ISTEP+
Grade 3 Writing

Two Places to Call Home

Practice Set 2
Directions
Read the story “Two Places to Call Home.” Then answer the questions.

Two Places to Call Home
by Jody Kapp

1. Good-bye, bedroom, cozy and small. Good-bye, picture books and stuffed animals. Today I’m going home, to the place my family comes from.

2. Mama and I are going to Ghana. Ghana is a small country on the west coast of Africa. It is where my mother was born. This will be my first time meeting my grandmother and grandfather and my first time flying on an airplane.

3. Up, up we go, sailing high over the Atlantic Ocean. Outside my small window the bright blue water slowly disappears under a carpet of fluffy white clouds. The airline attendants push carts of pretzels and drinks up and down the tiny aisles. They give us bags of sweet-smelling lotion, eye masks to help us sleep on the long flight, and headphones. When I plug the headphones into the special arm of my seat, I hear music playing—a symphony above the clouds.

4. Slowly we land in the night. My mother and I step out and breathe in our country. As the warm, moist air greets us, Mama sighs, “Ah, what sweetness!”

We climb aboard a rickety old bus and travel to my grandparents’ home. The dust from the road swirls up through the open windows and dances around our heads. Grandfather is waiting for us outside the cattle fence. He calls out to me, “Tall boy, you’ve grown faster than the trees in my yard.”

He reaches down and wipes the dust from my sandals. He’s wearing an outfit that looks like a dress. It’s called a kente cloth. This is a special kind of clothing the people of Ghana wear whenever there’s something to celebrate, but it’s much more interesting than a suit jacket or a fancy dress. It’s a book you wear! Every shape and color on the cloth is chosen to tell a story to those who see it.

For my visit, Grandfather has made a special story cloth to wear. He’s chosen a pattern of gold squares and black zigzags. In kente, the color gold stands for strength, and black means family. When gold and black are woven together in a dress, they tell all who see it how important the strength of a family is. Grandfather winks at me as I run my hand over the bright cloth. He thinks I’m important, too.
Grandmother hears our voices. She rushes out of her round mud hut and greets me with a big bear hug. She’s spent all morning preparing a welcome meal for us called teee zed, which means “hot food.” First she ground rice, corn, and peanuts into flour. Then she rolled the flour into little balls and cooked them in boiling water until they thickened like oatmeal that has been left sitting in a pan.

She shows me how to dip the balls into a stew of yams, onions, and goat meat. I’ve never eaten goat meat before. At first I’m afraid to try it, but I’m glad I do. It has a nice sweet flavor.

The next day Grandmother buckles me into her little white van and we head for Accra. Here there’s a big market where she’ll sell the plump red tomatoes she’s grown in her garden. It’s a busy place. My ears are filled with the sound of plantains frying on an open grill and the happy shouts of boys and girls playing soccer.

Accra = a city in Ghana

It’s fun watching the women with their big hats and baskets weave through the maze of bicycles like brightly colored toy tops. They smile at me and say, “Maakyé!,” which means “hello.” Grandmother takes my hand in hers and swings it back and forth as we walk along. She tells me, “Beautiful boy, we’ll remember these moments for many years.”

The week has passed too quickly, and the time has come to say goodbye. At the airport Grandmother gives me an extra long hug for the extra long trip. Grandfather kneels down and hands me a small package. It’s my very own kente cloth scarf to wear at home! He’s woven little hearts onto a black background to tell me and everyone who sees it the story of my family’s love. I’ll think of Ghana often. It’s good to have two places to call home.

Good-bye, warm yellow huts and shiny tin roofs. Good-bye, bold red skirts and gentle dirt beneath my feet. Today I’m going home, to the place I come from.
“Two Places to Call Home” is written from the young boy’s point of view. It shows how he sees things and what he thinks about his trip. What if the story were written from another character’s point of view? Imagine you can hear all the thoughts of the grandmother, mother, or the grandfather. Select a character and retell the story from that character’s point of view.

