FORMATIVE WRITING ASSESSMENT

Department of Literacy

Instruction & Interventions

Office of Academics

Grade 6

Text-Based Writing Prompts:

Administration and Scoring Guidelines

Teacher Directions:

Students will read a stimulus about a single topic. A stimulus consists of several texts written on a single topic. The stimulus may include informational or literary fiction or nonfiction texts and can cover a wide array of topics. After reading the stimulus, the students will respond to a writing prompt in which they will provide information on a topic, develop a narrative, or take a stance to support an opinion or argument. Students will be required to synthesize information from the text sets and must cite specific evidence from the texts to support their ideas. Students' informative/explanatory responses should demonstrate a developed and supported controlling idea. Students' opinion/argumentative responses should support an opinion/argument using ideas presented in the stimulus. Students will have 90 minutes to read the passages, and plan, write, revise and edit their essay. **Students should read the prompt first.** They should be encouraged to highlight, underline, and take notes to support the planning process.

Scoring:

The attached text-based rubric should be used to score student responses. While the total possible points on the rubric is ten, it is recommended that three individual scores be given—one score for each of the three domains on the rubric. This will allow the teacher to determine specific areas of need within individual student responses, thus allowing for differentiation in the writing instruction that follows these formative writing tasks. The three domains are: Purpose, Focus, Organization (PFO), Evidence and Elaboration (EE), and Conventions of Standard English (CSE). Teachers should score **holistically** within each domain—PFO (4-points), EE (4-points), and CSE (2-points).

Each level of scoring within a domain is based on the overarching statement for the score found in the rubric. For example, on the grades 6-11 rubric for argumentation, the overarching statement for a score of 4 in the Purpose, Focus, Organization domain is, "The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness." The bulleted points that follow the statement must be considered as factors in the scoring, but should not be utilized as a checklist. Most, but not all, of the bulleted points will be evident in the student writing for a score at a specific level.

Teachers should keep in mind that a score of 3 on the rubric for a domain signals student proficiency in the addressed writing standard with a score of 4 representing mastery. In the CSE domain, a score of two represents student proficiency in the standard.

Sixth Grade: Informative Prompt #1

Write an informative essay comparing and contrasting rogue waves and tsunamis. Cite textual evidence from what you have read in your writing.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages
- Plan your essay
- Write your essay
- Revise and edit your essay

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay. Remember to spend time reading, planning, writing, revising, and editing.

Part 1: Read Sources

Source 1: Informational Text

What Are Rogue Waves?

by Neveah Simmons

AS YOU READ Identify terms and ideas that you might be able to use in your essay. For example, "warning time" is likely to be a topic in both texts.

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A rogue wave is not just a big wave. A rogue wave is an enormous wave that occurs far out in the ocean. Rogue waves are also known as "freak" waves because they seem to come from nowhere, and no one can predict when or where they will strike. The surrounding sea can appear calm when suddenly a wave as high as 100 feet above the ocean's surface comes crashing towards you. That's as high as a ten-story building. So just imagine your terror if you witnessed a wall of water this high headed relentlessly toward your boat or ship?

What We Know—and Don't Know

Rogue waves are rare in the parts of the ocean that humans visit. This fact makes them difficult to study. Because they cannot be predicted in advance, scientists and their instruments are rarely in the right place at the right time with the right equipment to collect data about rogue waves. Although rogue waves are sometimes described as "random" waves, that description is probably not accurate. If it were true, we would have to conclude that rogue waves happen without a single, clear-cut pattern. There probably are patterns, but they have not been discovered yet.

WHY SO HIGH? What causes these rogue waves to be so high? Scientists don't know for sure, but they do have theories. Many factors affect a wave's height, including wind strength, ocean depth, ocean currents, and the presence of islands and other obstacles. In fact, some other types of waves can reach the same height as rogue waves, but they are generally predictable and more avoidable than rogue waves. For instance, in the midst of a hurricane, wind-driven waves can be just as high as rogue waves.

