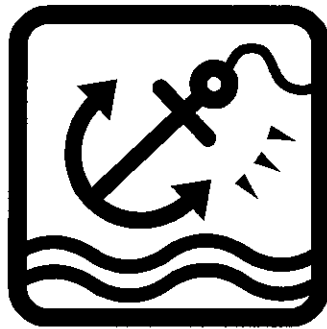


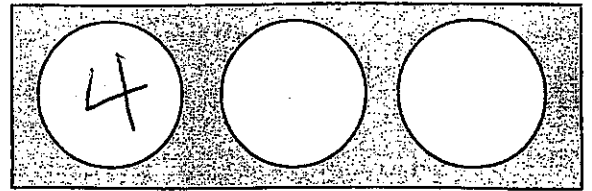
# Oakland Unified School District Writing Proficiency Project



## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Response to Literature Anchor Papers Geraldine Moore Prompt

Note: Please do not use the anchor papers with students prior to the administration of the Process Writing Assessment

# Writing Sample



Do not write in this box.

**START ESSAY HERE**

Writing can be a powerful way to help you express your feelings. In Tony Cade Bambara's story, "Geraldine Moore the Poet," the character Gemy finds something inside herself - the gift of poetry. Many things were going wrong in her life and she needed an outlet, a way to express her feelings. Poetry was the answer.

Gemy's family had serious problems. Her mother was sick and had gone away, so she was taken care of by her sister Anita and a kind neighbor - Miss Gladys. The absence of a mother in her life was already hard enough, but on top of that her father rarely came to visit her. She came home one day to discover that she and her sister were evicted from their home. Gemy felt like, "what else is there, what's next?"

Unfortunate events were constantly being thrown at Genny one after the next, and she was at a loss for how to cope.

At school she had trouble concentrating in her geometry class, and silently wondered "... what all these squares and angles had to do with solving real problems." In gym class she asked herself, "how does my body know what it will need, when I don't even know what I'll need to get through tomorrow?" Her trouble at school was frustrating, and it seemed as if she had no way out.

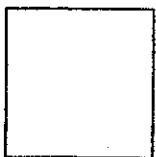
Life continued to spiral downward for her, when finally Genny's English teacher Mrs. Scott led her to an outlet - poetry. Genny didn't think she could write a poem at first. "I can't write a poem," she said loudly in class. Then she explained why: "... nothing lovely's been happening in my life. I haven't seen a flower since Mother's Day, and the sun don't shine on my side of

the street..." With these words she finally realized that her own life was poetry. She put pen to paper and wrote her first poem.

Gem's poem used small words that make a big impact. When reading the poem, you can visualize the events in her life, one after the next. For example, "...just the rain comes, and the bills come, And the men to move out our furniture." We get the feeling from these lines that hard times are here and hope is gone. That's when you know that a poem is well-written; when you feel as if you are in Gem's shoes and can take challenging steps with her. Gem now had a way of sharing her pain with others.

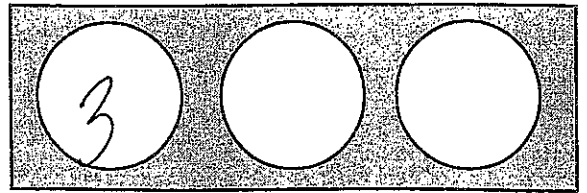
Gem's story has opened my eyes to poetry as a way of expressing your feelings. It's as if you just pour your heart out on the paper.

There is a saying that "paper is more patient than man." I agree. Writing allows you to vent without interruptions, conflict, or questioning. This story has helped me realize that even in hard times when your friends might not be there to listen, writing things out is a great help.



_____	Name:
_____	School:
_____	Teacher:
_____	Period:
_____	Grade:
_____	Date:

# Writing Sample



Do not write in this box.

## START ESSAY HERE

"Nothing lovely's been happening in my life." says Geraldine. She is right about her life so far but in "Geraldine Moore the Poet" by Toni Cade the main theme isn't about the bad things in life. I think the Author wrote this short story with the theme, writing can help you express your feelings. Geraldine is not happy and her life is sad, but when she tells her English teacher why she can't write a poem in a very poetic way she feels better.

After her teacher copies her words into a poem, Geraldine copies it down. She is surprised but happy. Already things are looking up. Life is hard but just writing how it is brightens your day. Geraldine's poem ends with, "I'm sorry, but I can't write no pretty poem." but once she reads it over and copies it down she is feeling better. "And even when the bell rang, and everyone came over to smile at Geraldine or to tap her on the shoulder or to kid her about being the school poet, Geraldine

wanted for Mrs. Scott to put the chalk down and turn around."

Writing can help you express your feelings and I have experienced this too. Whenever I am very mad at someone or something that happened I always write it down on a piece of paper and then crumple it up or burn it. I do this to help me feel better about things or people that have annoyed me at some point. I then burn the paper that I wrote it down on to help me feel like it has passed and over with and the next day will be better. Burning my bad experiences make them things of the past, not present and not something that I have to keep dealing with.

