



ISTEP+: Grade 8

English/Language Arts

Released Part 1 Applied Skills (open-ended) Items
and Scoring Notes

Introduction

The *ISTEP+* Spring 2016 test was administered to Indiana students in Grades 3-8 and 10. The test included two parts: Part 1 was given in March, and Part 2 took place in late April and early May. Part 1 contained Applied Skills test questions (also referred to as open-ended items) that were hand scored by trained evaluators, and Part 2 was machine scored. Scores for Part 1 and Part 2 are combined to generate a student's total score.

Test results, as well as images of the Applied Skills student responses, are available online, and schools are expected to discuss results with parents and students. As a springboard for these conversations and to serve as a resource for teachers, the Indiana Department of Education has created this document, which consists of the following:

- a brief description of the types of questions on the test
- a short summary of scoring rules utilized by the trained evaluators
- a copy of the rubrics—or scoring guides—used by evaluators to score student responses
- a copy of the released Applied Skills questions (*“released” means the items are posted on the web and are no longer secure; therefore, the released test items can be discussed and used with students as future practice items*)
- anchor papers—or sample student responses—used by evaluators to distinguish between score points

Notes:

- The Part 1 open-ended questions are released when test results are made available.
- It is important to keep in mind that the majority of a student's score is calculated from items in Part 2. Since Part 2 items are secure and are not released, they are not included in this document.

Question Types

This document addresses questions from *ISTEP+ Part 1*. Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding by responding to items that are open-ended, providing written responses in a short-answer or essay-type format.

Part 1 consists of the following test question types: Constructed-Response (CR), Extended-Response (ER), and a Writing Prompt (WP). Item types vary by subject area. Math, Science, and Social Studies include CR and ER items. English/Language Arts includes CR and WP test questions.

Scoring

The questions on *ISTEP+ Part 1* are scored by evaluators who must have a four-year college degree and pass a series of qualifying tests. Prior to scoring student responses, evaluators receive extensive training to ensure that student responses are scored accurately and consistently.

For Part 1 of *ISTEP+*, each question is scored according to a rubric, or scoring guide. Rubrics clearly define the requirements for each score point. A set of student responses representing all of the score points on a rubric are selected as samples—called anchor papers—and are used as clear examples of specific score points. Anchor papers are presented within this document.

ISTEP+ Part 1: English/Language Arts		
Question Type	Score Reporting Categories	Scoring Method
Constructed-Response (CR)	Reading	2-pt. CR Rubric (Grades 3-8, 10)
Writing Prompt (WP)	Writing	6-pt. Writing Rubric (Grades 3-4, 5-8, 10) 4-pt. Grammar and Usage Rubric (Grades 3-4, 5-8, 10)

If a student's response is unable to be scored, it is assigned one of the following condition codes:

- A** Blank/No Response/Refusal
- B** Illegible
- C** Written predominantly in a language other than English
- D** Insufficient response/Copied from text
- E** Response not related to test questions or scoring rule (not applied to Mathematics questions)

More information is available regarding assessment topics on the Office of Student Assessment homepage at <http://www.doe.in.gov/assessment>.

English/Language Arts Constructed-Response Items

Session One, English/Language Arts, contains a reading comprehension task. This task allows the students to demonstrate their understanding and comprehension of nonfiction or literary text. The reading comprehension task consists of one passage and three constructed-response (CR) questions. Because this is a reading comprehension task, all of the information students need to answer the questions correctly is contained in the text. All responses should be based on information from the text and will be scored for reading comprehension *only*. The following pages display the CR questions.

An example of a top-score response is provided for each CR question. The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied the item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.

Each CR question is followed by sample student responses, called anchor papers. The anchor papers are accompanied by explanations of the score points received.

English/ Language Arts 2-point Constructed-Response (CR) Rubric

2 points	Proficient The response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The information given is text-based and relevant to the task.
1 point	Partially Proficient The response fulfills some of the requirements of the task, but some of the information may be too general, too simplistic, or not supported by the text.
0 point	Not Proficient The response does not fulfill the requirements of the task because it contains information that is inaccurate, incomplete, and/or missing altogether.

Passage

Directions

Read this excerpt from the novel *Brian's Winter*. Then answer the questions.

Excerpt from *Brian's Winter*

by Gary Paulsen

Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson is stranded in the Canadian wilderness. In this excerpt, Brian discovers that he is not alone in the shelter he has built for himself.

- 1 In the morning he pushed the door to the side gingerly, looking both ways. He didn't see the skunk and he pushed the door all the way open and went outside. Still no skunk. Before heading back for the trench he had dug for a toilet he pulled the door back over the opening—no sense taking chances—and then trotted off into the woods.
- 2 When he came back he looked all around the area and still couldn't see the skunk and he shrugged. It must have moved on.
- 3 He kindled an outside fire using coals from the shelter fire and soon had a small cooking fire going. The cold lasted longer now into the morning and the ice had moved farther out into the lake, almost forty feet from the shore all around. The rabbit-skin vest and the fire felt especially good.
- 4 He took the last of the jellied meat in the pot, added a piece of red venison, and put it on the side of the fire to cook while he took stock of his situation. The shelter was done, or as done as he could get it, and almost airtight and warm when he had a fire going inside. He had nine arrows finished, which seemed like a lot. How many times would he have to defend himself? Besides, even if he used all the arrows he could get more tips from the arrow stone, and the wood shafts would be there in the winter as well.
- 5 Winter.
- 6 The word stopped him. He knew nothing about it. At home in upstate

New York, there was snow, sometimes a lot of it, and cold at times, cold enough to make his ears sting, but he could get inside, and he had good warm clothes. Here, he suspected, the winter would be a lot worse, but he didn't know how much worse or how to prepare for it.

7 Just then the meat was done and at exactly that moment, as he pulled the pot off the fire, the skunk came waddling around the end of the rock, stopped four feet away and raised its tail.

8 "What . . ." Brian winced, waiting, but the skunk did not spray and Brian took a piece of meat from the pot and threw it on the ground next to it. The skunk lowered its tail, smelled the meat, and when it proved too hot to eat, it backed away and raised its tail again.

9 "Listen, you little robber—I'm sorry it's too hot. You'll just have to wait until it cools . . ."

10 The skunk kept its tail up, but lowered it a bit and seemed to understand, and in a moment when the meat cooled it picked up the chunk and disappeared with it around the corner of the large rock that was the back wall of Brian's shelter.

11 "Where are you going?"

12 Brian stood up and followed at a distance, moving slowly, and when he came around the rock the skunk was gone, disappeared completely.

13 "But . . ."

14 Brian walked all around the end, back again, and was on his second loop when he saw some grass wiggling at the edge where the rock met the ground. The grass here was thick and about a foot tall and hid the dirt from view. Brian moved closer and saw some fresh earth and a hole beneath the rock and as he watched he saw black-and-white fur moving down inside the hole.

15 "You're living here?" Brian shook his head. "You've moved *in* on me?"

16 The skunk stopped moving inside for a moment, then started again, and while Brian watched, little spurts of dirt came out of the entrance as the skunk dug back in under the rock.

17 Brian turned away. "Wonderful—I've got a roommate with a terminal hygiene problem . . ."

- 18 Inside of four days a routine was established. The skunk came to the entrance in the morning, flicked its tail in the air and waited to be fed. Brian fed it and it went back to its burrow until the next morning.
- 19 It wasn't exactly a friendship, but soon Brian smiled when he saw the skunk. He named it Betty after deciding that it was a female and that it looked like his aunt, who was low and round and waddled the same way. He looked forward to seeing it.

