

Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Line It had taken him three months to complete the
thirty-six four-by-six-foot panels that would join
together, like a huge puzzle, to form the immense
5 mural. The last thing he painted, on the final morning,
was a third apple—airborne—tossed by a child
juggler. The apples were like tiny planets, and the
child, otherwise small and unexceptional, gained
power through his manipulation of them. Kenneth had
10 to break one last egg to paint this, and as he passed it
from hand to hand, letting the white drain to the floor,
and allowing the clean yolk to settle in his palm, he
looked at this boy—his serene, confident expression,
the three apples aloft, the face calm with the
15 knowledge that they would be kept in the air
indefinitely. While Kenneth mixed the yolk with the
warm shades of ground pigment, he remembered the
critic telling him to keep things on the picture plane
flat, two-dimensional, and he smiled as the apple
20 became spherical under his brush. When he could
imagine the weight of it in his hand, he knew he was
finished. Then he began to toss brushes, palettes, and
pigments down to the floor below. There was a drill
shrieking somewhere in the building. The clatter his
25 tools made on landing must have been drowned out by
its noise.

Kenneth figured he had broken five thousand eggs,
more or less, in the making of the mural, and each
time he broke the shell, he thought of the critic’s head,
the smooth baldness of the top of it. Humpty-
30 Dumpty,¹ he thought, this wall, and the wall of
cultural fashion that could keep you out, for a while,
until the great fall. By now he knew that fashion
always fell, it failed and fell. He was happy to be free
of it. And as he used the shell to separate the white

35 from the yolk, he thought about Harding,² a man who
had never made use of egg tempera. He wondered
what had become of him. And the woman Harding
had loved, whether she had ever painted again, and
whether or not he himself would ever come across a
40 painting by Gentleman.³ The girl in Germany, the
couple in Italy,⁴ floated by, a sense of them here and
there in the mural. These narratives fought for space
in his mind. But the mural itself, he knew, was
divorced from narrative. As it should be, he whispered
45 to himself, as it should be. *Flight and Its Allegories*.⁵

Once he was on the ground, he rifled through a
canvas sack until he found the camera he was looking
for, a Brownie Starflex, with six exposures still
available. He shot the mural from left to right. Then
50 he walked across the full length of the half-tiled floor.
This was the last exposure and it would make the
mural look incredibly small, like a two-inch-long
piece of ribbon with an unreadable pattern on it. But
he wanted to show its proportions to a friend and, in
55 any case, the more professional pictures would be
taken later, after he was gone, when the mural had
begun to live its own independent life in the presence
of an audience.

For months now there had been noise, the
60 workmen’s power tools and, in the odd moments
when those were silent, the roar of the planes arriving
and departing at the old, soon-to-be abandoned
terminal. He had seen the passengers, through the
plate glass of the windows, rivers of them, pouring
65 down the steps that were pushed up to airliners, then
flowing darkly across the tarmac. What would they
make of *Flight and Its Allegories*? Would they be
struck by it? Or would they simply pass it by,

preoccupied by the mysteries of their individual lives
70 as they walked forward or waited in the lounge? He
was not unaware that public art could be—and often
was—ignored. Still, what pleasure he had taken in the
making of it.

¹ Humpty-Dumpty is a nursery-rhyme character, typically depicted as an egg. He falls from a wall, breaks, and cannot be put together again.

² Kenneth’s former art teacher, who cautioned Kenneth against appropriating the ideas, styles, and techniques of other artists

³ Alexander Gentleman, an obscure artist that Harding once knew; another artist later copied his style and gained fame as a result

⁴ “The girl in Germany” and “the couple in Italy” are people Kenneth met while backpacking through Europe.

⁵ Allegories are works of literature or art that express moral or political messages, often through the use of symbols.

