

# Grade 7

## Third Prompt

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

**English/Language Arts Content Standards:**

- 1.0 Writing Strategies
- 2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)
- 2.2 Write responses to literature:
  - a. Develop interpretations exhibiting careful reading, understanding, and insight.
  - b. Organize interpretations around several clear ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.
  - c. Justify interpretations through sustained use of examples and textual evidence.

**Writing Situation**

Over the past year you were required to read several novels or short stories. At times you may have felt like you wanted to tell the author how a story affected you. (Allow an opportunity for discussion.)

**Directions for Writing**

Choose a fictional book or short story that you have read over the past school year. It could be a story that you have really enjoyed or one that you disliked. Express your thoughts and feelings about the story by writing a friendly letter to the author. Be sure to include three things you liked or disliked about the novel (i.e., a character, the theme, a conflict, or resolution.) Use the five basic parts of a friendly letter. Support your opinion with examples and details from the story.

**Writing and Convention Standards**

For this task, students will write a letter to an author that will:

- a. be clearly organized following the conventional friendly letter format.
- b. develop sound interpretations based on careful reading of the author's work.
- c. justify interpretations using concrete language and examples from the text.
- d. have a consistent, interesting, and appropriate point of view.
- e. have strong verbs in sentences.
- f. use the active voice.
- g. demonstrate grade level appropriate sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

**Resources**

*Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, p. 173*

*Write Source 2000: Lesson Plans and Assessments, pp. 14-17*

*Write Source 2000, pp. 149-152, 181, 151*

# Grade 7

## Third Prompt Rubric

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Fully addresses the prompt.</li><li>▪ Is clearly organized in a logical sequence that develops an interpretation exhibiting careful reading, understanding, and insight.</li><li>▪ Is organized around more than one clear idea, premise, or image.</li><li>▪ Is a multi-paragraph composition with an introduction, supporting details that use well-chosen examples and evidence from the text to develop and justify interpretations, and a concluding paragraph that summarizes important ideas and details and links to the purpose of the composition.</li><li>▪ Is written in correct friendly letter form.</li><li>▪ Contains effective transitions and conjunctions to connect and unify the important ideas.</li><li>▪ Has complete, coherent sentences that use a variety of patterns that include compound and complex sentences, using the active voice.</li><li>▪ Has effectiveness and variety of word choice.</li><li>▪ Has a consistent, interesting, and appropriate point of view that is relevant for the intended audience.</li><li>▪ Has grade-level appropriate spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation; contains few, if any, errors that do not interfere with understanding the writing.</li><li>▪ Has fluid, legible handwriting.</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Responds to the prompt.</li><li>▪ Is organized in a logical sequence that demonstrates an understanding of a literary work.</li><li>▪ Is organized around more than one clear idea, premise, or image.</li><li>▪ Is a multi-paragraph composition with an introduction, some details that use well-chosen examples and evidence from the text to develop and justify interpretations, and a conclusion.</li><li>▪ Is written in correct friendly letter form.</li><li>▪ Contains transitions and conjunctions to connect ideas.</li><li>▪ Has mainly complete sentences that use more than one pattern that include compound and complex sentences and may use the active voice.</li><li>▪ Has some variety in word choice.</li><li>▪ Has an interesting, and appropriate point of view appropriate for the intended audience.</li><li>▪ Has mainly grade-level appropriate spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation; contains some errors that do not interfere with understanding the writing.</li><li>▪ Has legible handwriting.</li></ul>

