

September 2003

# 1.7

## *Response to Text*

### **Benchmarks**

In responses to literature, students show understanding of reading, connect what has been read to the broader world of ideas, concepts, and issues, and make judgments about the text. This is evident when students:

**PreK-4:**

- A. Connect plot/ideas/concepts to experience, including other literature;
- B. Go beyond retelling of plot by reflecting on what is read and making connections to broader ideas, concepts, and issues;
- C. Support judgments about what has been read by drawing from experience, other literature, and evidence from the text, including direct quotations.

**5-8: Evidence PreK-4 applies, plus -**

- D. Clearly articulate a point of view, or state a firm judgment about the piece discussed;
- E. Engage the reader effectively and provide closure;
- F. Maintain a sense of audience by addressing the reader’s possible questions.

**9-12: Evidence PreK – 8 applies, plus –**

- G. Establish interpretive claims and support them.

### **10TH GRADE BENCHMARKS**

|                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| “Lord of the Flies”              | 5 / 3 |
| “Snows Falling on Cedars”        | 5 / 3 |
| “Brutus: Master, Husband, ...”   | 4 / 3 |
| “...and her fingertips of rose”  | 4 / 3 |
| “The Chocolate War”              | 3 / 3 |
| “Of Mice and Men”                | 3 / 2 |
| “Harry Hortense at Hormone High” | 2 / 3 |
| “For Better, For Worse, Forever” | 2 / 3 |
| “Who’s to Blame”                 | 1 / 1 |

Vermont Department of Education  
**VERMONT NEW STANDARDS RUBRIC FOR  
 RESPONSE TO TEXT**

**Standard 1.7:** In responses to text, students show understanding of reading, connect what has been read to the broader world of ideas, concepts, and issues, and make judgments about the text.

| Criteria   | Score Point 5<br>Exceeds the<br>Standard  | Score Point 4<br>Accomplished<br>Writing   | Score Point 3<br>Intermediate<br>Writing   | Score Point 2<br>Basic Writing  | Score Point 1<br>Limited Writing  |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p><b>PURPOSE, STANCE, VOICE/TONE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of understanding and reflection that are related to the text</li> <li>Analysis of the elements of the work under consideration</li> <li>Personal response to the work of literature.</li> <li>Sentence structure, variety, and vocabulary.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall coherence</li> <li>Information and ideas presented in logical, cohesive fashion</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>ELABORATION STRATEGIES, DETAILS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific concrete details with appropriate citations from text to support writer's point of view</li> <li>Comparing</li> <li>Explaining writer's response to the work</li> </ul> | <p>Score point 5 meets all the criteria listed in score point 4 and shows invention, creativity, and lucidity.</p> <p>Presents insightful ideas.</p> <p>Demonstrates strong sense of personal engagement in responding to the work of literature.</p> <p>Sophisticated sentence structure and imagery; language is often metaphorical or otherwise distinctive.</p> <p>Not only logical and coherent, but organized so that the writer's own ideas are clearly related to specific points in the work of literature.</p> <p>Elaborates using striking imagery or metaphors.</p> | <p><b>Responds directly to the text with analysis and personal response.</b></p> <p><b>Strong control of purpose, appropriate to topic and audience.</b></p> <p><b>Clearly establishes context (purpose).</b></p> <p><b>Uses effective sentence patterns and diction (voice/tone).</b></p> <p><b>Has clear, consistent coherence and organization.</b></p> <p><b>Elaborates using concrete language and details.</b></p> <p><b>Writer supports ideas with specific references to text (detail).</b></p> <p><b>References to text are supported by specific citations (detail).</b></p> | <p>Responds to the text, providing some evidence of analysis and personal response.</p> <p>Sense of purpose may be uneven or confined to providing a summary.</p> <p>Context limited to that of a book report or personal response (purpose).</p> <p>Uses appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure (voice/tone).</p> <p>Organizes ideas appropriate to topic and purpose (organization).</p> <p>Ideas are elaborated effectively, using some specific, concrete details.</p> <p>Elaboration may not be clearly related to the text (detail).</p> <p>References to text are general, or may not be supported by citations (detail)</p> | <p>Responds to the text with a general summary or retelling and may have little evidence of analysis (purpose).</p> <p>Response to text may show some misunderstanding.</p> <p>Attempts to establish a context (purpose).</p> <p>Ideas usually consist of generalities.</p> <p>Vocabulary and sentence structure are generally pedestrian and generic (voice/tone).</p> <p>Shows coherence, but may have minor digressions (organization).</p> <p>Sufficiently organized for reader to follow ideas (organization).</p> <p>Shows little purposeful use of strategies for elaboration (detail)</p> <p>Elaboration may be limited to lists of details or generalities.</p> <p>May not make specific reference to text (detail).</p> | <p>Responds to the text with little or no analysis. Misunderstood or incomplete retelling (purpose).</p> <p>No context (purpose).</p> <p>Uses basic vocabulary and simple sentences; may have some inappropriate word choices (voice/tone).</p> <p>Shows little or no evidence of purposeful organization. May be brief or, in longer papers, lack coherence.</p> <p>Reader may not be able to follow writer's line of thinking (organization).</p> <p>No attempt to elaborate or may attempt to elaborate by repetition of initial statement (detail).</p> |

*This rubric is adapted from materials created by the New Standards Project.*

## RESPONSES TO TEXT

**RESPONSES TO TEXT** – Writing in which the author reacts to the content, ideas, action, characters, plot, theme, or other elements within a piece of text.

### GLOSSARY

**Analysis** – A separating of a whole into its parts with an examination of these parts to find out their nature and function.

**Citation** – A direct quote from the text.

**Coherence** – The quality achieved when all the ideas are clearly arranged and connected.

**Context** – The set of facts or circumstances surrounding an event or a situation.

**Diction** – The writer’s choice of words based on their effectiveness.

**Elaboration** – The development and expansion of ideas and arguments. Both logical (evidence, reasons, facts and statistics) and emotional appeals can be used.

**Focus** – The concentration on a specific topic to give it emphasis or clarity.

**Occasion** – The happening or event that makes the response possible.

**Pedestrian** – Commonplace; usual.

**Purpose** – The specific reason for writing; the goal of the writing (to entertain, express, inform, explain, persuade, etc.). Purpose has to do with the topic the writer is addressing, its central idea, theme, or message.

**Reference to Text** – Mentioning or alluding to something in the text without directly quoting the text (Ex. Pip was frightened when he met the convict in the graveyard.)

**Retelling** - a restatement of the events in the story.

**Stance** – The attitude or position of the author.

**Thesis**- A sentence that announces the writer’s main, unifying, controlling idea about a topic. A thesis statement usually contains two main elements: a limited subject (Internet) and the reason for it - the “why” - ( The Internet is a good resource.).

**Tone** – The writer’s attitude toward the subject. This can be serious, sarcastic, solemn, objective; tongue-in-cheek, etc.

**Topic** – The specific subject covered in a piece of writing.

**Voice** – The style and quality of the writing. Voice portrays the author’s personality or the personality of a persona. A distinctive voice establishes personal expression and enhances the writing.

**HINT** – When looking at a response to text, if the piece is simply a summary of the text or what happened in the story, with no exploration of ideas, it is a retelling. A good response tells “why” the student wrote or the student’s thoughts about the text. These must demonstrate understanding of the piece. The analysis expands and supports the “why.” A simple retelling of the story or a summary of the text is a score point two.

**1.7 Response to Text  
Grade 10**

In the novel *The Lord of the Flies*, written by William Golding, we meet a group of English school boys marooned on a deserted island after their plane crashes. These boys want risk-taking adventure --generally, all the fun of a life without adults and the strict rules of a society. However, the boys soon learn life is not all fun splashes in warm tide pools - they begin to wish for rules again and definitely an adult to be in charge when they suddenly turn from innocent schoolboys to menacing beasts, guilty of murder. Throughout this tale of evil and corruption flows the story of one little, seemingly weak boy-- Simon. He is the one pure child, free of atavistic behavior, who lives in total selflessness, giving his life for other boys. This is why Simon symbolizes sacrifice. Simon shows his selfless behaviors from the very beginning of the story. He is willing to forgo all fun, all the thrill of adventure and amusement on this adult-free island, to help Ralph create huts for everyone to sleep in. Soon after they begin making shelters, all of the boys leave to make use of the warm tide pools or the sandy beach. Of course nobody feels like doing manual labor. Ralph is mainly building the shelters because of his pure selflessness and willingness to sacrifice.

