# Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing 2017

# English Language Arts Grade 6



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Follow these steps to access the Alberta Education website:

Step 1: Type education.alberta.ca.

Step 2: Click on the "Elementary" card.

Step 3: Click on the "Provincial Assessment" card.

Step 4: Scroll down to find and click on the "English Language Arts K-6" card.

Step 5: Click on "Provincial Achievement Test (PAT)."

On the website, there is a specific link to "<u>Subject Bulletins</u>." These bulletins provide students and teachers with information about the provincial achievement tests scheduled for the current school year. Please share the contents of the *Grade 6 English Language Arts Subject Bulletin* with your students.

Also on the website, there is a specific link to "Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing." These samples are intended to be used to enhance students' writing and to assist teachers in assessing student writing relative to the standards embedded in the scoring criteria in the scoring guides.

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#### Introduction

The written responses in this document are examples of Grade 6 English Language Arts writing that meet or exceed the acceptable standard for student achievement. Along with the commentaries that accompany them, they should help teachers and students to understand the standards for the Grade 6 English Language Arts Part A: Writing Provincial Achievement Test in relation to the scoring criteria.

The purpose of the sample responses is to illustrate the standards that governed the 2017 marking session and that anchor the selection of similar sample responses for marking sessions in subsequent years. The sample papers and commentaries were used to train markers to apply the scoring criteria consistently and to justify their decisions about scores in terms of each student's work and the scoring criteria.

The sample responses included in this document represent a very small sample of successful approaches to the Functional Writing Assignment.

To provide each paper with the most accurate and impartial judgment possible, use only the scoring criteria and the standards set by the Exemplars and Rationales. Each student is a person trying to do his or her very best. All students are completely reliant on your careful, professional consideration of their work.

Markers are responsible for

- reviewing and internalizing the scoring criteria and their application to student writing
- applying the scoring criteria impartially, independently, and consistently to all papers
- refraining from marking a response if personal biases—regarding the student's handwriting, development of topic, idiosyncrasies of voice, and/or political or religious preference—interfere with an impartial judgment of the response
- ensuring that every paper is scored
  - fairly
  - according to the scoring criteria
  - in accordance with the standards illustrated in the Exemplars and Rationales

The scores awarded to student responses must be based solely on the scoring criteria with reference to the Exemplars and Rationales. Fairness to all students is the most important requirement of the marking process.

To facilitate fair and valid assessment of all student work during both local and central marking, teachers must not mark or write in student booklets. Teacher-created scoring sheets, which may be used during local marking, are **not** to be included in student test booklets.

Please feel free to contact Provincial Assessment Sector staff members to discuss any questions or concerns.

#### **Maintaining Consistent Standards**

For all achievement test scoring sessions, teacher working groups for Exemplar Selection, Exemplar Validation, and Standards Confirmation are used to establish expectations for student work in relation to the scoring criteria and ensure that scoring is consistent within and between marking sessions. These committees ensure that marks are valid, reliable, and fair measures of student achievement.

#### **Exemplar Selection Working Group**

Exemplars are selections of student work, taken from field tests, that best illustrate the scoring criteria. The Exemplar Selection Working Group is composed of experienced teachers from various regions of the province. Working group members read a large sample of students' written responses to the Achievement Test and select responses that best match the standards established in the Exemplars and Rationales from the previous marking session. The working group then writes rationales that explain the relationship between each Exemplar and the scoring criteria in each scoring category. The same process also occurs in the selection of the Training Paper. This paper is selected to illustrate characteristics of student work that might not be covered in the Exemplars and that might lead to inconsistent judgments or marking difficulties. While Exemplars usually receive consistent scores across all categories, the Training Paper may not. This is because students rarely perform with equal ability in every scoring category, and it is necessary to evaluate each scoring category as a distinct skill area.

