



**BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL
LANGUAGE CO-ORDINATION**

STANAG 6001 Levels 1 - 3 Summary Review

Receptive Skills Testing

Self-Study Guide

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Note: This self-study guide was adapted from material produced by Dr. Martha Herzog for Brigham Young University's Center for Language Studies, and it is used with their permission. The chart in Appendix A was developed by Dr. Ray Clifford, Director of the Center for Language Studies, Brigham Young University.



Dr. Martha Herzog has been immortalized with her own personal suite at the Partner Language Training Center Europe

INTRODUCTION

This material presents a series of steps to follow in developing multiple-choice test items according to the STANAG 6001 scale. It is always important to develop test items in a team so that several points of view are represented, and item writers can review and offer suggestions about each other's items. It should be useful for all team members to begin with the same set of sample texts and test items.

In Part One we will concentrate on tests of reading comprehension. In Part Two we will adapt and expand the material to fit the requirements of listening comprehension tests.

Developing receptive skills test items is an iterative process. Part Three provides guidelines for reviewing and revising items after they are written.

Appendix A includes useful information about text rating and text characteristics to consider when determining the STANAG 6001 level of listening and reading texts.

For convenience, only the base levels, STANAG 6001 Levels 1, 2, and 3 are included in the Self-Study Guide. There will be some discussion of plus levels in Appendix B.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTING TERMINOLOGY

ITEM

An entire “question”. It may be considered a miniature test.

STEM

The initial part of the item: either a partial sentence to be completed, a question, or several statements leading to a question or incomplete phrase.

OPTIONS

Choices from which the examinee must select an answer.

KEY

The right answer. The one option that is distinctly correct or more suitable than the others.

DISTRACTORS

The incorrect options.

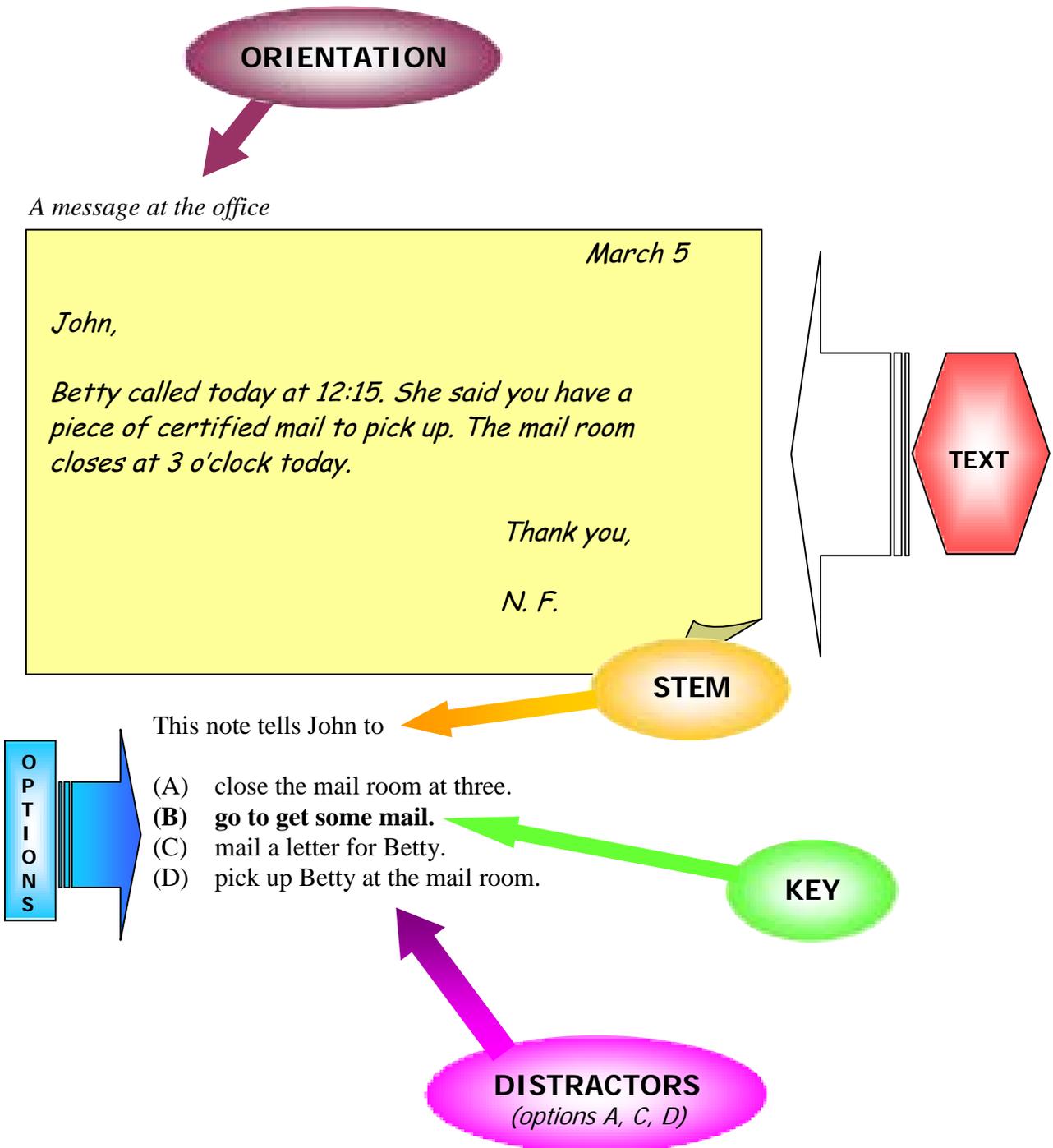
ORIENTATION, or SETTING

The context presented at the beginning of the item to provide a fuller understanding of the situation presented for testing.

TEXT

The written or spoken material providing the content on which the item is focused.

READING TEST ITEM



LISTENING TEST ITEM

The sample will use a transcript of the spoken text.



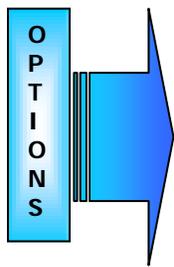
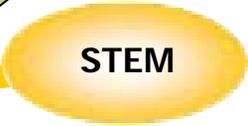
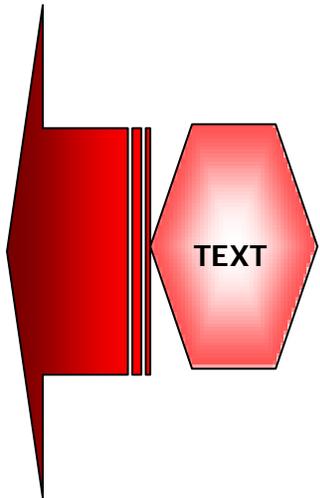
A radio report:

(Transcript)

1st speaker: Now we turn to Dave Shaw for today's weather report.

2nd speaker: This is Dave Shaw at the KTPO 24-hour weather center. After several dry days, there will be some wet weather. But temperatures will stay warm all week long. This afternoon, look for increasing clouds. But it'll be nice and warm. The high will be 68. Tomorrow, there may be showers in the morning, followed by afternoon sun. There will be a high of 67. Wednesday and Thursday should see light rain.

1st speaker: That was KTPO's weather update.



According to Dave Shaw's report,

- A. it will be sunny all week.
- B. it will be dry every day.
- C. there will be some rain.***
- D. there will be some fog.



PART ONE- READING COMPREHENSION

1. SELECT A TEXT

- a. Tests developed according to the STANAG 6001 scale measure proficiency, so texts should not come from any course of instruction. We should look for texts that our potential examinees are very unlikely to have read or heard. If possible, all texts should come from authentic sources within the target culture.
- b. As we examine a text, we need to determine the level. Not every text has an easily identifiable level. Some texts are mixed, with different parts of the text serving different purposes and presenting different degrees of difficulty. These are not the texts we want to choose for a test. We want to search for those texts that clearly meet the requirements for the level.
- c. We also want to ensure that the text is testable. Sometimes content is too thin for testing; this may occur in advertising and sales presentations based largely on generalities. Sometimes content is inappropriate for testing; examples of such content include frequent insertions of English or other non-target language words; culturally sensitive material, such as inappropriate gender or religious references; political advertising; or propaganda. Texts filled with quotations from familiar religious or patriotic writing may be poor choices for good item development; the quotes may be overly familiar, and the expected responses to the quotes may lead to unproductive testing. We should avoid specialized texts that are fully understood only by readers experienced in a technical field. In most cases, we should also avoid highly personal texts such as letters and diaries.

2. REVIEW THE TEXT TYPES ASSOCIATED WITH EACH PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Read some of the relevant documents in which text types are discussed. This handbook focuses on the STANAG 6001 level descriptions and Ray Clifford's "Overview of Reading Text Characteristics by Level," which adds an author purpose to the text type. The "Overview" is reproduced in Appendix A.

a. TEXTS – LEVEL 1

- STANAG 6001 scale

Very simple connected written material; short notes; announcements; highly predictable descriptions of people, places, or things; brief explanations of geography, government, and currency systems simplified

for non-natives; short instructions/directions (application forms, maps, menus, directories, brochures, simple schedules).

- Overview of Reading Text Characteristics by Level

Author purpose: Orient by communicating main ideas.

Simple short sentences with simple vocabulary. Sentences may be re-sequenced without changing the meaning of the text. Text organization is loose without much cohesion, but follows societal norms

**LEVEL 1 TEXT
EXAMPLE**

The Hillside Parks and Recreation committee will hold a special meeting today to plan activities and projects for the year. The meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall conference room.

b. TEXTS – LEVEL 2

- STANAG 6001 scale

Concrete, factual, predictable texts; descriptions of persons, places, and things; narration of current, past, and future events; news items describing frequently recurring events; simple biographical information; social notices; routine business letters; simple technical material for the general reader.

- Overview of Reading Text Characteristics by Level

Author purpose: Instruct by communicating factual information.

Connected factual discourse with compound and complex sentences dealing with factual information. Sentences are sequenced within cohesive paragraphs, but it might be possible to reorder some paragraphs without changing the meaning of the text. The identity of the author is not important.

**LEVEL 2 TEXT
EXAMPLE**

Steel Executive Among 8 Dead In Air Crash

SEOUL, South Korea – A helicopter slammed into an electricity tower and plunged into the sea yesterday, killing eight people, including the head of South Korea’s third-largest steel company, police said. Four people were injured.

