

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In the following poem by Caribbean writer Derek Walcott, the speaker recalls a childhood experience of visiting an elderly woman storyteller. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, discuss the speaker's recollection and analyze how Walcott uses poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience.

XIV

With the frenzy of an old snake shedding its skin,
the speckled road, scored with ruts, smelling of mold,
twisted on itself and reentered the forest
Line where the dasheen¹ leaves thicken and folk stories begin.
5 Sunset would threaten us as we climbed closer
to her house up the asphalt hill road, whose yam vines
wrangled over gutters with the dark reek of moss,
the shutters closing like the eyelids of that mimosa²
called Ti-Marie; then—lucent as paper lanterns,
10 lamplight glowed through the ribs, house after house—
there was her own lamp at the black twist of the path.
There's childhood, and there's childhood's aftermath.
She began to remember at the minute of the fireflies,
to the sound of pipe water banging in kerosene tins,
15 stories she told to my brother and myself.
Her leaves were the libraries of the Caribbean.
The luck that was ours, those fragrant origins!
Her head was magnificent, Sidone. In the gully of her voice
shadows stood up and walked, her voice travels my shelves.
20 She was the lamplight in the stare of two mesmerized boys
still joined in one shadow, indivisible twins.

¹ dasheen: tropical plant with large leaves

² mimosa: tropical plant whose leaves close or droop when touched or shaken

"XIV" from MIDSUMMER by Derek Walcott. Copyright © 1984 by Derek Walcott.
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AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION 2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Form O

Question 1: Derek Walcott, "XIV"

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but in problematic cases, please consult your table leader. The score that you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, style, and mechanics. **Reward the writers for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

9-8 These essays offer a persuasive discussion of the speaker's recollection and a persuasive analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience. The writers of these essays offer a range of interpretations; they provide a convincing discussion of the recollection and a convincing analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience. They demonstrate consistent and effective control over the elements of composition in language appropriate to the analysis of poetry. Their textual references are apt and specific. Though they may not be error-free, these essays are perceptive in their analysis and demonstrate writing that is clear and sophisticated, and in the case of a nine (9) essay, especially persuasive.

7-6 These essays offer a reasonable discussion of the speaker's recollection and a reasonable analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience. They are less thorough or less precise in their discussion of the recollection and Walcott's use of poetic devices. Their analysis of the relationship among the recollection, the devices, and the significance of the experience is less convincing. These essays demonstrate the writer's ability to express ideas clearly, making references to the text, although they do not exhibit the same level of effective writing as the 9-8 papers. Essays scored a seven (7) present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a six (6).

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible discussion of the speaker's recollection and a plausible analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience, but tend to be superficial in their discussion and analysis. They often rely on paraphrase, which may contain some analysis, implicit or explicit. Their discussion of the speaker's recollection or the analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices may be vague, formulaic, or minimally supported by references to the text. There may be minor misinterpretations of the poem. These writers demonstrate some control of language, but their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7-6 essays.

4-3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the poem. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant, or may ignore the speaker's recollection or the analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience. Evidence from the poem may be slight or misconstrued, or the essays may rely on paraphrase only. The writing often demonstrates a lack of control over the conventions of composition: inadequate development of ideas, accumulation of errors, or a focus that is unclear, inconsistent, or repetitive. Essays scored a three (3) may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

2-1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the writer's assertions are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the poem. These essays may contain serious errors in grammar and mechanics. They may offer a complete misreading or be unacceptably brief. Essays scored a one (1) contain little coherent discussion of the poem.

0 These essays give a response that is completely off topic or inadequate; there may be some mark or a drawing or a brief reference to the task.

-- These essays are entirely blank.

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2015 Lit Ques 1 Student Sample Essays Derek Walcott's "XIV"

Sample A

The author in "XIV" uses a variety of techniques in the poem. Most noticeably was the diction and word choice used throughout the poem. The poem has a very good use of imagery that catches the reader's attention. Line 5 through line 6 gives an example of Imagery. "Sunset would threaten us as we climbed closer to her house up the asphalt hill road. The author describes the sunset being blinding as they climb up the hill. The author even described the road they traveled on as they continue their journey

91 words

Sample B

In the poem "XIV" by Derek Walcott he talks about a childhood experience of an elderly woman telling him a story. He uses imagery to put the reader in the story. He does by giving extensive detail and painting a picture. He says "lucent as paper lanterns, lamplight glowed through the ribs", also "yam vine wrangled over gutters with the dark reek of moss."

Walcott also uses similies to give the reader a better feel for the recollecting childhood memory. He says "The shutters closing like eyelids of that mimosa". He also uses personification by saying "smelling of mold". Walcott uses one more literary device, he uses metaphors like "Her leaves were the libraries of the Caribbean". "Her voice travels my shelves", and "She was the lamplight in the stare of two mesmerized boys still joined in one shadow, indivisible twins".

141 words

Sample C

In the poem "XIV" by Derek Walcott, he descriptively recalls his experience of his encounter with an elderly woman storyteller. This experience must have been significant to the point where he remembers exactly what occurred. The speaker's recollection is vivid and includes a lot imagery to depict what happened with his experience with the story teller. The significance of the experience is the fact that until his encounter with the storyteller, he didn't really take in the beauty of nature and the caribbean. This encounter opened his eyes to all of his surroundings and nature.

In this poem, Walcott doesn't use rhyming but it flows pretty nicely throughout the reading. I think this poem is written in free verse. This childhood experience must have been dramatic and outstanding for him to remembering details like this. Just like the

elderly storyteller, he makes a pretty good one too. In a way, the storyteller influenced Walcott to tell his story.

The way Walcott writes this poem alludes to the exact experience. It is almost as if it was happening now rather than the past. Walcott describes it vividly almost as if you were there when this experience occurred. The significance of the experience is that he finally appreciate his surroundings and the beauty of nature. This experience probably resembles home whenever he thinks of it. This experience will always be a part of him.

231 words

Sample D

Caribbean writer Derek Walcott wrote "XIV" to simply express the emotions derived from a past time memory of visiting an elderly woman storyteller. This poem immediately exemplifies the potent moments of such an experience that even the reader becomes drawn in. Together, both the reader and writer are able to develop such an image of childhood due to Walcott's presence of imagery, poetic devices, and influential organization.

The imagery of this poem is as vivid as "an old snake shedding its skin" (line 1). The descriptions themselves paint a mental picture as seen when "the dasheen leaves thicken and folk stories begin" (line 4). The "lamplight glowed through the ribs" even allows for such imagination to interpret. His use of such descriptive words makes it only easier to become a part of the experience. His words put you in a place at a certain time such as "the minute of the fireflies, to the sound of the pipe water banging in kerosene tins" (lines 13-14). However, these examples of imagery would not be complete without poetic devices.

Walcott effectively uses several examples of poetic devices to portray an even greater sense of childhood. Immediately, line 2 phrases alliteration in the terms of "speckled ..., scored ..., and smelling" to emphasize the passage taken to the storyteller's world. On top of that, personification is prevalent just as it would be in a childhood story. In the beginning, "the sunset would threaten us (line 5) while at the end "her voice shadows stood up and walked" (line 18-19). Then to add more, both a simile, "shutters closing like eyelids of that mimosa" (line 8) and a metaphor, "she was the lamplight in the stare of the mesmerized boys" (line 20) give the reader a complete comparison of both the storyteller's home and herself. Due to the immense amount of description and poetic devices the speaker allows for the reader to join the journey.

On the other hand, this journey wouldn't be visible to read if it were not for the way Walcott structured and organized his poetry. The initial part of the poem expresses the descriptive nature of the journey or path taken to reach the storyteller. The lines 9 and 10 place a hyphen "-" to stress a pause or even importance of that specific part. On a side note, they could easily be interpreted as the random pauses that children tend to give to observe the surroundings of an unfamiliar area. Then to follow, line 13 is where the storyteller herself comes to light as her own words and image were described in just the right context.