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Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 2: Prose Fiction Analysis**6 points**

The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0-1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Make a generalized comment about the passage that doesn't respond to the prompt. Describe the passage or features of the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 		Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a defensible interpretation of Kenneth's complex perspective as he completes his mural.
Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"In this excerpt, the author shows Kenneth thinking about how complex the experience of making art can be."</i> Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Great works of art can have an amazingly powerful effect on our emotions."</i> Describe the passage or features of the passage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Kenneth uses eggs to make paint for his mural, and afterwards he takes pictures to show his friends."</i> 		Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The passage shows Kenneth realizing that the experience of painting the mural is a worthwhile endeavor no matter what may happen to it afterwards."</i> <i>"Kenneth's experience of completing the mural causes him to consider the impact of artistic tradition and its continued value in the future."</i> <i>"Although Kenneth works alone, he recognizes that he does not really create alone—he is aware that his art is always influenced by other people, both those he has known personally as well as complete strangers."</i>
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the passage contributes to its meaning.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the passage contribute to its meaning.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
Typical responses that earn 0 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	Typical responses that earn 1 point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on overarching narrative developments or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. • Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation. 	Typical responses that earn 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. • May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	Typical responses that earn 3 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an interpretation. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	Typical responses that earn 4 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an interpretation. • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. • Explain how the writer’s use of multiple literary techniques contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage. 	
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the passage. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C Sophistication (0-1 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.</p>
	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). • Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the passage could be said to...</i>”). • Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the passage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. • Oversimplify complexities in the passage. • Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument. 	<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage. 2. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. 3. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the passage. 4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 		

In this passage from *The Night Stages*, author Jane Urquhart uses rhetorical questions and juxtaposition in order to convey Kenneth's contradicting desire to be noticed and want for freedom of expression, all in order to show how true freedom comes from freeing yourself from the expectations of others.

At the end of the passage, Urquhart uses two rhetorical questions regarding Kenneth's audience and what they would "make of *Flight and its Allegories*?" as well as if they would even notice it, or would "simply pass by it, preoccupied by the mysteries of their individual lives?" These questions function as a way to show that despite Kenneth insisting that he doesn't care what people think of his art, he still does wonder what their opinions might be. His primary purpose of making art is to fulfill an innate drive to create, and his primary pleasure comes from simply creating. However, these rhetorical questions are used to indicate that he has not yet fully released himself from his desire for outside approval. He has come a long way from adhering to "cultural fashion," but his facade of not caring what others think is exposed by these questions. Kenneth is still thinking about what others think of him, so he is not yet truly free. He still desires to be noticed and a small part of him hopes that his "public art" is not "ignored." This goes to show that although true freedom involves removing the pressures of others' expectations from oneself, it is nearly impossible to live a life totally free of a desire for notice and appreciation. Due to this, people are always a work in progress, constantly working to fully free themselves from the desire for approval.

Throughout the passage, the author juxtaposes images of breaking eggs and creating art in order to convey that Kenneth needed to be "broken" and shaped by critics and past teachers in order to emerge as the best version of himself, free from others' expectations. The passage describes how Kenneth had to break "five thousand eggs" in order to create the masterpiece that he has today. In a way, the masterpiece mural he has created is him. Through all of the breaking and bruising of his ego by critics and teachers, Kenneth has developed a style unique to himself, and now this style will be displayed in public. Kenneth was able to paint this mural in a way contrary to what critics had told him was "correct," and has truly "broken free" from his own shell and matured into an artist. Though he still does care a little about what others think of him, this is not necessarily a weakness, but an area for growth. Kenneth is a work in progress, and the "breaking" of him leads to a contrasting image of his masterpiece being created, both on the canvas and in himself.

In this passage, Urquhart uses rhetorical questions and juxtaposing images of brokenness and masterpieces in order to show how Kenneth has grown through his experiences on the journey to free himself from the binds of others' expectations, but that he is still on this journey, all to show that our best selves come from when we are able to care less about what others think, but that the work to get to this point is continuous and never quite complete.

In the short story *The Night Stages* by Jane Urquhart, an artist by the name of Kenneth joyfully and confidently conceives his mural until he finds himself conflicted with worrying and fearful thoughts.

