

Nebraska Department of Education

2010 Statewide Writing Assessment

Grade 8 Task: DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Write an essay describing your most memorable time of the year. It could be related to a season, a holiday, or an event. Use specific sensory details so that anyone reading your essay will be able to create a mental picture and understand why it is memorable to you.

ADVANCED*

- * Creates a clear picture; is well-focused; description is distinctive.
- * Structural development includes an effective introduction, body, and conclusion; sequencing is thoughtful and logical.
- * Conveys a strong sense of the person; engaging throughout.
- * Effective use of vivid words and phrases.
- * Sentences vary in lengths or structure throughout; fragments add style.
- * Errors in conventions are mostly correct.

*This writing sample received a score of 8.00, the highest score possible on the assessment.

The Season of Independence

It is a warm summer's eve as you luxuriously stretch out in an old, beat-up lawn chair. The sky is darkening ever so slowly as the sun slips beneath the horizon. It was sweltering during the day, but the outside air is more bearable. After waiting for a short while, you see a flash, like an electric spark, and hear a boom like a large book being dropped. Suddenly, a small rocket soars toward the stars. Then, there's a moment of silence, followed by a tremendous boom. The rocket shatters into arcs of brilliant color that fall gracefully to the earth. What are these, you ask? They're fireworks. But not just any fireworks. They are 4th-of-July fireworks. The time of our American independence and my favorite time of year.

To start off, one of the reasons I so adore the 4th of July is the time of year. Now, some people may disagree, claiming that such a blasted hot time of year is not enjoyable at all. But think about it for a moment. Students, like myself, have no school. We are free from the horrors of homework, and free to do whatever we wish. One of my most loved summer hobbies is swimming. Imagine the feeling of butterflies as you peer into the water off of a diving board. The sun is burning your back, and the water is cool and inviting. Your skin tingles as the water and bubbles surround you. You swim, and marvel at how free you are in the water. Add a few friends, and the fun is doubled. If you don't like that, there is little else that will please you. Even if you are an adult, you have no obligation to go to work. In reality, Independence Day is the most liberating time of year-in more ways than one.

Second, I enjoy what I eat on the 4th of July. Because summer-time is time for barbecue. It doesn't matter what kind-it could be hot dogs, ribs, chicken, or any kind of meat. But my favorite is the hamburger. I love the way ground chuck sizzles as it hits the grill. The smoky, tasty smell is something I wait an eternity for. Now take that beef and toss it on a soft wheat bun. Add some crisp lettuce, odiferous onion, sharp cheddar cheese, and sweet ketchup,