Kim Jong-jin, chairman of Dongkuk Steel Mill Co., was among those killed when the S-76 Sikorsky helicopter carrying 12 people crashed in driving rain.

The helicopter crashed near Chinhae around 11:40 a.m. It took off from Kimhae International Airport on the south coast and was on its way to a shipyard run by Daewoo Shipbuilding and Maritime Engineering Co.

The national Yonhap news agency quoted pilot Kang Ik-soo who survived, as saying that he lost control of the Daewoo-owned craft when it was hit by a sudden gale amid thick clouds.

c. TEXTS – LEVEL 3

- STANAG 6001 scale

Authentic written material on general and professional subjects; news, informational, and editorial items in major periodicals for educated native readers; personal and professional correspondence; reports; material in professional specialty; abstract concepts on such topics as economics, culture, science.

- Overview of Reading Text Characteristics by Level

Author purpose: Evaluate situations, concepts, conflicting ideas, present and support arguments and/or hypotheses with both factual and abstract reasoning.

Multiple-paragraph block of discourse on a variety of unfamiliar or abstract subjects such as might be found in editorials, official correspondence, and professional writing. References may be made to previous paragraphs, common cultural values, etc. The “voice” of the author is evident.

**LEVEL 3 TEXT
EXAMPLE**

Tuna Diplomacy

The U.S. Senate has passed, unanimously, the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. It was an action that failed to make even the small-type legislative roundup in most American newspapers, but it is a matter of deep concern in a number of small island nations.

In recent decades, as colonialism became an anachronism in the Pacific, a whole series of mini-states have come into being. They are jealous about their independence but lack the strength to protect it. They also share another common trait; most came to independence with limited capital resources.

These island states do have common access to one source of wealth: the sea. And they have been sorely put upon because foreign tuna fleets have been taking harvests in their waters without permission or compensation. The situation has created a diplomatic opening which Russia has been attempting to exploit, with some limited success.

According to American Samoa congressman Fofu I.F. Sunia, the new treaty will provide \$50 million over the next five years to compensate for exploitation of fishing resources within territorial limits of the small South Pacific countries. U.S. fishing vessels will be subject to fees to raise some of this money.

It is a matter of simple equity that these lands receive some compensation when one of their most important resources is extracted by foreigners.

3. CONSIDER EDITING

- a. Ideally, the text will require no editing at all. However, we may find texts that require some adjustment to fit our test specifications. Nevertheless, we want to maintain as much authenticity as possible. For example, a complete text may be too long. If a two-paragraph text can be shortened by totally eliminating the second paragraph, this is a simple solution. However, the text may seem inconclusive or incomplete unless one or two sentences from the second paragraph are included. It is a good idea for two or more team members to consult when making this type of decision.
- b. A proposed text may include the names of elected officials, celebrities, or persons in today's news. We can anticipate that this text will soon be outdated, and any sense that the text is not fully up-to-date may distract examinees. A solution may be to use the title rather than the name of the elected official. In many cases, it may be acceptable to devise a totally

fictitious name for a newsmaker without affecting the authenticity of the text. In the text used as an example for Level 2, we might substitute other Korean names for the steel company and its chairman. In the text used as an example for Level 3, we might simply drop Mr. Sunia's name and refer to him only as a "congressman."

- c. A text may contain typographical errors that might distract examinees. These should be quietly corrected. However, it is not a good idea to "improve" the grammar or style of the original text.
- d. A text may include acronyms or abbreviations that are commonly used in the culture but not likely to be known by non-natives at the levels we are testing. We can replace them with full or shortened versions of the organizations' titles.
- e. After any editing has been done, item writers should review their work by asking themselves such questions as:
 - Is all spelling correct?
 - Is all punctuation correct?
 - Is all syntax correct?
 - Does the edited material retain sufficient semantic information and cohesion so that it can still be considered a "text"?
 - Does the text remain free-standing?
 - Would native readers find the result awkward or inauthentic?

4. EXAMINE POTENTIAL FOR ITEM WRITING

- a. Before beginning the item writing process, make a few notes about the characteristics of the text.
- b. At Levels 1, 2, and 3: Identify the purpose and main idea of the text.
- c. At Levels 2 and 3: Identify the main facts and supporting information. Even some Level 1 texts may contain such features.
- d. At Level 3:
 - Determine whether the text lends itself to a question focusing on:
 - inference
 - supported opinion
 - tone
 - synthesis
 - hypothesis
 - abstract linguistic formulations

- Identify the opinions presented in the text. Determine how the author supports the opinions.
 - Identify any analysis presented in the text. This may simply involve the author's classifying ideas into two or more points of view.
 - Determine the author's tone. Decide how the author's choice of words contributes to the tone.
 - Determine what abstract ideas and abstract linguistic formulations can be found in the text.
 - Determine if there is use of hypothesis in the text. If so, determine the extent to which the author's use of hypothesis contributes to the meaning of the text.
 - Identify any metaphors or other figurative language. Identify any literary, religious, or cultural allusions. The team will need to decide when these features raise the text above Level 3.
- e. If a text contains vocabulary or grammatical constructions that are not frequently used at this text level, make a note of it. You may want to discuss these points with team members at some point in the item writing process

5. REVIEW THE TASKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF THE TEXT

That is, determine which tasks are appropriate for a text of this level. The task should be at the same level as the text.

a. TASKS - LEVEL 1

- STANAG 6001 scale
Understand the main idea; find some specific details.
- Overview of Reading Text Characteristics by Level --
Intended Reader Purpose
Orient oneself by identifying topics and main ideas.

b. TASKS – LEVEL 2

- STANAG 6001 scale

Locate and understand the main idea and details; answer factual questions about texts.

- Overview of Reading Text Characteristics by Level -- Intended Reader Purpose

Understands not only the main topics and facts, but also the supporting details such as temporal and causative relationships.

c. TASKS – LEVEL 3

- STANAG 6001 scale

Can understand hypothesis, supported opinion, argumentation, clarification, and various forms of elaboration. Can interpret material correctly and relate ideas, understand implicit information, distinguish between various stylistic levels, and recognize humor, emotional overtones, and subtleties

- Overview of Reading Text Characteristics by Level -- Intended Reader Purpose

Learn by relating ideas and conceptual arguments. Understand the text's literal and the figurative meaning by reading both "the lines" and "between the lines." Recognize the author's tone and infer the author's intent.

6. DRAFT AN ITEM

a. LEVEL 1

- Look at the example text for this level (on page 10).
- Look at the appropriate tasks for this level (on page 14). These include identifying the main idea, topics, and some facts or details.
- Draft a key requiring examinees to identify the main idea or topic of the text. Possible keys:
 - There will be a meeting at 5:30 p.m. today.
 - This text is about a meeting.
 - This is an announcement about the Parks and Recreation committee.
 - The Parks and Recreation committee will hold a meeting.
 - The Parks and Recreation committee will meet today.

- Experiment with distractors. Based on experience with and knowledge of the proficiency of examinees below Level 1, draft a stem and distractors related to their comprehension problems.

Point to remember: At Level 1, distractors may capitalize on one or two words in the text. This will make them more plausible to the examinee below Level 1, who may recognize individual words but not understand the meaning of the text. However, each distractor should be clearly incorrect, and each should be completely distinct. We are not measuring subtle differences at this level.

Possible stems and distractors:

This is an announcement about

OR

The topic of this text is

- plans for a new park in Hillside.
- recreational activities today.
- a meeting tomorrow morning.
- a report on last year's projects.
- a meeting with the City Council.

- Draft an item with the stem, key, and distractors you prefer.
A possible item:

This is an announcement about

- A. a committee meeting today.*
- B. new parks opening in Hillside.
- C. today's recreational activities.
- D. a report on last year's projects.

- Add an orientation. A possible orientation:

From a local newspaper:

OR

From a list of announcements:

- A complete item in draft:

From a local newspaper:

The Hillside Parks and Recreation committee will hold a special meeting today to plan activities and projects for the year. The meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall conference room.

This is an announcement about

- A. a committee meeting today.*
- B. new parks opening in Hillside.
- C. today's recreational activities.
- D. a report on last year's projects.

b. LEVEL 2

- Look at the example text for this level (on page 11).
- Edit the text.
 - Remove the headline, which summarizes the entire text, and probably lowers the difficulty level.
 - Change the names of the two people mentioned. Use other Korean names, such as Chin-wee Li and Dae-yeol Suk.
- Look at the appropriate tasks for this level (on page 15). These include locating the main idea and details as well as answering factual questions about the text. Examinees below this level may grasp the general topic but not the main points of the text (e.g., they may not realize a text refers to past or future tense.)
- Draft a key requiring examinees to locate the main idea and details or to answer factual questions about the task. Possible keys:
 - a helicopter crash killed eight people and injured four.
 - the chairman of a Korean steel company was killed.
 - weather conditions led to a helicopter crash in Korea.
 - a helicopter pilot lost control of his craft in driving rain.
- Experiment with distractors. Based on experience with and knowledge of examinees below Level 2, draft a stem and distractors related to their comprehension problems.

Point to remember: At Level 2, a few words from the text may be put into a distractor reflecting factual information that might be found in another text on this subject, but is not present in this particular text. At Level 2, it is seldom useful to write distractors on topics completely unrelated to the text; that is more appropriate for Level 1.

The accuracy requirement of the item can be adjusted through the options. To make the item easier, move the distractors farther away from the key; or make the key a repetition or paraphrase of part of the text. To make the item harder, bring the distractors closer to the key or include in the set of distractors some repetition or paraphrase of part of the text.

Possible stems and distractors:

According to this news item,

OR

This article reports that

- two helicopters collided on the south coast of Korea.
- an electrical problem during a storm led to a crash.
- the chairman of Dongkuk Steel described the accident.
- an accident in a Korean shipyard caused eight deaths.
- everyone on board including the pilot was killed.
- the pilot and all twelve passengers were killed.

- Draft an item with the stem, key, and distractors you prefer. A possible item:

According to this news item,

- A. a helicopter crash killed eight people and injured four.*
- B. an accident in a Korean shipyard caused eight deaths.
- C. an electrical problem during a storm led to a crash.
- D. the chairman of Dongkuk Steel described the accident.

- Add an orientation. A possible orientation:

From the Korean news:

OR

An international news story:

- A complete item in draft:

From the Korean news:

SEOUL, South Korea – a helicopter slammed into an electricity tower and plunged into the sea yesterday, killing eight people, including the head of South Korea’s third-largest steel company, police said. Four people were injured.

