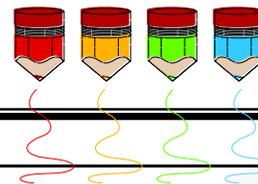


# Developmental Writing Continuum



Exploration .....	Scribbles, marks on paper
Early Pre-Conventional.....	Drawing with details
Pre-Conventional.....	Drawing, random letters
Emergent.....	Pictures, letter/sound connection, attempts words, directionality
Developing.....	Meaning in text with words, spaces, sentences
Developing Discovery.....	Expanded statements, moving toward more development
Beginning.....	General topic developed with expanded list, simple sentences, some conventions
Novice.....	Specific topic with supporting details and expansions, simple organization
Bridging.....	Develops several ideas on surface of specific topic, some coherence and organization,
Bridging Discovery	
Expanding.....	Explores topic with focus, beyond surface, control of some aspects of writer's craft
Independent.....	Developed focus, sufficiently adequate craft
Fluent.....	Expanded focus, purposeful crafting, moving toward complexity
Sophisticated.....	Insightful, expanded development with perspective, complexity, and significance, well-crafted

# Reasoning and Idea Development

Building from Naïve to Sophisticated

**Sophisticated**

## **Expanded Development of Ideas**

Larger connections, developed ideas and details reflect perspective, complexity, and significance

## **Developed Ideas**

Includes enough ideas and details to reflect an exploration of the subject with beginnings of complexity

