

Making Sense of the Common Core Standards: What Parents Need to Know

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Why Standards?

Why Common Core Standards?

- **Standards** provide a shared vision of what students should know and be able to do
- **Standards** provide a shared vision for teachers and administrators
- ***Common Core State Standards*** establish consistency across the states

CAUTION! BEFORE CONTINUING...

- The Common Core Learning Standards are not just a new set of performance indicators...
- They are a whole new way of teaching and learning...



How and Why Were the Common Core Standards Created?

- Let's watch a quick video about how and why the Common Core Standards were created.
- As you are watch this video, jot down a few words, phrases or ideas that stand out for you.
- <http://www.commoncoreworks.org>

English Language Arts Areas of Focus

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Language (grammar and vocabulary)
- Media and Technology – Research and Media skills built into the Standards as a whole



What Does the Research Document Contain? (Appendix A)

- Research on text complexity including exemplar texts (stories and literature, poetry, and informational texts)
- Research on reading foundational skills
- Research on forms of writing:
 - Argument
 - Informational
 - Narrative

What Does the Text Exemplar Document Contain? (Appendix B)

- Grade level text exemplars for English Language Arts
- Grade level sample performance tasks for English Language Arts
- Grade level text exemplars for Social Studies/History, Science, Math and Technical Subjects
- Grade level sample performance tasks for Social Studies, Science, Math and Technical Subjects

What Does the Document of Writing Exemplars Contain? (Appendix C)

- Grade level samples of student writing
 - Narrative
 - Argument
 - Informative/Explanatory



Six Shifts in ELA Literacy

- ✓ Balancing Informational and Literary Text
- ✓ Building Knowledge in the Disciplines
- ✓ Staircase of Complexity
- ✓ Text-based Answers
- ✓ Writing from Sources
- ✓ Academic Vocabulary

Balancing Informational and Literary Texts: PK-5

- Students read a true balance of informational and literary texts. Elementary school classrooms are, therefore, places where students access the world – science, social studies, the arts and literature – through text. At least 50% of what students read is informational.

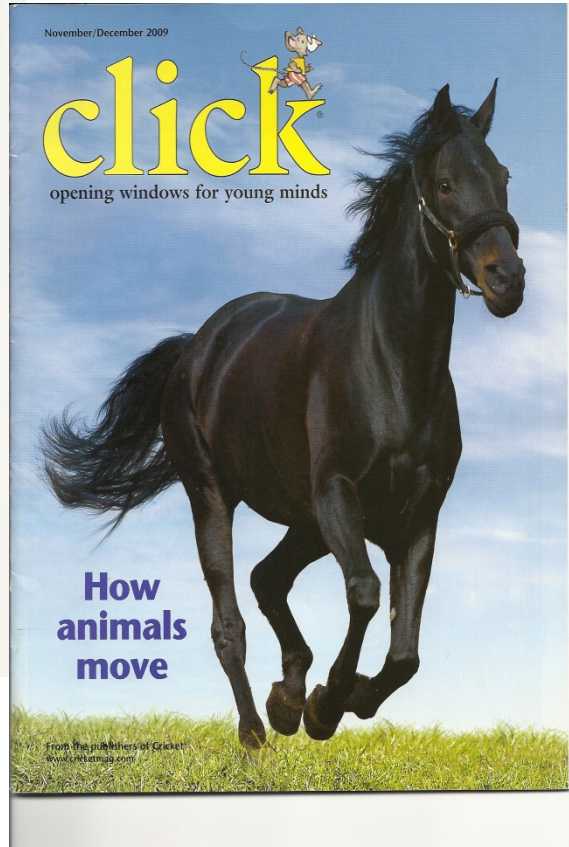
Shift 1: PK-5

Balancing Informational & Literary Texts

How Parents Can Help:

- Visit the library and help your child select nonfiction books
- Read aloud nonfiction at home
- Order some nonfiction selections when purchasing from Scholastic Book Clubs
- Look into ordering a nonfiction publication for your child at home, such as ***Time for Kids***, ***Ranger Rick***, ***National Geographic Kids***, etc.

Nonfiction Publications



Building Knowledge in the Disciplines: 6-12

- Content area teachers outside of the ELA classroom emphasize literacy experiences in their planning and instruction. Students learn through domain-specific texts in science and social studies classrooms – rather than referring to the text, they are expected to learn from what they read.

Shift 2: Building Knowledge in the Disciplines 6-12

How Parents Can Help:

- Supply series of texts on topics of interest (i.e. baseball, favorite animals, art, etc.)
- Learn the topics your child is studying in the content areas and find ways to deepen their knowledge outside of the classroom (i.e. museum visits, visiting historic sights, movies, etc.)

Staircase of Complexity

- In order to prepare students for the complexity of college and career ready texts, each grade level requires a “step” of growth on the “staircase.”
- Students read the central, grade appropriate text around which instruction is centered.
- Teachers are patient, create more time and space in the curriculum for this close and careful reading, and provide appropriate and necessary scaffolding and supports so that it is possible for students reading below grade level.

Shift 3: Staircase of Complexity

How Can Parents Help:

- Provide more challenging texts and provide texts that your child will want to read and can read comfortably
- Know what is grade level appropriate. If your child is not reading on grade level, read aloud grade level appropriate material

Shift 3 Continued: Increasing Reading Complexity

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile Ranges	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K-1	N/A	N/A
2-3	450-725	450-790
4-5	645-845	770-980
6-8	860-1010	955-1155
9-10	960-1115	1080-1305
11-CCR	1070-1220	1215-1355

Text-Based Answers

- Students have rich and rigorous conversations which are dependent on a common text.
- Teachers insist that classroom experiences stay deeply connected to the text on the page and that students develop habits for making evidentiary arguments both in conversation, as well as in writing to assess comprehension of a text.

Shift 4: Text-Based Answers

How Parents Can Help:

- Talk about books
- Read aloud or read the same book your child is reading, and discuss the book using evidence to support your thinking
- Demand evidence in every day discussions/disagreements

Writing From Sources

- Writing needs to emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument rather than the personal narrative and other forms of decontextualized prompts.
- While the narrative still has an important role, students develop skills through written arguments that respond to the ideas, events, facts, and arguments presented in the texts they read.

Shift 5: Writing from Sources

How Parents Can Help:

- Encourage writing at home
- Have your child keep a writer's notebook or journal at home where they can write about experiences, reactions to events, responses to books, and observations
- Write "books" together and use evidence/details

Academic Vocabulary

- Students constantly build the vocabulary they need to access grade level complex texts.
- By focusing strategically on comprehension of pivotal and commonly found words (such as “discourse,” “generation,” “theory,” and “principled”) and less on esoteric literary terms (such as “onomatopoeia” or “homonym”), teachers constantly build students’ ability to access more complex texts across the content areas.

