guy (John),” revealing “my yellow teeth,” obtaining the “Minty White Freshness” toothpaste and finally becoming his “girlfriend.” Characters are believable and peers would easily relate to them.

(4)

Criterion 2: Voice

The writer is confident and expressive. “Eww you have yellow teeth that’s disgusting,” “That is very humiliating” and “my face was as red as a tomato.” The intended audience (peers) has been clearly attended to.

(4)

Criterion 3: Structures

The use of dialogue and varied sentences enhance the story. “the last one I took made the whole pile fall” provides humour and allows the reader to visualize the situation.

(4)

Criterion 4: Conventions

Paragraphing and use of quotation marks is evident. The few grammatical and spelling errors do not affect meaning.

(4)

Global Summary

The student has complied with the task but the story fails to engage the reader and lacks inventiveness.

(4)



SAMPLE 28 - LEVEL 3

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

The student has obviously chosen to address a female audience with the advertisement for “Anti Frizz control.” The drawing of a young girl with straight hair, set among flowers, presents a very feminine image of glamour. There is sufficient information to create meaning given the large bottle of hair application, the central figure and the slogan “Say Good-bye to Poof and frizz.”

(3)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

The original colours of the advertisement are very feminine pinks. The student uses this as part of the technique to appeal to the ladies in the audience. Obviously straight hair is very much in vogue so the idea of being on the “bandwagon,” just like others of that age, is another important element of this advertisement. The shapely form of the young lady, the pronounced lips and eyes also allude to glamour appeal. The size of the bottle and the words of the slogan create a strong message for those wanting to be like the central figure here.

(3)

Criterion 3: Narrative

Although the narrative begins very strongly, appealing particularly to the girls in the audience, (“Chantal woke up and screamed so loud” because she found her hair “still poofy”) the theme of the story soon shifts. The shampoo for frizz control is only mentioned briefly at the beginning. The focus of the narrative turns to friendship at school, obtained through glamorous clothes, a new hairstyle and colour so that “she so pretty.” Although this is a logical connection it is a fairly weak plot.

(3)

Global Summary

The overall mark for Media Production is acceptable at Level 3.

SAMPLE 29 - LEVEL 3

Narrative Writing

Anti Frizz Control

One day like any other day Chantal woke up and screamed so loud. Because the other day she washed her hair with a poof control shampoo and I just made her hair more poofy. Then Chantal's mom ran in and said "What wrong" and Chantal said "my hair is still poofy". So then her mom gave her a new shampoo called Anti Frizz Control.

Then that night she washed her her hair with the anti frizz control shampoo, after her shower she blow dried It and it was still poofy! So then she went to bed sad. The next day she woke up and looked in the mirror and screamed agin but a hapy scream. She ran down stairs and showed her mom. Chantal's mom was so surprised and Happy. So then her mom took her shopping for new clothes, she bote a pink mini skirt with a very nice purple tank top. After she went to the hair salon to go get dark brow and blond streaks! She so pretty. The next day at school she walk in the class and no one knew who she was then she got to her seat and an ugly girl named Nicole said "Chantal your hair is so pretty" the Chantal said "thanks I know". At recess everyone went up to her and asked if she wanted to be her friends and she said "Yes!"

The End

SAMPLE 29 - LEVEL 3

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

This student has taken a theme, very pertinent to this age group, of being accepted and liked by his/her confreres. The means to this end was the use of the Anti Frizz Shampoo, followed by a visit to the hair salon and the purchase of glamorous clothes. The story does have a beginning, middle and end, and the central character of Chantal is believable, though not highly developed.

(3)

Criterion 2: Voice

The writer's voice is very evident in this narrative, where looking good and being accepted as "pretty" is paramount for girls at the Grade 6 level. For this reason the audience is assured, and the student shows awareness of peers when creating both the advertisement and the narrative.

(3)

Criterion 3: Structures

Sentence structure and vocabulary are fairly basic. Some dialogue and exaggeration are evident. "she woke up and looked in the mirror and screamed again but a happy scream." Such techniques lift the piece of writing into the acceptable level. However, the writing itself is fairly immature. "So," "then" or "the next day" begin most sentences.

(3)

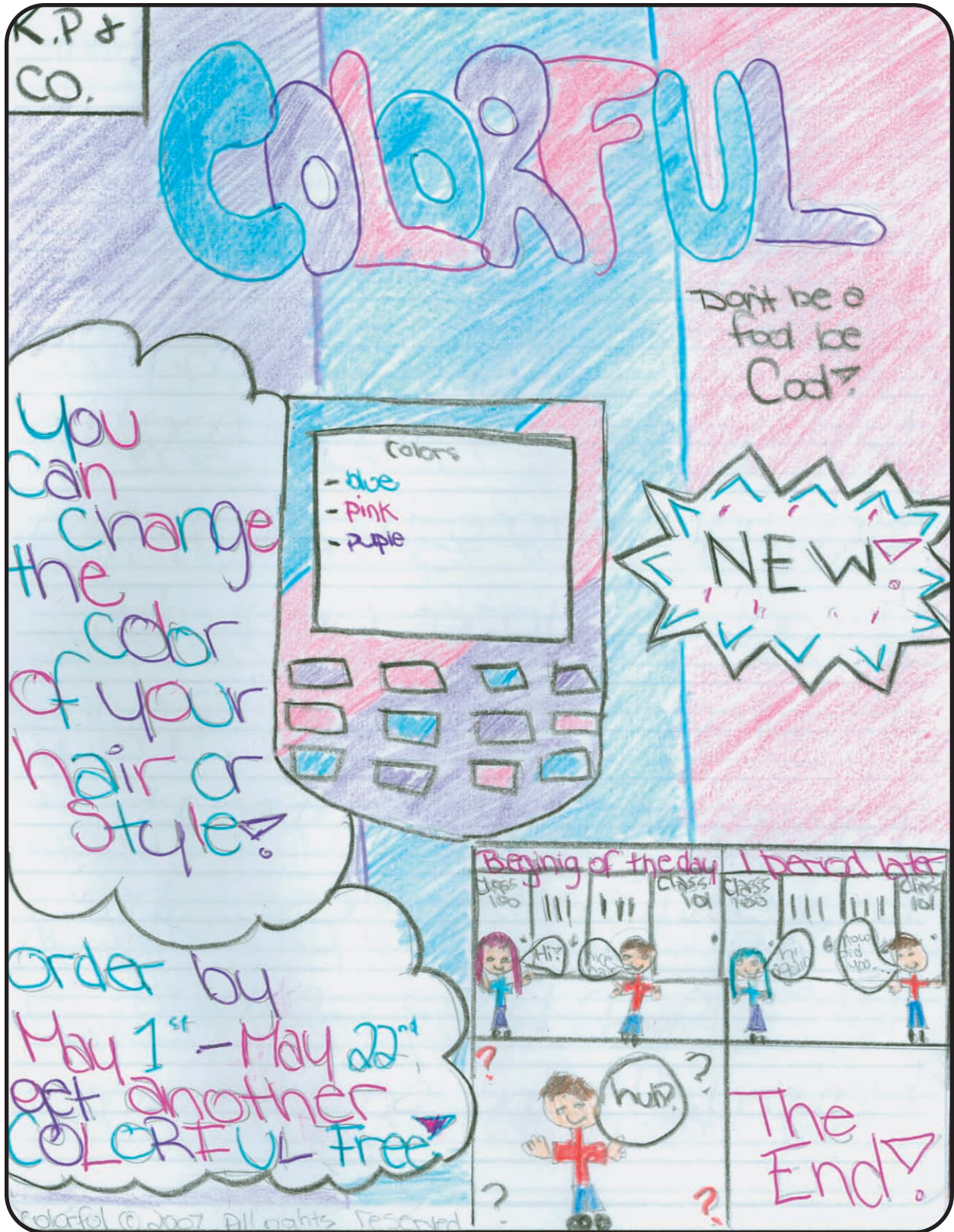
Criterion 4: Conventions

There is little evidence of editing. There are run on sentences, and missed letters "she so pretty." Misuse of capitals and lack of apostrophes also indicate lack of care. "Chantals mom was so surprised and Happy." Only two paragraphs are used for the whole of the narrative piece.