#### **Exemplar Validation Working Group**

The Exemplar Validation Working Group is composed of experienced teachers from various provincial regions, and it reviews and approves the Exemplars, Training Paper, and Rationales that have been prepared for local marking. The working group ensures that the Rationales accurately reflect the descriptors in the Scoring Guide and verifies that appropriate and accurate references have been made to student work. Working group members also strive to ensure that there is clarity within the Rationales.

#### **Standards Confirmation Working Group**

Teachers from throughout the province who serve on the Standards Confirmation Working Group read a large sample of students' written responses to Part A: Writing to confirm the appropriateness of the standards set by the test when compared with actual student work on the Achievement Test. The working group ensures that the Exemplars, Training Paper, and Rationales are appropriate for central marking, and working group members also select student responses that are to be used for daily Reliability Reviews. Once a day, all markers score a copy of the same paper so that inter-rater reliability is maintained. Reliability Reviews confirm that all markers are consistently awarding scores that accurately reflect the standards embedded in the scoring criteria.

Working groups for Exemplar Selection, Exemplar Validation, and Standards Confirmation are part of a complex set of processes that have evolved over the years of achievement test administration. They are crucial to ensuring that standards are consistently and fairly applied to student work.

#### **Local Marking**

Classroom teachers are encouraged to assess students' writing, using the Scoring Guides, Exemplars, and Rationales that are sent to the schools along with the Part A: Writing tests, before returning the tests to Alberta Education. All papers are scored centrally in Edmonton in July.

The Exemplars of student writing and the corresponding Rationales in this document exemplify the standards inherent in the scoring criteria. These Exemplars are not to be shared with students and must be returned to Alberta Education with the tests.

Scores awarded locally can be submitted to Alberta Education, where they will be used as the first reading of a student's response. Local markers are to use the "For Teacher Use Only" section on the back of each Part A: Writing test booklet to record their scores by filling in the appropriate circles. The "School Code" and "Accommodations Used" sections should also be completed. If a teacher wants to know how his or her locally awarded scores compare with the scores that the tests received when scored centrally, then he or she must create a three-digit identification number and enter it in the section labelled "ID No." on the back of each student booklet. No two teachers from the same school should create and use the same ID number. No other marks are to be made in the test booklet by the teacher.

Tests are to be returned to Alberta Education according to the scheduling information in the online General Information Bulletin. The tests will then be scored centrally by Alberta Education as the second reading. Both sets of scores are used when calculating each student's final mark. In the case of a discrepancy between these two sets of scores, papers will be adjudicated by a third reading, which will determine the final scores that a paper is awarded. In this way, valid and reliable individual and group results can be reported. Papers that are **not assessed locally** by teachers will be **scored centrally only once**.

After central marking has been completed and school reports have been sent to the schools, teachers who submitted their scores with an ID number will receive a confidential report on their marking. This report is called the **Local Marker Report** and includes the locally awarded scores, centrally awarded scores, third-read scores if applicable, and the final scores assigned.

Teachers may make photocopies of student writing from only the English Language Arts Part A: Writing tests for inclusion in portfolios of the year's work. Copies can be made for parents who request them.

The descriptors of each level of student achievement in the scoring guides were revised in 2008–2009. To continue to maximize fairness for all students, and to maintain consistency across all grade levels, the numeric achievement descriptors in the Grade 6 English Language Arts scoring guides were changed from numbers to specific words to describe student achievement in each scoring category. The revised achievement descriptors correspond to the values of the numbers that they replace. Classroom teachers are encouraged to discuss and use the scoring criteria, including the revised achievement descriptors, with their students during the year. When student writing is marked centrally, the revised achievement descriptors are used.