Communication in the 21st Century

What is wrong with this picture?



Shift 6: Academic Vocabulary

How Parents Can Help:

- Read often
- Start using academic vocabulary at home (i.e. *“Can you help me brainstorm some ideas for dinner tonight?”* *“Can you estimate which pile has more clothes in it?”*)
- Play board games (i.e. Scrabble, Brain Quest, Life, Monopoly, Boggle, etc.)

The more we read the more we CAN read!

- **By age 3, children from affluent families have heard 30 million more words than children from parents living in poverty. (Hart and Risley, 1995).**
- **Children who have larger vocabularies and greater understanding of spoken language do better in school (Whitehurst and Lonigan).**
- **If children aren't reading on grade level by third grade, they are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma (Hernandez, 2011).**

What a Writer Needs

- A writer learns to pull from a large toolbox of strategies to help him or her perfect their writing.
- As a parent, you can help your child develop two of these essential strategies at home.



1. A Love of Words

- “A rich vocabulary allows a writer to get a richness of thought onto the paper. However, the writer’s real pleasure comes not from using an exotic word but from using the *right* word in a sentence.” ~ Ralph Fletcher
- “Language permits us to see. Without the word, we are all blind.” ~ Carlos Fuentes, *The Old Gringo*
- Vocabulary is a strong indicator of student success (Baker, Simmons, & Kame’enui, 1997)

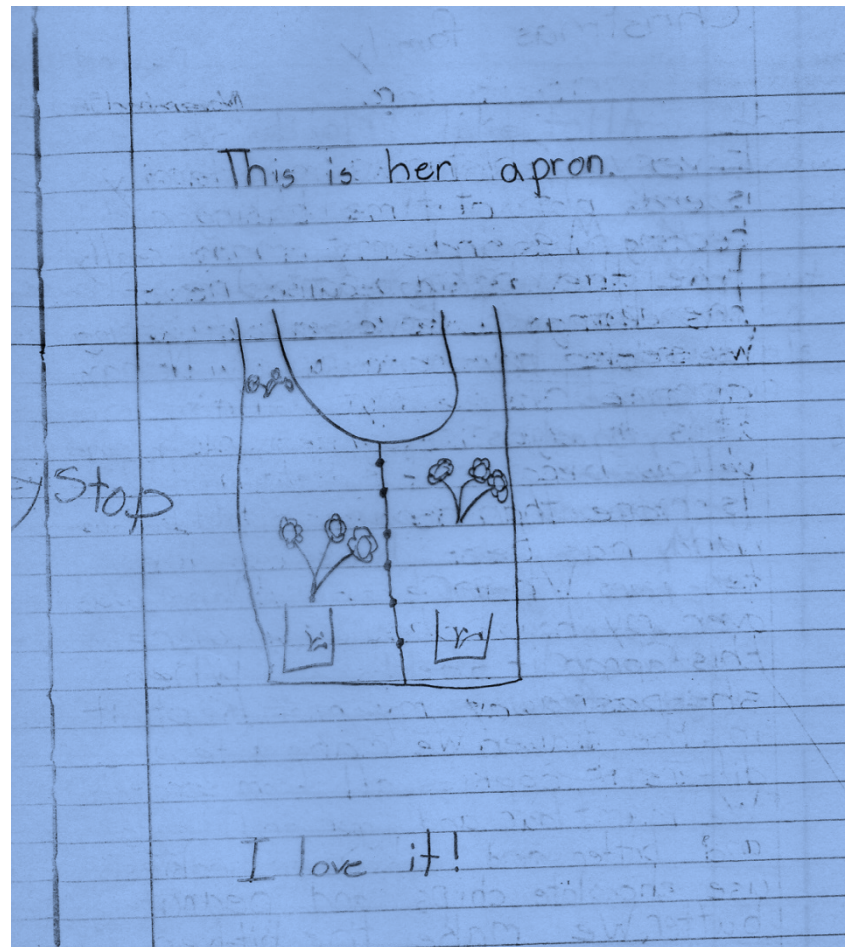
2. The Art of **Simplicity**

- “Keep listening. Keep your radar out. Take everything, because it is matter for your work. No detail is too small.” ~ Mary Tallmountain
- “The bigger the issue, the smaller you write. Very smart advice: possibly the single most important suggestion you will find in this book. It is the kind of insight that has taken me years to fully appreciate.” ~ Ralph Fletcher, *What a Writer Needs*
- We need to help children focus on small moments. Like a photographer zooming in on his/her subject. Or a seed idea vs a watermelon.

Writing Small – writing off of an object, Grade 3

Nana's apron November 14, 2001

This is my Nana's apron. It is blue, white, green, pink, and yellow because it is stained. It is more than ten years old because Nana has been in heaven for ten years. When ever my Nana was over my house she always wore this apron if she cooked. When she past away my mom kept it in the drawer. Now she wear it when she does a lot of cooking and frying. Dad makes fun of mom all the time when she wears it. He calls her Tessie, that's what Nana's name was. We all away laugh and they tell us stories about my Nana. My Nana used to sew alot this apron is one of the things she made.



How Parents Can Support the Common Core Writing Standards

- The Common Core State Standards are national standards that indicate what K-12 students are expected to learn in math and the English language arts. The standards themselves are lengthy and span K-12, but it's important for parents to understand the goals of the standards and ways to support school instruction at home.
- Following are some recommendations that align with the four “anchor standards” of the Common Core writing standards: **Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, and Range of Writing.**

Text Types and Purposes

- **What it means:** We write for many different purposes, and these standards address that fact. Teachers will be asking students to write opinion pieces about books or topics, informative pieces that contain facts about a topic, and more traditional-style writing called narrative in which students write about specific events or details.
- **How parents can help:** Help your child see the different types of writing you do in your adult life. Talk about the writing you do for work and the more casual writing you do to friends. Then have fun encouraging your child to write their own opinion pieces – ask them to write a review of last night’s dinner or the last family movie you watched.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- **What it means:** These standards address editing and publishing work. Teachers and students may work together to edit drafts of written pieces, focusing on specific suggestions to make the writing more clear or informative. The students also address sharing written work using a variety of digital tools.
- **How parents can help:** Help your child feel good about receiving feedback. Constructive suggestions can help make a child's writing clearer and the writing process more enjoyable. Then, discover ways to share your child's writing with a larger audience – email or mail stories and poems, have your child contribute to the family blog, and keep an eye out for writing contests designed just for kids.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- **What it means:** Students will be working with classmates on research and writing projects. Together they will collaborate to gather information and present findings in an accurate way.
- **How parents can help:** Consider checking out some “how-to” books from the library. Discuss the way the book is designed to teach someone to do something. Notice the format, short directions, and pictures or diagrams. Then, choose a topic to create your own family “how-to” book. It could be for a well-loved recipe or some other task that has multiple steps – how to clean the bathroom, unload the dishwasher, or program the DVR.

