

MCAS Released Item
Grade 3 2019 Constructed Response

Write a paragraph to explain how the author of “Humpback Whale: The Singer” describes whale songs. Support your response with important details from the article.

Main Idea: Describe whale songs

Detail #1: types of sounds

Detail #2: why they sing

Detail #3: changing songs

This student understands the organization of a paragraph with a main idea and details. Through the use of the detail generating questions to pull out important evidence and then explain that evidence, this was an effective piece. This Score Point 3 paper is a great example of the application of the EW skills.

What worked:

- **Organization:** This piece includes a main idea sentence and several details to support that main idea. It was clear that the student understood the purpose for the writing.
- **Elaboration:** The author was able to include elaboration through the use of the detail generating questions - What does it look like? And Why is it important? In this response to text, the detail generating questions provide a frame for locating specific evidence and explaining that evidence. What does it sound like when whales sing? The student writes, “The author does that by saying sailors heard moans, grunts, squeals and roars.” The writer goes on to explain why this is important, “The author also says whale songs are how whales stay in touch.” This type of evidence and explanation are woven into the paragraph.

Feedback with Prescriptive Lesson:
CHOOSE a Focus Skill

Main Ideas/Reasons: The student would benefit from lessons on developing main idea sentences that are creative and adding additional high level vocabulary.

Section 2 Lesson 10 and 11 Alternatives to Boring, Redundant Main Idea Sentences

Section 2 Lesson 15 Word Referents

Elaboration: The student would benefit by practicing how to state evidence through the use of sentence starters..

Section 3 Lesson 15 Paraphrasing

Section 3 Lesson 16 Giving the Author Credit

2019 MCAS Grade 3 English Language Arts Question 8 - Score Point 3

The constructed response is a clear explanation of how the author of "Humpback Whale: The Singer" describes whale songs. The response specifically references the "moans, grunts, squeals, and roars" that whales make and says that the author describes the sounds as "humming sound[s] from deep in the ocean." The response also includes information about how the songs of male whales change during the winter breeding season. Additionally, it explains that the sounds whales make allow them to stay in touch with each other and are made "when whales gather fish to eat." The response demonstrates full understanding of the reading material and includes important details from the article as support.

Main Idea Sentence

*Describe:
what
does it
sound
like?*

The author of "Humpback Whale: The Singer" describes whale songs. The author does that by saying sailors herd moans, grunts, squeals, and roars. The author also says whale songs are how whales stay in touch. Whales also make sounds when whales gather fish to eat. The author also describes it as a humming sound from deep in the ocean. During each winter breeding season, the songs of males change little by little. When the whales return to their winter homes the next year, they start singing the most recent songs from last year. Then once again their songs start changing little by little. Those are some reasons about how the author from "Humpback Whale: The Singer" describes whale songs.

*Explain:
why is it
important?*

[3 Points | 3 Points | 2 Points | 2 Points | 1 Point | 1 Point | 0 Points]