## **Developing Ideas**

Developed with surface ideas rather than depth or extensions

## **Expanded Statement**

Stated reason with some brief expansion or explanation

## **Statement**

Stated idea—no development, may repeat statement

**Naïve**

# Exploratory Stages—

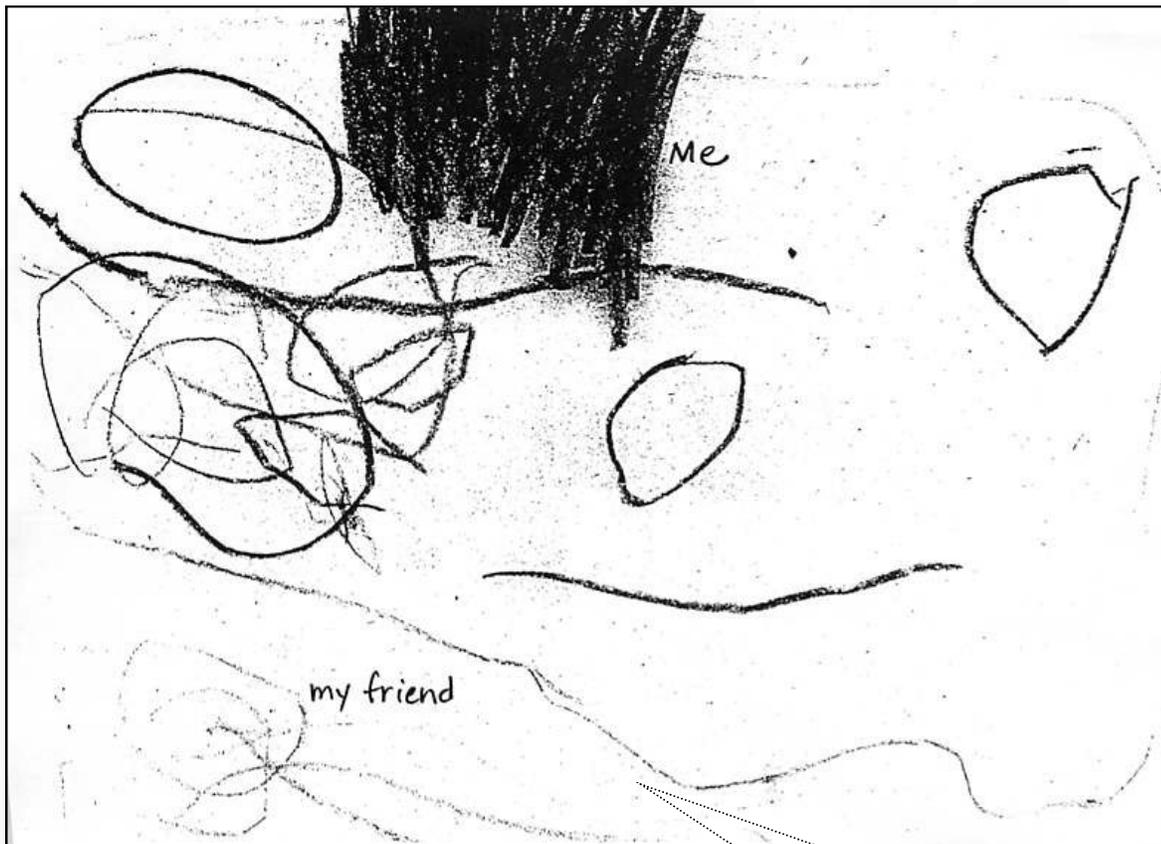
## Learning to use paper and pencils

### Exploration

**Key words: scribbles, marks on paper**

**Descriptors:**

This initial stage of writing is characterized by scribbles. Students are learning to explore the world of drawing and writing by putting marks on paper. The drawings are representational, without obvious meaning. In work at this level there are not recognizable objects or letters.



The example shows the exploration stage of writing, discovering possibilities with pencil and paper. The child is drawing representational shapes and scribbles, but the meaning may not be obvious to the reader.

# Exploratory Stages—

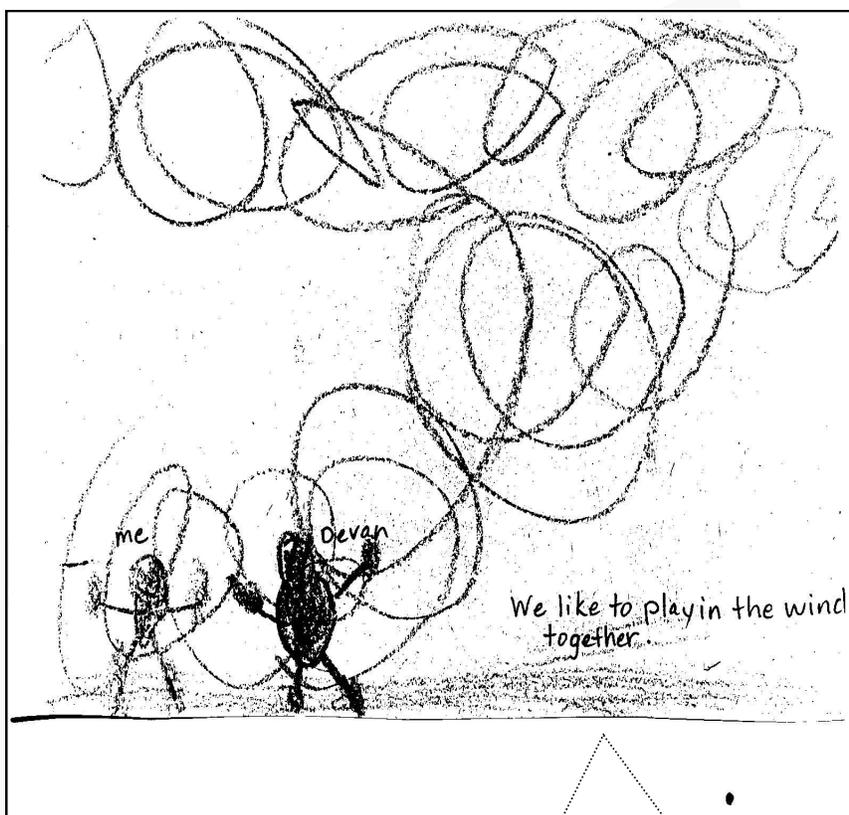
## Learning to use paper and pencils

### Early Pre-Conventional

#### Key Words: drawing with details

##### Descriptors:

This early stage of writing/drawing is characterized by a combination of some scribbles with recognizable objects. The student at this stage is still not forming letters or words. While the writing/drawing has meaning for the student, it is usually accompanied by oral interpretation for the reader/viewer. Students at this stage can describe what they are drawing. Adult reader/viewer can recognize the objects but would need the student interpretation for a sense of the significance or story behind the drawing.