Chin-wee Li, chairman of Dongkuk Steel Mill Co., was among those killed when the S-76 Sikorsky helicopter carrying 12 people crashed in driving rain.

The helicopter crashed near Chinhae around 11:40 a.m. It took off from Kimhae International Airport on the south coast and was on its way to a shipyard run by Daewoo Shipbuilding and Maritime Engineering Co.

The national Yonhap news agency quoted the pilot, Dae-yeol Suk, who survived, as saying that he lost control of the Daewoo-owned craft when it was hit by a sudden gale amid thick clouds.

According to this news item,

- A. a helicopter crash killed eight people and injured four.*
- B. an accident in a Korean shipyard caused eight deaths.
- C. an electrical problem during a storm led to a crash.
- D. the chairman of Dongkuk Steel described the accident.

c. LEVEL 3

- Look at the example text for this level (see page 12).
- Edit the text.
 - Omit the personal name in paragraph 4 and refer to him as “the American Samoa congressman.”
 - While this text is not very long for Level 3, the title and a few clauses could be eliminated without distorting the meaning. For example, the second sentence in paragraph 1 could be reduced to “It is a matter of deep concern in a number of small island nations.” Similarly, “as colonialism became an anachronism in the Pacific” could be dropped from the first sentence in paragraph 2. On the other hand, a test

development team might decide this language is essential to conveying the writer's tone so that they would prefer not to shorten the text.

- Look at the appropriate tasks for this level (see page 15). These include understanding hypothesis, argumentation, and supported opinion; relating ideas; “reading between the lines.” A Level 3 item should not test peripheral information but focus on some part of the central discourse feature of the text. (e.g., If the text is an analysis, look at one of the outcomes of that analysis. If the text is an argument, look at a central theme of the argument.)
- Draft a key requiring examinees to understand argumentation and other aspects of a Level 3 text. Possible keys:
 - the new states' economies do not permit them to defend their natural resources.
 - the US took action before Russia could gain a greater advantage in the region.
 - this author thinks the US Senate's effort will give new states a fair chance economically.
- Experiment with distractors. Based on experience with and knowledge of examinees below Level 3, draft a stem and distractors related to their comprehension problems.

Point to remember: At Level 3, the key and distractors should be written at the same level and in the same general style as the text. If the text is formal, the options should be formal. Distractors should capitalize on points and ideas that could very well be present in a similar text on the subject with a different stance or focus. Distractors should not cover topics unrelated to the text; that will lower the task below Level 3. They should not test a single word or phrase. They should deal with a central feature of the author's argument or analysis. Options may consider implications growing out of the content, as well as overtly-stated information. Examinees below Level 3 may respond to the concrete language in the text but miss the abstract linguistic formulations.

The stem should set the stage for the options. The stem should not present critical information from the text that we expect a Level 3 reader to understand because that would lower the difficulty level of the task. Options should normally be sentence-length.

Possible stems and distractors

[According to the information provided by this author,](#)

OR

The author of this editorial thinks

- A. the US offered legal protection for the independence of new island mini-states.
- B. the US is concerned that Russia will protest its presence in American Samoa.
- C. the new states have not established uniform territorial limits for foreign vessels.
- D. the best approach in the South Pacific is unified resistance to foreign interference.

- Draft an item with the stem, key, and distractors you prefer. A possible item:

The author of this editorial points out that the

- A. new states' economies do not permit them to defend their natural resources.*
- B. US offered legal protection for the independence of new island mini-states.
- C. US is concerned that Russia will protest its presence in American Samoa.
- D. new states have not established uniform territorial limits for foreign vessels.

- Add an orientation. A possible orientation:

From the international news:

OR

Commentary on the situation in the Pacific:

- A complete item in draft:

Commentary on the situation in the Pacific:

The U.S. Senate has passed, unanimously, the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. It was an action that failed to make even the small-type legislative roundup in most American newspapers, but it is a matter of deep concern in a number of small island nations.

In recent decades, as colonialism became an anachronism in the Pacific, a whole series of mini-states have come into being. They are jealous about their independence but lack the strength to protect it. They also share another common trait; most came to independence with limited capital resources.

These island states do have common access to one source of wealth: the sea. And they have been sorely put upon because foreign tuna fleets have been taking harvests in their waters without permission or compensation. The situation has created a diplomatic opening which Russia has been attempting to exploit, with limited success.

According to the American Samoa congressman, the new treaty will provide \$50 million over the next five years to compensate for exploitation of fishing resources within territorial limits of the small South Pacific countries. U.S. fishing vessels will be subject to fees to raise some of this money.

It is a matter of simple equity that these lands receive some compensation when one of their most important resources is extracted by foreigners.

The author of this editorial points out that the

- A. new states' economies do not permit them to defend their natural resources.*
- B. US offered legal protection for the independence of new island mini-states.
- C. US is concerned that Russia will protest its presence in American Samoa.
- D. new states have not established uniform territorial limits for foreign vessels.

PART TWO- LISTENING COMPREHENSION

The next part of this training material focuses on tests of listening comprehension. Again, only the base levels will be considered--Levels 1, 2, and 3.

1. SELECT A TEXT

- a. As noted in the discussion of reading tests, texts for a proficiency test should not be associated with any curriculum. We should try to identify authentic spoken materials that examinees are very unlikely to have listened to.
- b. We will use the word “text” to discuss listening comprehension, just as we do for reading comprehension. We will think of “texts” as those segments of spoken discourse that are suitable for using as the basis of a test item.
- c. The teaching and testing of listening comprehension in a foreign language presents special challenges. Foreign language professionals realize that many language students are not skilled listeners—even in their native language. They may not have been trained to listen to a text for a purpose. For that reason, they may not understand what real listening entails.
- d. One major consideration that distinguishes listening tests from reading tests involves memory. The test development team must be careful not to overload examinees’ memories when testing their ability to understand spoken texts. In selecting texts, a balance must be sought between finding examples that adequately represent the desired level and ensuring that the memory load is not excessive.
- e. Natural spoken language is quite different from a written text prepared for a broadcast or lecture. Natural conversation, even at the highest levels, includes hesitations, rephrasing, interruptions, false starts, digressions, etc. Formal and informal registers may be mixed in the same conversation. Speakers may try to talk at the same time. They may change the subject abruptly. Discourse may seem disorganized and unclear in comparison with a written text. On the other hand, conversation normally includes redundancy. One speaker may emphasize and reemphasize a point. An argument may include enough repeated detail to clarify the meaning. Sometimes, one speaker may actually request clarification from another speaker.
- f. A test development team will need to plan the degree of naturalness they consider acceptable for the listening test. They may want to balance some prepared speech intended for reading aloud (ranging from radio announcements to formal lectures) with natural, improvised speech. The team’s decisions should become a part of the Table of Specifications for the listening comprehension test. The team should consult the specifications periodically to make sure they adhere to their plan.

- g. The following is a list of possible sources for listening texts, organized by level.

- Level 1** Introductions to television and radio programs
Announcements at public events
Emergency announcements
Simple broadcasts of sports scores
Simple weather reports
Greetings, courtesy expressions, and common exchanges on television and radio programs
- Level 2** Instructions or orders
Short factual news broadcasts
Factual narration on a broadcast
Factual descriptions on a broadcast
Short concrete conversations on television and radio programs
- Level 3** Interviews on current issues
Broadcast editorials
Speeches or lectures
Debates
Recordings of meetings, conferences, or briefings
More complex conversations on television and radio programs

- h. Finally, many of the same concerns raised about reading texts also apply to listening. The texts should be testable. Content should immediately suggest a suitable test key at the intended level. However, regardless of how representative a text may be of the target culture, it should not be used if it has one of these features:

- non-target language words or phrases
- a mixture of dialects
- culturally sensitive material, such as gender or religious references or propaganda, that would distract examinees
- content depending on familiar quotations
- material intended for a technical specialist.

2. REVIEW THE TEXT TYPES ASSOCIATED WITH EACH PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Read some of the relevant documents in which listening text types are discussed. This handbook focuses on the STANAG 6001 level descriptions and the “Overview of Listening Text Characteristics by Level,” by Jana Vasilj-Begovic and Martha Herzog, which adds a speaker purpose to the text type. (The “Overview” is in Appendix A.)

a. LISTENING TEXTS—LEVEL 1

- STANAG 6001 scale

Common familiar phrases and short simple sentences about everyday needs related to personal and survival areas such as minimum courtesy, travel, and workplace requirements when the communication situation is clear and supported by context. Topics include basic needs such as meals, lodging, transportation, time, simple directions and instructions.

- Overview of Listening Characteristics by Level

Speaker purpose: Orient by communicating main ideas.

Simple short sentences with simple vocabulary. Text organization is somewhat loose, but follows societal norms.

**LEVEL 1 TEXT
EXAMPLE**

(Transcript)

You have reached the office of Dr. Carter Sloan. The office is currently closed. Our office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. We're closed on Saturday and Sunday. If you wish to leave a message, please do so after the beep. If this is an emergency, hang up and call Dr. Barbara Prentice at 942-8661. Thank you.

b. LISTENING TEXTS—LEVEL 2

- STANAG 6001 scale

Conversations on everyday social and routine job-related topics. Face-to-face speech in a standard dialect, delivered at a normal rate, about a wide variety of concrete topics, such as personal and family news, public matters of personal and general interest, and routine work matters presented through descriptions of persons, places, and things; and narration about current, past, and future events.

- Overview of Listening Characteristics by Level

Speaker purpose: Instruct by communicating factual information.

Connected factual discourse with compound and complex sentences dealing with concrete information. Discourse is paragraph-length, with sentences carefully sequenced within paragraphs. The speaker's personal viewpoint is subordinated to a factual presentation.

**LEVEL 2 TEXT
EXAMPLE**

(Transcript)

Guest: In a chimpanzee's mind, their intelligence is so flexible.

Host: You are listening to Tetsuro Matsuzawa of the Primate Research Institute at Kyoto University, in Japan. Matsuzawa trained chimps to recognize the numbers one to nine. He found that they outperformed college undergrads in a short-term memory test.

Guest: I tested three young chimpanzees at the age of five.

Host: Random numbers appeared on a touch-screen. After a fraction of a second, the numbers were masked by white squares. The chimps remembered the location of the numbers and were able to touch them in numerical order.

