



**Grade 10
Scoring Guide
for Reading
and
Written
Composition**

Make-Up Form

Spring 2004

INTRODUCTION

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

Short Answer Items

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

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

Objective 2

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

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

Objective 3

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

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

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

Written Composition

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

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

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

Objective 4

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

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

Objective 5

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

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

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

The Quality of Mercy

by *H. Barrett Pennell, Jr.*

1 The sky began to brighten in the north on that early-March day, as the roiled, greasy-gray clouds of the all-night storm began their retreat to the south and west.

My notes about what I am
reading

2 We slogged our way along the bank of the creek, “our creek” to us, a pair of ten-year-old males. We had decided on a tour of inspection of our holdings to see what damage the storm had wrought. And the creek was still there, still wandering its earnest, four-foot-wide way through the meadow, which was spongy underfoot with the gray-green, dead-alive promise of what would soon be grass. The rocks had not been harmed, we noted with satisfaction, and the pool beside the willow was still a pool, despite what must have been a temptation to go and join the sea. But the grass along the edges, and along the upper bank—the tough, fibrous evergreen grass that seemed to defy everything in its turn—was lying flat in its place, all tips pointed regimentally after the departing waters. So we were somewhat angry with the water, as a bully who destroys a myth.

3 But the overall loss was slight. Our creek was still alive and our plaything, and there were no other little boys to take it, and claim it, and mother it, and dam it with clods of tough, worm-filled sod and its own rocks. And there was none to pelt its muskrats and scare its minnows and trap its crawdads and capture its tadpoles. So we inspected—hermetically sealed in parkas and overshoes—sloshing through the drowned grass and rat-furred moss with the utter confidence of proprietorship.

4 We worked our way slowly, examining every inch, the way one does for hurt to valued property, while the excited air buffeted us with the first live messages of coming spring.

5 George found two marbles just below the gravelly spot beyond the willow pool, one chipped a little and the other polished by the sand and water to a better-than-new luster. I found a small earthenware jar with a clear, glazed finish and a kiln burn on the bottom side. I told George the jar was a remnant of the days when Indians used to camp along the banks of the creek. (I almost believed this to be true, and I wanted to.) George wondered who had lost the marbles. And great was our excitement and wonder that the creek was still as it had been, yet giving us new treasures, saved for years for some such special day as this.

6 And in the spot where the stream curved, and ate its way into the bank, where the red slash of clay towered upward for six feet above the trotting water and looked like red Swiss cheese—there were the muskrats, hiding in their daytime holes. With joyous whoops we attacked their sanctuary, hurling small rocks and stones toward the holes, around which the missiles of our last attack stuck in the mud like stone pickets. The savage satisfaction of the attack and the power, welling in our blood like a rare narcotic, to do destruction to these small creatures always sank a little in our hearts when a stone would dart into the depths of one of the holes. Then there was no satisfying smack of rock on mud, but only an echo, which could have been the sound of murder, and bright-gem eyes in the dark narrowing in pain and going out without the sight of another dawn. So, saddened by the ultimate outcome, we broke off the attack until the next time, not knowing if we were murderers or not, but hoping not, with all the desire serious doubt can bring.

7 Then we were explorers along our new-old creek—La Salle, De Soto, Lewis and Clark, voyageurs with muskrat hides stalking the banks of the Mississippi and other, lesser streams, seeking cautious trade with Indians.

8 Until George discovered the fish, swimming weakly in the stream.

9 We squatted on our heels in the creek-bed gravel, watching the fish struggle in our mighty, six-inch-deep Mississippi as it tried to make its way upstream. It floundered on the shoals of flattened boulders, its back appearing above the water in its struggle. It was a carp, about ten inches long, and far too large for our stream. Evidently it had been washed down in the torrential night from a safe pool somewhere far away, perhaps beyond where the stream goes under the railroad tracks and disappears into the earth. Now it was trying to get home, upstream, from where it had come so easily the night before.

10 The tail that beat feebly upon the shallow water was split and ragged; scales were missing from its battered side, and somewhere in the middle of the fish there was a wound, where pinkish flesh hung tattered out beyond the skin. It rested now, in sheer exhaustion, every slight movement crying out that it was one more movement too many beyond the range of life's endurance.

11 We watched without a word as the tired fish learned of our presence and tried instinctively to dart away, but only wrenched its way into the shallows, where it fell on its side and was carried back by the stream into the pool by which we knelt.

- 12 Great was our concern for the trapped fish fighting hard for present life, mindless of a further soul, with the instinctive courage that man admires in himself, but tends to call bestial in the beast, and we searched about for means of rescue.
- 13 George found the bottom of a milk bottle, but that was too small; I discovered a small coffee can near the willow pool, but the bottom had rusted out. So we used my waterproof parka hood instead, bulging it full of muddy water, carefully scooping out the failing fish, and dropping it into the sodden hood. We began our march of mercy down the length of the creek and across the road, headed for the big pool in the bird sanctuary, where the water was 5 feet deep and 20 across. And as we walked, fast but gingerly, holding the water-filled hood like a suspended binnacle and staggering somewhat with the weight, some of the water slopped out and dampened our clothes; it began to leak slowly through the waterproof hood, leaving a damp trail along the paving as we hurried along the road toward the deep hole. And every spilled drop was blood, and every step nearer, life.
- 14 At last we came to the sanctuary and slipped past the chain-link fence where the fence had to stop for the bridge of the creek, and we slid down the worn trail to the bank of the pool. The fish was almost dead, and its back was above water again in the hood.
- 15 I lowered the hood into the shallow water at the edge of the pool, and as the edge of the hood fell away, the fish drifted out into the water, its fins moving feebly, but fast, lying on its side on the surface. We stood mutely in the mud and watched the fish fight for life again.
- 16 Its tail moved convulsively, and it moved forward several inches, turning almost upright with the motion. Several more times it did this, nearly turning upright every time until, at length, it was successful. Then, with its mouth taking great gulps of air from the surface and its gills moving in convulsions, the fish slowly swam around the pool, merely moving, for there was still no strength or purpose in it. And still we didn't speak, as the fish seemed to grow new strength before our eyes. It gulped and it thrashed its gills for five full minutes, as if cleansing out the putrefaction of near-death with the new oxygen-full water.
- 17 George flipped a small stone into the water, a few feet from where the fish rested. With a small swirl, the fish disappeared, and the eddies made by the stone and the fish rocked one another into submission in the small wooded pool.

18 As we stared after our success, glowing inwardly in our Samaritanism, George knew why I had snapped at him when he had asked, back when we first put the fish in the hood, if I were going to feed the fish to my cat.

19 At home, the soggy parka hood was hung up to dry by my mother, who thanked me with her voice for the gift of the earthenware jar and wondered in her mind just what it was that made boys do senseless things like throwing the tops of their parkas into the stream.

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My notes about what I am
reading

A “Real School” Is Born

by Collin Perry

1 LORRAINE MONROE sat dumbfounded, watching the spectacle before her. She had pulled into the faculty parking lot of Harlem’s Frederick Douglass Intermediate School just as the next-to-last-period bell sounded. Dozens of students streamed from exits, running and screaming wildly.

2 “This is nothing,” an administrator told her. “I’ve seen textbooks sail out windows. Even classroom chairs.”

3 It was May 1991, and Lorraine Monroe had arrived for a tour of the junior high school where she had just become principal. As kids exchanged whoops and high-fives, she was told that a few days earlier, some students had climbed a 14-foot-high chain-link fence and broken their falls by jumping onto the teachers’ cars below.

4 Monroe knew that Frederick Douglass—once considered among the top schools in New York City—had lost its academic luster. But nothing in her experience as a teacher or as deputy chancellor of New York City public schools had prepared her for this.

5 As she headed for the office of school administrator Howard Lew, Monroe picked her way through the filthy, graffitied hallways, stepping over students sitting on the floor and past others roaming in groups—even though classes were in session.

Touring with Lew, Monroe took in the broken windows, and graffiti-coated blackboards. Ceilings in many rooms looked as though they had been systematically punched out by students. Fires had left other classrooms gutted and boarded up.

In class after class, students lounged on windowsills, laughing and gossiping while the teacher tried valiantly to teach. The few kids who wanted to learn were either unable to because of the chaos or afraid to try.

“Seen enough?” Lew asked.

Monroe just shook her head. *This isn’t a school*, she thought. *It’s a holding pen. What am I going to do?*

Dream Maker.

Monroe had grown up not far from Frederick Douglass. Back then the neighborhoods were not as devastated by drugs

and gangs, but life had been hard. In many ways, it was Lorraine’s tough-minded mother who had maintained the family. She had sweated the details, organizing, cleaning, shopping and hustling about on Sundays getting everyone together for church. She made it into a ritual, a real tradition.

That’s what’s missing from the lives of kids here—order and tradition, Monroe thought. Children need a place they can go to escape the chaos.

■ see School, page 2



12 But ritual and tradition alone weren't
the answer. Lorraine's father, a
metalworker, was an example of someone
always doing the unexpected, always doing
the bold thing.

13 As a child, Lorraine used to pore over
newspaper ads for houses in the country.
"Look at this one, Dad," she'd call out. "It's
got a fireplace! Sure wish we had one. Can
you imagine?"

14 "Yes, baby, that sure would be
something."

15 "Look, here's another one: 'Split-level
ranch priced to sell'—and, see, a fireplace!"