Simon's next sacrificial action came when the hunters made their first kill. The boys had brought back the huge sow, her heavy body hanging between two crudely sharpened poles. The boys, proud of their first meat, began roasting the flesh over the open fire, preparing for a great feast. Every boy got a fair share of the succulent flesh, except the complete outcast, Piggy. No one thought this unfair. Jack announced that Piggy didn't deserve anything since he didn't help in the hunt, (even though many other boys hadn't helped either,) so Piggy was left "dribbling," staring in aching hunger

at the dripping meat. The boys resumed eating, feeling not a drop of compassion for Piggy. All, that is, except Simon. "*Simon, sitting between the twins and Piggy, wiped his mouth and shoved his piece of meat over the rocks at Piggy, who grabbed it.*" (p.74) Simon sacrifices his food, which he surely hungered for, to Piggy. This is yet another example of Simon's selflessness. All the other boys are happily eating away, and Simon risks the ridicule of the other boys to give his meat to Piggy. Simon surely knew he would be picked on, chastised verbally for even associating with Piggy, let alone giving him his own meat. What a shameful thing, to give an outcast the thing they most desire. Nothing will stop Simon from helping, sacrificing his things for others; not the boys, not the unwritten rules of their society, not his own pain and hunger.

In Chapter 7, *Shadows and Tall Trees*, the boys explore as much of the island as they can, searching in vain for the "beastie." The boys had left Piggy, who they believed to be quite inapt to go on a hunt for the beast, by the open beach to look after the littluns. Ralph, always in the lead, brings the boys through valleys, gullies, streams, river beds, forests... without catching sight of any type of beast besides the pigs that run through their tracks, dodging the boy's attempts to spear them. As they continue searching in vain, the sun begins to sink lower and lower into the horizon, and Ralph realizes they will return back to the "home" far after dark, which would probably worry Piggy considerably. The boys decide they can only spare one boy to go back to tell Piggy of their plan. Of course, nobody wants to volunteer. To go back to the camp in the fading light, miles back through the dark woods full of threatening creatures, would take a very brave soul indeed. Either brave or extremely generous and altruistic. Simon, always the selfless, generous boy, volunteers for this awful task. "*I'll go if you like. I don't*

*mind, honestly,"* (p.117) Simon says to the boys, and disappears into the woods. This action shows extreme sacrifice and bravery. Simon is so generous, he will sacrifice anything for the boys--even if it means walking back to the beach through the dark woods all alone in the shadows of twilight. He sacrifices the fun of the expedition as well as the safe feeling of being in the close group of boys to help them. This shows his pure want of doing good and giving for others, something most of the boys lack entirely.

In Chapter 9, *A View to Death*, Simon lies unconscious in his fanciful clearing of humid air and flying butterflies. When he awakes from his fit, he walks away from his clearing and finds the dead parachuter, lying rotting on the ground, held together only by the strings of his parachute. When he sees this figure, Simon is hit by the realization that he was right all along: there was never any beast, and the "beast" the boys had seen before was only a poor dead soldier. Simon has known the truth all the time: there is no beast except the beast inside them all, the devil residing in the evil of all people. Simon's most impressive and incredible sacrifice comes in the coming sequence of actions. First of all, Simon realizes what he must do: he must go to the other boys and tell them there was never anything to be afraid of, and never will be. To run all the way down the mountain in his condition and risk more ridicule when he tells the boys of the nonexistent beast is a great sacrifice for Simon. He knows deep in his heart the boys will never believe him, for they never have before. Telling them the beast is non-existent will just lower the boy's view of Simon even more. On top of this, Simon is feeling faint from his fit, his face dripping blood, his body sore from

passing out on the ground. Once again, Simon sacrifices his own pain and worry for the boys.

As Simon runs down the mountain, he sees the boys bodies lit from the fire they are circling round. As he approaches, Simon witnesses a huge group of boys dancing around a circle, acting in incredible atavistic behaviors. However, Simon risks being hurt and puts in his mind only the thought of saving the boys from their own fear. He crawls down the hill into their ring, crouching beneath them, watching their quickening dance. Now comes the greatest sacrifice of all. On a metaphorical bed of good intentions, of trying to save the boys, Simon is slain. He has given himself to the ultimate sacrifice of life, the death only the purest, most selfless individuals could bear. Simon is giving his body, his soul, his flesh, his blood, for the boys. Giving help, being generous, doing brave things and selfless things are just the little hints that Simon is so giving and willing to sacrifice. His final sacrifice is far greater than before.

Simon tried to save the boys from their own thoughts and actions, but in the process, was killed by them. Somehow, his voice was never heard through the animal cries of the savages who stabbed him and bit him until he died a slow and painful death. Simon was the ultimate Christ-figure, the ever -sacrificing, selfless boy who knew the key to save the boys from their own fear on that island of death.

**1.7 Response to Text  
Effectiveness = 5  
Conventions = 3**

In the novel *The Lord of the Flies*, written by William Golding, we meet a group of English school boys <sup>wc</sup> marooned on a deserted island after their plane crashes. These boys want risk-taking adventure --generally, all the fun of a life without adults and the strict rules of a society. However, the boys soon learn life is not all fun splashes in warm tide pools - they begin to wish for rules again and definitely an adult to be in <sup>wc</sup> charge when they suddenly turn from innocent schoolboys to menacing beasts, guilty of murder. Throughout this tale of evil and corruption flows the story of one little, <sup>wc</sup> seemingly weak boy-- Simon. He is the one pure child, free of atavistic behavior, who lives in total selflessness, giving his life for other boys. This is why Simon symbolizes sacrifice. Simon shows his selfless behaviors from the very beginning of the story. He is willing to forgo all fun, all the thrill of adventure and amusement on this adult-free island, to help Ralph create huts for everyone to sleep in. Soon after they begin making shelters, all of the boys leave to make use of the warm tide pools or the sandy beach. Of course nobody feels like doing manual labor. Ralph is mainly building the shelters because of his pure selflessness and willingness to sacrifice.

*Effective context*

*Distinctive word choice indicated by "wc" and underlining*

*Specific, analytical focus/thesis*

*transition*

*Refers to focus*

Simon's <sup>wc</sup> next sacrificial action came when the hunters made their first kill. The boys had brought back the huge sow, her heavy body hanging between two <sup>wc</sup> crudely sharpened poles. The boys, proud of their first meat, began roasting the flesh over <sup>wc</sup> the open fire, preparing for a great feast. Every boy got a fair share of the succulent flesh, except the complete outcast, Piggy. No one thought this unfair. Jack announced that Piggy didn't deserve anything since he didn't help in the hunt, (even though many other boys hadn't helped either,) so Piggy was left "dribbling," staring in aching hunger at the dripping meat. The boys resumed eating, feeling not a drop of <sup>wc</sup> compassion for Piggy. All, that is, except Simon. "*Simon, sitting between the twins and Piggy, wiped*

*Striking images and insightful ideas*

*his mouth and shoved his piece of meat over the rocks at Piggy, who grabbed it." (p.74)*

Simon sacrifices his food, which he surely hungered for, to Piggy. This is yet another example of Simon's selflessness. All the other boys are happily eating away, and Simon risks the ridicule of the other boys to give his meat to Piggy. Simon surely knew he would be picked on, <sup>WC</sup> chastised verbally for even associating with Piggy, let alone giving him his own meat. What a shameful thing, to give an outcast the thing they most desire. Nothing will stop Simon from helping, sacrificing his things for others; not the boys, not the unwritten rules of their society, not his own pain and hunger.