Guest: And I did tests of up to eight numerals. And young chimpanzees had no problem at all. But if you test undergraduate students in a college, five numerals are already very difficult.

Host: The undergrads' accuracy dropped to 40 percent. Matsuzawa said that learning about the chimpanzee mind can tell us something about ourselves.

Guest: You can easily recognize the similar behavior between humans and the test of the animals. So humans, animals--we should be living together peacefully co-existing, sharing this beautiful planet Earth.

c. LISTENING TEXTS—LEVEL 3

- STANAG 6001 scale

Most formal and informal speech on practical, social, and professional topics, including particular interests and special fields of competence. Face-to-face speech delivered with normal speed and clarity in a standard dialect. Language used at interactive meetings, briefings, and other forms

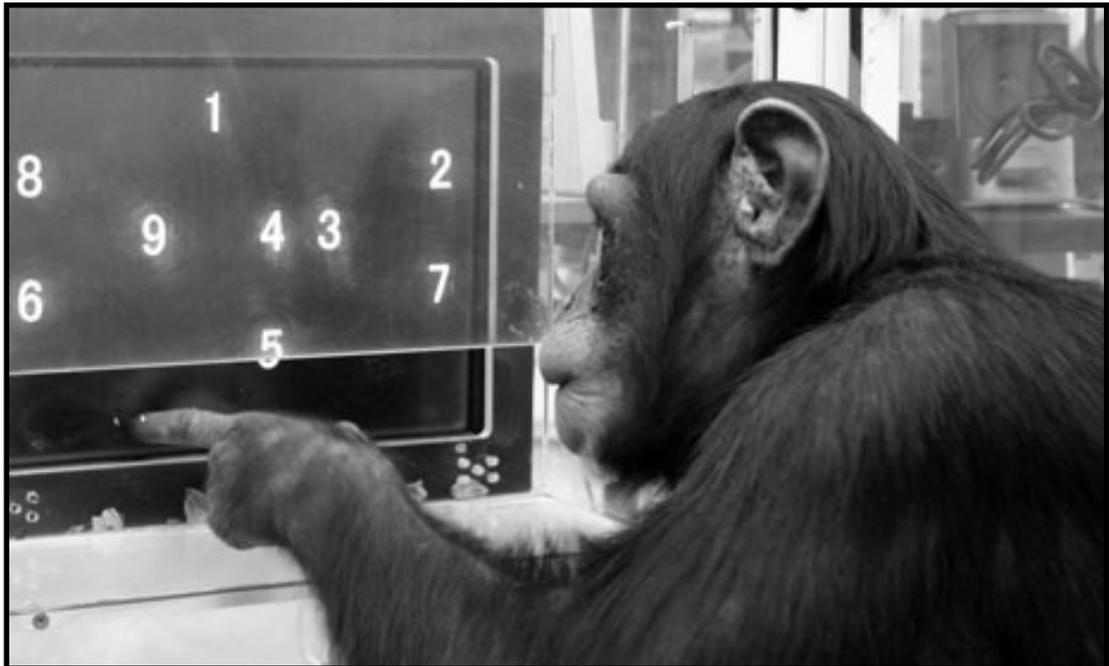
of extended discourse, including unfamiliar subjects and situations. The essentials of conversations among educated native speakers, lectures on general subjects and special fields of competence, reasonably clear telephone calls, and media broadcasts. Language that includes such functions as hypothesizing, supporting opinion, stating and defending policy, argumentation, objections, and various types of elaboration. Abstract concepts in discussion of complex topics (which may include economics, culture, science, technology) as well as his/her professional field.

- Overview of Listening Characteristics by Level

Speaker purpose:

Evaluate situations, concepts, conflicting ideas, present and support arguments and/or hypotheses with both factual and abstract reasoning.

Extended discourse on a variety of unfamiliar or abstract subjects; using either formal or informal speech such as might be found in professional discussions, supported opinion, hypothesis, argumentation and elaboration. References may be made to previous statements, to common cultural values, etc. The speaker's unique personal point of view is evident.



**LEVEL 3 TEXT
EXAMPLE**

(Transcript)

Guest: Anything that has to be rescued like a bank ought to be regulated like a bank. Any. . . It turns out that is anybody who borrows short and lends long.

Host: Don't you think that's going to be the end result of all this?

Guest: I hope so. I mean, I fear, a little bit that. . . you know, that the skies will clear. And people will say, "Let's go back to business as usual." But it has to be. That's right. What we really need to have is. . . You know this is a (we hope a much lower key), but this is a replay of the early 1930s. And we need to relearn our grandfathers' lessons. We need to say OK, the banking system, which is now much bigger than just the commercial banks, needs to have capital requirements. It needs to have some government guarantees. It needs to be regulated so that it doesn't destroy the world when it runs amok.

3. CONSIDER EDITING

- a. Like some reading texts, some listening texts may need to be edited. If the decision is made to edit a spoken text, that usually means that it must be re-voiced for the test. In each case, the test development team will want to weigh the pros and cons of making these changes. The team will probably not want a significant portion of the test to be re-voiced.
- b. The example used for Level 1 comes from a voice mail or answering machine message. If test developers decided to substitute fictional names to protect the privacy of the original doctors, this message could be re-voiced without sacrificing authenticity.
- c. Level 1 voice mail messages are usually prepared speech intended for reading.
- d. The example used for Level 2 presents a problem not obvious from the transcript. The Japanese scientist actually speaks English quite clearly, but his rate of speech is unusually slow. This extends the actual text to 80 seconds, while the text could probably be re-voiced by another speaker in less than 60 seconds. This type of re-voicing is something most test development teams would probably want to do.
- e. The example used for Level 3 shows what authentic, spontaneous argumentation is often like. Such a text should not be edited. However, the Level 3 portion of a listening test should probably include a balance of such spontaneous speech and

carefully planned and delivered spoken language (such as portions of lectures or speeches).

4. EXAMINE POTENTIAL FOR ITEM WRITING

- a. Before beginning the item writing process, make a few notes about the characteristics of the text. In the case of listening texts, the test development team may want to prepare a transcription. Otherwise, team members will need to listen to the text numerous times.
- b. At Levels 1, 2, and 3: Identify the purpose and main idea of the text. It may not always be easy to get agreement when working with natural, discursive speech.
- c. At Levels 2 and 3: Identify the main facts and supporting information. Even some Level 1 texts may contain such features.
- d. At Level 3:
 - Examine whether the text lends itself to a question focusing on:
 - inference
 - supported opinion
 - tone
 - synthesis
 - hypothesis
 - abstract linguistic formulations
 - Identify the opinions presented in the text. Determine how the speaker supports the opinions.
 - Identify any analysis presented in the text. This may simply involve the speaker's classifying ideas into two or more points of view.
 - Determine the speaker's tone. Decide how the choice of words contributes to the tone.
 - Determine what abstract ideas and abstract linguistic formulations can be found in the text.
 - Check to see if the text includes hypothesis. If so, determine the extent to which the speaker's use of hypothesis contributes to the meaning of the text.
 - Identify any metaphors or other figurative language, as well as literary, religious, or cultural allusions. The team will need to decide when these features raise the text above Level 3.

- If a spoken text contains vocabulary, grammatical constructions, or usage not frequently found at this level, make a note of it. You may want to discuss these points with team members at some point in the item writing process.

5. REVIEW THE TASKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF THE TEXT

That is, determine which tasks are appropriate for a text of this level. The task should be at the same level as the text.

a. LISTENING TASKS – LEVEL 1

- STANAG 6001 scale

Can understand common familiar phrases and short simple sentences about everyday needs. Can understand concrete utterances, simple questions and answers, and very simple conversations.

- Overview of Listening Texts Characteristics by Level – Intended Listener Purpose

Orient oneself by identifying topics and main ideas.

b. LISTENING TASKS – LEVEL 2

- STANAG 6001 scale

Can follow discourse at the paragraph level even when there is considerable factual detail. Understands factual content. Able to understand facts but not subtleties of language surrounding the facts.

- Overview of Listening Characteristics by Level- Listener Purpose

Acquire information by understanding not only the main topics and facts, but also supporting details such as temporal and causative relationships.

c. LISTENING TASKS—LEVEL 3

- STANAG 6001 scale

Can readily understand language that includes such functions as hypothesizing, supporting opinion, stating and defending policy, argumentation, objections, and various forms of elaboration. Demonstrates understanding of abstract concepts in discussion of complex topics. Understands both explicit and implicit information in a spoken text. Can

generally distinguish between different stylistic levels and often recognizes humor, emotional overtones, and subtleties of speech.

- Overview of Listening Texts Characteristics by Level —Listener Purpose

Learn by relating ideas and conceptual arguments, by understanding the messages “in the lines” and “between the lines,” by recognizing the speaker’s tone and intent.

6. DRAFT A LISTENING COMPREHENSION ITEM

a. LEVEL 1

- Look at the example text for this level (on page 25).
- Edit the text. You may want to change the names and phone number to protect the privacy of the doctors whose voice mail was used. Use other names, such as Dr. Melvin Watts and Dr. Madeline Bremer. Change the phone number.
- Look at the appropriate tasks for this level (on page 30). These include identifying topics and the main idea, as well as understanding simple sentences and questions.
- Draft a key requiring examinees to understand the topic, main idea, or sentence-level information. Possible keys:
 - Dr. Watts’ office is not open right now.
 - There is a number to call for emergencies.
 - The message tells when Dr. Watts is in the office.
- Experiment with distractors. Based on experience with and knowledge of the listening proficiency of examinees below Level 1, draft a stem and distractors related to their comprehension problems.

Point to remember: In many tests, examinees can listen to the Level 1 text twice. This reduces the memory load for lower level listeners. They will be able to read all the options before listening to the text. This feature allows them to focus on the task; that is, they will be able to listen for a purpose. Just as in a reading test, Level 1 distractors may capitalize on one or two words present in the text. However, distractors should be clearly incorrect, and each should be completely distinct. Remember, at this level, examinees are expected only to be able to identify the main idea.

Possible stems and distractors:

According to the message

OR

This is a message about

- new office hours.
 - Dr. Watts's new phone number.
 - a holiday sale.
 - dates for flu shots.
 - an overdue bill.
 - emergency room hours.
 - calling an ambulance.
 - refilling a prescription.
- Draft an item with the stem, key, and distractors you prefer.

