ISTEP+
Grade 7 Writing

The Game

Practice Set 1
In the story, "The Game," the author develops Sundara's character as she responds to the football game because she starts off not knowing anything about the game. Then, she starts thinking more about the people around her. Lastly, she realizes she can appreciate the game even if she doesn't get it.

First, the author develops Sundara's character as she responds to the football game because she starts out knowing nothing about the game. In paragraph 1, it says, "Unfortunately, the strange game didn't seem any clearer to Sundara here than it did on television. There must be more to it than she understood." This shows that she clearly knows nothing about what is happening, and she doesn't really understand it. It also says in paragraph 1, "Soon the players were smashing into each other, the men in striped shirts were blowing whistles and tossing handkerchiefs." This also shows Sundara doesn't know what is happening in the game since she refers to the referees as "men in striped shirts." This shows that the author develops Sundara's character as she responds to the football game since she knew nothing about football to start.

Next, the author develops Sundara's character as she responds to the football game because Sundara later begins to think more about the people in the
In paragraph 1, Sundara is wondering why football players are treated so well at school. It says, "At school the crowds parted in respect when two or three of the players in their letter jackets came swaggering down the middle of the hall." She stops thinking about just the game itself and more about the people in the game and why they get treated differently. She also thinks about a girl named Kathy Gates, who Sundara describes as having a face "which looked as if it turned on and off with a switch" because she changes her expression so much. Since Sundara starts thinking less about the game and more about the people, this shows that the author develops Sundara's character as she responds to the football game.

Lastly, the author develops Sundara's character as she responds to the football game because by the end of the game, Sundara realizes she can still appreciate the game even if she doesn't understand it. In paragraph 8, it says, "She did not understand the game, but she understood speed, she understood grace." This means that even though she didn't get the game, she could still be impressed with how well Jonathan played and how fast he ran. She also finds she can still enjoy the game even if she doesn't understand it. It says in paragraph 8, "Sundara found herself on her feet, jumping and clapping with the crowd." This shows
that even though she didn't quite understand the game, Sundara could still get excited about it and enjoy it. Since Sundara learned that she could still enjoy and appreciate the game even if she didn't really get it, it shows that the author developed Sundara's character as she responded to the football game.

In conclusion, the author develops Sundara's character as she responds to the football game because she starts off really confused, then moves on to thinking more about the people around her, and finally learning that although she didn't understand the game, she could still enjoy and appreciate it.

**Writing - 6 pts**

Completely focused on the topic and task, this exceptional response distinctly articulates Sundara's progress in learning about the game of football (she starts off not knowing anything about the game. Then, she starts thinking more about the people around her. Lastly, she realizes she can appreciate the game even if she doesn't get it). The response offers in-depth information and exceptional supporting facts that fully develop the topic. Organization is meaningful and cohesive, outlined by an inviting introduction. Despite rudimentary transitions, the writing is exceptionally fluent, including the use of well-integrated quotes.

**Language Conventions - 4 pts**

This response contains a few errors, primarily associated with more sophisticated sentence construction and use of quotations, but these minor errors do not impair the flow of the response or its overall meaning.
Linda Crew, the author of *Children of the River*, develops Sundara's character in *The Game* by explaining that she is not from America by her lack of understanding football. She also writes as the story progresses that all she understands is that the main idea was trying to get the ball to one end of the field or the other.

Sundara is curious as to why the Americans get so excited. Crew writes that Sundara has made the observation that during school the crowds parted in respect when two or three of the players in their letter jackets came swaggering down the middle of the hall. But why were football players such heroes? Another example of when she sees Americans getting excited over football is in paragraph 5, "It was arching high, and the crowd rose as one in a long, tense moan of anticipation."

Envy is another emotion Sundara feels throughout watching her school's football game. She envied Cathy's mystifying knack for knowing when Jonathan and his teammates had done something worth cheering about. She envies the people that actual can see and comprehend what is
going on.

Crew also writes that in paragraph 5 through 8 she begins to understand. She did not understand the game, but she understood speed, she understood grace. Sundara therefore begins to understand why the Americans get so excited. She understood why everyone thought Jonathan McKinnon was wonderful.