The previously used and the corresponding revised achievement level descriptors are highlighted below:

<b>Previously Used Descriptors</b>	<b>Revised Descriptors</b>
Meets the <i>Standard of Excellence</i> 5	Excellent E
Approaches the <i>Standard of Excellence</i> 4	Proficient Pf
Clearly Meets the <i>Acceptable Standard</i> 3	Satisfactory S
Does Not Clearly Meet the <i>Acceptable Standard</i> 2	Limited L
Clearly Below the <i>Acceptable Standard</i> 1	Poor P

To determine a student's mark, convert the word descriptors to the following numeric values: Excellent = 5, Proficient = 4, Satisfactory = 3, Limited = 2, Poor = 1

A total score for a student's written response may be calculated by a teacher using the following procedure. For the Narrative Writing Assignment, assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary, and Conventions. Then, multiply the scores for *Content* and *Organization* by 2 as these categories are worth twice as much as the other categories. The maximum score possible for Narrative Writing is 35. For the **Functional Writing Assignment**, assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *Content* and Content Management. Then, multiply these scores by 2. The maximum score possible for Functional Writing is 20. To calculate the **Total Part A: Writing Score**, add the Narrative Writing and Functional Writing scores as follows: Narrative /35 (63.6%) + Functional Writing /20 (36.4%) = Total Score /55 (100%). The mark for Part A: Writing is worth 50% of the total mark for the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

#### **Scoring Guide—Functional Writing**

#### **Content**

#### **Focus**

When marking **Content** appropriate for Grade 6 functional writing, the marker should consider

- effectiveness of development and organization of the news article
- whether the purpose of the assignment is fulfilled with complete and appropriate information
- appropriateness of tone for the assignment and awareness of audience is evident

Excellent E	<ul> <li>The ideas are well developed, and organization of the news article is clear and effective.</li> <li>Complete information is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise and</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>appropriate details that effectively fulfill the purpose of the assignment.</li> <li>A tone appropriate for the assignment is clearly and effectively maintained.</li> </ul>
Proficient	The ideas are generally well developed, and organization of the news article is generally effective.
Pf	• Complete information is presented, and this information is substantiated by appropriate details that fulfill the purpose of the assignment.
	A tone appropriate for the assignment is clearly maintained.
Satisfactory	The ideas are adequately developed, and organization of the news article is adequate.
S	• Some information is given, and this information is supported by enough details to fulfill the purpose of the assignment.
	A tone appropriate for the assignment is generally maintained.
Limited	The ideas are poorly developed, and organization of the news article is ineffective.
$\mathbf{L}$	• Essential information may be missing. Supporting details are scant, insignificant, and/or irrelevant. The purpose of the assignment is only partially fulfilled.
	A tone appropriate for the assignment is evident but not maintained.
Poor	The ideas are not developed, and organization of the news article is inadequate.
P	• Essential information and supporting details are inappropriate or lacking. The purpose of the assignment is not fulfilled.
	Little awareness of tone appropriate for the assignment is evident.
Insufficient	• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess <b>Content</b> .
INS	

Note: Content and Content Management are equally weighted.

Please advise students that their work must relate to the assignment. Those assignments that are completely off topic will be awarded a mark of Insufficient.

5

#### **Content Management**

#### **Focus**

When marking Content Management appropriate for Grade 6 functional writing, the marker should consider

- accuracy and effectiveness of words and expressions
- control of sentence structures, usage, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, etc.)
- clarity and flow of the communication

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.

Excellent	• Words and expressions used are consistently accurate and effective.
E	• The writing demonstrates confident and consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.
	• Errors, if present, do not reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Proficient	Words and expressions used are usually accurate and effective.
Pf	The writing demonstrates competent and generally consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.
	• Errors that are present rarely reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Satisfactory	Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective.
S	• The writing demonstrates basic control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.
	• Errors that are present occasionally reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Limited	• Words and expressions used are frequently vague and/or imprecise.
L	The writing demonstrates faltering control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.
	Errors reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the communication.
Poor	Words and expressions used are inaccurate and/or misused.
P	The writing demonstrates lack of control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.
	Errors severely reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the communication.
Insufficient	The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.
INS	

#### **Section II: Functional Writing** (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the situation below and complete the assignment that follows.

#### The Situation

Your name is Taylor Greene and you attend Kindler Elementary School. You are a reporter for your school's newspaper. Last week, your class visited a dark-sky preserve at night. Dark-sky preserves are areas away from cities that have very little artificial light pollution, such as light from streetlights. This makes it much darker and easier to see and observe objects in the night sky. You made notes and did additional research. Now you are ready to write your news article.