A possible item:

This is a message about

- A. Dr. Watts's office hours.*
- B. emergency room hours.
- C. calling an ambulance.
- D. refilling a prescription.

- Add an orientation. A possible orientation:

An answering machine message:

OR

A voice mail message:

- A complete item in draft:

A voice mail message:

(Transcript)

You have reached the office of Dr. Melvin Watts. The office is currently closed. Our office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. We're closed on Saturday and Sunday. If you wish to leave a message, please do so after the beep. If this is an emergency, hang up and call Dr. Madeline Bremer at 555-5602.

Thank you.

This message explains

- A. a doctor's office hours.*
- B. emergency room hours.
- C. how to call an ambulance.
- D. how to refill a prescription.

b. LEVEL 2

- Look at the example text for this level (on page 26).
- Edit the text.
 - As mentioned before, one of the speakers in the example text spoke extremely slowly. If we were to use this text on an actual test, we would prefer an average rate of speech. This text would be a good candidate for re-voicing.
 - When re-voicing the text, we will want to change the name of the scientist. Another Japanese name, such as Kazuo Nakahama, can be substituted.
- Look at the appropriate tasks for this level (on page 30). These include understanding facts, main ideas, and most supporting detail in paragraph length discourse.
- Draft a key requiring examinees to understand factual content. Possible keys:
 - A Japanese researcher trained chimpanzees in number recognition.
 - In a comparison test, chimpanzees performed better than undergraduates.

- Young chimpanzees identified up to eight numbers in correct numerical order.
- Experiment with distractors. Based on experience with and knowledge of examinees below Level 2, draft a stem and distractors related to their comprehension problems.

Point to remember: In many tests, examinees will be able to listen to Level 2 items twice. That reduces the memory load for these listeners. They will be able to read the options before listening to the text. This feature allows them to focus on the task; that is, they will be able to listen for a purpose. Most authentic Level 2 texts contain a great deal of factual information. Examinees below this level may understand numerous concrete words in the text, but they will usually not understand the primary message or be able to identify the most important points. Distractors can capitalize on familiar concrete words. Distractors may reflect factual information that might be found in a text on this topic but that is not present in this particular text. At Level 2 (unlike Level 1) distractors should stay close to the language of the text.

Possible stems and distractors:

There was Japanese research on

OR

This broadcast reports on

- intelligence tests given to chimpanzees.
 - the effect of fatigue in undergraduate testing.
 - the limits of chimpanzees' short term memory.
 - chimpanzees confused by touch-screen tests.
 - the similar behavior of undergrads and chimps.
- Draft an item with the stem, key, and distractors you prefer. A possible item:

This broadcast reports on

- A. a test comparing chimpanzees and undergraduates.*
- B. the similar behavior of undergraduates and chimps.
- C. the limits of chimpanzees' short term memory.
- D. effects of fatigue on undergraduates' memory.

- Add an orientation. A possible orientation:

A radio program about Japanese research:

OR

From the science news:

- A complete item in draft:

From a radio program about Japanese research:

(Transcript)

Guest: In a chimpanzee's mind, their intelligence is so flexible.

Host: You are listening to Kazuo Nakahama of the Primate Research Institute at Kyoto University in Japan. Nakahama trained chimps to recognize the numbers one to nine. He found that they outperformed college undergrads in a short-term memory test.

Guest: I tested three young chimpanzees at the age of five.

Host: Random numbers appeared on a touch-screen. After a fraction of a second, the numbers were masked by white squares. The chimps remembered the location of the numbers and were able to touch them in numerical order.

Guest: And I did tests of up to eight numerals. And young chimpanzees had no problem at all. But if you test undergraduate students in a college, five numerals are already very difficult.

Host: The undergrads' accuracy dropped to 40 percent. Nakahama said that learning about the chimpanzee mind can tell us something about ourselves.

Guest: You can easily recognize the similar behavior between humans and the test of the animals. So humans, animals—we should be living peacefully co-existing, sharing this beautiful planet Earth.

This broadcast reports on

- A. a test comparing chimpanzees and undergraduates.*
- B. the similar behavior of undergraduates and chimps.
- C. the limits of chimpanzees' short term memory.
- D. effects of fatigue on undergraduates' memory.

C. LEVEL 3

- Look at the example text for this level (see page 28).
- Edit the text.
- We should probably not edit or attempt to re-voice a text of this type. This is a typical example of spontaneous argumentation in English (by a Nobel laureate). However, a Level 3 listening test should not consist entirely of spontaneous argumentation. The test should also include segments of prepared speech.
- Look at the appropriate tasks for this level (see pages 30-31). These include understanding hypothesis, supported opinion, and argumentation; relating ideas; detecting implications and emotional overtones; “listening between the lines.”
- Draft a key requiring examinees to perform an appropriate task, such as understanding argumentation or hypothesis. Possible keys:
 - The guest hypothesizes that a sense of urgency could be lost if the situation stabilizes.
 - The guest posits that an expanded banking system requires far greater controls.
 - The guest thinks something can be learned today from the financial crises of the 1930s.
- Experiment with distractors. Based on experience with and knowledge of examinees below Level 3, draft a stem and distractors related to their comprehension problems.

Point to remember: At Level 3, the key and distractors should be written to reflect the complexity of the text. The stem should set the stage for the options. The stem should not present critical information from the text that we expect a Level 3 listener to understand because that will lower the difficulty level of the task. Options should normally be sentence-length. Distractors should not test a word or phrase or cover concepts that are unrelated to the text. Those approaches would also lower the difficulty level of the task. Options should deal with a central feature of the argument found in the text, and distractors should capitalize on points and ideas that could very well be found in a similar text on the topic with a different stance or focus.

Possible stems and distractors:

During this discussion,

OR

In his remarks

- the guest suggests that some recent bank rescues have been premature.
- the guest argues that financial reforms should follow the pattern of the 1930s.
- the guest complains that commercial banks have run amok despite regulations.
- the guest points out that government guarantees create a new set of problems.

Draft an item with the stem, key, and distractors you prefer. A possible item:

During this discussion, the guest

- A. hypothesizes that a sense of urgency could be lost if the situation stabilizes.*
- B. points out that government guarantees could create a new set of problems.
- C. argues that financial reforms should follow the pattern used in the 1930s.
- D. complains that commercial banks have run amok despite strong regulations.

- Add an orientation. A possible orientation:

From an interview about finance and banking:

OR

From a discussion of financial issues:

- A complete item in draft:

From an interview about finance and banking:

(Transcript)

Guest: Anything that has to be rescued like a bank ought to be regulated like a bank. Any. . . It turns out that is anybody who borrows short and lends long.

Host: Don't you think that's going to be the end result of all this?

Guest: I hope so. I mean, I fear, a little bit that . . . you know, that the skies will clear. And people will say, "Let's go back to business as usual." But it has to be. That's right. What we really need to have is . . . You know this is a (we hope a much lower key), but this is a replay of the early 1930s. And we need to relearn our grandfathers' lessons. We need to say OK, the banking system, which is now much bigger than just the commercial banks, needs to have capital requirements. It needs to have some government guarantees. It needs to be regulated so that it doesn't destroy the world when it runs amok.

During this discussion, the guest

- A. hypothesizes that a sense of urgency could be lost if the situation stabilizes.*
- B. points out that government guarantees could create a new set of problems.
- C. argues that financial reforms should follow the pattern used in the 1930s.
- D. complains that commercial banks have run amok despite strong regulations.

PART THREE- THE REVIEW PROCESS

This portion of the training material covers the review process. Review is an inherent part of test development. Every test development team should expect to follow a four-step procedure: write, review, revise, reflect.

WRITE: As the first three parts of this training material demonstrate, there are several steps to follow in developing an item. While teams may organize themselves in different ways, it is always desirable for all team members to get other opinions of their work as often as possible. Whether identifying a text for testing, developing options, or producing an orientation, the test developer benefits from the review process. It is useful to forget pride of authorship and accept the fact that a team often has much better ideas than an individual working alone.

REVIEW: The first review should be conducted by the original item writer him/herself. Put the item aside for a day or two, and look at it again. Often, solutions to a testing problem will present themselves after some time has passed. The next review should be done by fellow team members. In some cases this can be done by exchanging items produced by each individual every few days. The team can prepare written feedback or get together once a week to compare notes. Subsequent review can be conducted by one or more external reviewers.

REVISE: While the original item writer may not want to adopt every suggestion made, s/he should consider each one seriously and attempt to read the item from the perspective of the reviewer. The actual revision may not always be the exact change recommended by the reviewer, but it could be a change suggested by the reviewer's observation.

REFLECT: Revisions also should be set aside for a day or two and then reexamined. Sometimes the solution to one problem creates another. For example, the decision to put more information in the stem could reduce the difficulty of the task presented in the options so that the text is no longer tested at the appropriate level. When, upon reflection, the item writer decides to reject a revision that s/he first accepted, it would be a good idea to discuss the new problem with the colleague or team. This could be a positive learning experience for everyone.

PILOT: Another useful type of review is piloting. If possible, the team should identify a small number of language learners whose estimated level they can agree upon. Periodically, the team should administer a few items to these learners and then review the results. If those estimated to be at the target level identified the correct key, and if those estimated to be below that level did not, the item would appear to be on track. However, if an item does not work as expected, it would be desirable to conduct a "think-aloud" session with examinees to get their feedback. The team will want to revise items based on their piloting and feedback experience before discarding items.

DISCARD: Some items will have to be discarded. Some texts, regardless of how promising they may seem, just do not work for testing. After a certain amount of experimentation, the team should simply look for a replacement text and work on a new item.

REVIEW GUIDELINES

The following material presents some guidelines for reviewing proficiency test items. These can be used for reviewing one's own items or those developed by team members.

THE TEXT

1. Is the text a good, testable representation of the level to be tested?
2. Is the target language correct and authentic?*

 - a. Was a written text produced by a native writer for native readers and not prepared for language instruction?
 - b. Was a spoken text produced by native speakers for native listeners and not prepared for language instruction?

***Note:** When contrived texts are used, as discussed in Part Three, the team should agree on some internal guidelines for determining when texts do and do not provide an authentic representation of the language.