Suggestions for Practice at Home

Anchor Standard #1 in Writing:

Write arguments (opinions K-5) to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- Movie reviews
- Food reviews
- Books reviews
- Character analysis
- Sports (team vs team, athlete vs athlete, etc.)
- TV shows
- Vacation spots
- Current events

Emerson, Age 6 – Movie Review

Movie Review: →

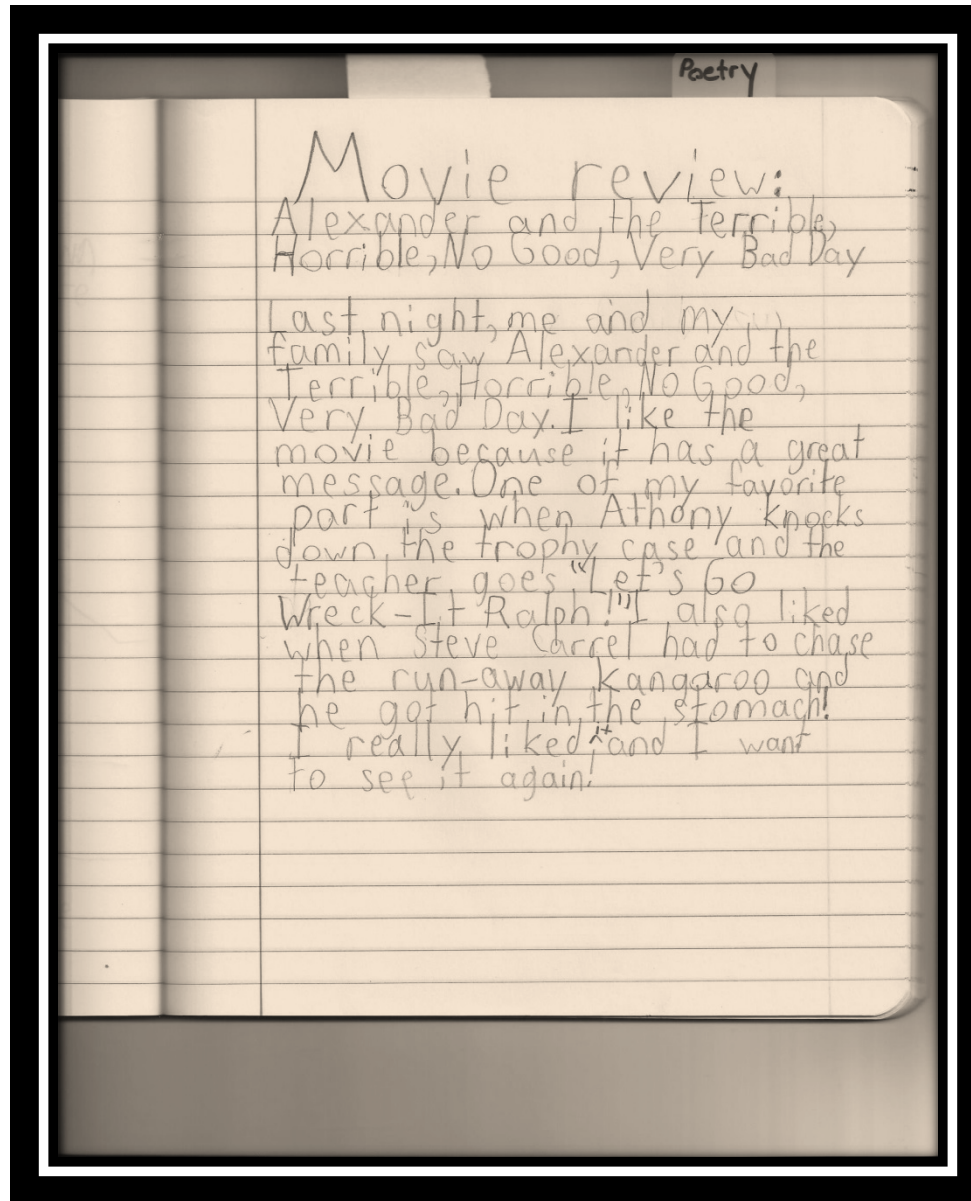
the movie

I liked Δ because
Steve Carell was
funny because he
said, "Ow comon!"
Another reason I
liked the movie was
because of the part

Alexander and the Terrible,
Horrible, No Good, Very
Bad Day

when the family opened
the door and there was
an alligator inside the
house. I laughed at
that part.

Cole, Age 8 – Movie Review

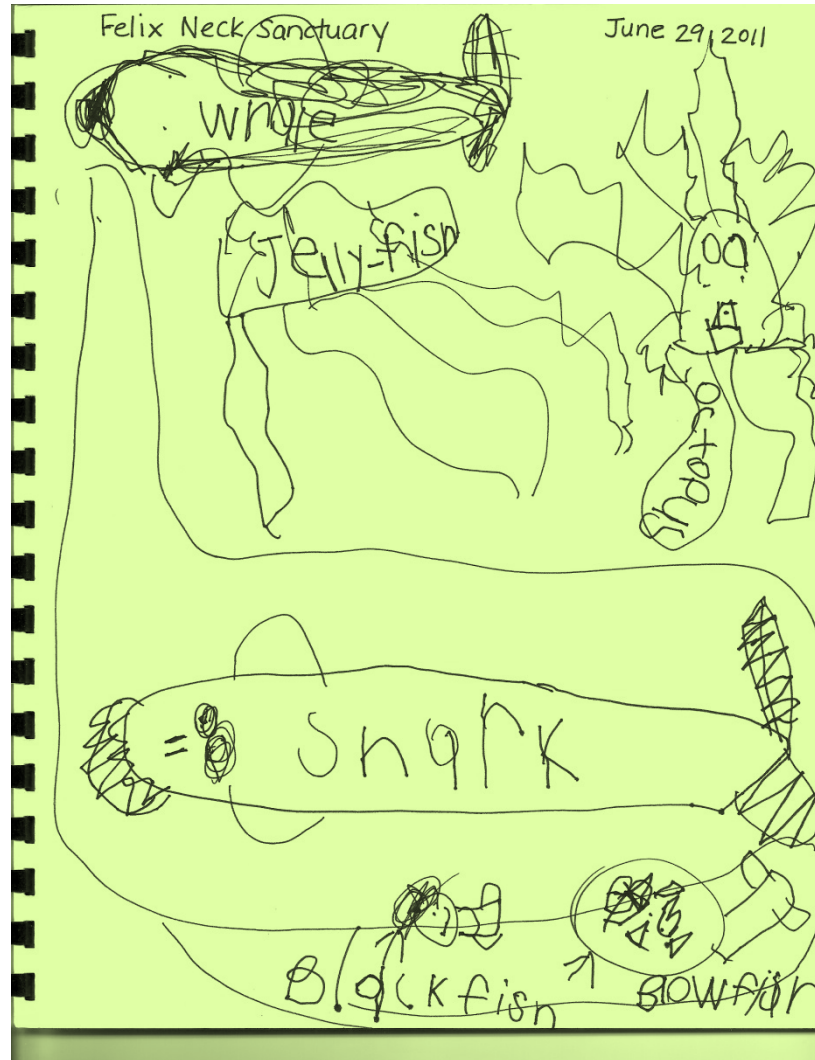


Anchor Standard #2 in Writing:

