

2016 Lit Ques 1 (“Juggler”) Student Samples/Anchors

Essays are typed as written by students

Sample A Score 1

The speaker describes the Juggler almost as a powerful being. Like the [^]mythological God Atlas who hold the world on his shoulders & the balls represent us people. This juggler who represents a god is freely throwing us from one hand to another; we are not in control, [^]sky blue Juggler w/ five red balls... Grazing his finger ends, ...Swinging a small heaven about his ears.”

These thoughts from the speaker reveal that all things, good or bad, are not the faults of our own. In the first stanza line 3-5 (Falling...forgot), “Falling is what it loves” brings to mind the phase “falling in love”; “earth falls” = heart break; line 4 shows maturity; line 5 is death. All these occurrences in our lives is from “a sky-blue juggler w/ five red balls.” We have no say in matter of the universe or in our own lives, is the narrators point, and we are as replaceable as a broom or plate [^]is to a juggler.

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.

Sample B Score 2

In this poem, the author begins by illustrating how a juggler may perform his show. “On his toe the table is turning”, or “the broom’s balancing up on his nose.” Wilbur, the author, conveys extravagant imagery throughout his poem, allowing the reader to almost place himself at the juggler’s performance. Throughout each stanza, a perfect picture of the difficulty, balance, determination, and raw talent is painted in the reader’s mind. Delivering these attributes to his audience in a way that most can relate to, Wilbur then transitions into that of a more meaningful tone. He compares the trials (broom, plate, table, balls, etc..) of the juggler to that of the “weight” the real world brings. His tone becomes somewhat inspiring in that an individual can overcome tribulations in their lives by practicing the same qualities a juggler has and incorporating them into into their own mindset.

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Sample C Score 3

When faced with many obstacles not many could just take it and end up good. In “Juggler” the speaker uses imagery to describe the juggler as someone who can be faced with many things and still manages to balance them all out. This reveals to us that the speaker is a person that has many things going on in their life and have a hard time managing them, and when they see the juggler balance everything out they wish to be them. This is to show us that if you just put everything in order then everything in your life will soon balance itself out.

“It takes a sky-blue juggler with five red balls.” This is what the speaker believes it takes to manage your problems. The speaker probably analyzes this, this way because the sky-blue represents the calmness and peace while the balls are red and represent the problems or conflicts. When the juggler starts and the balls “cling to their courses,” he is seen as the controller at the managing. Lastly, at the end when the “juggle is tired” the “broom stands” and does not fall.

This demonstrates how the juggler has gained dominion and now everything is back in its place. This reveals to us that the speaker is one who wants this to be their case.

In conclusion, Richard Wilbur uses imagery to describe the juggler as the skillful one who can control and have domination. Through this it reveals that the speaker has many problems and wishes to have balance in their life. Everything is compacted to demonstrate how an individual can take everything in domination in their life so long they put piece by piece together. Life is an ever ending juggler.

4-3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the use of poetic elements to describe the juggler and what it reveals about the speaker. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant, or may ignore the description, what it reveals about the speaker, or Wilbur's use of poetic elements. 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.

Sample D Score 4

In Richard Wilbur's "Juggler", the speaker describes the juggler utilizing grandiose imagery and an awed and admiring tone revealing the speaker is an entertained spectator.

The speaker illustrates the juggling sensation with images of spectacular actions such as, "swinging a small heaven above his ears" in order to emphasize the amazement of the speaker. He utilizes personification to further describe the juggler's actions stating, "the balls roll around . . . Learning the ways of lightness" in order to emphasize the authority of the juggler as if he were a teacher instructing the objects how to ignore gravity. He explains, "Damn, what a show, we cry" in order to highlight the truly entertained and entertained tone which is continued in the explanation, "For him we batter our hands Who has won for once over the world's weight".

Our speaker that Wilbur portrays is most likely highly naive or simply passionate in his admiration for the juggler. His descriptions of the gymnastic athleticism of a juggler is described as a feat of man over gravity and weight, and the complex tricks of a showman are exaggerated as a "spin of worlds" capturing an almost euphoric sense of amazement. His description of the crowd as "hearts from brilliance" shaken up by "a sky-blue juggler with five red balls" represents a return to childhood or playfulness as the entertainment of the juggler "shakes their gravity", and frees them to enjoy the cheerful simplicity of the show.

4-3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the use of poetic elements to describe the juggler and what it reveals about the speaker. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant, or may ignore the description, what it reveals about the speaker, or Wilbur's use of poetic elements. 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.