(low 3)

Global Summary

This piece of writing lies within the acceptable level but is a weak 3.



SAMPLE 30 - LEVEL 3

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

The message is evident. The product is “Colorful” and changes the color or style of your hair. The slogan “Don’t be a fool be cool!” and the colors “blue, pink, purple” would attract the intended audience. The overall presentation is quite busy and may distract the audience; however, sufficient information has been provided.

(3)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

The bold lettering “Colorful”, the flashy “NEW”, an offer to “get another colourful free” and a short story board in the corner are slightly persuasive techniques helping to create the message. However the story is not clearly presented, and the overall presentation is confusing.

(2)

Criterion 3: Narrative

The student provides a logical connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing.

(3)

Global Summary

The overall performance level is 3.

SAMPLE 31 - LEVEL 3

Narrative Writing

"I hate the rain", said Katrina, "my hair always gets messed up". It was the first day back from spring break and me and my best friend Katrina were waiting at our bus stop right across the hospital. "I can't wait to see everybody, it's been so long", I said. I didn't really miss Katrina that much because, we are so close, she comes to my house almost everyday. "Me too", said Katrina, "Maybe there will be changes or new secrets".

The bus finale arrived at 7:55 am. We got on the bus and sat on the seat we always sat on, all the way in the back to the left. It took us about 5 minutes to get to Veronica stop, one of me and Katrina's friends. She ran in with excitement and gave us a big hug. She started to talk very fast "Guys Guys I have to tell you something, my big sis heard that there was going to be a new girl in our grade, her name starts with a J, I forgot her name, but anyways she comes from Spain". "Calm down", I said. Katrin started to laugh. "Ok, Ok so there's a new girl", said Katrina "yes, yes" said Veronica. "She might be nice", I said. "I hope so" said Katrina.

About 10 minutes later we arrived at school and said hi to everybody. When the bell rang to go inside everybody got in there lines and walked in school with relief because of the disgusting rain. When we unpacked our stuff and got into class, the teacher said "There will be a new student in the class and her name is Jenna." Veronica gave a kick to my leg and said "I told you." Jenna was a short skinny girl with long brown hair in a ponytail, with beautiful blue eyes. She was wearing navy blue pants with pockets on the side, and a white short sleeve top with a black headband on her hair. She seemed nice but she seemed very sad. The teacher gave her a spot right in front of me. When she came to sit down, she dropped her books, I asked if she needed help, she said please. As I bent down to pick her books up, I looked at her hair changed color it changed to a nice shade of blond. Everyone looked at her and were freaking out.

Right at recess me, Veronica and Katrina were talking about what happened "how did she do that", said Veronica, "I don't but she is strange", Katrina said. "Ya", I said. "Do you want to go ask her," "Sure" they said. We tried to look for her but we didn't find her, we all went to the washroom, and there we saw her WITH A DIFFERENT COLOR AND STYLE! Her hair was black with red streaks. Me and my two friends went up to Jenna and asked her how she did that, she said in a very low voice, "When my parents past away in a car crash, I got this remote in there will, I was always trying to figure it out and finale, I found out that you pick a style or color on the menu, you click it and you scan it over your head and in seconds your hair changes." "That is so cool", said Katrina. "I would so need that for rainy days when my hair gets messed up" "Or at parties" I said "Or on just a regular school day", said Jenna. "We so need that", Veronica screamed. Jenna said "I wish I had more, then I would have given it to you guys". "It's ok", I said. "We can all share it said Jenna. "Thanks" we all said with excitement.

The next day at school me, Jenna, Katrina and Veronica came with the best hair in the school. Everyone told us that we had cool hair. Me and my three friends, Katrina, Jenna and Veronica kept it our little secret!

SAMPLE 31 - LEVEL 3

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

The student provides a focus. S/he relates to the trepidations and excitement at the commencement of a new school year. The encounters with a “new girl” within the class lead to the discovery of a “new and special “remote.” A special friendship is formed and the characters have been developed.

Criterion 2: Voice

The student writes with confidence while including his/her own experiences from school life and friendships. These encounters will certainly attract the intended audience (peers). The use of “Guys, Guys,” “my hair always gets messed up,” “Ya” also connects with the youth of today.

Criterion 3: Structures

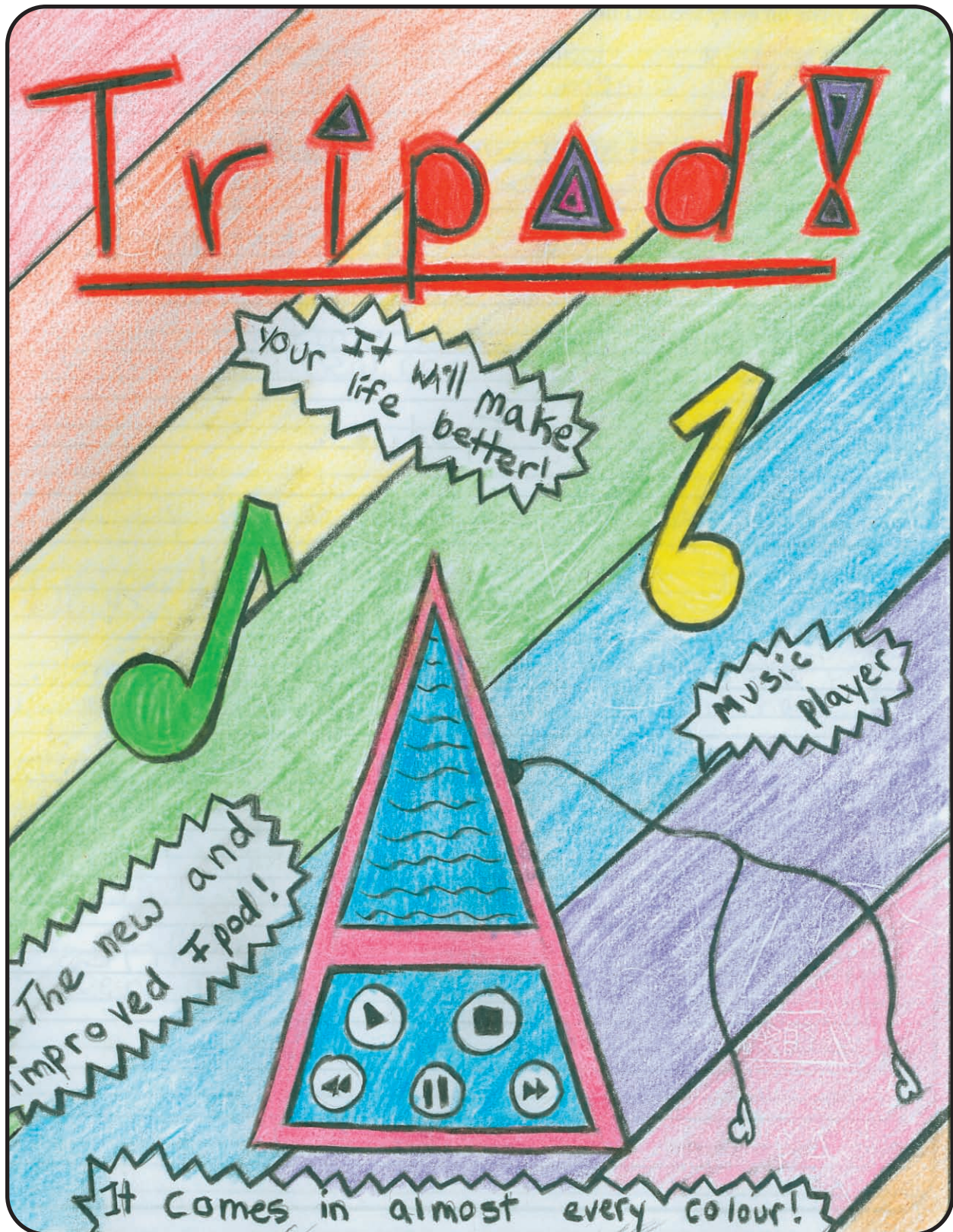
The use of dialogue is evident. His/her descriptions allow the reader to visualize the person. “Jenna was a short skinny girl with long brown hair in a pony tail, with beautiful blue eyes. She was wearing navy blue pants with pockets on the side, and a white short sleeve top with a black headband on her hair.” There is evidence of exaggeration “when my parents past away in a car crash, I got this remote in there will.”

