1Q Writing Workshop:
Vignettes

Mentor Texts
Writing Workshop: Vignettes

What is a vignette?

A vignette is a short form of personal narrative. It's a short scene that leaves an impression on the reader.

To write a vignette, take an event, moment, person, object, or setting from your life that you remember so vividly you will never forget it. Describe it to the reader so well that they feel like they were there with you in that moment.

For a fantastic vignette, you need to:

- focus on one event, moment, person, object, or setting
- tell the story in 1st person point of view = I
- have a catchy title
- have a strong beginning and memorable closing
- use a variety of writing techniques (intentional fragments, vivid verbs, sensory details, dialogue/internal dialogue, repetition/power of three, figurative language, use of questions, play-by-play description)
- focus on the essential meaning of the story (a snapshot)
- write no more than 1 page single-spaced

Mentor Texts: What do you notice?

Mark up the texts as we read. What do you notice about the craft and structure?

- Craft: How is it written? (writing techniques, voice, impact on the reader)

- Structure: How is it organized, or put together? (How an author gets from the beginning to the end.)
Writer’s Notebook: Topics for Vignette Freewrites

The subject of your vignette should be a personal experience that taught you something, had a profound influence on your life, or a moment that is big in your heart.

Start by brainstorming ideas to respond to the prompt. Then, choose one idea and write a draft of the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freewrite prompt</th>
<th>What I remember / What I could talk about</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think of a subject (or a person, place, or thing) that matters to you, then list small moments you remember. Choose one and write the accompanying story.</td>
<td>• A person who matters to me is</td>
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<td>• A place that matters to me is</td>
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<td>• A thing that still matters to me is</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think of first times, last times, or times when you realized something important. Write about one of those moments.</td>
<td>• A “first time” I remember is</td>
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<td>• A “last time” I remember is</td>
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<td>• A time I realized something important was</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Another time I realized something important was</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think of a strong feeling (love, fear, embarrassment, joy, sadness, etc.). Then list stories pertaining to that feeling. Choose one to write about.</td>
<td>• Memories I love / that make me smile:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Memories that make me cringe:</td>
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<td>• Memories that make me laugh:</td>
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<td>• Memories that make me embarrassed:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Memories that make me shake my head:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Think about the stories that your family tells and retells. Write about one of those. | • One story that my family tells is  
• One story that my family tells about me is  
• My favorite family story is about the time when |
| --- | --- |
| Think about the traditions or special holidays in your family. Write about a memorable event that occurred during one of those. | • One family tradition that is special to me is  
• One holiday that is special to me is  
• I remember one time, with my family, when I  
• I remember one time, during a holiday, when I |
| Think of the events in your life that are closely tied to the seasons: summer memories, fall memories, winter memories, spring memories. Choose one and tell the story. | • I remember one summer when I  
• I remember one fall when I  
• I remember one winter when I  
• I remember one spring when I |
| Think about the vacations or trips you've taken. Choose one small moment or event and tell the story. | • One of the vacations I remember was when I went to  
• One of the trips I remember was when I went to  
• One of the places I remember going to is |
| Think about all the times when you've gotten into trouble with your parents, siblings, or teachers. Choose one time and tell the story. | • I remember one time when I got in trouble at home for  
• I remember one time when I got in trouble at practice for  
• I remember one time when I got in trouble at school for  
• I remember one time when I thought I was going to get in trouble for |
| Think about a story you've never told anyone before. Retell the story on paper. | • I never told anyone the funny story about  
• I never told anyone the scary story about  
• I never told anyone the story about  

| Think about the times when you have encouraged a friend to try something. Write about the experience. | • I remember when I encouraged my friend to  
• I remember when I encouraged a different friend to  

| Think about the times when a friend has encouraged you to try something new. Write about the experience. | • I remember when my friends wanted me to  
• I remember when my best friend wanted me to  
• I remember when my coach encouraged me to  
• I remember when my parents encouraged me to  

| Think about the things you like to do in the summer time and who you like to do them with. Write about a summer pasttime shared with a friend or relative. | • One of the things I like to do in the summer is  
• One of the things I like to do with my friends is  
• One of the things I like to do with my family is  

| Think about school related memories. Choose one and retell the memory as if it happened yesterday. | • I remember one time at school when I  
• I remember one time at school when my teacher  
• I remember one time at school when my friends and I  

5
| Take an area or a topic from your life, like your hair, your glasses, your hobby, your pet, a relative, one part of school, your home. Make a timeline of things that have happened connected to that one topic. Choose one dot from one timeline and write a rough draft of that story. | I remember when I didn’t know how to ________________
I learned how to do it by:
- 
- 
- 

