

Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing 2008

English Language
Arts Grade 6

- Functional Writing

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Other Information

Do you need information on the Achievement Testing Program?

Follow these steps for easy access to the Alberta Education website:

Step 1: Type <http://www.education.alberta.ca>
Step 2: Click on *Provincial Testing* (under *For Administrators*)
Step 3: Click on *Achievement Tests*

On the “Achievement Tests” web page, there is a specific link to *Subject Bulletins*. These bulletins provide students and teachers with information about the achievement tests scheduled for the current school year. Please share the contents of the *Grade 6 English Language Arts Subject Bulletin*—particularly the sample questions, writing assignments, and scoring criteria—with your students.

There is also a specific link on this web page to writing samples that are designed to be used by teachers and students: the *Examples of the Standards for Students’ Writing*. These samples are intended to be used to enhance student 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

To provide each paper with the most accurate and impartial judgment that you can, 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: he or she is completely reliant on your careful, professional consideration of each piece of work.

Markers are responsible for

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

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

Please feel free to contact one of the Learner Assessment 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 both to establish expectations for student work in relation to the scoring criteria and to ensure scoring consistency within and between marking sessions. These working groups are crucial to ensuring 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 representing various regions of the province who read a large sample of students' written responses. Working group members select responses that best match the established standards 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 at this time in the selection of Training Papers. These papers are 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, Training Papers may not. This is due to the reality that students rarely perform with equal ability in every scoring category, as well as to the necessity of evaluating each scoring category as a distinct skill area.

Exemplar Validation Working Group

The Exemplar Validation Working Group, another group of experienced teachers from various provincial regions, reviews and approves the Exemplars, Training Papers, and Rationales that have been prepared for markers. The working group ensures that the Rationales accurately reflect the standards embedded in the descriptors in the Scoring Guide while verifying 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 student 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 Papers, and Rationales are appropriate for central marking. 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 student paper for inter-rater reliability. 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. These teacher working groups are crucial to ensuring that standards are consistently and fairly applied to student work.

Local Marking

Classroom teachers can mark student writing, using the Scoring Guides, Exemplars, and Rationales in this document that are sent to the schools along with the *Part A: Writing* tests, before returning the tests to Alberta Education. All papers are marked 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 the *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 locally awarded scores compare with the scores the tests receive when marked centrally, he or she must also fill in the **ID No.** section. No two teachers from the same school should use the same ID number. No other marks are to be made on 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 marked 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 marked locally** by teachers will be **marked 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, central marking 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.

A total score for a student's written response may be calculated by a teacher using the following procedure. For the **Narrative / Essay 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 / Essay 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 / Essay Writing and Functional Writing scores as follows: **Narrative / Essay Writing __/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 9 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

Meets the Standard of Excellence 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ideas are well developed, and organization of the news article is clear and effective. • Complete information is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise and appropriate details that effectively fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • A tone appropriate for the assignment is clearly and effectively maintained.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ideas are generally well developed, and organization of the news article is generally effective. • 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.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ideas are adequately developed, and organization of the news article is adequate. • 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.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ideas are poorly developed, and organization of the news article is ineffective. • 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.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ideas are not developed, and organization of the news article is inadequate. • 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 INS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Content.

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**.

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.

Meets the Standard of Excellence 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are consistently accurate and effective. • 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.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are usually accurate and effective. • 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.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective. • 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.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are frequently vague and/or imprecise. • The writing demonstrates faltering control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • Errors reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the communication.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are inaccurate and/or misused. • 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 INS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

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

Read the situation below and complete the assignment that follows.

The Situation

Your name is Kelly Brown. You are a writer for your school’s newspaper. Recently, a group of Grade 6 students from your school gave a presentation on National Forest Week to their peers. You interviewed the students, who told you about the purpose of their presentation and some of the interesting information they presented. You are now ready to write your news article.

Assignment

Write a news article that will inform the readers about the purpose of the presentation and talk about some of the interesting information that the students learned about National Forest Week.

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 7 to assist you as you write your news article.

