



## AFRICAN AMERICAN ART | Grade Band 3-9

### Self-Representation

### ABOUT DIA-DELIVERED

This toolbox provides educators with hands-on activities and discussion prompts relating to the Detroit Institute of Arts' collection. Offering students the opportunity to closely examine and touch contemporary reproductions of artworks, this toolbox helps them better understand the messages, materials, and methods of art production and design.



### LEARNING TARGET

In this set of lessons, students explore artworks made by African American artists during the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Through an examination of the themes and styles used by various artists, students identify issues faced by many African Americans, such as racism, segregation, and poverty, as well as the ways these issues negatively influenced the image of Black America. As a part of each activity, students consider the different ways African American artists worked to challenge and recreate this image during the Harlem Renaissance and beyond.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

*Students will...*

- identify and analyze symbols created by artists over time.
- compare themes and stylistic choices within different artworks.
- identify push and pull factors that led to the Great Migration.
- make connections between art from the Harlem Renaissance and today.
- create a small moment personal narrative in the form of a collage.

## TOOLBOX OBJECTS

*All toolkit objects to be returned in the toolbox.*

- Fujifilm Instax Mini Link Smartphone printer
- Two DIA iPads

## CONSUMABLE ARTMAKING SUPPLIES

*Please use any or all of the consumable materials listed below:*

- Sticky notes
- Beads
- Construction paper
- Pipe cleaners
- Cardboard
- Fujifilm

## STUDENT BOOKS

- *The Great Migration: An American Story* by Jacob Lawrence
- *My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden's Childhood Journey* by Jeanne Walker Harvey
- *Take a Picture of Me, James Van Der Zee!* By Andrew J. Loney
- *Bedtime Inspirational Stories: 50 Amazing Black People Who Changed the World (Volume 1)*
- *Making Our Way Home: The Great Migration and the Black American Dream* by Blair Imani

## CURRICULUM STANDARDS

### Michigan Social Studies

P3.4 Explain the challenges people have faced and actions they have taken to address issues at different times and places.

4 – C2.0.2 Describe how rights guaranteed by the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, and Democratic Values are involved in everyday situations.

7 – W2.1.5 Define the concept of cultural diffusion and explain how ideas and technology spread from one region to another.

7 – G4.3.3 Explain the patterns, causes, and consequences of major human migrations.

7.1.1 The Twenties—explain and evaluate the significance of the social, cultural, and political changes and tensions in the “Roaring Twenties” including: cultural movements such as the Jazz Age, the Harlem Renaissance, and the “Lost Generation.”

### Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.B

Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

### Michigan Merit Curriculum

ART.VA. V.3.4 Illustrate connections between the visual arts and other curriculum through student artwork.

ART.VA.II.4.3 Analyze and collaborate how artists express ideas through the use of visual culture, global perspective, and symbols in works of art.

ART.VA.II.4.4 Analyze and reflect on the uses of subject matter, symbols, and ideas to express and communicate meaning in artwork.

ART.VA.III.4.5 Analyze how art can be a reflection of society and a response to real world experiences.

## 21ST CENTURY STANDARDS

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Communication

*This educational resource was developed by teacher Lisa Burke in collaboration with the Education Programs and Curatorial departments at the Detroit Institute of Arts.*

## DIA COLLECTION CONNECTIONS



- A. Benny Andrews (American, 1930–2006), *Southern Pasture*, 1963, collage and oil on canvas, unframed: 60 1/8 × 36 1/8 in. (152.7 × 91.8 cm); framed: 63 13/16 × 39 3/4 × 2 in. (162.1 × 101 × 5.1 cm). Founders Society Purchase, W. Hawkins Ferry Fund, partial gift of Dr. Philip and Alicia Washington in honor of Haley Michelle Washington, 2000.100



- B. Charles Ethan Porter (American, 1847–1923), *Floral Still Life*, between 1880 and 1890, oil on canvas, unframed: 16 1/8 × 20 3/8 × 13/16 in. (41 × 51.8 × 2 cm); framed: 23 9/16 × 27 11/16 × 1 7/8 in. (59.8 × 70.3 × 4.8 cm). Museum Purchase, Robert H. Tannahill Foundation Fund, 2018.48