3. Does the text reflect contemporary use of the language?
4. Does the text avoid specialized technical vocabulary? Would it be understood by the average reader (or listener) in the target culture?
5. Is the text length realistic for the level you are testing?
6. Will the content soon seem outdated? If so, can editing correct the problem?
7. Is it unlikely the text has been translated into the examinees' native language and widely circulated? Similarly, is the content well known outside the culture, so that examinees might rely on information external to the text?
8. Is there any ambiguity in the text that would interfere with the testing point? If so, can this be corrected through editing?

THE ORIENTATION

1. Does it provide adequate information to introduce the text?
2. Is it representative of the level you want to test?

THE STEM

1. Does it clearly and succinctly set the stage for the options?
2. Does it make the examinee's task clear?
3. Does it give away the correct answer or, similarly, provide so much information that the task falls below the level to be tested?
4. Does the language of the stem fit the options grammatically and idiomatically?
5. Is it representative of the level you want to test? (i.e., Does the stem avoid vocabulary more characteristic of a level higher or lower than the text? Does it focus on a testing point at the intended level?)
6. Is it constructed so that one and only one correct answer can be selected from the options?
7. In an item dealing with judgment or controversy, does the stem cite the authority for determining the correct answer (e.g., "The author of this article believes. . ." OR "It is this speaker's opinion that. . .")?
8. Does it avoid general qualifiers (e.g., "usually," "sometimes," "possibly," etc.) in cases where these would reveal or distort the key or simply make the item "tricky"? (**Note:** That does not mean such qualifiers can never appear in a stem, but test developers should craft such items carefully.)
9. Is the stem stated positively? If not, is a negative stem consistent with the content of the text? (**Note:** When such words as "NOT," "NEVER," "EXCEPT," etc. appear in a stem, they should be printed in capital or bolded letters to highlight the negative statement. This will help prevent the appearance of a "tricky" item.)

THE KEY

1. Is there a correct answer?
2. Is there one and only one correct answer?
3. Is there any possibility examinees could determine the key without understanding the text?

4. Is the key (plus the stem) grammatically and stylistically consistent with the text?
5. Is it representative of the level you want to test? Does it constitute a task at the correct level?
6. Does the key differ from other options in a significant way?
7. Does anything artificially draw attention to the key? (e.g., length? amount of detail? repetition of words from the text?)

THE DISTRACTORS

1. Is each distractor plausible?
2. Is each distractor as carefully planned as other parts of the item?
3. Would each distractor seem attractive to examinees who cannot fully understand the text? (i.e., examinees whose comprehension is below the level of the text)
4. Is each distractor based on a specific problem or misconception a lower level examinee might have with the text?
5. Does each distractor differ from the key and other distractors in more than minor or trivial details?
6. Does each distractor avoid tricky or misleading language?
7. Is the form, meaning, and sociolinguistic context of each distractor plausible? Is the intended meaning of each distractor clear?
8. Is each distractor, although plausible, clearly incorrect?
9. Do distractors help determine the difficulty level of the item by requiring examinees to make distinctions in order to select the correct answer?
10. Are all distractors approximately equal in difficulty?

THE SET OF MULTIPLE-CHOICE OPTIONS

1. Are all the options clearly distinct from one another?
2. Are they approximately the same length? If not, are two longer options balanced by two shorter ones?

3. Are they equally general or equally specific? If not, are two general options balanced by two more specific ones?
4. If two options are related in some way, are the other two similarly related?
5. Do the options fit the text in terms of proficiency level and style?
6. Is the language correct and idiomatic?
7. Does each option fit the stem?

**THE COMPLETE ITEM
(ORIENTATION, TEXT, STEM, OPTIONS)**

1. Does the item measure a language task or a feature of the text that examinees at the intended level should be able to control?
2. Does it avoid testing trivial points?
3. Is there clearly one (and only one) correct answer?
4. Does the item test only understanding of the text? Does it avoid testing factual or cultural knowledge outside the scope of the text?
5. Could examinees identify the correct answer on the basis of outside knowledge without understanding the text?
6. Is there any requirement to understand language above the intended level?
7. Does the item contain offensive material about gender, race, age, ethnic characteristics, or other stereotypes?

THE COMPLETE TEST

Note: Some of these guidelines apply only to fixed-item tests and not to sets of randomly generated items.

1. Does the test avoid duplication of items and objectives?
2. Does the content of one item reveal the correct answer to another item?
3. Does a distractor appear in more than one item?
4. Are the items sequenced according to proficiency level?

5. Have the correct answers been randomly sequenced to avoid a discernible pattern?
6. Does the test represent a well-balanced sample of the target language domain at the levels tested?
7. Is the test content fair and unbiased toward examinees from different backgrounds (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnic background, etc.)?
8. Is the answer key correct?



**BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL
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APPENDIX A

**OVERVIEW OF READING TEXT
CHARACTERISTICS BY LEVEL,**

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE STANAG 6001
SCALE TO TEXT RATING**

&

**OVERVIEW OF LISTENING TEXT
CHARACTERISTICS BY LEVEL**

First Published: January: 2010
Version 6.0 Published June 2013

OVERVIEW OF READING TEXT CHARACTERISTICS BY LEVEL

Level	Author Purpose	Text Type	Reader Purpose
1	ORIENT by communicating main ideas.	Simple short sentences with simple vocabulary. Sentences may be resequenced without changing the meaning of the text. Text organization is loose without much cohesion, but follows societal norms.	Orient oneself by identifying topics and main ideas.
2	INSTRUCT By communicating factual information.	Connected factual discourse with compound and complex sentences dealing with factual information. Sentences are sequenced within cohesive paragraphs, but it might be possible to reorder some paragraphs without changing the meaning of the text. The identity of the author is not important.	Understand not only the main topics and facts, but also the supporting details such as temporal and causative relationships.
3	EVALUATE situations, concepts, conflicting ideas; present and support arguments and/or hypotheses with both factual and abstract reasoning; often accompanied by the appropriate use of wit, sarcasm, or emotionally-laden lexical choices.	Multiple-paragraph block of discourse on a variety of unfamiliar or abstract subjects such as might be found in editorials, official correspondence, and professional writing. References may be made to previous paragraphs, common cultural values, etc. The “voice” of the author is evident.	Learn by relating ideas and conceptual arguments. Understand the text’s literal and the figurative meaning by reading both “the lines” and “between the lines”. Recognize the author’s tone and infer the author’s intent.
4	PROJECT lines of thought beyond the expected, connect previously unrelated ideas or concepts, and present complex ideas with nuanced precision and virtuosity with the goal of propelling the reader into the author's world of thought.	Extended discourse that is tailored for the message being sent and the intended audience. To achieve the desired tone and precision of thought, the author will often demonstrate the skilful use of low-frequency vocabulary, cultural and historical concepts, and an understanding of the audience's shared experiences and values.	Read “beyond the lines”, understand the author’s sociolinguistic and cultural references, follow innovative turns of thought, and interpret the text in view of its wider cultural, societal, and political setting.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE STANAG 6001 SCALE TO TEXT RATING

Ray Clifford's overview of text characteristics by level is built upon the work done by James Child over the course of several decades of service in the US Government. Mr. Child supplemented such scales as the Interagency Language Roundtable and the STANAG 6001 by defining the characteristics of texts at four major proficiency levels—Base Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. His ideas have been circulated throughout the US Government's language learning and testing community and have also influenced academic discussion of text levels. His various articles on text typology have been published in several journals and books. Readers are encouraged to consult "Language Proficiency Levels and the Typology of Texts," in Defining and Developing Proficiency: Guidelines, Implementation, and Concepts, which was edited by Heidi Byrnes and Michael Canale in 1987 and "Language Skill Levels, Textual Modes, and the Rating Process," published in *Foreign Language Annals* in 1998.

In brief, Mr. Child's concept defines four text modes, ranging from Base Level 1 to Base Level 4. These are the orientation mode, which communicates a central idea, related to the immediate context; the instructional mode, which communicates factual information; the evaluative mode, which demonstrates a clear point of view by the author, concerning either analytical or affective content; and the projective mode, which presents original and innovative turns of thought by the author.

In general, as text modes become more complex, they also become longer. Orientation mode texts are constructed at sentence level; they are rarely more than 1-3 lines in length. Instructional mode texts are paragraph length; they are characterized by one or more fully developed paragraphs. Evaluative mode texts may be essay length, consisting of a series of cohesive, well constructed, carefully connected paragraphs. Projective mode texts demonstrate extended discourse and may be essay length or longer; because they represent an author's unique point of view, the method of argumentation itself may be complex and innovative.

OVERVIEW OF LISTENING TEXT CHARACTERISTICS BY LEVEL

Level	Speaker Purpose	Typical Text Type	Listener Purpose
1	Orient by communicating main ideas.	Simple short sentences with simple vocabulary. Text organization is somewhat loose, but follows cultural norms.	<i>Orient oneself</i> by identifying topics and main ideas.
2	Instruct by communicating factual information.	Connected factual discourse with compound and complex sentences dealing with concrete information. Discourse is paragraph-length, with sentences carefully sequenced within paragraphs. The speaker's personal viewpoint is subordinated to a factual presentation.	<i>Acquire information</i> by understanding not only the main topics and facts, but also supporting details such as temporal and causative relationships.
3	Evaluate situations, concepts, conflicting ideas; present and support arguments and/or hypotheses with both factual and abstract reasoning.	Extended discourse on a variety of unfamiliar or abstract subjects; using either formal or informal speech such as might be found in professional discussions, supported opinion, hypothesis, argumentation and elaboration. References may be made to previous statements, to common cultural values, etc. The speaker's unique personal point of view is evident.	<i>Learn</i> by relating ideas and conceptual arguments, by understanding the messages "in the lines" and "between the lines," by recognizing the speaker's tone and intent.
4	Project lines of thought beyond the expected, connect previously unrelated ideas or concepts; present complex ideas with nuanced precision and virtuosity.	Extended discourse that is tailored for the message and the intended audience. To achieve the desired tone and precision of thought, the speaker will often skillfully use low-frequency vocabulary, cultural and historical concepts, and demonstrate understanding of the audience's shared experience and values.	<i>Listen "beyond the lines,"</i> understand the speaker's sociolinguistic and cultural references, follow innovative turns of thought, and interpret the message in view of its wider cultural, societal, and political setting.

Jana Vasilj-Begovic & Martha Herzog, 2013.



**BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL
LANGUAGE CO-ORDINATION**

APPENDIX B

**DISCUSSION OF SOME
CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITTEN
TEXTS AT LEVELS 1+ AND 2+**

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DISCUSSION OF SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITTEN TEXTS AT LEVELS 1+ AND 2+

The STANAG 6001 Levels 1-3 Summary Review Handbook focuses on multiple-choice test item development for base levels 1, 2, and 3. The plus levels are not addressed.

