

Grade 1

A Short Piece of Descriptive
Writing ("My Favourite Toy")

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The Task

Students were asked to write a short piece of writing entitled "My Favourite Toy" using a planning sheet to record their ideas. They were reminded to make sure that their stories made sense and contained some details and information. They were also reminded to check their spelling and punctuation before writing their final copies. (In some individual cases, when teachers felt that students' published copies would be no better than their drafts, they were not asked to complete published copies.)

The following are the "overall expectations" that relate to this task:

By the end of Grade 1, students will:

- communicate ideas (thoughts, feelings, experiences) for specific purposes;
- organize information so that the writing conveys a clear message;
- produce short pieces of writing using simple forms;
- begin to revise their written work with the assistance of their teachers;
- use and spell correctly the vocabulary appropriate for this grade;
- use correctly the conventions specified for this grade.

During this task, students worked on the following selected "expectations in specific areas" from the Grade 1 curriculum:

By the end of Grade 1, students will:

- write simple but complete sentences;
- use a period at the end of a statement;
- correctly spell words identified by their teachers;
- use phonics to spell unfamiliar words;
- use capital letters to begin sentences and to differentiate certain words (e.g., names, the pronoun I);
- print legibly (capitals and small letters);
- leave spaces between words.

Previous Learning Experiences

It was suggested that before attempting the task, students should have had experience with the following:

- writing sentences
- revising and editing following whole-class prompts
- using visual organizers (planners)
- comparing their work to criteria outlined on task-specific charts like the rubrics included in this booklet

The Process Used

Teachers selected and read aloud one or more stories about a child and his or her toy. Using the ideas from the story or stories read, they demonstrated how to complete a planner such as a web diagram or the following chart:

	What	Where	When	Why	How
picture					
key words					

Teachers then used the following process:

Prewriting. Each student brought a favourite toy to school and completed a planner about it. This was followed by class discussion, after which students were given the opportunity to add to their planners.

Drafting. Using the planner, each student drew a picture, filled in the boxes with key words, and drafted a short piece of writing about his or her favourite toy.

Revising. In small groups or in the class as a whole, students read their drafts for meaning and then added, deleted, or changed words to improve their writing.

Editing. In small groups or in the class as a whole, students checked to ensure that they had capitals at the beginning of sentences and for names, that they had periods at the end of sentences, and that their words were spelled correctly. Note that in Grade 1 editing is done with the teacher's assistance.

Publishing. Teachers decided whether students should rewrite their drafts into good copies or whether the draft copies already represented students' best efforts. Where a student's work was difficult to read, the teacher made a clear copy which was attached to the student's original.

Reflecting. Students reflected on the process they had followed by participating in a sharing circle or through some other form of reflection used in the classroom.

Teachers then evaluated students' work using the rubric reproduced on the next page.

Grade 1: Rubric for a Short Piece of Descriptive Writing

Categories	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Reasoning	The student:			
– complexity of ideas and connection to the topic	– uses very few, simple ideas	– uses some simple ideas	– uses mainly simple ideas but also some developed ideas	– uses developed ideas
	– uses ideas that are not on topic	– uses some ideas that are connected to the topic	– uses many ideas that are connected to the topic	– uses only ideas that are connected to the topic
– number and relevance of supporting facts and details	– uses very few supporting details	– uses some supporting details	– uses sufficient supporting details so that the description makes sense	– uses many supporting details that enhance the description
Communication	In the student's work:			
– purpose: to describe a favourite toy	– the purpose is unclear	– the purpose is somewhat clear	– the purpose is clear	– the purpose is clear and interesting
– voice (feelings, opinions, attitudes)	– little feeling about the topic is expressed	– some feeling about the topic is expressed	– much feeling about the topic is expressed	– strong feeling about the topic is expressed
– sentence structure	– there are a few simple, sometimes incomplete sentences and a reliance on a single sentence stem	– there are some simple, complete sentences and some reliance on a single sentence stem	– the sentences are simple and complete with some variation in the stem used	– there are different patterns of simple, complete sentences
Organization	The student's writing:			
– structure (grouping of ideas)	– shows little grouping of common ideas (resembles a random list)	– groups some common ideas (includes elements of both a list and a story)	– groups common ideas together to tell a story	– links common ideas (the writing flows naturally)
Conventions	The student:			
– grammar	– uses a few of the conventions studied	– uses some of the conventions studied	– uses most of the conventions studied	– uses all or almost all of the conventions studied
– spelling	– shows some evidence of spelling strategies	– uses both phonetic and conventional spelling for familiar words	– uses conventional spelling for familiar words and phonetic spelling for unfamiliar words	– uses conventional spelling for most words
– punctuation	– uses capitals and periods randomly or not at all	– makes some errors in using capitals and periods	– generally uses capitals and periods accurately	– almost always uses capitals and periods accurately
– visual presentation	– produces a visual presentation that is unclear (spacing, placement, legibility)	– produces a visual presentation that is basically clear	– produces a clear visual presentation	– produces a clear visual presentation that enhances the story