- C. James Van Der Zee (American, 1886–1983), *Couple in Raccoon Coats*, 1932, gelatin silver print, sheet: 7 1/2 × 9 1/2 in. (19.1 × 24.1 cm). Gift of Dr. Delano A. Willis, 2008.415



- D. James Van Der Zee (American, 1886–1983), *Portrait of a Woman*, 1932, toned silver print, overall (image and sheet): 10 × 7 1/2 in. (25.4 × 19.1 cm). Founders Society Purchase, Michigan Council for the Arts Fund, 74.113



- E. James Van Der Zee (American, 1886–1983), *Untitled Wedding Portrait*, between 1920 and 1930, gelatin silver print, overall (image and sheet): 9 1/2 × 6 7/8 in. (24.1 × 17.5 cm); mount: 15 × 12 1/2 in. (38.1 × 31.8 cm). Gift of Bill and Doris Rauhauser, F1988.173.10



- F. Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977), *Officer of the Hussars*, 2007, oil on canvas, overall: 108 3/16 × 105 7/16 × 1 7/16 in., (274.8 × 267.8 × 3.7 cm). Museum Purchase, Friends of African and African American Art, 2008.3



- G. Mary Edmonia Lewis (American, 1845–1907), *Minnehaha*, 1868, marble, overall: 11 × 6 × 3 1/2 in. (27.9 × 15.2 × 8.9 cm). Gift of the Centennial Planning Committee for Sharing Traditions and Romare Bearden Exhibitions with a major contribution from Founders Junior Council, 1986.33



- H. Mickalene Thomas (b. 1971), *Something You Can Feel*, 2008, rhinestone, acrylic paint, and oil enamel on wood panel, 96 × 120 in. (243.8 × 304.8cm). The Detroit Institute of Arts, 2015.14



- I. Robert S. Duncanson (American, 1821–72), *Ellen's Isle, Loch Katrine*, 1871, oil on canvas, unframed: 28 1/2 × 49 in. (72.4 × 124.5 cm); framed: 42 3/8 × 63 × 6 in. (107.6 × 160 × 15.2 cm). Gift of the Estate of Ralzemond D. Parker, F80.215



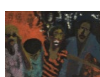
- J. Robert S. Duncanson (American, 1821–72), *William Barthelet*, 1846, oil on canvas, unframed: 30 × 25 in. (76.2 × 63.5 cm); framed: 38 3/4 × 33 5/8 × 3 1/2 in. (98.4 × 85.4 × 8.9 cm). Gift of William T. Berthelet, 52.207



- K. Romare Bearden (American, 1911–88), *Stamping Ground*, 1971, paper collage with graphite on board, unframed: 10 1/2 × 12 3/4 in. (26.7 × 32.4 cm); framed: 8 3/4 × 11 in. (22.2 × 27.9 cm). Museum Purchase, Dr. and Mrs. George Kamperman Fund, Catherine Kresge Dewey Acquisition Fund, and Friends of African and African American Art, 2005.23



- L. Romare Bearden (American, 1911–88), *Quilting Time*, 1986, mosaic tesserae mounted on plywood, 113 3/4 × 167 1/2 × 1 1/4 in. (288.9 cm × 4 m 25.5 cm × 3.2 cm). Founders Society Purchase with funds from the Detroit Edison Company, 1986.41



- M. Vincent Smith (American, 1929–2003), *The Fire Next Time*, 1968, oil and sand on canvas, framed: 23 3/4 × 33 7/16 × 1 5/8 in. (60.3 × 84.9 × 4.1 cm); unframed: 22 × 32 1/2 in. (55.9 × 82.6 cm). Museum Purchase, W. Hawkins Ferry Fund, 2005.3



- N. Wadsworth Jarrell (American, b. 1929), *Three Queens*, 1971, acrylic on canvas, 36 × 46 in. (91.4 × 116.8 cm). Museum Purchase, gift of John S. Newberry and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman by exchange, 2017.2



## GLOSSARY

**The Great Migration:** an era spanning from roughly 1916 to 1970 during which an estimated six million African Americans living in the South traveled to cities in the northern region of the United States.

