The student:
Year Level: 17 year old girl
Background: Karen refugee; in Australia ~ 4 months
Language: Karen
Schooling: Has been to a missionary school, where she acquired a range of English vocabulary.

The text shows that the student:

- can write short sentences
- can usually correctly use SVO word order
- uses some common time markers (Five years later)
- can combine clauses to make sentences – some have 3 clauses
- can write to communicate ideas
- can approximate narrative and recount genres
- uses pronouns consistently

The task – This was a diagnostic creative writing task. Students had read the story of Ake & Paolina from ‘True News Stories’. The student had the written story with her, but none of this writing comes from that text. The rest comes from her own ideas or recall of the story. The writing about dolphins came from her memory of the ‘Free the Dolphins’ text they had studied. The student did not actually fulfil the task requirements, as it was supposed to be in the first person.

You are Ake or Paolina. Write a story about your life.

Five years later Paolina has three children. She has one son and two daughters. Paolina’s son’s name is Suzy. He and Paolina can see the Blue and Ku Moo hill. This family is very beautiful. Paolina is a good mother. They go to America and visit her grand mother and grand father. Her grand mother is 75 years old and her grand father is 80 years old. She likes sky blue and red colours. They are going to be the sea and watch the dolphins. Paolina’s children are like dolphins, but Paolina doesn’t. Like dolphins and she likes the zoo and more animals. Paolina’s children look at the dolphins jumping in the water. Suzy says: “Dolphins are very nice. They watch dolphins in the sea. Paolina doesn’t. Paolina wants to see animals in the zoo. She likes animals in the zoo. She is a good teacher. Paolina’s children are students.

This text is typical of a student beginning to work towards the Standard at S1. She attempts to write down words she has heard or said, but these are not always spelt accurately. She relies heavily on proformas and other models of texts as scaffolding to produce extended pieces of writing longer than a phrase or sentence with teacher guidance, but is not yet aware that different text types are used for different purposes. She tends to focus on producing a final product, rather than recognising that the act of writing is a process that involves planning, revision, and editing.