This sample of an early pre-conventional paper shows the student drawing recognizable objects. At this stage, the student is usually able to orally describe the picture. Although this teacher has acted as scribe for the picture, the teacher's writing should not be considered part of the child's work or factor in the evaluation.

# Exploratory Stages—

## Learning to use paper and pencils

### Pre-Conventional

**Key Words: drawing, random letters**

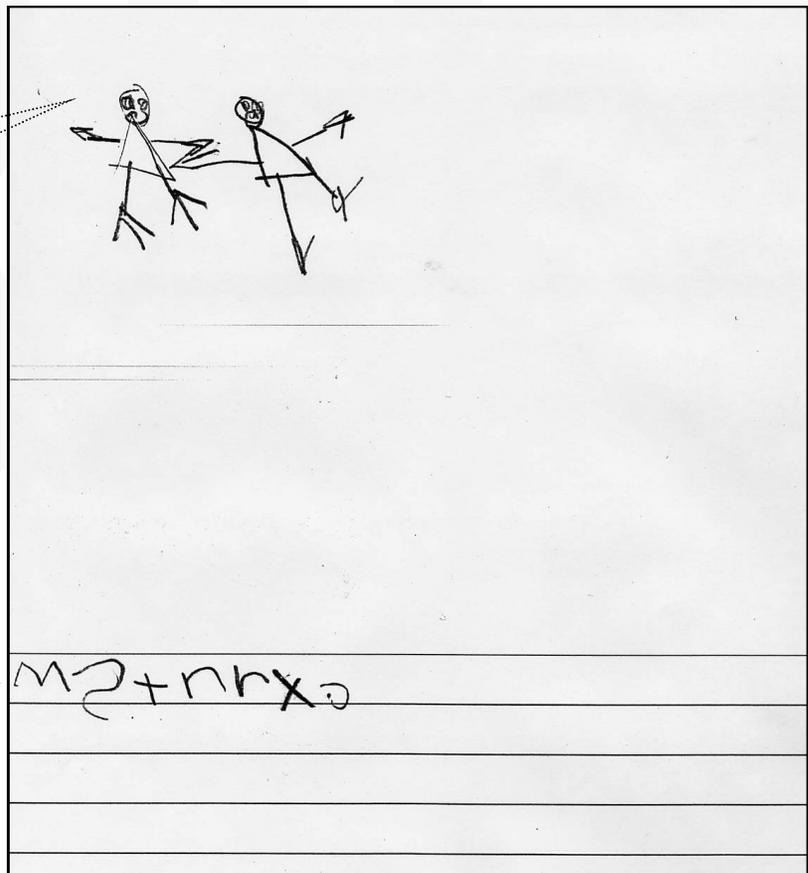
**Descriptors:**

This stage of writing focuses around drawing as well as creating some letters. The objects in the drawing are not just recognizable; they contain details, e.g. the people have faces or feet or hands and fingers. Students writing at this stage do attempt to create letters or words even though the focus of the paper is the drawing. Letters may seem random to an adult reader, but the child may be able to look at the paper and “read” a story about the picture. At this stage, there is no evidence of letter/sound connections by the writer.

Students move beyond the pre-conventional when they start attempting to produce words as parts of sentences. If a student draws a picture and supports it with words or fills in a sentence stem the teacher has given such as, “I like...”, “I can...”, or “I go to...,” the student developmental level is still considered pre-conventional because the writer is not creating or thinking of the sentence him/herself.