**Harlem Renaissance:** a flourishing of African American culture in the form of the arts and literature from roughly 1918 to 1937. This post-World War I era is named for the neighborhood in New York City in which it was birthed.

**Migration:** movement from one area to another.

**Pull factor:** a positive element, such as job opportunities or cheaper homes, that pulls people to a new region.


**Push factor:** a negative element, such as discrimination or lack of opportunities, that pushes people to leave their homes and relocate to a new region.

**Self-representation:** when a person or group defines themselves to others based on their own interpretations rather than someone else's.

**Style:** the manner in which the artist portrays his or her subject matter and how the artist expresses his or her vision.

**Symbol:** a recognizable object that stands for something else, that is hard to show.

**Theme:** relates to the subject, message, or meaning.



## CHANGES IN ART | Grades 6-9

*Additional supplies needed: chart paper*

**DIA Collection Connections:** A, B, F, G, H, I, J, M, N

### STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students will...

- identify and analyze symbols created by artists from multiple time periods.
- compare themes and stylistic choices within different artworks.
- identify push and pull factors that led to the Great Migration.

### OVERVIEW

In this two-part activity, students use their observational skills to analyze works of art and draw conclusions. In the first part, students make comparisons between African American art created in the 19th century and 20th/21st centuries. The second part asks students to consider the causes of Great Migration and how it influenced the development of African American art.

### PROCEDURE

#### Part I: Two Centuries of African American Art

1. Before class begins, divide students into six groups. For each group, lay out the DIA Collection Connection photographs (A, B, F, G, H, I, J, M, N), separated into two image sets: 19th century art and 20th/21st century art. Provide each student with a Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer.
2. Tell students that today they are going to compare artworks made by African American artists during the 1800s (19th century), 1900s (20th century), and 2000s (21st century). They should pay particular attention to symbols, themes, and artistic styles the artists chose to use. If needed, use the glossary definitions to review these terms before moving forward. Younger students may need additional examples.
3. Give students time to closely look at the artworks. Next, ask each group, “What symbols, themes, and artistic styles connect the images within each time period?” Encourage students to write down their answers in their Venn Diagram.
4. After 5–10 minutes, ask a few groups to share their responses. What details did they choose to write down? What do these commonalities tell us about the time periods in which the artworks were created?
5. In the center of their Venn Diagram, have students write down any similarities between the artworks from the 19th century and 20th/21st century.

## Part II: The Great Migration

1. Read to the class *The Great Migration: An American Story* by Jacob Lawrence or *Making Our Way Home: The Great Migration and the Black American Dream* by Blair Imani.
2. As a class, discuss the push and pull factors that led to the Great Migration. After a list of factors is created, ask, “How might the Great Migration have influenced changes in African American art?”
3. Wrap-up discussion questions:
  - What symbols, themes, and styles did you see in 19th century African American art? How does that compare to the symbols, styles, and themes in the set of 20th/21st century African American art?
  - What was the Great Migration?
  - What challenges were many African Americans facing in the South prior to the Great Migration?
  - How might the Great Migration have influenced African American art?

## VIRTUAL TIPS

Use the flash drive file **African American Art Kit Slides** to teach the lesson by screensharing or assigning each student their own copy. Watch a read aloud of *The Great Migration: An American Story* by Jacob Lawrence on YouTube.

Watch a read aloud: [The Great Migration: An American Story](#) by Jacob Lawrence

## Standards

P3.4

ART.VA.II.4.3

ART.VA.III.4.5

7 – G4.3.3

ART.VA.II.4.4

## JAMES VAN DER ZEE AND THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE | Grades 6–9

**Toolkit Supplies:** Two iPads, Fujifilm Instax Mini Link Smartphone printer, *African American Art Kit Slides*, Reflection Handout

**Additional Needed Supplies:** Instax Mini app, student cell phones

**DIA Collection Connection:** C, D, E

### STUDENT OUTCOMES

*Students will ...* make connections between art from the Harlem Renaissance and today.

