

Exit Level Scoring Guide for Reading and Written Composition

April 2006

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INTRODUCTION

The reading and written composition sections of the TAKS English language arts test are based on three thematically linked reading pieces, called a “triplet”—a literary selection, an expository selection, and a visual representation. The test includes two performance tasks: three short answer reading items and a written composition. The literary and expository selections are published pieces, and the visual representation is a created piece, although it may include some published elements, such as photographs. Using published selections on TAKS makes the assessment more authentic and, therefore, a more valid and reliable measure of student learning in reading at the high school level.

Short Answer Items

The three short answer items on each test assess two skills. First, students must be able to generate clear, reasonable, thoughtful ideas or analyses about some aspect of the published literary and expository selections. Second, students must be able to support these ideas or analyses with relevant, strongly connected textual evidence.

On each test one short answer item is based on the literary selection only (Objective 2), one is based on the expository selection only (Objective 3), and one is based on students’ ability to connect the literary and expository selections (also Objective 3). Short answer items are not used to measure Objective 1, since this objective focuses on basic understanding.

Objective 2

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the effects of literary elements and techniques in culturally diverse written texts.

To appreciate the literature they read in high school, students must develop an understanding of the literary elements that are at the heart of all stories. This understanding must go beyond mere identification to encompass the ways in which the parts of a story, singly and in combination, contribute to its overall meaning. Students must also understand the ways in which an author uses literary techniques and language to craft a story. In short answer items assessing Objective 2, students must write a short response analyzing how literary elements, literary techniques, or figurative language function in a story.

Objective 3

The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze and critically evaluate culturally diverse written texts and visual representations.

To read well at the high school level, students must go beyond their initial understanding or impressions of a selection. Students must be able to develop their own interpretations, make thoughtful judgments about what they read, examine how a selection relates to their own lives, and find meaningful connections across parts of a single selection or between two selections. Students must also be aware of the way an author crafts a selection. An author’s purpose for writing, organizational decisions, point of view or attitude toward the subject, and unique use of language all affect the way a reader reads and understands a selection. In short answer items assessing Objective 3, students must write a short response analyzing or evaluating some aspect of the expository selection or some aspect of text common to or based upon both selections.

TAKS short answer items are holistically scored on a scale of 0 (insufficient) to 3 (exemplary). For each score point, this scoring guide presents the rubric as well as four student responses with explanatory annotations. Using this scoring guide will help you to better understand not only your students’ reading development but also the strengths and weaknesses of your school’s reading program.

Written Composition

Writing is a life skill. As students move from grade to grade, writing skills are critical for academic progress. Students who have difficulty putting their thoughts into writing struggle to succeed in social studies, science, and many areas other than English language arts. Because good writing requires good thinking, the act of writing helps students learn to clarify their thoughts and focus their ideas.

The writing prompt is thematically linked to the three reading selections. In this way, students have a built-in context that they may draw from as they plan their compositions. Note, however, that while students may include an analysis or reference to one or more reading selections, this is not a requirement. Students may respond to the prompt in any way they choose.

The composition section of the TAKS English language arts test assesses the knowledge and skills grouped under Objectives 4 and 5. Objective 4 focuses on the quality of the composition's content, while Objective 5 focuses on how clearly and effectively the student communicates his or her ideas. These objectives are inextricably linked because good writing must be both substantial and mechanically sound.

Objective 4

The student will, within a given context, produce an effective composition for a specific purpose.

The ability to communicate thoughts and ideas through writing helps students become successful, not only in school but throughout their lives. In order to communicate effectively, students must organize and develop ideas in a logical, coherent, and interesting manner that is easy for the reader to follow and understand. Objective 4 tests each student's ability to produce an organized and well-developed composition in response to a prompt. The prompt is worded so that students have broad latitude in crafting an individual response. Students can use any organizational strategy that allows them to write an effective piece—they can write a story, a description, a philosophical piece, an expository piece, a response to reading—or they can combine approaches. However students choose to respond, it is important that the composition they write is uniquely theirs—that it is authentic and represents their best thinking and writing.

Objective 5

The student will produce a piece of writing that demonstrates a command of the conventions of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

To write well, students must be able to apply the conventions of the English language. First, when students write a composition, they are able to follow the rules of correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. Second, they are able to write effective sentences and use words and phrases that enhance the reader's understanding of their ideas. Although students are not expected to produce absolutely error-free writing on the test, they are expected to write as clearly and correctly as possible. The stronger the writing conventions are, the more likely it is that students will be able to produce an effective composition.

TAKS compositions are holistically scored on a scale of 1 (ineffective) to 4 (highly effective). For each score point, this scoring guide presents the rubric as well as four student compositions with explanatory annotations. Using this scoring guide will help you to better understand your students' writing development and the strengths and weaknesses of your school's writing program.

My Father Sits in the Dark

by Jerome Weidman

My notes about what I am
reading

1 My father has a peculiar habit. He is fond of sitting in the dark, alone. Sometimes I come home very late. The house is dark. I let myself in quietly because I do not want to disturb my mother. She is a light sleeper. I tiptoe into my room and undress in the dark. I go to the kitchen for a drink of water. My bare feet make no noise. I step into the room and almost trip over my father. He is sitting in a kitchen chair, in his pajamas, smoking his pipe.

2 "Hello, Pop," I say.

3 "Hello, son."

4 "Why don't you go to bed, Pa?"

5 "I will," he says.

6 But he remains there. Long after I am asleep I feel sure that he is still sitting there, smoking.

7 Many times I am reading in my room. I hear my mother get the house ready for the night. I hear my kid brother go to bed. I hear my sister come in. I hear her do things with jars and combs until she, too, is quiet. I know she has gone to sleep. In a little while I hear my mother say good night to my father. I continue to read. Soon I become thirsty. (I drink a lot of water.) I go to the kitchen for a drink. Again I almost stumble across my father. Many times it startles me. I forget about him. And there he is—smoking, sitting, thinking.

8 "Why don't you go to bed, Pop?"

9 "I will, son."

10 But he doesn't. He just sits there and smokes and thinks. It worries me. I can't understand it. What can he be thinking about? Once I asked him.

11 "What are you thinking about, Pa?"

12 "Nothing," he said.

13 Once I left him there and went to bed. I awoke several hours later. I was thirsty. I went to the kitchen. There he was. His pipe was out. But he sat there, staring into a corner of the kitchen. After a moment I became accustomed to the darkness. I took my drink. He still sat and stared.

His eyes did not blink. I thought he was not even aware of me. I was afraid.

My notes about what I am
reading

14 "Why don't you go to bed, Pop?"

15 "I will, son," he said. "Don't wait up for me."

16 "But," I said, "you've been sitting here for hours. What's wrong? What are you thinking about?"

17 "Nothing, son," he said. "Nothing. It's just restful. That's all."

18 The way he said it was convincing. He did not seem worried. His voice was even and pleasant. It always is. But I could not understand it. How could it be restful to sit alone in an uncomfortable chair far into the night, in darkness?