Drawing has details such as face features and is the main focus of the communication.

Writer is attempting to create letters and some are recognizable.



# Exploratory Stages—

## Learning to use paper and pencil with beginnings of ideas

### Emergent

**Key words: pictures, letter/sound connection, attempts words, directionality**

Characteristics of Emergent Writers	Where to go next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use picture as major emphasis for meaning.</li><li>• Attempt words and/or sentences with letter sound connections.</li><li>• Spelling reflects semi-phonetic (initial sound for word) or phonetic (CVC) or some simple words.</li><li>• May label picture parts, write name, etc.</li><li>• Generally correct directionality.</li><li>• Produces text that is sometimes difficult to read.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistent spacing between words.</li><li>• Consistent directionality.</li><li>• Build repertoire of sound/letter connections.</li><li>• Build repertoire of words.</li><li>• Begin using writing as central aspect of communication.</li><li>• Think about the audience and make things easy to read.</li></ul>



Although the drawing is still the main focus, student demonstrates that she understands concept of a word by labeling the objects in the drawing. Letters are recognizable; however there are problems with spacing.

# Exploratory Stages—

Learning to use paper and pencil with beginnings of ideas

## Emergent continued



This drawing seems to tell a story. Although the picture is the main focus of the paper, the writer is attempting letters and words, showing an understanding of directionality as well as letter/sound connections. The reader has difficulty understanding the text.

# Stages including Reasoning and Idea Development

## Developing

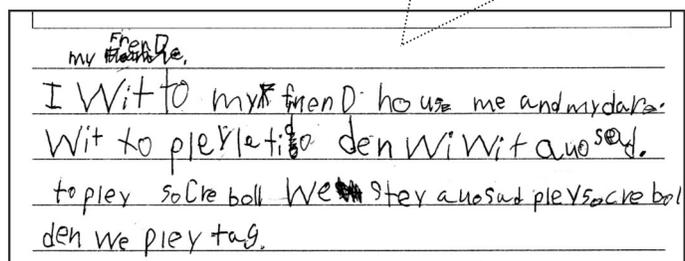
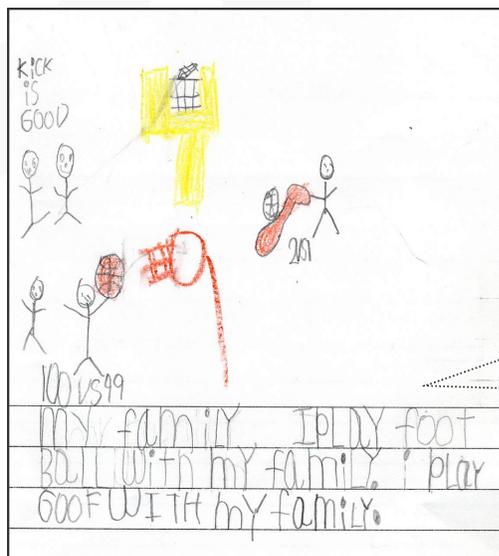
**Key Words: meaning in text with words, spaces, sentences**

Characteristics of Developing Writers	Where to go next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is main communication.</li> <li>• Not picture dependent even if connected to picture.</li> <li>• Write limited number of sentences.</li> <li>• Begin to develop idea by connecting details about a topic.</li> <li>• Writes words, even sentences but usually doesn't address mechanics.</li> <li>• Attempts punctuation at times, but may be wrong.</li> <li>• Creates readable text even if it takes work to read.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include more details to expand topic.</li> <li>• Write about what writer knows.</li> <li>• Work with sentence building.</li> <li>• Focus on beginning and ending punctuation for sentences.</li> <li>• Consider audience and write so others can read the text.</li> </ul>



Student writes sentences to convey message. Picture is used as support but is not necessary for understanding. Punctuation is missing but text is readable.

Student understands words, attempts to spell phonetically. Limited number of sentences (with pending punctuation) which begin to develop an idea. Text is difficult to read and not picture dependent. Has attempted to briefly expand idea with chronological list.

