ISTEP+
Grade 8 Writing

The Face on Mars

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

Unmasking the Face on Mars


New high-resolution images and 3D altimetry from NASA’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.
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](image)

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 website, 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.”
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

Use the following Prewriting/Planning page to help you plan your writing. Then write your final draft on the lined pages.
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 landform. Scientists 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 actually 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 than overjoyed for the second picture in 1998. But when the picture was published not every one was satisfied. When the second photograph was taken in April 1998, it was winter on Mars this month. So 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. Scientists 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 Elysium. At first this land form did quite look like a human face. But the placement of this land form 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 world that has theories such as
the land form 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. Over all this structure is nothing
more than a illusion to the human eye.

Writing - 6 pts
The response fully accomplishes the task of writing of convincing the
reader. The student remains focused on the main argument (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) while purposely progressing through five paragraphs,
including an introduction and conclusion, and contains supporting details that fully
develop multiple facets of the topic, including a logical explanation (So, overall this
“face” is nothing more than a land form), and additional evidence concerning the
resolution of the pictures (the original photo was only forty three meters per pixel).
Evidence and descriptions from the text fully support the argument while staying
completely focused on the topic and task. The use of transitional words and phrases
enhances the meaning of the text (Even though, In the second photo, Finally, At first).
While word choice is not always precise (geologically), and the content at times
repetitious (illusion for the human eye), the writing is fluent, appropriate to the
academic purpose in its use of citations, authoritative tone, a strong sense of audience
(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), and includes varied
sentence patterns.

Language Conventions - 4 pts
The response demonstrates command of standard English sufficient for this score point. Capitalization and
spelling are, for the most part, correct, and grammar and usage errors are infrequent. While awkwardness (But some people don’t
quite want to accept this because of their alien theory), missing
commas, and choppy sentences (So there were clouds and haze all
over Mars. So when the picture came out many people believe that
the haze was covering alien markings), and other errors may be
found, these errors have only a minor impact on communication.
The Mesa on Mars

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 its 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 not 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, not a 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.
Writing - 6 pts
This response is holistically a 6, representing an outstanding performance and fully accomplishing the task in a thorough and insightful manner. The student fully develops the main idea (the landform is clearly just a mesa, which is formed by natural processes) using multiple details from the article to support this idea (e.g.: more detailed photographic proof; NASA would benefit from extraterrestrial life). The essay is organized logically, including a strong introduction and a comprehensive conclusion highlighting the essay's main points. Smooth transitions enhance meaning from idea to idea (Ever since then, Looking at the newest photo). The writing style is strong, including varied and complex sentences, as well as control of challenging vocabulary (extraordinary, extraterrestrial origin, help out NASA tremendously). A simple, but effective, rhetorical question also demonstrates the student's writing fluency and technique (skeptics have been saying that this is evidence of ancient civilizations on Mars. How can they still think that?). Voice is also present as the student has a sense of audience and establishes an argumentative style appropriate to purpose (I have no doubt that this object is merely a large mound of rock).

Language Conventions - 4 pts
This response exhibits a good command of language skills. There are no errors that impair the flow of communication. Any errors present occur when the student attempts more sophisticated sentence construction.
Aliens, mermaids, UFO’s. All of these things are just conspiracy theories. A face on the side of Mars is strange, but does anyone 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 third times always a charm, right?

In 1976, a NASA spacecraft was looking for a good place to land when all of 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 named 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 producing a foggy picture.

Third times a charm. When they snapped the picture for a third time on April 8, 2001 - a clearless summer day in Cydonia. There was excellent technology and great weather. 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 lump of rock and it was not created by aliens. It's just a lump of rock 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 topic 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 credible 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 tell the world their giant discovery.

Writing - 5 pts: The response fully develops the main idea and uses well-chosen details from the text as support. The student has thoroughly explained the relevance of the string of progressively higher resolution photos taken by NASA through effective use of citation and exposition. The response is organized, and transitions between and within paragraphs strengthen the logical progression (In 1976 . . . but in the mid-1970's . . . However . . . When they snapped the picture). An awareness of the audience enhances the response (. . . but does one really believe it was created by aliens? . . . Third time's a charm . . . Yes, people have come up with conspiracy theories and some are even believable). However, this conversational style, while fluent, is slightly inappropriate.

