What to look for in SkyWatch
A Grader's Perspective

I am assigned to grade your extra-credit Skywatch reports. To avoid any miscommunications, I want to be clear about what I look for in the reports. These points follow the guidelines that Dr. Wheeler posted on the course website- http://www.as.utexas.edu/astronomy/education/fall11/wheeler/309n.html?a=xcrd- but I have a few specific criteria that I would like to mention so everyone can do well on their reports.

- Please give me good details about your location. "At my parent's house in south Austin," is not clear. I don't mean latitude and longitude, but cross streets are good.
- I would like you to be very clear in which direction you are looking at all times. "A little to the left of the moon" isn't clear. Please try to establish your cardinal directions. (South, Northwest, etc.)
- This also concerns where the object is in the sky. I know you can get the quantitative information for each object from Stellarium or other programs, but I need to know from your perspective. "A hand's width to the left of the moon." Put your hand at arm's length and look at the sky. Your pinky is ~1 degree. Your three middle fingers are ~5 degrees. Your closed fist is ~ 10 degrees. "The object was ~5 degrees north and ~10 degrees west of the moon."
- Please elaborate on how you found each object. Begin at the moon, or zenith, or some easy starting point, and briefly detail how you got to the object in question.
- When you're writing about the object's relevance, don't just Google it. I don't need a page of science about the object. Think about it. And if it's a supernova, don't quote: "This object is relevant because it's a supernova and it is important because we study supernova." Be a little more specific. Try to recall what Dr. Wheeler said in class about that particular object, if he mentioned it. If he didn't mention anything specific, it's up to you to convince me that you understand why these objects are important.

Caveat Emptor!
Quality over quantity, in my opinion. If you do three objects really well, you are more likely to get a "5" than the person who reported 7 objects, but whose report lacked quality. If you have any questions or concerns, email me at ashugart@astro.as.utexas.edu, or post on Facebook.