16 Then one Saturday he showed up with
wood to build a fireplace in the living room
of their walk-up apartment. No flue? Not a
problem. In no time the family was
enjoying the best electric-flame fireplace in
all of West Harlem. Sometimes, you just
had to start from nothing—and be bold.

17 Then it hit her: did she dare envision
starting from scratch with Frederick
Douglass?

18 **Real School.** A few weeks later, she
made her announcement: "The school is
being closed, Mr. Lew, and we're starting
all over."

19 Monroe explained that she had already
talked to the school board about a new
approach. With Frederick Douglass such
an embarrassment, they were willing to
try anything.

20 "We'll reopen in September and start
with the seventh grade; the following year,
seventh and eighth, and so on until we
have a completely new combined junior
and senior high school. We'll no longer be
just another school: we'll be Frederick
Douglass Academy for college and
professional careers."

"Where will everyone go," Lew asked,
"while we're getting this under way?"

"They'll be absorbed into other
community schools."

She noticed his look of concern.
"Howard, we have a unique opportunity
here—not just for tinkering, but for
creating a model for all inner-city schools.
I'm talking about real academics, real
achievement, real discipline. You know,
real school."

Lew slapped his hand on his desk.
"Real school! I love it!"

Monroe composed a list of "Twelve
Non-negotiables"—rules that all students
must follow or face real consequences,
ranging from in-school suspension to
expulsion. The rules included: No gum,
candy, hats or radios. No physical or verbal
violence. No defacing of school property.
Uniforms worn daily. Students must show
respect for staff and one another at all
times.

The staff devised a college-preparatory
curriculum. "Math, science, social science,
English and a foreign language will be the
basics," Monroe declared.

A few teachers left the school by
mutual agreement, feeling the highly
disciplined environment was not for them.
That allowed Monroe to handpick new
teachers—people with enthusiasm and a
sense of purpose.

High Expectations. Next, she had to
sell the academy to the community. As
expected, objections to uniforms—"freedom
of expression will be denied"—came from
community leaders. But not from parents.

■ see School, page 3

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Monroe pointed out that uniforms were already prevalent: those of violent gangs and designer-clothing retailers.

29 “And if they can afford \$100 sneakers,” Monroe said, “they can afford a traditional outfit or two.”

30 When asked what she expected of parents, she replied, “That you support the concept of high expectations.”

31 On opening day in September 1991, 150 wide-eyed seventh-graders in navy-and-white uniforms trooped into a new school. The interior shimmered in bright yellow and blue. Clean white tiles hung from the ceilings. Classrooms were completely refitted and open for business.

32 There was one exception to the “starting over” premise: Robinson Cuevas, a boy from the Dominican Republic who had failed miserably in the old school yet slipped through the review process. His papers wound up on Monroe’s desk, flagged with a bright red question mark. *I may be making a mistake, she thought, but why not give the kid a chance?* She stamped the application “APPROVED.”

33 **Rules Are Rules.** From that first day Monroe was everywhere, getting to know the kids, encouraging the staff and unexpectedly popping in on teachers—a practice they don’t traditionally welcome. “A principal who stays in her office might as well stay home” was Monroe’s position.

34 What she ended up with was a fine academic school running smoothly. Real school. She had innovative, dedicated teachers, and kids who were doing so remarkably well that even she was surprised.

35 After just one year, Frederick Douglass students scored at the top of their district

in city-sponsored tests for reading and math. Monroe’s critics now paid her the ultimate “compliment,” claiming that if her kids were performing above average, she must be “creaming” Harlem—taking only the best students. Monroe pointed out school policy: 75 percent of the students had to come from Central Harlem. “No cherry-picking here. Just the hard work of education.”

36 There was no more poignant proof of this than Monroe’s ongoing struggle to educate Robinson Cuevas. He was chronically in trouble for talking back to teachers and refusing to work.

37 One afternoon Monroe sat down to meet with him. “Robinson,” she began, “we’ve tried our best, but things aren’t working out. Maybe you’ll settle down to work in another environment.”

38 Like so many kids, Cuevas had been conditioned by bluff. Goof off, and you meet with threats and calls home, but never expulsion. Suddenly the young man was near tears.

39 “Robinson, you’ve had every chance to make it here.”

40 “I know, Dr. Monroe, I know.” Then he looked her square in the eye. “I guess I’m asking you to give me one more chance.”

41 “Okay,” she said, standing. “But just one complaint from *anybody* and that’s it! Understood?”

42 “Yes, ma’am,” the boy replied, trembling visibly.

43 “Now, stand up,” Monroe said, “and let’s shake on it.”

■ see School, page 4

44 **Feeling Proud.** One day in 1994, Lorraine Monroe headed toward a ninth-grade class. Long accustomed to his boss's "radical" ideas, Lew had feigned shock when Monroe suggested they offer Japanese at Frederick Douglass. "Look around you," she'd said. "It's Japanese cars and CD players we're buying. We have to look ahead."

45 Entering the classroom, she smiled at the young instructor, Chie Mochizuki-Helenski, and took a seat.

46 "*Basuketto boora no geemu-ni iki-mashita,*" Mochizuki-Helenski intoned. "Translate, please."

47 Hands strained toward the ceiling. "I went to a basketball game!" one of the boys shouted. "I taught that one to my mother last night," he said, beaming.

48 Monroe resisted the urge to pinch herself. Yes, this was Central Harlem, one of the innermost of inner cities. Yes, this was a public school. But this child of the ghetto was not only learning a difficult foreign language; he was passing some of it on to a parent.

By spring of 1996 Lorraine Monroe had many reasons to feel proud. She had brought order and boldness to her school, and it now housed more than 700 students. Nearly all were on course for college. Walking back to her office, she passed a boy who called out, "Hello, Dr. Monroe!"

"Hey there, Robinson. All's well?"

The stocky, well-turned-out boy gave her the thumbs-up sign and smiled brilliantly. Three years after being given one more chance, Cuevas was one of her "aces," a top student who had just been accepted at Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y.

Reaching her office, Monroe walked by a school banner that read "The tradition of excellence continues." Lorraine Monroe couldn't resist giving the thumbs-up sign before returning to her desk—and to the hard work of education.

SHORT ANSWER ITEMS

Rubrics and Sample Responses

Objective 2 – Literary Selection

- 29 In “The Quality of Mercy,” what do the boys learn from their experiences at the creek? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION
OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

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

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

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

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-1

29 The boys experience that just because it looks bad doesn't mean that it is. They went into a problem not knowing what to do and ended up doing the right thing, like it says in paragraph 18-19.

Score Point: 0

The student's analysis is vague and unclear (just because it looks bad doesn't mean that it is), and the general paragraph citation does not provide textual evidence. Therefore, the response is insufficient.

RG-2

29 The boys found out that the creek was dirty and that the fish were dying because the water wasn't good. But then that they had to try and clean it up so it can look better.

Score Point: 0

In this response the student presents an incorrect analysis that cannot be supported by the text (the boys found out that the creek was dirty and that the fish were dying...).

29 They learned to always tell their mother everything, like it says "my mother thanked me and wondered in her mind what it was that made boys do senseless things."

Score Point: 0

An incorrect analysis (they learned to always tell their mother everything) is paired with text that contradicts the analysis ("my mother...wondered in her mind what it was that made boys do senseless things"). Therefore, the response is insufficient.

29 The boys like to keep their creek a secret. because, by telling everyone, people will start going down there, some will destroy the place and others will use it for things that a creek is not intended for.

Score Point: 0

In this response the student does not address the question asked (the boys like to keep their creek a secret). Furthermore, no text evidence is presented. Instead, the student offers opinions about issues that are not addressed in the selection.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION
OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

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

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

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

Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-5

29 They learn how easy the simple things in life can be taken away or damaged, like their creek and a fish's life. They learn to be more respectful to the things around them, and how good it feels to help save a life, opposed to destroying one.

Score Point: 1

This student offers several reasonable ideas about what the boys learned (how easy the simple things in life can be taken away or damaged...; to be more respectful to the things around them; how good it feels to save a life) but offers no text evidence to support any of these ideas.

RG-6

29 Their experience was good because they "stared after our success, glowing inwardly in our Samaritanism."

Score Point: 1

The student provides text that could support a reasonable analysis but offers only a vague reference to the question.

29 In the story "The Quality of Mercy" the two boys learn from an experience at the creek. They learnt that helping someone or something is rewarding to everyone involved. "And every spilled drop was blood and every step nearer, life."

Score Point: 1

While this student offers a reasonable idea (helping...is rewarding to everyone involved), the text evidence given does not support that idea ("And every spilled drop was blood and every step nearer, life"). Therefore, the response is only partially sufficient.

29 In the "Quality of Mercy" the boys learn from their experiences that you feel better about yourself after you help others. When the boys "came to the sanctuary" the two boys felt the deep satisfaction of helping the helpless.

Score Point: 1

The student presents a reasonable idea (you feel better about yourself after you help others). However, the snippet of text given ("came to the sanctuary") does not adequately support the statement of what the boys learned. In the rest of the response, the student merely repeats the idea of feeling good about helping others.

**READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION
OBJECTIVE 2**

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- must offer a reasonable theme, character trait, conflict, or change and support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

- must offer a reasonable analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression and support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, sufficient responses must be clear and specific.