Sundara still did not understand why Cathy Gates face looked as if it turned on and off with a switch. Oh why, one instant she'd be standing there with her hip cocked, one elbow cradled in her other hand as she bit her thumb, watching the players on the field. Then the next, "something would happen in the game and click- her face would light up with a big smile as she whirled to face the crowd, clapping and prancing, her brown hair bouncing."

Crew builds Sundara and the other characters up so well that Sundara has a new understanding and appreciation for football. By the end of the excerpt from Crew's book Children of the River
Sundara understands why the Americans get so excited over a sport. She realizes why they enjoy the sport so much. They enjoy the sport so much for it is something they can all cheer and yelling about. She learned that though the game may be confusing, she understood why everyone thought Johnathan Mckinnon was wonderful. She appreciates Kelly informing her that “the main idea was trying to get the ball to one side or the other.” Having her tell her this, Sundara starts to comprehend why they are never on just one side of the field.

In conclusion, crew developed Sundara's character as she responded to the football game by explaining why she wanted to go to the game (she was curious about the sport and the fans!); why she is unable to comprehend the rules of the game; why she envies people who understand the game, and how she came to understand. She wanted to go to the game for she was curious about why everyone seemed to respect the players because they played. Sundara was able to comprehend the rules because they had never been explained to her until she
met Kelly. She envies the people who understand for they never have to worry about knowing when to cheer or when to not. Sundara came to understand the game because she saw how Johnathan McKinnon played, she watched Cathy Gates cheer, and Kelly, her friend, told her the main idea was trying to get the ball to one side or the other. Sundara's character was developed this way to help resolve the story and the other characters.

**Writing - 5 pts** This response represents a solid performance and accomplishes the task. Development of supporting facts and details is in-depth. Progression of ideas enhances the meaning by strategically employing a strategy of examining Sundara’s emotions (Envy is another emotion Sundara feels . . . She envied Cathy’s mystifying knack . . . She envies the people that actual can see and comprehend what is going on) and states of mind in chronological order. The heavy reliance on direct quotes, without original explanation hinders both writing style and audience awareness. Word choice is occasionally repetitive.

**Language Conventions - 4 pts** Writing has very few or no errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar/usage, or paragraphing, and is largely devoid of run-on sentences and sentence fragments.
Sundara is a 17-year-old Cambodian girl refugee living with extended family in Oregon. Sundara has watched football before, but does not understand why Americans have such a love for it. Through out the article, “The Game” Sundara watches the football players and cheerleaders, wondering why football is so important and how it is played. Sundara was confused until she saw how a touchdown was made and felt the rush and excitement like the rest of the crowd.

The author is able to develop Sundara's character as she responds to the football game, by describing her emotions and reactions during events. For example, in the article it says, "Soon the players were smashing into each other. The men in striped shirts were blowing whistles and tossing handkerchiefs... There must be more to it than she understood. Otherwise, why would Americans get so excited? At school the crowds parted in respect when two or three of the players in their letter jackets came swaggering down the middle of the hall." This shows that Sundara is upset that she doesn't understand the American's love of football. What this reveals about Sundara's character is that she gets upset when she doesn't understand something. Another example from the article is, "...Jonathan McMahon leapt, plucked it in midair, and hit the ground running. A deafening cheer rose as he dashed between the white posts. Sundara
understand the American's love of football. What this reveals about Sundara's character is that she gets upset when she doesn't understand something. Another example from the article is, "... Jonathan McKinnon left, plucked it in midair, and hit the ground running. A deafening cheer rose as he dashed between the white posts. Sundara found herself on her feet, jumping and clapping with the crowd. She did not understand the game, but she understood speed. She understood grace. She understood why everyone thought Jonathan McKinnon was wonderful." This excerpt from the article shows that even though Sundara doesn't understand the game, she understands why people enjoy it. She learns that even when you don't fully understand something, it can still effect you. This reveals that Sundara is smart and keeps an open mind of things. Also, just because you don't understand something, you should not dislike it.

The author uses the events in the story to build Sundara's character by revealing her emotions toward them. She learns in the end that just because you don't understand something does not mean you should dislike it. The author is descriptive, detailed, and well organized in his story. She is able to reveal Sundara's feelings toward certain events to form her character.
Writing - 5 pts
This response fully accomplishes the task and stays focused on the main topic (Sundara has watched football before, but does not understand why Americans have such a love for it). Development thoroughly explains events of the passage but becomes overly reliant upon direct quotes, which does not demonstrate enough style or voice to earn a higher score. Varied sentence patterns and complex sentences enhance the fluency of the response.