"MY FAVOURITE TOY"

**my Favourite toy.**

ball green.

I play a baseball.

it is green.

but de .

out set.

I like.

I like to play ball.

My mom give it a toy.

Teachers' Notes**Reasoning**

- includes only a very few simple ideas
- provides very few supporting details

Communication

- the purpose is unclear because of incomplete sentences

Organization

- the writing resembles a list

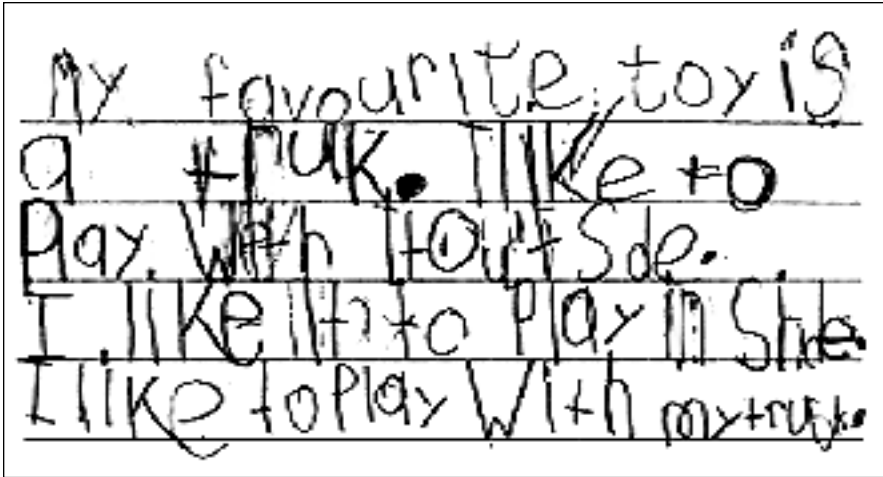
Conventions

- makes improper use of capitals and periods
- gives some evidence of the use of spelling strategies

Comments

The thoughts are not complete (missing words). The ideas are repetitive and disorganized.

"MY FAVOURITE TOY"



MY favourite toy is
 a truck. I like to
 Play With It Outside.
 I like It to Play in Side.
 I like to Play With my truck.

Teachers' Notes

Reasoning

- includes only one simple idea (where the child plays with the toy)
- provides no supporting details

Communication

- includes little description
- uses a few simple sentences that rely mainly on a single sentence stem ("I like to ...")

Organization

- the writing resembles a list

Conventions

- uses capitals randomly
- has some spacing problems
- includes both phonetic and conventional spelling

Comments

Although the student uses complete sentences and some phonetic and conventional spelling, only one idea is presented.

"MY FAVOURITE TOY"

my Favourite toy
 My Toy is cute and she
 is brown. And she has orange
 antlers. Hr name is Dc
 she is a moose she is
 Vere Vere cute. she has
 black eyes. My Toy is vere
 cute.

my Favourite ToY

My Toy is cute and she
 is brown. And she has orange
 antlers. Hr name is Dc
 she is a moose she is
 Vere Vere cute. she has
 black eyes. My Toy is vere
 cute.

Teachers' Notes**Reasoning**

- includes only simple ideas connected to the topic
- provides some supporting details

Communication

- communicates some idea of the writer's feelings
- uses simple sentences with repetition of details and structure