Chapter Six from BRIAN'S WINTER by Gary Paulsen, copyright © 1996 by Gary Paulsen. Used by permission of Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Item #1
Constructed-Response

Constructed-Response
Reading: Literature

Question 1

1. Explain how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Top-Score Response:

Brian knows winter is coming, so he has built a shelter for warmth that is almost airtight. He also built shelter and cooking fires, and he has a rabbit skin vest to help keep warm. In addition to keeping warm, he knows he may need to defend himself and has made nine arrows. He has even planned ahead and dug a trench for a toilet.

Note: *The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Question 1, Sample A – Score Point 2

- 1** Explain how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness. The text states, "He kindle on outside fire using coals..." (pg 25) This states that Brian has figured out how to cook his food. The text also states, "He had nine arrows finished." (pg 25) This states that he has figured out how to protect himself. That is how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The information provided helps to explain how Brian adapted to living in the wilderness (. . . Brian has figured out how to cook his food. . . he has figured out how to protect himself). This is supported by details from the text (*The text states, "He kindle on outside fire using coals. . ." "He had nine arrows finished"*).

Question 1, Sample B – Score Point 2

- 1** Explain how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness by learning how to make clothes and arrows from resources around him. He learned how to make a rabbit skin vest and how to make a bow and arrows to defend himself.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The response includes information that explains how Brian adapted to living in the wilderness (*Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness by learning how to make clothes and arrows from resources around him*). The response provides support for this with additional details from the excerpt (*He learned how to make a rabbit skin vest and how to make a bow and arrows to defend himself*).

Question 1, Sample C – Score Point 1

- 1** Explain how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness by building a shelter and hunting. In paragraph 4 it said he got the shelter done. This shows that in the wilderness Brian had to adapt.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. The information provided partially explains how Brian adapted to living in the wilderness (. . .by building a shelter and hunting). The response attempts to provide evidence as support, but the support provided is too simplistic (In paragraph 4 it said he got the shelter done).

Question 1, Sample D – Score Point 1

- 1** Explain how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Well he has adapted to it by getting what he needs for basic survival. He has a shelter, fire, food, weapons, and some clothing.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. The information provided explains how Brian adapted to living in the wilderness (. . .by getting what he needs for basic survival). The response is supported by general information from the text (He has a shelter, fire, food, weapons, and some clothing). The response needed to provide additional support such as an explanation of how Brian uses these items for survival.

Question 1, Sample E – Score Point 0

- 1** Explain how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Brian adapted to living in the wilderness so well by using his wilderness skills.

Scoring Notes: This response does not fulfill the requirements of the task because it is vague and incomplete. The statement “using his wilderness skills” remains unexplained and unsupported in this response.

Question 1, Sample F – Score Point 0

- 1** Explain how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness because he had lived there for so long. As a thirteen year old being stranded with what little he had he really had no choice but to make it work.

Scoring Notes: This response does not fulfill the requirements of the task. The information is too vague and doesn't help to explain how Brian has adapted to living in the wilderness.

Item #2
Constructed-Response

Constructed-Response
Reading: Literature

Question 2

<p>2. How does the setting impact Brian’s survival? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Top-Score Response:

Brian is stranded alone in the Canadian wilderness with winter approaching, and he recognizes the danger this presents. He is from upstate New York where he experienced winters, but he had a house and warm clothes. The text says, “Here, he suspected, the winter could be a lot worse, but he didn’t know how much worse or how to prepare for it.” He only has shelter and clothing he has made himself to stay warm here.

Note: *The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Question 2, Sample A – Score Point 2

2 How does the setting impact Brian's survival? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

The setting at the Canadian wilderness in late fall/early winter impacts Brian's survival by making it increasingly difficult and dangerous. In paragraph 6 it states "he suspected the winter would be a lot worse." This shows that Brian is worried about upcoming conditions because they could further endanger his life.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The response identifies the setting as "Canadian Wilderness in late fall/early winter" and goes on to explain that it impacts Brian's survival (. . .by making it increasingly difficult and dangerous). This is supported with a detail from the excerpt (. . . "he suspected the winter would be a lot worse." This shows that Brian is worried about upcoming conditions because they could further endanger his life).

Question 2, Sample B – Score Point 2

2 How does the setting impact Brian's survival? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

The setting impacts Brian's survival by making him have to keep himself warm. In Canada "the winter would be a lot worse." He could make a rabbit-skin vest and a fire to keep himself warm also.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The setting is identified as "Canada" and goes on to explain the impact to Brian (*The setting impacts Brian's survival by making him have to keep himself warm. In Canada "the winter would be a lot worse."*). This is supported by relevant information from the text showing how Brian overcomes the challenges of the setting (*He could make a rabbit-skin vest and a fire to keep himself warm also*).

Question 2, Sample C – Score Point 1

2 How does the setting impact Brian’s survival? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

The setting impacts it because it's winter and that means he has to find ways to stay warm in the brutal canadian winter.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. The response describes the setting as “it’s winter” and explains that this impacts his survival (. . . *he has to find ways to stay warm in the brutal canadian winter*). The response does not provide specific details from the text to support the answer.

Question 2, Sample D – Score Point 1

2 How does the setting impact Brian’s survival? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

He has to hunt for his food and make his own shelter

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. While the specific setting (e.g., Canada, wilderness, cold, winter) is not identified, the explanation of how the setting will impact Brian’s survival is clear (*He has to hunt for his own food and make his own shelter*). There is no additional supporting information from the text.

Question 2, Sample E – Score Point 0

2 How does the setting impact Brian's survival? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

He is surrounded by the wilderness in Canada.

Scoring Notes: This response does not fulfill the requirements of the task. The response identifies the setting, but there is no explanation of how the setting impacts Brian's survival.

Question 2, Sample F – Score Point 0

2 How does the setting impact Brian's survival? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

The setting impacts Brian's survival because based on where he is at is the only reason he's doing all this, that's what is impacting on the setting. If not for the setting the story would be completely changed.

Scoring Notes: This response does not fulfill the requirements of the task because it is too vague and there is no specific information from the excerpt provided.

Item #3
Constructed-Response

Constructed-Response
Reading: Literature

Question 3

<p>3. How does Brian’s relationship with the skunk change from the beginning of the excerpt to the end? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Top-Score Response:

Brian is nervous about seeing the skunk at the beginning of the excerpt. The text says, “. . .he pushed the door to the side gingerly, looking both ways.” Brian is not happy when the skunk shows up, and he has to feed it to stop it from spraying him. He refers to it as “you little robber.” He then discovers that the skunk is living next to his shelter. He establishes a routine with the skunk, feeding it when it flicks its tail, and he now looks forward to seeing “Betty.”

Note: *The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Question 3, Sample A – Score Point 2

- 3** How does Brian’s relationship with the skunk change from the beginning of the excerpt to the end? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

In the beginning of the excerpt, Brian has a scared view of the skunk. "In the morning, he pushed the door to the side gingerly, looking both ways. He didn't see the skunk and he pushed the door all the way open." After that he starts feeding the skunk, and the narrator says "It wasn't exactly a friendship, but soon Brian smiled when he saw the skunk." The view changed from negative to positive.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The information provided helps to explain the changing relationship between Brian and the skunk. The specific descriptions of the relationship (*Brian has a scared view of the skunk*) and (*The view changed from negative to positive*) are supported by relevant details from the text. The details provided ("In the morning, he pushed the door to the side gingerly, looking both ways. He didn't see the skunk and he pushed the door all the way open") and ("It wasn't exactly a friendship, but soon Brian smiled when he saw the skunk") help to support the changing relationship.

Question 3, Sample B – Score Point 2

- 3** How does Brian’s relationship with the skunk change from the beginning of the excerpt to the end? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Brian's relationship with the skunk changes because at first he did not want anything to do with it, but then it became a regular thing to feed the skunk. Brian became happy when he saw the skunk. "He looked forward to seeing it."