19 What can it be?

20 I review all the possibilities. It can't be money. I know that. We haven't much, but when he is worried about money he makes no secret of it. It can't be his health. He is not reticent about that either. It can't be the health of anyone in the family. We are a bit short on money, but we are long on health. (Knock wood, my mother would say.) What can it be? I am afraid I do not know. But that does not stop me from worrying.

21 Maybe he is thinking of his brothers in the old country. Or of his mother and two step-mothers. Or of his father. But they are all dead. And he would not brood about them like that. I say brood, but it is not really true. He does not brood. He does not even seem to be thinking. He looks too peaceful, too, well not contented, just too peaceful, to be brooding. Perhaps it is as he says. Perhaps it is restful. But it does not seem possible. It worries me.

22 If I only knew what he thinks about. If I only knew that he thinks at all. I might not be able to help him. He might not even need help. It may be as he says. It may be restful. But at least I would not worry about it.

23 Why does he just sit there, in the dark? Is his mind failing? No, it can't be. He is only fifty-three. And he is just as keen-witted as ever. In fact, he is the same in every respect. He still likes beet soup. He still reads the second section of the *Times* first. He still wears wing collars. He still believes that Debs¹ could have saved the country and that T.R.² was a tool of the moneyed interests. He is the

¹ Eugene Debs (1855–1926) was a U.S. socialist, political activist, and five-time presidential candidate.

² Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) was the 26th president of the United States, 1901–1909.

same in every way. He does not even look older than he did five years ago. Everybody remarks about that. Well-preserved, they say. But he sits in the dark, alone, smoking, staring straight ahead of him, unblinking, into the small hours of the night.

24 If it is as he says, if it is restful, I will let it go at that. But suppose it is not. Suppose it is something I cannot fathom. Perhaps he needs help. Why doesn't he speak? Why doesn't he frown or laugh or cry? Why doesn't he do something? Why does he just sit there?

25 Finally I become angry. Maybe it is just my unsatisfied curiosity. Maybe I *am* a bit worried. Anyway, I become angry.

26 "Is something wrong, Pop?"

27 "Nothing, son. Nothing at all."

28 But this time I am determined not to be put off. I am angry.

29 "Then why do you sit here all alone, thinking, till late?"

30 "It's restful, son. I like it."

31 I am getting nowhere. Tomorrow he will be sitting there again. I will be puzzled. I will be worried. I will not stop now. I am angry.

32 "Well, what do you *think* about, Pa? Why do you just sit here? What's worrying you? What do you think about?"

33 "Nothing's worrying me, son. I'm all right. It's just restful. That's all. Go to bed, son."

34 My anger has left me. But the feeling of worry is still there. I must get an answer. It seems so silly. Why doesn't he tell me? I have a funny feeling that unless I get an answer I will go crazy. I am insistent.

35 "But what do you *think* about, Pa? What is it?"

36 "Nothing, son. Just things in general. Nothing special. Just things."

37 I can get no answer.

38 It is very late. The street is quiet and the house is dark. I climb the steps softly, skipping the ones that creak. I let myself in with my key and tiptoe into my room. I remove my clothes and remember that I am thirsty. In my bare feet I walk to the kitchen. Before I reach it I know he is there.

39 I can see the deeper darkness of his hunched shape. He is sitting in the same chair, his elbows on his knees, his cold pipe in his teeth, his unblinking eyes staring straight ahead. He does not seem to know I am there. He did not hear me come in. I stand quietly in the doorway and watch him.

40 Everything is quiet, but the night is full of little sounds. As I stand there motionless I begin to notice them. The ticking of the alarm clock on the icebox. The low hum of an automobile passing many blocks away. The swish of papers moved along the street by the breeze. A whispering rise and fall of sound, like low breathing. It is strangely pleasant.

41 The dryness in my throat reminds me. I step briskly into the kitchen.

42 "Hello, Pop," I say.

43 "Hello, son," he says. His voice is low and dreamlike. He does not change his position or shift his gaze.

44 I cannot find the faucet. The dim shadow of light that comes through the window from the street lamp only makes the room seem darker. I reach for the short chain in the center of the room. I snap on the light.

45 He straightens up with a jerk, as though he has been struck. "What's the matter, Pop?" I ask.

46 "Nothing," he says. "I don't like the light."

47 "What's the matter with the light?" I say. "What's wrong?"

48 "Nothing," he says. "I don't like the light."

49 I snap the light off. I drink my water slowly. I must take it easy, I say to myself. I must get to the bottom of this.

50 "Why don't you go to bed? Why do you sit here so late in the dark?"

51 "It's nice," he says. "I can't get used to lights. We didn't have lights when I was a boy in Europe."

52 My heart skips a beat and I catch my breath happily. I begin to think I understand. I remember the stories of his boyhood in Austria. I see the wide-beamed *kretchma*,³ with my grandfather behind the bar. It is late, the customers are gone, and he is dozing. I see the bed of glowing coals, the last of the roaring fire. The room is already dark, and growing darker. I see a small boy, crouched on a pile of

³ *Kretchma* is the Yiddish word for inn or tavern.

twigs at one side of the huge fireplace, his starry gaze fixed on the dull remains of the dead flames. The boy is my father.

My notes about what I am
reading

53 I remember the pleasure of those few moments while I stood quietly in the doorway watching him.

54 "You mean there's nothing wrong? You just sit in the dark because you like it, Pop?" I find it hard to keep my voice from rising in a happy shout.

55 "Sure," he says. "I can't think with the light on."

56 I set my glass down and turn to go back to my room. "Good night, Pop," I say.

57 "Good night," he says.

58 Then I remember. I turn back. "What do you think about, Pop?" I ask.

59 His voice seems to come from far away. It is quiet and even again. "Nothing," he says softly. "Nothing special."

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Going to America

by Nicholas Gage

In 1949, at the age of twelve, Nicholas Gage left Greece with his sisters to be united with their father in America. Their mother, Eleni Gatzoyiannis, had been killed by invading Communist guerrillas in their mountain village, but her four children had escaped. Prokopi Koulisis, an acquaintance from a neighboring village, helped watch the children on the eighteen-day journey to America. In this selection, Nicholas remembers his first thoughts and emotions as the ship leaves Greece—and eighteen days later when it arrives in America.

1 As the ship began to pull away, I watched the figure of my grandfather shrinking. Suddenly he began to wave the walking stick he always carried, carved from the branch of a cornel tree and polished to a dark sheen by his hands. Finally it was only the frantic waving of his stick that distinguished him from the other dots on the harborside.

2 . . . My fingers touched something cold and smooth, and I pulled it out of my pocket. It was the small black stone that I had picked up outside my house on the night of our escape, because my mother had ordered me to throw one behind me so that I would never return to the place that gave us so much suffering. I had kept that stone in my pocket for eight months, and now it was time to toss it into the sea.

3 My mother had often told us the story of how my father, an itinerant tinker of seventeen, when he boarded the ship for America, triumphantly tossed over the rail the fez¹ that the Turkish occupiers of

northern Greece forced men to wear in those days as a symbol of their subjugation. When the fez disappeared into the waves, she said, my father felt like a free man for the first time in his life.