Language Conventions - 4 pts
The response contains almost no errors in the conventions traits. This response demonstrates near-perfect control of language.
The author helps develop Sundara's character by what Sundara does and thinks. Also to help define her character, the author includes things Sundara says to show her character. Sundara is very curious. Sundara also reasons how to define a great football player. The author helps define that Sundara is very curious.

First, the author helps develop her character by what Sundara does. "And Cathy Gates... Sundara found herself staring at the girl. She was fascinated with her face, which looked as if it turned on and off with a switch." (Page 1). This sentence shows she is curious because it said, "she was fascinated with her face."

Second, the author helps develop her character by what Sundara thinks. "So frustrating, hearing Jonathan's name over the loudspeaker, yet never being able to tell him from the others." (Page 1). This sentence shows she was curious. The reason the sentence shows curiosity is "so frustrating," and if you're a curious person trying to find something out, it is frustrating.

Lastly, the author helps develop her character by what Sundara says. "When Sundara tried to get Kelly to explain about those things, Kelly just said the main idea was trying to get the ball to one end of the field or the other." (Page 1). This sentence also shows Sundara's curiosity.
Sundara asked Kelly, out of curiosity, where the ball should go. Which by asking her, it showed her curiosity.

In the end, Sundara discovered how to tell if a football player was good. "She did not understand the game, but understood speed, and she understood grace." (Row 2). Which by those things, she could understand which player was good. Also by those things, she could possibly understand the game better.

In conclusion, the author helps develop Sundara's character by what she does, what she thinks, and says. By asking friends, it shows her curiosity. Also by what she thinks and does, it shows she is very curious. So all in all, the author does develop Sundara's character by what her wrote about her in this paper.

**Writing - 4 pts**
This response accomplishes the task as it stays mostly on topic. It is logically organized, featuring a solid introduction, sufficient examples or details, and an effective conclusion. Relevant supporting details are used, and rudimentary but adequate transitions help progress the main idea (The author helps define that Sundara is very curious). The writing is adequately fluent and includes varied sentence patterns and complex sentences.

**Language Conventions - 4 pts**
Errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, or grammar/usage are infrequent and do not impede the flow of the response.
In the story the author creates Sundara’s character by her going to a football game. Well once she gets there she doesn’t understand the game and she doesn’t even see the ball much. "The Game" cites that "Sundara could hardly ever see where the ball was." Sundara was so confused and didn’t know what was going on, she tried to ask her friends, but they didn’t help much. There eventually came a time where she saw the ball. Her friend Jonathan who she was cheering for caught the ball during a spiral throw. That is how she found Jonathan and knew why he was popular in football. That is how the author created Sundara’s character.

**Writing - 3 pts** This response minimally accomplishes the task. A simple topic sentence (Sundara . . . doesn’t understand the game and she doesn’t see the ball much) is supported with relevant details. There is an attempt to organize ideas, but the body of the response is largely a listing of events from the story. Writing style is generally fluent, but ordinary and predictable.

**Language Conventions - 4 pts** Sentences are mostly correct, as the response is devoid of run-ons or fragments. A few conventions errors are included, but they do not impede the reader's understanding.
Sundara's an interesting character. She doesn't instantly know what's going on. Her character develops slowly. She doesn't know what's going on but she goes with it. She starts out as a girl who doesn't really care about the game to someone who understands the point. She was jealous and mesmerized by Cathy Gates' happiness and understanding of the game.

Sundara learns throughout the game that the point is to get the ball from one side of the field to the other, this wasn't much help. She later understood while Johnson McKinnon was so popular was because he had grace. She understood the importance of speed and grace.

In conclusion Sundara went from being confused by why Americans love the game of football, to understanding the point of it.

**Writing - 3 pts** This response minimally accomplishes the task. A simple topic sentence (Sundara ... she doesn't know what's going on but she goes with it) is supported with relevant details. There is an attempt to organize ideas, but the body of the response is largely a general, brief summary of the story. Writing style is generally fluent, but ordinary and predictable.