The authors use of enlightening diction helps to convey a sense of confidence in Kenneth's work through words such as, "serene," "happy," and "independent." These words illustrates his joy in his art because a man who can describe his work as serene understands the beauty of his own work and also is able to prevent the negative thinking from overshadowing his hard work. The use of the words happy and independent also demonstrate his attitude throughout his work as any artist who is satisfied with their own efforts would find no reason to be disdainful and disliking, and that through it all, their continuous efforts and undying determination would instill a sense of independence into the creator because of how much time they have devoted along with their will to persist despite their own criticism and overthinking. Along with this, the speaker also employs visual imagery to display his calm and positive minded attitude through the following: "he thought of the critic's head, the smooth baldness of the top of it." As odd of a description as it is, Kenneth's ability to portray the critic's smoothness is enough to show his own comfort and confidence he has developed as someone who is insecure about their work would not describe their critic in a relaxed manner because that sense of urgency or their annoyance would infuriate the artist and only unleash hateful descriptions of their critics.

However, Kenneth also begins to develop feelings of uncertainty as shown through the author's worrisome diction with words like, "ignored," "darkly," and, "abandoned." These are all words that will surely create a feeling of fear as the worry of one's work to go unnoticed is enough to instill doubt within anyone, and to describe a crowd as moving darkly only serves to show his lack of humanistic identity to the masses as they flow because of the monstrous fear the artists has of their opinions. Along with this, to say that the airport will soon be abandoned does not instill a sense of security in the artist's mural as who will be there to witness such an amazing painting if it will soon be vacuous? To add to the his fear, the author utilizes visual imagery as well, stating, "He has seen the passengers... rivers of them, pouring down the steps..." This revelation before Kenneth's eyes would surely have had his mind going at the prospects of what to expect because the sight of a terrifying presence of so many people would surely open the mind to the imagined opinions of so many people that it will soon become overwhelming for the artist. Along with this, it is also stated throughout the short story that, "fashion always fell," a line that Kenneth understood deeply and tries to combat. The idea that one's work will soon find its own demise and lose fame creates a sense of despair due to the fear of their efforts being forgotten and abandoned, that it was all for nothing if their work will not be remembered.

In the novel *The Night Stage* by Jane Urquhart, Kenneth, an artist, gleefully and proudly paints his mural and meets the finished product with nervousness.

In Jane Urquhart's novel *The Night Stages*, Urquhart uses diction as well as metaphors to convey Kenneth's affection for his work despite knowing it may be rejected by society as he completes his mural.

Urquhart's description of how Kenneth "smiled as the apple became spherical" despite being told by a critic to "keep things" "two-dimensional" portrays Kenneth as knowing his work may contradict societal opinions yet still remaining optimistic. Urquhart's specific word choice of Kenneth as "smil[ing]" while disregarding the critic depicts Kenneth as in peace with his art through the connotation of smiles as bringing feelings of happiness and comfort. Being in peace with his art even though there is opposition against it conveys Kenneth as affectionate of his work despite understanding society's potential rejection of it.

Additionally, Kenneth's love for his work despite potential opposition to it is further highlighted through Urquhart's use of a metaphor illustrating the large amount of people viewing Kenneth's art. Urquhart's description of Kenneth as still having "pleasure" while creating his art despite the "rivers" of passengers "pouring" and "flowing" by his art that may simply "ignore" it illustrates Kenneth as understanding people could disregard his art yet as still affectionate for his work. The metaphor of the passengers as "rivers" that are "pouring" and "flowing" emphasizes the large size of the number of people viewing and judging Kenneth's art, which highlights that society may simply "ignore" and disregard it. Urquhart's emphasis on the large amount of people potentially disregarding Kenneth's art through his use of metaphor combined with his description of Kenneth as still finding "pleasure" in the creation of it depicts Kenneth as affectionate for his work despite society's potential opposition of it.

The literary elements present convey Kenneth's complex perspective as he continues his mural. One literary element that conveys this perspective is imagery by showing the intricate details of Kenneth's work through his own eyes; another literary element that helps convey the complexities of this perspective is personification by presenting the mural as its own being with its own experiences.

The imagery present convey's Kenneth's complex perspective about his mural by depicting said mural through his eyes. In the passage in the first paragraph, there is a detailed description of his paints and the process of the mural itself, it coming to life in the eyes of the artist. The imagery present gives a look into the view of Kenneth and provides some perspective into the thought process behind the mural. This consistent imagery continues into paragraph 4 with the details of the daily life the mural would experience. Kenneth's thought process brings the narrative into an imagined future that the mural would experience and the details that would be present, how his mural could be received. This use of imagery conveys a different meaning behind it, though the use of it in paragraph 1 gave insight into Kenneth's past regarding the mural - the history behind his style and medium, the use of imagery in paragraph 4 gives insight into the future of the mural after its completion and how it would be received as a piece of public art.