Sample E Score 5

In Richard Wilbur's poem "Juggler," the general public enjoys the display the juggler shows. Through visual imagery and an awed tone, the speaker's opinion of the juggler is revealed. "Juggler" conveys the speaker's amazement at the juggler's ability to amaze the people, making their lives interesting, even for a moment.

The visual imagery illustrates the captivating work of the juggler. A fallen ball will be forgotten by the people, but "it takes a sky-blue juggler with five red balls/ To shake [their] gravity up." (6-7). A fallen ball will stay on the ground, unmoving, until someone moves it. On its own, it does not provide any particular amusement. However the juggler is able to throw the

balls up, keeping them in constant motion for the people to enjoy. Sky-blue is a light color, commonly associated with the sky. Light colors represent life and purity. Motion is also connected to life. The juggler is simply juggling, drawing people toward him; there is purity in the simplicity of his action. The sky can symbolize freedom. The juggler frees the balls from inaction and the people from monotony of their lives. The way the speaker describes the juggler and the balls as the balls “roll round / Grazing his finger ends, / Cling to their courses” (8-11), is alluring and captivating. The smooth transitions provided by the words “roll,” “wheel,” and “graze” shows the practiced movement of the juggler. It is more enjoyable than if the movements are clumsy and rough.

Throughout the poem, the speaker speaks in an awed tone of the juggler and what he does. The people cry “Damn, what a show” and “The boys stamp, and the girls / Shriek and the drum booms” (21-23) in response to the juggler’s show. They respond in excitement and lively gestures such as stamping and shrieking. And those actions are in good nature for the people have enjoyed a performance. When the performance is over and the objects are back in their original places, the speaker mentions that for the juggler the people “batter [their] hands/ [for the juggler] has won for once over the world’s weight.” (29-30). The broom the juggler uses is in dust, the table in dark, and the plate lies unmoving. He has, once again, like with the balls, brought life to these dead objects. The world’s weight can represent burden and hardship for the world the people must go through on a daily basis. The juggler is able to bring them excitement for a moment, letting them simply enjoy themselves.

The speaker is awed at the juggler’s performance and the effect it has on the people, who are momentarily broken from their lives’ monotony and troubles.

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible analysis of Wilbur’s use of poetic elements to describe the juggler and what the description reveals about the speaker, but tend to be superficial or pedestrian in their analysis of the description and of the use of poetic elements. They often rely on paraphrase, which may contain some analysis, implicit or explicit. Their analysis of the description and what it reveals or of Wilbur’s use of poetic elements 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.

Sample R Score 6

The poem “Juggler” by Richard Wilbur is a piece that narrates the precise art and experience of Juggling. By analyzing the imagery, tone, and figurative language utilized throughout the poem, the reader is able to get a better sense of Wilbur’s passionate respect of the juggler.

The vivid image painted by Richard Wilbur throughout “Juggler” helps capture the brilliance of the juggler’s act. In the second stanza, Wilbur describes the juggling balls “Grazing [the juggler’s] finger ends . . . swinging a small heaven about his ears.” By depicting the balls grazing the juggler’s hands, the reader can see how fine of an art juggling truly is. If one’s timing is just slightly off the entire delicate “grazing” motion could be disrupted. Additionally, by imagining “a small heaven” growing around the juggler, the author is suggesting that the juggler’s work is possibly divine in nature, as what he is doing brings joy to his audience. Later in the poem, the author depicts a ravenous audience enjoying the spectacle, as “boys stamp, and the girls shriek” at the sight of his act. The juggler is able to bring people to ecstasy with his talent, which shows again why Wilbur respects his so much.

The tone that Wilbur uses throughout the poem also leads the reader to respect the juggler’s craft. Wilbur speaks in a jovial, borderline childlike tone in his poem, as he even shouts “Whee” when the ball is in the air. He uses words such as “brilliant” to emphasize how amazing the

juggler's act is, while also showing his own astonishment at the event. Wilbur also paints the tone as raucous and excited, proclaiming "Damn, what a show" as the juggler balances a broom on his nose.

The author also uses figurative language to convey his own astonished nature towards the juggler's act. Wilbur describes the juggler's "[reeling] heaven in" through his act, and while this is obviously not supposed to be taken literally, it does show how amazed he is by the juggler's defiance of gravity. He continues this admiration when he claims that the juggler has "won for once over the world's weight." The author sees the juggler as victorious in his act, and believes that he has achieved a great feat by overcoming the pull of gravity.

Overall, after analyzing the poetic elements used by Richard Wilbur in his poem "Juggler," the reader can gain a newfound understanding about the speaker and his youthful admiration of the Juggler's battle against gravity.