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

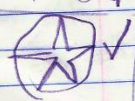

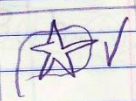



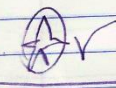

- Compare/contrast characters in a book
- “How-to” book
- Travel brochure
- Science experiments
- Nature Walk debrief
- Research on topics of interest
- Report of a sporting event

Cole, Age 5 – Nature Walk

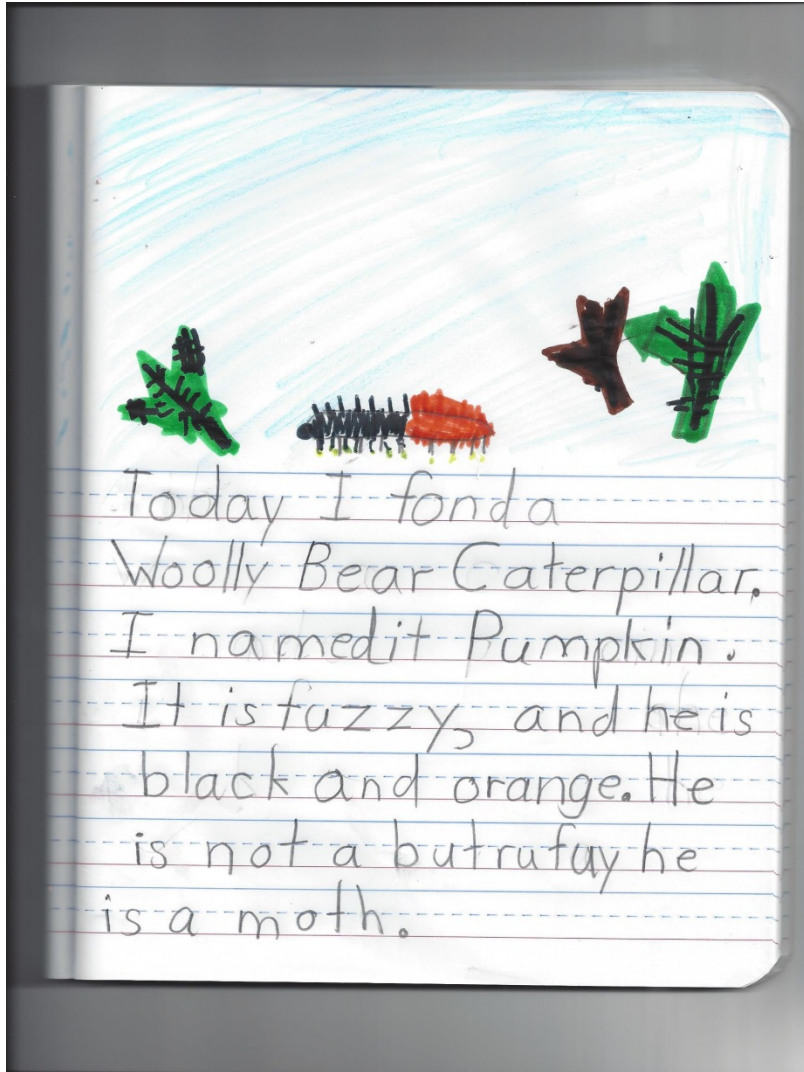


Cole, Age 6 – Science Observation

Sink or float?

item	sink	float
ball		
CUP		
Lego		
Penguin		
big Bear		
bucket		

Emerson, Age 6 – Informational



Anchor Standard #3 in Writing:

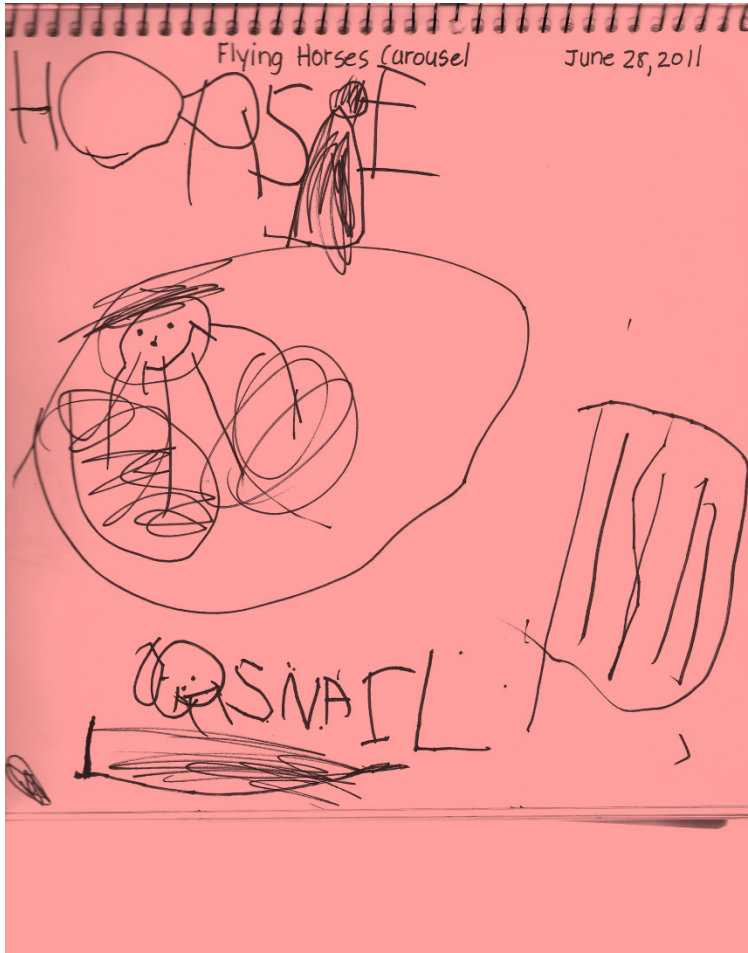
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- Journaling (vacations, weekends, trips to visit relatives, important moments, etc.)
- Personal narrative writing about small moments
- Create fictional stories
- Write from the voice of a character
- Write from the voice of a historical figure
- Poetry