Now it was my turn to throw this stone from my village into the same sea, to ensure that I would never be pulled back to this land of war and famine, bombs, torture and executions. My mother had said that any one of her children who came back would receive her curse. Throwing the stone was the way to turn my back irrevocably on Greece and my face toward America, where my father waited.



The author, bottom left, and his sisters.

But my mother's body was still in Greece, in the church only a few yards below our ruined house. They had called her the *Amerikana*² and all her life she had dreamed of America, but she would never leave our mountains. My sister was still somewhere behind those mountains, too, unless she was dead.

■ see Going to America, page 2

¹ A fez is a cone-shaped hat with a flat top, a tassel, and no brim, worn by men of Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries.

² *Amerikana* means "the American one," a nickname given to the author's mother because her husband had gone to America to work.

6

It was the only country I knew, and I loved the cruel beauty of the mountain peaks, the sound of the goats' bells in the thin air, the smell of wood smoke, and the annual transfiguration of the gray hillsides when the Judas trees and wildflowers burst into paschal colors in the spring. I wasn't sorry to be leaving Greece, but despite my mother's orders, I couldn't make myself throw that stone overboard and cut myself off from my native land forever. It was the only place I had ever felt I belonged, until the war killed my mother and washed my sisters and me away like the swells of the sea that frightened me so when I first saw its vastness.

7

I slipped the stone back into my pocket and turned to follow my sisters, who were descending the steel stairs into the bowels of the ship, crying out in dismay at the dizzying sway beneath their feet. . . .

8

On the eighteenth day of our journey, I got up before dawn to put on my scratchy woolen suit, then went up to the deck, much too excited to eat breakfast. As soon as the darkness lifted and the haze burned off I saw it—two strips of land reaching out to us, the arms of America pulling us to her bosom.

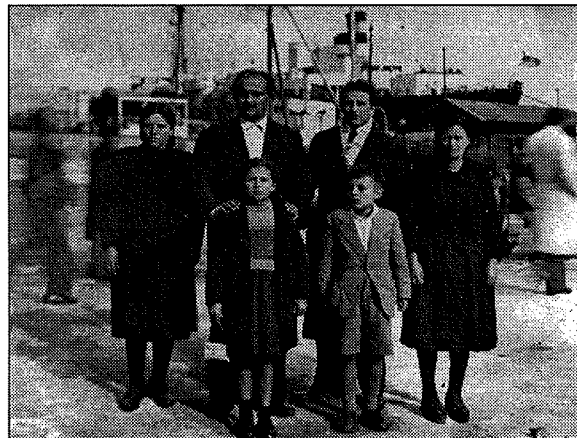
The deck quickly filled as the ship approached New York Harbor. My sisters gathered around me, silent at the rail, and I could feel Prokopi Kouklisis's hands on my shoulders.

When I could make out details of the land, I felt an ache of disappointment. There were pockets of dingy gray snow in the hollows and a grim, metallic sky overhead. I couldn't help thinking that now, in Greece, oranges and lemons were ripening on the trees under a warm blue sky.

"The Statue!" someone cried, and there was a stampede to the other side of the ship toward the immense figure of the woman my father called Saint Freedom. She faced us, holding the torch that had

welcomed millions of refugees from famine, war, poverty, and persecution, each one no doubt as frightened as I was now. Everyone started shouting and pointing, but when we drew close, the throng fell silent, as if in the presence of a miracle.

When we neared the dock, I turned toward the crowd of people waiting on land, trying to recognize the father I had never seen. I expected him to tower over



The author, bottom right, and his sisters just before boarding the ship to America.

9

10

11

12

■ see Going to America, page 3

the rest like a colossus, so I paid no attention to a short, portly man in a stylish felt hat and gray chesterfield, standing in the very front of the crowd. But Prokopi Koullis remembered my father from his visits to our village, and I felt strong arms lift me up off the deck, holding me high above the heads of the crowd like a trophy as Olga shouted, "*Patera!*"³ The stocky man on the dock snatched his hat from his bald head and began waving it.

13 Twenty-five years later, when he was eighty-one years old, my father described the scene in his broken English into a tape recorder. "I was on the dock watching the boat," he began slowly. "Olga recognize me. And I wave to them. Prokopi Koullis, he pick Nikola up and show him to me from the deck. First time I see my son. Oh, my tears! My heart broke that minute."

14 He paused, trying to collect himself while two small grandchildren played at his feet. "They start to come out," he went on doggedly. "I hugged him, his little arms. They was so cold. My own childrens!"

15 He turned toward the machine that was recording his words. "I think I have to stop now," he said apologetically, "because I'm going to cry."

16 His tearful words of remembrance, our cries of greeting across the water, the murmurs of wonder at the sight of the statue who lifts her lamp beside the golden door—all these sounds are part of the chorus of the millions who entered this harbor seeking a place where they would be safe and free. First they came from northern Europe to settle a raw new

nation, then from southern Europe, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, seeking sanctuary from pogroms⁴ and famines, dictatorships, death camps and genocide. Entering this place, each uttered the same hymn of thanksgiving in his own tongue.

Today that chorus has grown faint in our ears, for the old European immigrants have passed away, taking their memories with them. Their children have forgotten what it means not to be American. The new arrivals, fleeing from Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, are still trying to find homes and jobs, to learn the language and send their children to school. They have not yet found a voice to tell their tale.

[The] story of the children of Eleni Gatzoyiannis in America is the recollection of an immigrant who arrived at mid-century, old enough to be molded by the traditions left behind but young enough to belong in this new world. The particular calamities, heartaches, and triumphs in [our story] are unique to my sisters and me, but our odyssey is as old as the nation: the arduous journey across the bridge that separates an old familiar world from a new and frightening one, to find a place for ourselves on the other side.

From *A Place for Us* by Nicholas Gage. Reprinted by permission of the author. Photographs courtesy of Fotini Bottos.

³ *Patera* means "father."

⁴ Pogroms are organized massacres of innocent or helpless people.