Be sure to include

- good descriptive details
- strong character development
- a beginning, a middle, and an end to your story

Use the following Prewriting/Planning page to help you plan your writing. Then write your final draft on the lined pages.
“Today I’m going to the United States,” said Grandmother. “Finally my plane is here,” said Grandmother. When she got on to the plane she was scared a little because it was her first time on a plane before, and she was so far off the ground. Then she wasn’t so scared because she ate a snack and she wasn’t really thinking about it. Then she looked out her window, all she saw was big water.
Fluffy, puffy clouds when she got off her plane it seemed much different; and it was. When she saw her grandson she was so excited! "Grandson," said Grandmother. Grandmother asked, "What is that strange song on your shirt?" He said, "It is called Mike." "Cool." Said grandmother. "Let's go inside," his mom said. They sat down for dinner. Grandmother took a bite of pizza. Grandma said, "This it DELISHES"!!! "Glad you like it," said her grandson. As they finished their sweet, hot, cheesy pizza, their grandmother said, "I think I have to leave"
It was nice seeing you,” said grandmother. “I will come back next week.” Said grandmother. “OK, by love you.” Said the boy and his mother. As grandmother sadly flew home, her grandson was in bed dreaming of what would happen next week.

Writing - 6 pts: This outstanding response stays fully focused on the topic as it presents thorough and completely descriptive details that mirror the original while being translated to both a new voice and a new perspective. Airline pretzels overtly become a source of comfort (Then she wasn’t so scared because she ate a snack and she wasn’t really thinking about it). Kente cloth transforms to the wings of Roman myth (Grandmother asked, “What is that strange sign on your shirt? He said, “It is called Nike.”). Rich goat stew becomes (sweet, hot, cheesy pizza). The order and sequence are clear with a beginning, middle, and end and transitional phrases throughout. The response also provides a strong sense of audience with a distinctive and clear perspective – that of the grandmother and her visit to her family in the U.S. The word usage is strong (elated, sounds of joy). The response fully accomplishes the task as an outstanding performance and merits a 6.

Language Conventions - 4 pts: There are a few minor errors in language skills (spelling and capitalization). The command of language is very good throughout. This response receives a 4.
Two places to call home

Home again.
I am delighted to be going home to Ghana. My son and I are going to see my parents. When our plane lands, we go on an old bus. As I look out, I instantly remember my old house.

Greeting. My dad is waiting outside for us when the bus stops. His kente cloth's design indicates how important the strength of a family is. My mother rushes outside to greet us. She gives my son
and I big hugs. I remember my home even more as we step inside. My mother has made the meal. She worked a long time to make my favorite kind. The goat meat was what I had missed the most. The next day, my mother took my son to the market while my father and I stayed home to garden. He tends tomatoes and I tend green beans. I miss doing it every day. It hurts to think that I can’t stay. Sad goodbye.

We are going home.
Today, we play some of the games we used to play. When it's time to go, I run my hand along the wall. It's time to say goodbye. I hug my parents and they give me some vegetables. Goodbye home....

Writing - 5 pts
This solid performance fully accomplishes the task without distinguishing itself as outstanding. It stays fully focused on the topic and task. The writer provides varied and relevant details (As I look out I instantly remember my old house.... His kente cloth’s design indicates how important the strength of a family is.... I remember my home even more as we step inside). At the highest score point these ideas would be more fully developed. There is a beginning, a middle and an ending as well as transitional phrases throughout. The clear logical progression of ideas is supported by the effective titling of the paragraphs. The point of view is clear and shows an awareness of the audience. A quiet and somewhat expected sense of memory and loss is communicated with word choice that is more than adequate, but not outstanding. The response fully accomplishes the task and receives a 5.

Language Conventions - 4 pts
Though errors in spelling (ment, where for were, backround), punctuation (there are a number of missing and misused internal commas), and grammar are apparent in this response, the writer demonstrates good command of language skills. Errors have only a minor impact on communication. This makes the response a 4.
I am having my grandson come to Ghana. It's where I live. Oh! There he is! I am really excited to see him! I gave him a huge bear hug and led him to dinner. I made fee zed which means hot food. First I grind corn, rice, and peanuts into flour. Then I rolled them in little balls and cooked them in boiling water until they thickened like oatmeal that has been left sitting in a pan. "I say. I show him how to dip the balls into stew of
yams, onion, and goat meat. At first he is afraid to try the goat meat but he does any way and LOVES it! The next day I take him to Accra. It's a big market and he really likes it. "It's fun watching the women with their big hats and baskets weave through the maze of bicycles. I like brightly colored toy tops. They are all smiling at me and are saying "mawkyé." He says. I take his hand and swing it back and forth as we walk. I tell him "Beautiful boy, we'll remember"
These moments for many years.