***Refers to focus/thesis***

***Thoughtful interpretation***

In Chapter 7, *Shadows and Tall Trees*, the boys explore as much of the island as they can, searching in vain for the "beastie." The boys had left Piggy, who they believed to be quite inapt to go on a hunt for the beast, by the open beach to look after the littluns. Ralph, always in the lead, brings the boys through valleys, gullies, streams, river beds, forests... without catching sight of any type of beast besides the pigs that run through their tracks, dodging the boy's attempts to spear them. As they continue searching in vain, the sun begins to sink lower and lower into the horizon, and Ralph realizes they will return back to the "home" far after dark, which would probably worry Piggy considerably. The boys decide they can only spare one boy to go back to tell Piggy of their plan. Of course, nobody wants to volunteer. To go back to the camp in the fading light, miles back through the dark woods full of threatening creatures, would take a very brave soul indeed. Either brave or extremely generous and altruistic, Simon, always the selfless, generous boy, volunteers for this awful task. "I'll go if you like. I don't mind, honestly," (p.117)

***Writer provides additional context needed for reader***

Simon says to the boys, and disappears into the woods. This action shows extreme sacrifice and bravery. Simon is so generous, he will sacrifice anything for the boys--even if it means walking back to the beach through the dark woods all alone in the shadows of twilight. He sacrifices the fun of the expedition as well as the safe feeling

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*Writer provides additional context needed for reader understanding; specific references to text*

*Good imagery*

As Simon runs down the mountain, he sees the boys bodies lit from the fire they are circling round. As he approaches, Simon witnesses a huge group of boys dancing around a circle, acting in incredible <sup>WC</sup> atavistic behaviors. However, Simon risks being hurt and puts in his mind only the thought of saving the boys from their own fear. He crawls down the hill into their ring, crouching beneath them, watching their <sup>WC</sup> quicken dance. Now comes the greatest sacrifice of all. <sup>WC</sup> On a metaphorical bed of good intentions, of trying to save the boys, Simon is slain. He has given himself to the ultimate sacrifice of life, the death only the purest, most selfless individuals

*Refers to thesis/focus*

could bear. Simon is giving his body, his soul, his flesh, his blood, for the boys. Giving help, being generous, doing brave things and selfless things are just the little hints that Simon is so giving and willing to sacrifice. His final sacrifice is far greater than before.

Simon tried to save the boys from their own thoughts and actions, but in the process, was killed by them. Somehow, his voice was never heard through the animal cries of the savages who stabbed him and bit him until he died a slow and painful death. Simon was the ultimate Christ-figure, the ever -sacrificing, selfless boy who knew the key to save the boys from their own fear on that island of death.

*Refers to focus/thesis and builds to next*

*Strong conclusion*

**Effectiveness Score 5**

*This response meets all the qualities of Score Point 4. It responds directly to the work of literature with analysis, and there is evidence of synthesis of ideas.*

*The writing has a clear focus/thesis that is sustained throughout. Context is clearly established in the beginning and wherever else needed. Transitions give the piece clear, consistent coherence and organization. The writer elaborates, using concrete details and supports the ideas with specific references to text.*

*In addition, the writer often uses precise language that is metaphorical and distinctive, as well as language that evokes striking images. These are Score Point 5 qualities.*

*Overall, this is an excellent piece that demonstrates clear thinking and analysis of the book.*

**Conventions Score 3**

*This writing demonstrates consistent control of grade-level conventions.*

**Snows Falling on Cedars**

*Snows Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson is about a murder case on the small island of San Piedro, off Washington state. The story takes place in the late 1950's when WWII is still fresh in everyone's minds and conflicting emotions are strong between the equally large American and Japanese populations on the island. The book follows the trial of Kabuo Miyamoto, a Japanese man accused of killing Carl Heine, and is told, mainly, through a reporter named Ishmael. All of this happens simultaneously with a great snowstorm that lasts as long as a hearing. The snowstorm was metaphor for Ishmael's prejudice.

The accused man, with one segment of his consciousness, watched the falling snow outside the windows. He had been exiled in the county jail for seventy-seven days - - the last part of September, all of October and all of November, the first week of December in jail. There was no window anywhere in his basement cell, no portal through which the autumn light could come to him. He had missed autumn, he realized now -- it had passed already, evaporated. The snowfall, which he witnessed out of the corners of his eyes --furious, wind-whipped flakes against the windows--, struck him as infinitely beautiful (5).

The book opens with both an impending snowstorm for the residents of the island and a guilty verdict for the defendant, Kabuo Miyamoto. He is accused of murdering fellow fisherman, Carl Heine. In the courtroom, spectators take on a "what-you-see-is-what- you-get" mentality. Ishmael sees Carl Heine's devastated family and a seemingly complacent, unfeeling Japanese defendant, the husband of his first and only love. His vision is blurred by the snow and by his prejudice, which holds him back from viewing the case with an open mind. What he fails to understand is that behind every story there are many different, separate stories that all culminate into one end result, much like a snowstorm. The snow can come from many sources and touch down on many places, but it leaves behind an impression, the same basic product, despite the place of its origin.

When they looked out into the whiteness of the world the wind flung it sharply at  
Their narrowed eyes and foreshortened their view of everything (170).

As the trial moves along and new facts are presented, the story takes shape. Ishmael's certainty grows stronger that the Japanese Kabua Miyamoto killed the Caucasian Carl Heine. Veterans of WWII, although they fought alongside their Japanese neighbors from San Pedro, view any person of Japanese descent as a killer, an enemy. Ishmael is no exception. Miyamoto may not have killed Carl Heine, but his people killed Ishmael's friends and acquaintances during the war. Ishmael lost his arm because of a Japanese soldier. The evidence means nothing to him; the trial only brings back a blizzard of flashbacks. As the snow continues to cover the island, it covers his logic as well; it brings him back a decade to when his hatred had justification.

Outside he found that the snow had stopped--only a few scattered flakes fell. A hard winter sunlight seeped through the clouds, and the north wind blew cold and fast. It seemed colder now than it had been that morning; the air burned in his nostrils. The wind and the snow had scoured everything clean; there was the sound of snow crunching under Ishmael's feet, the whine of the wind and nothing else.

Near the end of the book, Ishmael stumbles upon a document that could make all charges against Miyamoto obsolete. He struggles with whether or not to submit it as evidence. His ancient grudges against the Japanese hold him back from doing the right thing. There is something else that causes him to hesitate; Miyamoto's wife, Hatsu, was Ishmael's first love. Deep down he dreams of a reunion for the two of them, of course that would only be able to happen if Miyamoto was behind bars. When he steps outside for the first time the storm subsided, he has an epiphany that is best described by this quote:

It occurred to Ishmael for the first time in his life that such destruction  
could be beautiful(428).

WWII shattered his life; he had never been able to piece it back together. His experience gave him the opportunity to grow and become a better person, though. Ishmael realized that beauty could come from destruction. He knew that Miyamoto's future was in his hands, and he made the decision not to ruin someone else's life because of his own rancor. After the storm clears, so does Ishmael's resentment and prejudice.

The intolerance came from a decade-old event, clouded Ishmael's judgement, and then suddenly, his confusion cleared and he was able to look at the situation objectively. This order of events was very much like a snowstorm. The snow came on suddenly, covered everything, and then ended as suddenly as it began. The storm may have stirred up dormant, spiteful feelings, but it left in its wake in clarity.

**1.7 Response to Text**  
**Effectiveness = 5**  
**Conventions = 3**

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*Effective context*

*Clear, concise thesis*

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*Writing has an unusual format: direct citations come BEFORE the supporting paragraph*

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*The simile adds to the piece and reinforces the thesis*

When they looked out into the whiteness of the world the wind flung it sharply at their narrowed eyes and foreshortened their view of everything (170).

*The relevance of this citation would be clearer to the reader with context*

As the trial moves along and new facts are presented, the story takes shape.

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*Precise vocabulary and "weather" words add to the effectiveness of this piece*

own rancor. After the storm clears, so does Ishmael's resentment and prejudice.

The intolerance came from a decade-old event, clouded Ishmael's judgement, and then suddenly, his confusion cleared and he was able to look at the situation objectively. This order of events was very much like a snowstorm. The snow came on suddenly, covered everything, and then ended as suddenly as it began. The storm may have stirred up dormant, spiteful feelings, but it left in its wake in clarity.

***Strong ending; the thesis restatement is very subtle, but effective***

***Effectiveness Score 5***

***This response has all the qualities of a Score Point 4. It responds directly to the work of literature with analysis. There is strong control of purpose, including a clear awareness of audience, effective sentence patterns and diction, and clear consistent coherence. There are good transitions and elaboration.***

***The writer supports the thesis with references to text. The specific citations are not embedded within an explanation and are placed in unique positions (before the supporting paragraph), but do support the thesis and references to text.***

***In addition, there is evidence of deep understanding of the text. It presents insightful ideas with sophisticated sentence structure and imagery. The language is often metaphorical and distinctive (Score Point 5 qualities).***

***Conventions Score 3***

***This writing demonstrates consistent control of grade-level conventions.***

***Brutus: Master, Husband, Citizen-Conspirator***

The character of Brutus in Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** can be viewed in three different ways: as a master, a husband, and a citizen-conspirator. He was a fair master, a kind and loving husband, and most of all a character with a love of Rome which made him an honored and responsible citizen and a formidable conspirator.