I remember when I really had to work hard to convince someone to ________________
I got what I wanted by:
- 
- 
- 

I remember when I first got my ________________
I got it by:
- 
- |

| Think about the last time you were scared or got butterflies in your stomach. Write the story of what caused it and how the situation was resolved. | I remember when I was nervous about
- 
- I remember when I was excited (but nervous) about
- I remember when I was anxious about

| Think about the firsts in your life—such as the first time you stayed home alone or the first time you stayed the night at a friend's. Or, the first time you tried an exotic food or the first time you were on stage in front of a crowd. Write the story of the first. | I remember the first time I
- I remember the first time I went to
- I remember the first time, by myself, that I
- I remember the first time I tried
- I remember the first time I met

| Think about your childhood. Write about a game or toy you liked when you were young. Tell the story of getting it, a time when you played with it, when you lost it, broke it, or no longer found it interesting. | A game I really liked when I was younger was
- A game I really liked when I was younger and still like is
- A meaningful present I got was

6
| Think about emotional moments in your past. Tell the story of the moment when you found out someone special passed away (a pet, a family member, a national hero). | • I remember when I found out that my  
• I remember how I found out that my  
• I remember how I felt when I found out that my  

| Think about the important conversations you have had in your lifetime. It may have been with an inspiring teacher, a caring grandparent, a stem parent, or a thoughtful religious leader. Write the story of a conversation you'll always remember. | • A teacher who made (has made) a difference in my life was (is)  
• A family member who has made a difference in my life is my  
• I remember the time someone taught me how to  
• I remember the time someone showed me how to  

**Writing Starters:** These are just suggestions to “jiggle” your ideas. You don’t have to use these.

My friendship was tested one time when...  
My worst day was when...  
I had to stand up for myself when...  
I remember the time when I (won, lost, tried out for, found)...  
I told a secret, and...  
My most (embarrassing, exciting, boring, fun) moment happened when...  
I wanted to be part of a certain group, and...  
When I was younger, I got blamed for...  
A neighbor (helped me, surprised me, scared me) when...  
Once, I decided to (run away, cook, color on, use scissors on, try) and...
Freewriting Pre-writing

My topic:

I remember:

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After you’ve recalled details from your story, start developing your ideas into complete sentences or thoughts. When you add an idea into your story, mark it off of this list.
Passage from The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls

Shortly after we moved into the depot, Mom decided that what we really needed was a piano. Dad found a cheap upright when a saloon in the next town over went out of business, and he borrowed a neighbor's pickup to bring it home. We slid it off the pickup down a ramp, but it was too heavy to carry. To get it into the depot, Dad devised a system of ropes and pulleys that he attached to the piano in the front yard and ran through the house and out the back door, where they were tied to the pickup. The plan was for Mom to ease the truck forward, pulling the piano into the house while Dad and we kids guided it up a ramp of planks and through the front door.

"Ready!" Dad hollered when we were all in our positions.

"Okeydoke!" Mom shouted. But instead of easing forward, Mom, who had never quite gotten the hang of driving, hit the gas pedal hard, and the truck shot ahead. The piano jerked out of our hands, sending us lurching forward, and bounced into the house, splintering the door frame. Dad screamed at Mom to slow down, but she kept going and dragged the screeching, chordbanging piano across the depot floor and right through the rear door, splintering its frame, too, then out into the backyard, where it came to rest next to a thorny bush.

Dad came running through the house. "What the Sam Hill were you doing?" he yelled at Mom.

"I told you to go slow!"

"I was only doing twenty-five!" Mom said. "You get mad at me when I go that slow on the highway." She looked behind her and saw the piano sitting in the backyard. "Oopsiedaisy," she said.

Mom wanted to turn around and drag it back into the house from the other direction, but Dad said that was impossible because the railroad tracks were too close to the front door to get the pickup in position. So the piano stayed where it was. On the days Mom felt inspired, she took her sheet music and one of our spool chairs outside and pounded away at her music back there. "Most pianists never get the chance to play in the great outdoors," she said. "And now the whole neighborhood can enjoy the music, too."
Boys, Beer, Barf, and Bonding
Bruce Hale

1 At first, I thought the whole thing was kinda dorky. I mean, wearing uniforms, tying knots, and helping old ladies cross the street? I had my doubts about Boy Scouts.

2 What’s worse, my dad—Mr. Ex-Marine, Mr. Spit-and-Polish—was scoutmaster. Scary? Let’s just say I had to keep reminding myself that he was my dad.

