



New York State Testing Program

Educator Guide to the Regents Examination in English Language Arts

Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards

Updated August 2025

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Regents of The University

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Revision Date	Revision
August 2025	<p>*All revisions are highlighted in yellow.</p> <p>p. 8, paragraph 3, a sentence was added to the paragraph</p> <p>p. 9, paragraph 4, a sentence was added to the paragraph</p> <p>p. 10, the Part 2–Writing from Sources–Argument Essay Directions were added</p> <p>p. 11, the Part 3–Text-Analysis–Response Directions were added</p> <p>p. 14, the Part 2–Writing from Sources–Argument Rubric was added</p> <p>p. 15 the Part 3–Text-Analysis–Exposition Rubric was added</p>

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Foreword

The information contained in this Educator Guide is designed to raise educator awareness of the structure of the New York State Regents Examination in English Language Arts used to measure the [New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards](https://www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction/english-language-arts) (<https://www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction/english-language-arts>).

The guide provides educators with pertinent information about the test development process, the learning standards that the test design is set to measure, and the format of the testing session, including which types of questions will be asked. Links to additional resources are provided to further enhance educators' understanding of the structure of this test. Educators are encouraged to review the guide prior to the test administration to gain familiarity with the test format. The information presented can also be used as a platform for educator discussion on how student assessment results can guide future instruction.

The High School Regents Examination testing schedule for the June 2026 administration can be found on the [New York State Education Department's website](https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/regents-examination-schedules) (<https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/regents-examination-schedules>). Questions regarding the New York State Testing Program and test design may be addressed to the Office of State Assessment at emscassessinfo@nysed.gov. Questions regarding the New York State Learning Standards may be addressed to the Office of Standards and Instruction at P12StandardsInstruction@nysed.gov.

New York State High School English Language Arts Testing Program

In September 2017, the Board of Regents adopted the New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards, which were implemented at the beginning of the 2022–2023 school year. The New York State High School English Language Arts Testing Program is designed to measure student progress on the Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards beginning in June 2026.

New York State Educators’ Involvement in Test Development

Many steps in the test development process for the Regents Examination in English Language Arts involve New York State-certified classroom teachers. For example, teachers select literary and informational passages, write and revise all test questions, and develop scoring rubrics. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) continues to expand the number of opportunities for New York State educators to become involved. New York State educators provide the critical input necessary to ensure that the tests are fair, valid, and appropriate for students through their participation in many test-development activities.

The test development process includes the development, review, and approval of test questions, construction of field and operational test forms, final approval of test forms prior to administration, and development of scoring materials. NYSED remains committed to improving the quality of the State’s assessments and the experiences that students have taking these tests. For more information on opportunities to participate in the test development process, please visit [Test Development Participation \(https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/test-development-participation-opportunities\)](https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/test-development-participation-opportunities).

The Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards

The New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards define the knowledge, skills, and understandings that individuals can and do habitually demonstrate over time when exposed to high-quality instructional environments and learning experiences. The standards are organized into four overlapping strands, which together support the development of advanced literacy skills: Reading, Writing, Language, and Speaking and Listening. The information below is meant to provide the context and expectations necessary to enable student success and inform teacher practice.

Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers

The Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers reflect the changing expectations for what it means to be literate today. Coursework and instruction based on the English Language Arts (ELA) Learning Standards should develop within the context of these Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers.

Reading

Students in Grades 9 through 12 should experience a balance of literary and informational texts in the context of instruction. Instruction should be designed to create opportunities for students to engage with a variety of authentic topics and texts and have discussions about texts that support language development and knowledge building. Creating this learning environment can take a variety of formats, including read-alouds, shared readings, paired readings, independent readings (beginning in Grade 4), and other learning activities that incorporate literacy materials, talking, and writing.

Writing

As students develop their writing skills, they will use a variety of strategies to plan, revise, and strengthen their writing as they work independently and collaboratively with adults and peers to produce texts. Students will write for multiple purposes (to entertain, to explain, to persuade) and learn about various technological tools to share and publish writing. In all writing tasks, students will learn to use and adjust language to best communicate ideas, content, and message. From Grades 9 through 12, students will further develop and refine an understanding of the distinction between—and appropriate application of—conversational and academic language.

Language

To develop academic language and enrich personal language, standards-based instruction will enable students to increasingly demonstrate linguistic knowledge and control of the conventions of academic language. This includes understanding how language functions in different contexts, making effective choices for meaning and style, comprehending more fully when reading or listening, and building skills related to vocabulary acquisition and use.