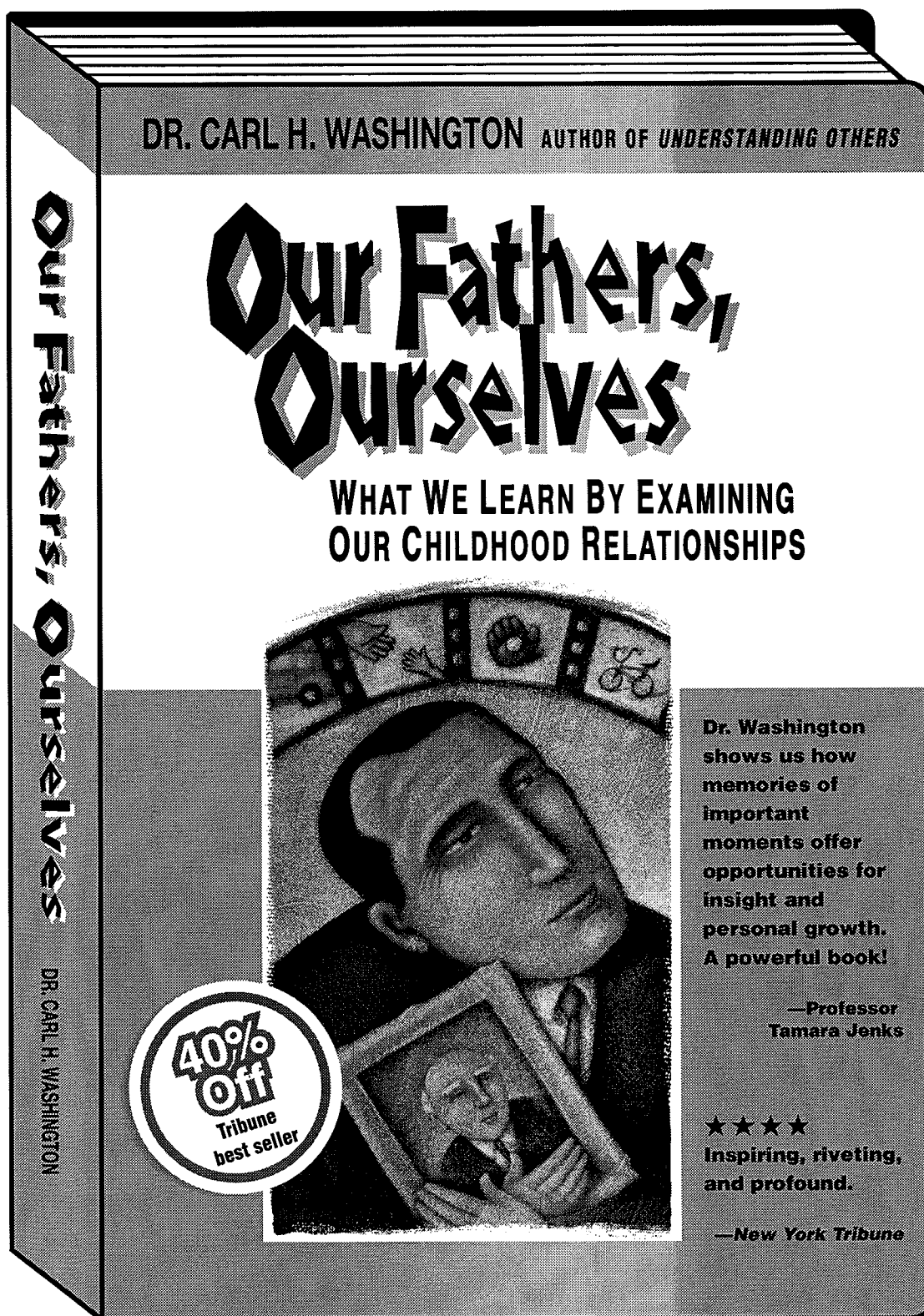


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SHORT ANSWER ITEMS

Rubrics and Sample Responses

Objective 2 – Literary Selection

What does darkness symbolize in “My Father Sits in the Dark”? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from the selection.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may offer an incorrect theme, character trait, conflict, or change
- ☐ may offer a theme, character, conflict, or change that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- ☐ may incorrectly analyze a literary technique or figurative expression
- ☐ may offer an analysis that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- ☐ may present only a plot summary
- ☐ may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- ☐ may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-1

The boy always gets a cup of water in the night because he feels thirsty. Every time he gets up he sees his dad sitting in a chair in the darkness. That starts to worry him, he asked his dad what's wrong he he dad never told him nothing. He thinks his dad is thinking about something and doesn't want to tell the boy.

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

In this response the student presents a plot summary of the selection, offering no idea or specific textual evidence.

RG-2

In "My Father Sits in the Dark", darkness symbolizes the story because it tells how the father of a boy "is fond of sitting in the dark, alone". And the boy figures it out by remembering his father's childhood in Austria.

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

Here the unsupported idea (darkness symbolizes the story because it tells how the father of a boy "is fond of sitting in the dark, alone") does not provide a clear symbol, making the response too vague to determine whether it is reasonable.

The darkness symbolizes the dark kitchen he sits in. He loves sitting in the dark and that's where he is always found just like his son said "He is fond of sitting in the dark, alone."

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

In this response the student incorrectly analyzes the literary technique. The idea that the darkness symbolizes the physical setting (the dark kitchen he sits in) indicates that the student does not understand the symbolic meaning of darkness in the selection.

It symbolizes evil in another way as bad things, like the father sitting the kitchen in the dark with a pipe in his mouth. The same time his bad behavior of not responding to his son of his situations of sitting in the dark.

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

This student incorrectly analyzes the selection. Asserting that the darkness symbolizes evil and that the father's behavior is bad because he does not respond to the son indicates that the student does not understand the selection.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may offer a reasonable theme, character trait, conflict, or change but provide only general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression but provide only general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable idea or analysis and may provide textual evidence, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea or analysis
- ☐ may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence without providing an idea or analysis

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-5

The darkness in "My Father Sits in the Dark" symbolizes the father's past. For example in this quote "My heart skips a beat... The boy is my father. (paragraph 52 page 7 Weidman) Even as a child the father would sit in the dark and think about general things.

Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient

This response is partially sufficient because the student offers only partial textual evidence to support the idea that darkness symbolizes the father's past. The attempt at textual support (My heart skips a beat...The boy is my father) does not show anything about the father's past. The student omits the relevant portion of the text that would directly connect the darkness symbolically to the father's past.

RG-6

The darkness symbolizes his father's childhood in Austria. In paragraph fifty-two, the young man has a "flashback" to when his father was a child watching a fire die down. This helps him understand his father's behavior.

Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient

Here the student offers a reasonable idea (The darkness symbolizes the father's childhood in Austria) but provides only general text reference to support the idea rather than specific textual evidence.

It symbolizes what the father
use to go through when he
was in Europe. "I can't get use to
lights. We didn't have lights when I
was a boy in Europe."

Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient

In this response the student provides accurate, relevant textual evidence (I can't get used to the lights. We didn't have lights when I was a boy in Europe) to support an analysis that is not clear and specific (It symbolizes what the father used to go through when he was in Europe).

The darkness symbolizes how the father feels
about his past. He misses the way things used
to be at his childhood home with no light.
"I remember the stories of his boyhood in
Austria," says the son trying to think of the
reason for his father's strange behavior.

Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient

This student reasonably concludes that the darkness symbolizes how the father feels about his past, missing the way things used to be without lights. However, the textual evidence offered (I remember the stories of his boyhood in Austria) is only weakly connected to the idea.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ must offer a reasonable theme, character trait, conflict, or change and support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
- ☐ must offer a reasonable analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression and support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, sufficient responses must be clear and specific.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-9

The darkness symbolizes the author's father's desire to sustain his boyhood memories in Austria. The author remembers his father telling him boyhood recollections of dozing off, watching the glowing coals, as the room became increasingly darker. The author comprehends that sitting in the dark is restful for his father, because he feels comfortable and able to think. "It's nice," he says. "I can't get used to lights. We didn't have lights when I was a boy in Europe."