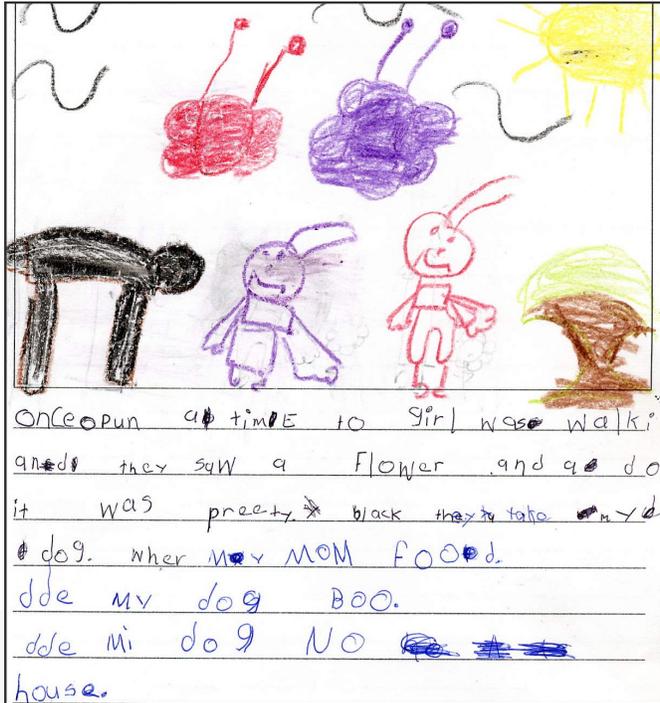


Text shows understanding that words convey an idea. Picture supports idea and includes some labels. There are a limited number of sentences without development. There is little control over conventions. Text can be read. Sentence structure follows one pattern.

# Stages including Reasoning and Idea Development

## Developing Discovery

This transitional stage between Discovery and Beginning shows more sophisticated development of writing. Students seem to be gaining an understanding of writing to an audience and building upon ideas. They expand their thinking but may not be able to put them together in a full representation of the next stage.

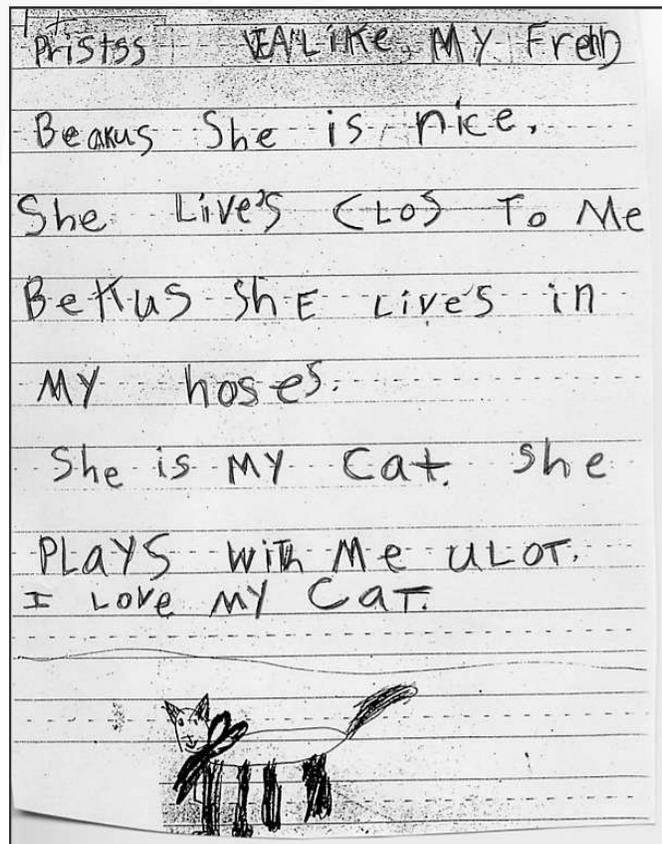


Writer shows familiarity with a conventional story beginning, showing a degree of knowledge about structures of storytelling. He/she has created several sentences about an idea but there is not accompanying punctuation for ease of reading.