Together as a whole, Walcott successfully combines his usage of imagery, poetic devices, and organization to construct a piece of literature that fully engrosses the reader. The speaker and reader are able to take a journey through their childhood to all the surroundings of familiarity and imagination we tend to leave behind calculato.

489 words

Sample E

Childhood is a time of innocence and wonder, so to many, childhood memories are mystical. Such is the case in Derek Walcott's poem "XIV," in which the speaker recalls a childhood visit to the home of an elderly storyteller. Through his use of vivid imagery and personification, Walcott conveys the significance of the speaker's visit to the old woman's home.

The speaker in Walcott's poem recalls an evening in his childhood when he and his brother climbed a hill to visit an old storytelling woman. The two boys climbed the hill at dusk, just as the sun was setting and people were closing their shutters for the night. When the boys reached the storyteller's house, she began telling them stories when the fireflies appeared. The woman's wisdom and skill at storytelling mesmerized the two boys, and her stories seemed to come alive.

The visit to the old storyteller's house clearly made an important impression on the speaker. to indicate the importance of the experience, Walcott uses vivid imagery to describe the scene in close detail. for example, the poem begins by saying "with the frenzy of an old snake shedding its skin, the speckled road, scored with ruts, smelling of mold ...". This vivid description of the road allows the readers to form a clear mental image of the boys' journey to the storyteller's house, and the attention to each detail indicates the importance of the visit. It is such an important trip that it warrants attention to the road upon which the boys traveled. Furthermore, the road is described as old, and compared to an old snake shedding its skin. This adds a sense of ancientness,, wisdom and closeness to nature, all of which contribute to a sort of mysticism and awe in the mood of the poem.

Furthermore, Walcott uses personification to show the elderly woman's skill at storytelling. The speaker says, "In the gully of her voice shadows stood up and walked." The storyteller's skill was such that when she told stories, she brought them to life so well that even the inanimate shadows seemed to come alive.

In Derek Walcott's poem "XIV," the speaker's visit to the home of an old storytelling woman left an impression on him. Through the use of vivid imagery, Walcott conveys both the importance of the visit and a sense of the ancient wisdom possessed by the old woman. Furthermore, through his use of personification, Walcott conveys the old storyteller's wisdom and skill through the life she brings to her stories. It is no surprise then that this is a vivid and important childhood memory to the speaker as he experienced the mysticism of ancient things, nature, and wisdom.

Sample F

Stories have an odd power over humans. they have the power to fascinate, intrigue, terrify, and even bore. But even more so, Storytellers hold a great deal of power. In his Poem, "XIV", writer Derek Walcott recalls a creepy, mysterious, and yet fascinating encounter with a storyteller, conveying that she held a great deal of power in her ability to manipulate a story. Walcott uses dark imagery, metaphors for power, and an admiring tone to communicate the storyteller's power.

Walcott portrays the encounter with the storyteller in a very creepy and mysterious way. In the first sentence he refers to the road as moving "with the frenzy of an old snake shedding its skin" and as "smelling of mold," to create a dark image. Furthermore, he refers to the "dark reek of moss" on the road. These creepy images and descriptions of putrid scents suggest there is something sinister about the encounter with the storyteller and with the story teller herself. This sinister quality adds to the aura of power that the storyteller seems to hold. Additionally, the storyteller lives at the end of "the black twist of [a] path," which is yet another creepy image that communicates that there is something dark about the storyteller, and conveys that she holds some sort of power. The creepiness of the encounter serves to exemplify the storyteller as a mystical, and powerful person who should not be taken lightly.

Walcott also makes use of metaphor to showcase the storyteller's power. For example, he says that, "[the storyteller's] leaves were the libraries of the Carribean, "which communicates how she metaphorically holds the literary collection of the entire Carribean. Next, Walcott mentions how "shadows stood up and walked" when she told stories. This conveys her supposed ability to control something that no human can, which serves as a metaphor for ht epower she holds. Last, the storyteller is described as the "lamplight in the stare of" the speaker and his brother. While this metaphor is a departure from the dark and sinister, it still shows the power of the storyteller by illustrating the hypnotic ability she has when she tells a story. The metaphors in this poem give a context to how powerful a storyteller can be.

Throughout the poem, there is a tone of admiration for the storyteller that shows that she is revered by those who come in contact with her. For example, the speaker proclaims "the luck that was ours" at his meeting with the storyteller. The speaker feels grateful to have had the opportunity to meet with the storyteller, conveying her importance and the speaker's own admiration for her. Furthermore, the speaker compliments the storyteller by saying "her head was magnificent." The speaker is impressed with the storyteller and praises her. This tone of admiration and respect furthers the notion that she is revered and powerful.

The combination of imagery, metaphor and tone portray the encounter with the storyteller as a mix of mystery, sinistry, and intrigue. Through this encounter, the speaker

learns the power that stories and storytellers hold, and that they can be both inspiring and malevolent.

519 words

Sample G

In “childhood’s aftermath,” writer Derek Walcott reflects upon an experience of his youth in which he and his brother ventured in to the dark unknown and experience the power of storytelling. With sensory image evoking darkness unknown territories, and mystery, Walcott sets up a sense of adventure. The storyteller serves as a source of enlightenment in the dark, her stories illuminating the minds of the young boys who listen.

The first eleven lines of the poem narrate the boys’ journey to the storyteller’s house. The path “twists on itself” and vines “wrangle over gutter.” The hanging leaves are thick and the path is riddled with odors of mold and moss. With the setting sun in the background, the imagery of the environment lends a sense of mystery and even foreboding to the poem. The choice of the word “frenzy” to describe the road furthers the feeling of danger.

When the boys find themselves at the storyteller’s home, the tone of adventure and fascination remains, but the imagery shifts to suggest light and comfort. The boys are led to her house in the “black twist of the path” by the light of her lamp. The old woman begins telling stories as the fireflies alight. In these images, light functions to give a sense of guidance, illumination, and safety in the dark. The sound imagery also lends a feeling of security: the “sound of pipe water banging in kerosene tins” is a distinct noise found in a human home, a stark contrast to the mysterious, jungle-like road that leads to the house.

The happenings in the storyteller’s house provide a sense of the mystical as well as the comfortable. The literal illumination leads the boys to a safe place, but the storytelling provides a mental illumination that seems to transcend the physical space. The speaker recalls that “shadows stood up and walked” when the old woman spoke, that she herself became the lamplight, that in this hypnotic experience he and his brother were joined in one “indivisible” shadow. The hyperbolic statement that the storyteller held “the libraries of the Carribean” furthers the idea that the experience transcends the space that the three people inhabit.

In Derek Walcott’s “XIV,” the narrative is dictated by imagery and sensory detail. The twisting roads, the unpleasant smells, and setting sun create a mood of foreboding and mystery. Images of light and sounds of home serve to create a sense of comfort as the boys arrive at the storyteller’s house. The end of the poem finds the boys venturing into the fascinating unknown once more, within the woman’s house, illuminated and captivated by the stories she tells. The significance of the experience is felt by readers because of the sense of adventure and journey.

457 words

Sample H

In Derek Walcott's poem, "XIV" the speaker recalls a childhood experience he endured which revolved around him and his brother visiting a local storyteller. In the poem, nature is a motif, and the recurrence of this idea helps to explain the speaker's mental and spiritual journey. Due to the tone of the passage, it is clear that the speaker remembers his childhood experiences with the storyteller fondly, and still believes she is magical to this day.

The speaker uses setting to help paint a picture for the reader of what it was like to grow up in an seemingly suburban or rural environment, that is by no means well-kept, or overly modern. The environment is personified in the first 3 lines of the poem as the speaker depicts the road as having the qualities of "The frenzy of an old snake shedding its skin,/the speckled road, scored with nuts, smelling of mold,/twisted on itself and reentered the forest" (1-3). The diction of "frenzy," "speckled," "huts," and "mold" vividly describe the road, which is not nicely paved, but instead flawed and uneven. The road, although weaving into in out of the forest, is contrasted to the nature. The forest is depicted as being voluptuous and luscious, where "the dasheen leaves thicken" (line 3). The force of nature is highlighted by the speaker's apparent appreciation for it as it is the place where "folk stories begin" (3), but also because it is more powerful than humans and society; nature is full of the unknown, just like the storyteller's stories themselves.