#### **Assignment**

Write a news article for your school newspaper that will inform the readers about dark-sky preserves. Use the information from your trip and your additional research to complete your news article.

When writing your news article, be sure to

- provide readers with information that will support the purpose of the news article
- use a style of writing appropriate for a news article
- use a style of writing appropriate for the audience

Use the information provided on page 12 to assist you as you write your news article.

Turn to page 13 to plan your writing. Begin writing your news article on page 14.



Night sky in a city



Night sky in a dark-sky preserve

Place this page inside this writing booklet when you have finished the test.

#### News Article Notes

#### Who:

—Your class

#### What:

—A visit to a dark-sky preserve

#### Where:

—In Alberta

#### When:

—Last week

#### **Purpose:**

—Learn more about dark-sky preserves and why they are important to humans and animals



View of the night sky in a dark-sky preserve

#### Information

- —Four dark-sky preserves in Alberta
- —Little light pollution from artificial
- —Incredible view of Milky Way galaxy
- —Largest dark-sky preserve in world located in Alberta
- —Several planets visible to naked eye
- —Located in remote areas away from towns and cities
- —Wood Buffalo National Park largest dark-sky preserve in world

#### **Interesting Facts**

- —Some animals use darkness to hide from predators
- —Bats, nighthawks, owls mostly active at
- —Many night sky objects invisible near artificial lighting
- —Wildlife and environment sensitive to artificial night lighting
- —Light pollution affects animals
- —People in towns and cities unaware of beauty of night sky

You do not have to use all of the information provided on this page.

You may include additional appropriate information in your news article.

### Student Exemplar—Satisfactory A

If you are using a word processor, staple your News Article here. You may make corrections directly on your printed page(s).

Planets visible by the Nated eye
(Headline) By Taylor Cyreen L
On April 21 2016 class six-t went to
Dark Sky Preserve to learn now they are
<u> </u>
important to humans and animals everywhere.
- There
There are only four dark sky perserves
local ( ) and ( ) delication of the local
located in Alberta. When you go to a dark stry
Perserve you can see many planets visible to
the nated eye, Wood Bustale National
Park is the largest dark sky Preserve in
THE THE THE TOTAL STATE TO THE
the world. This park is located away from
towns and cities

# $Student\ Exemplar - Satisfactory\ A$

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# GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 2017 ACHIEVEMENT TEST RATIONALE FOR STUDENT EXEMPLAR

#### Functional—Satisfactory A

Headline: Planets visible by the Naked eye

Score		Reporting Category			
		Content			
	S	• The ideas are <b>adequately</b> developed, and organization of the news article is <b>adequate</b> ("On April 21 2016 class six-T went to Dark Sky Preserve to learn how they are important to humans and animals everywhere" and "There are only four dark sky perserves located in Alberta").			
S	S	• Some information is given, and this information is supported by enough details to fulfill the purpose of the assignment ("When you go to a dark sky perserve you can see many planets visible to the naked eye. Wood Buffalo National Park is the largest dark sky Preserve in the world").			
	S	• A tone appropriate for the assignment is <b>generally</b> maintained ("On April 21 2016 class six-T" and "People who live in towns and cities are unaware of such beauty in the night sky").			
		Content Management			
	S	• Words and expressions used are <b>generally</b> accurate and <b>occasionally effective</b> ("you can see many planets visible to the naked eye" and "This park is located away from towns and cities").			
S	S	• The writing demonstrates <b>basic</b> control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics ("There are only four dark sky Perserves located in Alberta. When you go to a dark sky perserve you can see many planets visible to the naked eye").			
	S	• Errors that are present <b>occasionally</b> reduce the clarity or <b>interrupt</b> the flow of the communication ("perserves" and "such as hawks, egals and owls").			
		Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.			