Score Point: 2—Sufficient

In this response the student directly supports the reasonable idea that the darkness symbolizes the father's desire to sustain his boyhood memories with a combination of paraphrase (The author remembers his father telling him boyhood recollections of dozing off, watching the glowing coals...) and direct quotations (It's nice; I can't get used to lights. We didn't have lights when I was a boy...).

RG-10

The darkness symbolize in "My Father Sits in the Dark" is the calm and peacefulness of the world. "As I stand there motionless I begin to notice... the ticking of the alarm clock... the low hum of an automobile passing many blocks away. The swish of papers moved along the street by the breeze... It is strangely pleasant." As the son stands there in the dark with his father he too understands why his father thinks the darkness is "restful" and "nice."

Score Point: 2—Sufficient

Here the student offers the reasonable idea that darkness symbolizes the calm and peacefulness of the world. Direct textual evidence illustrating the peaceful nature of the dark is presented (I begin to notice...the ticking of the alarm clock...the swish of papers...it is strangely pleasant) and clarified with a combination of further explanation and specific synopsis (as the son stands there in the dark...he too understands why his father thinks the darkness is restful and nice).

The Darkness Symbolizes the fathers childhood memories he compares the Darkness to the lack of light as he grew up. The dark soothes him and lets him think about his childhood giving him a dreamlike atmosphere.
"I see the bed of glowing coals, the last of the roaring fire. The room already dark growing darker. I see a boy crouched on a pile of twigs near the dead fire. The boy is my father."

Score Point: 2—Sufficient

In this response the student presents a reasonable idea (The darkness symbolizes the father's childhood memories). The analysis and text evidence are linked by further explanation of how the darkness symbolizes the childhood memories (he compares the darkness to the lack of light as he grew up. The dark soothes him and lets him think...). The textual evidence provided (I see the bed of glowing coals, the last of the roaring fire...The boy is my father) illustrates and supports the symbolic connection between the childhood memories and the darkness.

The darkness in "My Father Sits in the Dark" symbolizes the father's attachment to his childhood in Austria, and the fact that he is still adjusting to life in America. When he confides in his son that he "can't get used to lights," because he "didn't have lights when [he] was a boy in Europe." It shows that even after so many years, he misses his homeland and is still adjusting to the new ways of America.

Score Point: 2—Sufficient

Here the student reasonably concludes that the darkness symbolizes both the father's attachment to his childhood in Austria and the fact that he is still adjusting to life in America. The textual evidence presented (he confides in his son that he can't get used to the lights because he didn't have lights when [he] was a boy in Europe) directly supports both that he misses his homeland and is still adjusting to the new ways.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful theme, character trait, conflict, or change and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, exemplary responses must demonstrate the student's depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea or analysis.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-13

In "My Father Sits In The Dark," darkness symbolizes his father's restful childhood. "We didn't have lights when I was a boy in Europe." After waking up every night seeing his father sitting alone in the dark, he begins to remember stories he was told about his dad when he was young. "It was late, the customers were gone, the room is already dark and growing darker. I see a small boy... his steady gaze fixed on... dead flames. The boy is my father." He realized that because his father "can't think in the light" he has enjoyed "restful" moments sitting in the dark reflecting on his unilluminated, peaceful childhood.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This effective response provides strongly linked textual evidence (We didn't have light when I was a boy...the room is already dark growing darker...the boy is my father) to support an insightful understanding of how the darkness comes to symbolize the father's restful childhood to both the father and his son (He realized that because his father "can't think in the light" he has enjoyed "restful" moments sitting in the dark reflecting on his unilluminated peaceful childhood).

RG-14

Darkness symbolizes a restful place to think. Originally the son was worried about his father's habit of sitting alone in the dark. When he asked, "What are you thinking about?" His father always replied, "Nothing. It's just restful. That's all. One night when his father didn't know he was observing him, the son noticed the night is "full of little sounds" that are "strangely pleasant." He turned on the light and found his father "doesn't like the light" because he "can't think with the lights on." So, he realized that this was his dad's retreat from the harsh light of the day to peacefully reflect on his life.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this response the student offers an in-depth analysis of how the darkness symbolizes a restful place to think for the father. The student skillfully uses specific synopsis (One night when his father didn't know he was observing him the son noticed the night is full of little sounds...He turned the light on and found that his father doesn't like the light) combined with further explanation of the analysis (this was his dad's retreat from the harsh light of day to peacefully reflect on his life) to demonstrate depth of understanding.

RG-15

DARKNESS SYMBOLIZES INNER PEACE, A TIME WHICH HIS FATHER USES TO "SIT IN THE SAME CHAIR, HIS ELBOWS ON HIS KNEES, HIS PIPE IN HIS TEETH "REMEMBERING HIS CHILDHOOD IN AUSTRIA, BUT ALSO ENJOYING A "NIGHT FULL OF SOUNDS" IN THE DARK. HE DIDN'T HAVE "LIGHTS WHEN HE WAS A BOY IN EUROPE" AND TO THIS DAY HE "CANNOT THINK WITH THE LIGHTS ON," SO THE DARKNESS IS A SPECIAL PLACE TO MEDITATE AND REFLECT ON IMPORTANT MOMENTS FROM HIS CHILDHOOD.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This student demonstrates depth of understanding by interweaving strong textual evidence (his elbows on his knees, pipe in his teeth; didn't have lights when he was a boy; cannot think with the lights on) into the analysis to both explain and illustrate how the darkness symbolizes peacefulness in the selection.

RG-16

Darkness symbolizes the simple pleasures of his father's past. Only when in the dark can he fully recall the memory of being a boy sitting in a tavern with the room "already dark, and growing darker." As soon as the light snaps on, he is suddenly faced with reality and the memories fade. "We didn't have lights in Europe." "I can't think with the lights on." So night after night he sits in the dark to reconnect to his simpler past that is overshadowed by the harsher reality of the modern world.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

Here the student offers the particularly insightful analysis that darkness symbolizes the simple pleasures of his father's past because he sits in the dark to reconnect to his simpler past that is overshadowed by the harsher reality of the modern world. A skillful combination of specific synopsis and direct quotations strongly supports and further clarifies the analysis.

Objective 3 – Expository Selection

In “Going to America,” what is one way Nicholas is affected by moving to America? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not based on the text
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that does not address the question
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not reasonable
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- ☐ may incorrectly analyze or evaluate a characteristic of the text
- ☐ may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- ☐ may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-17

In this selection there is one way how
Nicholas is affected by moving to America
because well he will miss his family
and friends.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

Here the student offers an idea that is incorrect. The move to America does not cause Nicholas to miss his family. It is death and separation due to war that cause him to miss his mother and one sister; the rest of the family is reunited by moving to America rather than separated by it. Nicholas's attitude toward his friends is not mentioned in the selection at all.

RG-18

His family was suffering because of the famine in Greece
His mother told him "to throw the stone in the sea and
to never come to his native country"

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the student answers a different question than the one asked. The student identifies and attempts to support one reason why Nicholas moved to America rather than one way he was affected by the move.