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

Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-9

29 I believe the boys learned that a life is always worth saving, even if it is a fish. The boys knew that what they had done was a success. In paragraph 11 it says "As we stared after our success, glowing inwardly in our samaritism..." The boys also must have learned that it is worth it to fight for life. In paragraph 12 it says "Great was our concern for the trapped fish fighting hard for present life, mindless of a further soul..."

Score Point: 2

In this sufficient response the student provides a reasonable analysis (the boys learned that a life is always worth saving) along with a closely related additional thought (it is worth it to fight for life). Relevant text support is provided in the form of direct quotations.

RG-10

29 In the story "The Quality of Mercy" the boys learn that sometimes it can feel really good to help something, rather than hurt it. At the beginning of the story the two boys are attacking the muskrats daytime holes with rocks, then realizing that they may have killed a muskrat they feel ashamed. Later on they have a chance to redeem themselves by saving a near death fish's life, and they take it. The boys show the fish mercy by taking the fish from the creek to the pool where it will have room to swim and breath.

Score Point: 2

The idea provided (the boys learn that sometimes it can feel really good to help something, rather than hurt it) is supported by a specific synopsis of text that contrasts the boys' encounter with the muskrats with their encounter with the fish.

29 In "The Quality of Mercy," the boys learn that a pure adrenaline rush sometimes fails to provide pleasure, but instead a sense of regret. For example "...to do destruction to these small creatures always sank a little in our hearts when a stone would dart into the depths of one of the holes." This shows that the boys learned that harming nature for fun was wrong and makes them feel bad in the long run.

Score Point: 2

In this sufficient response, the student presents a well-stated analysis (a pure adrenaline rush sometimes fails to provide pleasure...) and provides a relevant quote from the text for support.

29 One of the boy's experiences at the creek is the feeling of accomplishment, heroism, and optimism that all things are possible, and they discover these emotions when they save the fish and safely transport it to a pool. They see its strength and determination while it fights to live and "grows strength right before" their eyes.

Score Point: 2

The student presents the reasonable analysis that the boys learned about the power of accomplishment, heroism, and optimism as they helped the fish; the text referenced ("grows strength right before" their eyes) provides relevant support.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION
OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

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

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

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

Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-13

In the "Quality of Mercy," the two boys learned that it's easy to succumb to inflicting damage on something for pure momentary pleasure as in when they
29 were throwing rocks at the muskrats. "The savage satisfaction of the attack and power, willing in our blood like a narcotic." This "narcotic," though, can't keep the boys from feeling guilty, not knowing if they were murderers or not. So they change their actions, and after saving the fish the boys realize how doing something positive is much better for the soul. "As we stared after our success, glowing inwardly in our Samaritanism..."

Score Point: 3

In this well-integrated response, the student deftly articulates the change in the boys (it's easy to succumb to inflicting damage...this can't keep the boys from feeling guilty) and connects that guilt to the eventual saving of the fish. The relevant text woven throughout the response strongly supports the student's analysis.

RG-14

29 The two boys learn an important virtue from their experiences at the creek... care and concern for others. When they attack the muskrats, the boys feel "saddened by the ultimate outcome" and stop their brutality due to an inner sense of care for the small creatures. This concern is also present when they find the injured fish, "Great was our concern for the trapped fish" and valiantly try to rescue the animal. They learn that the world benefits from the good deeds of an individual. "We stared after our success, glowing inwardly at our Samaritanism."

Score Point: 3

The writer of this exemplary response explains that the boys discover the virtue of caring and concern for others after the muskrat attack (stop their brutality due to an inner sense of care for the small creatures). Relevant text ("saddened by the ultimate outcome..."; "Great was our concern for the trapped fish...") supports the analysis.

At the beginning the boys considered the creek theirs ("our creek was our plaything") but didn't understand that their "ownership" made them responsible for the creek's creatures. Instead they took advantage of the muskrats, "hurling small rocks and stones" toward them. Later, though, they are moved to help the struggling fish. After they successfully carry the fish to the pots and watch it swim away from them and its own death, they glow inwardly and understand what it means to be a good *hamasitan*.

Score Point: 3

In this response the student presents a thoughtful analysis of the concept of "ownership" as it relates to the boys' sense of responsibility for the creek and its creatures. Support is provided by both quotations and specific synopsis of text.

When they helped the fish, the boys learned what real friendship is. They "watched without a word" as the poor dying fish struggled. Then without hesitating, like a real team, they started working together to come up with ideas on how to save the fish. "George found the bottom of a small milk bottle... I discovered a coffee can but it had rusted out. So we used my parka hood instead." Then they kept working together to carry the fish - "we began our march," "as we walked east," "we stared after our success." Saving the fish was a bond between them + the team-work made their friendship even stronger.

Score Point: 3

This student takes a unique and insightful approach by focusing on how saving the fish strengthened the boys' friendship as they urgently worked together for a common purpose. Relevant quotations from the text are interwoven throughout the response and provide strong support for the writer's ideas.

Objective 3 – Expository Selection

- 30 Based on your reading of “A ‘Real School’ is Born,” do you think Monroe made the right decision for the school? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from the selection.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

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

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

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

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

RG-17

30 NO I don't think that monroe chose the best school because if you read the story he got into A lot of trouble and if he went to Another school he maybe wouldn't have gotten into those things.

Score Point: 0

This response is insufficient because the student apparently confuses Monroe with Robinson Cuevas, does not understand the question, and provides an incorrect idea.

RG-18

30 Yes. Because without change it would be the same. "Like so many kids, Cuevas had been conditioned by bluff.

Score Point: 0

The student provides only a vague analysis (without change it would be the same) and includes irrelevant text in an attempt to support the analysis.

30 Yes!! Thank Monroe made a great
decision and I respect that sometimes
it's not easy. She decided it was time
for a change, and sometimes a change
is good and sometimes it's not.

Score Point: 0

In this response the analysis is too vague to determine whether or not it is reasonable: no text support is provided.

30 I think she made the right
decision because she really helped
the students.

Score Point: 0

This response is insufficient because even though the student attempts an analysis (because she really helped the students), the idea remains general. In addition, the analysis is not supported by text evidence.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

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

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

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

Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

RG-21

30 In the story "A 'Real School' IS Born," Monroe made a really good decision. Monroe knew that if she didn't make any changes then there was no way that the school was gonna improve. Monroe changed a lot of the students life at Fredick Douglass. After Dr. Monroe got finished with all her changes the school was a better place.

Score Point: 1

In this partially sufficient response, the student presents a reasonable idea (Monroe knew that if she didn't make any changes then there was no way that the school was going to improve) but provides no textual evidence for support.

RG-22

30 yes, Dr. Monroe made a wise choice, she had to save those kids life and their education. She had to shut down the school to start over. Like her sign says "The tradition of excellence continues."

Score Point: 1

The student provides an analysis (...to save those kids and their education; she had to shut down the school to start over), but the text evidence (like her sign says...) is only weakly linked to the student's idea; more specific and relevant text support would be needed for a higher score point.

30 Yes, Mrs. Monroe made the right decision for the school in paragraph 55 and 52 the school scored at the top their district in city-sponsored test for reading, and math. Thier was a banner that read "The tradition of excellence continues. Sometime, you just had to start from nothing - and be bold.

Score Point: 1

This response is partially sufficient; the student has provided relevant text to support the idea that Monroe made the right decision but has not explained why he/she thinks that Monroe was correct. Therefore, the required analysis is missing from this response.

30 I feel that Monroe made an excellent decision by closing the school and starting over again because it was a better learning environment for the children and they were actually excited to be there.

Score Point: 1

The student provides a reasonable analysis (it was a better learning environment...they were actually excited to be there) but fails to provide text support. The response, therefore, remains partially sufficient.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- must draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

- must offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the selection and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, sufficient responses must be clear and specific.

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

Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

RG-25

30 YES, I DO THINK SHE MADE THE RIGHT DECISION, BECAUSE AFTER SHE IMPROVED THE BUILDING AND RAISED EXPECTATIONS FOR THE KIDS, THEY DID GREAT IN THEIR CLASS-WORK. THE AUTHOR STATED, "SHE HAD BROUGHT ORDER AND BOLDNESS TO HER SCHOOL, AND IT NOW HOUSED MORE THAN 700 STUDENTS, NEARLY ALL WERE ON COURSE FOR COLLEGE."

Score Point: 2

The student provides both a reasonable idea (after she improved the building and raised expectations for the kids, they did great in their class-work) and a direct quote from the text to support the idea ("Nearly all were on course for college").

RG-26

30 I think Monroe made the right decision for the school when she remodeled it + gave the students rules to go by. I think it helped the children learn better. Before she said the school was more like a holding pen instead of a school. but after she was amazed when she walked in the classroom + saw that a student from the ghetto was actually speaking Japanese.

Score Point: 2

In this response the student's reasonable analysis is supported by a specific synopsis of a relevant portion of the text (but after she was amazed...that a student from the ghetto was actually speaking Japanese).

30 Definitely! The school was a chaotic "holding pen" where the "students" did not even try to conceal their truancy, the sat in the halls! Dr. Monroe altered the school in an astounding way, and the results were miraculous! "What she ended up with was a fine academic school running smoothly. Real School. She had innovative, dedicated teachers, and kids who were doing so remarkably well that even she was surprised."

Score Point: 2

In this sufficient response the student's analysis (...the students did not even try to conceal their truancy...Monroe altered the school in an astounding way and the results were miraculous) is supported with relevant quotes from the text.