The personification within the excerpt conveys Kenneth's view of the mural as its own being with its own experiences. This is obvious in paragraph 3 of the excerpt when Kenneth is taking photos of the mural for a friend; during this process, Kenneth describes the mural living on its own in front of an audience. This description shows Kenneth's perspective regarding the mural and how he believes his art has a life of its own after it has been created. This personification can be explained by Kenneth's painting style; in paragraph 1 it depicts Kenneth not stopping painting until he could imagine the weight of the apple in his hand, it is also described in this paragraph about how he was critiqued on his work and encourages to keep it two dimensional. The fact that he resented this critic and continued to paint until he could see his painting come to life explains his perspective of viewing his mural of having its own life and experiences separate to him.

In the excerpt from Jane Urquhart's novel, "The Night Stages," Urquhart starts the excerpt by stating the amount of time and work that Kenneth has put into his work. After that, he shows us how rigorously Kenneth works on his mural. Next he talks about the influences of Kenneth's work and how he hopes his work will be appreciated as professionally later on. Urquhart ends the excerpt by showcasing Kenneth's fears of his work not being appreciated. Urquhart uses descriptive language in order to paint a picture of pride of Kenneth's work, he uses rhetorical questions to show Kenneth's fear of his hard work being forgotten but he uses humor in order to show the extent to how serious Kenneth takes his work.

In order to show Kenneth's pride in his work, Urquhart employs imagery language. For example, in the first paragraph he says, "The face calm with the knowledge that they would be kept in the air indefinitely." This shows us that

Question 2 – Prose Fiction Analysis

Sample Identifier: A

Score: 1-4-1

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This articulate essay examines how, in an excerpt from the novel *The Night Stages*, Jane Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural in an airport.
- The essay responds to the prompt with a thesis which comprises its first paragraph: “In this passage from *The Night Stages*, author Jane Urquhart uses rhetorical questions and juxtaposition in order to convey Kenneth's contradicting desire to be noticed and want for freedom of expression, all in order to show how true freedom comes from freeing yourself from the expectations of others.” Because the thesis presents a defensible interpretation of the passage, the essay earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 4

- The thesis establishes a line of reasoning focused on the dichotomy between Kenneth’s desire for attention and his desire for free expression, and this line of reasoning is expounded on throughout the essay. The response puts forth specific evidence of this conflict in paragraph 2, where it cites Kenneth’s curiosity about “what they would ‘make of *Flight and its Allegories?*’ as well as if they would even notice it, or would “simply pass by it, preoccupied by the mysteries of their individual lives?” (paragraph 2) as evidence of the claim about Kenneth’s “contradicting desire” for both notice and “freedom of expression” (paragraph 1).
- The commentary of the essay consistently explains how the evidence supports the line of reasoning, such as in paragraph 3, where the response suggests, “the author juxtaposes images of breaking eggs and creating art in order to convey that Kenneth needed to be ‘broken’ and shaped by critics and past teachers in order to emerge as the best version of himself, free from others expectations.” Additionally, the evidence that Kenneth has “truly ‘broken free’ from his own shell” (paragraph 3) is followed by the astute commentary “Though he still does care a little about what others think of him, this is not necessarily a weakness, but an area for growth. Kenneth is a work in progress, and the ‘breaking’ of him leads to a contrasting image of his masterpiece being created, both on the canvas and in himself.”
- The response explains how multiple literary techniques contribute to the meaning of the passage. In addition to juxtaposition, the essay explains the role of rhetorical questions by asserting, “However, these rhetorical questions are used indicate that he has not yet full released himself from his desire for outside approval” (paragraph 2). This combination of specific evidence, consistent commentary that develops a clear line of reasoning, and a thoughtful explanation of Urquhart’s use of multiple literary devices earned this essay 4 points in Row B.