While on the cusp of being a beginning paper, it is too difficult to read and the development is too sparse to be considered fully beginning.

This text is several connected sentences related to something the writer knows. The writer has developed an idea with an expanded list of reasons.

The paper shows control over simple conventions. The writer also shows an awareness of apostrophes even though not used correctly. Spelling is mostly correct with a few easy-to-read phonetic interpreta-



# Stages including Reasoning and Idea Development

## Developing Discovery

This transitional stage between Discovery and Beginning shows more sophisticated development of writing. Students seem to be gaining an understanding of writing to an audience and building upon ideas. They expand their thinking but may not be able to put them together in a full representation of the next stage.



Begin writing here

Abigail 2-18-10

With I went to Chucpana

my tooth hurt. I can't even  
eat at all. I can only drink

Sota. With I got home

I went downstairs and into

the bathroom I yanked it out.

At night I put my tooth

under my pillow and went

to sleep. The tooth fairy

left a note it said: Dear Abigail

I got you in the storm.

I am so sorry Abigail over

my tooth fairy. I ~~was~~ <sup>paid</sup>

it at morning, he gave

me 1 Dollar bill.

The End

Words carry the main meaning of the text with a picture for support. Paper shows connections from one sentence to another through basic organization of chronological order.

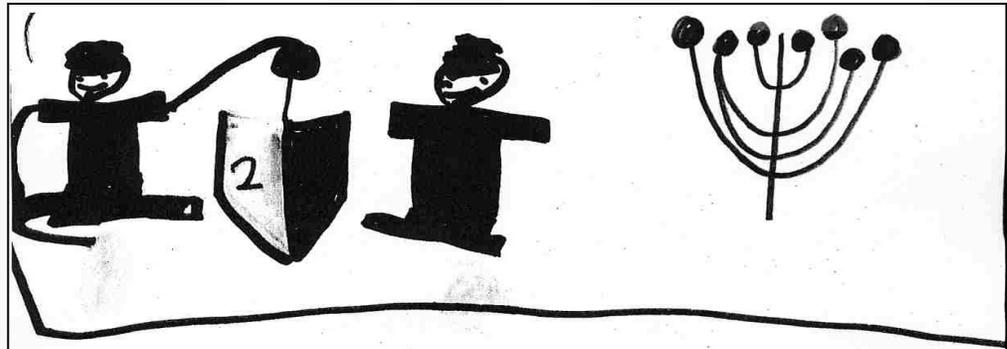
Although there are a number of sentences that fit in the organizational pattern, the ideas are not developed, just stated. The writer is using words beyond her/his control for spelling, but the difficulty in reading and lack of development of ideas make this paper on the cusp of beginning but not quite there.

# Stages including Reasoning and Idea Development

## Beginning

**Key Words: General topic developed with expanded list, simple sentences, some conventions**

Characteristics of Beginning Writers	Where to go next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is main communication.</li> <li>• Development is generally an expanded list of additional details or reasons.</li> <li>• May have simple organization, usually list or chronology.</li> <li>• Dependent on oral thought patterns, writes ideas as they occur.</li> <li>• May include too much detail or repetition.</li> <li>• May include automatic features of certain types of text.</li> <li>• Beginning use of capital letters and periods.</li> <li>• Simple sentence structure, usually subject-verb.</li> <li>• Writes so others can read.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand or explain ideas and details rather than listing them.</li> <li>• Keep writing about what writer knows, but push to go more deeply into development, explanation.</li> <li>• Practice some simple organizational patterns.</li> <li>• Work with sentence building, add some variety.</li> <li>• Keep working on punctuation and expand repertoire.</li> <li>• Consider audience and purpose.</li> </ul>



This piece expands the topic by adding additional, related sentences. The simple organization—an expanded list of things related to Hanukkah—wanders, suggesting oral language patterns where one idea leads to another.