30 I believe she made a great decision to change the school. She helped kids realize that there was a chance for them and that they could become something if they tried. Look at Robinson Cuevas, he used to be a trouble maker and not even do any work but then he became a good student and got accepted to Camisius College.

Score Point: 2

The student presents a reasonable idea (she helped kids realize that there was a chance for them and that they could become something if they tried) and supports it with a specific synopsis of the text (Look at Robinson Cuevas, he used to be a troublemaker...).

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful conclusion, interpretation, or prediction and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

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

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

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

Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

RG-29

30. Somehow, Monroe turns "chaos" into "class." I believe Monroe made the right decision for this specific school. Obviously, you can tell from just a simple, common, comparison of "before and after." Before Monroe the school was a war zone, "fire had left other classrooms gutted and boarded up... students sitting on the floor... others roaming in groups," that type of place is unquestionably wrong for a student's learning atmosphere. After Monroe, order was reestablished, "Nearly all [the students] were on course for college." "The tradition of excellence continues." That sounds like a much nicer, suitable environment for any type of student.

Score Point: 3

This student offers a particularly well-integrated response, supporting an insightful analysis (Monroe turns "chaos" into "class"...before Monroe the school was a war zone, after Monroe order was re-established) with relevant quotations from the text.

RG-30

30 Monroe arrived to the sound of students "running and screaming wildly." She walked through the tattered halls only to discover chaos and disorder. The decision she made was one of excellence. The once ghetto school was now equipped with clean white files and dedicated teachers. Most importantly, the students were learning. They began to "score at the top of their district" and "learning difficult foreign languages." "Nearly all students were on course for college." If that's not prestigious, I do not know what is!

Score Point: 3

In this response the student demonstrates an ability to provide thoughtful analysis interwoven with relevant pieces of text evidence. The result is a seamless and comprehensive response.

RG-31

I am thoroughly convinced that Monroe did make the right decision for the school. Seeing as she completely transformed the entire school, ³⁰the school banner which reads, "The tradition of excellence continues," proves that the attitude and mind-set throughout the school has been revamped and recharged. Had Monroe not decided to tell Mr. Lew that "The school is being closed... and we're starting all over," the school would still be repulsive and disorderly. Good judgement on Monroe's part led to Frederick Douglass being not just a school, but "Frederick Douglass Academy for college and professional careers."

Score Point: 3

Insightful analysis (the attitude and mind-set throughout the school has been revamped and recharged) is supported by well-chosen text to provide a response that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the question.

RG-32

Ms. Monroe was very smart and brave to force drastic changes to the school, like the controversial uniform rules. ³⁰ Monroe pointed out that the uniforms were already prevalent: those of violent gangs and designer-clothing retailers. "The school uniforms may have seemed harsh and old-fashioned to some, but those '150 wide-used 7th graders in navy and white uniforms' were really the lucky ones. Those uniforms helped to foster respect for learning and for themselves, and soon those kids were scoring 'at the top of their district in city-sponsored tests for reading and math.'"

Score Point: 3

This student focuses on Monroe's school uniform policy to provide a unique and insightful approach to the question. Well-stated analysis (uniforms may have seemed harsh and old-fashioned...those uniforms helped to foster respect for learning and for themselves) is supported by accurate, relevant text support in this thorough and coherent response.

Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

- 31 How is the fish in “The Quality of Mercy” similar to Robinson Cuevas in “A ‘Real School’ is Born”? Support your answer with evidence from **both** selections.

READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

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

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

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

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

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

RG-33

31 They are similiar to the enviramment that surrounds them. they learn in different ways. they come to their senses and resposns to whats good for them and to the enviroment around them. they do things that feel right to them. Give a chance to try again and do better.

Score Point: 0

Even though the student attempts to answer the question, this wordy response is so vague that it is not possible to determine if it is reasonable. In addition, the student does not provide any textual support.

31 The Quality of Mercy is talking about kids that go to this creek and find muskrats. "A Real School is Born" that's just talking about a woman want to go to a new school to see how she like it there but at that school she went to it's like prison u cant have CD players, gum, candy no physical or verbal violence.

Score Point: 0

The student does not address the question, making the response insufficient. Only a plot summary of each selection is offered; in addition, the plot summary of "A Real School Is Born" is incorrect.

31 The fish symbolizes Robinson Cuevas, in an odd way, one you would never think of, as the strong fish in "The Quality of Mercy" symbolizes Robinson Cuevas as a strong minded person. He lives, like the fish live.

Score Point: 0

The student attempts to draw a comparison between Robinson Cuevas and the fish. However, the premise that "he lives like the fish live" lacks clarity, and no text support is offered.

31 Robinson Cuevas in "A Real School is Born" and the boys in the passage "The Quality of Mercy" both start off with a negative way of thinking and acting. However with a simple change in situation the boys from both passages change their ways. "Three years after being given one more chance, Cuevas was one of her "aces"."

Score Point: 0

In this insufficient response the student fails to address the fish as required by the question. In addition, the analysis offered (with a simple change in situation, the boys from both passages change their ways) is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable.

READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

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

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

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

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

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

RG-37

31 The fish in "The Quality of mercy" is similar to Robinson Cuevas in "A 'Real School' Is Born" because the fish had to be saved by the two boys because it was stuck and Cuevas also had to be saved by Dr. Monroe because he was also stuck. The two boys in "The Quality of Mercy" played a important role in the fish life and in "A 'Real School' Is Born" Dr. Monroe played a important role in Cuevas life. Dr. Monroe and The two boys make a change in their environment.

Score Point: 1

In this response the student offers a reasonable conclusion based on both texts (the fish had to be saved...Cuevas also had to be saved) but fails to support the idea with textual support from either story. Therefore, the response is partially sufficient.

31 Both the Fish, and Robinson Cuevas get a second chance at Improving and starting over in life. In the story "The Quality of mercy:" The two boys, George and His Friend Help a fish get back into the creek so that the fish might live on and not die. In the story A "Real school" is born, Robinson Cuevas failed miserably in his Past school. But when arriving at the new and Improved school run by Idrairie Monroe, Robinson asks for a second chance and Monroe gives him the chance "she stamped the application, APPROVED."

Score Point: 1

In this partially sufficient response the student provides a reasonable analysis based on both selections (both the fish and Robinson Cuevas get a second chance). The student offers text support in the form of a specific synopsis for "Quality of Mercy" and a quotation for "A Real School Is Born." However, the quotation ("she stamped the application 'Approved'") is inaccurately used to support Monroe giving Robinson a second chance when he asked for one.

31 Both of them are similar because, they both were slowly ruining their lives, the fish, by flopping around in shallow water convulsively almost takin his own life, and Robinson by almost getting expelled, and he was ruining his own life by just doing nothing at all. And both of them at the last minute were saved and helped by a stranger.

Score Point: 1

In this response the student shows an understanding of a similarity between the fish and Cuevas (they were both ruining their lives...and both of them at the last minute were saved and helped by a stranger). However, no text support is provided for either selection.

31 They're the same because things got better for everybody. "And still we didn't speak, as the fish seemed to grow new strength before our eyes" (the fish). "The stocky, well-turned-out boy gave her the thumbs-up sign and smiled brilliantly... Cuevas was one of her aces, a top student." (Robinson Cuevas).

Score Point: 1

The student provides relevant quotations from both selections that would support a reasonable analysis dealing with a similarity between the fish and Cuevas. However, the attempt at analysis (things got better for everybody) lacks the necessary specificity, and the response remains partially sufficient.

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

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

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

- must offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections

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

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

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

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

RG-41

31 The fish in "The Quality of Mercy" had a second chance to live when the boys carried it to the deeper water it needed. "...watched the fish fight for life again." Robinson Cuevas in "A Real School is Born" had a second chance to succeed in life when Lorraine Monroe let him stay at the school if he promised to work hard and really try. Three years after being given one more chance, Cuevas was one of her "aces."

Score Point: 2

In this sufficient response, the student's analysis (the fish had a second chance to live...Robinson Cuevas had a second chance to succeed in life...) is supported by relevant quotations from each selection.

31 The Fish And Robinson Cuevas Were Both Reborn. "The Fish Was Almost Dead." But With The Boys Sympathy And Good Will The Fish Prevailed. "Taking Great Gulps Of Air From The Surface... The Fish Slowly Swam Around. In A Similar Fashion, Cuevas Went From The Ghetto And Numerous Second Chances To Go On To Be "Accepted At Canisius College In Buffalo, N.Y."

Score Point: 2

The student provides a reasonable idea (the fish and Robinson Cuevas were both reborn) and text from each selection to support the idea ("the fish slowly swam around..."; Cuevas was "accepted at Canisius College").

The Fish and Robinson Cuevas were very similar, because they
31 both seemed to be dead, no hope. The fish in "The Quality of
mercy" was stuck and hurt. "The tail that beat freely
upon the shallow water was split and ragged; scales were
missing from its battered side, and somewhere in the middle
of the fish was a wound..." The fish was basically dead, but
with a little help survived. Same goes for Robinson Cuevas he,
"...had failed miserably in the old school." With a second a
second chance given and a little help also was on his way
to college.

Score Point: 2

The student presents a reasonable interpretation that addresses both selections (they both seemed to be dead; no hope). This idea is supported by relevant quotations from each selection ("the tail...was split and ragged..."; "he had failed miserably in the old school") to create a clear and specific response.