Criterion 4: Conventions

There is a slight attempt at paragraphing. Although the reader is not distracted by the frequent grammatical errors, some attention to editing is required.

Global Summary

The overall performance falls within the level 3.



SAMPLE 32 - LEVEL 5

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

This student cleverly engages the intended audience. The image and words communicate in an arresting manner, with the name “Tripod” alluding to the triangle shape of the product itself, as well as featuring triangles in the wording and punctuation. The message is clear and succinct, perhaps skewed toward the young, but inclusive of all social groups where music is paramount. It is most authentic in today’s techno world where life style must include having the latest gadget to be “connected.” The outcome is assured: “It will make your life better!”

(5)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

There has been deliberate attention to details in this advertisement. There is a strong connection between verbal and visual symbolism with respect to the triangle. The shapes are clear and well defined, particularly the triangle motif. There is a focal point, but the pop ups are clear also. The advertisement is as effective in black and white as it is in colour. The persuasive techniques are there also, with “It comes in almost every colour!” and “It will make your life better.” This is “The new and improved Ipod!”

(5)

Criterion 3: Narrative

This student has chosen to write a script for a television advertisement. The focus is on the outcome of owning the “new cool Tripod” where life will be “soo much better and funner.” Although the piece of writing is short, s/he has used the story telling technique shown on television. It provides a seamless connection between the advertisement and the narrative, and indicates that s/he really understands the process used in the marketing of products.

(5)

Global Summary

“Tripod” is an arresting ad. The overall mark for Media Production is Exemplary and at Level 5.

TRIPOD

A boy is just minding his own business while going for a walk around his neighbourhood. He is just listening to music on his Ipod and starts thinking "Same, old, boring Ipod..."

A girl walks up to him and says, "Try this! The new Tripod!". He says, "Fine... I'll try anything as long as it's better than this boring Ipod...". He takes the Tripod from her hand, and he tries it.

"This is awesome!", he says. I'm never gonna use my old, boring Ipod again!". He continues listening to music and he starts singing and dancing. Then he says, "Now I'll never be bored because I have the new, cool Tripod!"

"My life is sooo much better and funner!", he says. Then the camera zooms in on his face and he says, "You have to buy the new Tripod... You won't regret it!". Then the Tripod is shown on the T.V. screen and music is being played.

SAMPLE 33 - LEVEL 3

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

This student has chosen to write a television script to advertise the product, “Tripod.” The scene is set: “A boy is just minding his own business while going for a walk around his neighborhood.” Although there is little character development, in the context of a television commercial, the boy and girl are both believable. There is a sharp focus sustained, given the time restraints in a 60-second commercial, as the boy indicates his unhappiness with the “same, old, boring Ipod,” a girl appears with “The new Tripod” for him to try, he begins “singing and dancing” and admits “My life is sooo much better and funner.”

The story plot also includes directions for filming. “Then the Tripod is shown on the T.V. screen and music is played.”

Although there is a very real purpose to this student’s work, using the narrative elements found in television commercials, it lacks the detail and descriptions that would make it a more thorough piece of writing.

(3)

Criterion 2: Voice

The purpose of the piece is to develop a commercial that will sell the Tripod to an intended audience, and this remains the central theme throughout. “This is awesome!” “Now I’ll never be bored because I have the new, cool Tripod.” The writer’s voice is confident but not very expressive, once again hampered by lack of details and descriptions.

(3)

Criterion 3: Structures

The structures are chosen deliberately, specifically for a television commercial with its limited time frame. Dialogue and exaggeration are evident, but do little to provoke the reader interest.

(3)