Brutus demonstrated that he was the master in many different ways. One way he showed this was when he ordered his servant Lucius to awaken and wait on him in the middle of the night. Brutus speaks to him formally and briefly. "Get me a taper in my study, Lucius. When it is lighted, come and call me here." (P, 49 lines 7 & 8) Lucius responds to Brutus quickly, efficiently, and politely. "I will, my Lord." (p. 49, line 9) Brutus then instructs Lucius to go back to bed and then changes his mind and tells him to go look on the calendar to check to see if the ides of March are indeed the following day. "Get you to bed again. It is not day. Is not tomorrow, boy, the ides of March?" "Look in the calendar and bring me word." (p. 51, lines 41,42, & 44) Even though Brutus both demands and receives respect from his servants, he is a compassionate master. When Lucius falls asleep, Brutus forgives him for sleeping on the job, and instead of awakening him he allows him to continue sleeping. "Boy! Lucius!--Fast asleep? It is no matter. Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber." (p. 65, lines 248-249) Brutus is a firm and caring master who can trust the people who serve him. His relationship with his servants allows him to share his thoughts aloud to them without fear that he will be betrayed. Brutus shares his thoughts with his trusted servant Lucius, "Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar, I have not slept." ( P. 53, lines 64 & 65)

You can see the softer side of Brutus when you look at him as a husband to Portia. He is loving, kind, faithful and supportive even though she may not always think so. It is evident that he is pretty lenient with Portia because he lets her speak her mind, even though women were subservient to men during Roman times. Portia begs her husband to tell her why he is troubled, ““I grant that I am a woman, but withal. A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife...Think you that I am no stronger than my sex, Being so fathered and so husbanded?” ( p. 71, lines 315-316 & 318-319) Portia reminds Brutus that she has demonstrated her loyalty and love for him by wounding herself in the thigh. “Here in the thigh. Can I bear that with patience, And not my husband’s secrets?” (p. 71, lines 324-325) Brutus then show sympathy for his wife and feels bad for not being able to tell her about him being a Citizen Conspirator, but he reassures her that he will share his secret with her. “And by and by thy bosom shall partake The secrets of my heart.” ( p. 71, lines 330-331) Brutus does indeed love his wife as evidenced by his word to her, “You are my true and honorable wife, As dear to me as are the ruddy drops that visit my sad heart.” (p. 71, lines 311-313)

Brutus is a kind and caring master and husband, but his role as a citizen-conspirator is more complex. Brutus is portrayed as a noble character who cares deeply for his country and acts not for his own gain but to support his ideals of duty and honor. Brutus tells his servant Lucius, “It must be by his (Caesar’s) death. And for my part I know no personal cause to spurn at him. “ (p. 49, lines 10-11) “O Rome, I make thee promise, If the redress will follow, thou receivest Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus. (p. 53, lines 59-61) Brutus is not quite sure why Caesar needs to be killed at first, but

uses what Cassius has said to him to make reason of it in his mind. Brutus, confused by his feelings, but foremost wanting to be loyal to Rome, reiterates all his reasons for being a part of the conspiracy to kill Caesar. “He would be crowned: How that might change his nature, there” the question.” ( p. 49 lines 12-14) “And therefore, think him as a serpent’s egg. Which, hatched, would, as his kind, grow mischievous” (P. 51, lines33-35) Brutus must feel in his own mind that the conspiracy against Caesar is for the good of Rome. He states, “Let’s be sacrificers, but not butchers,” (p. 61, line 179) Brutus is shown as a leader. He does not want to be seen as a follower. Brutus tells Cassius, “Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius, to cut the head off and then hack the limbs, like wrath in death and envy afterwards; for Antony is but a limb of Caesar. ( p. 61 lines 175-178) This is but one of the times that Brutus demonstrates his leadership by not following the wishes of Caius Cassius to also kill Mark Antony, but to express his own opinions and have others follow him.

Brutus had a personality in his private life that was kind, caring and compassionate. He was loyal to his servants and his wife. He ruled his home with a firm hand, but was respected by those who served him. His wife returned the love that he gave her and their relationship was a good one. Brutus role as Master and Husband was different than that as Citizen-Conspirator. Brutus was a loyal citizen of Rome and his most cherished ideal was devotion to the good of Rome. Brutus was respected by the citizens of Rome and they listened to what he had to say. He was so convinced that Casear would become bad for Rome that he was willing to betray loyalty to his good friend for what he believed was the good of his Republic.

**1.7 Response to Text**  
**Effectiveness = 4**  
**Conventions = 3**

***Brutus: Master, Husband, Citizen-Conspirator***

The character of Brutus in Shakespeare’s **Julius Caesar** can be viewed in three different ways: as a master, a husband, and a citizen-conspirator. He was a fair master, a kind and loving husband, and most of all a character with a love of Rome which made him an honored and responsible citizen and a formidable conspirator.

*Some context missing; analytical controlling idea/thesis*

Brutus demonstrated that he was the master in many different ways. One way he showed this was when he ordered his servant Lucius to awaken and wait on him in the middle of the night. Brutus speaks to him formally and briefly. "Get me a taper in my study, Lucius. When it is lighted, come and call me here." (P, 49 lines 7 & 8) Lucius responds to Brutus quickly, efficiently, and politely. "I will, my Lord." (p. 49, line 9) Brutus then instructs Lucius to go back to bed and then changes his mind and tells him to go look on the calendar to check to see if the ides of March are indeed the

*Elaborates using many concrete details; specific references to text supported by direct citations*

following day. "Get you to bed again. It is not day. Is not tomorrow, boy, the ides of March?" "Look in the calendar and bring me word." (p. 51, lines 41,42, & 44) Even though Brutus both demands and receives respect from his servants, he is a compassionate master. When Lucius falls asleep, Brutus forgives him for sleeping on the job, and instead of awakening him he allows him to continue sleeping. "Boy! Lucius!-- Fast asleep? It is no matter. Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber." (p. 65, lines 248-249) Brutus is a firm and caring master who can trust the people who serve him. His

*Depth of elaboration; many examples support assertion*

relationship with his servants allows him to share his thoughts aloud to them without fear that he will be betrayed. Brutus shares his thoughts with his trusted servant Lucius, "Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar, I have not slept." ( P. 53, lines 64 & 65)

*Restates thesis with more explanation.*

You can see the softer side of Brutus when you look at him as a husband to Portia. He is loving, kind, faithful and supportive even though she may not always think so. It is evident that he is pretty lenient with Portia because he lets her speak her mind, eventhough women were subservient to men during Roman times. Portia begs her husband to tell her why he is troubled, “I grant that I am a woman, but withal. A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife...Think you that I am no stronger than my sex, Being so fathered and so husbanded?” ( p. 71, lines 315-316 & 318-319) Portia reminds Brutus that she has demonstrated her loyalty and love for him by wounding herself in the thigh. “Here in the thigh. Can I bear that with patience, And not my husband’s secrets?” (p. 71, lines 324-325) Brutus then show sympathy for his wife and feels bad for not being able to tell her about him being a Citizen Conspirator, but he reassures her that he will share his secret with her . “And by and by thy bosom shall partake The secrets of my heart.” (p. 71, lines 30-331) Brutus does indeed love his wife as evidenced by his word to her, “You are my true and honorable wife, As dear to me as are the ruddy drops that visit my sad heart.” (p. 71, lines 311-313)

*Good embedded quotations; references to text are supported with direct citations that support the thesis*

Brutus is a kind and caring master and husband, but his role as a citizen-conspirator is more complex. Brutus is portrayed as a noble character who cares deeply for his country and acts not for his own gain but to support his ideals of duty and honor. Brutus tells his servant Lucius, “It must be by his (Caesar’s) death. And for my part I know no personal cause to spurn at him.” (p. 49, lines 10-11) “O Rome, I make thee promise, If the redress will follow, thou receivest Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus. (p. 53, lines 59-61) Brutus is not quite sure why Caesar needs to be killed at first, but uses what Cassius has said to him to make reason of it in his mind. Brutus, confused by

*Effective transition;. topic sentence restates part of the thesis*

*Context given here*

his feelings, but foremost wanting to be loyal to Rome, reiterates all his reasons for being a part of the conspiracy to kill Caesar. “He would be crowned: How that might change his nature, there” the question.” (p. 49 lines 12-14) “And therefore, think him as serpent’s egg. Which, hatched, would, as his kind, grow mischievous” (P. 51, lines33-35)

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He states, “Let’s be sacrificers, but not butchers,” (p. 61, line 179) Brutus is shown as a leader. He does not want to be seen as a follower. Brutus tells Cassius, “Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius, to cut the head off and then hack the limbs, like wrath in death and envy afterwards; for Antony is but a limb of Caesar. (p. 61 lines 175-178) This is but one of the times that Brutus demonstrates his leadership by not following the wishes of Caius Cassius to also kill Mark Antony, but to express his own opinions and have others follow him.