31 The fish could be similar to Robinson Crusoe because it was in trouble. Like the fish was about to die because a swim damage, Robinson was about to fail in his education because of his bad attitude. "It rested now, in sheer exhaustion, every slight movement crying out that it was one more movement too many beyond the range of life's endurance." (Fish) "He was chronically in trouble for talking back to teachers and refusing to work." (Rob. Crusoe)

Score Point: 2

In this sufficient response the student offers a reasonable analysis (the fish was about to die; Robinson was about to fail) and provides relevant text support from both selections ("...in sheer exhaustion..."; "...chronically in trouble...").

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

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

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

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

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

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

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

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

RG-45

31 The fish in "The Quality of Mercy" and Robinson Cuevas in "A Real School is Born" were both given second chances by gracious individuals. The fish's rescuers were two young adventurers that happened to stumble across him as he was "...swimming weakly in the stream." Rescuing the little fish from peril, they "...headed for the big pool in the bird sanctuary, giving the ~~fish~~ fish a second chance at life. In the other selection, Robinson was "...in trouble for talking back to teachers and refusing to work." Upon confrontation with Dr. Monroe, Robinson asked "...to give me another chance." Graciously, Dr. Monroe agreed. Three years later, Robinson became one of Dr. Monroe's "aces" and was "accepted at Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y."

Score Point: 3

In this seamless, comprehensive response, the student's analysis (both given second chances by gracious individuals) is strongly supported with a mixture of specific synopsis and relevant quotations from both selections.

31 The fish and Robinson Cuevas both face adversity and with the intervention of others defeat it. In "The Quality of Mercy," the dying carp cannot swim upstream. After a frantic, make-shift rescue in the hood of a parka, the fish swims to safety while the boys say nothing, "glowing inwardly in [their] Samaritanism." In "A Real School is Born," Robinson Cuevas is his own worst enemy, "refusing to work" and not having the self-discipline to behave. Monroe has to give him an ultimatum ("things aren't working out") before he turns his life around.

Score Point: 3

Focusing on the idea of "intervention" (a frantic, make-shift rescue...; Monroe has to give him an ultimatum), the student weaves analysis with text support from both selections to provide an in-depth and thoughtful response to the question.

31 The fish and Robinson both had a destination they had to reach, but they had to work for it. The 2 boys took the dying fish to the big pool, but then the fish had to help itself - "it's tail moved convulsively... until it was successful." And "it gulped + thrashed its gills for 5 full minutes, as if cleansing out the putrefaction of near death." Robinson begged for a 2nd chance from Monroe and got it, but she couldn't turn his life around for him. Only until he took responsibility for his own future did he reach his potential, "becoming a top student who had just been accepted at Camisius College."

Score Point: 3

In this response the student takes an insightful approach by focusing on the active role that both the fish and Cuevas played in their own salvation (the fish had to help itself; only until he [Cuevas] took responsibility for his own future did he reach his potential). The student effectively pinpoints relevant quotations from both selections to support this analysis.

31 The fish's chances for survival are very slim if its circumstances are not changed, "about 10 inches long and far too large for our stream." Robinson Cuevas is also put in harsh circumstances and though he has the choice to get out of them, he does not grasp the good it will do for his life. "He was chronically in trouble." Outside interference was needed in both stories to overcome problems the subjects themselves could not solve. The two boys in "Mercy" "began our march of mercy" to give the fish a better chance of survival. In "A Real School" when Dr. Monroe decides to give Robinson a second chance and says to him "let's shake on it", she opens his eyes to better his own life.

Score Point: 3

In this comprehensive response, the student compares the "harsh circumstances" that both the fish and Cuevas find themselves in as well as the help that they receive to change those circumstances. Relevant quotations from both selections provide strong support for this thoughtful analysis.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Rubrics and Sample Responses

Write an essay explaining the importance of accepting responsibility.

The information in the box below will help you remember what you should think about when you write your composition.

REMEMBER—YOU SHOULD

- write about the assigned topic
- make your writing thoughtful and interesting
- make sure that each sentence you write contributes to your composition as a whole
- make sure that your ideas are clear and easy for the reader to follow
- write about your ideas in depth so that the reader is able to develop a good understanding of what you are saying
- proofread your writing to correct errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure

The names of individuals mentioned in the compositions have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the students whose responses appear in this guide.

SCORE POINT 1

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS AN INEFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

- Individual paragraphs and/or the composition as a whole are not focused. The writer may shift abruptly from idea to idea, making it difficult for the reader to understand how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- The composition as a whole has little, or no, sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion, if present, may be perfunctory.
- A substantial amount of writing may be extraneous because it does not contribute to the development or quality of the composition. In some cases, the composition overall may be only weakly connected to the prompt.

Organization

- The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and/or paragraph to paragraph is not logical. Sometimes weak progression results from an absence of transitions or from the use of transitions that do not make sense. At other times, the progression of thought is simply not evident, even if appropriate transitions are included.
- An organizational strategy is not evident. The writer may present ideas in a random or haphazard way, making the composition difficult to follow.
- Wordiness and/or repetition may stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The writer presents one or more ideas but provides little or no development of those ideas.
- The writer presents one or more ideas and attempts to develop them. However, this development is so general or vague that it prevents the reader from understanding the writer's ideas.
- The writer presents only a plot summary of a published piece of writing, a movie, or a television show.
- The writer omits information, which creates significant gaps between ideas. These gaps prevent the reader from clearly understanding those ideas.

Voice

- The writer does not engage the reader, therefore failing to establish a connection.
- There may be little or no sense of the writer's individual voice. The composition does not sound authentic or original. The writer is unable to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

- There is little or no evidence in the composition that the writer can correctly apply the conventions of the English language. Severe and/or frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure may cause the writing to be unclear or difficult to read. These errors weaken the composition by causing an overall lack of fluency.
- The writer may misuse or omit words and phrases and may frequently write awkward sentences. These weaknesses interfere with the effective communication of ideas.

Being responsible is very important. We all do actions that have consequences. Some can be good and some can be very bad. We all have to accept our responsibilities for good. For example, if you have a little brother or sister and you have to babysit him/her, you have to be very responsible. We can't think that just because our parents aren't home we can do whatever we want. Everyone living in this world is responsible for themselves. We all have responsibilities and we have to accept them even if they're bad. Being responsible can be a lot of hard work, but we have to deal with responsibilities no matter what. We find responsibilities everywhere we go, so why hide from responsibilities, because even if we don't want to we have to deal with them. Today, tomorrow, and for the rest of our lives.

Score Point: 1

In this composition the writer presents the thesis statement that we all have to accept our responsibilities for good. Although the writer attempts to develop this thesis with a babysitting example, this development is so brief and general that it is ineffective. In the second half of the response, the progression of thought from sentence to sentence is weak because of repetition (Everyone living in the world is responsible for themselves. We all have responsibilities and we have to accept them even if they're bad. We have to deal with responsibilities no matter what). This repetition, which further hinders the development of the student's ideas, also limits the sense of the writer's voice.

Responsibility is a very important thing in life. because it's involed in your life forever. you got to go to school every-day till you grvate from high school. But also you have alot of responsibility in School you have to be on time School and class, you have to do all your work for class to pass. YOU have to know what kind of people you are hanging out with.

if your smart you got to college right after high school because that a big responsibility. so you can get the cheer you want for so long because you did the smart thing, the responsialbe thing a stayed in school. But also they more responsialbe thing you got to do in life while you got to school you got to get a car, house while some thing to live under because i know people don't want to live with ma'ma forever.

While that a lot of stuff to do in life that way you got to be responsialbe. so you go place and be some thing life. Because responsibility is a big thing in life and if you don't have you're not going anywhere in life.

Score Point: 1

The writer of this ineffective response focuses on the idea that responsibility is important as one progresses through life. In attempting to develop this theme, the writer presents a series of random, repetitive ideas, which weakens the progression of thought both from sentence to sentence and from idea to idea. In addition, the omission of words, severe and frequent errors in usage and spelling, and inappropriate sentence boundaries interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and contribute to an overall lack of fluency.

Accepting responsibility is a very important task & shows maturity, something many people look for in a good person, whether it be for a friend, employee, or leader.

It is always important to accept responsibility, no matter the size or importance of the task. A story I read once titled "The Quality of Mercy" by H. Barrett Pennell Jr. was about a couple of young boys going on an "adventure" pretending to be explorers by a local creek. They come across a shallow part in the creek and see a hurt fish, struggling to get away, but the current is too strong. Thinking the recent storm must've accidentally brought the fish there, they realize that the fish could possibly die, so they take responsibility and do what they can to save the fish. They take it to a deeper part of the stream & let it go. To those young boys saving that fish's life was very important to them and they took responsibility and did it.

The importance of responsibility may not always be as small as saving a fish in a stream. It could be a very difficult task affecting many people. An article I read recently, titled "A 'Real School' is Born" by Collin Perry involves a woman named Lorraine Monroe who receives the job as principal of Frederick Douglass Intermediate, a very poor school in the inner-cities of New York. She realizes the help the school needs, not only is the school in terrible shape with broken windows and graffitied walls but the students weren't getting an education and the teachers weren't making them, even the kids that wanted to learn were too afraid to try. Upon Monroe seeing this she knew it was time to take action. She took the responsibility and turned that school around. She shut down

the school and remodelled it and made new rules, changed the dresscode to uniforms and reopened the school with a brand new start. With Monroe accepting that responsibility, the school scored at the top of the district for city-sponsored test and nearly all 700 of her students were on a course for college, something she was extremely proud of. It was very important for Dr. Lorraine Monroe to accept that responsibility, otherwise her 700 plus students may have never had a second chance at getting the education they needed and deserved.