# Student Exemplar—Satisfactory B

If you are using a word processor, staple your News Article here.  You may make corrections directly on your printed page(s).
preserve our right exp or a right
(Headline)
last week on June 3 the grade 6
class of Kindler Elementary school
*
attended the Wood Buffalo National
Park
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Wood Buffalo National Park
is a dark sky preserve, it is
13 d dan 11 311 y preserve 1 11 13
acually the biggest one in
0.000011
the world,
It is located in Alberta in
a remote area away from
any towns and cities.
There are 4 dark sky preserves

# Student Exemplar—Satisfactory B

in Alberta.
"It was the most beautiful thing
that I had ever seen" said Sindy
Edge.
All of us learnt alot about
animals, planets and many other
things, like
Animals such as Bats, mighthawks
owls are mostly active at
night and that some animals
use durkness to hide from
predators, or that
some planet com be seen
by the naked eye and that

13

# Student Exemplar—Satisfactory B

you can get incredible views
of the Milky Way.
They said that people who live
in towns or cities are
unaware of the beauty of
the night sky.
So I advise every body to visit
a dark sky reserve whenever
you can.
Published by: Taylor Greene of
Kindler Elementary School

# GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 2017 ACHIEVEMENT TEST RATIONALE FOR STUDENT EXEMPLAR

#### Functional—Satisfactory B

**Headline:** Preserve our night sky at a night sky preserve

Score		Reporting Category					
		Content					
	S	• The ideas are <b>adequately</b> developed, and organization of the news article is <b>adequate</b> ("It is located in Alberta in a remote area away from any towns or cities" and "All of us learnt alot about animals, planets and many other things").					
S	S	• Some information is given, and this information is supported by enough details to fulfill the purpose of the assignment ("Wood Buffalo National Park is a dark sky preserve, it is acually the biggest one in the world" and "They said that people who live in towns or cities are unaware of the beauty of the night sky").					
	S	• A tone appropriate for the assignment is <b>generally</b> maintained ("Last week on June 3 the grade 6 class of Kindler Elementary school attended the Wood Buffalo National Park" and "Published by: Taylor Greene of Kindler Elementary School").					
		Content Management					
	S	• Words and expressions used are <b>generally</b> accurate and <b>occasionally effective</b> ("it is acually the biggest one in the world. It is located in Alberta in a remote area" and "So I advise").					
S	S	• The writing demonstrates <b>basic</b> control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics ("It is located in Alberta in a remote area away from any towns or cities. There are 4 dark sky preserves in Alberta").					
	S	• Errors that are present <b>occasionally</b> reduce the clarity or <b>interrupt</b> the flow of the communication ("it is acually," "learnt a lot," "Animals such as Bat's, nighthawks & owls," and "some planet can be seen").					
		Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.					

# **Student Exemplar—Proficient**

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sky pr							4. 4
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# **Student Exemplar—Proficient**

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#### GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 2017 ACHIEVEMENT TEST RATIONALE FOR STUDENT EXEMPLAR

#### **Functional—Proficient**

Headline: Wonders of Nature

Score		Reporting Category
		Content
	Pf	• The ideas are <b>generally well developed</b> , and organization of the news article is <b>generally</b> effective ("visited an Alberta dark-sky preserve to learn about them and why they are important to humans and animals," "The dark sky preserve we visited is located in a remote area away from cities and towns. There are only four dark sky preserves in Alberta, including Wood Buffalo National Park, which holds the world's largest dark sky preserve").
Pf	Pf	• Complete information is presented, and this information is substantiated by appropriate details that fulfill the purpose of the assignment ("Some animals use the cover of darkness to hide from predators and others, such as bats, owls and nighthawks are nocturnal meaning they are active during the night. Artifial lighting blocks out the view of the stars, which is why we have to travel to see such terrific sights").
	Pf	• A tone <b>appropriate</b> for the assignment is <b>clearly maintained</b> ("During the trip, we saw several planets without a telescope and viewed our incredible Milky Way" and "To learn more about dark sky reserves, visit www. Keep the Sky pure.com").
		Content Management
	Pf	• Words and expressions used are <b>usually accurate</b> and <b>effective</b> ("Dark sky preserves use as little as possible of artificial light, which is why we were treated to such a stunning view" and "bats, owls and nighthawks are nocturnal meaning they are active during the night").
Pf	Pf	• The writing demonstrates <b>competent</b> and <b>generally consistent</b> control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics ("We learned that the reason we cannot get such an amazing sight in the city is the light pollution" and "Everyone should get the chance to see this pure wonder of nature").
	Pf	• Errors that are present <b>rarely reduce</b> the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication ("Artifial lighting" and "they need a place of nature, like dark sky reserves").
		Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.