<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attempts to respond to the prompt.</li> <li>▪ May lack organization.</li> <li>▪ Is organized around more than one idea, premise, or image.</li> <li>▪ Contains most of the elements of a friendly letter.</li> <li>▪ May contain few transitions and conjunctions to connect ideas.</li> <li>▪ May have incomplete or incoherent sentences that may use only one pattern; the active voice is not present.</li> <li>▪ May have little or no variety in word choice.</li> <li>▪ May show an appropriate point of view that may be inappropriate for the intended audience.</li> <li>▪ May contain many errors in spelling, grammar, capitalization, and/or punctuation that may interfere with understanding the writing.</li> <li>▪ Has handwriting that is difficult to read.</li> </ul>
<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May not respond to the prompt. (May be off topic.)</li> <li>▪ Lacks organization.</li> <li>▪ May not be organized around any idea, premise or image.</li> <li>▪ Lacks paragraphs and/or does not include details or examples from the text.</li> <li>▪ May not be in friendly letter form.</li> <li>▪ Contains no transitions and/or conjunctions to connect ideas.</li> <li>▪ Has mainly incomplete or incoherent sentences.</li> <li>▪ Contains mainly basic sight words with no descriptive language.</li> <li>▪ May show an inappropriate point of view that does not consider the intended audience.</li> <li>▪ Handwriting may be mostly illegible.</li> <li>▪ May contain frequent and numerous errors in grammar, capitalization, or punctuation that interfere with understanding the writing.</li> </ul>
<p>BP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Blank Paper</li> </ul>

# Grade 7

## Third Prompt – Student Page

### Response to Literature

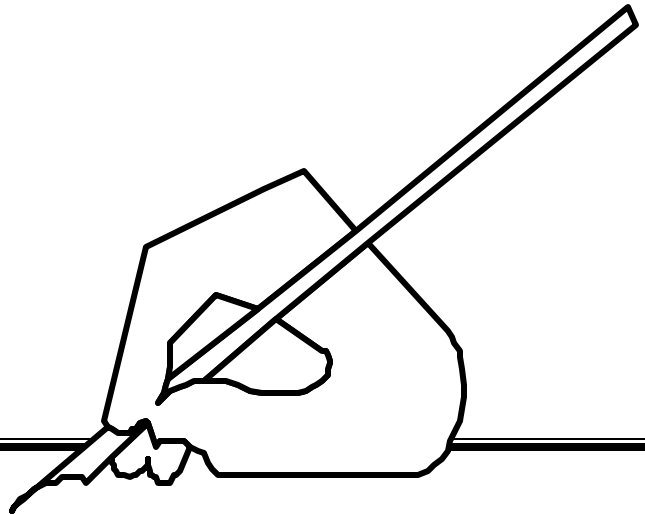
#### Writing a Letter to an Author

#### Writing Situation

Over the past year you were required to read several novels or short stories. At times you may have felt like you wanted to tell the author how a story affected you. (Allow an opportunity for discussion.)

#### Directions for Writing

Choose a fictional book or short story that you have read over the past school year. It could be a story that you have really enjoyed or one that you disliked. Express your thoughts and feelings about the story by writing a friendly letter to the author. Be sure to include three things you liked or disliked about the novel (i.e., a character, the theme, a conflict, or resolution.) Use the five basic parts of a friendly letter. Support your opinion with examples and details from the story.



#### Writing and Convention Standards

For this task, you will write a letter to an author that will:

- a. be clearly organized following the conventional friendly letter format.
- b. develop sound interpretations based on careful reading of the author's work.
- c. justify interpretations using concrete language and examples from the text.
- d. have a consistent, interesting, and appropriate point of view.
- e. have strong verbs in sentences.
- f. use the active voice.
- g. demonstrate grade level appropriate sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 4 anchor

#### **Characteristics that make the paper an anchor 4:**

- a. Is a multi-paragraph letter with a strong introduction and conclusion.
- b. Has well-chosen examples and evidence from the text to develop and justify interpretations.
- c. Uses correct friendly letter form.
- d. Fully addresses the prompt by discussing characters and plot.
- e. Transitions are not used to connect and unify the important ideas.
- f. Lacks variety of sentence patterns.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Modeling for the student how to use transitions and conjunctions to connect ideas and to vary sentence structure.