3 All in all, Boy Scouts looked to be as much fun as yanking out your molars with a rusty pair of pliers.

4 But then I discovered what our troop was really all about: gnarly guys out in the wilderness. Each month, we’d hit the high Sierras. There we hiked, fished, ate chilli-macaroni, and just generally went without bathing.

5 This was cool. This was manliness. I started to like Boy Scouts.

6 One summer, we planned a long-term hike. Seven days of tramping the backcountry, with no moms, no soft beds—just gnarly guys. I was only twelve, but I could almost feel whiskers sprouting on my chin.

7 “This’ll be great!” I told my friend Billy.

8 “Awesome!” he agreed.

9 The day came, and everyone piled into station wagons. Countless rounds of singing “99 Bottles of Beer” later, we reached the trailhead, parked, and set off.

10 Day after day, our packs grew heavier, and our blisters multiplied. But we toughed it out. We learned manly skills like cleaning fish and putting out a campfire by whizzing on it.

11 Through it all, my semi-scary dad led the way. We weren’t exactly buddy-buddy but he kept an eye on me.
12 By the fourth day, Billy and I had serious food cravings. Visions of ice cream and hamburgers and pizza filled our thoughts. We weren't homesick; we were just sick of fish and chili-macaroni.

13 Finally, the last day arrived. Filthy and footsore, our troop stumbled out of the trailhead and into its cars.

14 On the drive back, no one sang "99 Bottles of Beer." Everyone chanted McDonald's and Burger King songs.

15 We would not be denied.

16 In L.A., we stopped at a burger joint for the porkout to end all porkouts. Mountains of hamburgers, piles of fries, and lakes of milkshakes poured down our gullets. We ate until our guts ached. Pure bliss.

17 Then, we crawled into our cars, stuffed, like pythons digesting a whole cow. Ten minutes from home, a sudden cramp racked my belly.

18 "Oooh, I don't feel so hot."

19 "We're almost there," said my dad.

20 As we dropped off Billy and his father, my insides burbled and shifted. Uh-oh. "Dad..."

21 He rubbed his gut. "I feel it, too," he said. "Hang on. Just one more block."

22 We whipped around the corner and into the driveway. Bent double, we staggered to the front door. Locked.

23 And Mom's car was gone.

24 "Don't you have a key?" I asked.

25 "Thought she'd be home," said my dad. "Check the back door."
26 My guts were churning like molten lava. I shuffled around back, thighs clamped tight. Another locked door.

27 "Dad, what do we do?"

28 "Maybe the balcony door is open."

29 I eyed the second-floor balcony. On a good day, I could scale it. No problem. On a good day.

30 "Up you go," said my dad. He headed into the backyard.

31 I groaned. The lava was bubbling. This volcano could blow at any second. Somehow, I climbed the bushes, flung a leg over the railing, and stepped onto the balcony.

32 I tried the door.

33 "It's locked!" I cried.

34 "Fend for yourself!" my dad shouted.

35 And just then, the volcano exploded.

36 Blaaaargh! I erupted from both ends. Burgers, fries, milkshake and all made a reappearance.

37 Blaaaargh! came the answering call from the backyard, where Dad was having an eruption of his own.

38 Fifteen minutes too late, my mom pulled into the driveway. After helping us get cleaned up, she asked, "Did you have a good time?"

39 Dad and I shared a look.

40 "Not bad," I said. "Not bad at all." And in that moment, strangely, I felt closer to my dad than I ever had before.
Grandmama's Kitchen Table

BY CYNTHIA RYLANT

Since I was four years old I have been talking about my life to the people who sit at my grandmama's kitchen table in Cool Ridge, West Virginia.

The kitchen is small and skinny. There is a little window next to Grandmama's table, and this is where she sits when she is alone in the house. Outside she can see the birds at the apple tree, eating the seed she left them, and she can see who's driving up the hollow, or whose child is walking out the dirt road to the school bus. There are woods all around, and her eyes will follow them down past the creek, down past Bill Mills' house, and on.

When I am visiting, I make sure I never sit in Grandmama's chair. I want her to have her little window.