SPOTTING A ROGUE WAVE The defining feature of a rogue wave is not just that it is so huge, but that it does not match the surrounding ocean conditions. To identify a rogue wave, pay attention to the direction of the prevailing wave patterns. A wave coming from a different direction is quite possibly a rogue wave.

A LIKELY CAUSE Rogue waves seem especially likely to occur in places in the oceans where currents collide. Think of a current as a river in the ocean. There are major currents whose courses can be traced almost all the way around the world. Smaller currents that are affected by local conditions also exist. When one current collides with another current flowing in the opposite direction, a wall of water can build up into an enormous rogue wave.

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE You may have heard of the infamous "Bermuda Triangle." Some ships have vanished in this mysterious part of the ocean on clear days with no storms in sight. Ocean currents may be responsible. A strong current known as the Gulf Stream runs through the Bermuda Triangle. This current then moves north through the Atlantic Ocean, along the East Coast of the United States. It is possible that the collision of the Gulf Stream currents with other more localized currents provides the clue to unlocking the secret of the Bermuda Triangle and the origin of some rogue waves.

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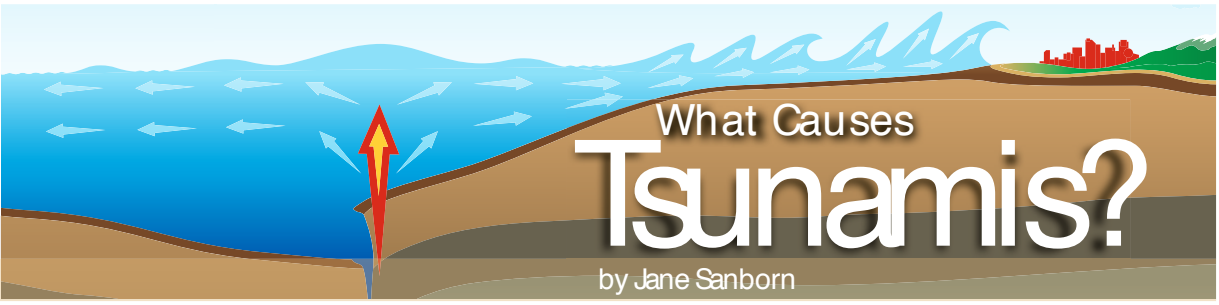
Other Contributing Causes

WIND While it is not believed that wind alone can cause a rogue wave, wind can play a major role in creating rogue waves. The stronger the wind, the higher surface waves tend to be. These strong winds push in the opposite direction against an ocean current, and the collision of the two can create large surface waves.

OCEAN DEPTH The depth of the ocean is also a key factor in creating rogue waves. Rogue waves tend to occur only in deeper water. In order to get high enough to be considered a rogue wave, a lot of water must build up. Very shallow parts of the ocean don't have enough water to create rogue waves. Note that other forms of horribly destructive waves do occur in shallow water. Tsunamis and storm surges are examples, but both are caused by known factors.

ISLANDS AND COASTLINES Geographical features such as islands, or shoals can interrupt and redirect ocean currents. Rogue waves occur most frequently downwind of these geographical features, where smaller waves can overlap and combine. If the waves meet at just the right time, small waves may join with other waves at a single point of focus that allows them to combine into a very large single wave.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREPARE FOR ROGUE WAVES? Fortunately, rogue waves are very rare and happen only at a reasonable distance from shore. However, if you are out to sea on a boat, it is always a good idea to make sure you are familiar with evacuation plans, the location of life preservers, and other safety equipment.



What Causes Tsunamis?

by Jane Sanborn

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Most waves occur at or near the surface of the ocean. Tsunamis, on the other hand, have their origins at greater depths of the ocean. As a result of the depth of the water, tsunamis can be much more devastating than most surface waves. The reason? Tsunamis move much more water.

Unlike the rogue wave, which is a single wave that is up to 100 feet high, a tsunami is a series of waves. Tsunamis are caused by landslides, volcanoes, or earthquakes that occur on the ocean floor. Large meteorites can also trigger a tsunami if they strike the ocean's surface.