Appendix B is intended to provide some information to test developers about characteristics of written texts at Levels 1+ and 2+.

A. DISCUSSION OF LEVEL 1+

Examples of some Level 1 announcements

- Example No. 1.

From a list of Tuesday meetings:

COUNTY POLITICS

SALINAS—Monterey County Supervisors meet. 10:30 a.m. Supervisors' Chambers, 168 W. Alisal St., Salinas. Free. 755-5025.

- Example No. 2

From a list of Wednesday meetings:

PACIFIC GROVE POLITICS

PACIFIC GROVE—City Council meets. 6 p.m. Council Chambers, City Hall, 300 Forest Ave., Pacific Grove. Free 648-3172.
www.ci.pg.ca.us/citycouncil/agmin.htm

However, some similar texts do not fit Level 1 constraints.

- Example No. 3

From a list of Thursday meetings:

PUBLIC MEETING TRAINING

MARINA—City Attorney Rob Wellington facilitates an interactive Planning Commission training program about the Brown Act, which governs public meetings in California. 6:30 p.m. Marina City Council Chambers, 211 Hillcrest Ave., Marina. Free. 884-1240.

○ **ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLE NO. 3**

LEVEL 1

Why does this text not meet the requirements for Level 1? Why does it not fit within the borders of a Level 1 text intended for orientation?

- Primarily, this text does not seem to be Level 1 because some key vocabulary (“facilitates,” “interactive,” “governs”) is not simple or high frequency.
- If Examples No. 1 and No. 2 set up an expectation for the content of a text about public meetings, the third text violates that expectation because of the higher level vocabulary.
- Readers may even question whether this announcement should be printed in a list of public meetings. After reading it, we cannot be sure if the public can participate in this activity or if the public is invited to observe the training of Planning Commission members.

Could the essential information in this announcement be reduced so that the text is more clearly Level 1? Consider this alternative:

- The City Attorney trains the Planning Commission to hold public meetings according to the Brown Act. 6:30 p.m. Marina City Council Chambers, 211 Hillcrest Ave., Marina. Free. 884-1240.

LEVEL 2

If we agree that the original text does not fit within the borders of Level 1, we may then ask why it does not reach or even approach the borders of a Level 2 text?

- To reach Level 2, considerably more information would have had to be added. Such information would look both backward and forward.
- In a Level 2 text, the writer would probably
 - provide background about the purpose of the Brown Act;
 - tell when it was enacted and when it must be implemented;
 - and explain how it applies to the Planning Commission.
- The writer might also explain

- Rob Wellington’s qualifications to give the training;
 - the source of his training materials;
 - and a few major points to be included in the training.
- In a Level 2 text, the interactive nature of the training would no doubt be explained. For example, if there is to be role-playing in which the public might take part, this would be stated. Such an explanation would make it clearer why the text is announced as a public meeting.
 - In the absence of detailed explanation of this type, the text is certainly not Level 2.

This text does not fit the scale at either Level 1 or 2. It may be considered 1+ because of the addition of non-essential, but truncated, detail and the use of less familiar vocabulary.

- Example No. 4

A newspaper announcement:

URBAN VILLAGE EIR

SEASIDE—The draft environmental impact report for the West Broadway Urban Village, a 40-acre redevelopment plan for downtown Seaside, is available for review and comment. The plan features a mix of multi-family residential, commercial, office and park uses. Copies available at the Seaside Library, City Hall, and online at www.broadwayurbanvillage.org. Comment period runs July 7-Aug. 21. Submit comments to Diana Hurlbert, Senior Planner, 440 Harcourt Ave., Seaside. 899-6737.

- **ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLE NO. 4**

LEVEL 1

Why does this text not fit the requirements for a Level 1 text intended for orientation?

- Just as was the case for Example No. 3, some of the vocabulary (“draft,” “environmental,” “impact,” “redevelopment”) is not simple or frequently used.
- Also, some of the concepts supporting the vocabulary (“environmental impact” and “a mix of . . . uses”) are not the everyday topics we expect to find in a Level 1 text.

- Finally, in the first two sentences the writer has provided more extensive detail than we might expect in a simple newspaper announcement.
- Presumably, a simpler announcement could have been written, stating merely that a report on a new plan for downtown Seaside would be available for review.

LEVEL 2

Why does this more detailed text not reach the borders of Level 2?

- Although not a Level 1 text, it remains basically an announcement—an extremely detailed one.
- For the text to reach the Level 2 border, additional categories of information would be needed to place the text in the instructive mode. For example:
 - There would probably be some background information about the proposed development—the proponents and their funding.
 - There would probably be general information concerning the need for an environmental impact study.
 - Also, there might be a brief explanation of how extensive an urban project must be to require such a study.
 - There would probably be some elaboration on the proposals mentioned, such as the nature of a multi-family residential use or the types of parks that are planned.
 - Finally, we would expect clarification as to how public comments will be reviewed and used.

Based on these samples, it seems that Level 1+ texts have vocabulary and detail that push them out of the expected constraints of a pure Level 1 text. However, they have none of the elaboration that we associate with texts in the instructive mode.

B. DISCUSSION OF LEVEL 2+

Examples of some Level 2 crime reports

- Example No. 5

PEDESTRIAN, 20, SHOT AND KILLED

A man was shot and killed Wednesday in San Pablo, police said.

Enrique Cisneros, 20, of Richmond was on foot when he was accosted by one or more people near 23rd Street and Maricopa Avenue about 7 a.m., said San Pablo police Lt. Fred Neiberger.

Cisneros tried to run but was shot numerous times, Neiberger said. He collapsed not far from his home near the Richmond-San Pablo border. More than a dozen shots were fired, police said. The circumstances are under investigation.

- Example No. 6

TWO BODIES FOUND NEAR RANCH LINKED TO GANG

NUEVO LAREDO, MEXICO—Mexican authorities working closely with the FBI unearthed two bodies yesterday near a ranch believed to be controlled by a local kidnapping and drug-smuggling gang.

The bodies of Jose Martinez and Arturo Ortiz, both of Nuevo Laredo, were found in shallow graves near Batista Ranch on the outskirts of Nuevo Laredo's airport, said Jaime Ramirez, an assistant prosecutor for northern Tamaulipas State.

During a subsequent raid of the ranch, police arrested Luis Rivas, a Mexican who had been living across the border in Laredo, Texas, and four other suspects.

Near the ranch, investigators found a Toyota pickup truck they believe was used in the slaying of another man, Jose Hernandez, who was killed in this seedy border city of 275,000 on November 2.

Authorities also seized \$81,000 in cash, 10 handguns and three walkie-talkies from inside the ranch.

However, some texts on a similar topic do not fit Level 2 constraints.

- Example No.7

PROSECUTORS SUBPOENA MURDER SUSPECT'S DOG

Bentonville, Arkansas—Prosecutors hoping for a witness in a murder case to roll over were barking up the wrong tree.

They sent out a batch of subpoenas for anyone who had contact with Jeffrey L. Sinclair while he was jailed awaiting his murder trial. One of those subpoenas went out to 5-year-old Kelly Sinclair—Sinclair's dog, it turned out.

The defendant had written his dog a letter from his cell, and that is how the shih tzu's name got on the witness list.

Prosecutors realized the mistake on Tuesday after the defendant's brother brought in Kelly to answer the subpoena and a deputy would not let them into the courthouse because no dogs were allowed.

Prosecutor Sandra Harper said she apologized to the brother for any inconvenience, and added: "The dog was friendly enough and probably would have been a very cooperative witness."

Jeffrey Sinclair is accused of shooting to death his ex-wife's boyfriend.

- ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLE NO. 7

LEVEL 2

Why does this text not meet the requirements for Level 2? Why does it stretch the borders of a Level 2 instructive-mode text?

- It is mainly a matter of tone. The author's attitude toward the subject is conveyed in the first sentence of the text. This attitude is further demonstrated by the selection of details and the quotation from the prosecutor.
- The first two crime reports are typical of the text type. Although Example No. 6 contains a single evaluative word—"seedy"—this is not sufficient to convey an author's voice. Example No. 7 provides such a voice, beginning with puns setting a wry tone that continues almost to the end. In the last paragraph, the writer reverts to instructive mode using factual language characteristic of Examples No. 5 and 6.

- The puns in the first paragraph introduce one type of abstract language, although the main comprehension problem for a lower-level reader would probably not be abstraction, but the sociolinguistic-cultural references. The two linked adages provide an entrance into the narrative for the dog. But, to a reader with skills above Level 2, they also signal the author's individual approach to the serious subject of a murder case.
- Could this report be reduced to a more clearly Level 2 text? Presumably, a more sober text could begin, "Prosecutors in a murder case discovered they had issued an inappropriate subpoena and sent an apology to those inconvenienced by the mistake." Details might be succinct, and there would be no puns.

LEVEL 3

Why does this text, so dependent on the author's presence, not reach the borders of Level 3?

- Although not a Level 2 text, this report is overwhelmingly factual and concrete. The author presents what we might consider a preposterous set of facts in a completely dead-pan manner: (1) The defendant wrote a letter to his dog. (2) The prosecutors subpoenaed all the defendant's contacts, including the dog. (3) The brother brought the dog to answer the subpoena. (4) A prosecutor apologized and went on to compliment the dog. These odd, but factual, details are followed by the chilling reminder of the charges against the accused.
- There is no argument or hypothesis. There is, instead, a distinct tone and a careful selection of details in support of an implied opinion that the Sinclair family has managed to show the legal system in a foolish light.

Examples of some Level 2 obituaries

- Example No. 8

Michael Alexander Bristol
August 14, 1921 – June 22, 2009

Born and raised in Leander, NE, Michael graduated Leander High School in 1939 as Salutatorian, attended Doane College where he graduated with a BS in chemical engineering. He lived mostly in California and enjoyed tennis, chess, bowling, and singing. In 1989 he retired from McGowan Industries after serving as head of the engineering department and plant manager.

Michael is preceded in death by his wife Adriane and his parents Charles and Josephine Bristol. He is survived by his daughter Pamela and son-in-law Robert Viertel of Butte, MT; son, Edward, of San Jose, CA; son Charles and his wife Helene of Omaha, NE; and three grandchildren Brooke, John, and Lea Bristol.