### PROCEDURE

1. Read *Take a Picture of Me, James Van Der Zee!* to the class.
2. Using the three DIA Collection Connection artwork prints, ask students to make observations about Van Der Zee's photographs. Ask, "What's going on in this picture?"
3. Facilitate a discussion about James Van Der Zee's work: how he retouched photographs, posed people to look like celebrities, and added backdrops and props.
4. Guiding questions:
  - What do these photographs show?
  - Describe the people in the photographs.
  - Why do you think Van Der Zee posed the people in his photographs?
  - Why do you think Van Der Zee chose to retouch photos?
  - Where do we see retouched photographs today? How are photos enhanced or retouched? Why do we do it?
5. Student Assignment
  - On a smart phone, students should go to the Google Play store or Apple store and search Instax Mini App. They will download the App onto their phone for free and allow it access to their camera, photos, and media (students can delete app after this project). Students should review terms of use and agree to the content. The app will walk through some of the app and printer features. They can easily take pictures in the app or select a picture from their camera roll. This app allows students to apply filters and change brightness, rotation, and saturation.
  - Students may also use the iPads that come with the kit.
  - Instruct students to take a posed self-portrait using a smart phone and print it out using the Instax Mini app and Kodak printer. Next, students take another picture of themselves in the same pose, but this time enhance and edit it. They may choose to add props, stickers, and filters.



6. Reflection: Support students in considering their artistic choices by asking the following questions about their photographs:

- What changes did you make in your second photograph? Why?
- What did you want to show about yourself or your life?
- James Van Der Zee's photographs reflected the historical period in which he lived. How does your photograph reflect parts of our world today?

## VIRTUAL TIPS

This activity can be completed 100% virtually using the **African American Art Kit Slides** and student personal devices. First, ask students to watch a read aloud of *Take a Picture of Me, James Van Der Zee!* by Andrea J Loney on YouTube. Then, share the PowerPoint with students so they can observe Van Der Zee's work. Finally, assign students the project inspired by this artist. Instead of printing pictures, students can upload both the edited and unedited images into a Google Slide or Google Doc to share with you.

Watch a read aloud: [Take a Picture of Me, James Van Der Zee!](#) by Andrea J. Loney

## STANDARDS

7.1.1

ART.VA.III.4.5

## PERSONAL NARRATIVE COLLAGE | Grades 3–5

**Toolkit Supplies:** cardboard, beads, pipe cleaners, construction paper, *Personal Narrative Brainstorm*, *Personal Narrative Rubric*, *African American Art Kit Slides*

**Additional needed supplies:** glue

**DIA Collection Connection:** K, L

### STUDENT OUTCOMES

*Students will...* create a small moment personal narrative in the form of a collage.

### PROCEDURE


1. Allow students some time to carefully look at *DIA Collection Connections* K and L by Romare Bearden. Post the questions below on the board and assign each student one question to consider as they listen.
  - What was the setting for this story? Who were the main characters?
  - Can you describe the beginning, middle, and end of this story?
  - Why might this story be an important moment in Romare Bearden’s life?
  - What connections can you make between the story and yourself?
  - How might this story be connected to bigger stories about the world and our place in it?
2. Read to the class *My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden’s Childhood Journey* by Jeanne Harvey.
3. Using the *African American Art Kit Slides*, show students the Great Migration map to give them a visual aid of where Bearden’s journey on the train took him.
4. Group students by assigned question and give them time to discuss their responses. Next, facilitate a debrief discussion of the story by asking students to share their group responses to their assigned question.
5. Pass out the *Personal Narrative Brainstorm* to each student. Ask students to brainstorm three important moments or events in their lives. Students will pick one and write a personal narrative describing the event in detail. Hand out the *Personal Narrative Rubric* to help guide students through the writing process.

To add some artistic expression, inform students they can use the beads, paper, and pipe cleaners provided in the toolbox to create a collage that is representative of their personal narrative.