As the speaker continues to describe his journey, he notes that the "yam vines/wrangled over gutters with the dark reek of moss" (6-7). Again, nature is depicted as a force that weaves its way into our lives and overtakes things. The speaker even uses a simile to depict the "closing" of the "shutters" like "the eyelids of that mimosa" (8). It is interesting that the speaker dedicates so much time to his journey to the storyteller with her "own lamp at the black twist of the path" (11), as this is just the buildup to the actual stories that had such a large impact on his life.

Before the speaker begins to relay the story he almost gives a disclaimer: "There's childhood, and there's childhood's aftermath" (12). This statement stands on its own line, and is the only sentence in the poem's entirety that does not have enjambment. This is Walcott's deliberate way of warning the speaker that his appreciation for the stories, although always there, matured as he aged; the way in which he interpreted them as a child differed from his understandings later in life. The speaker then goes into a description of the setting which has "fireflies" and "kerosene tins" (13,14). The use of the word fireflies following the warning about childhood reinforces the idea that at the time the speaker noticed fireflies (which are usually associated with children, as most are fascinated by them), and the lamp that the speaker used as a signal earlier in the poem to find the storyteller at the end of the "black twist of the path" (11). The lamp, for the speaker, is

associated with safety as he was able to safely find the storyteller and escape the scary, dark forest.

The speaker only dedicates the last 4 lines of the poem to the actual explaining of the power of the storyteller's words. This does not come as a surprise as children are often very perceptive of their environments (if they are meaningful and have something interesting about them--hence, the forest/nature itself clearly had a large impact on the speaker's life). The speaker uses a metaphor to describe the speaker, as he compares her to a plant in line 16 ("Her leaves were the libraries of the Carribbean"). The speaker's admiration extends as he describes how the storyteller is able to rise above the shadows and produce life and light, her words so powerful that "shadows stood up and walked" (19). The idea of light, first from the "lamplight glowed through the ribs, house after house" (10), [that] to the kerosene tines, the light of the fireflies, finally becomes so powerful as the speaker states that the storyteller was the "lamplight" (20), shining above all.

714 words

Sample I

In his poem "XIV," Derek Walcott paints a vivid picture of a young boy travelling to listen to a storyteller, and suggests the profound impact that the experience has on the boy's life as he grows up. Through the use of detailed descriptions, mood, and figurative language, Walcott explains the mystical, awe-inspiring nature of the scene. Through further metaphors and descriptions, he hints at the speaker's continued memorization and memory of the experience.

The first half of the poem describes the journey that the speaker and his brother took to get to the storyteller's house. Walcott effectively sets the mood of the setting, even in the first sentence: "With the frenzy of an old snake shedding its skin, / the speckled road, scored with ruts, smelling of mold, / twisted on itself and reentered the forest / where the dasheen leaves thicken and folk stories begin" (1-4). The comparison of the winding road to a snake gives the reader a sense of the wild feeling of the place and its natural mysticism. It also conveys hidden danger, which is reinforced in the line, "Sunset would threaten us as we climber closer" (5). The personification of sunset adds to the mysterious and sometimes threatening tone. The setting is a natural one, potentially dangerous for the two young boys, but this only adds to the weight of the experience for the speaker and its depth in his memory.

IN the second half of the poem, the speaker describes the actual experience of listening to the woman, Sidone, tell her stories. Walcott writes, "Her leaves were the libraries of the Caribbean" (16), utilizing the metaphor to explain the extent of her stories and their power for the boys. Based on this statement, it can be presumed that the boys had little to no access to actual libraries, and therefore listening to Sidone was a form of gaining knowledge as well as a mode of enjoyment. The full weight of the experience is suggested in the final two lines of the poem: "She was the lamplight in the stare of two mesmerized

boys / still joined in one shadow, indivisible twins” (20-21). The storyteller is compared to lamplight, to an illuminating spot of light and knowledge in the darkness, and the boys together are rapt listeners, further joined together by their shared wonder.

Additionally, throughout the poem, the speaker suggests the profound impact that the experience has had on his memories and the way in which it still affects him today: “...lucent as paper lanterns, / lamplight glowed through the ribs, house after house -- / there was her own lamp at the black twist of the path. / There’s childhood, and there’s childhood’s aftermath” (9-12). The speaker compares the lit houses with closed shutters to childhood, a warm but unknowing time; however, he compares the storyteller’s house to the aftermath of childhood. Not only does this strengthen the idea that the stories heard there continued to impact him after childhood, but the description of the “black twist” also adds an almost sinister tone, a mention of the unknown. Towards the end of the piece he also says, “In the gully of her voice / shadows stood up and walked, her voice travels my shelves” (18-19). This statement suggests that in the books he now reads, he hears echoes of her voice and her stories, which impacted him so deeply as a child and will never leave his memory.

Walcott utilizes extremely detailed depictions of the speaker’s childhood life and his journey to listen to the storyteller to provide readers with a sense of the awe and wonder the speaker felt as a child and to explain how it has continued to affect him and follow him throughout his life.

625 words

Sample A	1
Sample B	2
Sample C	3
Sample D	4
Sample E	5
Sample F	6
Sample G	7
Sample H	8
Sample I	9

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following excerpt is from the opening of *The Beet Queen*, a 1986 novel by Louise Erdrich. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children. You may wish to consider such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view.

Line
5
10
15
20
25
30
35

Long before they planted beets in Argus and built the highways, there was a railroad. Along the track, which crossed the Dakota-Minnesota border and stretched on to Minneapolis, everything that made the town arrived. All that diminished the town departed by that route, too. On a cold spring morning in 1932 the train brought both an addition and a subtraction. They came by freight. By the time they reached Argus their lips were violet and their feet were so numb that when they jumped out of the boxcar, they stumbled and scraped their palms and knees through the cinders.

The boy was a tall fourteen, hunched with his sudden growth and very pale. His mouth was sweetly curved, his skin fine and girlish. His sister was only eleven years old, but already she was so short and ordinary that it was obvious she would be this way all her life. Her name was square and practical as the rest of her. Mary. She brushed her coat off and stood in the watery wind. Between the buildings there was only more bare horizon for her to see, and from time to time men crossing it. Wheat was the big crop then, and the topsoil was so newly tilled that it hadn't all blown off yet, the way it had in Kansas. In fact, times were generally much better in eastern North Dakota than in most places, which is why Karl and Mary Adare had come there on the train. Their mother's sister, Fritzie, lived on the eastern edge of town. She ran a butcher shop with her husband.

The two Adares put their hands up their sleeves and started walking. Once they began to move they felt warmer, although they'd been traveling all night and the chill had reached deep. They walked east, down the dirt and planking of the broad main street, reading the signs on each false-front clapboard store they passed, even reading the gilt letters in the window of the brick bank. None of these places

was a butcher shop. Abruptly, the stores stopped, and a string of houses, weathered gray or peeling gray paint, with dogs tied to their porch railings, began.

Small trees were planted in the yards of a few of these houses, and one tree, weak, a scratch of light against the gray of everything else, tossed in a film of blossoms. Mary trudged solidly forward, hardly glancing at it, but Karl stopped. The tree drew him with its delicate perfume. His cheeks went pink, he stretched his arms out like a sleepwalker, and in one long transfixed motion he floated to the tree and buried his face in the white petals.

Turning to look for Karl, Mary was frightened by how far back he had fallen and how still he was, his face pressed in the flowers. She shouted, but he did not seem to hear her and only stood, strange and stock-still among the branches. He did not move even when the dog in the yard lunged against its rope and bawled. He did not notice when the door to the house opened and a woman scrambled out. She shouted at Karl too, but he paid her no mind and so she untied her dog. Large and anxious, it flew forward in great bounds. And then, either to protect himself or to seize the blooms, Karl reached out and tore a branch from the tree.