The week has passed too quickly and it’s time to say goodbye. At the airport, I give him an extra long hug for his extra long trip. I hate to see him go and I say “It’s good to have two homes.”

Writing - 5 pts: This response stays focused on the topic and task. A lack of control of the quantity of material that adheres too closely to the text is more than offset by number of relevant, lively, original ideas and vivid images (he is afraid to try the goat meat but he does anyway and LOVES it! ... Its fun watching the women with there big hats and baskets weave through the maze of bicycles like brightly colored toy tops. ... I hate to see him go and I say “It’s good to have two homes”). There is a beginning, a middle and an ending as well as transitional phrases throughout. The point of view is clear and shows an awareness of the audience. Despite the need for trimming of some of the near quotation, a solid performance that fully accomplishes the task and receives a 5.

Language Conventions - 4 pts: There are few minor errors. The writer demonstrates good command of language skills; errors have only a minor impact on communication. This makes the response a 4.
Good-bye, bedroom, cozy and small.
Good-bye, pictures on the wall. Today I'm going home to the place my family comes from.
My son and I are going to Ghana.
Ghana is a small country on the west coast of Africa. It was where my son was born.
It will be my son's first time meeting his grandparents and his first time on a plane. Up, up, we go sailing high over the Atlantic Ocean. Outside the small window the bright, blue Ocean disappears. We finally get there and, got on a rusty, old bus. We had a heart warming meal and my dad was wearing kente cloth. The next day my mom buckled my son in her white van and headed for Accra. "The weekend went by too quickly," sighed
my son. We said good-bye and got on the plane. Good-bye sweet smelling air. They got home safely," grandma said.

The End

**Writing - 4 pts**
Ideas, organization and style show some original work but can’t be called original. This response focuses on the topic and the task by partially reordering and changing relevant details and information. The concentration on the opening and ending emphasize the weakness of the treatment of the visit itself. There is an awareness of voice displayed through the attempts at similarity of tone. (a heart warming meal, they got home safe). The response accomplishes the task and receives a 4.

**Language Conventions - 4 pts**
Though there are a few minor errors in this response, these errors do not impair the flow of communication. This response is a 4.
Two Places To Call Home is a story in Ghana. Mother says, I will take my son to Ghana to see his grandmother and grandfather so they went to the airplane and flew up to the blue sky.

Mother says, Ah what a sweeter to be when I was born here in Ghana. The roads are all dusty.

In Aroca is a place in Ghana the girls and boys are playing soccer.
So there is a market in the market there is tomatoes, peanuts, corn, onions and other food. So the days went fast the week has passed so mom says I guess I am going back home with my son to the United States my son missed the United States so we are going back to the airplane and go back.

So we get food there is a special drink that will help us sleep to get back home to the United States so mother said I can't wait to get back home to the United States.
So we got here we passed the Atlantic ocean and now I am back home with my son. So my son is happy and mother is happy to so it is night to my son and the stars are white and the sky is black the lights are off and the cars are in the garage.

**Writing - 4 pts**
This holistic 4 focuses on the topic and the task by providing relevant details and information in a list-like way (In Araca is a place in Ghana the girls and boys are playing soccer so there is a market in the market there is tomatoes peanuts corn onions and other food so the days went fast). Strengths of focus and the quantity and quality of detail are matched by weakness in organization and style. There is an awkwardness of voice due to the repeated conjunction, (so). The response accomplishes the task and receives a 4.

**Language Conventions - 3 pts**
There are a few minor errors. Run on sentences do not impair communication. This response is a 3.
There was a boy who went in a airplan to met his grand-
mother and grand father. He was very shy to met them but he was still exit ed to met them. In the airplan there was snack and music. He go t there in the morning. In the afternoon the grandmother, grandfather, and the boy went to the stor. The boy was so shy when there was lots of people in there. But he was brave. They got food and they hed home to eat good food. The next day at morning the boy and the mother plays.
Music in the airplan and he was shy when there's new people in the airplan but he was still brave and they went home. 
The End.