Language Conventions - 4 pts: The response demonstrates full command of all conventions, with few errors. Those errors present do not impair the flow of communication. Compound sentences are composed correctly.
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 theorists 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...
scientist proved there was no civilization just a landform. Some people still didn't believe it even though the images were ten times sharper.

In 2001 the Mars Global Surveyor took one more look at this unusual landform. Midway Malin and his team took pictures using the Mars Orbiter Camera's maximum resolution. Each pixels spans 1.56 meters in stead of 4.3 meters per pixel in the original picture. According to Jim Garvin, if there were signs of an ancient civilization, such as pyramids or small snaks, you would of 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 American West. Jim Garvin compares the face to the Middle Butte in Snake River Plain in Idaho.
There is so much evidence that face on Mars is just natural. If it was made by aliens, there would be 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 was 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.
From the opening paragraph, which establishes an argument (I will explain why the face could not be made by aliens) that is supported by multiple relevant ideas, logically presented and frequently elaborated (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), through several body paragraphs, each of which groups ideas effectively, to a conclusion that summarizes the response, this response represents a solid performance. Transitions between and within paragraphs strengthen the logical progression. An awareness of the audience enhances the style, although the second person, direct address used might not be found in a paper written in a more sophisticated manner.

The response demonstrates good command of language skills. The writer shows control of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling; although errors exist (accept, Peop), they do not impede the flow of communication and are of a first-draft variety.
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 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 ‘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 architects in this picture, like airplanes on the ground or Egyptian-style pyramids or even small ships, you could see what the were.” This
Shows that it 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 similar to landforms on Earth, and pictures show it is just a landform.

The response represents a good performance. It adequately develops its main topic, using three distinct arguments found in the text: discovery of an alien monument would benefit NASA, The Face is similar to landforms found on Earth, and photographic evidence. The depth of development is typical of this score point. Each argument is supported in its own body paragraph, and the essay is book ended by a repetitive introduction and conclusion. The third paragraph is more effective than the others, this uneven quality is also characteristic of a 4. The argument generally progresses, but is not assisted by many transitions between paragraphs. The attempt to use citations to support the points made lends to a mostly appropriate style, and the references to others (Many people, some people) show some sense of audience.

General command of capitalization, coupled with few errors in spelling, grammar, and usage (the [they]), shows good control of conventions. For example, the student’s command of compound adjectives shows a level of sophistication (Egyptian-style pyramids, it is alien made). While a few errors do exist, they do not impede meaning.
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 one of the states here on Earth. Obviously, if you look in the photographs now, 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 there was 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 publicly 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). 

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 the fiction, find out the evidence.
Writing - 4 pts  This response is holistically a 4. The student accomplishes the task by arguing a main idea ("Obviously it is clear...that it is some sort of giant landform.") and uses details from the text as support. There are a few different supporting details used by the student, like the fact that NASA has continually taken more detailed photos of the Face and that "defenders of the NASA budget wish there was an ancient civilization on Mars." The essay is organized logically, including an introduction and a conclusion. Transitions also help the writing progress logically ("Obviously, it just goes to show, as you can see"). The student's voice is argumentative and appropriate to the purpose, demonstrating a sense of audience and an attempt at an original perspective ("So before you question the facts with the fiction, find out the evidence").

Language Conventions - 4 pts  This response exhibits a good command of language skills. There are few errors, mostly spelling (emensely), but those present do not impair the flow of communication, and are of the first-draft variety, occurring when the student attempts more advanced skills.
Not all things can be created by aliens. A lot of things are natural landforms. First of all, aliens are not real, they 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 science 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.

**Writing - 3 pts**

This response is holistically a 3 because the student minimally develops the topic and provides some development in support of the main idea (aliens are not real so nothing could be created by them). This development, however, is minimal and lacks the relevance and depth needed to reach a higher score point. Too much time is spent telling the reader that aliens are not real without details or support for this claim. There is some organization with a beginning, middle, and an end. There are also transitions that allow for some progression (First of all, Whichever, However, Sometimes).

**Language Conventions - 3 pts**

This response exhibits an adequate command of language skills. There is no need to reread portions to comprehend the student’s intended meaning. There are occasional errors, mostly punctuation and run-on sentences, but they do not obscure the meaning of the response. There are also a few issues with capitalization and left out words. However, none of these errors seriously impede the flow of communication.
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 windy 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 love dome.
The eyes, nose, and mouth are just chomps. 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.