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The response explains how Brian’s relationship with the skunk changes from the beginning of the excerpt to the end (Brian’s relationship with the skunk changes because at first he did not want anything to do with it, but then it became a regular thing to feed the skunk). The response uses relevant details as support ("He looked forward to seeing it").

Question 3, Sample C – Score Point 1

- 3** How does Brian’s relationship with the skunk change from the beginning of the excerpt to the end? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

At first he doesn't like it because
it took all his food and would threaten
him.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. The response includes text-based information which helps to explain how Brian felt about the skunk at the beginning of the passage (*At first he doesn't like it because it took all his food and would threaten him*). Although the response does not show how the relationship changed, the phrase “At first he doesn’t like it” implies that there was a change.

Question 3, Sample D – Score Point 1

- 3** How does Brian’s relationship with the skunk change from the beginning of the excerpt to the end? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

In the beginning of the excerpt Brian
is uncomfortable and is even a little mad
at the skunk. Although, towards the end of
the excerpt, Brian is happy and looks forward
to seeing the skunk everyday.

Scoring Notes: This response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. The information provided explains how Brian’s relationship with the skunk changes from the beginning (. . . *Brian is uncomfortable and is even a little mad at the skunk*) to the end (. . . *Brian is happy and looks forward to seeing the skunk everyday*). While these statements describe the changing relationship, they are not supported with relevant, text-based details.

Question 3, Sample E – Score Point 0

3 How does Brian’s relationship with the skunk change from the beginning of the excerpt to the end? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

The skunk started coming back to
Brians house because Brian was
feeding the skunk.

Scoring Notes: This response does not fulfill the requirements of the task. The response includes information from the excerpt with no indication of how the relationship changes.

Question 3, Sample F – Score Point 0

3 How does Brian’s relationship with the skunk change from the beginning of the excerpt to the end? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Brian in the beginning thought the
skunk looked good, and then the
skunk became brian roommate and
he had good hygiene.

Scoring Notes: This response does not fulfill the requirements of the task because it contains information that is inaccurate (. . . *thought the skunk looked good, and then the skunk became brian roommate and he had good hygiene*).

Item #4
Writing Prompt

Writing Prompt

You have read the article "Unmasking the Face on Mars." Imagine you are a scientist at NASA discussing the Face with someone who thinks it was created by aliens. Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform.

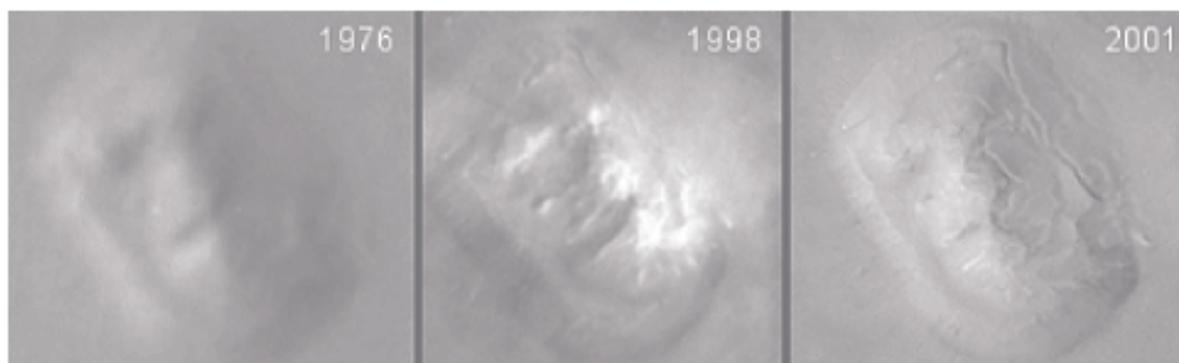
Be sure to include

- claims to support your argument that the Face is a natural landform
- evidence from the article to support your claims
- an introduction, a body, and a conclusion to your argumentative essay

Directions

Read the article “Unmasking the Face on Mars.” Then answer the questions.

Unmasking the Face on Mars



Side by side: a Viking 1 photo from 1976, a Mars Global surveyor (MGS) image from 1998, and the latest MGS image from 2001.

New high-resolution images and 3D altimetry from NASA¹'s Mars Global Survey spacecraft reveal the Face on Mars for what it really is: A mesa.

- 1 **May 24, 2001**—Twenty five years ago something funny happened around Mars. NASA's Viking 1 spacecraft was circling the planet, snapping photos of possible landing sites for its sister ship Viking 2, when it spotted the shadowy likeness of a human face. An enormous head nearly two miles from end to end seemed to be staring back at the cameras from a region of the Red Planet called Cydonia.
- 2 There must have been a degree of surprise among mission controllers back at the Jet Propulsion Lab when the face appeared on their monitors. But the sensation was short lived. Scientists figured it was just another Martian mesa, common enough around Cydonia, only this one had unusual shadows that made it look like an Egyptian Pharaoh.

¹NASA—U.S. space agency, also known as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration

3 A few days later NASA unveiled the image for all to see. The caption noted a "huge rock formation . . . which resembles a human head . . . formed by shadows giving the illusion of eyes, nose, and mouth." The authors reasoned it would be a good way to engage the public and attract attention to Mars.

4 It certainly did!

5 The "Face on Mars" has since become a pop icon. It has starred in a Hollywood film, appeared in books, magazines, radio talk shows—even haunted grocery store checkout lines for 25 years! Some people think the Face is *bona fide* evidence of life on Mars—evidence that NASA would rather hide, say conspiracy theorists. Meanwhile, defenders of the NASA budget wish there was an ancient civilization on Mars.



A 1976 Viking 1 photograph of the Face on Mars

6 Although few scientists believed the Face was an alien artifact, photographing Cydonia became a priority for NASA when Mars Global Surveyor (MGS) arrived at the Red Planet in Sept. 1997, eighteen long years after the Viking missions ended. "We felt this was important to taxpayers," explained Jim Garvin, chief scientist for NASA's Mars Exploration Program. "We photographed the Face as soon as we could get a good shot at it."

- 7 And so on April 5, 1998, when Mars Global Surveyor flew over Cydonia for the first time, Michael Malin and his Mars Orbiter Camera (MOC) team snapped a picture ten times sharper than the original Viking photos. Thousands of anxious web surfers were waiting when the image first appeared on a JPL web site, revealing . . . a natural landform. There was no alien monument after all.
- 8 But not everyone was satisfied. The Face on Mars is located at 41 degrees north martian latitude where it was winter in April '98—a cloudy time of year on the Red Planet. The camera on board MGS had to peer through wispy clouds to see the Face. Perhaps, said skeptics, alien markings were hidden by haze.
- 9 Mission controllers prepared to look again. "It's not easy to target Cydonia," says Garvin. "In fact, it's hard work." Mars Global Surveyor is a mapping spacecraft that normally looks straight down and scans the planet like a fax machine in narrow 2.5 km-wide strips. "We just don't pass over the Face very often," he noted.
- 10 Nevertheless, on April 8, 2001—a cloudless summer day in Cydonia—Mars Global Surveyor drew close enough for a second look. "We had to roll the spacecraft 25 degrees to center the Face in the field of view," said Garvin. "Malin's team captured an extraordinary photo using the camera's absolute maximum resolution." Each pixel in the 2001 image spans 1.56 meters, compared to 43 meters per pixel in the best 1976 Viking photo.
- 11 "As a rule of thumb, you can discern things in a digital image 3 times bigger than the pixel size," he added. "So, if there were objects in this picture like airplanes on the ground or Egyptian-style pyramids or even small shacks, you could see what they were!"
- 12 What the picture actually shows is the Martian equivalent of a butte or mesa—landforms common around the American West. "It reminds me most of Middle Butte in the Snake River Plain of Idaho," says Garvin. "That's a lava dome that takes the form of an isolated mesa about the same height as the Face on Mars."