*Quotes are embedded within an explanation; depth of elaboration evident in the explanation of quotes*

Brutus had a personality in his private life that was kind, caring and compassionate. He was loyal to his servants and his wife. He ruled his home with a firm hand, but was respected by those who served him. His wife returned the love that he gave her and their relationship was a good one. Brutus role as Master and Husband was different than that as Citizen-Conspirator. Brutus was a loyal citizen of Rome and his most cherished ideal was devotion to the good of Rome. Brutus was respected by the citizens of Rome and they listened to what he had to say. He was so convinced that Caesar would become bad for Rome that he was willing to betray loyalty to his good friend for what he believed was the good of his Republic.

*Personal response*

*Restates thesis; conclusion is effective*

**Effectiveness Score 4**

*The writer responds with a depth of analysis and elaboration, as well as a subtle personal response. The voice is effective and appropriate with precise diction. The organization is clear, consistent, and adds to the ease of understanding the ideas.*

**Conventions Score 3**

*This writing demonstrates consistent control of grade-level conventions.*

**“...and her fingertips of rose”**

The Odyssey, by Homer, not only tells an interesting story, but also uses figurative language to illustrate its points. In this way, our attention is drawn to events Homer considers important, through use of imagery or similes or metaphors. This style of writing makes reading the book more enjoyable and also causes you to think about some things you might miss otherwise. In the *Odyssey*, Homer uses effective imagery and startling similes to illustrate the importance and frailty of human life.

Often in this book, similes are used to compare human life to animal life. This shows what the view of humans might be from something higher than us. This is effective because it puts humans lower down on the scale of things than we tend to think of ourselves. For example, Homer describes the death of six of Odysseus’ men by the six-headed monster Scylla by comparing it to something “less significant”, in our eyes, than human deaths. He writes, “A man surfcasting on a point of rock for bass or mackerel, whipping his long rod to drop the sinker and the bait for out, will hook a fish and rip it from the surface to dangle wriggling through the air: so these were borne aloft in spasms toward the cliff.” By comparing human deaths to those of fish, which we for the most part think nothing of, Homer presents the possibility of how small in terms of importance humans really are. This is not something pleasant to think about, so it is not pleasantly described. It makes you think.

Another example of this combines not only the frailty of human life, but also uses a simile that plays on our emotions – the animal chosen has a connotation of being cute, lovable and most of all, helpless. Homer writes of the deaths of two of Odysseus’ men, “...in one stride [the Cyclops] clutched at my companions and caught two in his hands

like squirming puppies to beat their brains out, spattering the floor.” Cyclops is a large, one-eyed, human-eating monster. “Puppies” makes this especially effective and in the crew’s reaction we see more puppy-like behavior: “We cried aloud, lifting our hands to Zeus, powerless, looking on at this, appalled.” This runs along with the theme of human life’s importance to the person whose life it is, but its perhaps relative insignificance from another view. Homer is trying to show us this view, through great similes.

Homer also uses similes and imagery to make abstract ideas into something we can relate to. For example, when one of Odysseus’ men is killed and knocked overboard, Homer describes the soul’s departure from the body, “as the brave soul fled the body, like a diver.” This description is a neat mental picture and also makes an otherwise abstract idea into something concrete – a definite event. One simile whose topic Homer uses over and over again is that of dawn and “her fingertips of rose.” this is a nice picture and makes dawn into something definite, with a shape. He also says, “Dawn came up from the couch of her reclining” and this adds to dawn’s presence as a personified object. That is something else Homer does a lot – gives human qualities to something inanimate, or not human. That lends to the joy of reading it and makes you think about the objects described in a different light. This is tricky – Homer gives animals human qualities and compares humans to animals – perhaps he is suggesting the gap between humans and animals isn’t as big as we would like it to be.

This brings me to another theme of Homer’s work that is expressed with and without imagery and similes. This is the theme of ambivalence that runs strongly through the entire book. Homer does not seem content to only present one side of an issue, as many writers do. He describes most things in two different lights, and leaves to to you to

decide with which you agree. For example, what I just mentioned with the human/animal comparison. At times during the book humans are described as animals and their lives made to seem frail and somewhat unimportant. At the same time, Homer illustrates how important your own life is and how important it is for you to take care of it. He portrays some of the humans as near-gods, such as Odysseus. This is just one example of the ambivalence shown throughout the book.

Homer also uses similes and imagery purely to create interesting and pretty scenes. They enhance the book greatly and make the reading of it more realistic. For instance, Homer describes the way Athena enhances Odysseus' beauty by writing, "Think of gold infused on silver by a craftsman...one whose work moves to delight: just so she lavished beauty over Odysseus' head and shoulders." This is good imagery and fun to read. Another example that I like is "And fifty maids-in-waiting...flickering like the leaves of a poplar tree." This is just a neat comparison and creates a good realistic scene for the reader.

However, Homer's use of similes is more important than making the Odyssey fun to read and descriptive. It makes the reader consider the timeless issue of human life – its frailty, its length, its personal importance but perhaps impersonal insignificance. The Odyssey sets your mind thinking on how important your life is to you, but how easily it could end. Similes and imagery are just the tools Homer used.

**“...and her fingertips of rose”**

The Odyssey, by Homer, not only tells an interesting story, but also uses figurative language to illustrate its points. In this way, our attention is drawn to events Homer considers important, through use of imagery or similes or metaphors. This style of writing makes reading the book more enjoyable and also causes you to think about some things you might miss otherwise. In the odyssey, Homer uses effective imagery and startling similes to illustrate the importance and frailty of human life.

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| <i>Context<br/>established</i> |
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| <i>Thesis/<br/>controlling<br/>idea stated<br/>clearly</i> |
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|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| <i>Good topic<br/>sentence</i> |
|--------------------------------|

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|  |
|--|
| <i>Quote<br/>satisfactorily<br/>embedded<br/>within an<br/>explanation</i> |
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***Direct citation is relevant and well explained.***

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***Some generic language not suited to overall tone of writing***

This brings me to another theme of Homer’s work that is expressed with and without imagery and similes. This is the theme of ambivalence that runs strongly through the entire book. Homer does not seem content to only present one side of an issue, as many writers do. He describes most things in two different lights, and leaves to to you to decide with which you agree. For example, what I just mentioned with the human/animal comparison. At times during the book humans are described as animals and their lives

***Embedded personal response***

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*Embedded  
personal  
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Homer also uses similes and imagery purely to create interesting and pretty scenes. They enhance the book greatly and make the reading of it more realistic. For instance, Homer describes the way Athena enhances Odysseus’ beauty by writing, “Think of gold infused on silver by a craftsman...one whose work moves to delight: just so she lavished beauty over Odysseus’ head and shoulders.” This is good imagery and fun to read. Another example that I like is “And fifty maids-in-waiting...flickering like the leaves of a poplar tree.” This is just a neat comparison and creates a good realistic scene for the reader.

*Topic  
sentence  
restates  
thesis*

However, Homer’s use of similes is more important than making the Odyssey fun to read and descriptive. It makes the reader consider the timeless issue of human life – its frailty, its length, its personal importance but perhaps impersonal insignificance. The Odyssey sets your mind thinking on how important your life is to you, but how easily it could end. Similes and imagery are just the tools Homer used.