Many people keep Journals. Some write them to record what happened during a day or week. Others keep journals so that they have a place to put their feelings and thoughts on matters that bug them or interest them. Writing down the events of a day and how you felt or feel about something often puts people into a better mood. Some

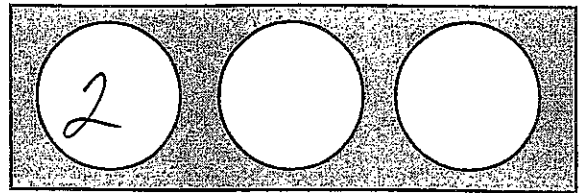
people even have a bad journal where the only things they write down are bad things that they are annoyed about. Journals help people sort out their thoughts and feelings and also get over annoying things of the past.

Expression of feelings through writing can make even someone who has had an awful day feel much better. "Geraldine Moore the Poet" shows this when Geraldine tells her English class she can't write a poem because nothing good is happening in her life. I think you can always feel better when you write it down. I write all the bad things that have happened to me down on a piece of paper then burn it or crumple it up and throw it away. Many people have journals, diaries and logs to express their thoughts and feelings to sort them out and feel better. So if you ever have a bad day, just write it down and keep it as a thing of the past.

# Writing Sample

## NEVER GIVE UP

START ESSAY HERE



Do not write in this box.

In the story "Geraldine Moore the Poet" I think that the main idea of the story is to never give up.

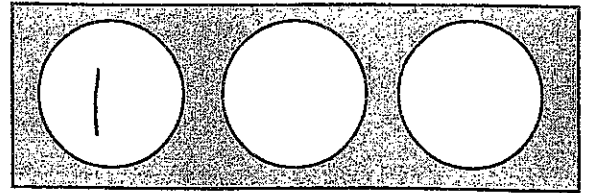
I think that this is the theme of the story because Geraldine was struggling to come up with a poem and just as she was about to give up she came up with "the best poem you will ever hear."

Another example of of a struggle that she had to deal with is having a very poor family and not being able to afford their house and have to move out.

She also just feels like nothing is going right in her life but she just deals with it and tries to keep her head up. She tries to be strong for her sister and deals with everything

that is being thrown at  
her! This is why I think the  
moral of this story is never  
give up!

# Writing Sample



Do not write in this box.

START ESSAY HERE

## The life of poems

My feeling about the story is sad and upsetting for me is because I will always feel sorry for her and when she always go school she will get really hungry because during she would sit through social studies class or something she would like make noise with her feet to like ignore the noise of her stomach growling. At lunch time for she would always wait for her older sister Anita to bring her some lunch and she just wait and wonder what does her sister has for her for lunch. When Geraldine mom got sick and mom couldn't work or do nothing because she was sick. so Geraldine went to school and get a good education and can get a good job. And Anita I feel kind sorry for her because she waiting and waiting for her husband to come out of the army because she miss him. so one day I think she from school and

she was almost home when she stopped and outside her building was a pile of stuff like furniture, boxes and she saw people get stuff and pulling them out in the street and that was mean because that was her stuff and you wouldn't like if some random people came to your house and took the stuff that you had and had it gone. And the sad part is when Miss Gladys was standing there and look at her stuff just put to the sidewalk.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Response to Literature Anchor Papers:  
“Geraldine Moore the Poet”**

Title	Score	Notes
“Writing can be a powerful way to help you express your feelings.”	4	<p><i>The writing corresponds to a 4 (Advanced) in these ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Interpretation of the important idea (theme) is perceptive and convincing.</li> <li>*There are several references to the text, including specific relevant quotes and passages for evidence. Quotes are integrated correctly.</li> <li>*Language is colorful and specific. Sentence types vary.</li> <li>*Errors in conventions are minimal and “first draft” in nature.</li> </ul>
“Nothing lovely’s been happening in my life.”	3	<p><i>The writing corresponds to a 3 (Proficient) in these ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Writer identifies an important idea (theme) and introduces this by contrasting a quote from the story to the theme</li> <li>*Support for important idea (theme) consists of references to the story, personal experience, and general information about the use and value of journal writing.</li> <li>*Although slightly repetitious, writing includes evidence of theme: “writing makes one feel better.”</li> <li>*Language is clear; sentence types vary</li> <li>*Few errors/errors that do not interfere with the meaning</li> </ul>
Never Give Up	2	<p><i>The writing corresponds to a 2 (Developing) in these ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Interpretation of the important idea (theme) is clear, though brief and simplistic</li> <li>*Evidence is general, brief, and unconvincing</li> <li>*Vocabulary is mostly simple. Many run on sentences.</li> <li>*Some spelling errors</li> </ul>
The Life of Poems	1	<p><i>The writing corresponds to a 1 (Emerging) in these ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Interpretation of important idea is difficult to determine, though writer tells how she feels about the characters and the story.</li> <li>*Organization is unclear</li> <li>*Language is general and vague; there are many incomplete and run on sentences.</li> <li>*Errors in conventions sometimes interfere with meaning.</li> </ul>