Writing - 3 pts
The response minimally presents and supports an argument, concluding with a plea. Some details are offered, but their relevance is unclear, since the purpose for writing is not explained well. The response is closer to a summary of the article than a persuasive essay. The student spends half the essay repeating the history of the photographs and only provides some evidence in the last few lines of the essay. While the response does logically progress from a brief introduction, through summary, to the final plea to the reader (We hope you understand that there is no alien life on Mars), that partially unifies its theme, this progression is difficult to follow because the ideas are not grouped effectively, nor are transitions used to guide the reader. There are attempts at varying sentence patterns, but the essay contains mostly simple sentences. Despite the student’s awareness of the audience, the summary nature of this response prevents it from establishing and maintaining an appropriate style.

Language Conventions - 3 pts
The response demonstrates adequate command of conventions. Occasional errors in capitalization (Egyptian), word usage (not possible for that to happen), and spelling (happened, professionals), together keep this from attaining a higher score point. Meaning is occasionally impeded (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).
The face on Mars may look like an alien contact system but it’s just a land form. We can prove it was an illusion with the pictures in 2001. Spacemen have a hard time finding the face with high tech cameras. As seen in under paragraph 5 at even the pixels have to mix colors for the reason there are too many things in that pixel’s view. In paragraph 9 an on named by Garvin says “It’s 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 buttercorn.

**Writing - 2 pts** The response presents an argument in the opening sentence and lists a few details in support, but does not explain their relevance. A basic introduction is included (The face on Mars may look like an alien contact system but it’s just a land form. We can prove it was an illusion with the pictures in 2001) but there is no conclusion. This brief attempt at development is only minimally effective. Confusing phrasing (the pixel have to mix colors for the reason there are too many things) demonstrates only minimal control of vocabulary, and the reliance on simple sentences also affects the student’s writing style. There is little sense of audience and no original perspective.

**Language Conventions - 2 pts** Errors that cause the reader to pause and reread portions of the text are relatively frequent given the length of the essay and include spelling (camreas) and word usage (As seen in under paragraph 5). To show adequate command and control of conventions in a response this brief would require demonstration of more sophisticated sentence patterns and have less error.
Many years ago like about 25 years ago Viking 1 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 alien artifact. Later on people researched and made better calculation. Some spacecraft took an image that appeared on JPL website that revealed 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 interesting, so there’s possibility of life on Mars, aliens ain’t real they couldn’t make the face.

**Writing - 2 pts** The student partially accomplishes the task by establishing a main topic and offering a few relevant details, but fails to provide sufficient support for a higher score point. Many of the details presented are repetitive (aliens don’t exist). There is a minimal attempt to logically organize the response, including an introduction and conclusion, but the progression of ideas is confusing and repetitive. Style and voice are mostly lacking, demonstrating minimal control of vocabulary and little fluency in the writing. Additionally, the student has difficulty establishing an appropriate style and demonstrates little sense of audience.

**Language Conventions - 2 pts** This response exhibits a minimal command of language skills. Errors are frequent and cause the reader to pause and reread portions of the text. The student fails to include apostrophes in contractions. There are serious errors in spelling (caulation, reveled, intresting) and grammar (people saying that it was an aliens artifact [and] aliens ain’t real they couldn’t make the face.). In this case, the variety and proportion of errors in relation to the length of the response are considered.
People thought aliens made the face but it wasn't these there and the dude had a better shot then the victim.

**Writing - 2 pts**
This response belongs at this score point because it fails to accomplish the task, offering only a single sentence containing a few ideas without facts or details to support the topic. No sense of organization, style, or voice can be discerned from such a brief response.

**Language Conventions - 2 pts**
This response exhibits less than minimal command of language skills. The errors present are numerous and cause the reader to struggle to read the response. Errors are frequent given the length of the essay and include spelling (whase [was], detter [better]), and sentence structure.
The surface 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 don't look silly but it look like a big foot print.

**Writing - 1 pt** Though clearly connected to the task, this response is holistically a 1 because it fails to accomplish the task. The student fails to offer any relevant details to support the main topic. The response exhibits difficulty in development, organization, and writing style and is too brief to establish or maintain a focus. There is no development or organization, as well as a lack of style and voice.

**Language Conventions - 2 pts** There are too many errors here for such a brief response. These errors are serious and cause the reader to struggle to read the response. Given the length of the essay, errors are frequent and include capitalization (mars), spelling (relly, dos’t) and usage (If I will go to [the] face).