

Grade 4 Sample Compositions

We wanted to share with you some samples of Grade 4 compositions that received 4s during last spring's TAKS administration. As you will see, the names and other identifying information in the compositions have been changed to protect the identity of the student writers. We hope that these papers will help deepen your understanding of the rubric and of the variety of approaches that students can take when responding to a TAKS prompt. Remember that these compositions were based on the 2003 TAKS prompt, which can be found at the beginning of the Grade 4 Scoring Guide.

"There's cable and satellite!" My brother exclaimed joyfully. He skipped happily around the room. My family had decided to stay in a condo by the beach in Florida for spring break. My mom then came in carrying heavy suitcases. "Why don't you kids go play on the beach, while your dad and I unpack," She suggested

. My brother, my sister, and I all rushed together and put our bathing suits on. As I was running out the door, I grabbed the sandboard I had bought on the way to the condo.

By the time we got to the beach it was already crammed full of noisy tourists with huge beach umbrellas and big floppy sandals. But I didn't mind them. I just wanted to cool off. I scurried towards the water. Waves crashed onto the beautiful white sand causing it to turn brown. I shielded my eyes from the bright sun, took a deep breath, held my nose, and dove into the gleaming ocean. It felt so refreshing. I could see all kinds of different creatures crawling about on the ocean floor. I dove down deeper and picked up a shiny smooth rock hidden under a clump of seaweed. I put the rock gently into my swimsuit pocket and swam up to the surface. I spotted my brother on the beach as soon as I had swam to shore. He was looking at the ground with his arms spread out in front of him.

He started to run very quickly. It looked like he was chasing something. I jogged over to see what he was doing. As I neared him I began to see little rainbows darting from place to place. Then I realized that they were little lizards. My brother dove after each one, but he missed all of them. "I almost had one", he said lying on the ground. "I've never seen a lizard like that before", I told him. "I wonder where ^{Alice} is", said my little brother. We both carefully scanned the beach for my sister. When we finally spotted her she was gliding swiftly along the shore. "Sandboarding!", I exclaimed excitedly. I sprinted across the beach to where my brand new sandboard lay. I picked it up and ran to get my brother. We jogged side by side to the edge of the beach where my sister was. She let my brother use her sandboard while she rested. We had a blast zooming down the shoreline on our sandboards. The cool breeze blowing through my hair felt so good. I closed my eyes and pretended I was flying.

Later that evening I stood out on the balcony staring down at the beach. It looked like vanilla ice cream with chocolate sprinkles as the sun cast its last shadows on the beach. Then, I looked out at the vast gleaming ocean. I smiled as I reached into my pocket and pulled out the rock I had found that day. This was certainly the best day I had ever had.

The tower of smoke grew higher and higher every second, the base of the smoke tower grew wider. Columbia's last launch and the Best day I had ever had had just taken place at Kennedy space center in Florida on January 16, 2003.

After the live coverage of the launch ended I began to worry about the seven astronauts. About 6 hours past and I found out that they had made it to the International space station safely. Then I jumped up and down in joy.

This day was the best day of my life because this and the events that followed taught me an important lesson. Although January 16 was the best day of my life the events that followed were painful for me and the families of the seven astronauts.

At around 9:15 A.M. on Feb. 1st 2003 Columbia exploded over Texas because of an unknown cause. Pieces of the Shuttle rained down all

Over eastern Texas.

The news immediately put on live coverage of the accident. It was horrible, just like Mir. when it descended.

I couldn't take the fact that seven astronauts lost their lives in an accident that should have never happened. The news kept repeating the words "Columbia is lost." The only way I could forget about it was remembering how happy and joyful I was sixteen days earlier.

Slowly I realized that the horror was over but it would haunt us until Death. These happy and tragic events taught me an important lesson and that lesson was that life is the most precious and fragile thing and we should never put it in the hands of machines that can cause tragedies like this one.

Remember Columbia.

The warmth of the sun shone across my face. I felt as if I had been reborn. Tropical flowers bloomed around us, bringing the sweet fragrance to Nina and I. The garden sparkled. The sky was a bright blue and I felt a bright day ahead of us. Feeling happy and peaceful, we began to explore the garden.

We walked down the narrow path and suddenly spied bright roses growing in a large cluster. Carefully I gathered a dozen roses. I broke off the thorns. The roses smelled fresh and divine. The petals felt soft and silky. They were colored scarlet. Suddenly my finger was poked by a thorn I had not seen. A tiny drop of blood fell on the grass. I wiped the blood on my skirt and thought how it looked like the color of my roses. Soon the bleeding stopped and we continued down the path.

All of the sudden, I smelled the unmistakable sent of orchids. We stopped and picked some. I closed my eyes and breathed in the heavenly smell. Then we saw jasmine blossoms. The white petals were so delicate. Nina touched one with the tip of her finger and it moved gently in the air.

Searching for these flowers brought us in the deeper part of the garden. Nature was all around us, the flowers were so tall we couldn't see above them. We could only see the sky. We knew it was late in the

afternoon so we turned around and began to retrace our steps. Finally we found our way back to our starting place. I offered half of the flowers we collected to Nina. She smiled at me and I smiled back.

When we saw my dad driving up, we sighed. We walked slowly to the car, careful not to drop any of our flowers. We were sorry it was time to go home. My dad smiled when we handed him a rose.

That night I thought about my perfect day. I knew I was lucky to share it with my best friend and my dad. I also knew I would always love flowers and gardens.