Organization

- the grouping of ideas is somewhat inconsistent

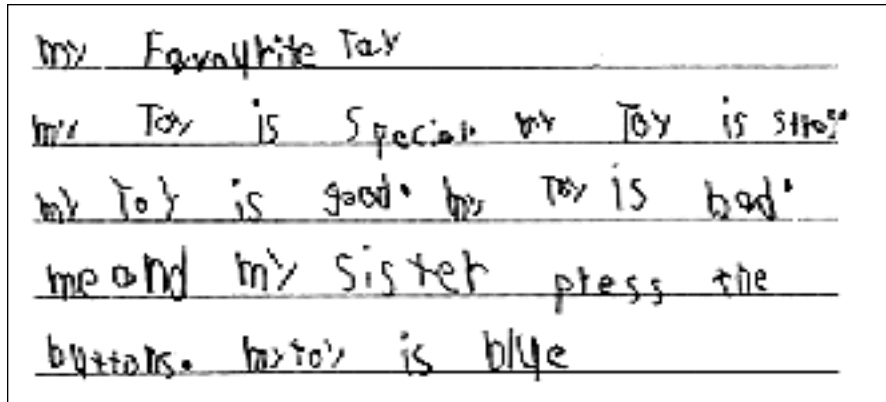
Conventions

- makes some errors in the use of capitals and periods
- uses both phonetic and conventional spelling

Comments

This piece contains some repetition ("vere vere cute" and "isvere cute").

"MY FAVOURITE TOY"



my Favourite Toy

my Toy is Special. my Toy is Strag.
 my Toy is good. my Toy is bad.
 me and my sister press the
 buttons. my toy is blue

Teachers' Notes

Reasoning

- includes only simple ideas connected to the topic
- provides some supporting details

Communication

- uses simple sentences with most using the same sentence stem ("My toy is ...")
- the description is usually clear
- some contradictory feelings are evident

Organization

- there is some evidence of grouping in the list ("good" and "bad")

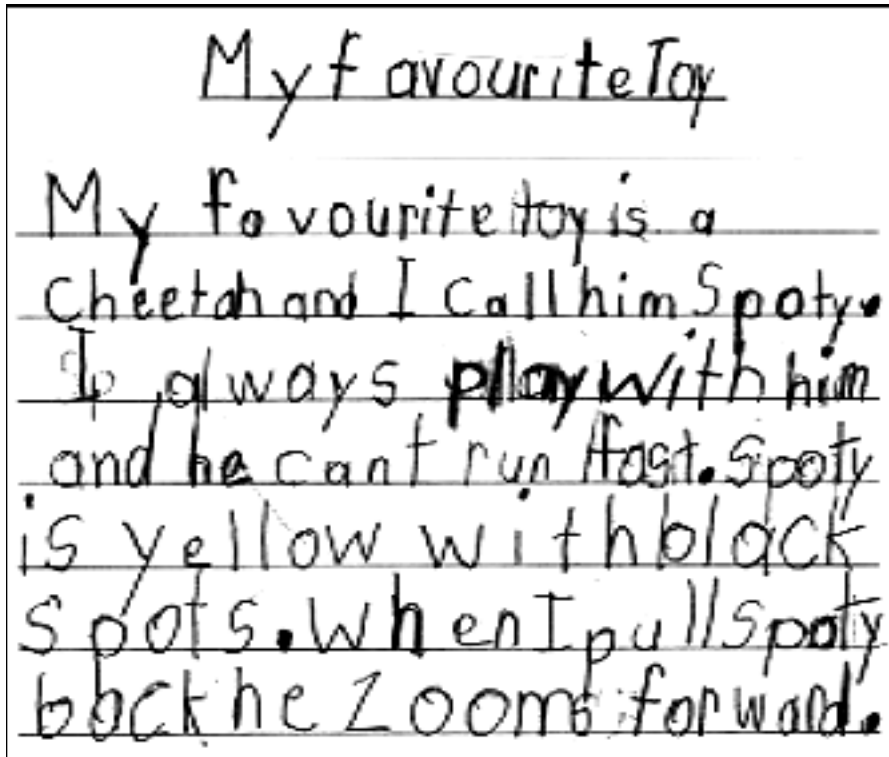
Conventions

- makes some errors in the use of capitals and periods
- uses both phonetic and conventional spelling

Comments

The description uses simple ideas. There is some confusion whether the toy is good or bad. Some errors in using capitals and periods.

"MY FAVOURITE TOY"

**My favourite Toy**

My favourite toy is a Cheetah and I call him Spoty. I always play with him and he cant run fast. Spoty is yellow with black spots. When I pull Spoty back he Zooms forward.

