Story

**Score 4 Benchmark Paper** The writing is entirely focused on the topic and purpose given in the prompt. The story feels complete, and its plot is well-structured, with a well-developed conflict, climax, and resolution. An interesting problem (trying to understand what the writer is experiencing) drives the story. Events are consistently presented in chronological order, are well connected with time-clue words, and reflect an active imagination. First-person point of view is maintained throughout. Strong descriptive details (a commanding, clear voice; waves as they splashed my shins) and dialogue make the characters, actions, and setting vivid. Careful selection of details and interesting word choice, which includes many exact adverbs (brightly, strangely, totally, loudly, closer), help to create the story’s suspenseful mood. Sentences are varied and include participial phrases (letting the surf wash over my feet, enjoying this celebration, becoming brighter and brighter, feeling the waves).

**Score 3 Benchmark Paper** The writing is mostly focused on the topic and purpose, but paragraph 8 could be more clearly connected to the rest of the story. The plot begins strongly. The conflict is interesting and builds fairly well to a climax but is not resolved in a satisfying way. To raise the score, the writer needs to develop the story’s resolution. The first seven paragraphs include strong details and dialogue; the others need more. The voice is fairly strong, as is the word choice. Sentences are varied in all but the last paragraph.

**Score 2 Benchmark Paper** The writing is somewhat focused on the topic and purpose, but paragraph 4 is off topic. There is no real plot structure, only a vague problem is presented (It was hard to get used to.), and there are no events. Instead of telling what happened, the writer mentions some things that exist in the future. There are almost no details, and word choice is mostly vague (different stuff, weird clothing, weird hairstyles). Most sentences are short.
**Story (continued)**

**Score 1 Benchmark Paper** The writer attempts to focus on the topic and purpose but quickly veers off course. By the second paragraph the writer has stopped telling a story and, instead, gives his or her opinion on seeing into the future. Word choice, voice, and ideas are generally interesting, but they do not constitute a story.