7-6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of Wilbur's use of poetic elements to convey how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. They are less thorough or less precise in their analysis of Wilbur's description of the juggler and what it reveals about the speaker, and their analysis of Wilbur's use of poetic elements is less thorough or 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).

Sample G Score 7

The juggler, a poem by Richard Wilbur, serves to juxtapose the whimsical nature of a juggler's act with gentle self awareness and perspective of the Earth celestial qualities, ultimately revealing an enraptured and nostalgic speaker through tone, an extended metaphor, and colloquialisms that permeate throughout the stanzas.

Throughout this poem, the speaker extends a metaphor aligning the juggler's balls with the sphere of the Earth. These balls "roll round, wheel on his wheeling hands" as if he holds in his hands the "world's weight" (line 30). The balls, like planets, create "a small heaven about his ears", this metaphor juxtaposing the childlike joy of juggling with the sheer magnitude of planets in real life. Despite this sharp contrast, the speaker's enrapture with both space and the nostalgic skill of juggling highlight both phenomena in a similar light. Juggling, whilst more earthly than planets and divinity, has the ability to mesmerize and stay. It is an underrated art, holding a sense of mystery and unattainability—at least, to the nonjuggler—and a hint of magic and whimsy that is paralleled by the speaker's similar fascination with the Earth and surrounding planets. The speaker's tone is enraptured, impressed, and carefree, establishing an air of nostalgia and excitement in watching the juggler "shake [his] gravity up", a further nod to the celestial metaphor.

Like a child, the speaker regards with delight the bouncing balls and other tricks performed by the juggler, but the hint of bittersweet nostalgia found throughout the poem is further amplified by his gentle self awareness of the heaven and planets surrounding earth. The last stanza represents a shift in the tone of the poem: a recognition of the end of the spectacle and a realization of the weight that rests on not only the juggler's, but also the speaker's shoulders. At the end of the poem, the juggler becomes tired: the broom that was once balanced "upon his nose" now "stands in the dust again" and the plate "[whirling] on the tip of the broom" now "lies flat on the table." With this, the speaker concludes his energetic excitement and corresponding tone, and suspends his childlike colloquialisms—such as "Whee" (line 7) and "Damn, what a show, we cry," (line 21)—succumbing once more to the "daily dark" of adult life. However, the

speaker ultimately thanks the juggler for his performance, commending him for his ability to postpone daily routine and responsibility, and ignite once more a nostalgic flame in his heart.

7-6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of Wilbur's use of poetic elements to convey how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. They are less thorough or less precise in their analysis of Wilbur's description of the juggler and what it reveals about the speaker, and their analysis of Wilbur's use of poetic elements is less thorough or 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).

Sample H Score 8

Life and the world—the fixed terrarium in which it resides are governed by restrictive laws—scientific, social, legislative. Oftentimes humanity, in its untamable and bright-eyed mindset, seeks escape from such detaining, limiting facts of life. In Richard Wilbur's descriptive poem "Juggler" he describes the juggling clown as the savior of reality-enslaved people (including himself), delivering them to a world in which mundane life becomes free and weightless through the kinesthetic imagery of the juggling balls as a reference to the feeling of freedom the crowd experiences, the personification of the balls as able to learn a new mode of motion and onomatopoeia to describe the noise and compacted passion of the crowd, all delivered through an appreciative and praising tone toward the juggler, revealing the speaker's desire to escape reality.

First, Wilbur employs kinesthetic imagery as he describes the lofty, weightless motion of the balls as something experienced by the audience—as if guided as well by the juggler's expert hands. He conveys motion as he describes: "the balls roll round, wheel on his wheeling hands, learning the ways of lightness" (Wilbur 8-9). As one view the juggling act and the floating balls, one may imagine experiencing the same sensation of floating freely and escaping reality. Wilbur writes of this motion created by the juggler vividly and longingly, revealing his desire to be swept away by the performer, avoiding the responsibilities of "the real world" for the duration of the show.

Additionally Wilbur personifies the balls as objects capable of learning and sensations, extending the spirit of the crowd (along with himself) as objects the juggler throws, as well as uses onomatopoeia to describe the crowd's enthralled reactions. The speaker portrays the juggler as a teacher, instructing his balls as well as his audience to abandon the rigid principles which govern life in favor of a free floating experience. The balls are "learning the ways of lightness" (Wilbur), personified as pupils unfamiliar with escaping the rational world, reflecting the novelty of the experience of lighthearted fun to the speaker. In response to the juggler liberating them, the balls proclaim, "Whee" (Wilbur 7), "the boys stamp, and the girls shriek, and the drum booms" (Wilbur 22-23). Utilizing polysyndeton, the speaker emphasizes the wall of sound and immense emotion which the crowd experiences, revealing further his willingness to succumb to the mob mentality praising the juggler and his offering of an escape.