*Effective  
conclusion*

#### *Effectiveness Score 4*

*This response has a clear purpose, including good context and a clearly defined controlling idea. There is analysis of author’s craft supported by references to text and direct citations. The writing is well-organized and uses effective transitions. The writer effectively embeds personal response throughout the piece.*

#### *Conventions = 3*

*This writing demonstrates consistent control of grade-level conventions.*

### **The Chocolate War**

The Chocolate War was amazingly written with suspense and cruelty. Robert Cormier put this novel together quite cleverly. It took place during modern time at a young boy's small private school, Trinity. Every year the school had a big chocolate sale and is headed up by Archie and The Vigils. Archie was a very pressuring kid. He ran the secret society, The Vigils, and had power over almost everyone in the school. When Jerry, who's mother died recently, refused to sell or be bullied into selling chocolates, Archie became furious. Jerry became a hero and then a victim and very vulnerable. At this point the reader can really realize how much peer pressure goes on at this school.

The Vigils were part of a lot of that pressure. They enforced many rules. A lot of what their group was about was pressuring other people do all the dirty work that they need done.

"The members of the Vigils did nothing but enforce the rules. Carter was muscle and Obie an errand boy. Archie alone was always under pressure, devising the assignments, working them out. As if he was some kind of machine. Press a button: out comes the assignment (30)."

They picked up Goober, an innocent kid who played football and didn't get into any trouble, and they made him go into Brother Eugene's room and unscrew all of the chairs, desks, tables, and whatever had screws in it. What was interesting was before they actually made Goober do this assignment, they had Archie pick from a box that had white marbles and one black marble in it. If Archie picked the black marble he would have to do the assignment himself, but of course he picked a white one and Goober had the assignment. Archie also had an amusing way with people. He wasn't intimidated by

anyone. His attitude was very positive, yet cocky. Most everyone listened to Archie and did what he asked and said.

The teachers at Trinity didn't help the situation either. Many of them were similar to Archie, especially Leon. Brother Leon was like most adults, vulnerable, running scared, and open to invasion. Leon went to Archie about selling the chocolates; he was very set to selling them. Archie was surprised to find Leon asking him and putting the plan before him. They hadn't gotten along well in the past.

"Archie, in fact, was wondering why Brother Leon had laid his plans before him. He had never been particularly friendly with Leon or any other Trinity teacher. And Leon was a special breed. On the surface, he was one of those pale, ingratiating kind of men who tiptoed through life on a small, quick feet. He looked like a henpecked husband, a pushover, and a sucker (23)."

Unfortunately, all of the pressure was put on Jerry. Jerry was their victim. Jerry had been through so much with his mother's death just that spring. It appeared that Archie and the Vigils took things to far. Jerry had refused to sell the chocolates and that made Archie extremely angry. Archie had a plan. If only there was something he could do to change Jerry's mind.

"He had the feeling that he had missed a beat somewhere, had missed a crucial moment. Archie and all his subtle crap. What the kid Renault needed was a stiff jab in the jaw and another to the belly. That would make him sell the frigging chocolates (127)."

Archie went and found someone, similar to when he made Goober take apart all of the chairs, and he made the person beat up Jerry. Just because he refused to sell chocolates Archie had someone willing to beat up Jerry in front of everyone.

I enjoyed this book overall. The book left you hanging in suspense. Although the story jumped around a lot, it was easy to follow, understand, and keep track of. I thought

it was sad how it ended with Jerry getting hurt, but I'm glad that he was able to stand up for himself. Peer pressure is hard on someone and Jerry took a risk.

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|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <i>Sufficient<br/>context</i> |
|-------------------------------|

The Vigils were part of a lot of that pressure. They enforced many rules. A lot of what their group was about was pressuring other people do all the dirty work that they need done.

|   |
|---|
| <i>Thesis<br/>stated;<br/>thesis<br/>restated<br/>with first<br/>body<br/>paragraph</i> |
|---|

"The members of the Vigils did nothing but enforce the rules. Carter was muscle and Obie an errand boy. Archie alone was always under pressure, devising the assignments, working them out. As if he was some kind of machine. Press a button: out comes the assignment (30)."

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| <i>Direct<br/>citation<br/>supports<br/>thesis</i> |
|--|

They picked up Goober, an innocent kid who played football and didn't get into any trouble, and they made him go into Brother Eugene's room and unscrew all of the chairs, desks, tables, and whatever had screws in it. What was interesting was before they actually made Goober do this assignment, they had Archie pick from a box that had white marbles and one black marble in it. If Archie picked the black marble he would have to do the assignment himself, but of course he picked a white one and Goober had the assignment. Archie also had an amusing way with people. He wasn't

|   |
|---|
| <i>This attempt<br/>to explain is<br/>confusing</i> |
|---|

intimidated by anyone. His attitude was very positive, yet cocky. Most everyone listened to Archie and did what he asked and said.

*Context is vague and confusing*

The teachers at Trinity didn't help the situation either. Many of them were similar to Archie, especially Leon. Brother Leon was like most adults, vulnerable, running scared, and open to invasion. Leon went to Archie about selling the chocolates; he was very set to selling them. Archie was surprised to find Leon asking him and putting the plan before him. They hadn't gotten along well in the past.

*Irrelevant quote has no connection to thesis (peer pressure), but rather more context*

"Archie, in fact, was wondering why Brother Leon had laid his plans before him. He had never been particularly friendly with Leon or any other Trinity teacher. And Leon was a special breed. On the surface, he was one of those pale, ingratiating kind of men who tiptoed through life on a small, quick feet. He looked like a henpecked husband, a pushover, and a sucker (23)."

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*Topic sentence that restates thesis*

"He had the feeling that he had missed a beat somewhere, had missed a crucial moment. Archie and all his subtle crap. What the kid Renault needed was a stiff jab in the jaw and another to the belly. That would make him sell the frigging chocolates (127)."

Archie went and found someone, similar to when he made Goober take apart all of the chairs, and he made the person beat up Jerry. Just because he refused to sell chocolates. Archie had someone willing to beat up Jerry in front of everyone.

*Elaboration needs to be related to peer pressure*

I enjoyed this book overall. The book left you hanging in suspense. Although the story jumped around a lot, it was easy to follow, understand, and keep track of. I thought it was sad how it ended with Jerry getting hurt, but I'm glad that he

*Overt personal response not effective as a conclusion*

was able to stand up for himself. Peer pressure is hard on someone and Jerry took a risk.

***Effectiveness Score 3***

***This response has some evidence of analysis supported with direct citations. The sense of purpose is uneven because the point of the analysis is sometimes not clear. The organization is appropriate and helps in understanding the point of the analysis. The references to text are supported by direct citations, and there is an attempt to prove and support the specific ideas and thesis. More elaboration and concrete details are needed.***

***Conventions Score 3***

***Despite isolated errors, this writing demonstrates overall consistent control of grade-level conventions.***

John Steinbeck's novel, *Of Mice and Men*, is set in the 1930's, during the depression. The novel is about the friendship of two grown men. George is a small, smarter man who is designated to taking care of Lennie, and intellectually challenged man who acts like a 4 year old. They are trying to seek their life long dream of owning their own land. "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world." Says George. "But not us! An' why?" Because ...because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you,, and that's why." "An' live off the fatta the [an'." Says George about their future. Throughout this novel, it becomes apparent that they will probably not achieve their life long dream.

First of all,, Lennie is intellectually challenged. This doesn't help them to get their own land because he doesn't know right from wrong. Although he is a good worker, he cannot do anything for himself. "Well, I could. I could go off in the hills there. Some place Id find a cave." "Yeah? Howd you eat. You ain't got sense enough to find nothing to eat." He also doesn't listen to George, and fogets a lot of the important information George tells him. "Where we goin', George?" "So you forgot that awready, did you? I gotta tell you again, do I? Jesus Christ, you're a crazy bastard." Although George is taking care of Lennie, he is always telling Lennie that he could be so much better off without having to take care of him. "God a'mighty, if I was alone I cold live so easy. I could go get a job an' work, an' no trouble."

George and Lennie also do not have enough money to buy their own land. They can only make so much traveling from town to town, working on different farms. They have to travel more than usual because Lennie always did something wrong, and they had

to run from the police, or lynch gangs. “An’you ain’t gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed, neither’

It was also hard to find a good paying job because this was during the depression. It was also hard for the people who needed to hire people couldn’t always pay the workers. So many people were being laid off of their jobs; it was so hard to find a decent job. George and Lennie were very lucky to be able to travel, and keep on finding jobs at different ranches.