Relatives will come by - Uncle Dean and Aunt Linda, Sue and the girls, Bev and the baby - and all sit on a bench in the doorway or on an extra chair that will block anybody who's trying to get through the room. But no one wants to go into the living room, where there are plenty of seats for us all. We want to be in Grandmama's kitchen, near this heavy old table, and we want to drink coffee and tea and Coke and eat angel food cake or leftover biscuits and talk and talk and talk and talk until we are all talked out, and there is nothing left to do but go on home and rest up and come back tomorrow to talk some more.
Expectations

It would go like this: a date would be set, say in two or three weeks. As the date got nearer, my mother stripped and waxed the kitchen floor. It took her all morning, first the warm soapy water, then the stripper, then more warm water, the wax. And drying in between. She gave my sisters and me a handful of old rags, and we poured Old English furniture polish on each piece of wooden furniture—the coffee table, the side tables, our chests of drawers—we rubbed the thick brown polish into the wood until it shone. We cleaned the windows with vinegar and water and old newspapers. My mother swept out the garage and then sprayed the concrete floor with the garden hose. The house gleamed. My mother sighed and poured Jergens hand lotion onto her hands, rough from soap and wax. Then off to the A&P for fresh green beans and a pound of shrimp and a can of cherries to make a pie, and phone calls to all our relatives. We polished all of our shoes, even my father’s, the ones he left behind. Patti drew new pictures. B.J. brushed the dog. I practiced my guitar, made sure it was in tune. That’s how it would go.

Then

It would go like this: A knock on the door. A man from Western Union.

“Plans delayed STOP More work STOP Got raise STOP Be home four months STOP Love you girls STOP.”

That’s how it would go. Stop.
Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess
Student vignette

Head spinning, my vision was being construed by the heat. All I could see was dancing lights and wavy figures in the air. My shallow breaths felt like rings of smoke escaping my nostrils.

Two outs, bases loaded, last inning, score: six to three.

I felt like I was in a bubble. A warm, stuffy bubble, an invisible barrier between me – and them. I was hearing the constant drone of disinterest through a plastic wall. They didn’t care about the game, but they would still ridicule me when I blew it. The red, rubber ball laughed as it bounced towards me. Teeth gritted, nostrils flared, I spat on the melting tar of the black top and rubbed my hands through my sweaty hair. A flash of red passed. My eyes must be playing tricks on me.

“STRRRRRIKE ONE!”

Their chatter turned into mocking jeers. The fingers pointed in my direction felt like lasers piercing my bubble. My uniform stuck to me like a wet rag. The collar of my navy blue polo asphyxiated me.

“Hurry up, we don't have all day!”

I ignored the crushed water bottle sent from third base. Once again, I felt the ball’s mocking stare as it bounded towards the chalk-drawn home plate. I swung my leg, startled at smack of contact between my sneaker and the ball.

Grinning as it sailed through the air, I thought, Homerun, first one of the season.

“WHY AREN'T YOU RUNNING?” An exasperated shout came from the dugout. It was not necessary; the ball fell directly into the arms of the second baseman.

“OUT!”

My bubble popped.
Darkness

Suddenly, the wave pool wasn’t so fun anymore. I regretted ever disobeying my father and moving beyond the rope. I got tired from the constant treading. So I relaxed. But, I sunk like a rock in a rushing river. I stopped moving, and then, just as if I had brought my foot down expecting another stair at the top of a staircase, my stomach dropped as fast as I did. Like a rock in a river, I descended, down, down, down. Where was the bottom of the pool? I thought. Where was anything?

Although I felt as if I had never been more tired in my life, I used my last gram of energy to swim towards the surface. Every second I spent ascending felt like an hour. Finally, I got up to the surface and took a breath of life. One second passed, but I was still having trouble keeping my head above water, literally. I coughed and sputtered, just like my dad’s old car used to do before it started up.

I desperately and vainly tried to inhale as the devious waves, like a vicious beast, washed over my face. I needed air! I was about to breathe in again, but another wave smothered my hopes.

I gulped down a gallon of chlorine. My nose burned, and my throat seared with pain as the chemical set fire to my respiratory system. I tried one more time. Same thing as last time, and I gave up.

Sinking quickly, the light of the fresh air above taunted me. The edges of my vision flickered, and my head exploded with dizziness.

I was panicked because now my options were dwindling. Nobody likes to be helpless, but I was exhausted, so in spite of my oxygen deprived brain telling me to swim up, I sunk down. It was over. I thought it was the end.

Then, by chance, a hand grabbed mine.
 Alone

Whoosh! A puff of cold air rushed toward us. The subway car came and we inched closer from the back of the crowd. It was hot, and a trickle of sweat crawled down my back. People pushed and shoved to get on. The sound of fluent Chinese was being passed around. I could almost taste the warm dumplings as the smell wafted from a small shop. To my right, a grim-faced businessman stood alert and looked at his watch worriedly. To my left, a lady was pushing a stroller with a pink-faced baby that was sleeping. My mom squeezed my nine-year-old hand. Not far ahead were my dad and brother.