Accepting responsibility is very important no matter how big or small the task or outcome is. With that responsibility comes maturity and trust along with many other good character qualities many people look for in a good, responsible person.

Score Point: 1

This response is ineffective because it is, for the most part, a summary of events in "The Quality of Mercy" and "A 'Real School' Is Born." The writer attempts to focus on the theme that responsibility shows maturity, but because he or she relies on retelling rather than analysis, there is little sense of the writer's own original ideas or authentic voice.

Accepting responsibility is important. If no one accepted any responsibility, nothing would ever get done. If parents didn't accept responsibility and pay bills, the rest of the family wouldn't have a place to live. If the president of the United States of America didn't accept responsibility, the country could be in total chaos.

Accepting responsibility shows that you are a true leader. If you are put in a leadership position, you should take initiative and accept responsibility. If you don't then you are not a true leader. The main character in "The Quality of Mercy", accepted responsibility by deciding to try to save the fish.

Accepting responsibility also shows that you care. NASA is showing that they care about what happened to the space shuttle. They are starting the tedious of trying to piece back together the space shuttle that is now in thousands of pieces, and figure out why it blew up. This shows that they really care about what happened. Lorraine Monroe, from the story "A 'Real School' is Born" showed that she cared

by accepting responsibility to revitalize the school.

This took much hard work that she wouldn't have done if she hadn't cared. Overall, accepting responsibility is important

Score Point: 1

In the introduction, the student presents the thesis that accepting responsibility is important because without responsibility, nothing would ever get done. However, the two body paragraphs focus on ideas (accepting responsibility shows you are a true leader, shows you care) that are not meaningfully connected to the thesis. This lack of focus and coherence contributes to the composition's ineffectiveness. In addition, the writer shifts quickly from idea to idea both within and across paragraphs, weakening the organization and causing the development of ideas to be general.

SCORE POINT 2

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

- Individual paragraphs and/or the composition as a whole are somewhat focused. The writer may shift quickly from idea to idea, but the reader has no difficulty understanding how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- The composition as a whole has some sense of completeness. The writer includes an introduction and conclusion, but they may be superficial.
- Some of the writing may be extraneous because it does not contribute to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

- The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and/or paragraph to paragraph may not always be smooth or completely logical. Sometimes the writer needs to strengthen the progression by including more meaningful transitions; at other times the writer simply needs to establish a clearer link between ideas.
- The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses do not enable the writer to present ideas effectively.
- Some wordiness and/or repetition may be evident, but these weaknesses do not completely stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The writer attempts to develop the composition by listing ideas or briefly explaining them. In both of these cases, the development remains superficial, limiting the reader's understanding and appreciation of the writer's ideas.
- The writer presents one or more ideas and attempts to develop them. However, there is little evidence of depth of thinking because this development may be somewhat general, inconsistent, or contrived.
- The writer may omit small pieces of information that create minor gaps between ideas. However, these gaps do not prevent the reader from understanding those ideas.

Voice

- There may be moments when the writer engages the reader but fails to sustain the connection.
- Individual paragraphs or sections of the composition may sound authentic or original, but the writer has difficulty expressing his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

- Errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure throughout the composition may indicate a limited control of conventions. Although these errors do not cause the writing to be unclear, they weaken the overall fluency of the composition.
- The writer may include some simple or inaccurate words and phrases and may write some awkward sentences. These weaknesses limit the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

Score Point 2 Guide Papers

TAKS Gr. 10 Make-Up
Spring 2004

WG-5a

In order to lead a successful life you must be willing to accept responsibilities. Being responsible means being reliable, and which is important because it leads to a happier life.

Responsibility is an honorable strong attribute that will help you get what you want. For example, a friend of mine wanted a car for her sixteenth birthday and received one because she was told in order for her to get the car she would have to show her parents that they could rely on her with the responsibility of a car. The whole month before her birthday she spent doing chores and helping others. This showed her parents that they could rely on her taking good care of the car. Showing that you have responsibility will only lead you to good things.

Responsibility has a positive

impact toward your reputation. Having a good reputation shows you the path to success. Accepting responsibility will convert the way a person looks upon you. To keep a hold of a good reputation, you must be willing to acknowledge and take advantage of the responsibilities you are capable of having.

To have trust in someone is important. The importance of being able to fulfill ones obligations is expressing your responsibilities and positive attributes.

Score Point: 2

In this response the writer focuses on the idea that to be successful in life you must be willing to accept responsibilities. The writer begins with a superficial discussion of a friend who did chores to prove to her parents that she was responsible enough to have a car. Then the writer switches to a philosophical discussion of how responsibility can affect your reputation; however, this discussion remains general (a good reputation shows you the path to success). Though the transition between the two paragraphs could be stronger, the implicit link is strong enough for the composition to be considered somewhat effective.

There comes a time in everyone's life where accepting responsibility is a must. Thus making it an important part of growing up and more importantly an important part of life. Responsibility can be considered in many categories such as cleaning your room or paying your bills. Never the less it's a part of every individual's life.

There's many occasions I can recall in which I have had to deal with knowing and understanding the responsibilities I will have to endure to proceed with life. There's an occasion I specifically recall in which me, my fellow running buddies, and my coach traveled to Colorado. We drove up there to train for cross country and track. Well we had to stay there in tents for two weeks, wash our own clothes, buy our own food, and basically support ourselves, without the aid of our parents. Undoubtedly that trip taught me that it takes a lot of effort to take care of myself. I also learned not to take advantage of my parents, and that one day I'll have to begin to do everything for myself for the rest of my life.

So accepting responsibility is necessary. It's the difference between ~~being~~ growing up to be a adult or staying an immature teenager.

Score Point: 2

The writer of this response uses a reflective approach to focus on the idea that responsibility is a must as one matures in life. The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence is logical, and the conventions are generally good; however, the ideas that the writer attempts to develop remain superficial because the writer merely lists the activities done on the trip (stay in tents, wash our own clothes, buy our own food, and basically support ourselves). Because the writer does not develop these ideas further, the reader has only a limited understanding of the ideas.

Responsibility: it is not just a word, or a thing; It is a necessary trait to have to excel in life. When striving for that one goal that you want to reach so badly, responsibility has to be obtained in order to achieve it. It is important to have for every little detail that life has to offer. Whether it be taking out the trash, or making your biggest financial investment ever, responsibility is there. Accepting responsibility is an extremely important task, and plays a big role on how successful your life turns out to be.

To begin with, without taking some responsibility, you could make bad choices that could ruin your future. My cousin is a prime example. She is nineteen years old, and has a three year old daughter. When she was younger, she made some bad decisions and ended up with something that never should have happened. All of that was because she lacked the responsibility that it took to stop what was going to happen. Now she has to pay the price for something that she

could have avoided so easily.

In addition, on one episode of Friends, they were in Las Vegas.

Rachel and Ross both got very drunk and without even thinking about what they were doing, got married.

Even though they were drunk, that's no excuse for the lack of responsibility on their part. If you are not responsible for your actions, you will end up regretting it, and wish you had thought about things more thoroughly.

Therefore, responsibility is very important to have, and everyone needs to accept the fact that it puts a huge impact on your life. Depending on whether you fully accept all your responsibilities, it can either make or break you. Responsibility will always be there, but whether you accept it is your choice, and will only make things better in the end.

Score Point: 2

Although each idea in the composition is somewhat focused (anecdote about the cousin, retelling of the *Friends* episode), the unifying link is weak, which limits the overall coherence of the composition. In addition, the development of ideas remains superficial (she made some bad decisions and ended up with something that never should have happened), which limits the reader's understanding of the writer's ideas.

Did you ever have to cut the yard or wash the cars when you did not feel like it. How about watching your brother on a Friday night while your friends go the movies without you. And worst of all, you have to do a project that is due the next day and you want to beat a Blockbuster game you got to return before midnight. These few things above can be classified as a 6 syllable word called responsibility. Being responsible needs to come in everyone's life. Being responsible determines if you can handle a job or even have children of your own. Anyway who wants to be with someone who cannot be on time for anything, 25 years old but acts like a third grader, or (true story) forget a baby in the back seat of a car for 5 hours in 90 degree weather while the woman is in the mall with her friends. There is no reason for that to happen. That shows no responsibility what so ever. Being responsible is not an easy thing. It is not something you can earn all in one day. In order for others to think you are responsible they got to believe that you

are someone to be trusted. But in the end
it is worth it.

Score Point: 2

The writer of this somewhat effective response focuses on the philosophical idea that to earn responsibility you need to be trusted. The writer's voice is apparent, but the ideas in the composition are superficially developed because they are merely listed as hypothetical questions (who wants to be with someone who cannot be on time for anything, 25 years old but acts like a third grader, forget a baby in the back seat of a car for 5 hours).

SCORE POINT 3

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A GENERALLY EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

- Individual paragraphs and the composition as a whole are, for the most part, focused. The writer generally shows the clear relationship between ideas, making few sudden shifts from one idea to the next.
- The composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion add some depth to the composition.
- Most of the writing contributes to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

- The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is generally smooth and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and the links between ideas are logical.
- The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses are generally effective.
- Wordiness and/or repetition, if present, are minor problems that do not stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The writer attempts to develop all the ideas included in the composition. Although some ideas may be developed more thoroughly and specifically than others, the development overall reflects some depth of thought, enabling the reader to generally understand and appreciate the writer's ideas.
- The writer's presentation of some ideas may be thoughtful. There may be little evidence that the writer has been willing to take compositional risks when developing the topic.