Speaking and Listening

Language develops in the classroom if there is an extended back-and-forth process of interaction among students, organized around rich content and topics. Students will build their speaking and listening skills and knowledge by participating effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with partners; expressing ideas clearly and persuasively; integrating and evaluating information presented in diverse media and formats; evaluating points of view and reasoning; reasonably and clearly presenting information with supporting evidence; ensuring that organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; making strategic use of technology; adapting speech to context; and demonstrating command of academic English.

For more information about the Next Generation Learning Standards for English Language Arts, please refer to the NYSED website (<https://www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction/english-language-arts>).

Policy Definitions

For each subject area, students perform along a continuum of the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of the Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Regents Examinations are designed to classify student performance into one of five levels based on the knowledge and skills the student has demonstrated. Due to the need to identify student proficiency, the State tests must provide students at each performance level opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards.

The performance levels are defined as:

NYS Level 5

Students performing at this level meet the expectations of the English Language Arts Learning Standards with distinction.

NYS Level 4

Students performing at this level fully meet the expectations of the English Language Arts Learning Standards. They are likely prepared to succeed in the next level of coursework.

NYS Level 3

Students performing at this level minimally meet the expectations of the English Language Arts Learning Standards. They meet the content area requirements for a Regents diploma but may need additional support to succeed in the next level of coursework.

NYS Level 2

Students performing at this level partially meet the expectations of the English Language Arts Learning Standards. Students with disabilities performing at this level meet the content area requirements for a local diploma but may need additional support to succeed in the next level of coursework.

NYS Level 1

Students performing at this level demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the English Language Arts Learning Standards below that of Level 2.

Performance Level Descriptions

Performance Level Descriptions exemplify the knowledge and skills that students at each performance level demonstrate and describe the progression of learning within a subject area. The Performance Level Descriptions play a central role in the test development process, specifically question writing and standard setting. For more information about the Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards Performance Level Descriptions, please see the [High School English Language Arts webpage](https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/high-school-english-language-arts) (<https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/high-school-english-language-arts>).

Types of Texts Featured on the Test

To meet the demands as articulated by the Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards, the Regents Examination in English Language Arts requires students to read, analyze, and/or write about a balance of authentic literary and informational texts.

Literary texts include: stories (the subgenres of adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, and satire); drama (one-act and multi-act plays); and poetry (the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free-verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads, and epics). Informational texts consist of literary nonfiction (the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, infographics, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts written for a broad audience).

Complexity of the Texts Featured on the Test

The appropriateness of texts for use on the Regents Examination in English Language Arts is evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative analysis in accordance with the requirements outlined in the [Introduction to the New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards](https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/standards-instruction/introduction-to-the-nys-english-language-arts-standards.pdf) (<https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/standards-instruction/introduction-to-the-nys-english-language-arts-standards.pdf>).

The quantitative analysis of texts is conducted using the Lexile Framework and up to two other measures, such as ATOS and Flesch-Kincaid (see chart). These measures use algorithms to analyze text characteristics such as word length or frequency, sentence length and structure, and text coherence. While these measures provide some indication of text complexity, they may underestimate or overstate the complexity of literary texts and figurative language, and they are inappropriate for poetry. Texts that score outside the 11th-College and Career Readiness (CCR) band must be justified for use by qualitative analysis, which considers thematic content beyond algorithmic determination, as well as the complexity of the questions developed.

Quantitative Analysis of Texts			
Grade Band	ATOS	The Lexile Framework	Flesch-Kincaid
2 nd –3 rd	2.75–5.14	420–820	1.98–5.34
4 th –5 th	4.97–7.03	740–1010	4.51–7.73
6 th –8 th	7.00–9.98	925–1185	6.51–10.34
9 th –10 th	9.67–12.01	1050–1335	8.32–12.12
11 th –CCR	11.20–14.10	1185–1385	10.34–14.2

The qualitative analysis of texts is conducted by English teachers with extensive classroom experience, and SED content staff. Teacher-submitted texts are examined for appropriateness based on content, knowledge demands, richness and complexity, structure, language use, and vocabulary traits. Classroom teachers are encouraged to use the texts appearing on the Regents Examination in English Language Arts, as well as associated questions, as exemplars of commencement-level texts and close reading skills. Best practice is for teachers to evaluate their texts qualitatively to ensure alignment of classroom goals with commencement-level skills as evidenced by examination content.