It was such a large branch, from such a small tree, that blight would attack the scar where it was pulled off. The leaves would fall away later on that summer and the sap would sink into the roots. The next spring, when Mary passed it on some errand, she saw that it bore no blossoms and remembered how, when the dog jumped for Karl, he struck out with the branch and the petals dropped around the dog's fierce outstretched body in a sudden snow. Then he yelled, "Run!" and Mary ran east, toward Aunt Fritzie. But Karl ran back to the boxcar and the train.

"The Branch," from the book *THE BEET QUEEN* by Louise Erdrich. Copyright © 1986 by Louise Erdrich. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Form O

Question 2: Louise Erdrich, *The Beet Queen*

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but in problematic cases, please consult your table leader. The score that you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, style, and mechanics. **Reward the writers for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

9-8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children through such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view. The writers make a strong case for their interpretation of the impact of the environment on the two children. They may consider a variety of literary devices, and they engage the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear and effectively organized. Essays scored a nine (9) reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an eight (8).

7-6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children. The writers provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than 9-8 essays, the writers present their ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Essays scored a seven (7) present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a six (6).

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but tend to be superficial or thin in their analysis of how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children through such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view. While containing some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the analysis of the impact of the environment or the use of literary devices may be slight, and support from the passage may tend toward summary or paraphrase. While these writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7-6 essays.

4-3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; the writers may ignore the impact of the environment on the two children or the use of literary devices. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Essays scored a three (3) may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

2-1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the writer's ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a one (1) contain little coherent discussion of the passage.

0 These essays give a response that is completely off topic or inadequate; there may be some mark or a drawing or a brief reference to the task.

-- These essays are entirely blank.

Version 1.0

2015 Question 2 Samples

Sample D

In what ways can the environment have completely different impacts on two children? In "The Beet Queen" by Louise Erdrich, tone imagery and point of view are implanted to illuminate the different impacts the different impacts had on Karl and Mary.

41 words

Sample H

The environment during this story was very country like. In the border of Dakota and Minnesota they seemed to be near a wheat field so this does impact how you live. And as the way the story ended the two kids felt differently about living there. Mary seemed to like that type of environment but Karl seemed to not. At the end of the story it said Karl came back east towards the boxcar and train symbolizing that he was trying to get out of there.

The imagery displayed through the story was the setting. All the descriptive words used to give me that warm feel. This urban feel will show how Karl is even more adept to it.

Mary always seemed to be concerned with Karl's safety. Checking to see if he's close behind her if he's still ok. She was a very caring person. As Karl was very strong He stood up to that dog and got them out of their sticky situation.

168 words

Sample A

The novel "The Beet Queen" is a story that is impacted by the environment. What is impacted however is of two children, Mary and Karl. Erdrich, the author depicts the impact through selection of detail, point of view, and tone. The literary devices help Louise Erdrich create a story of the two children shaped by the environment.

The first literary device used, selection of detail created descriptive occurrences for the characters. Lines 41-49 mention Karl's love toward the environment. In that part of the passage they find a __-tree of no importance, but with beautiful petals. The passage says how Karl "floated to the tree and buried his face in the white petals. This shows how the tree as the environment impacted Karl in which he buried his face in the petals.

For point of view is mostly told by Mary. Farther in the story a woman sends her dog after Karl and he tears a branch off. This impacts Mary because she is witnessing Karl get attacked over a tree which impacts their safety from the dog.

Tone in the story was also another factor Erdrich brought in the story. Lines 38 & 39 show the author's tone as very bland and melancholy. Words such as weathered gray: and "peeling gray" show how Mary is not as impressed which is how she is impacted. Also lines 41-43 use very bland words to describe a tree Mary saw in which the impact from the environment was not major.

To sum this all together Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment of the two children. She uses this impact of the environment from literary devices such as tone, selection of detail, and point of view.

283 words

Sample F

In this excerpt from "The Beet Queen", we can see that the changes in the environment had different impacts on Karl and Mary. It appears that the story is written during the time of the Dust Bowl, and the kids moved with their aunt for that reason. Because of this, it had probably been a while since Karl had been able to see the beauty in nature. Mary, being younger, probably didn't understand the significance of nature, and what it provides, but Karl did.

When Karl sees the tree with the flowers, he is immediately drawn to them because he hasn't seen flowers in a long time. He is captivated by their beauty. The author uses the simile "he stretched out his arm like a streetwalker" to describe how he approached the tree. In this we can see how he marveled at the sight of nature's beauty. The author also uses great imagery when she talks about how Karl's "cheeks went pink". We are truly able to visualize just how in awe he is.

Mary on the other hand, doesn't understand what Karl is doing. She may be too young to remember or understand not how gorgeous and wonderful nature is. She is confused by her brother's actions. The author even states that she was "frightened". Mary is simply more simple minded and isn't concerned as much about the bigger picture.

In conclusion, Karl and Mary were affected completely different. Mary is ok with how life is now, but Karl is eager never to miss out on nature's beauty. Mary runs back to Aunt Fritzie and will be fine with being with her. In contrast, Karl is running and searching for better and will not give up until he finds it. He doesn't want to miss out on nature and life's beauty.

302 words

Sample C

In this excerpt from *The Beet Queen*, reaction to environment is the primary descriptor of the two children featured in the passage. Imagery and selection of detail provide insight to the Adares' personalities as they convey the relationship between setting and character.

The imagery in this passage serves to characterize both the children and their environment and consequently the impact of the two on each other. The second paragraph begins by describing each Adare child and foreshadow each's reaction to the new environment. Mary, who is "short and ordinary," fits in well with the gray "string of houses," while Karl's skin is "fine and girlish" and indicates his sensitive reaction to the tree with "delicate perfume." By describing the children and the setting with carefully selected, vivid imagery, the author effectively conveys the power of the environment and its capacity to affect each person differently.

By choosing to focus on Argus' gray and mundane appearance and the weak, blossoming tree, the author highlights the severity of the environment and the contrast between the two children. Louise Erdrich demonstrates Argus' lack of life and abundance of the mundane by dedicating time and description to the tree that is "a scratch of light against the gray of everything else." The tree's importance is in that it is the one symbol of life in the dying town. The children's reaction to it effectively shows the power of environment and the impact it can have. Choosing to provide a detailed description of Karl's reaction to the tree, the author points out the contrast between Karl and Mary and presents the impact of environment as relevant on personality.

By describing the Adares' personality through visuals and then by using imagery to characterize Argus, the author presents a link between the two and carefully selects details to focus on in order to present an environment that speaks in contrasting ways to contrasting personalities.

316 words

Sample G

In the excerpt from *The Beet Queen*, two children are impacted very differently by the nature of the world. Erdrich uses details, imagery, and point of view to emphasize these two children's qualities. Throughout the passage, Erdrich gives you small hints towards the children's personalities, but as you get to the final paragraph, you understand Erdrich's true meaning.

Starting with the first paragraph, Erdrich foreshadows the foreboding outcome of this work by indicating the train brought "both addition and subtraction." After a long trip, Karl and Mary Adare are introduced. With the use of imagery, we see that Karl is a "very pale" fourteen year old male with "girlish" skin. Mary, on the other hand, is eleven years old, both her appearance and her name was "square" and bland. Mary was overall monotonous. The two were shipped out east for the better economy. As the two walk through the town, Karl becomes entranced by a tree, a blossoming tree with a smell compared to a "delicate perfume." His cheeks turned "pink," which corresponds with the pink and white colors of a blossoming tree. The nature draws him closer, and nothing can pull him out of the trance. The environmental impact on Karl is that he loves the nature of things. The beauty and the empowerment of all the surroundings him pulls him in and he can't let go. When the dog comes to attack, he takes a branch of the tree and yells "Run!". "Karl ran back to the boxcar and the train." Using the detail of the branches and the imagery of Karl being mesmerized by the tree gives the reader the idea that Karl is going to explore the world and find more amazing trees, and other nature.

