SMART Writing Exemplars for Years 3-10

The SMART writing exemplars are linked into the SMART assessment page on Tāhūrangi.
You need to go to tab 3 'SMART resources', scroll down the page, select 'writing' and scroll down.

They are also linked here for easier access.

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

Year 6

Year 7

Year 8

Year 9

Year 10

Score 5 Exemplar, Year 3: total score 25/30

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Feedback for Score 5 Exemplar, Year 3

Audience and Purpose [5/6]
This response demonstrates a thorough and insightful understanding of both audience and purpose. The writer addresses the principal by name throughout, anticipates the principal's concerns precisely, and adopts a formal but warm register that is entirely appropriate for writing to a school leader. The position — a guinea pig for Room 7 — is established immediately and maintained with precision throughout. The writer also names the teacher, references the school's enviro programme, and provides a call to action in the conclusion.

Content Development/Elaboration [5/6]
Three well-elaborated reasons are provided: responsibility (with specific tasks named), wellbeing linked to the school's hauora framework, and curriculum integration through the enviro project and science journaling. The counterargument section is substantive — it pre-empts three distinct objections (cost, allergies, workload) and provides a specific, credible rebuttal for each. No reason is left as a single sentence.

Dear Mr Tāhoe,

Have you ever walked into a classroom and felt something was missing? I think I know what it is. Our class needs a pet — and not just any pet. I am writing to persuade you that a guinea pig would be a wonderful addition to Room 7 at Riverside School. I have three strong reasons why this is a great idea, and I am also going to explain why the concerns you might have are not as big as you think.

First of all, having a class guinea pig would help us learn about responsibility. Looking after a living creature is one of the best ways to learn that our actions matter. In our class we would take turns giving our guinea pig fresh water and vegetables, cleaning its hutch, and making sure it has enough space to move around. These are real skills that we will use for the rest of our lives. Our teacher, Mrs Parata, has told us that children who care for animals at school often become more caring and more careful in all parts of their learning.

Secondly, a class pet would support our wellbeing. Research shows that spending time with animals helps to lower stress and makes people feel calmer and happier. At our school we talk a lot about hauora and looking after the whole person. A guinea pig would be a gentle, friendly reminder that looking after something else also looks after us. Many children in our class feel anxious about reading aloud or doing maths tests. Having a small, quiet animal in the corner of the room gives us a calm place to look before we begin.

Thirdly, caring for a class pet connects brilliantly to our learning. Guinea pigs eat only plants, so we could grow their food in our school garden as part of our enviro project. We could write observations in our science journals. We could graph how much food our guinea pig eats each week. Learning would feel real and connected in a way it does not always feel when we are only reading from a book.

I know you might have some worries. You might think a guinea pig would be too expensive. However, guinea pig hutches and food are quite affordable, and our class is already planning a small fundraiser to help pay for the first month. You might also worry about allergies. We have checked with our class and no one has a known allergy to guinea pigs. If a new student joins who does have one, the hutch could easily be moved to a different area. Finally, you might think it would be too much work for one person. But that is exactly the point — no one person would be responsible. It would be shared fairly across the whole class, with a rotating roster.

I hope you will consider our request seriously. A class guinea pig would teach us responsibility, support our wellbeing, and enrich our learning in ways no textbook can. Our class is ready, and we are excited. Please say yes, Mr Tāhoe — Room 7 is ready to step up.

Ngā mihi,

Aroha Tane (on behalf of Room 7)

Structure [5/6]
The letter is cohesively organised: a formal salutation, an engaging opening paragraph that hooks with a question and maps the argument, three body paragraphs each with a clear topic sentence and developed support, a full counterargument paragraph, and a strong conclusion with a call to action and a formal sign-off. Transitional language is used. Paragraphing is consistent throughout.

Language Use, Choice, and Style [5/6]
Language is precise and audience-aware throughout. The writer uses te reo Māori naturally (hauora, and ngā mihi). Rhetorical devices are used purposefully: a question opener, direct address, inclusive 'we,' and an appeal to shared school values. Sentence variety is strong — short declarative sentences sit alongside longer periodic ones. The voice is confident, warm, and appropriately formal.

Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling [5/6]
High level of accuracy. Grammar is correct throughout. Punctuation is used purposefully including an em dash, parentheses, and a rhetorical question mark. All words are spelled correctly.