News Article Notes

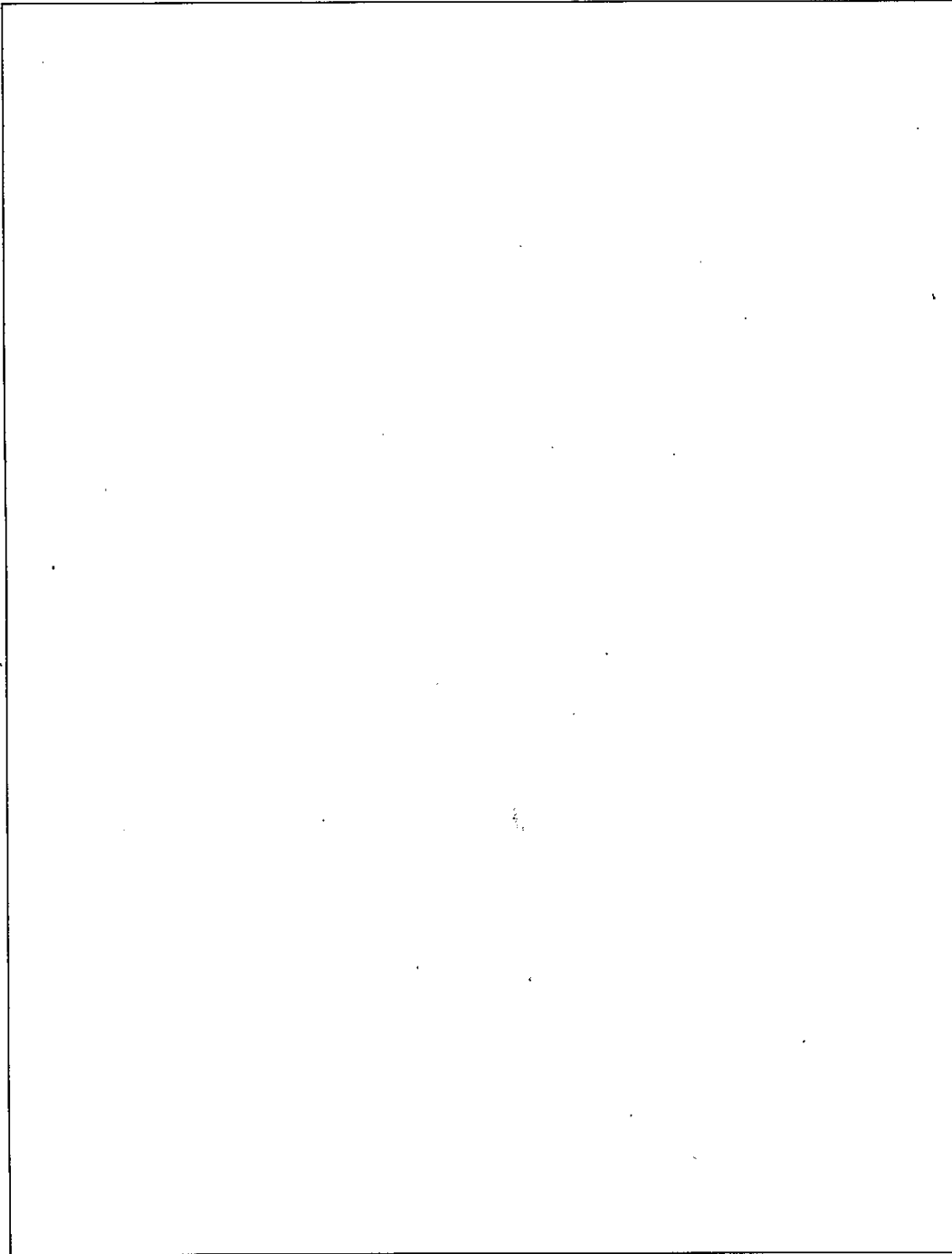
<p>What happened? —Grade 6 students gave a presentation on National Forest Week</p> <p>When? —last week</p> <p>Where? —at the school</p> <p>Who was involved? —Grade 6 students</p> <p>Purpose of the presentation —to learn more about Alberta’s forests —to increase awareness of the importance of forests —to encourage a greater understanding of our environment</p>	<p>Interesting Facts —National Forest Week started in 1926 —there are more than 5 000 products made from trees —forests provide people with recreational areas —originally called Forest Fire Prevention Week —forests help to provide clean water and air —usually first week in May —forestry is Alberta’s third-largest industry —forests cover about 60 percent of the province —forests provide habitat for wildlife —forests provide food and products for human use —a variety of special events are planned in many communities to celebrate National Forest Week</p>
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**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 3A

Section II: Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the central portion of the page. It is intended for the student to use for planning their work.

