

ILLUSTRATING THE WRITING STANDARD

Fair Trade Coffee

By the end of year 8, 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 8 [as compared with year 7] 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 8, students need to be **confidently and deliberately choosing the most appropriate processes and strategies** for writing in different learning areas. (Reading and Writing Standards, page 35)

As part of a social studies unit, the students in this year 7-8 class are investigating the need for the Fair Trading Act. This context arose when students noticed the uncaring attitudes of some people who were discussing imported goods from Third World countries. In the example below, the student has researched a particular import (coffee) and formed an opinion about the need for the Fair Trading Act. This writing task requires the student to express their opinion as an argument and present information that supports it.

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: Fair Trade Coffee

Tuesday 1 June  
Persuasive for Trade

**FAIR TRADE COFFEE**

8 full hours of picking good bad seeds less than 50c a day

1kg bag \$2.50 approx farmers get \$1 approx

\$7-\$10 going into the country comes from coffee

Coffee is the second most traded commodity in the world and is the only way some families can survive. In Ethiopia - coffee country of origin - there are so many people who can't send their children school or have nutritional food because their coffee is not fairly traded.

There are 6 major steps when harvesting coffee beans: 1. Growing and harvesting 2. Processing 3. Drying 4. Transporting 5. Roasting 6. Distributing and selling. All of these steps require constant work but most of all growing and harvesting even picking the bad seeds from the good requires 8 full hours of work but

Coffee is the second most traded commodity in the world and is the only way some families can survive. In Ethiopia - coffee country of origin - there are so many people that can not send their children school or have nutritional food because their coffee is not fairly traded and I believe it should be.

The student's deliberate selection and economical use of precise language, which focuses the reader on the issue of fair trade, positions this text within the year 8 writing standard rather than the year 7 standard. For example, there is a wide range of subject-specific vocabulary ("traded", "commodity", "Transporting"), and the student uses a variety of sentence structures. An example of her deliberate language choices is the adverbial clause of reason "because their coffee is not fairly traded". These inclusions make the text more precise and defined, a key distinction between the year 7 and year 8 writing standards.

results in less than 50c pay per day. In families where fathers and mothers can't afford to send their children school or their children have to work on the family farm. As the children grow up they have nothing better than to work which results in poverty as well.

As soon as the beans are sorted they are taken to auction where buyers bid for the best beans. The price of these beans is decided by the New York stock exchange and if they decide the price will be so low that the farmer could get 50c a day. They will get their usual amount which is 50c a day but the farmer can't be able to have a say.

Before coffee beans are sent to be auctioned buyers have a strict grading process and not all beans can be sold in which means some farmers may not be able to feed their family with the money that they get. Beans are only sold if they are of a certain size and shape, colour and have to smell a certain way.

There are 6 major steps when harvesting coffee beans: 1. Growing and harvesting 2. Processing 3. Drying 4. Transporting 5. Roasting 6. Distributing and Selling. All of these steps require constant and around the clock work particularly growing and harvesting. Even picking the bad seeds from the good requires 8 full hours of work but results in less than 50c pay per day! This also creates a cycle in families

Each paragraph covers a different aspect of the background to the issue to ensure that the reader has enough information to understand the argument. This demonstrates the student's deliberate and confident use of strategies for selecting and organising relevant content in order to inform and persuade the reader. The choice of content (about the processes of growing, harvesting, and selling coffee beans and the consequences for the farmers) clearly aligns the student's writing with the level 4 social studies objective "Understand how producers and consumers exercise their rights and meet their responsibilities".

Mostly the beans they are unable to be sold/traded if they are of a certain size and shape, colour and have to smell a certain way. Even if they are the only beans the farmer can produce at this time.

Buying fair trade coffee would make such a difference to so many people's lives and if it is worth the few extra cents these farmers need a voice and to be taught right from wrong. Next time you have your morning coffee think about where it first started and how could you make a difference to somebody else's life.

Buying fair trade coffee would make such a difference to so many people's lives and it is worth the few extra cents. These farmers need a voice and deserve to be taught how to negotiate. Next time you have your morning coffee think about where it first started and how you could make a difference to somebody else's life.

The student concludes by appealing directly to the reader, making a connection between fair trade and the reader's own life. She deliberately uses emotive language to create empathy for the coffee farmers ("make such a difference", "these farmers ... deserve ..."). The content throughout the text has been selected to convince the reader that they should buy fair trade coffee. The overall tone is serious and sincere and likely to engage the intended audience. The student demonstrates a high level of control in selecting language, content, strategies, and processes to meet her purpose for writing.