**Language Conventions - 4 pts** Occasional errors in word usage, spelling (slowly, feild, jealousy) and omitted punctuation do not impair the flow of communication.
What Sundara does about football. Sundara doesn’t know a lot about football. When she’s at the game she didn’t understand the game. She only knew the one on to better. Sundara is trying to understand what she picks up from watching for a good period of time. Sundara starts to watch for a little bit more. Then she say that they are trying to get the ball to one end or the other. Sundara is getting the point now.

What is going on in the game. Well in the game there is a cheerleader in there that is just perfect. There a football player named Jonathan McKinnon that’s the caption. Jonathan is the star that leads the team. Jonathan is the one that is scoring. When Sundara figures out when Sundara was watch the game it just click in her brain that when she nows when to chant “Go! Go! Go!” or “Push’em back, push’em back, waaaaay back!” Sundara just knew that she could do it.
What she thinks about the game. When the game was almost over she was trying to find out who was Jonathan McKinnon, but they all look the same. Then she saw the flying high and over all of the players. The ball was going right at Jonathan. Then he catches and wins the game. This how Sundara start to understand how to study football games.

**Language Conventions - 3 pts**
The response contains several errors over multiple categories, including punctuation, basic grammar and spelling. The writer's intended meaning is evident, but the awkward structure of the response limits its effectiveness.

**Writing - 3 pts**
This minimally accomplished response provides some details about the football game, but they are not developed in relation to the main idea (Sundara doesn't know a lot about football). The attempt at paragraphing is logical, but the writing style impedes the flow of the essay. In a bulleted format, topic sentences are stated, often in the form of rhetorical questions (What is going on in the game; When sundara figures out; What she thinks about the game), followed by incomplete explanations. Although generally fluent, the writing is ordinary and predictable.
At the beginning, Sundara has no idea about football. She is from Colombia. There is no football where she's from. So she doesn't know everything about it.

Sundara is from Colombia so she don't know about football. She sees everyone body excited about it but she don't know why. Sundara went to one of the football games. Sundara asks Cathy about the game. Cathy said you got to get the ball to the end of the field. Sundara still didn't really understand it but when Jonathan made a great catch and made a touchdown she saw every one jumping and cheering with her. Under stand the game a little bit more. Know Sundara knows about football. She sees it's a fun game. That is what this story's about.

**Writing - 3 pts** This response minimally accomplishes the task as it demonstrates logical organization with a discernible introduction, short body, and conclusion. In support of the main idea, multiple supporting details are given (Sundara ask Cathy about the game; When Jonathan made a great catch ... she saw every one jumping and cheering with her. Under stand the game a little bit more), but they are thinly developed. The writing consists of ordinary vocabulary, and the attempts at varied sentence structure cause repetition in phrasing.

**Language Conventions - 2 pts** Frequent errors in grammar (she don't know; Sundara ask Cathy), word usage (Know Sundara knows about football), and punctuation often impede the reader's comprehension.
In "The garage," Sundara didn't really understand why people got so excited about football. It didn't make sense. Her friend Kelly knew what was going on. When Sundara asks Kelly to explain it all, she says, "They're trying to get the ball from one end of the field to the other." "I don't get it," says the girl. She didn't understand until she actually saw her. She realizes that football and soccer are two things that The football player is a moment.

**Writing - 2 pts**
Demonstrating partial accomplishment of the task, this response provides an attempt to develop a main idea (Sundara didn't really understand why people got so excited about football), but development suffers from information gaps and vague supporting details. Organization is logical with a simple topic sentence, a brief list-like series of supporting details, and a concluding sentence, all in one paragraph. Writing demonstrates some fluency, but attempts at constructing complex sentences are not well-executed due to punctuation errors.

**Language Conventions - 2 pts**
There are frequent errors in spelling (so exited; sens; Thire) and punctuation (omitted commas) which cause the reader to have to reread portions of the text.
Student Response 10

Sundra is a girl who is from a different place, and doesn't know what football is. She's curious why everyone likes it.

She learns that people like football because it's interesting.

**Writing - 1 pt**
This response does not establish or maintain a focus as it is just too brief. Presented details are minimal (Sundara . . . doesn't know what football is. She is curious why everyone likes it). Despite the attempted introduction, the response does not demonstrate sufficient organization, largely due to the lack of developed supporting ideas.

**Language Conventions - 2 pts**
Overall, the student has demonstrates proficiency in language and conventions, with only one punctuation error in the response. However, since the response is only three sentences in length, language and conventions cannot earn a score higher than 2.