A Note on Texts

Many of the Reading Standards require students to recognize how authors support their opinions, to understand the author's point of view and purpose, and to be able to discern well-supported arguments from those that are not. To assess these standards on the test, and to provide content that is authentic and worthy of student time, text passages are included that may express opinions and theories with which not all readers may agree. Students must demonstrate resilience in their ability to objectively determine point of view, purpose, and success of argumentation with supporting evidence in authentic subjects that they will encounter both in other academic classes and in their daily lives.

The Regents Examination in English Language Arts

The Regents Examination in English Language Arts is designed to measure the Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards. It primarily measures the Grade 11–12 Reading, Writing, and Language Standards, but may also include some aspects that measure criteria from the Grade 9–10 Standards. The standards that are measured by the test are listed in the test blueprint; however, due to the authenticity of the text content, there may be some variation in the representation of each standard measured between administrations of the examination. It is not possible to measure all the standards during a three-hour test; Speaking and Listening Standards will not be assessed on the Regents Examination in English Language Arts. These standards do, however, remain important components to social, academic, and career success. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers continue to instruct and assess the Speaking and Listening Standards in the classroom.

Part 1–Reading Comprehension–Multiple Choice

Multiple-choice questions are designed to assess the Reading and Language Standards. As a result, answering these questions correctly requires more than rote recall or simple identification. The complexity of the questions ranges from asking students to analyze aspects of the text or its vocabulary to requiring students to determine an answer using multiple steps and skills. For example, questions may ask students to identify a segment of text that best supports a central idea. To answer correctly, students must first identify a central idea and then identify evidence that illustrates how that central idea was developed. Additionally, students are required to negotiate plausible, text-based distractors¹. Students must select the best answer from four options.

Part 2–Writing from Sources–Argument Essay

The Argument Essay is designed to assess the Reading, Writing, and Language Standards. The task requires comprehension and analysis of four sources, one of which may be a stand-alone infographic. The task requires students to take a position on an argument and write a coherent essay using source-based evidence to support their ideas. **The Part 2 directions can be found on page 10.**

Part 3–Text-Analysis–Response

The Text-Analysis Response is designed to assess the Reading, Writing, and Language Standards through expository writing. The task requires comprehension and analysis of a literary or informational passage. The task requires students to identify a central idea or theme in the passage and analyze how the author’s use of at least one writing strategy develops this central idea or theme. The response task allows students to demonstrate an ability to write coherent responses using evidence and application of analytical processes to support their ideas. **The Part 3 directions can be found on page 11.**

¹ A distractor is an incorrect response that may appear to be a plausible correct response to a student who has not mastered the skill or concept being tested.

Each of the three parts of the Regents Examination in English Language Arts has a number of raw score credits associated with the questions/tasks within that part. To ensure an appropriate distribution of credits across the test, each part is weighted based on the anticipated time on task, content coverage, and psychometric properties of the test. The table below can be used to determine each student's scale score (final exam score) using a conversion chart provided by NYSED for each administration of the exam.

Part	Maximum Raw Score Credits	Weighting Factor	Maximum Weighted Score Credits
Part 1	24	1	24
Part 2	6	4	24
Part 3	4	2	8
TOTAL			56

Directions: Part 2

Argument Essay

Sample Topic: Should the Internet be shut down on weekends?

Directions:

Closely read and analyze each of the four sources provided on pages XX through XX. Using evidence from at least *three* of these sources, plan and write a well-developed argument regarding whether the Internet should be shut down on weekends.

☒ **Be sure to:**

- ☐ Establish your claim regarding whether the Internet should be shut down on weekends.
- ☐ Distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims.
- ☐ Use specific, relevant, and sufficient evidence from at least *three* of the sources to support your argument.
- ☐ Cite your evidence by source number and line number(s) or graphic to avoid plagiarism. For example: (Source 1, lines 4–5), or (Source 2, graphic), or equivalent; do *not* simply summarize the sources.
- ☐ Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent essay.
- ☐ Maintain an appropriate style and tone, avoiding the use of casual or conversational language, symbols and/or abbreviations, unless quoting directly from a cited source.
- ☐ Use appropriate grammar and punctuation.