**Teacher Notes:**

3211 Pico Avenue

Bakersfield, Ca 93306

March 7, 2001

Dear Paul Zindel,

I'm a seventh grade student at Compton Junior High School. I read your book, The Pigman and really enjoyed it. The book is actually a tragic story, but you give it the touch of humor it needs. I really enjoyed how one minute everything is going great, but suddenly the whole story changes into something completely different. The novel is surprising and unpredictable.

I loved the characters of the story. I also enjoyed the way you made them with so much emotion like real people have. John and Lorraine have interesting personalities because they are so different and they still do get along great. Lorraine doesn't have very much confidence, but John understands her. Mr. Pignati is

always happy. When ever he's in a situation he tries to look at the good side of things. John and Lorraine see that in him and realize that he is special.

The plot of your story was great, but I wish Mr. Pignati hadn't died in the end. John and Lorraine learn to enjoy life as they spend time with the pigman at his house, shopping, and at the zoo, visiting his monkey, Bo bo. When Bo bo dies it's like a big piece of Mr. Pignati dies too. Bo bo makes Mr. Pignati so happy, a happiness which John and Lorraine both see in him. When John and Lorraine had a party at Mr. Pignati's house I was so surprised.

I'm glad I spent my time to read your book because I really enjoyed it. It always kept me hanging, not exactly sure what's going to happen next. I hope other people enjoy

this novel as much as I do. Every chapter of the book made me want more, and soon enough I was done. I can't wait to read the next book.

*Sincerely,*

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 4 low

#### **Characteristics that make the paper a low 4:**

- a. Contains effective transitions and conjunctions to connect and unify ideas.
- b. Is a 5-paragraph essay with supporting details and conclusion.
- c. Has complete, coherent sentences that use some sentence patterns and an active voice.
- d. The introduction is abrupt and lacks a strong thesis.
- e. The paper was written using the business letter format.
- f. Does not address literary elements in the composition.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Reviewing the format of a business letter.
- b. Demonstrating how to develop strong leads/introductions.

**Teacher Notes:**

John Neufeld  
1600 Sandwid  
Friendswood, TX 55409

Dear Mr. Neufeld,

I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed reading your book, Lisa, Bright and Dark.

I really liked the way Lisa, Elizabeth, Mary Nell, and Betsy talk about real things that teenagers talk about, like politics, boys, and sex. They are real teens with real problems, just like my friends and me.

Another thing I liked was that I can relate to how they felt. My mother is mentally ill, so I know what it is like to deal with people like Lisa. It can be scary at times, just like in your book. I felt a special connection with Betsy, because she is a lot like me.

Last, I liked at the end where you threw in the fact that Elizabeth had gone nuts too. It was a little too obvious, though, I kind of suspected

something when Lisa started following her around. But that was still a great twist.

I really loved the whole book and I've recommended it to all of my friends. I hope to read more of your books soon.

Sincerely,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 7

Response to Literature

Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 3 high

## **Characteristics that make the paper a high 3:**

- a. Responds to prompt in logical sequence demonstrating clear understanding of a literary work.
- b. Organized around more than one clear idea, premise or image in a multi-paragraph composition with introduction, details, and examples of works.
- c. Uses complete sentences with a variety of compound/complex sentences.
- d. Has consistent, interesting, and appropriate point of view appropriate for intended audience.
- e. Exhibits careful reading, understanding and insight of work through examples of discussion of a variety of author's work.
- f. Contains few, if any, errors in spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
- g. Could include a more clearly distinguishable conclusion as a better indicator of a friendly letter.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Demonstrating how to develop an effective conclusion.
- b. Modeling for the student how to use transitions to connect ideas and create variety of sentence structure.

**Teacher Notes:**

Dear C.S. Lewis,

I have enjoyed your books I have read The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe, and Prince Caspian. I am currently reading The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. I have especially enjoyed Prince Caspian.

Prince Caspian is full of great characters. From Nikabrik to Freepeehoop. I loved the way you brought Aslan back; at first I thought Lucy was seeing things, too. I liked the part when all the trees came back to life to help scare all the Telmarines away.

