



2022 NAPLAN Topic – Years 3 & 5

Brave

Planning (7 minutes)

Here is Jen's plan, including her initial brainstorm of ideas for the topic and then her ideas for how the story will unfold.

Brave 4 mins.

Nar heroes
 Adrenaline adventures - parachuting
 - trapeze
 Lost in bush / cave /

Journalists - truth, can be imprisoned
 Stalker
 Depression - constant. Fighting solo is so
 - alone. harder.
 - grey No end
 No reward.

Speaking, huge crowds.
 Sport - big match, father.

Topic 3 mins.

My cousin is the bravest person I know.
 'I'm not.'
 ...

Symptoms. Grogginess. Get out of bed effort
 No reward. Adrenaline things there are -
 No end.
 Alone.
 Medals.

Writing (28 minutes)

Here is Jen's response to the NAPLAN topic. She wrote this in the time that all children receive to draft their NAPLAN writing test. We have not changed Jen's spelling, grammar or punctuation – this example is exactly as she wrote it in the time available.

Sizzling Start

My coiusin is ht ebravest person I know.

'I'm not,' she said flatly. 'I'm not even close. You're the one who jumps out of aeroplanes. Does circus trapeze. Hikes mountains.'

Hard to explain about courage. I like to jump off things, do adventurous stuff, challenge myself. But there's always a reward for conquering that fear and nervousness. It's risk and then exhilaration. Fabulous stuff.

Sometimes my cousin showed far more courage than me, just to get out of bed.

Backfill

Depression it's called.

She described it a few times.

'It's like everything grey, boring, there's no fun. Like life is ftal.'

Other times the tears welled up in her eyes.

'It all seems so pointless.' And I felt fear in my heart.

Pebble

One day she just shrugged and sighed. 'Getting out of bed is the hardest thing. Why bother.'

There's no reward for getting out of bed.

There's medals for war heroes. There's money for sporting heroes holding trophies high above their head. There's TV shows and blogs and You Tube clips about adventurers, winf suiters, mountaineers, survivors, ...

What is it like to face the hardest thing when there is no motivation.

'You just get up,' she said. 'Because soonr or later you have to.'

No medal in sight.

Rock

Once, I learnt the hard way about loneliness.

Watch the movies, the characters overcoming against all odds, always have a side kick. I tried to be a side kick to Sange. But you can't be there for so many times. You can't call in for breakfast, do lunches, walk in parks, even jump out of planes for 24/7. You have your own life to live. Ang's parents did too.

They watched her, talked endlessly to her, took her places and got her help of course.

Research shows if you have at least one friend, you are more supported and more resilient.

But in the end, everyone in life has a lot of solo time. You are often alone.

And alone in a grey flat world is scary.

Boulder

There's lots of definitions of bravery. But to me time is a huge element of courage. It's easy to be brave for an hour when you jump out of a plane. It's more gut wrenching to be scared of standing up in front of a crowd of hundreds of people to give a talk. I lost a weeks sleep on that one. But again, there's that reward thing again.

Sange has no reward.

She doesn't even know when the greyness will end. When slowly one day, she will feel a familiar lightness of spirit. Laugh. Look forward to the day.

Day after day, she faces the grey. And she does not know when, if ever it will end.

Exciting Ending

Four years it took. Four years of enduring, of exhaustion, and trying to find a way through. I could see the flatness in her eyes at family dinners, the effort of her smile when someone made a joke, the determination when walking into a room and the slump of her shoulders when she thought no-one was watching.

She endured.

Slowly, infinitesimally, she improved.

That's why Sange is my hero. She's so brave. Alone and for so many years she endured. And she fought the grey and pointlessness.

'How did you fight that for so long?' I once asked. And she just shrugged.

'It's not like you have a choice. You just live one day and the next. And you keep telling yourself: Maybe tomorrow will be better. I will try.'

Editing (5 minutes)

Here are the changes Jen made in the time available for editing at the end of the NAPLAN writing test.

Sizzling Start

My ~~cousin~~cousin is ~~the~~ bravest person I know.

'I'm not,' she said flatly. 'I'm not even close. You're the one who jumps out of aeroplanes. Does circus trapeze. Hikes mountains.'

Hard to explain about courage. I like to jump off things for sure, ~~do adventurous stuff, challenge myself~~. But there's always a reward for conquering that fear and nervousness. It's risk and then ~~exhilaration~~exhilaration. Fabulous stuff.

Sometimes my cousin showed far more courage than me, just to get out of bed.

Backfill

Depression it's called.

She described it a few times.

'It's like everything's grey, boring, there's no fun. Like life is totally flat.'

Other times the tears welled up in her eyes.

'It all seems so pointless.' And I felt fear in my heart.

Pebble

One day she just shrugged and sighed. 'Getting out of bed is the hardest thing. Why bother.'

There's no reward for getting out of bed.