In contrast to Karl, Mary is very ordinary. When passing the tree "Mary trudged boldly forward, hardly glancing at it." The beauty of the blossoming tree does nothing for Mary, as she just continues to move on. The next year, when she passes the tree, and notices no blossoms, she doesn't feel melancholy at the loss of that beauty from her life. When Karl yelled, "Run!" she ran toward Aunt Fritzie. The new life out east for her was the economy, making a good life for herself, and ignoring the nature of things.

Erdrich, for this passage, used third person narrator, which as a literary technique applied to show the big picture of events. If this passage was told in the first person by Karl or Mary, the environmental impact on these kids would be invisible to the reader.

Overall, Erdrich's use of a variety of literary techniques allowed for the emphasis of both Karl and Mary's behaviors. Mary being the "addition" to the town, and Karl the "subtraction," Erdrich showed the characteristics of the two different people and how nature, and society, and the future can impact them.

482 words

Sample B

In Louise Erdich's novel, "The Beet Queen," Erdich portrays how two children are affected by the new environment where they moved to. Erdich is able to show that the environment is able to produce a confusion of feelings in the children by depicting the environment in which they live as both cold and inviting.

Erdich starts the passage by noting how an "addition and subtraction" entered the town by train, which is a nice foreshadowing of Karl leaving the town. Erdich writes that it was so cold that "their lips were violet and their feet were so numb." These images show that this environment is an uninviting one which actually hinders their abilities. Not only is the environment physically cold, but also emotionally. As Mary looks out on the town, all she could see is "more bare horizon." This diction choice of bare adds to the idea that it is quite a desolate place. The use of a third person narrator adds the emphasis of the coldness to the place. As the third person omniscient narrator describes the hardship and the effects of the cold weather and "watery wind" on Mary, there is no sense of sympathy. While most would feel sorry for the young-girl, the speaker is able to describe her misfortunes with a lack of care. As the children get farther into town, they see the weathered or peeling gray facades of the houses. These images of the dreary facades add to the idea of coldness of the town because they are so bleak. Through the use of imagery, diction, and point of view, Erdich is able to demonstrate how cold and lifeless the town is.

Erdich also is able to portray the town as an inviting place. She writes that the "topsoil...hadn't all blown off yet," and that "times were generally much better in," the town than in other places. This image of the land being more fertile here than elsewhere contrasts the idea that the environment is cold and desolate. All though cold and desolate, eastern North Dakota seems like the best place to be. The moment when Karl approaches the tree is key in understanding the impact of the environment on the two children. In the lifeless area, Karl is intoxicated with "delicate perfume," of the tree. The smell is so strong that it gives him quite the aesthetic experience. The image of his cheeks turning pink, and his arms outstretched like a sleepwalker show that he has been totally nourished by the sensory pleasure produced by the tree. The tree is one of the only inviting and pleasant parts of the environment, and the pleasure Karl gets from it is heightened by the bleakness of his surroundings. Although the town is bleak and cold, Erdich makes it seem like a good place to be.

The environment actually had different effects on Mary and Karl. When Karl watches the petals drop from the branch, he realizes that the fleetingness and short lived nature of the positive things in town are too much for him to handle. He can't stand the duality of constant desolation, and a false sense of constant joy and life, so he heads back to the train to leave the town. Mary, though, although very young, comes to terms and realizes that although it is a bad place to live due to the harshness of the environment, it is the best place to be.

Sample I

This excerpt from "The Beet Queen" by Louise Erdrich occurs during the great depression, in 1932. Mary and Karl came to North Dakota on the train to see their aunt. Erdrich's choice of third person narration and a detached tone, and bleak imagery paired with a juxtaposition between Karl and Mary, sets up a bleak beginning to a story that begins in a bleak time period in American history.

Erdrich chooses to convey this scene via third person narration and an ambivalent tone in order to convey the bleak setting of this story. "On a cold spring morning in 1932, the train brought both an addition and a subtraction." This quote outlines the majority of the passage. The third-person perspective distances the speaker and the reader in a cold manner, rather than making the speaker someone who is reflecting on their past experience. "A cold spring morning" shows how even in the spring when the sun would be shining and the grass should be green, this pleasant season is weighed down by misery. The choice to include 1932 in this introduction is to remind the reader that this time, the United States are well into the great depression: the worst economic period in US history. Personifying the train as the bringer of these children adds a factor of the clinical nature of this passage. A train is a cold metal machine, similar to the nature of this speaker. Erdrich could have chosen to say that fate brought the two children, to add a mystifying element, but instead chooses to indicate that this is a cold and unwelcoming reality. This clinical tone is further emphasized by the word choice of "an addition and a subtraction." These are very mathematical terms to describe the separation of siblings, the loss of the hope of spring, and stay of one lovely girl. This approach is meant to convey how dreary, gray, and hopeless this time period feels.

The juxtaposition between Mary and Karl is used to explain why they react the way they do to their surroundings. Mary is described as "so short and ordinary that it was obvious she would be this way all of her life." This creates an aura of hopeless resignation about Mary. That a girl at age 11 has accepted that she has stopped growing and will stay the way she is physically, emotionally and living situation. In comparison Karl is depicted as "hunched with his sudden growth", showing that he is still changing and ready to continue doing so. He is also allotted kinder words, such as "sweetly curved", "fine", and "girlish". This makes Karl a ___ blossoming flower, in comparison with Mary, who's name is as "square and practical as the rest of her." Mary and Karl's contrasting interactions with the tree encapsulate their differing personalities and rationals. "Mary trudged solidly forward, hardly glancing at it." Here Mary pays no attention to the sudden hint of hope. The word "trudge" encapsulates Mary's resolve to proceed in a dreary fashion, without minding a chance of hope. Karl is conversely, "transfixed, paying no attention to Mary, the dog, or its owner. He most likely feels a kinship with the tree, as they have both begun to grow rapidly amidst dreary surroundings. Mary and Karl's contrasting departures encapsulate their differences. Practical Mary runs to her Aunt who was the intended person that she was to stay with, and Karl runs back to the boxcar and the train. Karl's decision to run toward the train suggests that he finds the town of Argus to lack any hope. The train will keep chugging forward to

her destinations, and Karl believes that this spontaneous choice is more viable than staying in Argus. The tree's inability to bloom during the following spring concludes an extended metaphor that the branch that Karl tore away was the last bit of hope, and he took it with him.

Erdrich's choice of third-person perspective provides the reader with an overall understanding of how hopeless and bleak in a scene like this, set in 1930s America would feel. This scene is interlaced with by contrasting siblings that show how hopeful people pursue unclear dreams and realistic people drudge forth towards the gray horizons.

705 words

Sample E

In this excerpt from Louise Erdrich's *The Beet Queen*, Erdrich uses tonal shift, the imagery of a tree, and the juxtaposition of Mary and Karl to explore how the children's reactions to the environment reveal their differing perspectives and understandings.

The passage begins with straightforward description and an almost objective tone, but the tone changes when Karl sees the tree, and this shift in tone reflects the fragility of Karl in comparison to the steadiness of Mary. The beginning of this passage is essentially emotionless. Erdrich notes that the train arrived "on a cold spring morning in 1932," and describes Karl and Mary by giving their ages and physical descriptions (6). The writing is "square and practical" like Mary (18). The details are simple and factual, and it reflects the sensation of numbness that the children feel.

However, as the passage progresses, hints of emotion foreshadow the ultimate tonal shift from distant and uncaring to reverent. Erdrich notes that "once they begin to move 'they' felt warmer, although they'd been traveling all night and the chill reached deep" (31-32). Although at its surface this is another objective statement the discussion of temperature evokes the senses and the idea of feeling. The passage loses its objective, uncaring nature when Erdrich mentions the tree "weak, a scratch of light against the gray of everything else, tossed in a film of blossoms" (42-44). In this moment, Erdrich's writing is no longer "square and practical," and appropriately, "Mary trudged solidly forward: (44). In this moment, the story is no longer Mary's story. It is no longer a story of indifference. It is Karl's story, and it is a story of being enraptured, of being drawn to the tree and to the story "like a streetwalker" (47).