Throughout, Wilbur speaks in an admiring, respectful tone towards the juggler as a messiah for those detained by the lead boots of daily working life. He describes the juggler as manipulating heaven and earth, with "heaven about his ears" (Wilbur 12). Furthermore, he employs a positively connoted invective: "Damn, what show, we cry" (Wilbur 21), in order to convey the intense admiration for the juggler and his performance. The speaker's passionately positive, praising tone reveals his gratitude for the juggler's provision of an experience deviating from dull reality.

In conclusion, the speaker conveys his deep admiration of the juggler as one who delivers the audience to a universe in which reality is long gone through the kinesthetic imagery of the balls

floating (channeling his desire to experience such otherworldly sensations), personification of the balls as cognitive objects which can learn from the juggler (again an extension of the speaker's desire to gain knowledge and experience from the juggler), onomatopoea embodying the speaker and the crowd's passionate reaction, and an appreciative tone, treating the juggler as a christlike figure whose purpose is to deliver the audience to a heavenly alternative reality.

9-8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of Wilbur's use of poetic elements to convey how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. The writers of these essays offer a range of interpretations. They provide convincing readings of the description of the juggler, what it reveals about the speaker, and Wilbur's use of poetic elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone. 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.

Sample I Score 9

Juggling is a relatively uncommon skill. Few people can muster the coordination, timing, and sheer self-confidence to simultaneously move and hold multiple objects, and it often seems that the juggler uses magic to perform such a feat. Richard Wilbur's poem "Juggler" seeks to capture the boundary-defying nature of a juggler, rejoicing in the ephemeral escape of objects—balls, "a broom, a plank, a table"—from gravity. But more importantly, beneath the surface of Wilbur's work lies an abstract and philosophical, almost spiritual, commentary on man's ability to transcend the iron laws and concrete realities of the world. The juggler and his props are the gods of the speaker's extended metaphor, and the work's specific language—its rhythm, diction, and so on—capture the intangible quality of transcendence that jugglers and dreamers share.

At the most basic level, Wilbur performs this poetic imitation with the phrasal structure of the poem. The first stanza's lines break sentences—"It's not / A light-hearted thing" by running on past their ends, and by technically-incorrect capitalization: "...and the earth falls / So in our hearts from brilliance." That sentence ought to be read as a whole, not bifurcated by a little break and capital "S," but in writing it so, Wilbur mimics the unrhythmic and bland nature of reality and its limits. By the penultimate stanza, however, the long and professional commentaries of the first stanza have been replaced with rhythmic, lyrical language. He combines this transition with a similar change in sounds. The first stanza's language contains no significant assonance or alliteration, but the later stanzas are songlike. Contrast "Settles and is forgot" with "Oh, on his toe the table is turning." The combined evolutions in sound and structure capture the escalating pace of the juggler's activities, especially relative to the dead stillness at the beginning. On a metaphysical level, this transition reflects the rising mania of a dream as it transcends reason.

Wilbur does not merely paint an image of rising and unsustainable motion; he also describes human reactions to this feat. The bland and dispassionate language of the first stanza evolves into the excited interjections of lines 19-29: "Damn, what a show we cry." The stamping of the boys and the shrieking of the girls clearly exhibit their joy at the juggler's ability, a joy that is also present in adults' reactions to more metaphorical juggling. An adult promised the impossible—get rich quick, live forever, and so on—shows the same mania and excitement as Wilbur captures in language describing the actions of the children.

In the final stanza, Wilbur's living image winds down as the show ends. The childlike exclamations of earlier lines is replaced by the long, adult phrases and compound sentences of clear-headed reason: "If the juggler is tired now, if the broom stands / In the dust again, if the table starts to drop." Just as every rational person eventually grasps the unattainable nature of an

escape from reason on some level, so does Wilbur's poem wind down. But it is concluded with the grateful appreciation of the speaker and the rest of the juggler's audience—"For him we batter our hands / Who has won for once over the world's weight." Like the frenetic language of the middle of Wilbur's work, the juggling could not last forever, but in its wake, children and reader are left, respectively, with an appreciation for skill physical and intellectual, as Wilbur and the juggler lay down [lost in?] their props—or words.

9-8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of Wilbur's use of poetic elements to convey how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. The writers of these essays offer a range of interpretations. They provide convincing readings of the description of the juggler, what it reveals about the speaker, and Wilbur's use of poetic elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone. 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.