Voice

- The writer engages the reader and sustains that connection throughout most of the composition.
- For the most part, the composition sounds authentic and original. The writer is generally able to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

- The writer generally demonstrates a good command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. Although the writer may make minor errors, they create few disruptions in the fluency of the composition.
- The words, phrases, and sentence structures the writer uses are generally appropriate and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

Responsibility, it's a big deal. Responsibility is what gives you freedoms, it's what sets you apart from everyone else. Being responsible causes people to trust you. Without responsibility, you aren't trusted.

I remember when I was thirteen-years-old how I had always wanted to babysit. My mother would always tell me what a huge responsibility taking care of other people's kids was, and how trustworthy I had to be. I thought nothing of it, because all I wanted was the title of "Babysitter." When I was thirteen, I was immature and I had slacking tendencies, but I wanted to babysit so bad, I was willing to do anything to gain acceptance and responsibility from my mom. At first, I wasn't exactly sure what I had to do to show more responsibility. So I would take out the trash, walk my dog, and clean the kitchen. After a month of doing all these chores, I asked my mom again if I could babysit, and she said to me, "You're showing signs of improvement but babysitting is a huge responsibility, that I don't think you can take on right now." So I worked harder, this time doing things my

mom hadn't even asked me to do. I kept up with all my chores, and tasks on a continual schedule for a month. And that's when my mom decided I was responsible enough to babysit. That was my day of triumph, I had earned my responsibility.

Now, I am fifteen, and my day to day responsibilities have increased. But because I worked so hard to gain my parents' trust, they also let me do what I want to do, knowing I will make a responsible decision. Responsibility, gave me, my freedoms.

In conclusion, responsibility is an important part of life, and growing up. Earning responsibility isn't as easy as some may think. You have to be dependable and honest, and trustworthy. Responsibility leads to many freedoms. And for me, responsibility and trust walked hand in hand.

Score Point: 3

The writer of this personal narrative focuses on the idea that gaining trust and earning responsibility are interrelated. The writer's progression of thought is logical because the student moves consistently through time (I remember when I was thirteen-years-old. Now I am fifteen). Although the ideas in the first body paragraph are more thoroughly developed than those in the second, the overall development reflects some depth of thought. In addition, the composition sounds authentic, and the writer demonstrates a consistent control of conventions.

Responsibility plays a large role in our lives everyday. We start accepting responsibility at a young age. And we accept more and more responsibility as we mature. When we used crayons to create a mural on our freshly painted bedroom wall at the age of two, we did not accept responsibility, but it was forced upon us by our parents after they discovered what we had done. As we cleared off the crayon marks, we began to discover what responsibility was. At the age of five, when our older brother was mean to us, we accepted responsibility after we pinched him back. Instead of waiting for him to go tell our parents, we went and told them first. We accepted responsibility at the age of ten when we imagined telling our teacher, "my dog ate my homework," when in reality our favorite tv show was on. Even though at first we didn't feel like doing our homework, we did it anyway because we knew it was the right thing to do.

Now that we are getting older, we are accepting more responsibilities. We are

getting jobs, going to college, and moving away from home. Some people can handle responsibility better than others. But no matter what the situation, we have to accept responsibility because in doing so, we portray a willingness to move on to the next stage of our life. Without this crucial willingness, we would still be creating the landscape of the Grand Canyon on the walls of our childhood bedroom.

Score Point: 3

The writer of this engaging composition focuses on the philosophical idea that accepting responsibility for what you do is crucial to your growth as a person. The writer uses three vignettes from three different points in childhood to illustrate this point. Although none of the vignettes is thoroughly developed, the writer includes enough specific details to create some depth of development. In addition, the progression of thought from sentence to sentence and vignette to vignette is generally smooth and controlled.

Have you ever taken responsibility for something and not let it go until the job was done? Most people finish what they take responsibility for. Once you accept responsibility for something you usually see it to the end. Both stories showed that this idea is true.

In the first story, "The Quality of Mercy" the boys take responsibility for many things. When the boys find the wounded fish in the creek they decide to save it and use their resources to do so. They could have just left the fish in the creek and not bothered with it, but they decided to rescue it. Even though there was nothing to be gained by saving the fish. Then when they can't find a suitable container the narrator volunteers his parka hood. The boys could have just given up and not finished what they started. But they were responsible enough to not stop until the job was done.

The same thing happened in "A Real School's Born". In this story the lead character Lorraine Monroe takes full responsibility for everything she does. When

Monroe first goes to the school and finds it is a mess, she doesn't give up. Instead she decides to redesign how the school works. She could have just left and found another job. She also could have just left the school as it was and let it continue as a "fake school"; but she didn't want to just be an average principal. Also, later when her student Robinson is acting up and getting low grades she doesn't just give up. She turns him into one of her "ace" students getting the best grades. Monroe could have just let him fail. She didn't have to spend her time with the boy trying to get him to turn his life around.

Once you accept responsibility for something you should see it to the end. Only irresponsible people give up on what they start. Nobody wants to be labeled irresponsible.

Score Point: 3

The writer of this generally effective response focuses on the selections to develop the thesis that once you accept responsibility for something, you usually carry it through to the end. By providing some analysis of both selections (The boys could have just given up and not finished what they started...; She didn't have to spend her time with the boy trying to get him to turn his life around), the writer is able to help the reader understand the thesis. In addition, consistent control of conventions contributes to the overall fluency of the composition.

You are sitting down on your big, comfy, leather couch enjoying your regular Saturday morning cartoons. The news rudely interrupts your tradition. "We have just received information from NASA that an asteroid the size of Canada is heading straight for Earth," the news lady exclaimed. "What?" you're thinking "Is this some kind of joke?" The news lady tries to catch her breath, "NASA will be calling a lucky winner to help them on their flight to destroy it. If that person fails... Earth will be destroyed." She's silent. The phone rings and startles you. You walk ever so carefully, to the phone and pick it up. "Hello, this is NASA, you are the lucky winner." You start to feel queasy. Accepting responsibility is as stressful as this at times.

Accepting responsibility is much like feeling that the whole world is depending on you. Accepting it is part of growing up. When you are young you can't do everything on your own. You don't have much responsibility. It is very hard to accept the fact that something depends on you. The first step in maturing is gaining responsibility for some things. In order to fulfill your duty you have to be able to accept the fact that it is up to you. The most important thing out there is accepting responsibility. If you never accept it then you will never accomplish it. Accepting responsibility is like catching a fish. The fish will get hooked on your hook but if you never pull it up

you will never get your reward. Accepting it is like reeling in your fish. If you want to have success you have to learn to accept responsibility.

When I started High school it was alot like catching a fish. I had my stick in the water but I was not reeling in my big fish. I had not yet accepted the responsibility of being more on my own and depending on me to make most of my decisions. It was hard at first, but then I realized how important and critical it is to accept responsibility. I, soon after, reeled in my fish. I didn't make as big of a catch as I had hoped because I didn't realize how important it is to accept responsibility. I have learned tremendously since then and have made many successful catches.

The next time you have a huge responsibility don't forget to reel in your fish and accept the facts. That is, after all, the most important step.

Score Point: 3

The writer of this unique, reflective composition compares going to high school to catching a fish to develop the idea that accepting responsibility is part of growing up. The writer's use of meaningful transitions (Accepting responsibility is much like feeling that the whole world is depending on you) contributes to the overall coherence of the composition. In addition, the writer's effective word choice (I had my stick in the water, but I was not reeling in my big fish) allows the reader to better understand the sustained analogy connecting fishing and responsibility.

SCORE POINT 4

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

- Individual paragraphs and the composition as a whole are focused. This sustained focus enables the reader to understand and appreciate how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- The composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion are meaningful because they add depth to the composition.
- Most, if not all, of the writing contributes to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

- The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is smooth and controlled. The writer's use of meaningful transitions and the logical movement from idea to idea strengthen this progression.
- The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses enhance the writer's ability to present ideas clearly and effectively.

Development of Ideas

- The writer's thorough and specific development of each idea creates depth of thought in the composition, enabling the reader to truly understand and appreciate the writer's ideas.
- The writer's presentation of ideas is thoughtful or insightful. The writer may approach the topic from an unusual perspective, use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, or make interesting connections between ideas. In all these cases, the writer's willingness to take compositional risks enhances the quality of the content.

Voice

- The writer engages the reader and sustains this connection throughout the composition.
- The composition sounds authentic and original. The writer is able to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

- The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the composition. The writer demonstrates a consistent command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. When the writer attempts to communicate complex ideas through sophisticated forms of expression, he/she may make minor errors as a result of these compositional risks. These types of errors do not detract from the overall fluency of the composition.
- The words, phrases, and sentence structures the writer uses enhance the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

Everyone has been in a situation that involved someone taking the blame. These predicaments arise at home, school, and in our everyday lives. Accepting responsibility for your actions demonstrates nobility, makes it easier for others to trust you, and sometimes weakens the consequences.