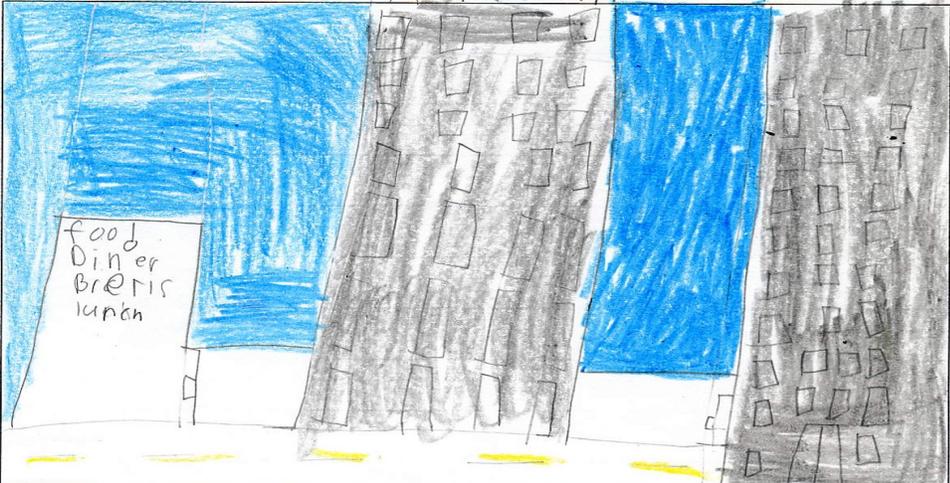
Writer spells some sophisticated words, e.g. *celebrated* and *fought*, and generally spelling is under control. Thoughts are listed as simple sentences, mostly one pattern. Beginning and end punctuation help guide the reader.

Hanukkah is celebrated by poeple  
 with games songs and dances.  
 There are games called dradtle.  
 dances called the hora.  
 There is a guy named Juda  
 hoe fought for the Jues freedom  
 There is a guy named Adam  
 sandler he is a xlae he is famps for  
 his songs one of his is a thankamira song  
 kind his brother two songs are his christmas  
 song and hanukkah songs

# Stages including Reasoning and Idea Development

## Beginning

**Key Words:** General topic developed with expanded list, simple sentences, some conventions



Autumn

food  
Diner  
Br@is  
lun@n

1 day my baby was born in Autumn and we named her Autumn when she was born she had on hair and she was so soft and she had little hands and small feet and she had a small nose and i got to hold her the 2 day and rit now she is 2 years old and she bis and she hits and she like laing with spete alot and she likes me a lot.

This paper shows a beginning writer following a chronologically ordered list. The paper does wander, jumping to how the baby sister acts now. There is no real organizational plan, just details as part of the list.

There is no real punctuation of sentences except the final period. However, the paper has more detail than papers at the developing stage.

# Stages including Reasoning and Idea Development

## Beginning

**Key Words:** General topic developed with expanded list, simple sentences, some conventions



When I ~~sleep~~ <sup>slept</sup> over at my cousins house  
When I ~~sleep~~ over at my CUSINS  
house we are going to see scary ~~amovies~~.  
When We see the Scary ~~amovies~~ we are  
going to eat Pop Corn. When ~~we~~  
we see the Scary movies and eat POP CORN  
we are going to drink SODA. Piffereent kinds of  
SODA.

It is gonna be fun. We are going  
to play ~~games~~. ~~my cousins~~ ONE OF  
MY CUSINS is big he is 12 years old the  
other one is 10 years old the other  
one is 5 years old and the other one  
is 1 years old. ~~the~~ ~~my~~ big cousin  
his name is kike. ~~my~~ My other cousin  
name is toto. ~~my~~ My other cousin  
name is osvaldo. My other cousin  
name is emilano. MY mom made my  
CUSINS and me and my BIG SISTER some Popcorn  
and my mom is gonna give us some  
SODA. MY other cousins came too. ~~my~~ My  
others cousins saw a scary movie with us

This K-4 paper has a general focus, but ideas seem to be presented randomly. The simple chronology of the event gets lost because the writer tries to fill in background information.