It was evident that they would not achieve their dream because so many important factors were either missing, or wrong. I feel badly that such a good pair of people with such kindness in their hearts could not even achieve a simple dream they have had forever.

**1.7 Response to Text**  
**Effectiveness = 3**  
**Conventions = 2**

John Steinbeck's novel, *Of Mice and Men*, is set in the 1930's, during the depression. The novel is about the friendship of two grown men. George is a small, smarter man who is designated to taking care of Lennie, and intellectually challenged man who acts like a 4 year old. They are trying to seek their life long dream of owning their own land. "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world." Says George. "But not us! An' why?" "Because ...because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you,, and that's why." "An' live off the fatta the [an'." Says George about their future. Throughout this novel, it becomes apparent that they will probably not achieve their life long dream.

*Context  
established*

*Clearly stated focus*

First of all, Lennie is intellectually challenged. This doesn't help them to get their own land because he doesn't know right from wrong. Although he is a good worker, he cannot do anything for himself. "Well, I could. I could go off in the hills there. Some place Id find a cave." "Yeah? Howd you eat. You ain't got sense enough to find nothing to eat." He also doesn't listen to George, and fogets a lot of the important information George tells him. "Where we goin', George?" "So you forgot that awready, did you? I gotta tell you again, do I? Jesus Christ, you're a crazy bastard." Although George is taking care of Lennie, he is always telling Lennie that he could be so much better off without having to take care of him. "God a'mighty, if I was alone I cold live so easy. I could go get a job an' work, an' no trouble."

*Topic  
sentence  
refers to  
focus, but  
support  
not  
clearly  
connected*

George and Lennie also do not have enough money to buy their own land. They can only make so much traveling from town to town, working on different farms. They have to travel more than usual because Lennie always did something wrong, and they had

to run from the police, or lynch gangs. “An’you ain’t gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed, neither’

It was also hard to find a good paying job because this was during the depression.

It was also hard for the people who needed to hire people couldn’t always pay the workers. So many people were being laid off of their jobs; it was so hard to find a decent job. George and Lennie were very lucky to be able to travel, and keep on finding jobs at different ranches.

It was evident that they would not achieve their dream because so many important factors were either missing, or wrong. I feel badly that such a good pair of people with such kindness in their hearts could not even achieve a simple dream they have had forever.

*Topic sentence refers to focus, but support comes from prior knowledge, not the text*

*Adequate conclusion has overt personal response*

***Effectiveness Score 3***

*This response has evidence of analysis and personal response in its stated thesis and topic sentences. The references to text and citations are not clearly connected to the thesis. Elaboration is also lacking in the third and fourth paragraphs. The piece does have a clear, consistent organizational structure.*

***Conventions Score 2***

*This writing demonstrates inconsistent control of grade-level conventions, with pervasive errors in formatting and punctuating quotations.*

**Harry Hortense at Hormone High**

Can you imagine thinking that you are from about 1200 years ago? I can't. Well in the book *Harry and the Hortense at Hormone High* by Paul Zindale a kid named Jason does. The book sounds like Harry is writing the book. At the beginning of the book they give a little bit of their life history and what they are like.

The author explains everyone's life history very well the one that is depicted the most is Jason. He is very weird. He tries to make everyone think that he is a god but he isn't. Then you've got the psychiatrist, her name is Hortense. She is the type that is always willing to help anyone out that she can. Then you felt the serious type, his name is Harry. He doesn't like Jason because he is trying to take Hortense away from him. This book takes place on Staten Island. The time that this book takes place is in the 1990's I think. The atmosphere of the book is a sad one because everyone was always mean to Jason when he was only trying to get people to like him because both of his parents had died in a car crash.

At the beginning of the book it tells you how Harry and Hortense met Jason and why they think that they need to write this book about themselves and Jason Rhor. It tells you how dramatic the whole book is going to be. Then it begins to explain how Jason gets put into the mental hospital.

At the middle it explains how they try to get Jason out and about all of the letters that they wrote for Jason. The letters were about thinking that he was god. When he escaped from the mental hospital he went to a construction site and hid out there for a little while.

Than one day when they go down to the construction site to talk to him he wasn't there. They also found out that some dynamite was missing from the place that he was staying in. When they get back to school it is time for the assemble to start. Right when it was about to start they hear his voice and everyone that is in the auditorium gets up and leaves. The reason wh is because they wanted to find out where the voice was coming from. After they all finally come back to the auditorium they find out that the voice was coming from the auditorium the whole time even while they were in there.

The author's main idea is that you can be who you want to be not who you are. "I knew I wasn't exactly making sense, but Hortense and I had lifted our eyes and were at least looking at each other now. It was the first moment I had a really good chance to see she wasn't weraing a whole lot of makeup on her eyes for a change. I knew we both had had enough tears in our eyes so it looked like we were seeing each other underwater or through a heavy, sad mist-but in another way I was looking deeper into her eyes that I had ever done before. What Hortense looked to me most at that moment was smart. She looked damn smart and deep. And if she was looking at me with friendship and love at the same time, well-those had a chance only of running third. It was as if the same thoughts were flowing between our brains, and we would need no words."

The special feature of the book is when they go to Jason's house. "Jason went right to the window sill and grabbed a giant bottle of papaya juice, an already-opened quarter pound of butter and half a loaf of whole wheat bread."

My opinion of my book was that it was very good but at the ends it got really sad. I would recommend this book to any one that likes to read a good book that gets sad very fast.

**Harry Hortense at Hormone High**

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*Context is confusing  
Who are these characters?  
What about the time period?*

The author explains everyone's life history very well, the one that is depicted the most is Jason. He is very weird. He tries to make everyone think that he is a god but he isn't. Then you've got the psychiatrist, her name is Hortense. She is the type that is always willing to help anyone out that she can. Then you felt the serious type, his name is Harry. He doesn't like Jason because he is trying to take Hortense away from him. This book takes place on Staten Island. The time that this book takes place is in the 1990's I think. The atmosphere of the book is a sad one because everyone was always mean to Jason when he was only trying to get people to like him because both of his parents had died in a car crash.

*Underlined words show generic word choices*

At the beginning of the book it tells you how Harry and Hortense met Jason and why they think that they need to write this book about themselves and Jason Rhor. It tells you how dramatic the whole book is going to be. Then it begins to explain how Jason gets put into the mental hospital.

*No clear thesis*

At the middle it explains how they try to get Jason out and about all of the letters that they wrote for Jason. The letters were about thinking that he was god. When he escaped from the mental hospital he went to a construction site and hid out there for a little while.

*Vague, incomplete retelling*

Then one day when they go down to the construction site to talk to him he wasn't there. They also found out that some dynamite was missing from the place that he

*Retelling continues*

was staying in. When they get back to school it is time for the assemble to start. Right when it was about to start they hear his voice and everyone that is in the auditorium gets up and leaves. The reason why is because they wanted to find out where the voice was coming from. After they all finally come back to the auditorium they find out that the voice was coming from the auditorium the whole time even while they were in there.

The author's main idea is that you can be who you want to be not who you are. "I knew I wasn't exactly making sense, but Hortense and I had lifted our eyes and were at least looking at each other now. It was the first moment I had a really good chance to see she wasn't weraing a whole lot of makeup on her eyes for a change. I knew we both had had enough tears in our eyes so it looked like we were seeing each other underwater or through a heavy, sad mist-but in another way I was looking deeper into her eyes that I had ever done before. What Hortense looked to me most at that moment was smart. She looked damn smart and deep. And if she was looking at me with friendship and love at the same time, well-those had a chance only of running third. It was as if the same thoughts were flowing between our brains, and we would need no words."

*Attempted analysis of the theme of the book; lengthy citation not connected*

The special feature of the book is when they go to Jason's house. "Jason went right to the window sill and grabbed a giant bottle of papaya juice, an already-opened quarter pound of butter and half a loaf of whole wheat bread."

*Irrelevant detail*

My opinion of my book was that it was very good but at the ends it got really sad. I would recommend this book to any one that likes to read a good book that gets sad very fast.

