

MCAS Released Item
Grade 3 2019

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Your writing should:

- Present and develop a central idea.
- Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Write an essay that explains how the author uses text features to help the reader understand grizzly bears. Be sure to use information from the passage to develop your essay.

Topic: Text Features

Main Idea #1: subtitles

Main Idea #2: diagram

Main Idea #3: maps

Main Idea #4: fact boxes

This student understands the organization of an informational piece. 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 4 paper is a great example of the application of the EW skills.

What worked:

- **Organization:** This piece includes an introduction statement, several main ideas and a conclusion statement that loosely follows the pillar structure. The writer presents a central idea that is clear - how the text features help the reader understand the text. It was clear that the student understood the purpose for the writing.

- **Main Ideas:** Each main idea is distinct from the others. The details support the main idea. There are no clear main idea sentences, the student names the main idea of each paragraph but goes right into the details. The main idea, subtitles, is not in a paragraph of its own but embedded in the first paragraph.
- **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 a diagram look like? The student writes, “it shows a picture of a grizzly bear and label the parts and what they do to help the bear, like strong teeth that are useful for catching and chewing food, and the thick fur that keeps it warm in cold or wet weather.” The writer goes on to explain why this is important, “The diagram also includes the picture to show what a grizzly bear looks like for people who have never seen one, and to show where the labeled parts of the body are.” This type of evidence is pulled directly from the text and then the explanations are woven into each paragraph.
- **Introduction and Conclusion:** The introduction statement established the topic by turning the prompt into the response. The conclusion re-stated the prompt. These “bookends” provided coherence to the piece. They are simplistic and could be improved by learning some techniques and strategies for effective writing.
- **Transitions:** There were some transitions within each paragraph that made it easy to read, however the writing could certainly be enhanced using creative transitions and main idea sentence starters.

Feedback with Prescriptive Lesson:

CHOOSE a Focus Skill

Main Ideas/Reasons: The student would benefit from lessons on developing main ideas 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 and to paraphrase in their own words at times.

Section 3 Lesson 15 Paraphrasing

Section 3 Lesson 16 Giving the Author Credit

Introductions: This piece could be enhanced by a strong lead and an effective topic sentence that names the specific main ideas in the author's prewriting plan.

Section 5 Lesson 1 Leads and Topic Sentences

Section 5 Lesson 6 Writing Response to Text Introductions

Conclusions: The student needs instruction on effective conclusion paragraphs.

Section 5 Lesson 11 Writing Response to Text Conclusion paragraphs

2018 MCAS Grade 3 English Language Arts Question 16

Idea Development - Score Point 4

The central idea of how the author uses text features to help the reader understand grizzly bears is clear and fully developed. The essay is effectively organized and includes specific examples of text features such as subtitles, diagrams, maps, and fact boxes, to explain how they provide the reader with a fuller understanding of grizzly bears. Ideas are clearly expressed with a full awareness of the purpose for writing.

Standard English Conventions - Score Point 3

Although there are minor errors in grammar, the essay contains a variety of sentence structures, including "These places are important because they are, or used to be, a habitat for grizzly bears." Punctuation is mostly correct throughout the essay. Overall, the essay demonstrates consistent control of Standard English conventions for this grade level relative to length and complexity.

Introduction

The author uses text features such as subtitles, diagrams, maps, and fact boxes to try and give the reader a full understanding of what a grizzly bear is. The subtitles simply state the heading of the piece of writing below such as, meet the grizzly bear, and, a very large animal.

subtitles

In the diagram, it shows a picture of a grizzly bear and label the parts and what they do to help the bear, like the strong teeth that useful for catching and chewing food, and the thick fur that keeps it warm in cold or wet weather. The diagram also includes the picture to show what a grizzly bear looks like for people who have never seen one, and to show where the labeled parts of the body are.

diagram

transition language

The author uses maps to show a certain place or a number of places that is important in the passage. In this passage, the important places are Alberta, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Montana, Wyoming, Chihuahua, Idaho, Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska. These places are important because they are, or used to be, a habitat for grizzly bears.

map

cite evidence

→ explain

The fact boxes in this writing piece are used to give extra information, or fun facts about the topic. These factboxes give information about grizzly bear fun facts, their gatherings, and how there are national parks that provide a safe home for grizzly bears.

fact boxes

conclusion

This concludes my essay on Jacqueline Dineen's *Grizzly Bears*.

[4 Points | 4 Points | 3 Points | 2 Points | 1 Point | 0 Points]