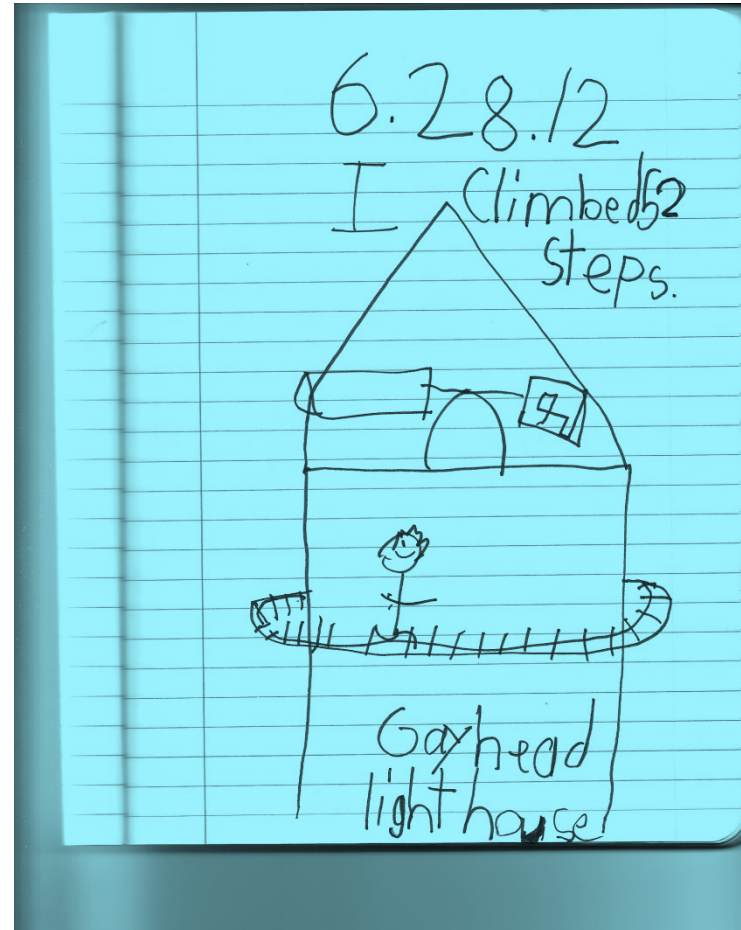
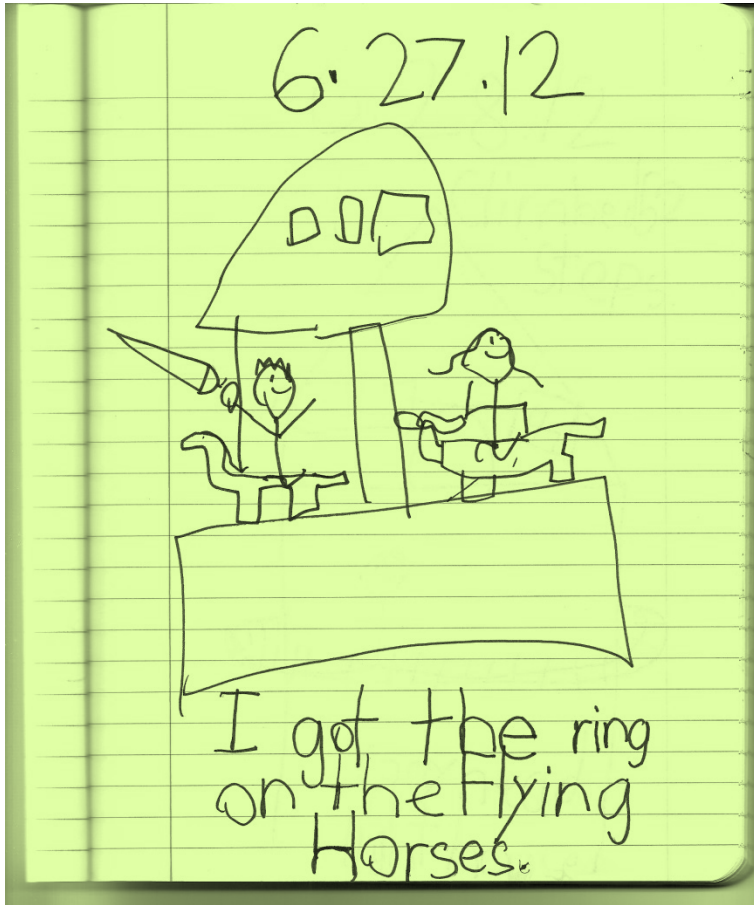
Cole, Age 5 – Vacation Journal