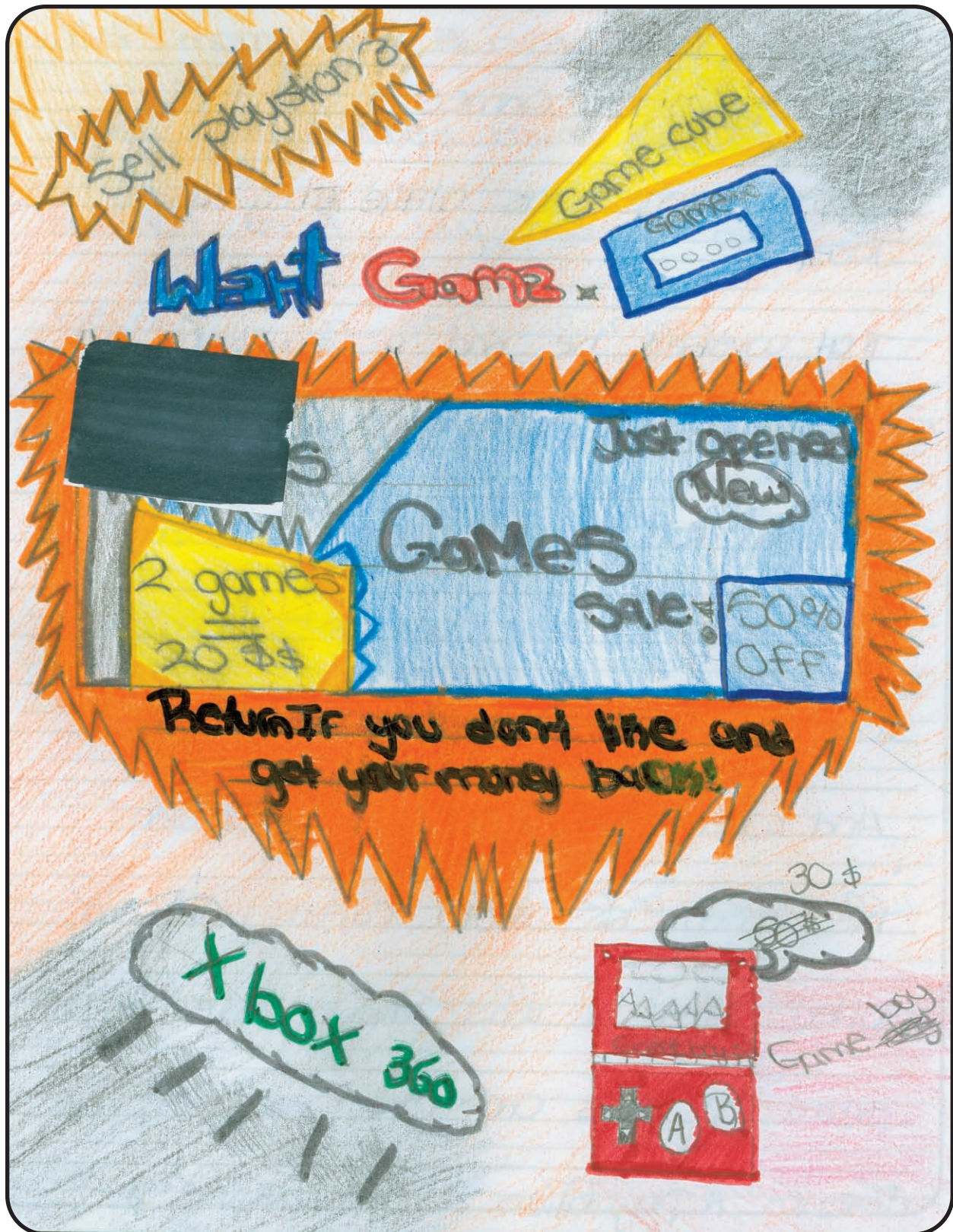
Criterion 4: Conventions

The writing appears to have been edited as there are no errors, paragraphing is consistent and dialogue well punctuated.

(5)

Global Summary

Although this piece of narrative writing is extremely brief, the student has indeed used the story telling techniques necessary for a television commercial and advertisement. However, the lack of description and a more detailed “plot” places the student’s work within the range of Level 3.



SAMPLE 34 - LEVEL 2

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

The purpose of this advertisement is unclear. While the subject appears to be a store where computer/video games are sold, the name of the store is missing as well as how to get to it. Furthermore, the target audience is not specifically addressed; computer/video games are played by people of all ages and there are few clues as to who might be interested in buying “X box 360” or “Game boy.” The main reason for shopping at this store is the reduced prices of the games.

(2)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

The structures and features of advertisement production are basic and poorly applied. The student’s work resembles a magazine page or a sale flyer more than an advertisement because too many techniques are used. Names and prices of games are splashed over the page, and although one of these is larger, centred, and more prominent, its content is no different from those that are smaller and occupying peripheral places. The message about saving money is repeated in every technique without extending or elaborating the meaning in any way. In addition, the producer of the ad mainly uses words rather than images; there are only two, small, literal images, of a computer and a game box.

(2)

Criterion 3: Narrative

Unfortunately, the student’s story does not elaborate upon the theme of his/her advertisement; it, too, lacks complexity and focus.

(2)

Global Summary

This student’s level of performance is basic and falls within the range of level 2.

(2)

SAMPLE 35 - LEVEL 2

Narrative Writing

_____’s Games

Once there was a little boy named Joseph.

That wished he had a playstation 2. So his mom made a deal clean your room everyday for twenty dollars a week. So it was a deal and he cleaned his room just for that playstation.

And when he had completed cleaning his room his mom called him and told him it was dinner time. As he pulled out his chair he had seen his dream A playstation 2 im playing it right this minute.

His mom said not right now after your finished eating dinner. did you even buy me a game because im very curious.

His mom said actually I did your favorite game Aliens Take Over the world.

Ok cool awesome your the best mom.

Ok hurry so you could play now instead of sitting at the table with me.

Ok mom I have been waiting to play Joseph you have only been sitting here for a minute and your food is getting cold wait mom were did you get the playstation from at sly’s games just opened across the street.

There is a sale 80 percent off on any game and game system like for example gamecube, psp and xbox.

Is half price ok mom im finished. HaHa whispering I feed my dog the food.

Ok well im going to play now hay mom do I still get payed twenty whole dollars yes Joseph ok cause I want to go to the new game store sly’s games is it big humongis wow! sounds great.

could you help me hook up the playstation yes my dear his mom said.

never mind it is hooked up some how it has no wires ok wierd it is portable cool im liking it alot im going to _____’s games all the time. Now everyone no’s that _____’s games is the best and you should come, here more often. To get the chepest games in good condition and new games. Sale 2 games for twenty dollars and the third one free. This is why you should come to my store

SAMPLE 35 - LEVEL 2

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

This story is limited, uneventful, and the characters are lifeless. The action consists mainly of a child sitting at the dinner table talking to his mother about the video games that s/he would like to own. We learn nothing about the personalities of either character. The story line is confused and at times contradictory, as the focus of the action shifts from the child earning money to buy the games to the mother purchasing the desired game on sale at a newly opened shop. The student appears to make many assumptions about the product in his/her advertisement and narrative. To him/her, it is a given that play station and other computer games are desirable objects as there is no discussion of his/her reasons for wanting the games nor of the relative merits of different games. The only distinctive characteristic of the games that s/he mentions is a lower sale price.

(2)

Criterion 2: Voice

The student's purpose and audience are vaguely defined. Problems with the plot have been described above. Furthermore, s/he changes from the third to first person, and it appears that by the end of the story, the child narrator becomes the store owner who is selling the games. The writer's limited awareness of his/her readers' needs is apparent in the confused story line and missing information.

(2)

Criterion 3: Structures

The student's grasp of the larger structures of narrative writing is weak. In addition, s/he uses a basic vocabulary and very simple sentence structures. His/her attempts to write more complex sentences result in run-on sentences, suggesting a lack of understanding of sentence structure; for example, "ok well im going to play now hay mom do I still get payed twenty whole dollars."

(2)