Oh no—that expensive lamp that NICK'S mom bought last week just ran into his baseball! He knew he wasn't supposed to be playing ball in the house anyway, but that lamp wasn't supposed to be there either, right? Now, NICK has two options, he can blame the incident on his 5-year old brother (even though he was in his own room), or he can face the consequences and tell his mom the truth. Going with option number two, of course his mom is still mad, but she realizes that it took a lot of courage to admit his mistake. Sure, NICK has to clean up his mess and give up his allowance until that lamp is paid for, but that's better than the punishment that he would have received had he chosen to lie to his mom and have her find out on her own. Also, NICK'S mom knows that she can trust him to make good decisions, learn from his mistakes, and always tell her the truth. By accepting responsibility for his actions, NICK knows that he did the right thing, and has learned from this incident.

A few years later we find NICK in college. Having only a couple of classes a week is suiting him just fine, and he's thoroughly enjoying the extra time that he gets to spend with his friends. Unfortunately, a few of his buddies

get this bright idea to go paint the town - literally. NICK joins them at 2 am. on a Wednesday morning, and they decide that their school's mascot would look great on the rival school's water tower. When the police notice the graffiti later that day, they head straight for the school. The students hear the traditional, "if you confess now, we won't be as harsh." NICK has been in this predicament before, so he does the honorable thing and turns himself in privately. None of his accomplices confess, so he is left to clean the water tower and pay a hefty fine by himself. Unfortunately, for his friends, the police find out about their involvement from another source. Their punishment is much greater and they are banned from the campus. Life goes back to normal for NICK, but his pals will never be able to face their parents. NICK knows that he did the right thing and will try to stay out of that kind of trouble from now on.

When it comes to accepting responsibility, everyone has their own methods. When you decide to confess and admit your mistakes, the people around you will probably take you more seriously and have an easier time trusting you. The consequences aren't as harsh on the outside, or the inside when you know you've done the right thing.

Score Point: 4

The writer of this highly effective response uses an anecdote to explain that accepting responsibility for your actions makes it easier for others to trust you. The presentation of ideas within each paragraph is smooth and controlled. Effective use of meaningful transitions (a few years later we find Nick in college) strengthens the progression of thought throughout the composition. Thorough development and specific word choice create depth of thought, while consistent control of conventions and an engaging voice further strengthen this response.

TRACY tugged, impatiently on her father's arm.
"I like that one." She said excitedly, pointing to
a compact, dark-blue Toyota, "It's got a CD
player, and everything!"

TRACY GREEN stood in the sweltering hot parking lot of
the car dealership with her parents. She wiped her sweaty
bangs out of her eyes. She had been looking at car
after car for hours on end with no luck. She
and her parents were down to the last few rows
of used cars in the lot, and like buried treasure, TRACY
saw the one she had to have, sitting there, as if it was
waiting for her to find it.

The car dealer piped up that he would be happy to go
get the keys, if she would care to take it on a test run.

TRACY nodded vigorously.

"Sure," her father consented, "Why not?"

Five minutes later, TRACY and her parents were sitting in the
practically brand-new car, air conditioning blasting.

A few hours later, at the tender age of 16, TRACY
found herself the proud owner of her very own 2002
model Toyota Corolla 'S'.

That night, TRACY dreamed of all the places she would
be driving herself to now - parties, concerts, ... even college.
It was not for her to take in.

But, because of new restrictions, she could not
drive without one of her parents beside her in the car, for six

months.

"Six whole months!" TRACY exclaimed, "What's the point of driving myself around, if you have to come with me?"

"Calm down, TRACY," Her father replied sternly, "believe it or not, it does serve a purpose besides making your life miserable. It's for your safety."

TRACY finally relented, but still refused to drive with her parents in the car, and simply did not drive at all.

Six months later, TRACY began driving again, but without her parents. On the first day of her 'automotive freedom', TRACY took herself, and her best friend to school. Everything went smoothly on the way there.

When the 3:30 bell rang, TRACY rushed out to the school's parking lot, found her car, and her friend, and backed out of her space to wait in line at the stop sign to get out of the parking lot.

TRACY quickly became bored of waiting in the slow traffic, and let her attention wander to chatting with her friend, and listening to the radio. And, suddenly, the first day TRACY drove her new car, and the day she had her first car which became one and the same, as he absentmindedly rear-ended the car in front of her.

Later on, TRACY would realize that driving is a huge responsibility - not one to be taken lightly. She had learned that lesson the hard way, but she had learned it.

Score Point: 4

The writer of this composition uses a narrative organizational strategy to focus on the theme that driving is a huge responsibility. The writer's progression of thought moves logically through time, allowing the reader to understand the presentation of the writer's ideas. In addition, through the specific and thorough development of the composition, including the effective use of dialogue, the reader is able to understand the writer's unique perspective.

Respect, and the privileges which accompany it, must be earned by repeatedly demonstrating the ability to assume responsibility and accept accountability for one's own actions. These important qualities are necessary in order to become a mature human being and a person worthy of others' trust ^{and admiration}. The ability to claim responsibility for your errors, as well as your triumphs, is ~~one~~ of the major characteristics which set apart civilized people from simple animals.

Anyone who has ever made a mistake is able to express the shame and embarrassment which accompany it. However, everybody makes mistakes, it is an individual's ability to accept the consequences that makes them an ethical person. When you accidentally drop a glass or ding a car, it may be difficult to take the blame, and possible punishment. Simply trying to hide the evidence, fleeing the scene, or shifting the guilt onto someone else may seem like the easiest way out, but it is not right.

From the time we are children, this lesson is reinforced by parents, society and experience. It is much less damaging to a person's character to confess your transgressions than it is to attempt to hide these actions behind a wall of deception.

By continuously exhibiting your propensity to handle responsibility and accept accountability, a person will gain the respect of their peers.

Consistently exemplifying these qualities will allow you to gain the trust of others, and help to build a strong relationship. A person is far more likely to share with someone whom they feel can be depended upon, even in difficult circumstances, to act conscientiously. However, if there is dishonesty and doubt about a person's character, it may be difficult for others to rely upon them. A lie may cause irreversable damage to a relationship which would have been mutually beneficial. For example, if a teenage driver puts a dent in the bumper and admits to it they may be grounded ^{for a period of time} and forced to pay for the damage. However, if they try to conceal the accident and it is discovered, it may be a long time before their parents would be capable of trusting them with any great responsibility, such as a job or other priveleges which depend on their honest communication. Only by proving again and again that you are able to handle challenging situations properly can respect be earned back.

Responsibility is greatly valued in today's world by parents, teachers, employers, and friends. By taking on a duty, you are promising to put forward your best effort. Once you commit yourself; it is how well you accomplish the task that determines the merit of your character.

Score Point: 4

In this highly effective philosophical response, the writer focuses on the idea that people should have personal accountability for their actions. The progression of thought moves logically from sentence to sentence as well as paragraph to paragraph. Each idea in the composition is thoroughly developed, allowing the reader to fully understand what the writer is attempting to say. The student's voice is conveyed through the philosophical tone and the specific word choice of the response (It is much less damaging to a person's character to confess your transgressions than it is to attempt to hide these actions behind a wall of deception). In addition, the writer shows consistent control of the conventions of the English language.

The morning comes and I awake. My visions of slumber slowly fade away. The day is young and the basketball court beckons me to play with him. But the basketball court is not the only thing that calls to me; my mother as well. With disappointing ears I hear my mother say, "DAVID I need you to take out the trash, Clean your room, Rake the leaves, do the dishes, etc. A neverending list of duties and responsibilities, slowly build a wall keeping me from life. And the question I ask myself is do I tear down the wall, brick by brick, or do I just go around it?"

Surprisingly, I decide to take down the wall. As the hours pass, one by one my chores begin to disappear into the night and the wall begins to slowly come down. But as I do my chores, I notice that my mother is watching in amusement. With her little smile on that face of hers, I begin to wonder if she finds my suffering amusing. I doubt that though. Ever since I can remember, all my mother would do was take care of me and my family, & do all the chores for us. Even chores I've done today, I have seen my mother do. But why? Why does she accept these responsibilities & forget about her own pleasures? I'll probably never know.

The day has died and night has conquered the

the skies of today. Slowly I begin to remove the last stone of my wall of responsibilities.

Still my mother sits there watching me, with that smile on her face. I close and lock the gate, with a sigh of relief. I walk towards my mother & sit next to her on the swing. A moment of silence sets in. Then my mother says, "You've had a busy day... and I know how much you wanted to go play basket ball... and I..."

"What is it mom?" I said.

Suddenly she gives me a big hug that lasts for almost 2 minutes. I was speechless, then the moment passed. She said, "Do you still want to play?"

Then I said "Are you sure you're up to it?"

She replied, "Always."

Right at that moment, I finally understood.

I understood why all those years, my mom spent doing all those things for my family. Why she spent all those years tearing down her own wall. It was because she loved me. I know now that people accept responsibility to please the ones they love. That's why it was important to take down my wall. To please my mom.

As the night grows old, and wind begins to blow, my mother & I begin to play our little game but now with a better understanding of what the game is. The game that we play is the game of life... the game of love... the game of living.

Score Point: 4

The writer of this highly effective response combines organizational strategies—part reflective, part descriptive, part philosophical—to discuss the idea of the writer's appreciation of his mother. The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence is smooth and controlled. In addition, the thoughtful and insightful presentation of ideas (I understood why all those years my mom spent doing all those things for my family. Why she spent all those years tearing down her own wall. It was because she loved me) engages the reader and enhances the overall effectiveness of the composition.