Text and photographs courtesy of NASA, "Unmasking the Face on Mars," May 24, 2001 (retrieved from science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2001/ast24may_1/)

Writing Rubric Grades 5-12

SCORE POINT 6
A Score Point 6 paper is rare. It fully accomplishes the task in a thorough and insightful manner and has a distinctive quality that sets it apart as an outstanding performance.
Ideas and Content
Does the writing fully accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion/argument, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it <ul style="list-style-type: none">• present a unifying theme or main idea without going off on tangents?• stay completely focused on topic and task? Does the writing include thorough, relevant, and complete ideas? Does it <ul style="list-style-type: none">• include in-depth information and exceptional supporting facts and details that fully develop the topic?• fully explore many facets of the topic?
Organization
Are the ideas in the writing organized logically? Does the writing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• present a meaningful, cohesive whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end (i.e., include an inviting introduction and a strong conclusion)?• progress in an order that enhances meaning?• include smooth transitions between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs to enhance meaning of text (i.e., have a clear connection of ideas and use topic sentences)?
Style
Does the writing exhibit exceptional word usage? Does it <ul style="list-style-type: none">• include vocabulary to make explanations detailed and precise, descriptions rich, and actions clear and vivid (e.g., varied word choices, action words, appropriate modifiers, sensory details)?• demonstrate control of a challenging vocabulary? Does the writing demonstrate exceptional writing technique? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the writing exceptionally fluent?• Does it include varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences?• Does it demonstrate use of writer's techniques (e.g., literary conventions such as imagery and dialogue and/or literary genres such as humor and suspense)?
Voice
Does the writing demonstrate effective adjustment of language and tone to task and reader? Does it <ul style="list-style-type: none">• establish and maintain a style appropriate to purpose?• demonstrate a strong sense of audience?• exhibit an original perspective (e.g., authoritative, lively, and/or exciting)?

SCORE POINT 5

A Score Point 5 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task, but lacks the overall level of sophistication and consistency of a Score Point 6 paper.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing fully accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion/argument, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it

- present a unifying theme or main idea without going off on tangents?
- stay focused on topic and task?

Does the writing include many relevant ideas? Does it

- provide in-depth information and more than adequate supporting facts and details that fully develop the topic?
- explore many facets of the topic?

Organization

Are the ideas in the writing organized logically? Does the writing

- present a meaningful, cohesive whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end (i.e., include a solid introduction and conclusion)?
- progress in an order that enhances meaning of text?
- include smooth transitions (e.g., use topic sentences) between sentences and paragraphs to enhance meaning of text? (Writing may have an occasional lapse.)

Style

Does the writing exhibit very good word usage? Does it

- include vocabulary to make explanations detailed and precise, descriptions rich, and actions clear and vivid?
- demonstrate control of vocabulary?

Does the writing demonstrate very good writing technique?

- Is the writing very fluent?
- Does it include varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences?
- Does it demonstrate use of writer's techniques (e.g., literary conventions such as imagery and dialogue and/or literary genres such as humor and suspense)?

Voice

Does the writing demonstrate effective adjustment of language and tone to task and reader? Does it

- establish and maintain a style appropriate to purpose?
- demonstrate a sense of audience?
- exhibit an original perspective (e.g., authoritative, lively, and/or exciting)?

SCORE POINT 4

A Score Point 4 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion/argument, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it

- present a unifying theme or main idea? (Writing may include minor tangents.)
- stay mostly focused on topic and task?

Does the writing include relevant ideas? Does it

- include sufficient information with supporting facts and details that develop the topic? (Details may not be fully developed; ideas may be listed.)
- explore some facets of the topic?

Organization

Are the ideas in the writing organized logically? Does the writing

- present a meaningful whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end despite an occasional lapse (e.g., a weak introduction or conclusion)?
- generally progress in an order that enhances meaning of text?
- include transitions between sentences and paragraphs to enhance meaning of text? (Transitions may be rough, although some topic sentences are included.)

Style

Does the writing exhibit good word usage? Does it

- include vocabulary that is appropriately chosen, with words that clearly convey the writer's meaning?
- demonstrate control of basic vocabulary?

Does the writing demonstrate good writing technique?

- Is the writing fluent?
- Does it exhibit some varied sentence patterns, including some complex sentences?
- Does it demonstrate an attempt to use writer's techniques (e.g., literary conventions such as imagery and dialogue and/or literary genres such as humor and suspense)?

Voice

Does the writing demonstrate an attempt to adjust language and tone to task and reader? Does it

- establish and maintain a style mostly appropriate to purpose? (The writing may occasionally slip out of register.)
- demonstrate some sense of audience?
- attempt an original perspective?

SCORE POINT 3

A Score Point 3 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing minimally accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion/argument, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it

- attempt a unifying theme or main idea?
- stay somewhat focused on topic and task?

Does the writing include some relevant ideas? Does it

- include some information with only a few details, or list ideas with minimal facts and supporting details to develop the topic?
- explore some facets of the topic?

Organization

Is there an attempt to logically organize ideas in the writing? Does the writing

- have a beginning, a middle, or an end that may be weak or absent?
- demonstrate an attempt to progress in an order that enhances meaning? (Progression of text may sometimes be unclear or out of order.)
- demonstrate an attempt to include transitions? (Are some topic sentences used? Are transitions between sentences and paragraphs weak or absent?)

Style

Does the writing exhibit ordinary word usage? Does it

- contain basic vocabulary, with words that are predictable and common?
- demonstrate some control of vocabulary?

Does the writing demonstrate average writing technique?

- Is the writing generally fluent?
- Does it contain mostly simple sentences (although there may be an attempt at more varied sentence patterns)?
- Is it generally ordinary and predictable?

Voice

Does the writing demonstrate an attempt to adjust language and tone to task and reader? Does it

- demonstrate difficulty establishing and maintaining a style appropriate to purpose?
- demonstrate little sense of audience?
- generally lack an original perspective?

SCORE POINT 2

A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing only partially accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion/argument, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it

- attempt a main idea?
- sometimes lose focus or ineffectively display focus?

Does the writing include few relevant ideas? Does it

- include little information and few or no facts and details to develop the topic?
- explore only one or two facets of the topic?

Organization

Is there a minimal attempt to logically organize ideas in the writing?

- Does the writing have only one or two of the three elements: beginning, middle, and end?
- Is the writing sometimes difficult to follow? (Progression of text may be confusing or unclear.)
- Are transitions weak or absent (e.g., few or no topic sentences)?

Style

Does the writing exhibit minimal word usage? Does it

- contain limited vocabulary? (Some words may be used incorrectly.)
- demonstrate minimal control of vocabulary?

Does the writing demonstrate minimal writing technique?

- Does the writing exhibit some fluency?
- Does it rely mostly on simple sentences?
- Is it often repetitive, predictable, or dull?

Voice

Does the writing demonstrate language and tone that may be inappropriate to task and reader? Does it

- demonstrate difficulty establishing a style appropriate to purpose?
- demonstrate little or no sense of audience?
- lack an original perspective?

SCORE POINT 1

A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that fails to accomplish the task. It exhibits considerable difficulty in areas of development, organization, and writing style. The writing is generally either very brief or rambling and repetitive, sometimes resulting in a response that may be difficult to read or comprehend.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing fail to accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion /argument, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Is it

- difficult for the reader to discern the main idea?
- too brief or too repetitive to establish or maintain a focus?

Does the writing include very few relevant ideas?

- Does it include little information with few or no facts and details or unrelated facts and details to develop the topic?
- Is it unsuccessful in attempts to explore any facets of the prompt?

Organization

Are the ideas in the writing organized illogically?

- Does it have only one or two of the three elements: beginning, middle, or end?
- Is it difficult to follow, with the order possibly difficult to discern?
- Are transitions weak or absent (e.g., without topic sentences)?