THE END

Score Point: 4

My team and I never thought that we would ever do this good on a soccer game. Especially because we were playing the Panthers! The Chargers weren't that good, but that day we were GOOD!

It was the last game of spring season for the Chargers. We were all really nervous. The Panthers had beat us many times before and we didn't want to lose the last game. We decided to play our best. Antonio was our goalie. He was good but didn't want to dive for the ball too much. He was surely going to give up a goal first half. Our games are an hour long. We warm up a little while and then our coach puts us in the places he wants to. I'm on offense. Three, two, one, GO! We start playing. Our best player (when he gets his way) kicks off. One of the kids on the other team gets it. We get it back and make the first score 1 min. into the game! That's a really good start! Jessie kicks off again. Panthers get it, take it down and shoot. Antonio catches it and punts it to me. I take it down a while and pass it to Toby. He takes it down and scores. 2-0 five min. into the game.

It is ten min. into the game and no more scores have been made. Hey, we're still winning right?? So, we keep going and going. They keep shooting and Antonio keeps catching. Twenty-five minutes into the game and we still haven't made any more points, neither have they. Which is good. Coach has switched us

in and out some. He took me out and put me right back in before the referee called half-time. We drank a lot of water and before we knew it, it was time to get back in the field.

A few min. later we got another point. Now Toby was in the goal. He was better than Antonio because he had more experience. Panthers kick off. Jessie is terminator so he is closer. I'm faster though! I come in and intercept the ball and he gets mad! After a while, we make a few more points, 4-0. One minute left in the game. I know because I accidentally have my watch on. Toby punts the ball to Jessie (he's best but I'm fastest), and he takes it down, passing everyone in his way and shoots and scores, 5-0. Out of time! Chargers win the game!

All the parents run onto the field. Everyone is excited, Jessie and I are jumping up and down. I never thought we could beat the Panthers but we did. It was my best day ever.

Score Point: 4

Dear Diary,

Something truly wonderful happened today. A true miracle. And no I didn't win one million dollars or get invited to the popular girl's party. I spent the day with my Grandpa. Wait a minute you're probably thinking, he's resting in peace. Well, he came to see me today, wings of an angel and all. It all started yesterday night when I wished on a star.....

"Darling, time to go to bed," my mother said softly. "Just wait one minute. I've got to pick the right star to wish on." I replied gazing out into the night sky. "Get a life. I've tried to wish on a star but my wish never came true," my stuck up brother said just waiting for me to run upstairs bawling. "Whatever. You probably didn't wish with your heart," I replied trying to hold my temper. My brother just walked away looking dissapointed. I gazed again and saw a star twinkling so brightly it could light up a galaxy. I looked at it and said in my heart, "Star light, star bright please bring my Grandpa back tonight or tomorrow." "Okay now go to bed" my mom said again. I clambored up the 25 stairs. (I counted) up to my room, climbed into the covers and prayed my dream would come true.

When I woke up the next day, Grandpa was sitting on my feet reading Girls Weekly. "Grandpa I didn't know you liked that stuff," I said giggling. "Oh hi Jenny" he replied giving me the biggest bear hug I'd ever recieved. "Yes, Grandpa Oh yes. You really did come, you did! I'll call mom," I said. "No, don't call anyone. Nobody can see you or me from now on," he replied still smiling. I nodded my head in reply while I pulled on my overalls. He took my small hand into his big rough hands and started flapping his wings. He flew straight through the window pane and all. We were invisible. He began flying through neighborhoods but finally we were over the countryside. "This is the special place I grew up, right here on Oak Rd. I think you

will like it. I think we'll go fishing in the great lake and fry whatever we catch." Grandpa said gazing at me. "Sounds great" I whispered not wanting to break his gaze. We soon found ourselves at the "great lake" and slowly drifted down. "Just like I remembered", he said. Well enough talk, let's fish." He babbled some words and then "Poot" there appeared 2 fishing poles and a can of worms. I grabbed a slimy, helpless worm and strung it on the hook. I lowered my pole down into the water just like Grandpa. After a few minutes of silence I felt a HUGE tug. "Grandpa please help, I'm going to fall in!" "It's okay you will be fine" he said in a cooing voice while pulling me on the waist. Soon after tugging and pulling, we finally got the line up out of the water onto the wooden dock. Lucky for me 4 catfish still were on the line, all looking exhausted but all still trying to gobble the remains of the worm. "Wow, some catch. When I was young the most fish I caught on a line, was one. Four will be enough for both of us." Grandpa said in amazement. He popped up a grill and started frying our fish just as he promised. I still had a question so I let it out. "Grandpa, why did you come? Why did you answer my wish?" "Sweetie, you wished with your heart and your wish wasn't bogus. I've been wanting to see you for a long time and this was the perfect opportunity." Grandpa had such love in his voice I couldn't explain it. We happily ate in silence, thinking about how much we loved each other. We then flew home telling one another every secret. When we finally arrived home I spoke out first. "Grandpa, I know this is where we have to say good-bye but I don't want to. I love and miss you so much." "Sweetie, I don't want to leave either. I have duties up in the stars but I promise I'll come visit you again." Grandpa whispered getting all teary eyed. Then he was off.

Diary, wasn't that the perfect day? Nobody knows about it, so don't tell. It's raining again. I wonder if it's Grandpa. He looked awful teary eyed when he left. Diary, here's one secret you can tell the whole world... If your wish comes from your heart, your wish will come true.

Love,
Jenny