

Informative/Explanatory Example Essays

Grades 3-4

Essay scores are produced for the following grade ranges: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12. Thus a third grade essay is compared to models for both third and fourth grades.

Prompt for Essays 1-4: *What is your favorite place to visit? Use details to explain why it is so much fun.*

Informative/Explanatory Essay 1: The Beach

I love the beach and we go every summer and sometimes we stay 2 days. We can stay 5 days. The ocean is green and then blue and the sky is blue and yellow sand. I look for seashells and I feel like there was 100 shells. I pick it up. I keep it in a bucket. I saw a jellyfish. I play in the sand. I chase the waves. When I got washed away to the sand by the waves. I saw a fish. Grandpa gave his hat and his hat flew away. I was sorry. Mother says time to go and I go home.

Annotation: This essay needs more detail. Adding details would help raise the score even more than correcting the grammar and spelling.

Informative/Explanatory Essay 2: The Beach

I love the beach. My family goes to the beach every summer. Sometimes we stay two days and sometimes we stay more. Sometimes the ocean is green. Last summer, the ocean and sky were blue with yellow sand. The sun is always bright and hot. I like to look for seashells because I love seashells. Seashells used to be the home of little animals. Sometimes, after it rains, it looks like there are 100 shells! If I see a special seashell, I pick it up and keep it in a bucket. My mother always says, "Don't go too far," when I go in the water. Sometimes I see tiny fish, and once I saw a jellyfish. I got out fast! I play on the beach and build things in the sand. I chase the waves and it is fun. But my favorite part was when I got washed away to the sand by the waves.

Then Grandpa takes me fishing. I caught a fish once. Another time Grandpa gave his hat to me to keep the sun away. His hat flew away. I was sorry. When it is time for supper, Mother says, "Time to go," and I go home. It is awesome.

Annotation: This essay has more detail than the first one, but there are too many ideas for the length of the essay. It would be better to have fewer ideas with more support for each. For example, collecting shells, chasing waves, and fishing might be the three main points. This way the author could add good details for each of these ideas. Then the essay would be stronger.

Informative/Explanatory Essay 3: The Beach

I love the beach. It is my favorite vacation spot. My family goes to the beach every summer. Usually we go for a week, but sometimes we also go for a weekend. I love to watch the ocean. Sometimes it is green and sometimes it is blue, and sometimes both. With the bright blue sky and the pale yellow sand, it is so pretty.

The first thing I do when we go is look for seashells because I love seashells. Did you know that seashells used to be the home of little animals? Because of this, they are all different shapes, colors, and sizes. Sometimes, after it rains, it looks like there are a thousand shells! If I see a special seashell, I pick it up and put it in my red plastic bucket. I have a lot of seashells at home that I have collected from the beach. When I am tired of looking for seashells, I play in the water. At first it is really cold, even though it is hot out. It is so fun. My mother always says, "Don't go too far." Sometimes I see tiny fish, and once I saw a jellyfish. I got out fast! It is so much fun to chase the waves and jump over them. My favorite part is when the waves wash me into the shore.

Later I play on the beach and build things in the sand. Once I completely covered my sister except for her head. We build roads and castles and forts. We get water from the ocean and make swimming pools. Sometimes my grandpa takes me fishing. I caught a fish once. Another time Grandpa gave his hat to me to keep the sun away, but the wind blew his hat away and out over the water. That was the end of his hat!

My mom has to drag me off the beach when it is time to go home. I wish I lived at the beach. It is awesome!

Annotation: This essay shows a big improvement in organization. The details are organized around the main points so that the reader can easily follow the ideas. The linking words "first" and "later" also help the reader understanding. The author has also added an introduction and a conclusion.

Informative/Explanatory Essay 4: The Beach

I love the beach. It is my favorite vacation spot. I've been to Disney World and to the mountains, but my favorite will always be the beach. My family goes to the beach every summer. Usually we go for a week, but sometimes we also go for just a weekend. We stay at different places, but always right on the beach so we don't have to walk far. We've been in the spring, when the water is still freezing, and in the fall, when it is still a little warm. I even like to go in the winter, when we have to wear heavy coats! But no matter when we go, I love to watch the ocean. Sometimes it is blue, sometimes it is green, and sometimes it even looks gray. Most of the time, it is just a beautiful blue with white caps on the waves. With the bright blue sky and the pale yellow sand, it is so pretty. Just looking at it makes me happy

The first thing I do when we go is look for seashells, because I love seashells. Did you know that seashells used to be the home of little animals? Because of this, they are all different shapes, colors, and sizes. Sometimes, after it rains, it looks like there are a thousand shells that were washed up on the sand! If I see a special seashell, I pick it up and put it in my red plastic bucket. When it is full, I sit down right where the waves come in gently and sort through them. I only keep really different looking ones now, because I have a lot of seashells at home that I have collected from the beach. I also have some seashells that people have given me. My favorites are the little nutmeg shells that look like tiny conchs. I also like the slipper shells because they look like a little baby blanket just waiting for the baby. After I sort the shells, I toss the others back into the ocean to be washed up again on another day. Then I put the ones I'm keeping in my bag and start looking again.