Style

Does the writing exhibit less than minimal word usage? Does it

- contain limited vocabulary, with many words used incorrectly?
- demonstrate minimal or less than minimal control of vocabulary?

Does the writing demonstrate less than minimal writing technique? Does it

- lack fluency?
- demonstrate problems with sentence patterns?
- consist of writing that is flat and lifeless?

Voice

Does the writing demonstrate language and tone that may be inappropriate to task and reader? Does it

- demonstrate inability to establish a style appropriate to purpose?
- demonstrate a lack of a sense of audience?
- lack an original perspective?

Grammar and Usage Rubric Grades 5-8

In their writing, students will apply the Standard English conventions defined in the 2014 Indiana Academic Standards for their grade and all previous grades.

Score	Does writing exhibit a good command of language skills?
4	<p><i>In a Score Point 4 paper, there are no errors that impair the flow of communication. Errors are infrequent and have a minor impact on the overall communication; they are generally of the first-draft variety and may occur when students attempt sophisticated sentence construction.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have very few or no capitalization errors? • Do sentences have very few or no punctuation errors? • Do words have very few or no spelling errors? • Do sentences have very few or no grammar or word usage errors? • Writing has very few or no paragraphing errors. • Writing has very few or no run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Does writing exhibit an adequate command of language skills?	
3	<p><i>In a Score Point 3 paper, errors are occasional but do not impede the flow of communication; the writer's meaning is not seriously obscured by language errors.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have occasional capitalization errors? • Do sentences have occasional punctuation errors? • Do words have occasional spelling errors? • Do sentences have occasional grammar or word usage errors? • Writing may have occasional paragraphing errors. • Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Does writing exhibit a minimal command of language skills?	
2	<p><i>In a Score Point 2 paper, errors are typically frequent and may cause the reader to stop and reread part of the writing. While some aspects of the writing may be more consistently correct than others, the existing errors do impair communication. With a little extra effort on the reader's part, it is still possible to discern most, if not all, of what the writer is trying to communicate.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have frequent capitalization errors? • Do sentences have frequent punctuation errors? • Do words have frequent spelling errors? • Do sentences have frequent grammar or word usage errors? • Writing may have errors in paragraphing, or paragraphing may be missing. • Writing is likely to have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Does writing exhibit a less than minimal command of language skills?	
1	<p><i>In a Score Point 1 paper, errors are serious and numerous; they cause the reader to struggle to discern the writer's meaning. Errors are frequently of a wide variety. There may be sections where it is impossible to ascertain what the writer is attempting to communicate.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have many capitalization errors? • Do sentences have many punctuation errors? • Do words have many spelling errors? • Do sentences have many grammar and word usage errors? • Writing may have errors in paragraphing, or paragraphing may be missing. • Writing is likely to have run-on sentences or sentence fragments

NOTE: The elements of this rubric are applied holistically; no element is intended to supersede any other element. The variety and proportion of errors in relation to the length of the writing sample are considered. A very brief paper consisting of two or three sentences may receive no more than 2 score points.

Writing Prompt, Sample A
Writing – Score Point 6
Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

In 1976, NASA's Viking 1 spacecraft took a photo of Mars, and there appeared to be a massive human-like face on the planet. Ever since then, skeptics have been saying that this is evidence of ancient civilizations on Mars. How can they still think that? Looking at the newest photo, released by NASA in 2001, the landform is clearly just a mesa, which is formed by natural processes. I have no doubt that this object is merely a large mound of rock.

Sure, the first photograph, taken in 1976, looks very much like a face. But, if you look closely, and use evidence from the newer pictures, you can tell that this "face" is just a result of shadows. Also, this mesa is nearly two miles long, and if some form of life were to build this, it would take an extraordinary amount of time and labor. Using this information, and just by looking at the most recent pictures, you can tell that the "Face on Mars" is no an alien monument, but just a normal mesa.

Today, skeptics still think that this landform is of extraterrestrial origin. Some of these men and women think that the newest photo of the "face" is not completely accurate because of clouds and other materials blocking the structure. NASA then took another picture, on a cloudless day on this region of Mars, and released it to the public. Again, the photo did not resemble a face, but merely a mound of rock. Every pixel in the 2001 photo spans about 1.56 meters, compared to the 1976 photo, where each pixel was about 43 meters. This shows that the newest picture, which does not resemble a face, gives a much more accurate idea of what this mesa really looks like.

Other skeptics think that NASA knows this picture resembles a face, but is denying their knowledge of this. NASA would have no reason at all to do this. The discovery of life on another planet, Mars in particular, would in fact help out NASA tremendously. The organization would gain much more popularity and fame, as well as a greater budget to spend on the exploration of Mars. Therefore, NASA would have no reason to cover up any evidence they find of extraterrestrial life.

When the first photograph of this "face" was taken in 1976, it gained popularity in many ways. Still, to this day, skeptics have thought that this face-like mound on Mars was evidence of aliens. The most recent photos, though, and many other pieces of evidence, show that it is merely a mesa, just like the ones on Earth. This is why the "Face on Mars" is not at all a face, but just a natural landform.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample A

Writing – Score Point 6

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 6** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- fully accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- stays completely focused on the topic and presents a unifying central idea.
- provides in-depth information and fully developed, relevant supporting details (e.g., *The organization would gain much more popularity and fame, as well as a greater budget to spend on the exploration of Mars.*).
- organizes ideas logically and creates a meaningful, cohesive whole with a solid introduction, body, and conclusion connected with smooth transitions (e.g., *Today, skeptics still think that this landform is of extraterrestrial origin.*).
- demonstrates precise word choice with excellent writing technique, varying vocabulary throughout the essay (e.g., *Also, this mesa is nearly two miles long, and if some form of life were to build this, it would take an extraordinary amount of time and labor.*).
- is exceptionally fluent; the writer includes varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences (e.g., *Looking at the newest photo, released by NASA in 2001, the landform is clearly just a mesa, which is formed by natural processes.*).
- demonstrates a sense of audience and establishes an argumentative style appropriate to the purpose (e.g., *Ever since then, skeptics have been saying that this is evidence of ancient civilizations on Mars. How can they still think that?*).

NOTE: Per the Writing Rubric (grades 5-12), a Score Point 6 paper is rare. It fully accomplishes the task in a thorough and insightful manner and has a distinctive quality that sets it apart as an outstanding performance.

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- uses correct capitalization.
- has correct punctuation.
- has few spelling errors (e.g., *extrordinary* [extraordinary], *dening* [denying]).
- uses correct grammar.
- uses paragraphs effectively.

Writing Prompt, Sample B

Writing – Score Point 6

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

The Face on Mars is a common misconception with people who believe in other life forms. Some say that this "face" is a sign or evidence of life and it was even created by aliens. Even though this face on Mars is scientifically amazing and one of the most popular pop icons in space, it is nothing more than a land form. Scientist have proven this over the past twenty-five years.

People want to believe that this structure was built by aliens but we live in a world that has the same features and aliens didn't create them, they were geologically created. As stated in paragraph 12, ". . . picture acually shows is the Martian equivalent of a butte or mesa- land forms common around the American west." So, overall this "face" is nothing more than a land form.

The first photo taken of this Face on Mars was absolutely outstanding and created a lot of popularity for Mars. People all around the world were more then overjoyed for the second picture in 1998. But when the picture was published not every one was satisfied. When the second photograph was taken, April 1998, it was winter on Mars this month. There were clouds and haze all over Mars, so when the picture came out many people believe that the haze was covering alien markings. But what people don't realize is that the original photo was only forty three meters per pixel which didn't quite show all of the features of this structure and the things around it. In the second photo the image was 1.56 meters per pixel which is three times bigger than the original photo! So if there were any little features or even alien markings they would have appeared in the image.