Furthermore, the story itself serves as a reflection of Karl and as a reflection of beauty in times of hardship. Like Karl, whose skin is "very pale...his skin fine and girlish," the tree is "weak" and has "white petals" (14,15,42,49). Moreover, the tree is the only light "against the gray of everything else" just as Karl is emotional, and taken by the tree's beauty, while Mary is stoic and the woman who unties her dog and lets it charge Karl is only frustrated and indifferent towards the danger in which she places Karl by freeing the dog (43). The symbol of the tree becomes more

complicated and more developed when Erdrich notes that on the branch which Karl tears from the tree “the leaves would fall away” showing that the beauty and power of the tree is fragile (65). By showing the tree’s weakness, Erdrich also reveals Karl’s weakness which allows the reader to understand why Karl shouts “Run!” ; he runs back to the train; he knows that time and seasons change, and he cannot face what is to come (71).

Overall, in this passage Erdrich contrasts the objectivity of numbness with the terrible beauty of being enraptured and of finding oneself in an unexpected way. In doing so, she raises the question of whether the hero is Mary, who remains strong and steady by not feeling the beauty around her, or Karl, who must confront the interconnectedness of wonder and tragedy.

534 words

Sample D 1
Sample H 2
Sample A 3
Sample F 4
Sample C 5
Sample G 6
Sample B 7
Sample I 8
Sample E 9

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In literary works, cruelty often functions as a crucial motivation or a major social or political factor. Select a novel, play, or epic poem in which acts of cruelty are important to the theme. Then write a well-developed essay analyzing how cruelty functions in the work as a whole and what the cruelty reveals about the perpetrator and/or victim.

You may select a work from the list below or another work of equal literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Beloved
A Bend in the River
Billy Budd
Black Boy
Catch-22
Cat's Eye
The Crucible
Frankenstein
A Gesture Life
Great Expectations
Heart of Darkness
Invisible Man
The Kite Runner
The Last of the Mohicans
Lord of the Flies

Mansfield Park
Medea
The Merchant of Venice
Night
The Odyssey
Oliver Twist
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Othello
The Red Badge of Courage
The Scarlet Letter
Sister Carrie
Sophie's Choice
Tess of the d'Urbervilles
To Kill a Mockingbird
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
Wuthering Heights

STOP

END OF EXAM

THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS APPLY TO THE COVERS OF THE SECTION II BOOKLET.

- **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION AS REQUESTED ON THE FRONT AND BACK COVERS OF THE SECTION II BOOKLET.**
- **CHECK TO SEE THAT YOUR AP NUMBER LABEL APPEARS IN THE BOX ON THE COVER.**
- **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE USED THE SAME SET OF AP NUMBER LABELS ON ALL AP EXAMS YOU HAVE TAKEN THIS YEAR.**

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Form O

Question 3: Cruelty

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but in problematic cases, please consult your table leader. The score that you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, style, and mechanics. **Reward the writers for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

9-8 These essays offer a well-focused and persuasive analysis of the nature of how cruelty functions in the work as a whole and what the cruelty reveals about the perpetrator and/or the victim. Using apt and specific textual support, these essays analyze the significance of cruelty in the work. Although these essays may not be error-free, they make a strong case for their interpretation and discuss the literary work with significant insight and understanding. Essays scored a nine (9) reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an eight (8).

7-6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how cruelty functions in the work as a whole and what the cruelty reveals about the perpetrator and/or victim. These essays analyze the significance of cruelty in the work. While these papers have insight and understanding, their analysis is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific in supporting detail than that of the 9-8 essays. Essays scored a seven (7) present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a six (6).

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading, but they tend to be superficial or thinly developed in analysis. They often rely upon plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. Although the writers attempt to discuss how cruelty functions in the work as a whole and what the cruelty reveals about the perpetrator and/or victim, they may demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding of the significance of cruelty, and support from the text may be too general. While these writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7-6 essays.

4-3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of how cruelty functions in the work as a whole and what the cruelty reveals about the perpetrator and/or victim. The analysis may be partial, unsupported, or irrelevant, and the essays may reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the significance of cruelty, or they may rely on plot summary alone. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors; they may lack control over the elements of college-level composition. Essays scored a three (3) may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

2-1 Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. Often, they are unacceptably brief or incoherent in presenting their ideas. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. The writers' remarks may be presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Essays scored a one (1) contain little coherent discussion of the text.

0 These essays give a response that is completely off topic or inadequate; there may be some mark or a drawing or a brief reference to the task.

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2015 Lit Ques 3 Student Sample Essays (Cruelty)

Sample H (*Othello*)

Cruelty comes in different forms and causes death or either betrail, Friends become Foes and lies Come upon people. In *Othello*, Othello had a trusted friend who was really lying behind his and who trying to get him killed caused Othello to kill another friend and also kill the love of his life Desdemona. His friend was becoming deceitful because he simply wanted Othello's position as lieutenant. It was a form of a someone pretending to be a friend who was a foe.

Sample A (*Night*)

In the novel *Night*, there is cruelty through out the entire novel because of different beliefs, also because of different race. In my personal view cruelty would be when someone or something is being treated would be when someone or something is being treated unfair, because they don't belong with other people/group. Also cruelty can be seen through many point of views; people think cruelty is only seen when an individual is being hurt physically. There are many ways in which you can distinguish if it is or not cruelty. For example, in the novel *Night* people were forced to leave their homes because they were Jews. Their houses were taken over by the soldiers. It was not the individuals fault for being born into that society or for being Jews. After being forced out of their home, they were used as slaves. They received few resources and food; horrible food by the way. Before, being used as slaves they were lined up in a huge line of nothing but Jews. In that line they were looking for men whom were big and strong. They could not be younger than 11 or maybe 12, or old to the point where they would only be a waste of time, and food. The people whom they decided were not suitable for their needs were later killed and burned along with the rest of the Jews.

Sample J (*Beloved*)

In Toni Morrison's tour de force Beloved Sethe faces the ultimate cruelty of being a slave. This cruelty affects her actions and her way of thinking.

As a slave, Sethe is subjected to cruelties humans can hardly fathom today. This prevailing fear of cruel prevails with her even once she runs away. Once in 124 after escaping Sweet Home 28 days earlier the schoolmaster finds Sethe and comes to bring her back. When Sethe sees him she is so contorted by a fear of what will happen if she and her four children upon return to the cruel and unforgiving place of Sweet Home that she reacts animalistically. The cruelties of slavery are still fresh in her mind as she takes her four children out back where she plans to kill them in order to keep them from never having to experience the horrors she went through.

Later in the novel after Sethe has been away from the cruelty of slavery for longer it no longer affects how she thinks. When a white man, whom Sethe perceives to be the schoolmaster coming to bring her and Denver back to slavery, comes Sethe ~~no longer~~ reacts not out of fear of former cruelty, but takes actions into her own hands and moves to kill the white man herself. This shows that she does not live in fear any longer of what cruelties she could face by has instead grown out of slavery.

Sample B (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*)

Cruelty is an action that we are all affected by. There are two types of people – in this world – that are involved of affected by it : those who are damaged by it – minorities, homeless people, victims of police brutality, and victims of random acts of violence – and those who inflict it-- Communist leaders, Hitler and College Board. Through violent means, cruelty impacts society as a whole, as literature captures it, as seen in One flew over the Cuckoo's Nest. When seen through a literary lens, cruelty functions in works by revealing one's true, inner self, more often than not, being detrimental to the characters self.