C. Sophistication Score: 1

- Through its thorough exploration of the tension between Kenneth’s desire for artistic freedom and his desire for the approval of others, this essay demonstrates sophistication of thought. The concluding sentence clearly shows this sophistication in its assertion that “In this passage, Urquhart uses rhetorical questions and juxtaposing images of brokenness and masterpieces in order to show how Kenneth has grown through his experiences on the journey to free himself from the binds of others’ expectations, but that he is still on this journey, all to show that our best selves come from when we are able to care less about what others think, but that the work to get to this point is continuous and never quite complete.”

Sample Identifier: B

Score: 1-4-0

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This essay responds to the prompt with an insightful analysis of Jane Urquhart’s use of literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he puts the finishing touches on his mural as described in an excerpt from the novel, *The Night Stages*.
- The thesis for the essay appears in paragraph 1 and states, “In the short story *The Night Stages* by Jane Urquhart, an artist by the name of Kenneth joyfully and confidently conceives his mural until he finds himself conflicted with worrying and fearful thoughts.” The thesis responds to the prompt with a defensible interpretation of the passage; therefore, the essay earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 4

- The response provides specific evidence to support all claims in its line of reasoning about the ambivalent feelings Kenneth has about his mural. Paragraph 2 of the essay focuses on Kenneth’s positive feelings about his work. For example, the essay examines Urquhart’s word choice and notes, “The authors use of enlightening diction helps to convey a sense of confidence in Kenneth’s work through words such as, ‘serene,’ ‘happy,’ and ‘independent.’” In contrast, paragraph 3 looks at Kenneth’s “feelings of uncertainty through the author’s worrisome diction with words like, ‘ignored,’ ‘darkly,’ and ‘abandoned.’”
- The commentary offered throughout the essay consistently relates the evidence back to the thesis and the line of reasoning. In paragraph 3, the essay presents Urquhart’s use of the phrase “‘fashion always fell’” and notes in the commentary that follows, “The idea that one’s work will soon find its own demise and lose fame creates a sense of despair due to the fear of their efforts being forgotten and abandoned, that it was all for nothing if their work will not be remembered.”
- The essay analyzes how multiple literary elements or techniques in the passage contribute to its meaning. In addition to diction, the essay considers the role of imagery in the passage: “To add to his fear, the author utilizes visual imagery as well, stating, ‘He has seen the passengers... rivers of them, pouring down the steps...’ This revelation

before Kenneth's eyes would surely have had his mind going at the prospects of what to expect because the sight of a terrifying presence of so many people would surely open the mind to the imagined opinions of so many people that it will soon become overwhelming for the artist” (paragraph 3). The blending of apt evidence, insightful commentary, and clear explanation of the role of literary elements result in a score of 4 for this response.

C. Sophistication Score: 0

- While the essay does attempt to address complexities and tensions within the passage, it offers commentary that oversimplifies those complexities with generalizations. For example, the last sentence of paragraph 2 argues, “Kenneth's ability to portray the critic's smoothness is enough to show his own comfort and confidence he has developed as someone who is insecure about their work would not describe their critic in a relaxign manner because that sense of urgency or their annoyance would infuriate the artist and only unleash hateful descriptions of their critics.” The essay did not, therefore, earn 1 point in Row C.

Sample Identifier: C

Score: 1-3-0

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This essay considers how Jane Urquhart in an excerpt from her novel, *The Night Stages*, uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural in an airport.
- The introductory paragraph of the essay presents the thesis: “In Jane Urquhart's novel *The Night Stages*, Urquhart uses diction as well as metaphors to convey Kenneth's affection for his work despite knowing it may be rejected by society as he completes his mural.” The thesis presents a defensible interpretation of the passage and earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 3