Finally, the Face on Mars is nothing but an illusion to the human eye. But some people don't quite want to accept this because of their alien theory. People are believing in theories that aren't even proven over the scientific truth. Scientist have proven that this structure is nothing more than rocks and shadows. These structures are commonly found in a region of the Red Planet called Cydonia. At first this land form did quite look like a human face. But the placement of this landform has created shadows among the structure creating a common illusion to the human eye. So therefore, the Face on Mars is nothing but rocks and shadows creating an illusion for the human eye.

The Face on Mars is a common misconception with many people around the world who have theories such as the landform was created by aliens and the photos don't show everything that is there. But over the twenty-five years these theories have been proven wrong by NASA and scientific research from all over. Overall, this structure is nothing more than a illusion to the human eye.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample B

Writing – Score Point 6

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 6** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- fully accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- stays completely focused on the topic and presents a unifying central idea.
- provides in-depth information and fully developed supporting details (e.g., *But what people don't realize is that the original photo was only forty three meters per pixel which didn't quite show all of the features of this structure and the things around it.*).
- organizes ideas logically and creates a meaningful, cohesive whole with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion (e.g., *The first photo taken of this Face on Mars was absolutely outstanding and created a lot of popularity for Mars.*).
- demonstrates vivid word choice with excellent writing technique, varying vocabulary throughout the essay (e.g., *But the placement of this landform has created shadows among the structure creating a common illusion to the human eye.*).
- is fluent; the writer includes varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences (e.g., *There were clouds and haze all over Mars, so when the picture came out many people believe that the haze was covering alien markings.*).
- demonstrates an authoritative tone that demonstrates a strong sense of audience. (e.g., *People want to believe that this structure was built by aliens but we live in a world that has the same features and aliens didn't create them, they were geologically created.*).

NOTE: Per the Writing Rubric (grades 5-12), a Score Point 6 paper is rare. It fully accomplishes the task in a thorough and insightful manner and has a distinctive quality that sets it apart as an outstanding performance.

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- uses correct capitalization.
- has punctuation errors including missing commas and a comma splice (e.g., *People want to believe that this structure was built by aliens but we live in a world that has the same features and aliens didn't create them,[,] they were geologically created.*).
- has few spelling errors (e.g., *sciencitificaly* [scientifically], *acually*, [actually], *Finaly* [Finally]).
- uses mostly correct grammar (e.g., *Scientist* [Scientists], *then* [than], *every one* [everyone]).
- uses paragraphs effectively.

Writing Prompt, Sample C

Writing – Score Point 5

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

Aliens, mermaids, UFOs. All of these things are just conspiracy theories. A face on the side of Mars is strange, but does one really believe it was created by aliens? The Face on Mars is just a natural landform because when they took the picture for the first time they didn't have magnificent technology like we do today. When they took the picture the second time there were many clouds which made the picture unclear, and the third time's always a charm, right?

In 1976, a NASA spacecraft was looking for a good place to land when all of a sudden they see a face. No, somebody wasn't trying to scare them. The people in the Jet Propulsion Lab snapped pictures trying to get a good look, but in the mid-1970's they didn't have great technology to produce a clear image. However, that didn't stop the theories. The face carved in the side of Mars was everywhere and seemed to be the topic of every conversation.

On April 5, 1998, Mars Global Surveyor flew over a region of the Red Planet called Cydonia where "The Face" was located. They did have better technology about twenty-two years later. However, it wasn't the technology that caused an unclear picture. It was winter in Cydonia when the photograph was taken and the camera had to look through clouds. Therefore it produced a foggy picture.

The third time's a charm. When they snapped the picture for a third time "on April 8, 2001- a cloudless summer day in Cydonia." There was excellent technology and great weather and no reason a clear picture couldn't be produced. Just that happened. A crystal clear photo was taken and it proved that The Face on Mars was just a strange-looking landform.

Yes, people have come up with conspiracy theories and some are even believable. However, The Face on Mars is just a landform and it was not created by aliens. It's just a landform because NASA has produced photos to prove it and some of the scientists who work for NASA want there to be life on Mars. So it makes sense to say that if there were life on Mars we would probably know it by now.

The Face on Mars has been the talk of every grocery store probably and has made it into movies all because some people think that it was created by aliens, but it was NOT. The Face is just a mesa because NASA has creditable photos to prove it and scientists want there to be life on Mars so if there was they would be ecstatic and would probably want to share with the world their giant discovery.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample C

Writing – Score Point 5

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 5** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- fully accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- stays focused on the topic with a unifying central idea.
- includes many ideas that are well developed with relevant details (e.g., *It was winter in Cydonia when the photograph was taken and the camera had to look through clouds.*).
- is organized logically with an introduction, body, and conclusion (e.g., *In 1976, a NASA spacecraft was looking for a good place to land when all of a sudden they see a face.*).
- exhibits more than adequate word usage (e.g., *A crystal clear photo was taken and it proved that The Face on Mars was just a strange-looking landform.*).
- is fluent and uses varied sentence patterns (e.g., *The people in the Jet Propulsion Lab snapped pictures trying to get a good look, but in the mid-1970's they didn't have great technology to produce a clear image.*).
- displays an appropriate register and awareness of audience for the task (e.g., *A face on the side of Mars is strange, but does one really believe it was created by aliens?*).

NOTE: A Score Point 5 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task, but lacks the overall level of sophistication and consistency of a Score Point 6 paper.

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- uses correct capitalization.
- has mostly correct punctuation with some missing commas.
- has few spelling errors (e.g., *believeable*, [believable], *probaly* [probably]).
- has correct word usage.
- has some sentence fragments. Some are used stylistically; however, one is unintentional (e.g., *When they snapped the picture for a third time "on April 8, 2001- a cloudless summer day in Cydonia."*).
- uses paragraphs correctly.

Writing Prompt, Sample D

Writing – Score Point 5

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

Could there ever have been life on Mars? When NASA first discovered a rock formation that resembled a face, many people believed that NASA had found an ancient martian civilization. It was later proved just to be a natural formation. In the following paragraphs, I will explain why the face could not be made by aliens.

When NASA released the first photograph of the face, the caption said that the face was a natural formation that resembled a face. People saw this and thought that it was sure evidence that there was once life on Mars. Conspiracy theorist said that NASA was just trying to hide the fact. This doesn't make sense because this evidence would benefit NASA, so they wouldn't hide it.

In September 1997, the Mars Global Surveyor took pictures of the face. After the pictures came back scientists proved there was no civilization, just a landform. Some people still didn't believe if even thought the images were ten times sharper.

In 2001 the Mars Global surveyor took one more look at this unusual land form. Michael Malin and his team took pictures using the Mars Orbiter camera's maximum resolution. Each pixel spans 1.56 meters instead of 43 meters per pixel in the original picture. According to Jim Garvin, if there were signs of an ancient civilization, such as pyramids or small shacks, you would have been able to see them in this picture.

So if the face is not part of an ancient civilization, then what is it? The face is actually a Martian equivalent to a butte or mesa. These are common in the American West. Jim Garvin compares the face to the Middle Butte in the Snake River plain in Idaho.

There is so much evidence that the face on Mars is just natural. If it was made by aliens, there would have been some sort of other signs of civilization around it such as some kind of shelter. But even with the maximum amount of resolution on the camera, you couldn't see anything.

Also since the landform is similar to ones on Earth, chances are it formed the same way. It just happens to look similar to a face. Shadows make an illusion that resembles eyes, a mouth, and a nose.