*Attempted personal response*

### *Effectiveness Score 2*

*This response summarizes the book. The attempts at analysis seem to be organized by a set of scaffolding questions, rather than by a demonstration of clear thinking about the text. There is little elaboration and no direct citations. Much of the language is generic.*

### *Conventions Score 2*

*This writing demonstrates inconsistent control of conventions with multiple errors in spelling, sentence structure, inconsistency of verb tense, and vague pronoun usage.*

**For Better, For Worse  
Forever  
By Lurlene McDaniel**

For Better, For Worse, Forever is a tragic story of a young girl whose short life is an emotional roller coaster. Set in New York and Saint Croix, high school senior April Lancaster loses one boyfriend ( Mark ) to Cystic Fibrosis then learns that she herself is dying.

This book is a sequel to Till Death Do Us Part. It begins with April releasing a red balloon with a yellow ribbon symbolizing letting Mark go. After Marks death, April's parents make her move to Saint Croix where she meets Brandon Benedict. Brandon helps her cope with death and also helps her live life to the fullest. during the time that April is there, she gets sick and has to go back to New York for medical help. She goes back without telling Brandon. Back in New York, the doctors diagnose her with a brain tumor and give her six months to live.

April goes back to Saint Croix where her health deteriorates rapidly each day. Brandon only knows that she is sick, but April doesn't tell him the extent of her sickness. Eventually April's parents tell him. Brandon goes back to the house one morning only to find that she has passed on. April's body will be returned to New York where she will be buried next to Mark.

I think that the theme of the story is that death is just a part of life and it happens to even the best and healthiest of people. Some races of people celebrate a person's life after they die, but in the U.S. we get very upset and mourn for a long time. Personally I thought that is was unfair that Mark and April

had to die. I had a hard time letting go. I think that doctors should do some research to find cures for Cystic Fibrosis and brain tumors.

The book had some emotional parts which I found very hard to read. They were well written, but very sad, so I really must have been attached to the characters for it to affect me this way. I learned that death is not an easy thing to face or have happen in front of you. I thought that the characters handled it very well, especially since they were teenagers. Recently, someone I knew well died unexpectedly, and I know that I am not handling it as well as the people in this story who are about my age.

Other than the sad and emotional parts, I thought that the book was very good to read. I would recommend this book to anyone who has had a death in their family or relatives who died from Cystic Fibrosis or brain tumors. It is a good book because it helps you look at death from a whole new perspective: death can be seen as a way of moving on. It's difficult to do this, but I think that it's a good way to see things. In conclusion, this book explains death as a natural cause and helps people understand it even if it has not happened in your family.

**1.7 Response to Text**  
**Effectiveness = 2**  
**Conventions = 3**

**For Better, For Worse  
Forever**  
**By Lurlene McDaniel**

For Better, For Worse, Forever is a tragic story of a young girl whose short life is an emotional roller coaster. Set in New York and Saint Croix, high school senior April Lancaster loses one boyfriend ( Mark ) to Cystic Fibrosis then learns that she herself is dying.

*Sets context;  
no clear thesis*

This book is a sequel to Till Death Do Us Part. It begins with April releasing a red balloon with a yellow ribbon symbolizing letting Mark go. After Marks death, April's parents make her move to Saint Croix where she meets Brandon Benedict. Brandon helps her cope with death and also helps her live life to the fullest. during the time that April is there, she gets sick and has to go back to New York for medical help. She goes back without telling Brandon. Back in New York, the doctors diagnose her with a brain tumor and give her six months to live.

*The first  
sentence is  
irrelevant*

April goes back to Saint Croix where her health deteriorates rapidly each day. Brandon only knows that she is sick, but April doesn't tell him the extent of her sickness. Eventually April's parents tell him. Brandon goes back to the house one morning only to find that she has passed on. April's body will be returned to New York where she will be buried next to Mark.

*Retelling  
of the plot*

I think that the theme of the story is that death is just a part of life and it happens to even the best and healthiest of people. Some races of people celebrate a person's life after they die, but in the U.S. we get very upset and mourn for a long time. Personally I thought that is was unfair that Mark and April had to die. I had a hard time letting go. I think that doctors should do some

*Ineffective  
attempt at  
analysis*

research to find cures for Cystic Fibrosis and brain tumors.

The book had some emotional parts which I found very hard to read. They were well written, but very sad, so I really must have been attached to the characters for it to affect me this way. I learned that death is not an easy thing to face or have happen in front of you. I thought that the characters handled it very well, especially since they were teenagers. Recently, someone I knew well died unexpectedly, and I know that I am not handling it as well as the people in this story who are about my age.

*Personal response but little analysis of text or characters*

Other than the sad and emotional parts, I thought that the book was very good to read. I would recommend this book to anyone who has had a death in their family or relatives who died from Cystic Fibrosis or brain tumors. It is a good book because it helps you look at death from a whole new perspective: death can be seen as a way of moving on. It's difficult to do this, but I think that it's a good way to see things. In conclusion, this book explains death as a natural cause and helps people understand it even if it has not happened in your family.

*More personal response than analysis*

***Effectiveness Score 2***

*This piece has few original ideas. The ideas and references to text are generalities. There is no clear thesis, specific references to text, and little analysis of the text; it concentrates on retelling the story with personal response. This becomes a book report. There is organization, but it seems to be based on provided scaffolding questions. Consequently, it lacks coherence, and the last three paragraphs could actually go in any order.*

*Despite isolated errors, this writing demonstrates overall consistent control of grade-level conventions.*

***Conventions Score 3***

**WHO'S TO BLAME?**

In the play of Romeo and Juliet I think that Romeo was to blame because if he did not kill himself, he would have found out that Juliet was not really dead but in a deep sleep.

Juliet drank the sleeping potion and fell in to a deep sleep because she did not want to marry Paris. Juliet fell in love with this guy called Romeo and he was a Capulet.

The Montague and the Capulets are two females that live in the same kingdom and they can't get along. The Montagues who are Juliet's people did not get along with Romeo's people who are Capulets.

Romeo and Juliet fell in love and could not be separated though their people.

Juliet's father would not allow his daughter to marry Romeo. Juliet's whole point was to fake her death. Then her whole kingdom would think that she was dead and she would be placed in to the family tomb. Juliet would run off from there and spend the rest of her life with Romeo.

Every thing went wrong when Romeo found out that Juliet was dead. Romeo got Poisson and rushed to Juliet's side. In Juliet's family tomb were he would drink the Poisson that he got and kill himself so that he could be with Juliet forever. What he did not know was that Juliet was not really dead but in a deep sleep and would shortly awaken to find Romeo dead by her side. She did not know what to do so; she picked up a knife and stabbed her self to death.

I think that Romeo was to blame because if he was not so eager to kill himself so that he could be with Juliet, he would have found out that she was not really dead but in a deep sleep.

**1.7 Response to Text**  
**Effectiveness = 1**  
**Conventions = 1**

### WHO'S TO BLAME?

In the play of Romeo and Juliet I think that Romeo was to blame because if he did not kill himself, he would have found out that Juliet was not really dead but in a deep sleep.

*No context; focus (?) is a statement of fact*

Juliet drank the sleeping potion and fell in to a deep sleep because she did not want to marry Paris. Juliet fell in love with this guy called Romeo and he was a Capulet.

The Montague and the Capulets are two females that live in the same kingdom and they can't get along. The Montagues who are Juliet's people did not get along with Romeo's people who are Capulets.

*Incorrect spelling of "families" affects coherence*

Romeo and Juliet fell in love and could not be separated though their people.

Juliet's father would not allow his daughter to marry Romeo. Juliet's whole point was to fake her death. Then her whole kingdom would think that she was dead and she would be placed in to the family tomb. Juliet would run off from there and spend the rest of her life with Romeo.

*Generic language*

Every thing went wrong when Romeo found out that Juliet was dead. Romeo got Poisson and rushed to Juliet's side. In Juliet's family tomb were he would drink the Poisson that he got and kill himself so that he could be with Juliet forever. What he did not know was that Juliet was not really dead but in a deep sleep and would shortly awaken to find Romeo dead by her side. She did not know what to do so; she picked up a knife and stabbed her self to death.

*Incomplete, incoherent retelling of the plot*

I think that Romeo was to blame because if he was not so eager to kill himself so that he could be with Juliet, he would have found out that she was not really dead but in a deep sleep.

***Effectiveness Score 1***

***This response is an incomplete and incoherent retelling of the story line. The vocabulary and sentence structure are simple and basic. The piece is brief and the reader is not easily able to follow the writer's line of thinking.***

***Conventions Score 1***

***This writing demonstrates minimal control of conventions. Numerous errors of many types interfere with meaning.***