Teachers' Notes**Reasoning**

- expresses a complex idea ("When I pull ... he zooms.")
- connects many ideas to the topic
- provides supporting details and a description that makes sense

Communication

- includes several ideas (what the toy is, does, looks like, and what special feature it has) that give a clear description
- uses a variety of sentence types

Organization

- groups ideas to tell a story

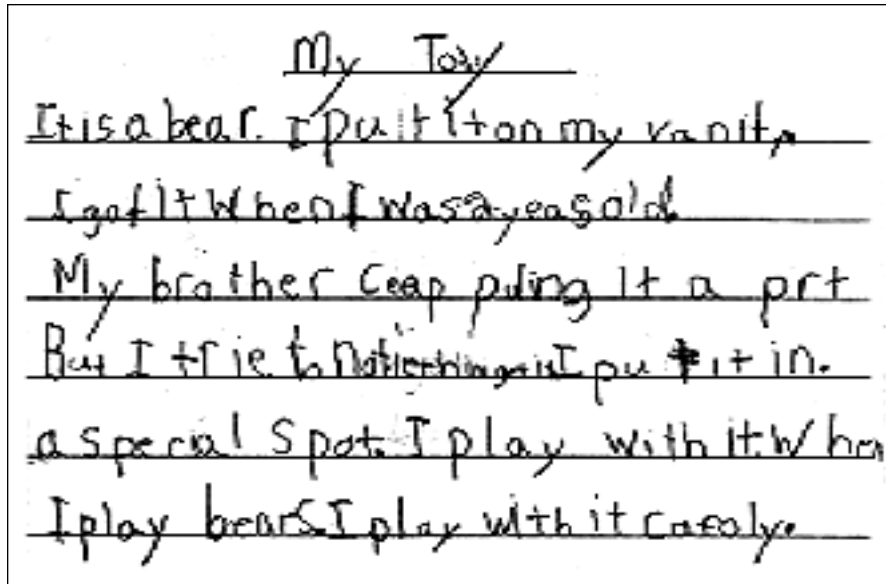
Conventions

- makes accurate use of capitals and periods
- uses phonetic spelling of unfamiliar words ("Spoty" for "Spotty", "cant" for "can't")
- work is legible

Comments

The student has achieved the purpose in this "to the point" piece of writing. The sentence structure links the ideas to each other.

"MY FAVOURITE TOY"

**My Toy**

It is a bear. I pu t it on my vanity.
 I got it When I was 2 years old.
 My brother ceap pulling it a prt
 But I trie to not let him get it. I pu t it in a Special Spot. I play with it When I play bearS. I play with it cafolye.

Teachers' Notes**Reasoning**

- develops some ideas using the conjunctions "but" and "when"
- includes many ideas that are connected to the topic
- provides supporting details and a description that makes sense

Communication

- describes the toy clearly, indicating its importance by words such as "put it in a special spot" and "carefully"
- uses both simple and complete sentences

Organization

- groups common ideas to tell a story
- includes complex sentences that use the conjunctions "but" and "when"