There's medals for war heroes. There's money for sporting heroes holding trophies high above their head. There's TV shows and blogs and You Tube clips about adventurers, winning suiters, mountaineers, survivors, ...

What is it like to face the hardest thing when there is no motivation.

'You just get up,' she said. 'Because ~~soon~~sooner or later you have to.'

No medal in sight.

Rock

Once, I learnt the hard way about loneliness.

Watch the movies, the characters overcoming against all odds, always *seem to* have a side kick. I tried to be a side kick to Sange. But you can't be there for so many times. You can't call in for breakfast, do lunches, walk in parks, even jump out of planes for 24/7. You have your own life to live. *Angie's Sange's* parents did too.

They watched her, talked endlessly to her, took her places and got her help of course.

Research shows if you have at least one friend, you are more supported and more resilient.

But *in* the end, everyone in life has a lot of solo time. You are often alone.

And alone in a grey flat world is scary.

Boulder

There's lots of definitions of bravery. *But no-one ever talks about time – But to me time is* a huge element of courage. It's easy to be brave for an hour when you jump out of a plane. It's more gut wrenching to be scared of standing up in front of a crowd of hundreds of people to give a talk. I lost a week's sleep on that one. But again, there's that reward thing again.

Sange has no reward.

She doesn't even know when the greyness will end. When slowly one day, she will feel a familiar lightness of spirit. Laugh. Look forward to the day *ahead*.

Day after day, she faces the grey. And she does not know when, if ever it will end.

Exciting Ending

Four years it took. Four years of enduring, of exhaustion, and trying to find a way through. I could see the flatness in her eyes at family dinners, the effort of her smile when someone made a joke, the determination when walking into a room and the slump of her shoulders when she thought no-one was watching.

She endured.

Slowly, *unbelievably, infinitesimely, infinitesimally*, she improved.

That's why Sange is my hero. She's so brave. Alone and for so many years she endured. And she fought the grey *and pointlessness*.

'How did you fight that for so long?' I once asked. And she just shrugged.

'It's not like you have a choice. You just live one day and the next *and the next*. And you keep telling yourself: Maybe tomorrow will be better. I will try.'

Marked Results

2022 NAPLAN writing task (Years 3 & 5) – Narrative Genre

NAP Marker: Lani Brockwell

Criterion	Marks	Score	Comments
Audience	0–6	5	The author is aware of an appropriate narrative structure and uses narrative devices to engage her audience. The story material uses a subverts the audience's expectation of the topic and is designed to evoke an emotional response.
Text Structure	0–4	3	The story is complete, subtly demonstrating all the traditional parts of a story. While there is hinting of foreshadowing at the beginning of the story, it is quickly resolved and not adequate to achieve a 4.
Ideas	0–5	4	The ideas are consistent and focused on a single theme. They are related ideas that contribute to a single story line. The story contains an underlying message.
Character and Setting	0–4	4	Details are carefully selected and writing (both style and content) are crafted to create two distinct characters. Convincing dialogue and style used to create effective characterization. Very little information is provided as to the setting, the nature of the story is introspective.
Vocabulary	0–5	5	A range of precise and effective words and word groups are used in a manner that is natural to the character and articulate to the author's purpose.
Cohesion	0–4	3	Cohesive devices are used accurately. Narrative tense is highly controlled. The character's voice creates some incorrect sentence structures, which interferes with the fluency of the piece.
Paragraphing	0–2	1	Accurate paragraphing.
Sentence Structure	0–6	4	Routine use and control of elaborating clauses and phrases in simple, complex and compound sentences. Some incorrect formations, due to character's voice. The piece demonstrates a large variety of sentences types.
Punctuation	0–5	5	All punctuation accurate and used to create pace and control.
Spelling	0–6	6	All spelling correct. Challenging vocabulary included: mountaineer, enduring, determination, conquering, exhilaration, infinitesimally.

Total marks: 40 out of 47 (Band 9)

Jen's Insights

Planning

In NAPLAN, students have just five minutes to plan their text. This is a big ask, especially for a narrative when you have to brainstorm an idea for the story and then plan out the different elements of the story, such as a great start, a problem, characters, settings and an impactful ending.

The good news is that students who have been trained in the Seven Steps will have had plenty of practice brainstorming original ideas and plotting those ideas on the Story Graph to create a plan for their text. This will stand them in great stead when they need to do this under pressure on the big day.

On page 1, you can see my brainstorm of ideas for the topic 'Brave'. My first ideas included very traditional examples of bravery – wartime, sport and adventure. Then once I pushed past these initial ideas, I came up with some more original ideas. I liked the journalist one – there are people in prisons across the world, locked up for telling a more unbiased truth than some dictators would like. However, I decided that this was too ambitious for a short story.

In the end, I decided to write about a very different type of bravery – my cousin's battle with depression. According to the marker, 'The story material subverts the audience's expectation of the topic and is designed to evoke an emotional response.' This is exactly what I was aiming for.