“We’re almost there,” my mom whispered to me. “Don’t worry!” she added when she looked at my solemn, anxious face. We inched forward, the seconds ticking by, as we struggled through the crowd to board the subway. Then, in the rush, I accidentally let go of my mother’s hand in the crowd. I hurried, trying to grasp it as fast as I let it go, but it was gone. I searched aimlessly through the crowd.

Yeah, don’t worry Jessica everything will be perfectly fine! my mind panicked. The subway doors shut again. Too late. I did not know if my family made it on the train or were still looking for me. At this point, Beijing, China was definitely where I did not want to be.

I was alone, by myself amongst thousands of strangers. Minutes before, I had been with my family. They were all gone now, like a distant picture in my mind. I paced around, thinking terrible thoughts about what might happen to me in these few minutes to come, waiting for the next car to come. I shuddered at the thought, my heart fluttering with butterflies.

What can I do? What is going to happen to me? What will happen if I can’t find my family? My blood ran cold. My body felt like blocks of lead, moving by itself.

The next subway car came. I took a deep breath and gulped in some air. My heart pumped loud with fear. I felt like everyone could hear it. I walked into the train car and turned my head wildly, searching for a seat. Finding none, I let out a sigh. A pruned, kind old man looked up and offered me his seat. I declined, and decided to cling to an old, disgusting, puke-colored bar for dear life. I swished and swayed, like a rag doll as the subway car began to move.

I looked up to the ceiling on the brightly-colored map. I studied the teeny, tiny dots as carefully as I could. I had to get this right. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven stops to my destination. The focus calmed me as I began my count again. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. The bus lurched to the first stop and I stumbled, nearly hitting a low bar.

The second stop came. Then the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth stop. By now the subway car was nearly empty, and I sat down. I put my head in my hands and just stared at the gray, clean floor. It was all I could do to keep myself from losing control. I had made it this far. I had to continue. I had to trust they would be waiting for me at our stop. My mom. My dad. My brother.

The last stop was here; I took a deep breath and watched the doors separate on the platform. My eyes darted and searched, stopping on my mom’s open arms.
Revising & Choosing a Lead for Your Vignette (10 points)

We are learning to write an effective lead for a vignette.
We are looking for beginning sentences that “hook” the reader and make them want to read on.

The beginning—also called the lead—is the first word, the first sentence, the first paragraph, or the first passage that introduces your topic to the reader. Your lead must hook the reader and engage them in your story. Sometimes writers use a combination of types of leads to engage the reader in many ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Leads</th>
<th>Examples from Mentor Texts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduces Narrator’s Voice</td>
<td>“At first, I thought the whole thing was kinda dorky. I mean, wearing uniforms, tying knots, and helping old ladies cross the street? I had my doubts about Boy Scouts.” “Boys, Beer, Barf and Bonding”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Circular Beginning → Ending | **Beginning**→ “It would go like this: a date would be set...”  
**Ending**→ “That’s how it would go.” “Expectations/Then”  
**Beginning**→ “Since I was four years old I have been talking about my life to the people who sit at my grandmama’s kitchen table in Cool Ridge, West Virginia.”  
**Ending**→ “...there is nothing left to do but go on home and rest up and come back tomorrow to talk some more.” “Grandmama’s Kitchen Table” |
| Establishes Setting/ Time/Context/ Problem | “Shortly after we moved into the depot, Mom decided that what we really needed was a piano.” “The Glass Castle”  
“Since I was four years old I have been talking about my life to the people who sit at my grandmama’s kitchen table in Cool Ridge, West Virginia.”  
“Grandmama’s Kitchen Table”  
“Suddenly, the wave pool wasn’t so fun anymore.” “Darkness”  
“Game point. 15-15, next shot won.” “Wind” |
| Action/ Description | “Head spinning, my vision was being construed by the heat. All I could see was dancing lights...Two outs, bases loaded, last inning, score: six to three.” “Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess”  
“My feet kissed the block goodbye.” “In the Zone”  
“Whoosh! A puff of cold air rushed toward us.” “Alone” |
| Dramatic | “Eleven months is a long time for one father to be gone.” “Calling”  
“It went like this: He left.” “363 Days”  
“My palms were sweating. My eyes were watering. My heart was pounding as fast as a race car approaching the finish line.” “My Life Inside a Bug’s Life” |
| Unanswered Question/ Questions | “I don’t know why Mama ever sewed for me.” “Mama Sewing”  
“Where was my family? What would I do without them? What would happen if I didn’t find them?” student example  
“What I don’t understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you’re eleven, you’re also ten, and nine, and eight, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one.” “Eleven” |
| Intentional Fragments / Power of 3 | “Gone. Over the fence. Game over.” student example  
“I thought I would see him again. I thought he would become my brother. I thought we would have forever together.” student example |