- The essay provides specific evidence to support the line of reasoning that focuses on Kenneth’s “affection for his work” (paragraph 1) despite “society’s potential opposition to it” (paragraph 3.) Paragraph 2 cites, “Urquhart's description of how Kenneth ‘smiled as the apple became spherical’ despite being told by a critic to ‘keep things’ ‘two-dimensional’ portrays Kenneth as knowing his work may contradict societal opinions yet still remaining optimistic” as evidence in support of the claim.
- Commentary offered in the essay explains how some of the evidence supports the line of reasoning, such as in paragraph 3 where the response states, “The metaphor of the passengers as ‘rivers’ that are ‘pouring’ and ‘flowing’ emphasizes the large size of the number of people viewing and judging Kenneth’s art, which highlights that society may simply ‘ignore’ and disregard it.” The evidence and commentary in paragraph 3 focus on the potential judgment of passersby of his mural; however, it does not fully integrate

evidence of Kenneth’s “still having ‘pleasure’ while creating his art” to support the claim that Kenneth is “affectionate for his work despite society's potential opposition of it.”

- The response examines Urquhart’s use of diction and metaphor in the excerpt. In paragraph 2, for example, the essay suggests that “Urquhart's specific word choice of Kenneth as ‘smil[ing]’ while disregarding the critic depicts Kenneth as in peace with his art through the connotation of smiles as bringing feelings of happiness and comfort.” Because the essay provides specific evidence, commentary that explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning, and an explanation of how literary elements contribute to the meaning of the work, the essay earned 3 points in Row B.

C. Sophistication Score: 0

- The response does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument. It did not earn the point in Row C.

Sample Identifier: D

Score: 1-2-0

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This essay attempts to analyze how Jane Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspectives as he completes his mural as described in an excerpt from the novel, *The Night Stages*.
- The thesis of the essay, “One literary element that conveys this perspective is imagery by showing the intricate details of Kenneth's work through his own eyes; another literary element that helps convey the complexities of this perspective is personification by presenting the mural as its own being with its own experiences” appears in the introductory paragraph and presents a defensible interpretation in the passage. This thesis earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 2

- The essay is organized around Urquhart’s use of imagery and personification. In paragraph 3 of the response, some specific evidence is provided: “in paragraph 1 it depicts Kenneth not stopping painting until he could imagine the weight of the apple in his hand, it is also described in this paragraph about how he was critiqued on his work and encourages to keep it two dimensional.” The evidence also consists, however, of broad generalities, such as “there is a detailed description of his paints and the process of the mural itself, it coming to life in the eyes of the artist” (paragraph 2) and “This use of imagery conveys a different meaning behind it” (paragraph 2).
- The commentary of the response explains how some of the evidence relates to the thesis. For example, in paragraph 3, the essay suggests, “This description shows Kenneth's perspective regarding the mural and how he believes his art has a life of it's own after it has been created.” The essay does not, however, explain the connections or progression between the response’s claims. No clear line of reasoning is established within the response.

- The response contains repetitive comments about “the daily life the mural would experience,” but these explanations do not relate to the thesis or support any claim.

C. Sophistication Score: 0

- Because the essay does not develop a complex literary argument or demonstrate sophistication of thought, it did not earn the point in Row C.

Sample Identifier: E

Score: 1-1-0

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This essay considers how Jane Urquhart uses literary techniques to convey Kenneth’s reaction as he completes his mural as conveyed in the excerpt from the novel *The Night Stages*.
- The essay responds to the prompt with its thesis presented as the last sentence of paragraph 1: “Urquhart uses descriptive language in order to paint a picture of pride of Kenneth's work, he uses rhetorical questions to show Kenneth's fear of his hard work being forgotten but he uses humor in order to show the extent to how serious Kenneth takes his work.” This thesis offers a defensible interpretation of the passage and, therefore, earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 1

- The evidence of the essay focuses on the overarching narrative of the passage rather than on specific, relevant evidence. For example, in paragraph 1, the essay offers the general statement, “Next he talks about the influences of Kenneth's work and how he hopes his work will be appreciated as professionally later on.”
- No line of reasoning is established through the evidence and commentary. Instead, the commentary summarizes the evidence in observations such as, “Urquhart ends the excerpt by showcasing Kenneth's fears of his work not being appreciated.” No connection is made between the evidence and the student’s argument.
- The response mentions “descriptive language” and “rhetorical questions” but provides little explanation as to how they function in the passage.

C. Sophistication Score: 0

- This essay does not demonstrate sophistication of thought, nor does it develop a complex literary argument. Therefore, it did not earn the point in Row C.