I liked how Prince Caspian was packed with action and adventure. From the first chapter where the kids disappeared from the train station to the island, I could tell it was going to be exciting. I thought it was pretty cool how the kids found Cair Paruel after hundreds of years, and it was all still there except it was covered with vines and plants. One of the best parts of the book was when Peter and Miraz fought. At first I thought Peter would lose, but I was happy when he finally defeated him.

I also liked the ending of Prince Caspian; the way Aslan gave the Telmarines a chance to stay in Narnia, or go back to Earth where they came from. I thought it was cool how the Telmarines

Came from Earth in the first place. But I didn't like  
that Susan and Peter could never come back, but  
I look forward to the new adventure of Lucy and  
Edmund.

Sincerely,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 3 anchor

#### **Characteristics that make the paper an anchor 3:**

- a. Is a multi-paragraph composition with introduction, some details that use well-chosen examples and evidence to justify interpretations, and a conclusion.
- b. Responds to prompt and is organized in logical sequence demonstrating an understanding of a literary work.
- c. Has interesting and appropriate point of view appropriate for intended audience.
- d. Correct friendly letter form with transitions and conjunctions, complete sentences and mainly grade-level appropriate spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation.
- e. Uses great examples from variety of novels indicating knowledge of subject.
- f. Good use of personal questions about being an author in conclusion.
- g. Does not contain much variety in word choice or sentence patterns.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Modeling for the student how to develop compound/complex sentences.
- b. Modeling how to improve word choice variety.

**Teacher Notes:**

3211 Pico Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93306  
March 7, 2001

Dear J. K. Rowling,

I'm writing to you because I'm taking a benchmark. So far I have read 4 of your novels. They are Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, and Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. All of these novels were wonderful and enjoying, but I really like Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban the most. This book has a lot of adventure and fantasy. I like that in books!

I like where your settings are. Sometimes they're in the Hogwarts Castle which has lots and lots of wonderful secrets and adventures that even the head master doesn't know about. Another setting I liked was in Hogsmeade where there are all kinds of different candies you can eat.

You have excellent settings and I hope you continue to write interesting settings.

I liked your plot in this novel also. It was very interesting to me when Sirius Black planned to go to Hogwarts. I never thought the plot would turn out to be with Sirius Black almost getting the Death Kiss from the Dementors. It took me by surprise.

I like the main characters; Harry, Ron, and Hermione. They reminded me of my friend and me. The main characters always stuck together. I also like the way you describe your characters when they are in different moods. You make it very clear to me how they would look, react, and think.

I have a few questions. One is how do you set your mind to write great adventure stories? Also I'd like to ask how old were you when you set your goal to be an author?

My final question would be how long does it take you to write a single novel? I'm looking forward to reading your next novel when Harry Potter enters the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

Sincerely,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 3 low

#### **Characteristics that make the paper a low 3:**

- a. Responds to prompt in logical sequence demonstrating an understanding of a literary work.
- b. Is a multi-paragraph composition with details and examples to justify interpretations of a work.
- c. Has interesting and appropriate point of view for intended audience.
- d. Has mainly grade-level appropriate spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation, which do not interfere with understanding of the writing.
- e. Contains a good conclusion, indicating friendly letter.
- f. Includes a good supporting examples for topic sentences of the paragraphs.
- g. Contains several incomplete sentences.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Modeling for the student how to use transitions and conjunctions appropriately – not at the beginning of a sentence, which creates incomplete sentences.
- b. Reviewing the rules for punctuating titles of novels.
- c. Modeling for the student how to develop complex/compound sentences.

**Teacher Notes:**

2613 Aberdeen Ct 93306

March 6, 2001

Dear Ms. J.K. Rowling,

I love your books. Especially Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. I love your book, because I like the part when Mad-eye Moody (Crouch's son) turns Malfoy into a white ferret. I love it, because it uses magic.