I then created a rough plan for my story but because of the time limit, I didn't manage to create an entire plan. I came up with a Sizzling Start and some rough ideas, but I ran out of time to come up with an ending, which is not ideal. Despite that, however, the marker commented that, 'The ideas are consistent and focused on a single theme', which secured 4 marks.

Top Tips

Here are my tips for making the most of the 5 minutes available for planning:

- **Push beyond your first idea:** Encourage students to dig deeper and think differently about the topic to come up with something original.
- **Pick the right-sized idea:** Teach students to identify a short story idea (a slice of life), rather than a movie-length idea; otherwise, they won't finish their text, let alone have time to edit it. There are 5 marks up for grabs for ideas, so students need something original but not too ambitious.
- **Plan on paper:** Even if students are sitting NAPLAN online, it's a good idea to plan on paper. Computers are too linear and not as conducive to creativity.
- **Visualise the Story Graph:** Remind students to visualise the Story Graph and use this to map out how the story will unfold. In NAPLAN, you don't have the luxury of doing an entire plan, so at the very least students need to have a Sizzling Start, a problem and an Exciting Ending in mind before they start writing.

Writing

It can be hard to write a complete text in 30 minutes; the key is to keep it simple. Picking the right-sized idea and coming up with a base structure in the planning time will make the writing so much easier.

Students who have been taught the Seven Steps techniques will have had plenty of practice writing a Sizzling Start, building tension and coming up with an Exciting Ending that wraps up their story and satisfies the reader. Students need practice doing this in both complete texts and parts of texts before they sit NAPLAN, so that they are confident putting it all together. The more students practise, the faster they will become, which is important given the time constraints in NAPLAN.

I came up with the Sizzling Start in the planning time as that is what sets the 'voice' of the piece, so that made it much easier when I started writing. When I look back at my rough, scrappy and sometimes illegible plans for my novels and chapter books, that first sentence is always there as a starting point.

I had a really clear idea of who the two characters were because this story was based on a personal experience. As a result, I scored full marks for Character and Setting, with the marker commenting: 'Details are carefully selected and writing (both style and content) are crafted to create two distinct characters. Convincing dialogue and style used to create effective characterization.'

You will see from the marker's comments that I lost a mark for text structure because: 'While there is hinting of foreshadowing at the beginning of the story, it is quickly resolved and not adequate to achieve a 4.' I needed more time to slowly build up the tension and then wrap up the story. If I had planned my ending before I started writing, I may have been able to do this more effectively.

Top Tips

Here are my tips for making the most of the 30 minutes available for writing:

- **Know your ending before you start writing:** Students need to know their ending before they start writing to ensure that the story builds up to that final climax.
- **Follow your plan:** Make sure students use their plan as a roadmap while writing their response so that they don't go off on a tangent.
- **Aim for quality, not quantity:** Writing more words will not get extra marks. It's better to have a short, well-written text than a long text with lots of half developed ideas.
- **Finish your text:** It's crucial that students allow enough time to write an ending. They will lose a significant number of marks in several assessment criteria if the text is unfinished.

Editing

I sit NAPLAN every year and, in the past, I've run out of time at the end for editing because I've been too ambitious and written too much. One year I wrote 1,200 words and lost marks because I didn't have time to proofread my work.

As you know from the Seven Steps, there are three types of editing – structural editing, expression editing and line editing. It's unlikely students will have time to do much big picture editing in five minutes, so they should focus on improving the expression and proofreading their work.

As you can see from the edited version on pages 4–5, I focused on checking spelling and grammar (line editing), and I reworded some sentences to create better flow (expression editing).

I got rid of the initial sentences in one of the paragraphs: Once, I learnt the hard way about loneliness. I wanted to say how bravery is so much harder alone and still keep the narrative context, but this put the focus on 'me' as the narrator, which felt wrong. The subconscious is an amazing thing; I knew it wouldn't work as I typed it, but then I had to find another way.

I lost a couple of marks for sentence structure because, according to the marker: 'The character's voice creates some incorrect sentence structures, which interferes with the fluency of the piece.' This is a trade-off I am willing to make as I gained marks in Character & Setting for writing the character's voice, with the marker noting: 'Convincing dialogue and style used to create effective characterization.'

Top Tips

Here are my tips for making the most of the 5 minutes available for editing:

- **Check punctuation and spelling:** There are 5 marks for punctuation and 6 marks for spelling, so students must allow time to check for typos.
- **Work on the expression:** There are 4 marks for cohesion and 5 marks for vocabulary, so ensuring that the text flows well and uplevelling the vocabulary will score a few extra marks.
- **Ensure sections build up to a crescendo:** There are 4 marks for text structure, so checking that the text follows the Story Graph is time well spent.
- **Finesse the ending:** There are 6 marks for audience, so it's important that the ending leaves a lasting impression on the reader.

Jen McVeity

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