Revising & Choosing a Lead for Your Vignette (10 points)

1. Identify the topic of your vignette:

2. Copy and paste your Original Lead Sentence and/or paragraph in the box below:

3. Write a NEW Lead Sentence and/or paragraph in the box below. (Use new techniques as well.)

4. What type of new lead did you try? (Consult the chart on the first page of this doc.)

19
Revising and Adding More Writing Techniques to Your Vignette (10 points)

We are learning to write vignettes to develop real experiences or events using effective techniques (i.e. dialogue, inner thoughts, sensory details, figurative language, intentional fragments, repetition, humor, concrete, precise words and phrases.)

We are looking for ways to help our reader visualize and experience the moment just like we did.

Directions: Read the following examples of writing techniques and choose TWO places in your vignette where you can add new writing techniques. Fill out the form at the end of this document to record your changes. Then add the changes to your final draft.

**Sensory details/Imagery:** describe how something looks, feels, tastes, sounds, or smells in vivid detail; helps readers create mental pictures in their minds as they read; helps readers “show” what’s happening instead of “telling.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of:</th>
<th>Use:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flower</td>
<td>bright pink rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong smell</td>
<td>repulsive odor of trash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>cold, icy January rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound of her voice</td>
<td>a scratchy whine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great tasting meal</td>
<td>savory, juicy, turkey leg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(shows what it actually looks like)
(shows an actual smell)
(shows how it feels)
(shows a specific sound)
(shows a specific taste)

**Vivid verbs:** use “active” verbs to make your sentences more detailed

“The piano jerked out of our hands, sending us lurching forward, and bounced into the house, splintering the door frame. Dad screamed at Mom to slow down, but she kept going and dragged the screeching, chordbanging piano across the depot floor…”

*(The Glass Castle)*

**Humor:** make your readers laugh with a funny thought or description

“I ignored the crushed water bottle sent from third base.”
("Kickball, Or Why I Hate Recess")

“She looked behind her and saw the piano sitting in the backyard. “Oopsiedaisy,” she said.” *(The Glass Castle)*
**Intentional Fragments:** short phrases or a one word sentence used for emphasis; also used to control pacing (may speed up or slow down action)

"It would go like this: A knock on the door. A man from Western Union. " ("Then")
"Stop." ("Then")
"Gone. Over the fence. Game over." (student example)

**Repetition/Power of 3:** repeating a word, phrase, or sentence structure intentionally for emphasis or effect

"Waves crashing like thunder. Sand swirling like a dust storm. Black clouds hovering like a menace." ("Powerful Ocean") Three intentional fragments in parallel structure

"We all want to be in Grandmama's kitchen...and talk and talk and talk and talk until we are all talked out...." ("Grandmama’s Kitchen Table")

"Making the family complete again." 3 times, beginning, middle and end ("363 Days")

**Figurative language:** language that uses figures of speech, such as the following:

**Alliteration:** "Swish and sway of the subway..." (student example)

**Hyperbole:** "Mountains of hamburgers, piles of fries, and lakes of milkshakes poured down our gullets." ("Boys, Beer, Barf and Bonding")

**Simile:** "My uniform stuck to me like a wet rag." ("Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess")
"My heart melted to the bottom of my stomach, as if cold ice cream was sitting in the hot sun." ("363 Days")

**Onomatopoeia:** "My bubble popped." ("Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess") smack

**Metaphor:** "And just then, the volcano exploded...I erupted from both ends." ("Boys, Beer, Barf and Bonding")

**Personification:** "The red rubber ball laughed as it bounced towards me." ("Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess")

**Exploding the Moment or Speeding Up the Moment:** taking an image and either slowing it down by adding extra details, or speeding it up by emphasizing only the important images

*Exploding the Moment examples:*

"But instead of easing forward, mom, who had never quite gotten the hang of driving, hit the pedal hard, and the truck shot ahead. The piano jerked out of our hands, sending us lurching forward, and bounced into the house, splintering the door frame. Dad screamed to mom to slow down but she kept going and dragged the screeching, chordbanging piano across the depot floor"
and right through the rear door, splintering its frame, too, then out into the backyard," (The Glass Castle)

"I ignored the crushed water bottle sent from third base. Once again, I felt the ball’s mocking stare as it bounded towards the chalk-drawn home plate. I swung my leg, startled at smack of contact between my sneaker and the ball. Grinning as it sailed through the air, I thought, Homerun, first one of the season." ("Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess")