I also love your book, because it holds my attention. Especially the part where Moody is revealed as Crouch. And when Crouch (Mad-eye Moody) was teaching the Unforgivable Curses.

I love this book, because you never know what is going to happen next. Like when Rita Skeeter wrote about Hermione and Harry being boyfriend and girlfriend. Hermione got rude letters. I think you are doing a wonderful

job at these books. I hope you  
make more than just 7 of  
them. Thank you for your wonderful  
job.

Sincerely,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 2 high

#### **Characteristics that make the paper a high 2:**

- a. Contains a strong attempt to respond to prompt.
- b. Includes a finely developed friendly letter format.
- c. Has a strong attempt at including character, theme, and setting.
- d. Is a multi-paragraph composition; however, lacks clearly developed evidence from text.
- e. Uses one sentence pattern, lacking transitional words.
- f. Lacks sentence variety.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Modeling for the student how to develop complex sentence structure.
- b. Modeling for the student how to use transitions to connect ideas and create variety of sentence structure.

**Teacher Notes:**

Needed to be with Marty like

his Marty was his owner.

I didn't think that  
the setting was right for  
the story. Friendly is a town,  
small town, Marty lives in a  
mountain with trees and lakes.

like a forest. I think the setting

would fit better if it were in

a city because there's more cruel

people in a city. Marty would have

to buy Shilo.

I think the theme of the

she wouldn't buy it. Just like

that Marty wanted Shilo really

badly but couldn't get to own

Shilo. I think this was a venturist

because Marty was hiding Shilo.

Most times he almost got

caught with his secret by

other people.

I think that Marty

changed from being ~~scared~~ <sup>scared</sup> of

giving his ideas to giving his ideas

out so he can accomplish getting

Shilo. I think Shilo really liked

of the story given from the

the author where many.

One is that it takes time

to get what you want. Another

is that sometimes you have to

talk to a grown up and give them

your side, your opinion. Another

is that it's not right to steal,

it's better to buy or work for it.

Sincerely,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 2 anchor

#### **Characteristics that make the paper an anchor 2:**

- a. Is organized with appropriate paragraphing.
- b. Speaks to the author with his/her voice being heard.
- c. Uses some variety of sentence structures with transitions.
- d. Doesn't contain justification from the text for ideas.
- e. Use of friendly letter format.
- f. Some uses of sentence structure variety.
- g. Developing ideas backed up with examples from text.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Teaching how to pick a specific character, setting, or theme; state it, and develop it with support from text.
- b. Teaching the student some strategies to develop vocabulary.

**Teacher Notes:**

3971

4

Bakersfield, CA

March 13, 2001

Dear Irene Hunt,

Your the most favorite female author I've ever heard of. My favorite book was The Lottery Base. Usually, I'm one of those kids that doesn't really care a lot about books, but once I started reading this book, I didn't want to stop!

Each chapter that we stopped at, I just wanted to read more and more. I liked the parts where Georgie got home every night. It was suspenseful! This was a different kind of story that I liked. I don't like those stories where the good people win and the bad guys lose. In this story, something bad happened to the good people also.

When that happened to Robin People didn't want that to happen, I didn't want that to happen, but that's what made it a very, very good

Finally, after the book  
was over, I couldn't stop  
thinking about it. I wanted  
there to be a sequel.  
That book was one of  
the most best I ever  
read.

Sincerely,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 2 low

#### **Characteristics that make the paper a low 2:**

- a. Attempts to respond to prompt.
- b. Is written correctly in the friendly letter format.
- c. Attempts to address character – “my favorite character is...”
- d. Contains incomplete sentences with numerous errors in punctuation that interfere with comprehension.
- e. Contains many spelling errors.
- f. Does contain some examples from text but they are not developed.
- g. Contains one sentence pattern.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer’s growth would include:**

- a. Modeling how to develop sentences around a main idea. This will lead into paragraph development.
- b. Teaching the student basic spelling rules and patterns to increase his/her personal dictionary.
- c. Modeling for the student how to develop complex/compound sentences.