In conclusion, there is no way that the face could have been made by alien creatures. Even with NASA's sharpest images, no one could see any evidence around the face of civilization. NASA wouldn't hide it if there was evidence of civilization because it would benefit them. You now know many reasons why the face wasn't made by aliens; it is just a natural landform.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample D

Writing – Score Point 5

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 5** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- fully accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- stays focused on the topic.
- includes many ideas that are well developed with relevant details (e.g., *According to Jim Garvin, if there were signs of an ancient civilization, such as pyramids or small shacks, you would have been able to see them in this picture.*).
- is organized logically with an introduction, body, and conclusion (e.g., *When NASA released the first photograph of the face, the caption said that the face was a natural formation that resembled a face.*).
- exhibits more than adequate word usage (e.g., *But even with the maximum amount of resolution on the camera, you couldn't see anything.*).
- is easy to read and uses varied sentence patterns (e.g., *If it was made by aliens, there would have been some sort of other signs of civilization around it such as some kind of shelter.*).
- displays an appropriate tone and awareness of audience for the task (e.g., *So if the face is not part of an ancient civilization, then what is it?*).

NOTE: A Score Point 5 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task, but lacks the overall level of sophistication and consistency of a Score Point 6 paper.

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- uses mostly correct capitalization (e.g., *martian* [Martian], *survayor* [Surveyor], *each* [Each]).
- has correct punctuation.
- has spelling errors (e.g., *civilazation* [civilization], *useing* [using], *orginal* [original]).
- has mostly correct word usage (e.g., *theorist* [theorists], *pixles* [pixel]).
- uses paragraphs correctly.

Writing Prompt, Sample E

Writing – Score Point 4

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

The Face on Mars has been a debate on whether or not it is a sign of life on that planet or just another everyday hill you might find in our western states here on Earth. Obviously it is clear in the photographs now, that it is some sort of giant landform. Yet some conspiracy theorists believe that aliens have something to do with it, or that NASA is keeping evidence or information hidden from the people.

NASA has been keeping people up-to-date with the pictures of the Face since 1976 and even took the others with better resolution. When people insisted that before they thought something like a haze was interfering with the camera from getting a perfectly clear shot on what still might be down there. NASA took yet another photo with no "haze" on a clear summer day, proving that there was nothing to see. It just goes to show that if the NASA team really had found alien life or something along those lines, they wouldn't have been so eager to publically put them online for the whole world to see. Also if anything was found NASA would have benefited from it immensely. "Meanwhile, defenders of the NASA budget wish there was an ancient civilization on Mars" (Unmasking The Face On Mars 43).

As you can see there is nothing that NASA is trying to cover up and there is no real way for skeptics or conspiracy theorists to have solid evidence of any ancient civilization or any life for that matter. So before you question the facts with fiction, find out the evidence.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample E

Writing – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- stays focused on the topic.
- includes sufficient information and supporting details (e.g., *NASA took yet another photo with no “haze” on a clear summer day, proving that there was nothing to see.*)
- progresses in a logical order with an introduction, body, and conclusion (e.g., *As you can see there is nothing that NASA is trying to cover up and there is no real way for skeptics or conspiracy theorists to have solid evidence of any ancient civilization or any life for that matter.*)
- demonstrates control of vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic (e.g., *Yet some conspiracy theorists believe that aliens have something to do with it, or that NASA is keeping evidence or information hidden from the people.*)
- uses varied sentence patterns (e.g., *It just goes to show that if the NASA team really had found alien life or something along those lines, they wouldn’t have been so eager to publically put them online for the whole world to see.*)
- displays an appropriate register and sense of audience (e.g., *Obviously it is clear in the photographs now, that it is some sort of giant landform.*)

NOTE: A Score Point 4 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, and more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- has correct capitalization.
- has mostly correct punctuation with some missing commas.
- has few spelling errors (e.g., *publicaly* [publically], *emensly* [immensely]).
- has correct word usage.
- has a sentence fragment (e.g., *When people insisted that before they thought something like a haze was interfering with the camera from getting a perfectly clear shot on what still might be down there.*)
- uses paragraphs correctly.

Writing Prompt, Sample F

Writing – Score Point 4

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

Many people think the Face on Mars is alien made. This isn't true because it would benefit NASA, it's similar to Earth landforms, and it has been proven there is just a landform. I believe it is just a landform on Mars.

If there was something NASA wouldn't hide it because it would benefit them. According to the text, "Meanwhile defenders of the NASA budget wish there was an ancient civilization on Mars." This shows that NASA wants there to be one.

The Face is similar to Earth landforms. According to the text, "What the picture actually shows is the Martian equivalent of a butte or mesa- landforms common around the American West." This means there are similar landforms on Earth. Also the text said "It reminds me most of Middle Butte in the Snake River Plain of Idaho," says Garvin. "That's a lava dome that takes the form of an isolated mesa about the same height as the Face on Mars."

It's been proven it's just a landform. According to the text, "So, if there were objects in this picture like airplanes on the ground or Egyptian-style pyramids or even small shacks, you could see what they were." This shows that if something was there you could see it.

Some people might say that it is alien made and NASA is just covering it up, but NASA would benefit from this.

In conclusion, the Face on Mars is just a mesa. NASA isn't covering anything up because they would benefit from it, it is similar to landforms on Earth, and pictures show it is just a landform.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample F

Writing – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- stays focused on the topic.
- includes sufficient information and supporting details, mostly quoted directly from the text (e.g., *According to the text, “What the picture actually shows is the Martian equivalent of a butte or mesa- landforms common around the American West.”*).
- progresses in a logical order with an introduction, body, and conclusion (e.g., *NASA isn’t covering anything up because they would benefit from it, it is similar to landforms on Earth, and pictures show it is just a landform.*).
- demonstrates control of vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic (e.g., *Some people might say that it is alien made and NASA is just covering it up, but NASA would benefit from this.*).
- uses some varied sentence patterns (e.g., *If there was something NASA wouldn’t hide it because it would benefit them.*).
- displays an appropriate register (e.g., *This shows that if something was there you could see it.*).

NOTE: A Score Point 4 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, and more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- has mostly correct capitalization (*mars* [Mars]).
- has mostly correct punctuation (e.g., *Also the text said [,] “It reminds be most of Middle Butte in the Snake River Plain of Idaho,” says Garvin.*).
- has few spelling errors (e.g., *benefit* [benefit]).
- has mostly correct word usage (e.g., *This mean* [This means]).
- uses paragraphs correctly.

Writing Prompt, Sample G

Writing – Score Point 3

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 3

The face on Mars was used as a great attraction site. It was discovered nearly 25 years ago. A ship was circling Mars looking for a place for the second ship to land. Then they spotted something that looked exactly like a human face. They say it looked like an Egyptian pharaoh. Then people were wondering how it got there. Some say it was made by aliens and some think it is not possible for that to happen. So NASA went back to Mars. They took more pictures and revealed that it was not made by aliens. It is a lava dome and the face features are just shadows. Some conspiracy theorists say that they are incorrect. It was winter in Mars at that time so it could have been possible that it was too cloudy and wispy for them to see and take pictures clearly. They are wrong because NASA has professionals. They would have noticed life on Mars a long time ago. We have evidence that it is just a lava dome. The eyes, nose, and mouth are just shadows. It even said in the passage in the picture you would be able to see and airplanes, pyramids, or shacks you would be able to spot them out very easily. We hope you understand that there is no alien life on Mars.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample G

Writing – Score Point 3

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 3** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- minimally accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- stays focused on the topic.
- includes a few supporting details in a list-like manner (e.g., *It is a lava dome and the face features are just shadows.*).
- attempts to logically organize ideas with single sentence introduction and conclusion and a brief body presented in one paragraph (e.g., *We hope you understand that there is no alien life on Mars.*).
- demonstrates control of basic vocabulary and uses mostly simple sentences with some attempt at more varied sentence patterns (e.g., *It was winter in Mars at that time so it could have been possible that it was to cloudy and wispy for them to see and take pictures clearly.*).
- demonstrates an attempt to adjust language and tone to task (e.g., *We have evidence that it is just a lava dome.*).