Student Exemplar 3A

National Forest Week

(Headline)

Kelly Brown

Sun

On Friday May-5 the Grade six students gave a speech on National Forest Week.

The reason the students of grade six are giving this speech is so people will be more aware on how important the forest is, to teach people about Alberta's forest, and to encourage a better understanding of the environment.

National Forest week started in 1926.

Alberta's forest is so important because it gives wild life a habitat, over 5000 products are made from trees, the forest food water and clean air.

After the speech there was a dramatic change like not as much garbage on the ground and more people recycle there paper.

**GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
RATIONALE FOR STUDENT EXEMPLAR 3A**

Functional 3A

Headline: National Forest Week

Score	Reporting Category
3	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 • The ideas are adequately developed, and organization of the news article is adequate (“On Friday May. 5 the Grade six students gave a speech on National Forest Week,” “The reason the students of grade six are giving this speech,” and “After the speech”). 3 • Some information is given, and this information is supported by enough details to fulfill the purpose of the assignment (“teach people about Alberta’s forest” and “better understanding of the environment”). 3 • A tone appropriate for the assignment is generally maintained (“On Friday May. 5” and “Alberta's forest is so important”).
3	<p>Content Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 • Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective (“people will be more aware on how important the forest is” and “dramatic change”). 3 • The writing demonstrates basic control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics (“After the speech there was a dramatic change like not as much garbage on the ground and more people recycle there paper”). 3 • Errors that are present occasionally reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication (“the forest food water and clean air”). <p>Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.</p>

Student Exemplar 3B

Section II: Functional Writing

Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.

The graphic organizer is a large inverted triangle with a horizontal line near the top. The text is written in the top section of the triangle, divided into three lines by the horizontal line and the top edge of the triangle.

Headline: Grade Six Students give presentation on National Forest Week.

Secondary headline: Grade Six Students are a success!

Lead: last week

Student Exemplar 3B

Grade Six Students Give Presentation
On National ^(Headline) Forest Week.

Grade six students are a success!

Last week at around 11:45am,

Grade six students gave a presentation

on National Forest Week + got

+ gold medal for their presentation.

Some interesting facts

about national Forest Week are:

the program started in 1926. In

Alberta, Forestry is the third-

largest industry + forest provide

food + products for our use.

Forests also provide a habitat

Student Exemplar 3B

for wildlife, they help provide clean water + air, + forests cover 100% of the province.

I "I thought their ^{presentation} was breath taking." exclaims Mrs. Robinson, a former teacher at the school. "The presentation took us three weeks to complete + make it the best that it could be." explains one of the grade six students. "If I had to grade it, I would give it $\frac{9}{10}$." states the school librarian.

**GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
RATIONALE FOR STUDENT EXEMPLAR 3B**

Functional 3B

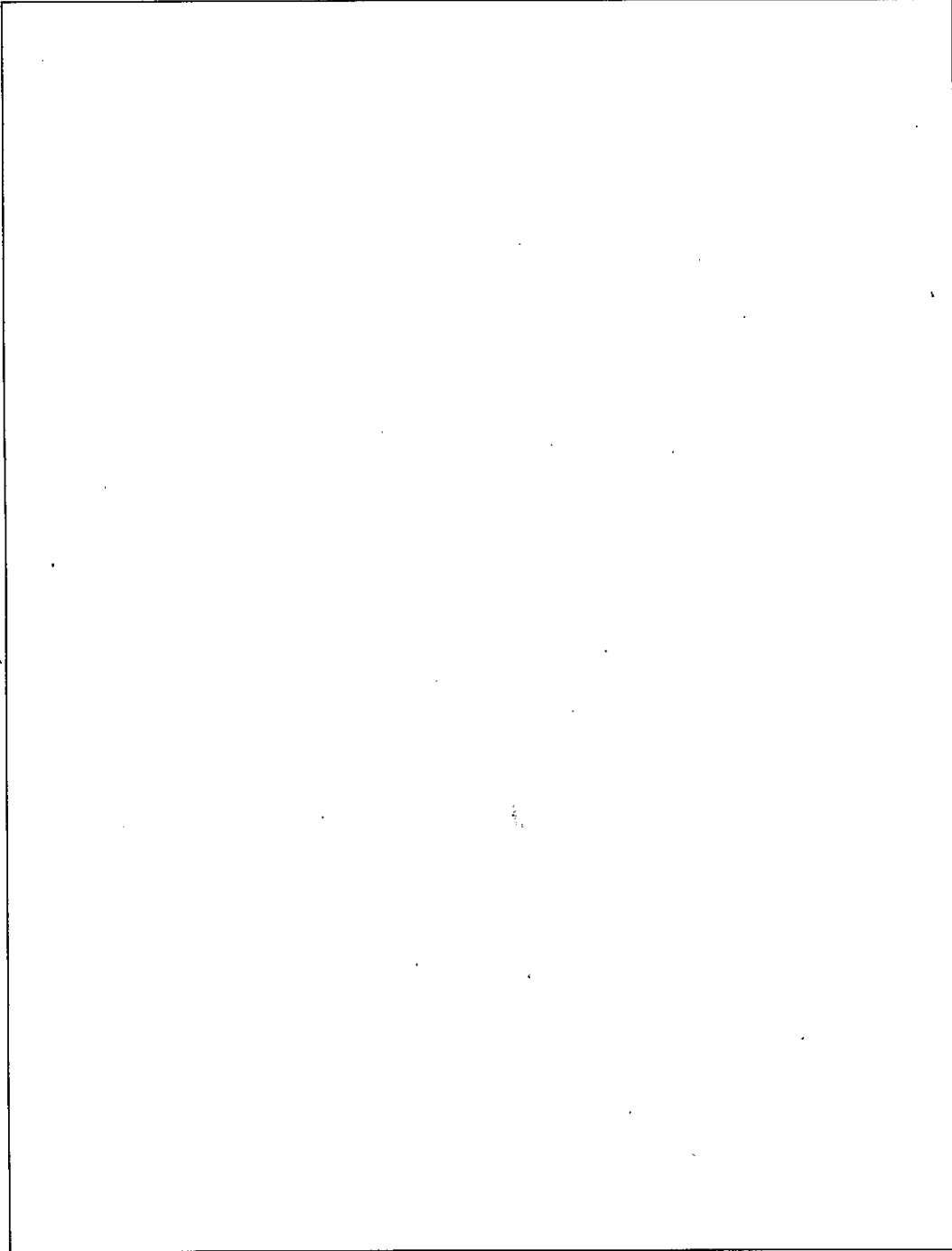
Headline: Grade Six Students Give Presentation On National Forest Week

Score	Reporting Category
3	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 • The ideas are adequately developed and organization is adequate (students give a presentation and the article talks about the facts: “Last week” and “Some interesting facts”). 3 • Some information is given, and this information is supported by enough details to fulfill the purpose of the assignment (“program started in 1926,” “forestry is the third-largest industry,” and “Forests also provide a habitat for wildlife”). 3 • A tone appropriate for the assignment is generally maintained (“Grade six students are a succes!” and “‘the best that it could be.’ explains one of the grade six students”).
3	<p>Content Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 • Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective (“forests cover 60% of the province” and “I thought their presentation was breath taking”). 3 • The writing demonstrates basic control of sentence structure, usage (“gold metal” and “states the school librarian”), and mechanics (“Some interesting facts about national forest week are:” and “exclames”). 3 • Errors that are present occasionally reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication (“& got & gold metal” and “exclames Mrs. Robinson, a formal teacher at the school”). <p>Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.</p>

Student Exemplar 4

Section II: Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the central portion of the page. It is intended for the student to use for planning their response.

Student Exemplar 4

A school For National Forest Week

(Headline)

Last week, at [redacted] school, the grade 6 students gave a large presentation on National Forest week. They did this to encourage a greater understanding of the importance of Alberta's forest environment.

National forest week, originally called Forest fire prevention week, started on the first week of May, 1926. Because Forestry is Alberta's 3rd largest industry and over 5000 products are made from trees there are a variety of events planned in many communities to celebrate National forest week.

Forests cover about 60% of our province and it is important for it to stay that way for many reasons. First of all, forests help provide clean water and air for us. Second of all, forests provide food and products for our use and last but not least, forest provide habitats for animals.