Funeral Services will be held Monday, June 19th, 2:00 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church, in Carmichael, CA.

- Example No. 9

Denise Delia Stevenson

Denise Delia Stevenson, a resident of Belmont, passed away on May 29, 2009. She was 101.

She was the beloved wife of the late Medford Stevenson and is survived by her children, Philip Stevenson (his wife, Luann), Marilyn Crawford, and Gerald Stevenson (his wife, Nancy), nine grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and her sister Diane Cardinalli. She was preceded in death by her parents, Gianni and Maria Cardinalli and her brother, Daniel. Denise was a native of San Francisco.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated on Friday, June 12, 2009, 10:30 AM at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Burlingame. Private committal will be at Elmwood Memorial Park in Colma.

The family prefers that memorial contributions be made to Claremont Hospice in San Mateo.

- Example No. 10

Stanley Kaplan—Test Prep Founder

New York—The founder of the Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Centers Ltd., the nation's first test preparation company, has died. He was 90.

Stanley H. Kaplan died from heart failure on Sunday at his home in New York City. He started his company from his parents' Brooklyn home in 1938, and it became a chain of more than 100 centers nationally.

Mr. Kaplan, rejected from medical school, believed that students should have access to higher education based on their capabilities, not connections. He began Kaplan centers to help students with SAT and other admissions tests.

In 1984, Mr. Kaplan sold his business to the Washington Post Co. and dedicated his life to charitable causes.

He is survived by his wife, Rita, and daughters Susan B. Kaplan and Nancy Kaplan Belsky.

However, some obituaries do not fit Level 2 constraints.

- Example No. 11

REYNALDO, MARIA—on June 26th, 2008 left her son Alberto L. Reynaldo, Jorge De Soto, and his wife Anne Lynch. She also left behind two grandsons, Harold Lynch and Frederick Lynch along with two great grandsons, Howard and Scott. Also she leaves us with her sister Olivia Sanchez; niece Juanita Sanchez; and nephew Raul Sanchez.

Her friendly, loyal, and loving pitbull guarddog Cisco passed away only days before.

In Mexico, she leaves her sister Rosalia along with her family, and her nephews Manuel, Juan, and Eduardo, sons and daughter of Elena, her deceased sister, and her cousins, Leonardo Mencia and Pedro Fernandez, an actor seen on Spanish television locally as well.

In Texas, she leaves her cousin Gloria Santos and her daughters Anna, Marguerita, and son Daniel.

Maria was born in Durango Mexico to a show business family. By her teens, she and her sister Olivia formed a duo called ‘Las Mascotitas,’ later to be joined by another great performer Segundo Sanchez.

Maria’s good friend, famed performer of stage and cinema, the Late Comedian Mario Moreno aka ‘Cantiflas’ became Godfather to her first son Jorge De Soto.

Now the trio, called ‘Las Mascotitas y Pancho’ settled in San Francisco in the late 1950’s at the famed Sinaloa Cantina Night-Club in North Beach. There are so many fellow entertainers and friends there that it is impossible to list them all.

She married Argentine Heavyweight Champion and World Contender Vincente Reynaldo, later a Sheet Metal Workers’ Official of local 104, to whom she was a devoted wife beyond his passing up to her own.

This beautiful queen passes her class and dignity on to us.

We miss her very much and she will always be in our hearts.

Services will take place noon, Wednesday, July 9 Skyfield Memorial Park (off highway 92 between 280 and highway 35) at the Chapel of Light as she willed, alongside her husband.

○ **ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLE NO. 11**

LEVEL 2

Why does this text not meet the requirements for a Level 2 obituary?

- The first three obituaries present strictly factual information following a relatively conventional organizational pattern. Details are provided about background, such as education, employment, and family. These facts are followed by funeral information.
- Example No. 11 also contains background information. However, the comparatively loose organization of the text and the addition of unexpected information remove it from a Level 2 classification. Instead of following the usual formula, the obituary writer mixes the names and relationships of family members with other facts, such as the recent death of a pet and the celebrity of one cousin. Injected into the synopsis of the deceased woman's career is a completely unanticipated reference to her friendship with another show business personality. Following this synopsis is another, covering the two careers of the woman's late husband in considerable detail.
- There is also evaluative language about the woman (and her pet) that gives us a sense of the writer's presence which does not appear in the other obituaries. She is described as a "beautiful queen" with "class and dignity." Her dog is "friendly, loyal, and loving." In contrast Example No. 9 contains a single evaluative word "beloved." Similarly, Example No. 10 briefly notes that Mr. Kaplan "dedicated his life" to charitable work. Otherwise, these obituaries are completely factual.
- Capitalization is used in Example No. 11 in a manner that seems to have an evaluative purpose. For example, references to Cantinflas, such as "Late Comedian" and "Godfather," are capitalized. References to the woman's deceased husband, such as "Heavyweight Champion" and "World Contender," are similarly capitalized. The writer appears to use this device to ensure attention is paid to other significant persons in the text.
- The text includes many facts. In fact, there are so many concrete details that they could readily be rearranged into an obituary typical of Level 2; this would, however, require subordination or removal of the unexpected material and reduction of the evaluative language.

LEVEL 3

Why does this text, with its noticeable author's presence, not reach the borders of Level 3?

- There is, of course, no argumentation—just an effort to highlight the positive traits of the woman, her family, and friends—and no abstract linguistic formulation or hypothesis. There is, instead, an unorthodox arrangement of details that conveys something of the writer's personality, opinion, and apparent desire to include as much interesting information about the family as possible.
 - This seems to be a case of a text that has “too much” non-factual material for Level 2 and “not enough” for Level 3. The writer takes an evaluative stance but does not develop an evaluative text.
- Example No. 12

Dave Van Ronk—Mentor to Folk Musicians
By Richard Cromelin
Los Angeles Times

Dave Van Ronk, a singer and guitarist who sat in on the birth of the 1960s folk music revival and served as a mentor to its biggest star, Bob Dylan, died Sunday in New York from colon cancer. He was 65.

Although Mr. Van Ronk was never a major record-seller or a prolific songwriter, he was an influential interpreter of the country blues tradition and was among the first to record songs written by Dylan, Joni Mitchell and other young composers who would make personal expression a major component of popular music.

Mr. Van Ronk had continued to tour and teach guitar until late last year, when he underwent cancer surgery.

Raised in his native Brooklyn, N. Y., and later in Queens, he began playing the ukulele when he was 12 and later moved on to banjo and guitar. A purist who favored traditional New Orleans jazz, he moved to Manhattan in the mid-'50s and played banjo in jazz groups while living in communal lofts and apartments with large groups of friends.

Transcript continued on next page

Although he was an admitted “snob” with a disdain for folk music, Mr. Van Ronk took a liking to the blues music he encountered while collecting jazz records. To learn the finger-picking guitar technique of bluesmen including Furry Lewis, he watched the young musicians who flocked to Washington Square to play folk music every weekend.

His encounters there led to instruction from masters including the Rev. Gary Davis, but Mr. Van Ronk had no intention of being a professional musician, planning instead to make his living in the merchant marine. But when the singer Odetta heard him perform at the Café Bizarre, she put him in touch with Albert Grossman, who later would manage Dylan and others. Grossman at one point offered Mr. Van Ronk a post in a folk trio he was assembling, but Mr. Van Ronk declined, leaving it to someone else to fill out the lineup of Peter, Paul & Mary.

But with his raspy voice and accomplished guitar work, Mr. Van Ronk became prominent on the burgeoning folk scene, recording first for the Folkways label and later for Prestige. He also was a resource for younger musicians, including Dylan, who had come to New York from Minnesota.

Dylan frequently stayed at Mr. Van Ronk’s Manhattan apartment, where the two shared ideas about music and literature. Mr. Van Ronk is credited with introducing Dylan to the French Symbolist poets, and the two recorded many of the same vintage songs, such as “Fixin’ to Die” and “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean.” The version of “House of the Rising Sun” on Dylan’s debut album is based on Mr. Van Ronk’s arrangement. They drifted apart, but in 1974 they were together again, with Mr. Van Ronk joining Dylan on stage at a New York benefit concert for Chilean political prisoners.

Mr. Van Ronk’s eclectic career continued into the 1990s. He performed music ranging from jug band (including an album of Prokofiev’s “Peter and the Wolf” in jug-band style) to folk-rock to Brecht-Weill. His 1995 album “From Another Time & Place” was nominated for a Grammy in the folk category. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from ASCAP in 1997.

Mr. Van Ronk is survived by his wife, Andrea Vuocolo.

○ **ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLE NO. 12**

LEVEL 2

- Example No. 12 is clearly not intended to conform to the conventions of a Level 2 text. This obituary has a byline and includes a title that gives the author's over-all evaluation of Dave Van Ronk and his place in folk music history. Personal information about the musician's boyhood, original career plans, illness, and marriage is kept to a minimum.

LEVEL 3

- Instead, the author focuses on analyzing the career of a man who managed to have great influence on folk music without selling many records or writing many songs.
- The author makes no pretense of producing a completely factual, objective text. There are numerous evaluative conclusions reached in this text: Van Ronk was a mentor to folk music's biggest star, an influential interpreter of the country blues tradition, an early recorder of young composers' work, a purist, an admitted "snob," a resource for younger musicians; his career was eclectic.
- Nevertheless, the author firmly embeds his opinions in a narrative covering a fairly detailed summary of a musical career beginning when Van Ronk was 12 and concluding with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. This may be considered a case in which the author's appreciation of the contributions made by the deceased man is actually overwhelmed by the amount of history he brings to bear writing that appreciation.
- The narrative is well-structured and easy to follow chronologically. The references to other musicians, composers, etc. are carefully situated in the chronology. Unlike some of the content in Example No. 11, none of the information seems misplaced.
- However, it appears that the emphasis on factual history outweighs the evaluative elements so that the text does not turn into an argument or a full analysis. Instead, like Example No. 11, the text is Level 2+ despite this author's superior writing techniques.

Note: Except for Examples No. 10 and 12 and one instance in Example No 11, all of the names have been changed in the texts at Level 2 and above to preserve the privacy of the individuals mentioned. However, the deceased persons discussed in Examples No. 10 and 12 were public figures in the US and very well known in their fields, so that it was impossible to disguise their identities. The celebrated Mexican comedian, mentioned in passing in Example No. 11, is in the same category.