

## ILLUSTRATING THE WRITING STANDARD

### I Am David – Epilogue

By the end of year 5, students are required to create a variety of texts in order to think about, record, and communicate experiences, ideas, and information across the curriculum. To meet the standard, students draw on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for writing described in the Literacy Learning Progressions for students at this level.

The difference in the standard for year 6 [as compared with year 5] is the students' increased **accuracy** and **fluency** in writing a variety of texts across the curriculum, their **level of control** and **independence** in **selecting writing processes and strategies**, and the range of texts they write. In particular, by the end of year 6, students will be required to **write more complex texts** than students in year 5 and to **be more effective in selecting different strategies** for different writing purposes. (*Reading and Writing Standards*, page 31)

The teacher of this year 5–6 class has been reading and discussing the novel *I Am David* with his students. The discussions have involved students in making connections to the text and integrating what they know about this text's historical context, and those of other texts that have similar themes, to understand how an author can convey ideas to a reader. Their task is to write an epilogue (to be published in the class library) that continues David's journey using the style and language features of the original text. The student has begun the first part of this epilogue.

*The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the writing demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.*

Transcript: *I Am David – Epilogue*

The student has oriented the reader in the opening sentence and used his understanding of the themes of the novel (resilience and freedom) to position David with a clear purpose in life by showing that he knows that "knowledge was freedom and power". He further illustrates these themes at the end of his piece when David is reflecting on past events ("... and how life, colours and his mother Edith were so beautiful and filled with joy").

The student has deliberately chosen some language features in order to develop a plausible next chapter for the story. He appropriately weaves two important aspects of the original story (the death of David's dog and David's friendship with Maria) into the context of his epilogue. He makes further links back to Maria and their friendship by alluding to a possible reunion in the future.

David sat at his desk in school ... David was just about to drift off when he realised. He snapped up in his chair and focussed on what the teacher was saying, because learning at school would give him knowledge and knowledge was freedom and power.

The school bell rung loudly as all the children hurriedly picked up their bags and sprinted to the front gate of school.

David sat ..., David was ..., David loved ..., David and Edith ..., David and Maria ...

The student builds a picture for the reader by using precise verbs ("drift off", "snapped up", "focussed on"), and he also uses adverbs to add further detail to the narrative ("loudly", "hurriedly", "quickly"). He shows some control in varying sentence structures and beginnings ("When they got home", "Lying on the kitchen bench", "But he could always think"), but he has also used some sentence beginnings repetitively ("David sat", "David was"). Most sentences are grammatically correct.

Overall, the student has clearly provided a sequence of events within a setting, but he has not grouped these events into paragraphs. His choice of language, and the fact that he shares his ideas with the reader explicitly (rather than implicitly), demonstrate that he is still learning to control his writing strategies. His writing is meeting the writing demands of the English curriculum as he works towards level 3, as expected by the end of year 5.

*I Am David Epilogue*  
David sat at his desk in school David was very tired after staying up late the other night reading. David was just about to drift off when he realised he snapped up in his chair and focussed on what the teacher was saying because learning at school would give him knowledge and knowledge was freedom and power. The school bell rung loudly as all the children hurriedly picked up their bags and sprinted to the front gate of school. David spotted Edith waiting at the school gate and quickly ran to greet her. David and Edith walked home together when they got home David ran up to his room and changed out of his school uniform. Afterwards David walked down to the kitchen lying on the kitchen bench was an envelope. It was a letter from Maria. David and Maria wrote to each other frequently and Edith said that they may even go to Italy after the war to visit Maria and her family. David was pleased to hear that all was well with Maria and her family. They also said they were very excited about David and Edith coming to visit them in Italy. They also said that they would enjoy seeing where David now lived. David hoped his life from then although sometimes he had nightmares about the horrible night King had taken the bullet for him. But he could always think of reasons to keep on living and how life, colours and his mother Edith were so beautiful and filled with joy.

Lying on the kitchen bench was an envelope. It was a letter from Maria. David and Maria wrote to each other frequently ...

David loved his life now. Although sometimes he had nightmares about the horrible night King had taken the bullet for him. But he could always think of reasons to keep on living and how life, colours and his mother Edith were so beautiful and filled with joy.