When I am tired of looking for seashells, I play in the water. At first, even in the summer, it is really cold, even though it is hot out. My mother always says, "Don't go too far. Be sure to stay right here where I can see you." Sometimes she or my dad go out with me, and then I can go to the deeper part where the waves aren't so strong. Then we can float, letting the waves push us up and down. Other times I try to body-serf and just ride on the waves. If you look really close, you can see tiny fish, and once I saw a jellyfish. I got out fast! It is so much fun to chase the waves and jump over them. My favorite part is when the waves wash me into the shore. It rolls me over and over until I am almost out of the water. I could play in the water for days.

When I get cold, I run out and up on the beach and build things in the sand. I make whole cities out of the sand. I use sticks and shells for people and decorations and even cars. I love it when my dad helps me build castles. He is so good at making the points on the tops of the castles. We make moats and lakes with water we carry up from the ocean. I like to dig in the sand, too, pretending I am going to the center of the earth. Once I completely covered my dad except for his head! He said it was great, because he could just lie there and rest!

If my grandparents come, my grandpa takes me fishing. I caught a fish once. Another time Grandpa gave his hat to me to keep the sun away, but the wind blew his hat away and out over the water. That was the end of his hat! He didn't care, though. He just laughed.

The beach is so much fun. No matter what I am doing at the beach, when it is time to go, my mom has to drag me away. I wish I lived at the beach. It is awesome!

Annotation: This essay shows a big improvement in organization. The details are organized around the main points so that the reader can easily follow the ideas. The linking words "first" and "later" also help the reader understanding. The author has also added an introduction and a conclusion.

Prompt for Essays 5-7: *Suppose a new family moved in across the street from you. Write a letter to the family welcoming them to your town and neighborhood. Then explain why the town is a good place in which to live.*

Informative/Explanatory Essay 5:

Dear Family,

I am going to tell you about our town it is very clean, it don't have hardly any drugs or crime. It has a wonderful scenery and in the fall you would just love to go for a ride and watch the colorful leaves fall to the ground and the mountains are very green so the mountains give good food to the animals that live on it. During the summer time when every body is out of school they just keep getting more parks for kids to play on to keep them out of trouble. Its a good town. Well I hope you have a good time moving into your new house. Sincerely,
Your Nextdoor
Neighbor

Annotation: This essay has few details that support the author's points. It seems more like a list than an essay.

Informative/Explanatory Essay 6:

Dear Family,

I wanted to tell you a little about our town and say welcome. I think you will like living here like I do. We have lived here about 3 years and our house is across the street from you, and has a basketball goal in the driveway.

For one thing, this town has pretty scenery. Everybody says so. The mountains are usually kind of blue or gray when you look out, but when you drive to them, you can see the pretty leaves in the fall, the snow in the winter, and the green in the summer and in the spring. People go see the leaves a lot. The mountains look good all year round but my favorite is the spring when you can see flowers.

Our town is good. The people in charge of the town try to take good care of it and keep it clean, and it is a safe place to live. There is not a lot of crime or drugs. We have all kinds of sports and other things to do. There are lots of parks and kids play on swings and slides and also sports like soccer or touch football or baseball. There are swimming pools, which is fun and a lake and you get to swim there. Or you can ride a bike on a trail.

So don't be homesick and good luck on moving in.

Sincerely,

Your neighbor, Zack

Annotation: The details the author has added make this essay much better than the first one. The essay is organized and has a both an introduction and conclusion.

Informative/Explanatory Essay 7:

Dear Family,

Welcome to the neighborhood! I am really glad you are here. I think you will enjoy living here as much as I do. My family moved in about three years ago, and we really like it. Our house is the one right across the street from yours, the one with a basketball goal in the driveway.

I wanted to tell you a little about our town, so you will have an idea of what to expect. As I'm sure you already know, Statesboro has wonderful scenery. The mountains are only a few miles away, and they always look kind of blue or gray against the sky. But if you drive to them, you will see another kind of beautiful. In the fall, the leaves on the trees turn yellow, red, orange, and brown. Lots of people come here during the fall just so they can drive around the mountains and look at the gorgeous leaves. After they fall to the ground, the mountains are still pretty. When the snow comes in November, it usually lasts all winter on the top of the mountains. They kind of look like ice cream sundies. Then it's spring and there are some trees with flowers and all the other ones have green leaves. I love the spring. Since it is summer now, you know that the mountains are still really pretty.

Our town is a good one. The people in charge of the town try to take good care of it and keep it clean, and it is a safe place to live. There is not a lot of crime, and the police try to keep it that way. The schools are good, too, and you will make friends here. We have all kinds of sports and other things to do. There are lots of parks where kids can play on swings and slides, but also places where you can play soccer or touch football or baseball. There are two swimming pools, and they are always fun. Oh, and don't forget, we also have a lake that's just outside of town, and it's a great place to swim. Another thing that you can do in our town is ride bikes. My whole family rides on the bike trails we have here and sometimes we take a picnic and then end up at one of the swimming pools later. That is really cool.

My mom said we'd have a cookout and have you all over next week when you are settled. Good luck!

Sincerely,

Your neighbor, Zack Morris

Annotation: Notice that the author of this essay added even more details to fully develop the essay. The letter now is full of information for the new neighbor and interesting to read.

*For more examples of student essays, see the Common Core State Standards Initiative site, which includes samples of actual student essays for all three writing genres and for all grades. Each essay includes helpful notes and explanations. The first set of essays is from an on-demand writing assignment. The second set shows a range of writing, usually with one or more short essays and one or more longer ones.
Link: <http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing>*