Personal Narrative

Score 4 Benchmark Paper The writing focuses on the topic and purpose given in the prompt. The narrative is complete, well developed, and well organized. Events are related clearly in chronological order, and time-clue words link paragraphs and sentences. The events, people, and setting are elaborated well with descriptive details (the world’s largest living room set, a silky grain that swirled with different shades of brown, permanently pinned between the door and the sofa, the upholstered beast). Mature use of language, which includes many exact verbs (drag, maneuver, angled, flashed, securing, gabbing, honked, pitched in), varied sentences, and the effective use of dialogue help to create this narrative’s strong and engaging voice.

Score 3 Benchmark Paper The writing is almost completely focused on the topic and the purpose, but paragraph 6 is only loosely related. The narrative is fairly well organized and follows chronological order except for paragraph 7, which should come earlier in the narrative. Sufficient time-clue words are used. Some parts of the narrative are well supported with details (paragraphs 1–5), but other parts need more (paragraph 8, for example). Some word choice is precise (frustrated, naturally, concentrate), but some is uninteresting. Sentences are somewhat varied, and the writer’s voice is fairly strong.

Score 2 Benchmark Paper The writing is somewhat focused on the topic and purpose, but paragraph 2 and the end of paragraph 8 are off topic. For the most part, the paper is not organized as a narrative; very few narrative events are mentioned, and there are almost no time-clue words. Only a few details are presented (items of trash, forgetting to bring potato chips), and no clear picture of the people, setting, or action materializes. Much of the word choice is vague (done many things, throw junk around, a ton of stuff). The sentences are all short and the writer’s voice weak.
**Personal Narrative (continued)**

**Score 1  Benchmark Paper** The writing is only vaguely focused on the topic and purpose; after the opening sentences the writer veers off course, switching from personal narrative to persuasive essay. The writing has some strengths, such as good ideas and precise examples, but it fails to relate a story.