NOTE: A Score Point 3 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 3

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 3** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- has few capitalization errors (e.g., mars [mars], egyptian [Egyptian]).
- has spelling errors (e.g., *happend* [happen], *whispy* [wispy], *professionals* [professionals]).
- has usage errors (e.g., a [an], to [too]).
- has a run-on sentence (e.g., *It even said in the passage in the picture you would be able to see and airplanes, pyramids, or shacks you would be able to spot them out very easily.*).
- has only one paragraph.

Writing Prompt, Sample H

Writing – Score Point 3

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 3

Not all things can be created by aliens. A lot of things are natural landforms. First of all aliens are not real the are made up creatures so nothing could be created by them because sometimes "As a rule of thumb, you can discern things in a digital image 3 times bigger than the pixel size" he added.

Whichever you may believe if aliens are real or not that's your choice but we have no proof of aliens being real. If aliens were real they could not create landforms like that. Natural landforms just form. sometimes they form in weird spots. Just because it formed on mars does not mean an alien created that landform.

However some people do believe that aliens are real but we have no proof that they are real. Natural Landforms don't form right away it takes years for them to form and we don't know if that landform was there before scientists had the technology to see the landform. sometimes people believe a lot of facts that are not true but we probably never know if the landform was created by aliens or if it was just a natural landform.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample H

Writing – Score Point 3

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 3** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- minimally accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- stays somewhat focused on the topic.
- includes a few supporting details that are developed (e.g., *Natural Landforms don't form right away it takes years for them to form. . .*).
- attempts to organize ideas with an introduction, body, and conclusion; however, the progression of ideas is somewhat unclear (e.g., *First of all aliens are not real the are made up creatures so nothing could be created by them because sometimes "As a rule of thumb, you can discern things in a digital image 3 times bigger than the pixel size" he added.*).
- demonstrates control of basic vocabulary and attempts to use more complex sentences (e.g., *However some people do believe that aliens are real but we have no proof that they are real.*).
- demonstrates an attempt to adjust language and tone to task (e.g., *Not all things can be created by aliens.*).

NOTE: A Score Point 3 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 3

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 3** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- has capitalization errors (e.g., *mars* [Mars], *sometimes* [Sometimes], *Landforms* [landforms]).
- has correct spelling.
- has missing commas.
- has difficulty with sentence structure, sometimes resulting in run-on sentences (e.g., *Natural Landforms don't form right away it takes years for them to form and we don't know if that landform was there before scientists had the technology to see the landform.*). Issues with sentence structure impair the flow of communication.

Writing Prompt, Sample I
Writing – Score Point 2
Grammar and Usage – Score Point 2

Many years ago like about 25 years ago Viking I spacecraft was going in circling around mars taking photos. They found a face on mars and everybody was surprised, people saying that it was an aliens artifact.

Later on people researched and made better caulation. Some spacecraft took an image that appared on JPL website that reveled a natural landform. so aliens don't exist and no human was there. It was important to taxpayers.

The unmasking face on mars is something inreasting, so theres posibility of life in mars. Aliens ain't real they couldn't make the face.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample I

Writing - Score Point 2

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 2** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- partially accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- exhibits some focus.
- provides few supporting details (e.g., *Some spacecraft took an image that appeared on JPL website that revealed a natural landform.*).
- lacks development of ideas.
- presents ideas with an introduction, limited body, and conclusion (e.g., *Many years ago like about 25 years ago Viking I spacecraft was going in circling around mars taking photos.*).
- exhibits minimal word usage and writing techniques (e.g., *Aliens ain't real they couldn't make the face.*).

NOTE: A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.

Grammar and Usage - Score Point 2

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 2** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- has capitalization errors (e.g., *mars* [Mars], *so* [So].)
- has grade-level spelling errors (e.g., *caulation* [calculations], *appeared* [appeared], *reveled* [revealed]).
- has punctuation errors (e.g., *aliens* [alien's], *theres* [there's]).
- has usage errors (e.g., *circling* [circles], *ain't* [are not]).
- has difficulty with sentence construction, resulting in some run-on sentences (e.g., *Aliens ain't real they couldn't make the face.*).
- has frequent errors in a relatively brief writing sample.

Writing Prompt, Sample J

Writing – Score Point 2

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 2

The Face on Mars may look like an alien contact system but its just a land form. We can prove it was an illusion with the pictures in 2001. Spaceman have a hard time finding the face with high tech camreas. As seen in under paragraph 5 at even the pixel have to mix colors for the reason there are too many things in that pixels veiw. In paragraph 9 a man named by Garvin says "It not easy to target Cydonia" also saying "In Fact it's hard work." In the 12th paragraph it says "What the picture actually shows is the martian equivalent of a butte or mesa.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample J

Writing - Score Point 2

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 2** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- partially accomplishes the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- exhibits some focus.
- provides few supporting details that are listed and not clearly connected (e.g., *Spaceman have a hard time finding the face with high tech camreas.*).
- lacks development of ideas.
- presents ideas with a basic introduction and no conclusion (e.g., *The Face on Mars may look like an alien contact system but its just a land form.*).
- exhibits minimal word usage and writing techniques.

NOTE: A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.

Grammar and Usage - Score Point 2

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 2** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- has capitalization errors (e.g., *Fact* [fact], *martian* [Martian]).
- has spelling errors (e.g., *camreas* [cameras], *veiw* [view]).
- has punctuation errors, including missing commas (e.g., *its* [it's]).
- has usage errors (e.g., *Spaceman* [Spacemen], *As seen in under paragraph 5* [As seen in paragraph 5], *a man named by Garvin* [a man named Garvin]).
- has frequent errors in a relatively brief writing sample.

Writing Prompt, Sample K

Writing – Score Point 1

Grammar and Usage – Score Point 1

The face in mars is not a face it look like a big foot print. if I will go to face and look at it. I will find out if it is a face or not. the face it dos't look relly but it look like a big foot print.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample K

Writing - Score Point 1

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 1** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- does not accomplish the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- has less than minimal development.
- is too brief to establish an order.
- exhibits minimal word usage.
- demonstrates less than minimal writing technique.

NOTE: A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that fails to accomplish the task. It exhibits considerable difficulty in areas of development, organization, and writing style. The writing is generally either very brief or rambling and repetitive, sometimes resulting in a response that may be difficult to read or comprehend.

Grammar and Usage - Score Point 1

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 1** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- has capitalization errors (e.g., *mars* [Mars], *if* [If], *the* [The]).
- has spelling errors (e.g., *dos't* [doesn't], *relly* [really]).
- has difficulty with sentence construction (e.g., *if I will go to face and look at it.*).
- has numerous errors in a brief writing sample.

Writing Prompt, Sample L
Writing – Score Point 1
Grammar and Usage – Score Point 1

People thak Aliens made the face but it whase craed there and the dude had a better shot then the vieking.

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample L

Writing - Score Point 1

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 1** using the ISTEP+ Writing Rubric.

This sample

- does not accomplish the task (i.e., Using information in the article, write an argumentative essay to convince someone that the Face is just a natural landform).
- has less than minimal development.
- is too brief to establish an order.
- exhibits minimal word usage.
- demonstrates less than minimal writing technique.

NOTE: A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that fails to accomplish the task. It exhibits considerable difficulty in areas of development, organization, and writing style. The writing is generally either very brief or rambling and repetitive, sometimes resulting in a response that may be difficult to read or comprehend.

Grammar and Usage - Score Point 1

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 1** using the ISTEP+ Grammar and Usage Rubric.

This sample

- has a capitalization errors (e.g., *Aliens* [aliens], *vieking* [Viking]).
- has spelling errors (e.g., *thak* [think], *whase* [was], *craed* [created]).
- has numerous errors in a brief writing sample that cause the reader to struggle to discern meaning.