Published in 1962, One flew over the Cuckoo's Nest takes place in a psychiatric ward controlled by the cruel, tyrannical, Nurse Ratched. Once admitted, our protagonist, McMurphy, enters the ward, ready to cause havoc amongst the patients in the facility. We see cruelty soon after this as McMurphy gets sent to electroshock therapy after disturbing the peace. Here, he meets Chief Bromden, a quiet, tall man that lives in Solitude, acting dumb. As revealed later on, Chief isn't deaf or dumb, but rather wise and intellectual, exposing us to the horrors of, "The Combine".

The Combine, are the forces that keep the ward in place. Nurse Ratched, being the leader, sends her "black boys", to do her dirty work, beating, abusing, and slandering the patients so that they stay in their place. McMurphy fights the oppression, showing his inner Alpha attitude towards the woman, leading to the patients breaking the fear of cruelty and living for just a bit, until the end where McMurphy gets silenced through a lobotomy. The cruelty of this book ties well with the era it was published in, the civil rights era.

From the narrators perspective, Bromden see's oppression everywhere, such as those oppressed by racism. A man then arrives, being fearless, such as Malcolm X or Marthin Luther. Yet, ultimately, the good men get silenced and killed, as the quiet observe, unaffected by the chaos.

In conclusion, cruelty shows us how Savage we can truly be. when taken into perspective, we humans only want freedom, being the cages creatures we are, yet too much freedom hurts us. Without emotion, we see Savages fighting for dominance over everyone, the cuckoo's. When put into perspective, you no longer see hatred, or cruelty. When put into perspective, we fly over the nest.

Sample I (*The Color Purple*)

In The Color Purple by Alice Walker, the main character, Celie, has been mistreated all her life. The cruelty enacted towards her however helped her change her life. The cruelty of both her father and Mr. ____, made Celie despise herself, however, along the way she met a woman who helped her figure out who she really was.

In the novel, Celie was always being mistreated by her own father. He called her names, insulted her, and told her that she was worthless. On top of that he raped her several times, and then telling Celie that he killed their babies. That cruelty made Celie truly hate herself and her father. She believed everything she was told, and would not be made to believe that she was, afterall, a human and wasn't worthless.

Celie's husband was also very cruel to her. He was constantly beating her for the smallest things. When questioned why he did that, Mr. ____ said that that was what a wife was for, to beat her and let her know her place. The amount of cruelty that she recieved

from the people around her made Celie give up, she wouldn't try to stop it. Celie became helpless when it came to dealing with men. She was afraid of all of them.

The degree of cruelty that Celie was subject to, made it clear that as a victim, she was strong. Celie did not break down, when she thought she couldn't stand it anymore. Celie did her best to continue living and make the best of it. She still talked to her husband and father. Celie didn't let their cruelty change her and make her cruel. With others, even with the ones that were cruel to her, she was kind and understanding. Celie understood that the reason why Mr. ___ beat her was because he grew up in that setting, it was something he thought was right to do, and she didn't judge him.

In Conclusion the Cruelty that was enacted upon Celie by her father, and husband made Celie hate herself. However, it did not make her change her way of being. No matter her husband did to her, Celie was understanding, and did not hate him for it. In fact she was sympathetic and was kind with him. Cruelty revealed just how kind and strong Celie was.

Sample F (*To Kill a Mockingbird*)

* Note - names may be incorrect.*

There is a cliché mothers can often be heard telling their children, that people always remember kindness. Although this may be true, often times there is a darker side to this rule. Not only people but animals have proven that no creature ever forgets pain or punishment and the emotions produced when an act of cruelty begets these unpleasanties. In the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird," such acts of cruelty help to develop a central theme that character is proven by one's ability to withstand adversity.

In this timeless novel by Harper Lee, young Scout sees first-hand the toll of racism and ignorance on the blacks of her town. Rather than treat them as human beings, Jim Crowe laws sanction the "right" of whites to basically abuse blacks how they please. This becomes evident when a young white trash girl named Mayella (?) claims a black man has raped her. Of course the allegations are false, but in the South during the era of Jim Crowe, who would stand up for a black, especially one that happened to only have one functional arm? This unforgivable act of scapegoating an honest black man (who had performed an act of kindness for the girl free of charge just recently) is written off by the town as the truth by all but Scout and her father, Atticus Finch. Although the evidence is in his favor, the people of the town would rather believe that a black man, angry at his mistreatment by the whites or perhaps just a brute by nature, had raped Mayella, rather than her father (?) as evidence suggested. Mobs came after the alleged rapist, insults were hurled just as hard as objects, and the man feared for his life. But details such as the handprint not matching the hand the one-armed black would have used and evidence of former abuse by the cruel and dishonest father convinced Atticus that the "rapist" was innocent. All of this shows that people, ignorant of the plight of their black brothers, were willing to write off the allegations as true if it meant a blackman was punished rather than a white, even if the moral character of the black was far less corrupt. This unwillingness to accept a person as innocent and determination to see that Mayella "got justice" just served to contrast the character of the black man with that of the ignorant whites and show his determination to stay moral against an endless stream of cruelty and torment.

Despite proving himself innocent and winning the case, the black is brutally murdered by a mob by the story's end. This lapse in humanity and unwillingness to accept a human being as innocent simply for the color of his skin remains today one of the greatest

examples of both human character and human cruelty in literary history. Despite the heart-wrenching end that it leads to, the unforgivable acts of the white population serve to better contrast the character of the honest and good black man and his determination to overcome adversity than a town full of his friends. This glaring difference in character and lack thereof ultimately make "To Kill A Mockingbird" the masterpiece that it is.

Harper's novel, a staple in every school history or English curriculum, reminds the people of not only the South but the world over what ignorance can lead to. However, without the acts of cruelty, inspired by such ignorance, the poignancy of "to Kill a Mockingbird" and its unforgettable theme of remaining true to one's character in the face of adversity would be lost. Through the pain and suffering of one innocent, Harper insured that for as long as "To Kill a Mockingbird" can be found on a shelf, her message to remain a moral character despite even the worst of cruel adversity or threats of punishment will long be celebrated and remembered.

Sample C (*The Great Gatsby*)

Often regarded as the best American novel of the 20th Century, The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald is a vivid tale about the poisoned moral decay that was America during the 1920's. Full of superficial characters, malicious morals, and backward opinions, cruelty functions in the novel to explicate the theme and reveal information about the affluent New York society as a whole.

The Great Gatsby opens with Nick Carraway, the novel's narrator, buying a home on the West Egg side of Long Island, New York. He lives across the bay from his cousin, Daisy Buchanan, and her husband, Tom. The Buchanans are part of the wildly affluent Long Island socialites. They own a sprawling mansion in the East Egg, horses for Tom's polo hobby, and an upscale apartment in New York. However, these benefits come with problems of their own. One afternoon, Nick joins Tom on an expedition to New York. They pick up Tom's mistress, Myrtle Wilson, on the way and end up having a party at the apartment. Tom is an arrogant bully, and he ends up punching Myrtle when they get in a fight over Daisy, breaking her nose. Tom values women as objects--he abuses both his wife and mistress. Because of the cruelty Tom demonstrates to his wife, Gatsby, who has loved Daisy for all their lives, nearly persuades her to run away with him. Tom is a foil to Gatsby--he is a malignant force while Gatsby is Daisy's escape--her way out of the relationship. Tom's cruelty towards women highlights Gatsby's kindness and gentleness. Fitzgerald employs cruelty in his novel not only to develop Tom's malicious motives, but to place Gatsby in an idyllic position.