If y	ou are using a	word proces	sor, staple your	News Article <i>here</i> .
	You may make	corrections of	directly on your	printed page(s).

Discovering Beauty

(Headline)
By Taylor Greene
Last week, on April 26th a grade six class
Visited a dark sky preserve in Alberta to
learn more about dark sky preserves and
why they're important to animals and humans.
Ieslie, a student in the class states,
"You never know what you can learn about
nature."
Did you know there are 4 clark sky
preserves in Alberta, and one of the largest

sky preserves in the world is located also in
Alberta? Dark sky preserve are a place
or area where there's year's little light pollution
from artificial lights, and is usually located
in remote areas away from busy cities
and towns. That way, they're much more
peaceful and is much easier to see the
2tmasphere.
Dark Sky preserves help humans see stars,
planets, constellations and much more. There's
incredible views of the milky way and
usually there are several planets visible to

the naked eye. Some of these things are
hard to see near artificial lighting so it's
very different to see the stars and planets.
Jonah an intrested student exclaims,
"There are so many people in towns and
cities who are unaware of the beauty of
the night sky, and the animals in the area."
There are many animals I that are active
There are many animals I that are active
at night that need to live near dark sky preserves
because a) light pollution is hard on animals
or b) some animals use darkness to
hide from predators. Animals like bats, owns

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artif	sicial )	ighting.					
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# GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 2017 ACHIEVEMENT TEST RATIONALE FOR STUDENT EXEMPLAR

#### **Functional—Excellent**

**Headline:** Discovering Beauty

Score		Reporting Category					
		Content					
	E	• The ideas are <b>well developed</b> , and organization of the news article is <b>clear</b> and <b>effective</b> ("Did you know there are 4 dark sky preserves in Alberta, and one of the largest sky preserves in the world is located also in Alberta? Dark sky preserve are a place or area where there's very little light pollution from artificial lights" and "Animals like bats, owls and nighthawks may even be sensative to artificial lighting").					
E	E	• Complete information is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise and appropriate details that effectively fulfill the purpose of the assignment ("There's incredible views of the milky way and usually there are several planets visible to the naked eye. Some of these things are hard to see near artificial lighting" and "'I didn't know artificial lighting had so much affect on what we see and how animals live").					
	E	• A tone appropriate for the assignment is <b>clearly</b> and <b>effectively</b> maintained ("Last week, on April 26th a grade six class visited a dark sky preserve in Alberta to learn more about dark sky preserves and why they're important to animals and humans").					
		Content Management					
	E	• Words and expressions used are <b>consistently</b> accurate and effective ("Dark sky preserves help humans see stars, planets, constellations and much more," and "Sometimes, you don't know what you're missing. So go look at a dark sky preserve enjoy nature, learn new things and look at the beauty of our world").					
E	E	• The writing demonstrates <b>confident</b> and <b>consistent</b> control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics ("Leslie, a student in the class states, 'You never know what you can learn about nature'" and "Dark sky preserve are a place or area where there's very little light pollution from artificial lights, and is usually located in remote areas away from busy cities and towns").					
	E	• Errors, if present, <b>do not reduce</b> the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication ("That way, they're much more peaceful and is much easier to see the atmosphere," "many animals that we didn't lived out," and "sensative").					
		Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.					