In "Going to America," one way Nicholas is affected by moving to America is his mother's curse. She told them, "If any of her children come back, they would receive her curse. So he stayed in America like she always dreamed.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

This student presents an idea that is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable (one way Nicholas is affected by moving to America is his mother's curse). Neither the text provided (If any of her children come back, they would receive her curse) nor the last sentence (So he stayed in America...) clarifies the specific effect on Nicholas.

That the way that Nicholas was affected by moving to America would have to be found in "dingy gray snow in the hollow and a grim metallic sky overhead" evidence paragraph 10 on line 3/4

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the student offers only incomplete, irrelevant textual evidence (dingy gray snow in the hollow and a grim metallic sky) with no analysis at all.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the text that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable idea, analysis, or evaluation and may provide textual evidence, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea, analysis, or evaluation
- ☐ may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence without drawing a conclusion, offering an interpretation, making a prediction, or providing an analysis or evaluation

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-21

In "Going to America," Nicholas is affected by not wanting to completely forget about his hometown. He says "I couldn't make myself throw that stone overboard." He can't just get rid of his memories growing up and that was the only place he felt he belonged.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student provides a reasonable idea of how moving to America affects Nicholas (Nicholas is affected by not wanting to completely forget about his hometown; he can't just get rid of his memories...that was the only place he felt he belonged). However, the text evidence provided (I couldn't make myself throw that stone overboard) is only partial, incomplete support for the idea that Nicholas is affected by his inability to let go of his memories of Greece.

RG-22

In the passage "Going to America" one way Nicholas is affected by moving to America is because his sister is left behind. "My Sister was still somewhere behind those mountains, too, unless she was dead." His mother also was killed in the war and he had to look for his dad, which he had never seen before, who was in America. How sad.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

This student offers two ways in which Nicholas was affected by moving to America (his sister is left behind; he had to look for his dad, which he had never seen before). The text evidence offered to support Nicholas being affected by leaving his sister is merely an echo, and no text evidence is provided to support Nicholas having to look for the father he had never seen.

In "Going to America" one way he is effected by going to America is trying to adapt to his new country and getting over the bad things that happened in Greece "All of these sounds are part of the chorus of the millions who entered this harbor seeking a place where they would be safe and free."

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the text evidence presented (All of these sounds are part of the chorus of the millions...seeking a place where they would be safe and free) is only weakly linked to the idea that Nicholas is affected by moving to America by having to try to adapt to a new country and get over the bad things that happened in Greece.

In "going to America" Nicholas is affected by moving to America because he will never get to visit his mother's grave again. Before Nicholas's mother died she told him to throw a stone into the water as he leaves Greece and to never come back. Now as Nicholas gets closer to America he misses his mother & homeland.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

This student reasonably concludes that Nicholas is affected by moving to America because he will never get to visit his mother's grave again and he misses his mother and homeland. However, the student makes no attempt at textual support.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ must draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
- ☐ must offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the selection and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, sufficient responses must be clear and specific.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-25

In "Going to America" one way Nicholas is affected by moving to America is he is sad to leave his country. "It was the only country I knew, and I loved the cruel beauty of the mountain peaks." (pg. 10 parag. 6)

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

Here the student offers the reasonable idea that one way in which Nicholas is affected by moving to America is that he is sad to leave his native country. The text evidence offered (It was the only country I knew, and I loved the cruel beauty...) directly illustrates and supports the sadness Nicholas feels.

RG-26

In "Going to America", Nicholas is affect with being homesick, "I couldn't help thinking that now, in Greece, oranges were ripening under a warm blue sky". In my opinion he ~~saw~~ homesick, he's thinking of Greece and everything along with it.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

Here the reasonable analysis that moving to America makes Nicholas homesick is supported by direct textual evidence (I couldn't help thinking that now, in Greece, oranges were ripening under a warm blue sky).

Nicholas is torn between attachment to his life in Greece and excitement about the start of a new one in America. "...but despite my mother's orders, I Couldn't make myself throw that stone and Cut myself off from my native land forever." ... then I went up to the deck, much too excited to eat breakfast... I saw it - two strips of land reaching out to us the arms of America pulling us to her bosom.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

This student analyzes how Nicholas is torn between his old life in Greece and the excitement of starting a new life in America. Direct quotations are used to support both his ties to Greece and his feelings about America.

Nicholas had a better understanding of freedom by moving to America. For example, he notices that some "children have forgotten" what it means not to be American. He understands, and is very grateful for his freedom. He has such a great understanding of this, that he can see how other people take freedom for granted.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

This student analyzes the long-term effect that moving to America had on Nicholas (He had a better understanding of freedom). This reasonable interpretation is further explained (he has such a great understanding that he can see how other people take freedom for granted) and supported by direct textual evidence.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful conclusion, interpretation, or prediction and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the text and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, exemplary responses show strong evidence of the student's depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea, analysis, or evaluation.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-29

Nicholas' move to America leaves him feeling conflicted. Aside from worrying whether or not the sister he left behind is alive, he struggles with leaving the "only country he knew," to meet the father he has never known. Though he wasn't sorry to leave Greece and despite his mother's threatened "curse," he could not take it upon himself to "throw the stone overboard and cut himself from his native land forever." His first sight of America was a disappointment "pockets of dingy grey snow in the hollows and a grim metallic sky overhead" which he compared to Greece "oranges and lemons were ripening on the trees under a warm blue sky."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This thorough response demonstrates depth of understanding by skillfully interweaving specific textual evidence with a detailed description of how Nicholas is affected and conflicted by moving to America (struggles with leaving "the only country he knew"...Though he wasn't sorry to leave...he could not take it upon himself to "throw the stone").

RG-30

Nicholas is affected by the freedom he gained by moving to America. He was once suppressed in a country full of "pogroms and famines, dictatorships, death camps and genocide." Once he enters American soil, he does not have to worry about those terrifying memories. Though he is still connected to his homeland, his life is greatly improved by his move to America. His story is the recollection of an immigrant who arrived old enough to be molded by the traditions left behind but young enough to belong in this new world. "So he came at the right time to reap the benefits of freedom and secure a bright future."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This student offers the insightful analysis that the effect moving to America has on Nicholas is that he gains the freedom that he never had in Greece. The analysis is strongly supported by a skillful interweaving of specific synopsis (He was once suppressed in a country of dictatorships...), direct quotations, and further explanation of how Nicholas benefitted from the freedom he gained.

Even though his father waited in America his mother's body is still in Greece in the church only a few yards below his ruined house," and another sister is unaccounted for. Greece is the only country that he knew and he loved its cruel beauty." It was a painful journey to leave all that is familiar to go to a new land with unknown hope and promise. He eventually completed the arduous journey across the bridge that separates an old familiar world from a new and frightening one, to find a place for ourselves on the other side.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this particularly thoughtful response, the student focuses on how painful it was for Nicholas to break from the familiar to pursue unknown hope and promise. The student demonstrates depth of understanding with a skillful choice of strongly linked text illustrating the difficulty of this transition.