Directions: Part 3

Text-Analysis Response

Directions:

Closely read and analyze the text provided on pages XX and XX. Plan and write a well-developed, text-based response of at least two paragraphs. In your response, clearly identify a central idea or theme in the text and provide an analysis of one or more writing strategies that develop and support this central idea or theme.

☒ **Be sure to:**

- ☐ Introduce a central idea or theme from the text.
- ☐ Analyze how the author uses one or more writing strategies to develop and support the central idea or theme you identified.
 - Examples include: allusion, cause/effect, characterization, conflict, dialogue, irony, language use, metaphor, mood, simile, personification, point of view, setting, structure, symbolism, tone, etc.
- ☐ Support your analysis by providing evidence, such as details, quotations, and/or paraphrased information from the text.
- ☐ Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent response.
- ☐ Maintain an appropriate style and tone, avoiding the use of casual or conversational language, symbols and/or abbreviations, unless quoting directly from a cited source.
- ☐ Use appropriate grammar and punctuation.

Test Blueprint: New York State Regents Examination in English Language Arts

Test Part	Suggested Time	Next Generation Standards Addressed (coverage will vary)	Text Description	Student Task
Part 1 Reading Comprehension	45-60 minutes	Reading 1–6, 8, 9 Language 3–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three texts • Up to approximately 2,600 words total • Each test will contain one literary text, one poem, and one nonfiction text. 	Students will perform a close reading of the texts and answer 24 multiple-choice questions.
Part 2 Writing from Sources: Argument Essay	60-75 minutes	Reading 1–8 Writing 1, 5, 7 Language 1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four sources • Ranging from approximately 2,200 to 2,400 words total • Each test will contain four informational sources, which may include embedded graphics and/or stand-alone infographic. 	Students will perform a close reading of the documents and write a source-based argument essay, as directed by the task.
Part 3 Text-Analysis: Exposition	30-45 minutes	Reading 1–6, 8, 9 Writing 2, 5 Language 1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One text • Up to approximately 1,200 words total • Each test will contain one literary or one informational text. 	Students will perform a close reading of the text and write a two-or-more-paragraph expository response that identifies a central idea or theme in the text and analyzes how the author’s use of at least one writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea or theme.
Overall, the test requires that students closely read eight texts of up to approximately 6,200 words, answer 24 multiple-choice questions, and write one source-based argument and one text-based analysis response. The test assesses Next Generation Learning Standards in Reading, Writing, and Language for the Grade 11–12 band, but due to the integrative and cumulative nature of the standards, items may also assess standards in the Grade 9–10 band. Exact standard coverage will vary from test to test based on the texts and writing tasks used.				

Scoring Rubrics

Parts 2 and 3 will be assessed using the rubrics² provided in the Rating Guide for the Regents Examination in English Language Arts. Part 2 will be scored using a 6-point rubric; Part 3 will be scored using a 4-point rubric. Both rubrics reflect performance level criteria based on the Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards.

Holistic Approach to Scoring Papers

Papers must be evaluated based on their overall quality as described by the criteria descriptions denoted in the respective rubric. The descriptions of criteria at various levels within the rubric are represented as a reasonable manifestation of characteristics; each rubric criterion must be considered, and no other criteria may be substituted for those denoted by the rubric. To ensure accuracy in scoring, training materials and student papers specific to each exam administration are provided. Additionally, the scoring process dictates that each paper is scored by raters divided into two-person teams. One team member will be designated as Rater 1 and the other as Rater 2. Each rater will independently score each paper assigned to the team. If a student's scores are discrepant, a third rater will independently score the student's paper.

In addition to rating exam papers, educators can use the rubrics to evaluate in-class writing activities that require argument and/or analysis. Educators can also use the criteria denoted by the rubrics as a means of setting differentiated instructional goals for their students and targeting writing instruction to meet these goals.

New York State Regents Examination in English Language Arts
Part 2 Rubric
Writing from Sources: Argument