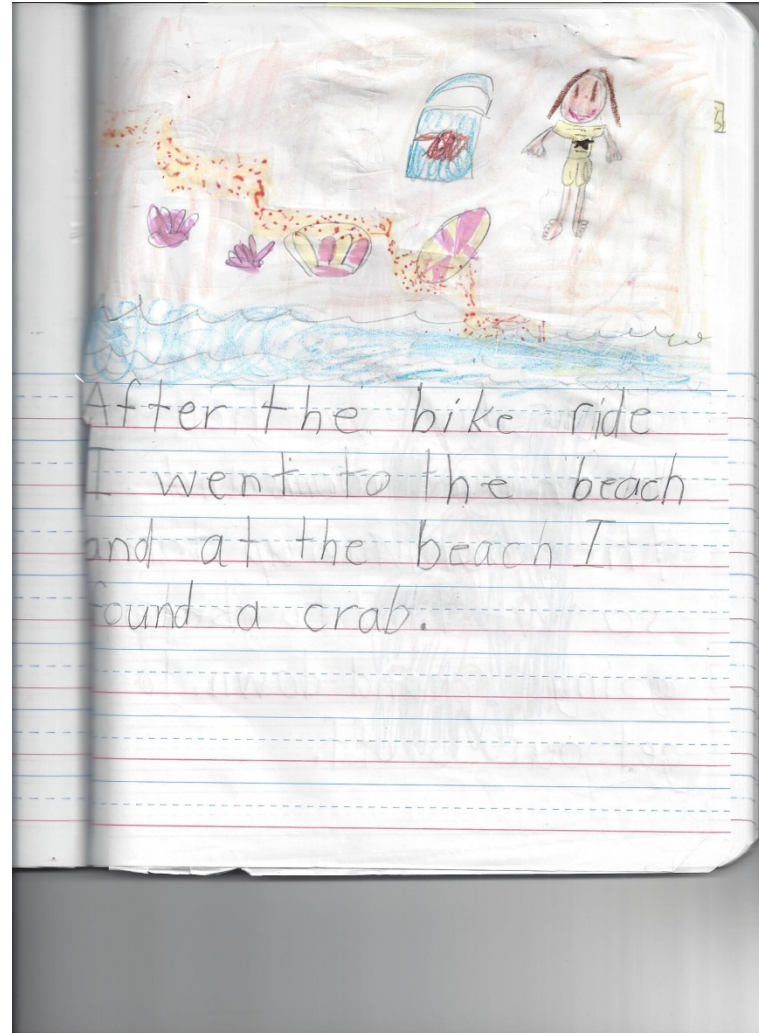
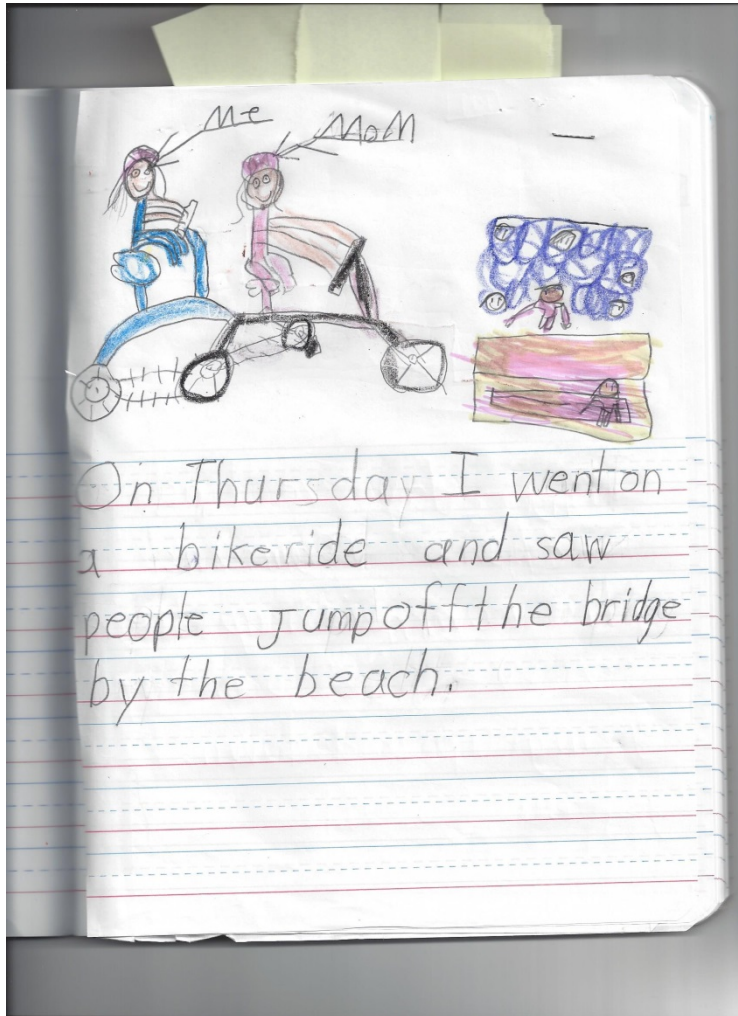
Emerson, Age 3 – Vacation Journal



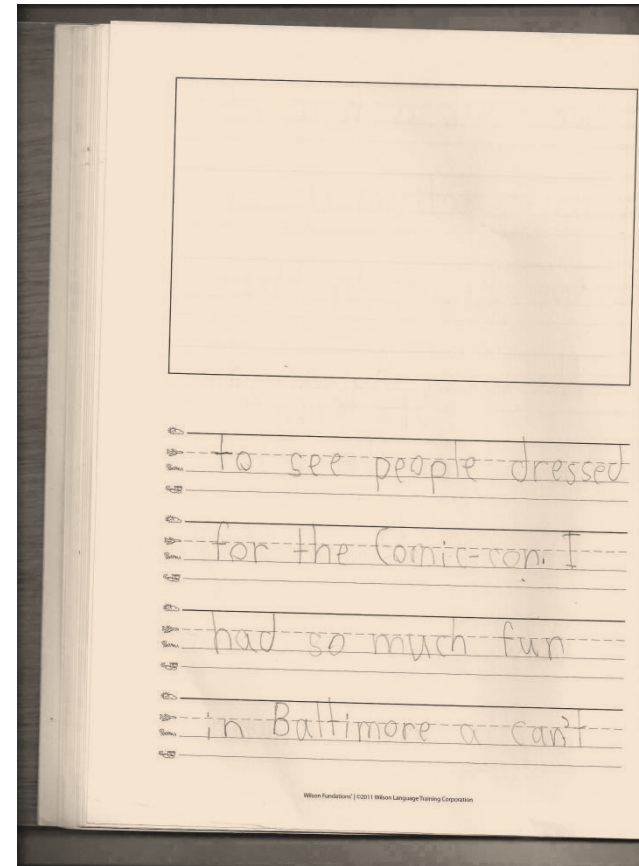
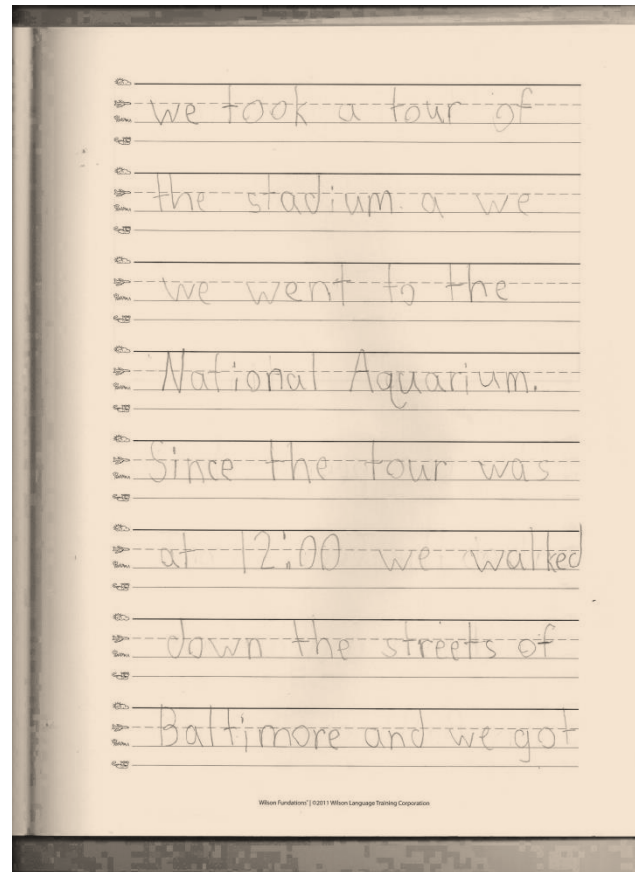
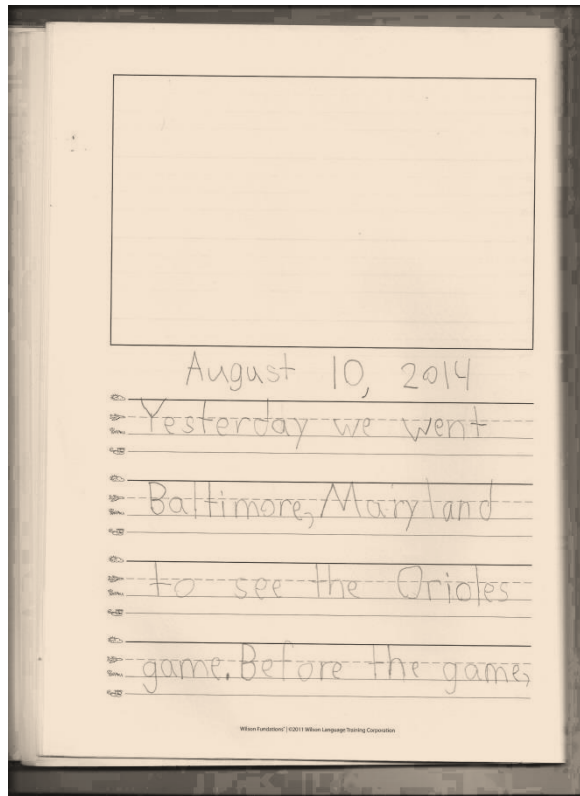
Cole, Age 6 – Vacation Journal