Writing - 3 pts: This response stays somewhat focused on the topic and the task. The response minimally develops some relevant ideas (He was very shy to meet them but he was still exited to met them.) and (the grandmother, grandfather, and the boy whent to the stor. The boy was so shy when there was lots of people in there. But he was brave. They got food and they hed home to eat good food). There is a minimal beginning (There was a boy who went in an airplane to meet his grandmother and grandfather) and ending (he was shy . . . but he was still brave and they went home). There are gaps in organization where further development of support is needed. The response minimally accomplishes the task and receives a 3.

Language Conventions - 3 pts: This response demonstrates adequate command of language skills. While errors in most skills are only occasional, we have errors in verb usage (there was lots of people, they got food and they hed home, the boy and the mother plays music, was shy when there is new people), spelling (whent, airplaen, affternoon, stor), and sentence formation (a fragment) and a missing period. This makes the response a 3.
To Places To Call Home

One summer day Josh and I packed up all of our things and flew to Ghana, a state in Africa. When we got to Ghana, I smelled the sweat smell of the town I grew up in. It smelled like fresh food. When we got to Mom's and Dad's place, Dad was wearing a long cap with black and gold with ment "I care for my family." Then Mom came out and took Josh and me to the shopping place. I told myself, "This is home." The weeks flew by, and it was time to go home. At the airport, Mom and Dad gave us big hugs and we boarded our plane.

Writing - 3 pts

This response stays somewhat focused on the topic and the task. The response provides some relevant ideas with minimal support (When we got to Ghana I smelled the sweet smell of the town I grew up in. It smelled of fresh food). There is a minimal beginning (One summer day Josh and I packed all of our things and moved to Ghana) and slightly more developed ending (The weeks flew by and it was time to go home. At the airport Mom and Dad gave us big hugs and we boarded our plane). The body of the response has some gaps that weaken organization. The response minimally accomplishes the task and receives a 3.

Language Conventions - 3 pts

This response demonstrates adequate command of language skills. While errors in most skills are only occasional, we have errors in usage (all of are things) spelling (smeled, small, wareing, wich, ment, Shopeing, borded), and several missing punctuation marks. This makes the response a 3.
I made a story outfit of black zigzags and gold squares. My grandson is visiting Ghana. His mom was born in Ghana. He got his sandals. We went to the market, I bought the set for him. We went in and to eat dinner. Grandma wanted to ride my grandson. He had to go home.

**Writing - 2 pts**
This response minimally develops two ideas with only a few relevant details (I made a story outfit of black zigzags and gold squares, my grandson is visiting Ghana. . . . he got his sandals were dste so I sowap up the dset of his sandlos). Other attempted ideas are fragmented. There is a brief conclusion. Focus is less than minimal. The overall control of language is minimal. This response only partially accomplishes the task and receives a 2.

**Language Conventions - 2 pts**
In this response, spelling errors cause the reader to pause and reread. However, it is still possible phonetically to discern the writer’s meaning. The response exhibits minimal command of conventions and is scored 2.
Once there was a girl who went to see her Grandma a Papa in Ghana. She went to a market with her grandma to sell her fresh red tomatoes for 10 dollars and 70 cents. And the weak was over and she had to fly back home.

Writing - 2 pts
This response, though an attempt to accomplish the task, falls short. There is a main idea (Once there was a girl who went to see her Grandma a Papa in Ghana). However, the focus is ineffective and there are only a few relevant details (She went to a mark[et] ... to sell her fresh red tomatoes ... the weak was over and she had to fly back home). The overall control of language is minimal. This response only partially accomplishes the task and receives a 2.

Language Conventions - 2 pts
Though errors are not extensive in this response, the spelling errors (hoo for who, weak for week, mark for market) and grammar errors cause the reader to pause and reread. However, it is still possible to discern the writer’s meaning. The response exhibits minimal command of language conventions and receives a 2.
When he was a little boy, he had two glasses to call home. In the USA and the West, the cost of Africa.