Criterion 4: Conventions

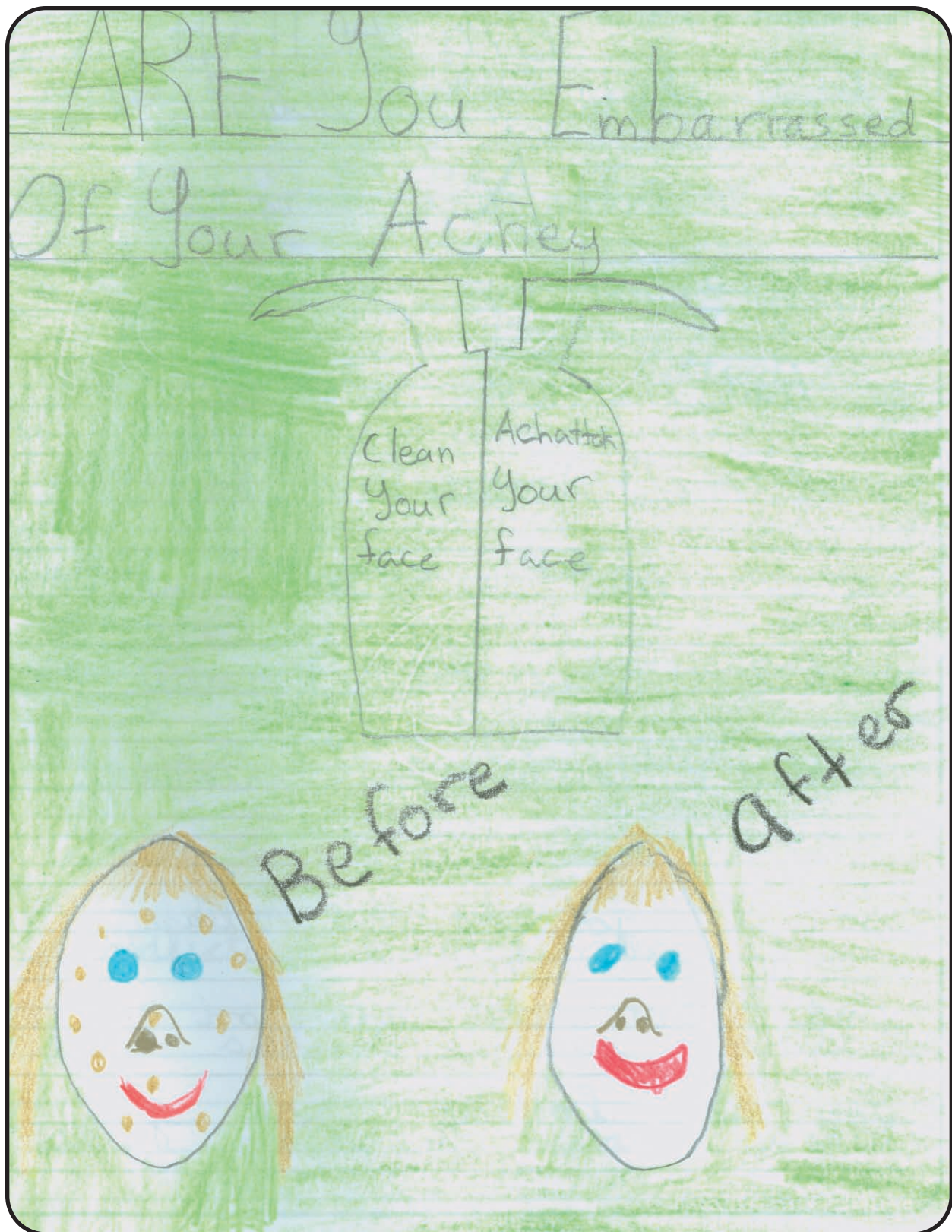
There is some attempt at making paragraphs, but the student's understanding of the reasons for paragraphs is limited. In addition, his/her control of sentence structure is weak and needs much attention; for example, "His mom said not right now after your finished eating dinner" and "Okay mom I have been waiting to play Joseph you have only been sitting here for a minute and your food is getting cold wait mom were did you get the playstation from at sly's games just opened across the street."

(2)

Global Summary

The student's performance in this piece of writing is within the range of level 2.

(2)



SAMPLE 36 - LEVEL 2

Media Production

Criterion 1: Purpose and Audience

The producer of this ad addresses a specific target audience, teenagers, with a clear message: use “Achattak” and you will get rid of your acne. The words and the images in the ad provide some support for the message. There is a before/after label on the images and the question at the top of the ad pulls in the audience by asking them if they find acne embarrassing.

(3)

Criterion 2: Structures and Features

The name of the product, Achattak, is witty and catchy and a very good choice. The words and images, however, are obvious, basic, and unsubtle. The images show a girl’s face before and after using the skin cream and are unnecessarily labeled as the “before” face is covered with spots. The image of the container for the cream is unclear. The same shaped bottle is divided in half and each side is “labeled” with parallel instructions: “Clean your face and Achattak your face.” In fact, the label of the bottle is the only place where the clever name of the product is mentioned. Not only is the ad producer’s wittiness obscured in the small font of the label, but s/he ignores the need to display the name of the product prominently. The font and placement of the question at the top of the ad is poorly executed and yet, paradoxically, the grammar error, “Are You Embarrassed Of Your Acney?” is highlighted.

(2)

Criterion 3: Narrative

The connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing is decidedly tenuous. The ad shows the benefits of using the skin cream, but in the story there is little description of its impact on the face of the main character or on her social life. In addition, the advertisement confines its focus to the benefits to the skin and makes no allusion to increased popularity and/or sex appeal which might also accompany such an improvement in appearance.

(2)

Global Summary

The student’s basic use of advertising techniques and lack of subtlety in his/her message places his/her work at level 2.

(2)

SAMPLE 37 - LEVEL 2

Narrative Writing

THE ACHAttAck

It all started on a beautiful day and Gabrielle was going to the village with some friends.

But she was a little embarrassed because of her acney but she still went because she really really wanted to see her friends.

So she got to the village and then she saw on an ad board are you embarrassed about your acney. Then use the achattack when she was looking at the board she saw that you could get it at face fitting store. To her luck she was standing right in front of the store, and she said to her self

Wow I so need this product every one in my school has beautiful skin and I want beautiful skin to. She also saw on the board not a product but a person.

So when she went to the store and got the product, and when I went to pay for it she saw him short skinny and not muscular at all she got so red that Johnathan the love of her life gave her a some water.

So she went and told her friends that she was going home so she called her mom and she went home.

So that night before she went to bed she tried it on, and in the morning she dashed to the bathroom to see how her face looked and belive it or not there was not as much acney on her face.

She called all her friends to see if they were going to the village. But noone was going but she still went because she wanted to she the love of her life.

So when she walked into the store and waited for about fifteen to twenty minuts she was about to leave and then he walk in she was so happy but then she saw that a girl was walking in behind him but it was not any girl it was her bestfriend Emma and Gaby was like oh my god and now when Emma talks to Gaby well she is like "What ever good for you" and walks away.

So after about a month Gaby started talking to Emma and Emma told Gaby all about what happened between the two of them but Gaby still went back to the store to get the achattack, and never talks to the guy again.

THE END

SAMPLE 37 - LEVEL 2

Narrative Writing

Criterion 1: Organization

Confusion and lack of focus derail this piece, although the writer begins well. The main character, a girl with acne, sees an ad for a skin cream called *achattak*, goes to a store to buy the product, sees the man of her dreams there, goes home, and tries the cream. After this point, the narrative structure falls apart. The sequence of events which forms the entire plot of the story becomes jumbled and difficult to follow. The more predictable story line in keeping with the exaggerated claims for skin creams, typical of the world of advertising, would be for the main character to win her man after using *achattak*. However, an unexplained disruption in the friendships or communication of the main character and her female friends appears to become the focal point of the action. Although the main character loses interest in “the man of her dreams,” she continues to go to the store to buy the skin cream, and this appears to be the final resolution of the story. None of these events, however, are explained explicitly or implicitly. The intended audience for the writing is clearly teens because of the nature of the product and the characters in the story. The purpose of the narrative, to extol and display the benefits of using the skin cream is lost in this muddled story.

(2)

Criterion 2: Voice

While the author’s voice is discernible at times, the purpose of the writing is lost for reasons already explained in the previous criterion. The intended audience is clear, but their needs are not addressed by the writer as demonstrated by his/her inconsistent use of pronouns and jumbled plot line.

(2)

Criterion 3: Structures

This writer’s grasp of narrative structures is basic, and his/her vocabulary is simple. Poorly constructed sentences are frequent; for example, “So when she walked into the store and waited fore about fifteen minuts she was about to leave and then he walk in she was so happy but then she saw that a girl was walking in behind him but it was not any girl it was her bestfriend Emma and Gaby was like oh my god and now when Emma talks to Gaby well she is like ‘What ever good for you’ and walks away.”