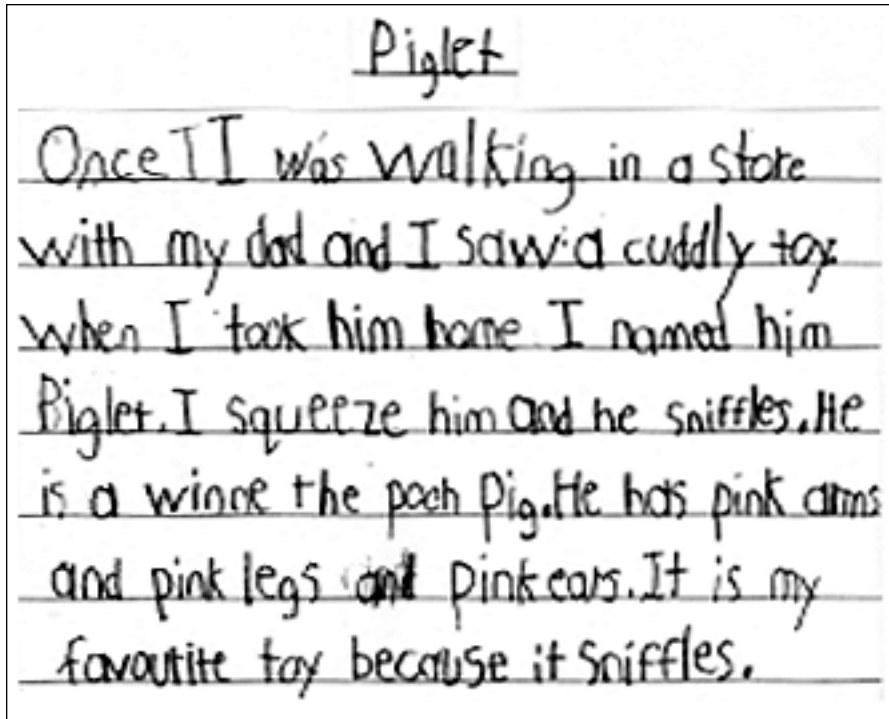
Conventions

- generally uses capitals and periods accurately
- uses phonetic spelling for unfamiliar words ("ceap" for "keep" or "kept", "cafolye" for "carefully", "puling" for "pulling", "trie" for "try")

Comments

This piece contains mostly simple ideas but includes a fair amount of supporting detail.

"MY FAVOURITE TOY"

**Piglet**

Once I was walking in a store with my dad and I saw a cuddly toy. when I took him home I named him Piglet. I squeeze him and he sniffles. He is a winne the pooh pig. He has pink arms and pink legs and pink ears. It is my favourite toy because it sniffles.

Teachers' Notes**Reasoning**

- develops ideas using two related thoughts in several sentences
- links the ideas consistently to the topic
- enhances the description by providing many supporting details

Communication

- clearly communicates feelings
- uses a good choice of words (i.e., "cuddly", colour words, "sniffles"), which makes the description clear and interesting
- uses different patterns of simple, complete sentences

Organization

- the writing flows naturally from the purchase of the toy to the explanation of why it became the favourite

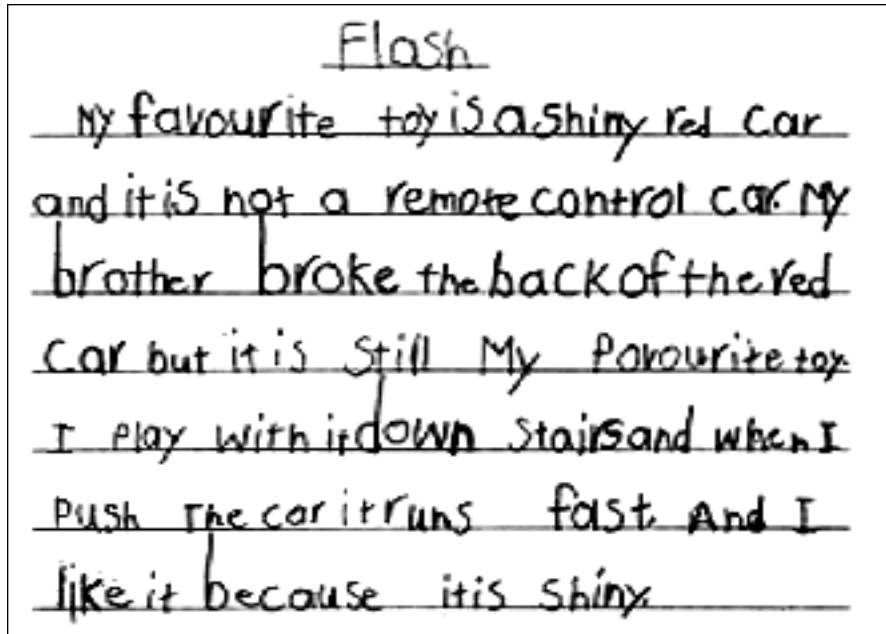
Conventions

- makes no spelling errors with familiar words
- uses capitals for proper nouns
- has periods at the end of all sentences
- has neat presentation

Comments

The writing uses ideas and supporting details that all relate to the topic. The writing is organized to flow naturally. The writing uses simple, compound, and complex sentences.

"MY FAVOURITE TOY"

**Flash**

My favourite toy is a shiny red car and it is not a remote control car. My brother broke the back of the red car but it is still My favourite toy. I play with it down stairs and when I push the car it runs fast. And I like it because it is shiny.

Teachers' Notes**Reasoning**

- uses two related thoughts in several sentences to develop ideas
- consistently links ideas to topic
- the description is enhanced by many supporting details

Communication

- the description is clear and interesting
- the writer clearly communicates his feelings (i.e., still his favourite toy even after his brother broke it)
- uses different patterns of simple, complete sentences

Organization

- the writing flows naturally

Conventions

- includes accurate spelling
- uses capitals and periods
- writing is legible and neat

Comments

The student uses two or more related ideas in the same sentence (more than once). The style used is very expressive.