Speeding Up the Moment example:
"A flash of red passed. My eyes must be playing tricks on me." ("Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess")
"15-15. All tied up." ("Wind")

Slowing the Moment example: Counting
"He was going to be gone for a whole year: 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,670 hours, 525,600 minutes." ("365 Days")

Dialogue: Conversation between characters that develops the important events of the story and shows readers something important about the characters. GOOD dialogue moves the story forward and allows the readers to feel a part of the story.
—Start a new paragraph for each new speaker
—Use dialogue tags to show how the quote was said
—Carefully punctuate dialogue (look at your independent reading book if you are not sure how to punctuate something)

"I told you to go slow!"
"I was only doing twenty-five!" Mom said. "You get mad at me when I go that slow on the highway."
She looked behind her and saw the piano sitting in the backyard. "Oopsiedaisy," she said. (The Glass Castle)

Internal Dialogue: the narrator shares his or her thoughts and feelings about what is happening throughout the story.
"Grinning as it sailed through the air, I thought, Homerun, first one of the season." ("Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess")
What can I do? What is going to happen to me? Will I ever see my family again? (student example)

Revision: Adding Writing Techniques to Your Vignette (10 points)
Revising & Choosing an Ending for Your Vignette (10 Points)

The ending of your story is just as important as your lead. It is the ending that remains with the reader when the piece of writing is finished. If the ending fails to satisfy the reader, the writing is not complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Endings</th>
<th>Examples from Mentor Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circular Ending</td>
<td><strong>Beginning:</strong> “Since I was ten years old, I always dreamed of being number seventeen on the Florida Gators home field.”&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ending:</strong> My dream would have been totally shattered. Now, I can still dream about being a star.”&lt;br&gt;<strong>Beginning:</strong> “This is how it would go.”&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ending:</strong> “That’s how it would go.” <em>Expectations</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasting Image/Description</td>
<td>“In the depth of that inky sky, those overpowering waves, and that broiling breeze I knew I should not attempt that water again. Instead, I laid in the thick sand, until I was actually okay.” <em>When the Water Comes For You</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous/Dialogue/Look on the Bright Side</td>
<td>“Most pianists never get the chance to play in the great out of doors,” she said. “And now the whole neighborhood can enjoy the music, too.” <em>Glass Castle</em>&lt;br&gt;“My bubble popped.” <em>Kickball, or Why I Hate Recess</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Ending</td>
<td>“That’s when I knew everything was going to be alright. That’s when I knew my family was complete again.” (“363 Days”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>“They were proud. Proud of me. Proud of something that I had done. I was one of them, someone who actually accomplished something.” (“The Fourth Out”)&lt;br&gt;“But I learned a valuable lesson that day: Do not underestimate the power of a little square scooter.” (“The Danger of a Little Square Scooter”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Learning/Life lesson/Theme</td>
<td>“Not bad,” I said. “Not bad at all.” And in that moment, strangely, I felt closer to my dad than I ever had before. <em>Boys, Beer, Barf and Bonding</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revising & Choosing an Ending for Your Vignette (10 points)

1. Copy and Paste your **Original ending:**
Writing Workshop: Editing Your Vignette

Before you turn in any piece of writing, you MUST proofread and edit to correct the following items. Check every sentence of your vignette for the following errors and correct them by using the guidelines below.

1. Capitalization: Make sure capital letters are used in the right places.
   - at the beginning of a sentence
   - when using "I" to refer to yourself
   - for proper names of people or places (Sam Smith, Solon, Ohio, Uncle Bob)
   - days of the week, months of the year (Monday, December)
   - official names of businesses or products, titles with names (Colgate toothpaste, President Donald Trump, Taco Bell)
   - historical events, documents, periods of time (World War I, the Bill of Rights, the Middle Ages)
   - names of languages, nationalities, religions (Spanish, African art, Judaism)

2. Punctuation: Make sure you have a punctuation mark (period, question mark, or exclamation point) at the end of every sentence, and commas to indicate a pause or change in thought.
   - Fix all run-on sentences: add periods, question marks, or exclamation points at the end of each complete thought. Or, combine thoughts with and, but, or.
     Run-On: I was going to school for the first time I was so nervous.
     Fixed: I was going to school for the first time. I was so nervous. OR
     Run-On: I couldn't believe what was happening I was a nervous wreck all day.
     Fixed: I couldn't believe what was happening. I was a nervous wreck all day.

   - Fix all comma splices: you can't connect two simple sentences with a comma. You need a period, question mark, or exclamation point.
     Wrong: I never really enjoyed math, language arts is my favorite subject.
     Fixed: I never really enjoyed math. Language Arts is my favorite subject.