Criteria	6 Essays exhibit	5 Essays exhibit	4 Essays exhibit	3 Essays exhibit	2 Essays exhibit	1 Essays exhibit
Content and Analysis: the extent to which the essay conveys complex ideas by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> introducing a claim analyzing the sources and topic distinguishing the claim from alternate or opposing claims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sophisticated claim insightful source and topic analysis insightful evaluation of a counterclaim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough claim thorough source and topic analysis thorough evaluation of a counterclaim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific claim appropriate source and topic analysis appropriate evaluation of a counterclaim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> surface-level claim emerging source and topic analysis insufficient evaluation of a counterclaim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited claim unclear or confused source and topic analysis confused or no counterclaim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unrelated or no claim no source and/or topic analysis
Command of Evidence: the extent to which the essay supports analysis by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporating relevant evidence from sources avoiding plagiarism when citing the texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sophisticated support using a wide range of strategically chosen, relevant evidence consistent avoidance of plagiarism with acceptable citation format(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough and accurate support using effective and relevant evidence consistent avoidance of plagiarism with acceptable citation format(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sufficient and adequate support using relevant evidence consistent avoidance of plagiarism with acceptable citation format(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> basic support using relevant and/or generalized evidence partial avoidance of plagiarism with emerging citation format(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insufficient support using limited, inaccurate, or irrelevant evidence insufficient avoidance of plagiarism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides no evidence no use of citations
Coherence, Organization, and Style: the extent to which the essay addresses the claim as a cohesive, unified whole by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining focus on task organizing ideas optimizing language style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strategic focus on task strategic organization of ideas sophisticated language and sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear and appropriate focus on task thoughtful organization of ideas precise language and sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> acceptable focus on task logical organization of ideas appropriate language and sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emerging focus on task emerging organization of ideas basic language and sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack appropriate focus on task, but suggest organization of ideas -or- suggest a focus on task, but lack organization of ideas imprecise language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little to no focus on task little to no organization of ideas incoherent language -or- minimal writing, making assessment unreliable
Control of Conventions: the extent to which the response establishes a framework for clear communication by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> displaying control of 9–12 band grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling maintaining control relative to language characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exceptional control virtually no errors when using sophisticated language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> considerable control errors that do not hinder comprehension, even when using sophisticated language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partial control errors that do not hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emerging control errors that hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of control errors that make comprehension difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant lack of control errors that severely interfere with comprehension -or- minimal writing, making assessment unreliable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An essay that uses information from fewer than 3 sources can be scored no higher than a 3. An essay that is entirely unrelated to the topic and/or makes no reference to the sources or task can be scored no higher than a 1. An essay that is predominantly a verbatim copy from the task or sources with negligible student writing must be scored a 0. An essay that is indecipherable, entirely incoherent, unrecognizable as English, or blank must be scored a 0. 						

New York State Regents Examination in English Language Arts
Part 3 Rubric
Text-Analysis: Exposition

Criteria	4 Responses exhibit	3 Responses exhibit	2 Responses exhibit	1 Responses exhibit
Content and Analysis: the extent to which the response conveys complex ideas by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a central idea or theme • analyzing the author’s writing strategy usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thorough central idea or theme • thorough writing strategy analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate central idea or theme • appropriate or sufficient writing strategy analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general or emerging central idea or theme • limited, surface-level writing strategy analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unclear or confused central idea or theme • confused, inaccurate, or no writing strategy analysis
Command of Evidence: the extent to which the response supports analysis by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporating supporting evidence • establishing a link between writing strategy-related evidence and central idea or theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thorough support of ideas • clear link between specific and relevant evidence and central idea or theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficient support of ideas • reasonable link between adequate evidence and central idea or theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attempted support of ideas • emerging link between partial, inconsistent, or inaccurate evidence and central idea or theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimal or no support of ideas • little or no evidence
Coherence, Organization, and Style: the extent to which the response addresses the task as a cohesive, unified whole by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining focus on task • organizing ideas • optimizing language style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and appropriate focus on task • logical organization of ideas • precise language and sound sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acceptable focus on task • acceptable organization of ideas • appropriate language and sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack appropriate focus on task, but suggest organization of ideas - or - • suggest a focus on task, but lack organization of ideas • basic, inappropriate, or imprecise language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little or no focus on task • little or no organization of ideas • predominantly incoherent, or copied language - or - • minimal original writing, making assessment unreliable
Control of Conventions: the extent to which the response establishes a framework for clear communication by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displaying control of 9–12 band grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling • maintaining control relative to language characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considerable control • rare errors that do not hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partial control • errors that do not hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emerging control • errors that hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of control • errors that make comprehension difficult - or - • minimal original writing, making assessment unreliable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A response that is predominantly a verbatim copy from the task or text with negligible student writing must be scored a 0. • A response that is entirely unrelated to the task, indecipherable, incoherent, unrecognizable as English, or blank must be scored a 0. 				