His father's tearful words of remembrance have caused him to reflect on what coming to America has meant to him. Being one of the chorus of the millions who entered this harbor seeking a place where they would be safe and free, Nicholas is worried "that the chorus has grown faint in our ears, for the old European immigrants have passed away, taking memories with them." These new generations have forgotten what it means to not be American. Though his story is unique to his family, their odyssey is as old as the nation. They crossed the bridge between "old and new" worlds to find their safe haven.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This student demonstrates depth of understanding with an insightful analysis of the long-term effect that moving to America had on Nicholas as he reflects on what coming to America has meant to him. The student interweaves strongly linked textual evidence into the analysis to illustrate Nicholas's concern that the immigrant story is being lost on new generations.

Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

What do the narrators learn about their fathers in “My Father Sits in the Dark” and “Going to America”? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from **both** selections.

READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not based on the selections
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that does not address the question
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not reasonable
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- ☐ may incorrectly analyze or evaluate a characteristic of text based on both selections
- ☐ may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- ☐ may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence from one or both selections

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-33

They learned that both fathers have had something bad happen to them. In "My Father sits in the Dark" the narrator learns that his dad doesn't like the light. something had had happened, like a fire that had killed loved ones or his home. we know this because it says, "Dead Flames". In "Going to America" there farther was nothing like they expected. They thought he would stand out instead he was a "short, portly man". They did find out that he cared for them so much.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the idea that the authors learned that both fathers have had something bad happen to them is incorrect. The explanation and text support for "My Father Sits in the Dark" (something had happened, like a fire that had killed loved ones or his home...dead flames) further demonstrates the student's misunderstanding of the selection. The explanation and text evidence offered for "Going To America" (their father was nothing like they expected...he was a "short portly man") is not connected to the analysis provided.

The narrators learn from their father's that in the past when they were younger time was much different. In "My Father sits in the Dark" they didn't have lights when he was a boy in Europe. In "Going to America" the narrators father described the scene in his English tape recorder, and kind of tells them about his past. They both talk about their past so their sons can know how life was back then.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

Here the student answers a different question than the one asked. The student offers an analysis explaining what the narrators learn from their fathers (The narrators learn from their fathers that in the past when they were younger time was much different) rather than what they learn about their fathers.

OFTEN TIMES THE FATHER MAY SEEM WEIRD, BUT HE USUALLY HAS REASONS HE ACTS THE WAY HE DOES, IN THE FIRST STORY THE AUTHOR DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHY HIS FATHER SITS IN THE DARK BUT HE THEN UNDERSTANDS AFTER HE CATCHES HIMSELF DOING THE SAME THING.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

This response is insufficient because the student makes no attempt to answer the question for “Going to America.” The first sentence (Often times the father may seem weird, but he usually has reasons he acts the way he does) is too vague to be considered an analysis for either selection. The remainder of the response refers only to “My Father Sits in the Dark.”

The narrators learn that their fathers wanted what was best for their families. They were both very reflective of their childhood in Europe, but wanted their children to have a better life.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

This response is too general to determine whether it is reasonable for either selection.

READING RUBRIC

LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections but supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence from one or both selections
- ☐ may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections but may offer textual support from only one selection or may offer no textual support at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence from one or both selections
- ☐ may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections but may offer textual support from only one selection or may offer no textual support at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable idea, analysis, or evaluation based on both selections and may provide textual evidence from both selections, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea, analysis, or evaluation
- ☐ may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections but may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, make a prediction, or provide an analysis or evaluation based on only one selection
- ☐ may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections without drawing a conclusion, offering an interpretation, making a prediction, or providing an analysis or evaluation

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague or may indicate that the student has difficulty making connections across selections.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-37

The narrators learned about their fathers that it wasn't easy to forget of what they have gone through in life. For example, Pop wasn't used to have the light on which they didn't have in Europe. For another example, Patero moved to America because he was suffering in Greece and had to move in order for him to be safe and free. That's true, both fathers had suffered in their past because they didn't have what they wanted and had to move to another country to get what they wanted, which they have now.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

Here the student offers two ideas (The narrators learned about their fathers that it wasn't easy to forget what they have gone through in life; both fathers had suffered in their past because they didn't have what they wanted and had to move to another country...). Only general text reference is offered for the idea that both fathers have suffered (Pop wasn't used to have the light on which they didn't have in Europe; Patero moved to America because he was suffering in Greece and had to move...to be safe and free). The idea that it was not easy for them to forget what they had gone through is not supported.

In "My Father Sits in the Dark" the son learns that his father has a great passion of remembrance of his life in Europe. In paragraph 52 it says, "My heart skips a beat and I catch my breath happily. I began to think I understand I remember the stories of his boyhood in Austria. In "Going to America" the son learns how much love his father has for him. In paragraph 14 the father says, "First time I see my son. Oh my tears! My heart broke that minute."

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

This student offers a separate reasonable analysis for each selection (In "My Father Sits in the Dark" the son learns that his father has a great passion of remembrance of his life in Europe; In "Going to America" the son learns how much love his father has for him). Direct textual evidence is provided for "Going to America," but the text offered for "My Father Sits in the Dark" (My heart skips a beat...I began to think I understand. I remember the stories of his boyhood in Austria) is only weakly connected to the analysis.

The narrator from "My Father Sits in the Dark" learns that his father is not unwell because he sits in the dark, that's just how he's always been. "You just sit in the dark because you like it". In "Going to America" Nicholas learns that his father wasn't exactly what he expected. "I expected him to tower over the rest... so I paid no attention to a short, portly man..". Nicholas learns that his father is an emotional, loving man.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student offers the reasonable ideas that the first narrator learns that his father is not unwell because he sits in the dark, while Nicholas learns that his father was not exactly what he expected and is an emotional, loving man. However, the student does not provide direct textual evidence for all the ideas that are offered.

The narrator in "My Father Sits in the Dark" learns that his father just sits in the dark because he likes it and that there is never anything wrong. "You mean there is nothing wrong? You just sit in the dark because you like it, Pop?" The narrator in "Going to America" learned that his father was a very emotional man. "First time I see my son. Oh, my tears! My heart broke that minute."

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student offers a reasonable analysis supported by direct textual evidence for "Going to America." However, the attempt at analysis provided for "My Father Sits in the Dark" (the narrator...learns that his father just sits in the dark because he likes it and that there is never anything wrong) is merely a paraphrase of the same text offered as support (You mean there is nothing wrong? You just sit in the dark because you like it, Pop?).

**READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3**

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ must draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections
- ☐ must offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections

In addition, sufficient responses indicate that the student is able to make clear and specific connections across selections.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-41

The fathers remember something of the past. In "My father Sits in the Dark", the father sheds light on why he sits in the dark. "I can't get used to lights. We didn't have lights when I was a boy in Europe." In "Going to America", the narrator learns about how the father felt when he first saw him. "I was on the dock watching the boat," he began slowly. "Olga recognize me. And I wave to them. Prokopi Koulisis, he pick Nikola up and show him to me from the deck. First time I see my son. Oh, my tears! My heart broke that minute."

