

ILLUSTRATING THE WRITING STANDARD

Shadows

By the end of year 6, students are required to create a variety of texts in order to think about, record, and communicate experiences, ideas, and information across the curriculum. To meet the standard, students draw on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for writing described in the Literacy Learning Progressions for students at this level.

The difference in the standard for year 6 [as compared with year 5] is the students' increased **accuracy** and **fluency** in writing a variety of texts across the curriculum, their **level of control** and **independence** in **selecting writing processes and strategies**, and the range of texts they write. In particular, by the end of year 6, students will be required to **write more complex texts** than students in year 5 and to **be more effective in selecting different**

**strategies** for different writing purposes. (*Reading and Writing Standards*, page 31)

The students in this year 6 class are involved in a science investigation into light sources and reflections. Using the results from their experiments, they are writing an explanation of how a shadow is produced. Their explanations are to be published on a page on their class blog titled "Scientific Mysteries – How things work".

*The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the writing demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.*

Transcript: Shadows

What is a shadow? Why does it happen? That's what I am going to explain to you.

A shadow is caused when the light hits something solid, or opaque. The light's rays cannot penetrate that object, so it squeezes through any other crack it can find. That's why your shadow is in your body's shape.

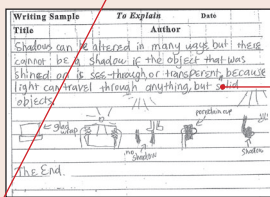
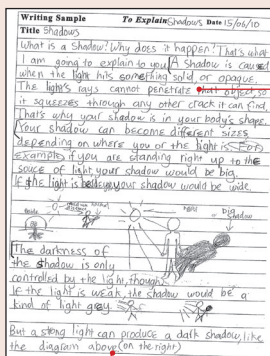
Your shadow can become different sizes, depending on where you or the light is. For example, if you are standing right up to the source of light, your shadow would be big. If the light is beside you, your shadow would be wide.

The student uses her knowledge of text structure to organise ideas and information. The writing begins by stating the purpose – to explain how shadows are produced.

Each paragraph includes a topic sentence and supporting detail, and these details are provided within sentences that are mostly complex and correct (the student has indicated where paragraphs should be during her revision).

The student has selected vocabulary appropriate to the writing purpose, including precise verbs ("penetrate", "squeezes", "controlled", "produce") and some subject-specific nouns and adjectives ("rays", "solid", "opaque", "transparent"). She uses explanatory words and phrases to express cause-and-effect relationships ("caused", "so", "That's why"), the prepositional phrase "For example" to introduce illustrative detail, and the subordinating conjunction "if" to indicate variables within the experiment.

The student correctly spells many subject-specific words ("opaque", "penetrate", "squeezes") and demonstrates knowledge of how words work in her attempts to spell "transparent" and "source". Her use of writing conventions (full stops, commas, apostrophes, and question marks) is mostly accurate, including the correct use of the possessive apostrophe ("light's", "body's").



The student uses diagrams to clarify some of her descriptions and clearly refers to specific diagrams in her text "(on the right)".

The student connects ideas between paragraphs through recurring lexical links ("light", "shadow") and by the use of "but" to introduce a contrasting piece of information.

The student does not conclude her writing effectively. However, the deliberate vocabulary choices that she has made to communicate her understanding of how shadows are produced, as well as her controlled use of specific text features (structured paragraphs, lexical links), show that she is meeting the writing demands of the science curriculum at level 3, as expected by the end of year 6.

The darkness of the shadow is only controlled by the light, though. If the light is weak, the shadow would be a kind of light grey.

But a strong light can produce a dark shadow, like the diagram above. (on the right)

Shadows can be altered in many ways, but there cannot be a shadow if the object that was shined on is see through, or transparent because light can travel through anything, but solid objects.