

That Noise

One night I was helping my best friend babysit her two little sisters. We had just watched a scary movie so everyone was kind of freaked out. We all came up from the basement to the kitchen and sat in there talking about who knows what. Out of nowhere she said she heard a door shut. Well at that time my friend, her two little sisters, and I were the only ones in the house, and we were all in the kitchen. Everyone was getting a little creeped out so we ran upstairs. Sarah, one of the sisters, said we should hide in a closet in case it was a burglar, so we did. That didn't last very long though! My friend and I decided to grab brushes and go downstairs to see if anyone was there. After searching through the whole house we called my little sister to find that she had walked in the front door and couldn't find us, so she went to play video games in a room we had already checked. So the whole night we were scared of my little sister.

“That Noise” / Grade 8 / Narrative/ Six Trait, 6-Point Rubric
Prompt:

Ideas and Content 4/4	This narrative piece works as a plot summary with intriguing possibilities. More detail is needed to flesh out the story, and to create a suspenseful atmosphere—the writer may want to select details about the setting (time and place), the name of the “scary movie”, or perhaps details about the closet crammed with four people trying to avoid detection from the suspected burglar, at large in the house.
Organization 4/4-	The action described follows a clear chronology and tells a basic story from beginning to end. The discovery that the “burglar” turned out to be the writer's sister, is delivered somewhat anticlimactically; a good narrative builds to something, and delivers impact through careful sequencing. The timing of the writer's search through the house and the sister's undetected arrival, needs clarification. A little more work is needed in the conclusion to bring out the “punchline.”
Voice 4/4-	Feeling “freaked out” after watching the movie, and then getting “a little creeped out” by the sound of a door shutting, shows readers how the narrator and the others felt, in general. More vivid, descriptive words about the writer's reactions to the strange noise, the tension in the crammed closet, and the relief and laughter after the final discovery, would really enhance the voice in this story, which offers many opportunities to engage readers in the action.
Word Choice 4/4	The word choice is functional. Sensory details are missing—the sound of the door shutting, the hypersensitive state of fear, the musty smell of the closet, visual descriptions of some of the rooms searched—the words and phrases that help readers “be there” with the writer.
Sentence Fluency 4 /4	Sentences are soundly constructed and reflect some variety and complexity. Avoid using “so” as a sentence beginning or connective. Note how leaving out “so” in the final sentence helps to add impact to this important conclusion to the story.
Conventions 4/4	Conventions reflect control for grade level expectations, with the exception of a few missing internal commas. Stylistic use of conventions are not yet present.