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Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.

- A. Words are specific and accurate. It is easy to understand just what the writer means.
- B. Striking words and phrases often catch the reader's eye and linger in the reader's mind.
- C. Language is natural, effective, and appropriate
- D. Lively verbs add energy while specific nouns and modifiers add depth.
- E. Precision is obvious. The writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in the right spot.

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The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.

- A. Words are adequate and correct in a general sense, and they support the meaning by not getting in the way.
- B. Familiar words and phrases communicate but rarely capture the reader's imagination.
- C. Attempts at colorful language show a willingness to stretch and grow, but sometimes reach beyond the audience (thesaurus overload)
- D. Despite a few successes, the writer is marked by passive verbs, everyday nouns, and mundane modifiers.
- E. The words may be refined in a couple places, but the language looks more like the first thing that popped into the writer's mind

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The writer demonstrates a limited vocabulary or has not searched for words to convey specific meaning.

- A. Words are so nonspecific and distracting that only a very limited meaning comes through
- B. Problems with language leave the reader wondering. Many of the words just don't work in this piece.
- C. Audience has not been considered. Language is used incorrectly, making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.
- D. Limited vocabulary and/or misused parts of speech seriously impair understanding.
- E. Jargon or clichés distract or mislead. Redundancy may distract the reader.