(2)

Criterion 4: Conventions

It is not this writer’s problems with choice of words and spelling that interfere with the meaning of his/her piece. As explained previously, s/he has serious problems with syntax and sentence structure. In addition, his/her lack of control of the larger structures and features of narrative writing distract the reader.

(2)

Global Summary

While this student has a basic ability to communicate in writing, s/he needs further work on narrative structures and features and on English sentence structure and syntax.

(2)

APPENDIXES

STRATEGIC READING AND CRITICAL THINKING

Comparison of Two Media Texts: Present-Day and Historical

APPENDIX I - RUBRICS

CRITERIA	Range of Competency				
	Level 5 Exemplary	Level 4 Thorough	Level 3 Acceptable	Level 2 Partial	Level 1 Minimal
Comparison —	- Distinguishes significant and the more subtle commonalities between the media texts. - Distinguishes the subtle differences between the media texts.	- Distinguishes significant commonalities between the media texts. - Distinguishes significant differences between the media texts.	- Notes obvious commonalities between the media texts in a general, loose manner. - Notes differences between the media texts in a general, loose manner.	- Lists limited commonalities from both media texts. - Lists limited differences from both media texts.	- Disregards commonalities. - Disregards differences
Synthesis	- Interprets with examples, significant similarities and differences from both media texts. - Combines information to offer insightful and substantiated judgments regarding the purpose and effects of the structures and features (techniques) used in advertising.	- Interprets with examples, appropriate similarities and differences from both media texts. - Combines information to offer substantiated judgments regarding the purpose and the effects of the structures and features (techniques) used in advertising.	- Compares obvious similarities and differences used in both media texts. - Offers a general judgment about the effects of the structures and features (techniques) used in advertising.	- Provides a summary of the listed similarities or differences. - Offers a tentative conclusion about how advertising structures and features (techniques) work.	- Does not work with differences or similarities. - Does not offer comments about how advertising structures and features (techniques) work.

For each statement, put a check mark (✓) in the box that best describes the student's performance.
Determine an overall or global level of performance, placing more value on the synthesis.

RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

CRITERIA	Range of Competency				Level 1 Minimal
	Level 5 Exemplary	Level 4 Thorough	Level 3 Acceptable	Level 2 Partial	
Constructs meaning	Draws comprehensive and elaborated meaning from the whole text. Extensive understanding is supported with references to the text.	Draws in-depth meaning from the text. Thorough understanding is supported with references to the text.	Draws general meaning from the text. Understanding is apparent but not supported by references to the text.	Summarizes details from the text. Partial understanding is evident.	Retells the text, listing details from the text. Understanding is not evident.
Makes connections	Integrates values, experiences and reflections with the text. Connections are perceptive and make reference to other texts including media, as well as to issues beyond the text.	Elaborates on and justifies connections and experiences with the text. Connections are thoughtful and interpretive, and make reference to other texts including media.	Associates experiences with the text. Obvious or simplistic connections are made to other texts including media.	Offers highly obvious connections to the text. Connections may be forced, superficial or uncertain.	Makes few or no connections to the text. If offered, connections are illogical or unrelated to the text.
Notes structures	Analyzes the effect of narrative structures featured in the text that enhance meaning.	Explains how narrative structures featured in the text reveal the author's purpose and enhance meaning.	Identifies structures that characterize the narrative.	Mentions obvious structures of narrative text.	Does not refer to structures featured in the narrative text.
Offers judgment	Judges the qualities of the narrative text and supports judgment with elaborated and insightful explanations, which at times apply to life in general.	Reacts with sincere opinions about the text and supports them with thoughtful explanations.	Reacts to the text and offers logical explanations for opinions.	Reacts to the text with likes and/or dislikes, but does not justify opinions.	Appears indifferent to the text, and does not offer any judgment or opinion.

For each statement, put a check mark (✓) in the box that best describes the student's performance.
Determine an overall or global level of performance.

NARRATIVE WRITING

CRITERIA	Range of Competency				
	Level 5 Exemplary	Level 4 Thorough	Level 3 Acceptable	Level 2 Partial	Level 1 Minimal
Organization	Carefully sustains a sharp focus on details, events and character development that result in a smoothly flowing, entertaining story. Characters are authentic.	Sustains a focus throughout; events and characters unfold to create a satisfying story. Characters are believable.	Provides a focus but the story falters at times; events unfold and eventually lead to a resolution. Characters are developed.	Attempts to develop a narrative, but the unfolding of events lacks momentum. Characters are lifeless.	Does not focus on a story or characters. There is no momentum or character development.
Voice	Places purpose and audience at the centre of the writing. The writer's voice is compelling and engaging.	Carefully attends to purpose and intended audience. The writer's voice is confident, sincere, and expressive.	Addresses purpose and audience with some assurance. The writer's voice is discernible at times.	Shows uncertainty in addressing purpose and audience. The writer's voice may be indistinct or inauthentic, if not absent.	Indicates little or no awareness of audience or purpose. The writer's voice is not evident.
Structures	Uses structures in a deliberate manner, including word choice and varied sentences. Dialogue and story devices such as humour, suspense or exaggeration enhance the story and engage the reader.	Uses essential structures in a sustained manner, including word choice and varied sentences. Dialogue and story devices such as humour or exaggeration provoke reader interest.	Uses essential structures occasionally, including word choice. Some dialogue and story devices such as humour or exaggeration are evident.	Uses basic language structures such as simple sentences and vocabulary.	Attempts to use basic language structures, such as simple sentences and/or captions.
Conventions	Effectively controls resources and tools to revise and edit; paraphrasing is consistent and there are very few or no errors. Meaning is enhanced.	Applies revision and editing strategies; paraphrasing is evident, but inconsistent. Infrequent errors do not affect meaning.	Attends to revision and editing; attempts are made to use paragraphs. Minor, but frequent errors affect meaning and distract the reader.	Attempts minor revisions and occasional editing. Serious and multiple errors in syntax, sentence structure and spelling impede meaning.	Attempts to edit, but writing is very difficult to read and understand due to major, multiple and repetitive errors in language and syntax.

For each statement, put a check mark (✓) in the box that best describes the student's performance. Determine an overall or global level of performance.

MEDIA PRODUCTION

CRITERIA	Range of Competency				
	Level 5 Exemplary	Level 4 Thorough	Level 3 Acceptable	Level 2 Partial	Level 1 Minimal
	• Cleverly engages the intended audience. The message is clear and succinct. • The image and words communicate meaning in an arresting manner.	• Effectively addresses the intended audience. The message is clear. • The image and words communicate meaning effectively.	• Addresses the intended audience. A message is evident. • The image and words convey sufficient information to create meaning.	• Attempts to address an audience. A message is suggested. • The image and words provide some information, but the meaning is unclear.	• Does not address an audience. • The image and words do not convey information or meaning.
	Purpose and Audience				
	Structures and Features (Techniques)	• Pays deliberate attention to specific persuasive techniques to elaborate a message.	• Pays careful attention to persuasive techniques to develop a message.	• Uses persuasive techniques to create a message.	• Relies on basic techniques to suggest a message.
Narrative (Story Plot)	• Develops and expands on a seamless connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing.	• Develops a fitting and satisfying connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing.	• Makes a logical connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing.	• Makes a tenuous connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing.	• Makes no connection between the advertisement and the narrative writing.

For each statement, put a check mark (✓) in the box that best describes the student's performance. Determine an overall or global level of performance.