   - Use commas correctly.
     ➢ items in a series (We ate candy, chips, and popcorn at the movies.)
     ➢ to set off dialogue (He said, "I'll see you tomorrow.") ("I'll see you tomorrow," he said.)
     ➢ to keep numbers clear (2,000,000)
     ➢ in dates and addresses (December 4, 2015)
Writing Workshop: Editing Your Vignette

➢ to set off interruptions (You can, for example, buy almost anything online.)
➢ in direct address (Jill, listen to this!)
➢ to set off phrases and clauses (English, the language which computers speak worldwide, is also the most widely used language in all fields of science and medicine.)

I like cooking my family and my pets.
COMMAS SAVE LIVES

3. Paragraphs: Make sure you have multiple paragraphs.
- Each paragraph must focus on ONE idea or topic.
- Start a new paragraph if you change the topic or setting.
- When using dialogue, start a new paragraph after each person speaks.
- Use a combination of simple and complex sentences for variety.
- Use paragraphs to achieve a desired effect. (For example, a one-sentence paragraph to build suspense: I was alone.)

4. Verb Tenses: Make sure your verbs are consistent throughout the story.
- If your story in is past tense, every verb should be past tense. (walked, ran)
- If your story is being told in present tense, every verb should be present tense. (walk, run)

5. Subject-Verb Agreement: Make sure your subjects and verbs agree in number.
- Singular subject=singular verb (John likes pizza.)
- Plural subject=plural verb (His friends like pizza too.)

6. Spelling: Make sure you have all words spelled correctly.
- Go to tools → spelling
- there, their, they’re, two, to, too
- it’s→it is, its (possessive)
Vignette: Final Revision Checklist

General appearance

☐ Font is black and easy to read (Arial, Times New Roman, Candara, Calibri) and sized 12 pt.
☐ Title is at the top with name directly below. Both are capitalized correctly.
☐ Vignette is about 1 full page. (single-spaced)

Focus

☐ Focuses on one event, moment, person, object, or setting.
☐ Focuses on the essential meaning of the story (a “snapshot”)
☐ Vivid details show the importance of the topic.
☐ Story has a logical beginning, middle and end.

Craft

☐ Highlight your 3 best (and different!) writing techniques in your Vignette Final Draft. How do these techniques make your writing better? Explain on your rubric.
☐ Has a catchy title, well-written to reflect and maintain appropriate mood.
☐ Uses a variety of writing techniques (intentional fragments, vivid verbs, sensory details, dialogue/ internal dialogue, repetition/ power of three, figurative language, use of questions, play-by-play description, etc.) Circle each of the techniques you use.

Structure

☐ 1st person point of view
☐ written in logical paragraphs (more small paragraphs for vignette)
☐ New paragraphs shown by an indent
☐ New paragraphs for each new speaker in dialogue
☐ strong beginning
☐ memorable ending

Conventions

☐ Run-ons have been corrected.
☐ Uses correct capitalization (names, places, proper nouns, beginning of dialogue).
☐ Uses correct punctuation. (Carefully punctuate dialogue. Use periods and commas correctly.)
☐ Uses correct verb tenses. (Maintain consistent past or present tense verbs.) If your event happened in the past, you should use past tense verbs.
☐ Spelling is correct. (Double check the frequently misspelled words- there, their, they’re, it’s, its, our, are, know, now, no, you, you’re) (The personal pronoun I should always be capitalized → I.)

As you work today, make any corrections needed to say YES to the requirements on this list!
1Q Writing Common Assessment: Vignette

**Focus**
- focuses on **one** event, moment, person, object, or setting
- focuses on the essential meaning of the story (a “snapshot”)
- vivid details show the importance of the topic

---

**Craft**
- has a catchy title, well-written to reflect appropriate mood
- uses a variety of writing techniques (intentional fragments, vivid verbs, sensory details, humor, dialogue/internal dialogue, repetition/power of three, figurative language, use of questions, play-by-play description, etc.)

Write out your **3 best, and different**, writing techniques and explain your deliberate decisions below. How do these techniques make your writing better?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example from text</th>
<th>Name the technique</th>
<th>What’s your purpose for this line? How does this make your writing better?</th>
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**Structure**
- 1st person point of view
- logical flow of paragraphs
- strong beginning
- memorable ending

---

**Conventions**
- Displays a consistent understanding of grammatical conventions. Minor errors, if any, do not impair a reader’s understanding and comprehension. Overall, uses correct capitalization, sentence structures, punctuation, verb tenses, and spelling.

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**Total Score:**

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*I would like to submit this piece to The Comet’s Tale. Yes No (circle one)