6. Allow students time to present their collage and read their personal narrative aloud to the class.

### VIRTUAL TIPS

Use the PowerPoint to show students Romare Bearden’s artwork. Watch a read aloud of *My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden’s Childhood Journey* by Jeanne Harvey on YouTube. Students can write their personal



narratives on paper or type them into a Google Doc. To make the collage, tell students to use just four materials found in their homes, e.g., cardboard from an old box to build the collage on, paper, magazines, material from old clothing, etc. Students can present their narrative and collage via a virtual meeting or upload a photograph of their collage into their typed personal narrative document.

Watch a read aloud: [My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden's Childhood Journey](#) by Jeanne Harvey

## STANDARDS

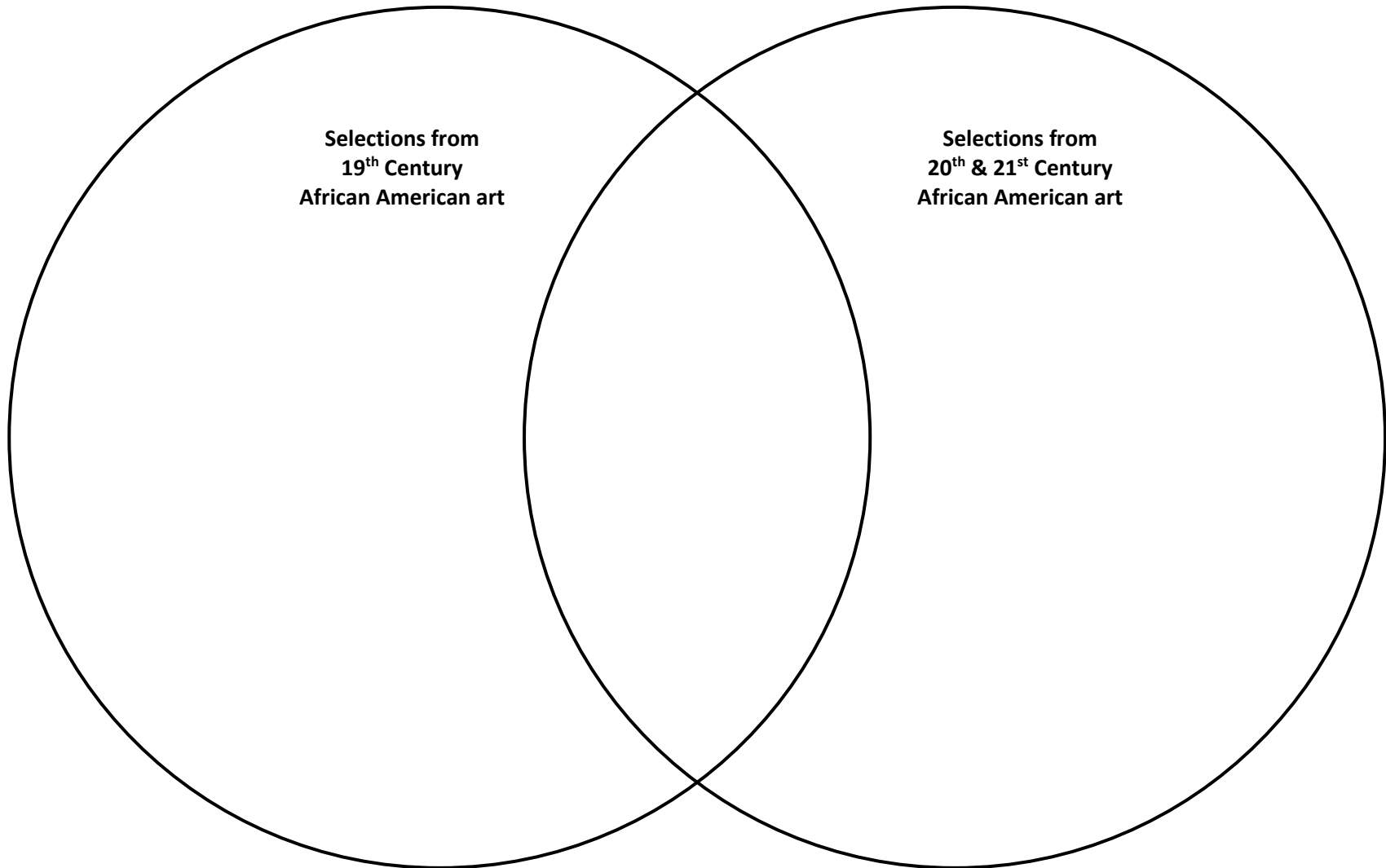
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3


CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.B

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### VENN DIAGRAM GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Directions: Take a few moments to closely look at the images from each century that are in front of you. Then, compare and contrast the two time periods. Use 4-8 words to describe the artworks in each time period.





Name \_\_\_\_\_

## PHOTOGRAPH REFLECTION HANDOUT

*Complete the project inspired by the artist James Van Der Zee then respond to the following questions.*

Talk about your unedited photograph. Why did you choose that pose and setting? What does this photograph show about yourself or your life?

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What changes did you make in your edited photograph?

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What do you want those enhancements to show about yourself or your life?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## PERSONAL NARRATIVE BRAINSTORM

What are three important moments in your life?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Pick one important moment from the list above and write a personal narrative about it. Your narrative should include a setting and characters, as well as a beginning, middle, and ending.

<b>Setting</b> <i>Where does your story take place?</i>	
<b>Characters</b> <i>Who are the people in your story?</i>	
<b>Beginning</b> <i>How does your story begin?</i>	
<b>Middle</b> <i>Is there a key moment or turning point?</i>	
<b>Ending</b> <i>How does your story end? Is there a conclusion?</i>	



Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### PERSONAL NARRATIVE WRITING RUBRIC

	<b>4- Wow!</b>	<b>3- Good, Keep Going</b>	<b>2- Making Progress</b>	<b>1- Needs Improvement, not there yet!</b>
<b>Narrative Genre</b>	Writing is clearly of the narrative genre and effectively utilizes many details to enhance the reader's enjoyment of the story	Writing contains many elements of narrative genre (plot, setting, characters, theme) and shows an effort to use details	Writing contains few elements of narrative and has a limited detail	Writing contains no elements of narrative and little to no details
<b>Ideas</b>	Small moment, specific, focused idea  Many juicy details that are thoughtful, clear, accurate and support topic  Writer clearly understands topic	Small moment, specific, focused idea  Some juicy details that are clear, accurate and support topic  Writer shows some understanding of topic	Topic too big  Includes some ideas that could make a good topic  Lacks details OR Some details off topic, unclear or wrong	No clear topic at all  Hard to tell what writer thinks is important  Details not present, unclear or wrong
<b>Organization</b>	Bold Beginning/Strong Lead Mighty Middle  Excellent Ending  Variety of thoughtful transitions	Has a beginning, middle and end  Transitions used effectively	Beginning, middle or end is missing  Few or incorrectly used transitions	No beginning and end Confusing  No transition words



	<b>4- Wow!</b>	<b>3- Good, keep going!</b>	<b>2- Making Progress</b>	<b>1- Needs Improvement, not there yet!</b>
<b>Word Choice</b>	Precise verbs, specific nouns and vivid adjectives fit the genre or topic	Some precise verbs, specific nouns and vivid adjectives fit the genre or topic	Writer uses verbs, nouns and adjectives that are repetitive, vague and/or unimaginative	Words are simple and ordinary Words do not help reader clearly see author's ideas Words are used over and over
<b>Conventions</b>	Spelling is magnificent Capitalization is used appropriately Grammar is correct Punctuation is accurate and enhances clarity and meaning	Some spelling, capitalization, punctuation and grammar mistakes	Many spelling, capitalization, punctuation and grammar mistakes make some parts hard to read  Little editing is evident and makes some parts hard to read	Spelling makes it very hard to read  Many capitalization and punctuation mistakes Incorrect grammar

Comments:

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