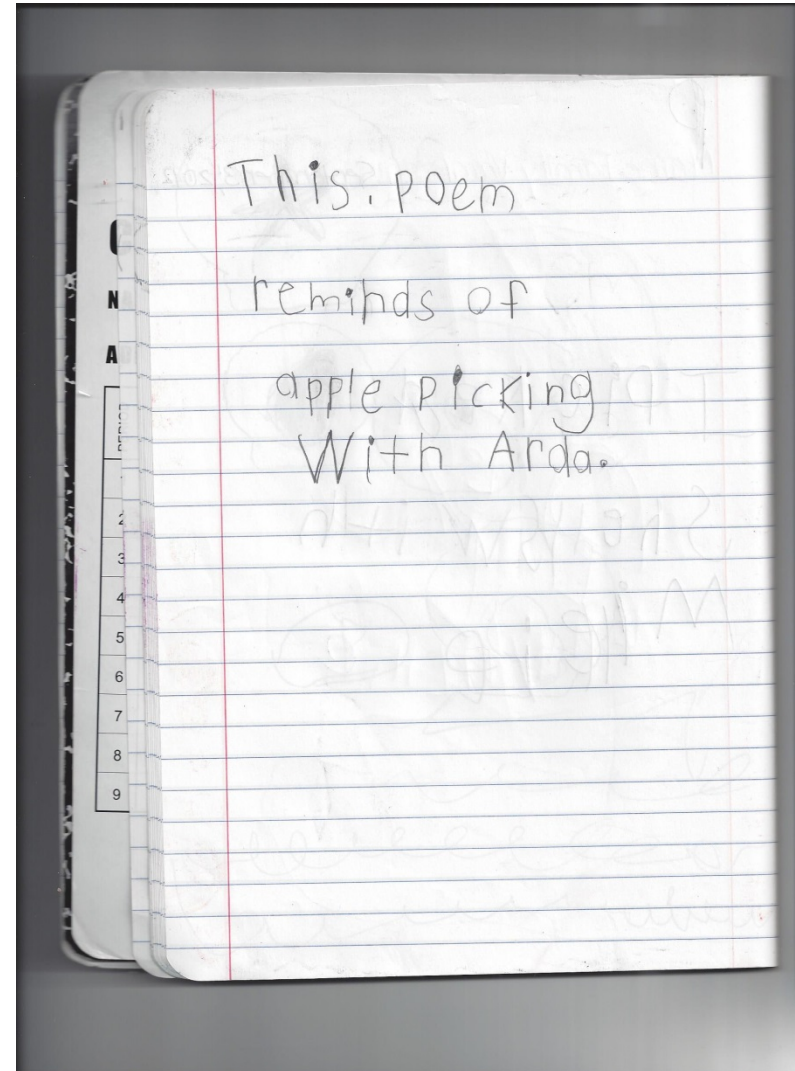
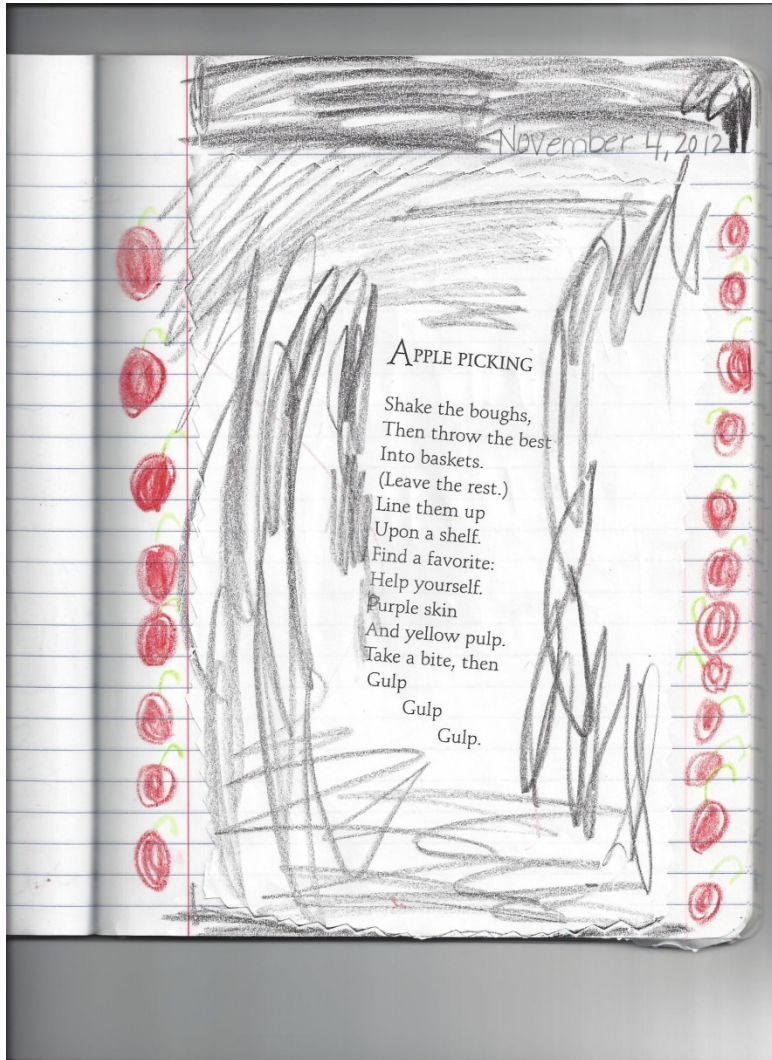
Emerson, Age 6 – Vacation Journal