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

Here the student provides a reasonable but general analysis that the sons learn that the fathers remember something of the past. For both selections, the idea is clarified (the father sheds light on why he sits in the dark; the narrator learns about how the father felt when he first saw him) and supported with direct textual evidence (I can't get used to the lights. We didn't have lights when I was a boy in Europe; First time I see my son. Oh my tears! My heart broke that minute).

Both boys in the stories learn that their fathers are different than what they thought. In *My Father Sits in the Dark* the boy thinks something is wrong with his dad. He finds out his dad likes the dark because it reminds him of his childhood. He says "I can't get used to the light, we didn't have light's back in Europ." In *Going to America* the boy expects his dad to be a huge man, he says "I expected him to tower over the rest like a colossus." His father was really the short man in a stylish hat and a chesterfield. The boy realizes his father was different than he thought.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the reasonable analysis that both boys learn that their fathers are different than what they thought is further explained and supported by a combination of paraphrase (the boy thinks something is wrong...finds out his dad likes the dark; his father was really the short man in a stylish hat and chesterfield) and direct quotations (I can't get used to the light; I expected him to tower over the rest like a colossus).

The narrator in "My father Sits in the Dark" learns that his father "sits in the dark" to remember "his boyhood in Austria" and to think about "nothing special." This act is comforting and part of his life. In "Going to America" the narrator learns how much meeting him means to his father. "First time I see my son. Oh, my tears!" This was one of the most emotional moments in his life, while telling the story he has to "stop" because he's "going to cry." These events were very different but they both let each man's son see his true heart and feelings.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student presents an idea that both sons learn their father's true heart and feelings. The student combines paraphrase (his father sits in the dark to remember his boyhood in Austria; while telling the story he has to stop because he's going to cry) and further explanation (This act is comforting and part of his life; This was one of the most emotional moments of his life) to clarify and support the idea.

In "My Father Sits in the Dark" the narrator learns to understand the puzzling behavior of his father. For example, as the father states, "It's just restful... I can't think with the light on." every time the son asked him why he sat motionless in the dark every night. On the other hand, "Going to America" Nicholas learned that his father left Greece to end the suffering and adversity he faced. When the father tossed his "fez" in the ocean he "felt like a free man for the first time in his life." Nicholas experience helped him reflect on the meaning of immigration and how many refugees left their lands to "seek a place where they would be safe and free".

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student provides a separate analysis for each selection. For "My Father Sits in the Dark" the student offers the reasonable idea that the son learns to understand his father's puzzling behavior of sitting motionless in the dark every night. Direct textual evidence (It's just restful...I can't think with the light on) supports this idea. For "Going to America" the idea that the son learns that the reason his father left Greece was to end his suffering and adversity is supported with specific paraphrase of text (When the father tossed his fez in the ocean he felt like a free man for the first time in his life).

READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful conclusion, interpretation, or prediction based on both selections and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections
- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections

In addition, exemplary responses indicate that the student is able to make meaningful connections across selections. These responses show strong evidence of the student's depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea, analysis, or evaluation.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
April 2006

RG-45

In "My Father Sits in the Dark" the son is worried about his father's peculiar behavior of staying up late and sitting in the dark alone. At first the son thinks that something could be wrong but later learns that his father sits in the dark because "he didn't have lights when he was a boy in Europe" so darkness now is somewhat of a solace to him. In "Going to America," the father has come to America to escape subjugation of the Turkish occupiers and to feel free, but at a price: he doesn't even know Nicholas. Nicholas learns that one of his father's happiest moments was the first time his father saw him. "First time I see my son, Oh, my tears! My heart broke that minute." When his father records "his fearful words of remembrance," he is so affected that he almost begins to cry. These two fathers were lastingly affected by their immigration: a difference being that the first father was affected physically by his dislike of lights while the second was affected emotionally by his deep love for his son!

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This student provides an insightful explanation of how the son in the first selection learns not to worry about his father's peculiar behavior of sitting in the dark alone by coming to understand that it is a solace to him, while Nicholas learns that being separated from his son was a big price his father paid to gain freedom. Strongly linked textual evidence is interwoven into the analysis to demonstrate a depth of understanding.

In the first story, he learns that he doesn't have to worry about his dad's habit of sitting alone in the dark. He rules out "money" "brooding" and "mental problems". He discovers that his father "doesn't like the light". "He can't get used to them" because "he didn't have lights as a child in Europe" and "could not think with the lights on". He learns that the dark his father's "restful" sanctuary from the harsh problems of everyday life. In "Going to America" the son knows nothing about his father until he reaches America. He expected him to "tower over the rest like a Colossus" but at that moment he learned that his father was "the stocky man on the dock" to whom he paid no attention at first. years later he learned the depth of his father's love for him at that instant "The first time I see my son, oh my tears, my heart broke that minute."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this response the student demonstrates depth of understanding with skillful use of particularly effective textual evidence to support the idea that the son in the first selection learns that he doesn't have to worry about his dad's habit of sitting alone in the dark and that Nicholas learned what his father was like both physically and emotionally.

The son learns that the cause of his father's sitting in the dark is rooted in his childhood in Austria. "We didn't have lights when I was a boy in Europe." He remembers stories of his father in the "wide-beamed Kretchma" in the dark room growing ever darker, gazing into... dead flowers. "The father uses the darkness to escape the bright hectic day-to-day rat-race and reflect on his 'restful past.'" In "Going to America" the author learns of his father's vivid memory of his son and his daughters stepping off the boat, "they start to come out, 'I hugged him, his little arms. They were so cold. My own childrens!'" He realizes he is one of millions of immigrants who enter America to find their freedom. "His tearful words of remembrance, our cries of greeting, across the water, murmuring of wonder at the sight of the statue who lifts his lamp beside the golden door."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This exemplary response shows the student's depth of understanding by interweaving particularly effective textual evidence into a thorough discussion of what each son learns about his father (The son learns that the cause of his father sitting in the dark is rooted in his childhood; the author learns of his father's vivid memory of his son and daughters stepping off the boat).

By undergoing the journey from old and familiar to new and frightening, Nicholas experiences much of what his father went through. He learns that his own story "The recollection of an immigrant who arrived at midcentury" is also his father's story and that of "millions who entered this harbor seeking a place where they would be safe and free." The son in "My Father Sits in the Dark" also comes to understand his father by understanding the lasting impact of being an immigrant. This father and son do not have the same shared experience as Nicholas and his father but when the son snaps on the kitchen light, sees how his father jerks as though struck, and hears his father say he does not like the light because they didn't have lights when he was a boy in Europe, the son begins to make the connection between his father's experience before moving to America and his behavior now. He then realizes that sitting in the dark is a comforting holdover from his father's childhood.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This insightful response focuses on what the sons learn about their fathers when they finally understand the immigrant experience. The student combines strongly linked textual evidence into the explanation of how Nicholas learns what things were like for his father by understanding his own immigrant story, while the narrator in "My Father Sits in the Dark" finally understands his father by understanding how deeply being an immigrant has impacted him.