The writer at this stage does not try to determine which details are most important. The sentence development is very simple with few variations. This student attempts proper conventions with capitalization and punctuation but doesn't always carry it off.

# Stages including Reasoning and Idea Development

## Beginning

**Key Words: General topic developed with expanded list, simple sentences, some conventions**

Begin writing here

Sometimes my Nana let's me cook with her. Other times she just let's me watch. My favorite thing to cook with her is a three layer cake. I get to mix the dough. One time we made a birthday cake for my brother with peanut butter between the layers.

I want to chop the vegetables, but she only let's me watch.

I hope we make snickerdoodles next time they are my favorite cookies.

This beginning writer has followed the basic characteristics of expanding a list around a topic. There are generally two sentences about each of the items in the list, and because the items follow oral reasoning, they seem somewhat disconnected at the end of the paper.

This writer demonstrates some technical skills beyond the beginning stage; although she follows a general subject-verb pattern, she uses a variety of beginnings to her sentences, e.g. sometimes, other times, one time. Punctuation is generally under control. There is some confusion about apostrophes, but it is common for writers at this stage to use them as plural markers.

### About School

I don't think that schools should have community service. I think that it is not good because some teachers give allot of home work or allot of studding to do. If we had to do community service then when it wouldn't be able to study for the test. The home work would never get done. Peoples houses would be a mess. I think it's right because with all that stuff it is all ready hard and now they what to add more.

People also have a family to take care of.

As with most beginning writers, this high school student creates a statement and makes some attempt to develop it,. Although this is technically easier to read than some beginning papers, it is an expanded list with undeveloped, even illogical, ideas. That may be because the writer is addressing a topic requiring abstract reasoning rather than concrete details. It also shows very uneven control over different aspects of writing.

# Stages including Reasoning and Idea Development

## Beginning

**Key Words:** General topic developed with expanded list, simple sentences, some conventions

Begin Writing Here:

The thing that changed my life was when I went to live with my aunt & uncle. It was rough for a week or two. I didn't know all the rules so I had to adjust to the new rules. I got used to it.

Then after a month I really wanted to go home to my dad. From this experience has made me stronger in many ways. I have met new people even though I don't like chitch I have to go.

I am very weird about my dad he is

losing his eye site he has a problem with smoking. He has tried so hard to stop and I hope he does. My dad said that when I'm 13 I can choose how I want to live with and I hope to soon.

My mom this week really made me mad about a year ago she got a tat two and she promised to make I went to see her for her birthday I saw on her wrist a tat two so I never went to see her a year later.

Boom the  
End

Spelling approximations make this beginning paper from an older writer hard to read. The writer makes statements and tries to expand them, but there is little or no development of ideas or organization.

This writer expands the topic of an X-Men figure by adding related sentences about a list of characters. There is a willingness to communicate ideas, but the lack of control over conventions, especially spelling, makes this very difficult to read. There are only two periods in this paragraph. In addition to the lack of punctuation, the letter spacing isn't under control. For older writers, the beginning stage seems to be characterized by a severe lack of control over at least one aspect of writing.

Begin Writing Here:

I got X-Men the movie and a action figure of it. It has friends that help him fight the bad people. On the names of his friends are Jean Storm, Magneto, Wolverine, Teleporter, Cyclops, Professor X, Metalman, Blue Copycat, Fireman, Iceman, makes ice, Fireman makes fire, Metalman is metal, Wolverine can die, Storm makes wind, Magneto can catch metal, Cyclops can see, Teleporter can go to a different place, Cyclops can shoot laser beams out of his eyes.