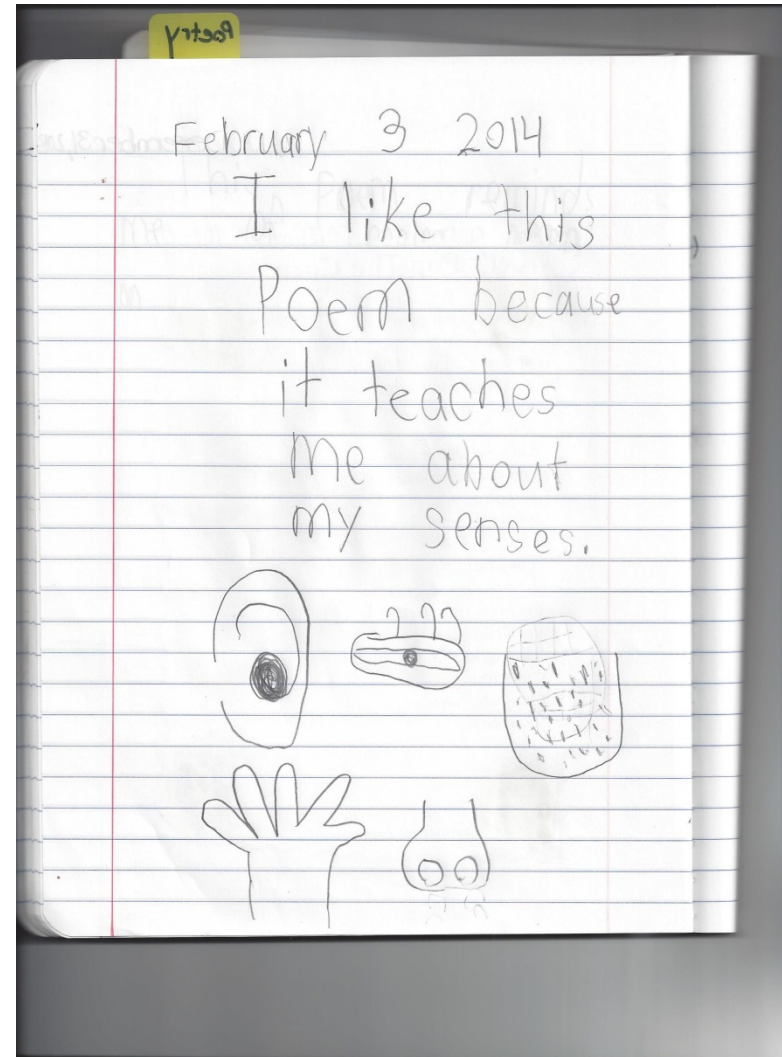
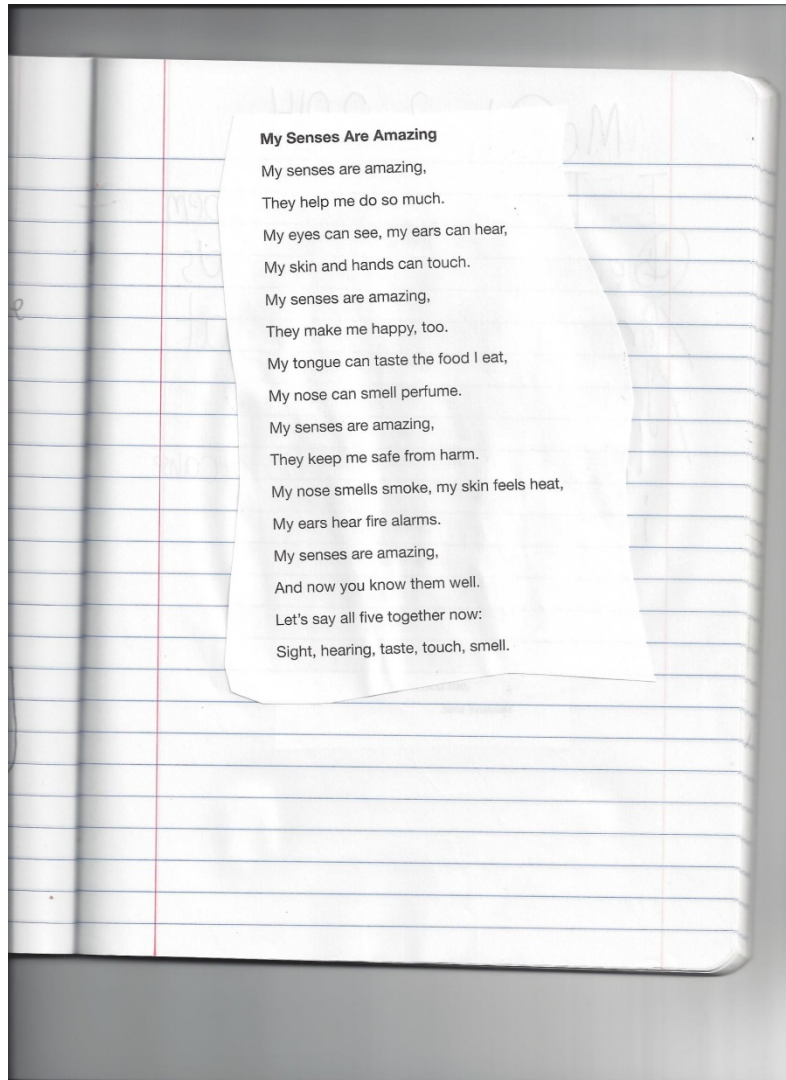
Cole, Age 8 – Vacation Journal



Emerson, Age 4 - Poetry Response



Cole, Age 7 – Poetry Response



Last word of advice...make writing fun,
make it authentic! The result...



Parent Resources

The following parent resources can be found on www.engageny.org:

- ***Shifts for Students and Parents***: a guide that describes demands for students in ELA and Math, and suggestions on how parents can help
- ***Parents' Guide to Success***: an overview of what your child will learn by the end of the year in a particular grade level for Mathematics and English Language Arts

The following parent resources can be found on www.commoncoreworks.org:

- ***Parent Roadmaps for ELA***: provide detailed information for parents about the expectations of the Common Core in English Language Arts and Literacy (listed by grade level)
- ***Parent Roadmaps for Mathematics***: provide detailed information for parents about the expectations of the Common Core in Mathematics (listed by grade level)