Even though Gatsby is a far greater contender for Daisy than Tom, Daisy returns to her husband, claiming that she is too virtuous to break off their marriage. However, Nick and the reader realize that it is really only for appearances. Daisy is such a selfish, egotistic character that she would rather put herself in harm's way than to be genuinely happy. Gatsby, however, is still infatuated with Daisy. He lets her drive his new roadster back home from New York. While passing through the Valley of Ashes, Daisy hits and kills Myrtle Wilson. Gatsby promises not to tell anyone she was driving at the time because of his dedication to her. While there are crowds and police still at Wilson's Garage after the accident, George Wilson is frantically trying to find out who killed his beloved wife. Tom Buchanan steps forward and announces that Jay Gatsby killed her in his brand-new yellow car. Because of Tom's cruelty, Gatsby, the protagonist who only wanted Daisy to have a

happy life, ends up getting killed by George Wilson while swimming in his pool. Nick Carraway immediately leaves New York, disgusted with the society he has found himself in. *The Great Gatsby* not only makes use of disillusioned, selfish characters--it reeks of inhuman cruelty. Hearts are broken, dreams are thrown to the wayside, and a man considered great is killed because of the cruelty shown by Tom Buchanan, and the egotistical American society at the time as a whole.

F. Scott Fitzgerald at once employs the American dream, but also demonizes it in *The Great Gatsby*. The characters he creates from the affluent New York society are selfish, cruel, and incapable of sympathy. Gatsby, the protagonist of the novel, is killed directly through Tom Buchanan's inhumane cruelty. His dream of winning over Daisy is lost, and American society at the time is demonized. Not only does Fitzgerald employ cruelty in his novel, he employs it to reveal Gatsby's pristine morals.

Sample G (*All the Pretty Horses*)

In his novel *All the Pretty Horses*, Cormac McCarthy introduces protagonist John Grady Cole, whose moral foundation is repeatedly tested in the wild and dangerous Mexican outback. Even though Cole ultimately maintains his strict moral code's integrity, he is forced to compromise in the face of extreme hostility, both physical and mental. Through McCarthy's exploration of the effects of physical and emotional acts of cruelty, John Grady Cole has his moral foundations tested as his resiliency eventually prevails.

During his extended time in Mexico, Cole faces the painful wrath of the Mexican prison system and the unfortunate events that lead to his persecution. Cole originally embarks for Mexico to escape his parents' separation and to find a new life. However, when he meets the young Blevins, who kills a man for taking his runaway horse, Cole's fortune turns for the worse, shaking the perceptions he previously held about the world. Cole believes in kindness toward strangers and as Blevin's foolhardy and rash qualities contrast with Cole's calmness and steadiness, it becomes apparent that Cole's moral code is the dominant and resilient way of behavior. When Cole and another acquaintance, Rawlings, are unfairly placed in the awful world of a Mexican prison, Cole's morality is tested and compromises must be made. Cole is attacked by an assassin in cold blood for refusing to conform to the disturbing norms of prison gangs, and he is forced to kill the attacker. The cruelty of not only the justice system, but the Mexican prison as well, make Cole compromise on his morals in order to survive. Such cruelty pushed him to sacrifice morality for survival, a common theme in episodes of systematic hostility everywhere. Eventually, however, Cole maintains his foundation, albeit with adjustments, and prevails over the forces of hostility in his life as he restores the debts he owes and reinstates justice over the people who put him in prison.

Although Cole's humanity is obviously tested through the effects of physical cruelty, more subtlety is administered to the implications of the emotional harm Cole faces when he enters into a doomed affair with his Mexican boss' daughter. After being warned against falling in love with Alejandra, Cole still follows his emotions and begins courting her in secret, in alliance with his morality because he is a chivalrous character who does not want to deny his feelings for her. However, she eventually asks him to leave for her own good because she must maintain her own status in Mexican culture, and Cole is again faced with

painful cruelty, this time attacking his emotions. In trying to do what is best for her, despite the agony he will face, Cole stops pursuing Alejandra and sticks to his morality.

Although Cole faces cruelty in different aspects of his life, his innate human resilience is the clear victor over seemingly impossible forces of hostility. McCarthy begs questions of the reader through his character John Grady Cole: what would one do when faced with physical and emotional harm? And how does one's own moral code stand against everyday acts of cruelty?

Sample (*The Bluest Eye*)

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison presents many troubling and important ideas about the way humans interact with each other based on their differences, including age, sex, race, and other characteristics. In The Bluest Eye, cruelty functions as a tool to reveal to the reader how dangerous current societal norms are to the well-being and sense of self of those individuals who differ from what is considered acceptable in the community. Pecola Breedlove's experience with cruelty based on her appearance, her relationship with her father, and her pregnancy cause her to lose her mind at the end of the novel.

Being a very young, very dark-skinned female in her community put Pecola at a huge disadvantage from the moment she was born. She is very conscious about her appearance and associates her unattractiveness, as she perceives it, with all of the other issues she must deal with in her life. Her family life is very unstable; Cholly Breedlove, deals with issues of abandonment and his wife, Pauline Breedlove, completely derives her identity from her husband, leading to frequent physical altercations and leaving no support structure or loving arms for Pecola or her brother. She has nobody to help her sense of self or her identity; there is nobody who even really cares about her. To make matters even more tragic, in addition to understanding the lack of love, even disdain, she feels from her parents, Pecola must also deal with a society that does not love her. On one occasion, she goes into a candy store and is invisible to the clerk, an obvious commentary on Morrison's part on the fact that society ignores the needs of those who are different. A child needs to be seen and appreciated in order to become a fully-functioning adult, but Pecola never has this experience. She watches other girls who are her age, such as Maureen, a beautiful white girl who receives a lot of attention because she is deemed acceptable and ideal in the eyes of society, and cares to be like them. She believes that attaining blue eyes will solve all of her problems because that is what she has been taught. In this case, the cruelty she experiences is subtle but damaging. By seeing all of the examples of what she feels she should be, like watching Shirley Temple at the movies, Pecola becomes increasingly negative towards herself and develops a very perverted sense of herself and the world.

Not only does Pecola feel invisible, but when she has any hope of actually receiving the positive attention she needs to survive, the people around her fail to act responsibly. One day, Pecola is washing dishes, trying to contribute to her family so they will continue to supply her with even the weakest support structure, her father, Cholly, comes home and proceeds to rape Pecola. Rape is the most cruel, dehumanizing act one can perform other than murder, and it completely wrecks Pecola. After this experience with her father, she can never attain any sort of confidence or self-fulfillment. The rape reveals a lot about both Cholly and Pecola. Cholly was abandoned at a young age and struggles between being tender and being violent throughout the novel. He and Pecola both feel abandoned by their

parents, the people who are supposed to love their children unconditionally, the only people one can turn to when society turns its back. Cholly reacts to this struggle by hurting those closest to him, including both Pecola and his wife. Pecola reacts by retreating within herself and hiding from the world, accepting the cruelty dictated at her and clinging to the idea that she can stop her pain by somehow obtaining blue eyes. Within her family, the pain that all of its members feel reveals the theme that familial support is very important in the development of young people and for people whose race puts them at a disadvantage in society.

Lastly, Pecola's pregnancy reveals a great deal about how cruel society is to its outcasts and how important it is to pay attention to those who are alone. When she is raped, Pecola becomes impregnated with her father's child, and Claudia, the child narrator in *The Bluest Eye*, reveals that nobody wants the baby to live. Claudia and Freida, peers of Pecola, do want the baby to live, however, and they show great compassion towards Pecola. They plant marigold seeds and promise themselves that the growth of the marigolds would mean Pecola's baby would be healthy and make it to full term, but their attempts at combating the cruelty Pecola has faced are not successful and the baby dies. These two young girls, unaffected by society's ideas about beauty and appearance because they have strong familial support behind them, cannot affect change in Pecola's life or take away any of her suffering because the pain she feels is already too great and too constant to be changed, Morrison presents an important opportunity for the reader to examine a situation which should be prevented at all costs and ponder whether his community has standards that hurt people in even a fraction of the way Pecola has been damaged.

Toni Morrison utilizes cruelty as a tool to reveal the motives of society, the pain of outcasts, and the ways in which she wants the reader to prevent outcasts from being ignored, to prevent people like Cholly damaging their children, and to provide support and compassion to those in need before it is too late, like in Pecola's case.

Sample H	1
Sample A	2
Sample J	3
Sample B	4
Sample I	5
Sample F	6
Sample C	7
Sample G	8
Sample D	9