The word "tsunami" is derived from a Japanese word that means "harbor wave." An earthquake that registered 9.0 devastated Japan on March 11, 2011. The resulting tsunami had wave heights of 131 feet and six miles across the land.

What is the most likely cause of a tsunami?

Most tsunamis are triggered by earthquakes that are under the surface of the oceans or close to the coastline. An earthquake is caused when tectonic plates (large pieces of Earth's crust), quickly slide past one another, releasing a huge amount of pent-up energy. Earth's movement during the quake triggers the reaction. Tsunamis are usually characterized by a series of very large waves, rather than a single wave.

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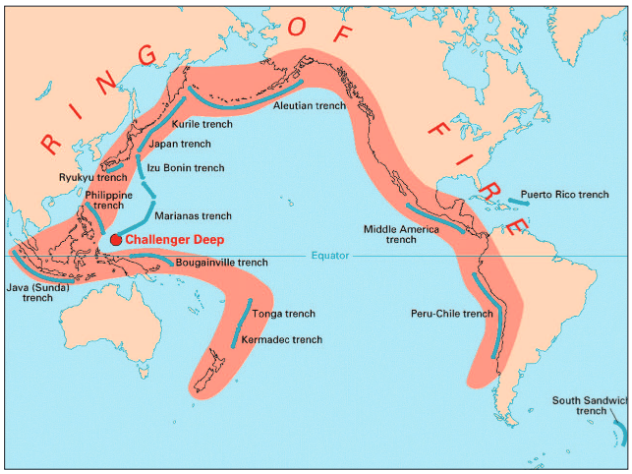
When the sea floor becomes shallow near shore, all the water in motion that is traveling the entire height of the water column is suddenly pushed up. (A water column is the expanse between the ocean floor and its surface.) The resulting tsunami floods the shore. Most of the damage of a tsunami is done on land.

Where do tsunamis occur?

Tsunamis are most likely to occur on lands surrounding the Pacific Ocean. That is the western coastline of North and South America, the Aleutian Chain, and the eastern coastline of Asia to Japan. This region is called the "Ring of Fire."



This map identifies the "Ring of Fire," where tsunamis are most likely to occur.

The Ring of Fire

Many warning systems give Pacific populations advance notice of tsunamis. Warning centers combine earthquake data with sea level data. This combined information allows authorities to predict a tsunami path and order evacuation.

FINAL

English Language Arts
Text-based Writing Rubrics
Grades 6–11: Informative/ Explanatory

Florida
Standards Assessments

UPDATED OCTOBER 2014

Grades 6-11 Informative/Explanatory Text-based Writing Rubric (Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below.)			
Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
4	The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear controlling idea and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following: • Strongly maintained controlling idea with little or no loosely related material • Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas • Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion • Appropriate style and objective tone established and maintained	The response provides thorough and convincing support, citing evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following: • Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources • Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples), demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text • Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language • Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose • Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility	
3	The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear controlling idea and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following: • Maintained controlling idea, though some loosely related material may be present • Adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas • Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion • Appropriate style and objective tone established	The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following: • Generally integrated and relevant evidence from sources, though references may be general or imprecise • Adequate use of some elaborative techniques • Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language • Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose • Some variation in sentence structure	
Continued on the following page			

Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric)
2	The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have a controlling idea with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following: • Focused controlling idea but insufficiently sustained or unclear • Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety • Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end with an inadequate introduction or conclusion	The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following: • Weakly integrated evidence from sources; erratic or irrelevant references or citations • Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques • Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas • Some use of inappropriate domain-specific vocabulary • Most sentences limited to simple constructions	The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: • Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors • Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling
1	The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have little or no controlling idea or discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following: • Confusing or ambiguous ideas • Few or no transitional strategies • Frequent extraneous ideas that impede understanding • Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization	The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following: • Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence or citations from the source material • Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing • Limited and often inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary • Sentences limited to simple constructions	The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: • Various errors in usage • Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling
0			The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.