Brooklyn, a student from [redacted] elementary says, "If we don't take care of our forests"

Student Exemplar 4

how is it supposed to take care of us. With no trees the world would be such a dirty, ugly place. So please give respect to our forests. Keep this world as the beautiful place it is!

**GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
RATIONALE FOR STUDENT EXEMPLAR 4**

Functional 4

Headline: A School For National Forest Week

Score		Reporting Category
4	4	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ideas are generally well developed, and organization of the news article is generally effective (“Last week, ... the grade 6 students gave a large presentation on National Forest week,” “National forest week, originally called forest fire Prevention week,” and “Keep this world as the beautiful place it is!”).
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete information is presented, and this information is substantiated by appropriate details that fulfill the purpose of the assignment (“If we don’t take care of our forests how is it supposed to take care of us”).
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tone appropriate for the assignment is clearly maintained (“Brooklyn, a student from ... elementary” and “So please give respect to our forests”).
4	4	<p>Content Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words and expressions used are usually accurate and effective (“First of all,” “and last but not least,” and “With no trees the world would be such a dirty, ugly place”).
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writing demonstrates competent and generally consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics (“They did this to encourage a greater understanding of the importance of Alberta’s forest environment”).
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors that are present do not reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication (“there are a variety of events planned in many communities to celebrate National forest week”). <p>Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.</p>

Student Exemplar 5

Section II: Functional Writing

Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.

National Forest Week Upnear! ← headline

Students of [redacted] do their part for environment. - secondary

Lead → "Forests are an important thing," stated Michelle [redacted] of [redacted] school, while she was doing a special presentation last week for National Forest Week.

Important → National forest week started in 1926, and has been very important ever since. The city has been having special celebrations, the students have been telling why the forest was important

Less Important → Forest week is usually the first week in May, forestry is important to Alberta.

Student Exemplar 5

National Forest Week Uproar!

(Headline)

Students of [redacted] do their part for environment. ← Secondary

Michelle [redacted], grade 6 student at [redacted]

school, held a special presentation for National Forest

Week, last week, May 1st, 06. "Our forests are very

important. They supply us with clean water and air,

and they also house many wild creatures," states Michelle,

"In honor of our forests, we celebrate National Forest

Week!"

National Forest Week started in 1926, and is

still very important. Our forests cover 60% of Alberta,

and forestry is the third largest industry in Alberta.

More than 5 000 products are made from trees.

Student Exemplar 5

Forests also give us many recreational activities. We get lots of our food from forests, and should be proud that we have them.

"I think it's excellent that we have forests!" exclaimed Madame [REDACTED], principal of the school, "Every wonderful tree one should do their part in preserving our forests."

Celebrations have been held all across the city, people from all over celebrating what Alberta has to offer.

"Just think of it all as equivalent exchange," Michelle remarked at the presentation, "if we do good for our forests, they'll do good for us." People may also like to know that National Forest Week was originally known as "Forest Fire Prevention Week."

Student Exemplar 5

"Save our forests!" exclaimed Michelle, when
she finished her presentation, "It's important!"

**GRADE 6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
RATIONALE FOR STUDENT EXEMPLAR 5**

Functional 5

Headline: National Forest Week Uproar!

Score	Reporting Category
5	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 • The ideas are well developed, and organization of the news article is clear and effective. 5 • Complete information is presented (“Our forests cover 60% of Alberta, and forestry is the third largest industry in Alberta”) and is enhanced by precise and appropriate details that effectively fulfill the purpose of the assignment (“Just think of it all as equivalent exchange ... if we do good for our forests, they’ll do good for us”). 5 • A tone appropriate for the assignment is clearly and effectively maintained (“Students of ... do their part for enviroment,” “Celebrations have been held all across the city,” and “People may also like to know”).
5	<p>Content Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 • Words and expressions used are consistently accurate and effective (“house many wild creatures,” “In honor of our forests,” “people from all over celebrating what Alberta has to offer,” “remarked,” “People may also like to know,” and “exclaimed Michelle”). 5 • The writing demonstrates confident and consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics (“ ‘Save our forests!’ exclaimed Michelle, when she finished her presentation, ‘It’s important!’ ”). 5 • Errors, if present, do not reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication (“enviroment” and “I think it’s excellent the we have forests!”). <p>Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.</p>