Stargirl

She was elusive. She was today. She was tomorrow. She was the faintest scent of a cactus flower, the flitting shadow of an elf owl. We did not know what to make of her. In our minds we tried to pin her to a corkboard like a butterfly, but the pin merely went through and away she flew.



ABOUT JERRY SPINELLI

Jerry Spinelli, born in 1941, grew up in Norristown, a small town in Pennsylvania. He is a well-known children's author specializing in writing for preteen and teenage readers. He is the author of *Space Station Seventh Grade*, *Maniac Magee* (winner of the 1991 Newbery Medal), *Wringer* (1998 Newbery Honor Book) and *Stargirl*, among many other books.

Jerry really wanted to be a baseball player when he was growing up. One day when he was 16, his team won an important game. Jerry wrote a poem about the game and it was published in his local newspaper. That was when he first decided he wanted to be a writer.

After university Jerry worked for a magazine publisher, but was also writing books for adults. None of Jerry's books were accepted by a publisher until he started writing for young people. *Space Station Seventh Grade* was published when he was 41 years old. He likes to say that we have to experience many failures before we can be successful.

In most of his books, Jerry writes about growing up, the feelings, problems and funny happenings he remembers from his own childhood, and about the people in his hometown. He has seven children, who inspire many of his stories.

He lives in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Eileen Spinelli, also a writer. His most recent book is *Milkweed*, a story about a little kid with a big heart, trapped in a walled nightmare. The story is set in Poland during an earlier time, 1939-1942.

1

“Did you see her?”

That was the first thing Kevin said to me on the first day of school[...]. We were waiting for the bell to ring.

“See who?” I said.

“Hah!” He craned his neck, scanning the mob. He had witnessed something remarkable; it showed on his face. He grinned, still scanning. “You’ll know.”

There were hundreds of us, milling about, calling names, pointing to summer-tanned faces we hadn’t seen since June. Our interest in each other was never keener than during the fifteen minutes before the first bell of the first day.

I punched his arm. “Who?”

The bell rang. We poured inside.

I heard it again in homeroom, a whispered voice behind me as we said the Pledge of Allegiance:

“You see her?”

I heard it in the hallways. I heard it in English and Geometry:

“Did you see her?”

Who could it be? A new student? A spectacular blonde from California? Or from back East, where many of us came from? Or one of those summer makeovers, someone who leaves in June looking like a little girl and returns in September as a full-bodied woman, a ten-week miracle?

And then in Earth Sciences I heard a name: “Stargirl.”

I turned to the senior slouching behind me. “Stargirl?” I said. “What kind of name is that?”

“That’s it. Stargirl Caraway. She said it in

homeroom.”

“Stargirl?”

“Yeah.”

And then I saw her. At lunch. She wore an off-white dress so long it covered her shoes. It had ruffles around the neck and cuffs and looked like it could have been her great-grandmother’s wedding gown. Her hair was the colour of sand. It fell to her shoulders. Something was strapped across her back, but it wasn’t a book bag. At first I thought it was a miniature guitar. I found out later it was a ukulele.

She did not carry a lunch tray. She did carry a large canvas bag with a life-size sunflower painted on it. The lunchroom was dead silent as she walked by. She stopped at an empty table, laid down her bag, slung the instrument strap over her chair, and sat down. She pulled a sandwich from the bag and started to eat.

Half the lunchroom kept staring, half started buzzing.

Kevin was grinning. “Wha’d I tell you?”

I nodded.

“She’s in tenth grade,” he said. “I hear she’s been home-schooled till now.”

“Maybe that explains it,” I said.

Her back was to us, so I couldn’t see her face. No one sat with her, but at the tables next to hers kids were cramming two to a seat. She didn’t seem to notice. She seemed marooned in a sea of staring, buzzing faces.

Kevin was grinning again. “You thinking what I’m thinking?” he said.



I grinned back. I nodded. “*Hot Seat.*”

Hot Seat was our in-school TV show. We had started it the year before. I was producer/director, Kevin was on-camera host. Each month he interviewed a student. So far, most of them had been honour student types, athletes, model citizens. Noteworthy in the usual ways, but not especially interesting.

Suddenly Kevin’s eyes boggled. The girl was picking up her ukulele. And now she was strumming it. And now she was singing! Strumming away, bobbing her head and shoulders, singing, “I’m looking over a four-leaf clover that I overlooked before.” Stone silence all around. Then came the sound of a single person clapping. I looked. It was the lunch-line cashier.

And now the girl was standing, slinging her bag over one shoulder and marching among the tables, strumming and singing and strutting and twirling. Heads swung, eyes followed her, mouths hung open. Disbelief. When she came by our table, I got my first good look at her face. She wasn’t gorgeous, wasn’t ugly. A sprinkle of freckles crossed the bridge of her nose. Mostly, she looked like a hundred other girls in school, except for two things. She wore no makeup, and her eyes were the biggest I had ever seen, like deer’s eyes caught in headlights. She twirled as she went past, her flaring skirt brushing my pant leg, and then she marched out of the lunchroom.

From among the tables came three slow claps. Someone whistled. Someone yelped.

Kevin and I gawked at each other.

Kevin held up his hands and framed a marquee in the air. “*Hot Seat!* Coming Attraction—Stargirl!”

I slapped the table. “Yes!”

We slammed hands.

2

When we got to school the next day, Hillari Kimble was holding court at the door.

“She’s not real,” Hillari said. She was sneering. “She’s an actress. It’s a scam.”

Someone called out, “Who’s scamming us?”

“The administration. The principal. Who else? Who cares?” Hillari wagged her head at the absurdity of the question.

A hand flashed in the air: “Why?”

“School spirit,” she spat back. “They think this place was too dead last year. They think if they plant some nutcase in with the students—”

“Like they plant narcs in schools!” someone else shouted.

Hillari glared at the speaker, then continued,

“—some nutcase who stirs things up, then maybe all the little students will go to a game once in a while or join a club.”

“Instead of making out in the library!” chimed another voice. And everybody laughed and the bell rang and we went in.

Hillari Kimble’s theory spread throughout the school and was widely accepted.

“You think Hillari’s right?” Kevin asked me. “Stargirl’s a plant?”

I snickered. “Listen to yourself.”

He spread his arms. “What?”

“This is Mica Area High School,” I reminded him. “It’s not a CIA operation.”

“Maybe not,” he said, “but I hope Hillari’s right.”

“Why would you hope that? If she’s not a real student, we can’t have her on *Hot Seat.*”

Kevin wagged his head and grinned. “As usual, Mr. Director, you fail to see the whole picture. We could use the show to expose her. Can’t you see it?” He did the marquee thing with his hands: “*Hot Seat* Uncovers Faculty Hoax!”

I stared at him. “You *want* her to be a fake, don’t you?”

He grinned ear to ear. “Absolutely. Our ratings will go sky-high!”

I had to admit, the more I saw of her, the easier it was to believe she was a plant, a joke, anything but real. On that second day she wore bright-red baggy shorts with a bib and shoulder straps—overall shorts. Her sandy hair was pulled back into twin plaited pigtails, each tied with a bright-red ribbon. A rouge smudge applied each cheek, and she had even dabbed some oversized freckles on her face. She looked like Heidi. Or Bo Peep.