**Teacher Notes:**

1101 Noble Ave  
Bakersfield, California 93301  
March 14, 2001

Dear Miss Taylor,

The book Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. One of the books you rate. Showed me alot how it was right after slavery was over. How the white people did not like the black people like in your book. When Big Ma go to the store and get kick out.

My favorite character was T.J. He was a kid who tried to get out of suff. He did and tried to get other people in trouble. He was a liar.

I think that book was the best books I liked to read. And the Friendship book you rate two.

Sincerely,



Dear Author,

I would like to talk about one of your Novels call Holes. I like Holes alot because of the setting in the desert, and I like that becaue the setting reminds me of were I used to live, mountains all around and desert in the middle. I also liked it because of the plot. I figured out that the Warden and the kids commader, were trying to find the lost treasure that Kissing Koi Barlow had left, and thats why all the kids had to dig 5 feet deep and 5 feet around holes (I'm guessing thats why they call it holes). Finally, I liked the part when Stanley finds treasure and its his becaue it had his name on it, Stanley Yldnate, and then gets to go home and see dose his friends, and the Warden lost her treasure. Those are some of the reasons I like Holes.

Sincerely,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 1 anchor

#### **Characteristics that make the paper an anchor 1:**

- a. Attempts a friendly letter format.
- b. Uses paragraphs.
- c. Frequent and numerous errors in spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation that interfere with understanding the writing.
- d. Has mainly incomplete or incoherent sentence.
- e. Uses conjunctions inappropriately.
- f. Contains mainly basic sight words with no descriptive language.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Teaching the student the proper way to write a sentence using a complete thought with a subject and a predicate and the correct use of conjunctions.
- b. Reviewing the capitalization rules for the proper noun, "I".

**Teacher Notes:**

4705 Foster Street  
Backersfield, CA  
93308  
March 8, 2001

Dear Dahl Raul,

I have read James and the Giant Peach  
it is a very good book. I read it  
at the beginning of the year and took an  
A.R. test on it. I like this book because  
I like Bugs and I feel bad for him  
when his parent get eaten and he has  
to go live with his ants.

What I don't like about the book is  
that his ants are way to mean to  
him. He's just a kid and that it is  
a little to imitate nature.

Sincerely,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

## Third Prompt, Grade 7

### Response to Literature

#### Writing a Letter to an Author

Rubric Score Point: 1 low

#### **Characteristics that make the paper a low 1:**

- a. Attempts vocabulary which is beyond basic sight words.
- b. Does not respond to the prompt.
- c. Lacks paragraphs.
- d. Inappropriate point of view that does not consider the intended audience.
- e. Contains frequent and numerous errors in spelling.
- f. Includes details from the text.
- g. Lacks sentence structure.

#### **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Teaching the student to examine the topic and identify what needs to be included in responding to a prompt.
- b. Practicing how to identify a run-on sentence and how to rewrite it.

**Teacher Notes:**

3211 Picot Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 9330  
March 7, 2001

Dear Mary Ann McDonald

Your book is great I really fear about rattlesnakes it help to learn about them they are cool but they are dangerous. I have seen in the book how they catch there prey and how they eat there prey their fangs are small but there mouths open big as a rat or like a fat rat. There victims is porseres it can kill litter kids and babies that will be bad for the moms and dad that care about them and that the moms and dads will not have family. And there victim could and can take people to the hospital and they can die. Some people just love to mess with the snakes but ones they get bit they back off from the snakes some people do not mess with

snakes because they do not like to get bit. Most of the time, the rattler will let go after biting its victim. The animal won't run far because the venom acts fast. The rattlesnake waits a few minutes, then uses its tongue to follow the prey's scent. Once it finds the victim, it will search for the head. Rattlesnakes eat most of their food head first.

Sincerely,