At lunch she was alone again at her table. As before, when she finished eating, she took up her ukulele. But this time she didn’t play. She got up and started walking among the tables. She stared at us. She stared at one face, then another and another. The kind of bold, I’m-looking-at-you stare you almost never get from people, especially strangers. She appeared to be looking for someone, and the whole lunchroom had become very uncomfortable.

As she approached our table, I thought: *What if she’s looking for me?* The thought terrified me. So I turned from her. I looked at Kevin. I watched him grin goofily up at her. He wiggled his fingers at her and whispered, “Hi, Stargirl.” I didn’t hear an answer. I was intensely aware of her passing behind my chair.

She stopped two tables away. She was smiling at a pudding-bodied senior named Alan Ferko. The lunchroom was dead silent. She started strumming the uke. And singing. It was “Happy Birthday.” When she came to his name she didn’t sing just the first name, but his full name:

“Happy Birthday, dear Alan Fer-kooooh”

Alan Ferko’s face turned red as Bo Peep’s pigtail



ribbons. There was a flurry of whistles and hoots, more for Alan Ferko’s sake, I think, than hers. As Stargirl marched out, I could see Hillari Kimble across the lunchroom rising from her seat, pointing, saying something I could not hear.

“I’ll tell you one thing,” Kevin said as we joined the mob in the hallways, “she better be fake.”

I asked him what he meant.

“I mean if she’s real, she’s in big trouble. How long do you think somebody who’s *really* like that is going to last around here?”

Good question.

Mica Area High School—MAHS— was not exactly a hotbed of nonconformity. There were individual variants here and there, of course, but within pretty narrow limits we all wore the same clothes, talked the same way, ate the same food, listened to the same music. Even our dorks and nerds had a MAHS stamp on them. If we happened to somehow distinguish ourselves, we quickly snapped back into place, like rubber bands.

Kevin was right. It was unthinkable that Stargirl could survive—or at least survive unchanged—among us. But it was also clear that Hillari Kimble was at least half right: this person calling herself Stargirl may or may not have been a faculty plant for school spirit, but whatever she was, she was not real.

She couldn't be.

Several times in those early weeks of September, she showed up in something outrageous. A 1920s flapper dress. An Indian buckskin. A kimono. One day she wore a denim miniskirt with green stockings, and crawling up one leg was a parade of enamel ladybug and butterfly pins. "Normal" for her were long, floor-brushing pioneer dresses and skirts.

Every few days in the lunchroom she serenaded someone new with "Happy Birthday." I was glad my birthday was in the summer.

In the hallways, she said hello to perfect strangers. The seniors couldn't believe it. They had never seen a tenth-grader so bold.

In class she was always flapping her hand in the air, asking questions, though the question often had nothing to do with the subject. One day she asked a question about trolls—in U.S. History class.

She made up a song about isosceles triangles. She sang it to her Plane Geometry class. It was called "Three Sides Have I, But Only Two Are Equal."

She joined the cross-country team. Our home meets were held on the Mica Country Club golf course. Red flags showed the runners the way to go. In her first meet, out in the middle of the course, she turned left when everyone else turned right. They waited for her at the finish line. She never showed up. She was dismissed from the team.

One day a girl screamed in the hallway. She had seen a tiny brown face pop up from Stargirl's sunflower canvas bag. It was her pet rat. It rode to school in the bag every day.

One morning we had a rare rainfall. It came during her gym class. The teacher told everyone to come in. On the way to the next class they looked out the windows. Stargirl was still outside. In the rain. Dancing.

We wanted to define her, to wrap her up as we did each other, but we could not seem to get past "weird" and "strange" and "goofy." Her ways knocked us off balance. A single word seemed to hover in the cloudless sky over the school:

HUH?

Everything she did seemed to echo Hillari Kimble: She's not real...She's not real...

And each night in bed I thought of her as the moon came through my window. I could have lowered my shade to make it darker and easier to sleep, but I never did. In the moonlit hour, I acquired a sense of the otherness of things. I liked the feeling the moonlight gave me, as if it wasn't



the opposite of day, but its underside, its private side, when the fabulous purred on my snow-white sheet like some dark cat come in from the desert. It was during one of these nightmoon times that it came to me that Hillari Kimble was wrong. *Stargirl* was real.

3

We fought daily, Kevin and I.

My main job as producer was to recruit people for the *Hot Seat*. After I signed someone up, Kevin began researching the person, getting his questions ready.

Every day he asked me, “Did you sign her up?”

Every day I answered no.

He got frustrated.

“What do you mean, no? Don’t you want to sign her up?”

I told him I wasn’t sure.

His eyes bugged out. “Not sure? How can you not be sure? We high-fived in the lunchroom weeks ago. We were thinking *Stargirl* mini-series, even. This is a *Hot Seat* from heaven.”

I shrugged. “That was then. Now I’m not sure.”

He looked at me like I had three ears. “What’s there to be not sure about?”

I shrugged.

“Well then,” he said, “I’ll sign her up.” He walked away.

“You’ll have to find another director, then,” I said.

He stopped. I could almost see the steam rising from his shoulders. He turned, pointed. “Leo, you can be a real jerk sometimes.” He walked off.

It was uncomfortable. Kevin Quinlan and I usually agreed on everything. We had been best friends since arriving in Arizona the same week four years before. We both thought the prickly pear cactus looked like Ping-Pong paddles with

whiskers, and that saguaros looked like dinosaur mittens. We both loved strawberry-banana smoothies. We both wanted to go into television. Kevin often said he wanted to be a sleazy talk show host, and he wasn’t kidding. I wanted to be a sports announcer or news anchor. We conceived *Hot Seat* together and convinced the faculty to let us do it. It was an instant hit. It quickly became the most popular thing in school.

So why was I balking?

I didn’t know. I had some vague feelings, but the only one I could identify was a warning: Leave her alone.

In time “Hillari’s Hypothesis” (so called by Kevin) about *Stargirl*’s origins gave way to other theories.

She was trying to get herself discovered for the movies.

She was sniffing fumes.

She was home-schooling gone amok.

She was an alien.

The rat she brought to school was only the tip of the iceberg. She had hundreds of them at home, some as big as cats.

She lived in a ghost town in the desert.

She lived in a bus.

Her parents were circus acrobats.

[...]

Her parents were brain-dead vegetables in a hospital in Yuma.

We watched her sit down in class and pull from her canvas bag a blue and yellow ruffled curtain that she draped over three sides of her desk. We saw her set out a three-inch clear glass vase and drop into it a white and yellow daisy. She did and undid this in



every class she attended, six times a day. Only on Monday mornings was the daisy fresh. By last period the petals were drooping. By Wednesday the petals began to fall, the stem to sag. By Friday the flower hung down over the rim of the waterless vase, its dead stump of a head shedding yellow dust in the pencil groove.

We joined her as she sang “Happy Birthday” to us in the lunchroom. We heard her greet us in the hallways and classrooms, and we wondered how she knew our names and our birthdays.

Her caught-in-headlights eyes gave her a look of perpetual astonishment, so that we found ourselves turning and looking back over our shoulders, wondering what we were missing.

She laughed when there was no joke. She danced when there was no music.

She had no friends, yet she was the friendliest person in school.

In her answers in class, she often spoke of sea horses and stars, but she did not know what a football was.

She said there was no television in her house.

She was elusive. She was today. She was tomorrow. She was the faintest scent of a cactus flower, the flitting shadow of an elf owl. We did not know what to make of her. In our minds we tried to pin her to a corkboard like a butterfly, but the pin merely went through and away she flew.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Stargirl*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000, pp.3-15.

