

ASSIGNMENT I: PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS

Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes

You have been provided with three texts on pages 1 to 4. One interpretation of “Itinerary,” by Eamon Grennan, suggests that the speaker recognizes the need to secure a broader perspective. In the excerpt from “A Few Notes for Orpheus,” an estranged son returns home and revisits the past in light of a new experience. Alex Webb’s photograph entitled *Dislocations* captures a lone figure on a carnival ride.

The Assignment

What do these texts suggest to you about the ways in which individuals deal with the uncertainties of the past? Support your idea(s) with reference to one or more of the texts presented and to your previous knowledge and/or experience.

In your writing, you must

- use a prose form
- connect one or more of the prompting texts provided in this examination to the topic and to your own ideas and impressions

Fold and tear along perforation.

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS ASSIGNMENT

Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes

Carefully read and consider the texts on pages 1 to 4, and then complete the assignment that follows.

Itinerary

Feel a passion for invisibility, be a fly on the wall,
the pitcher's ear, the child in the corner
with his eyes clenched. Like a dog going round
and round, you circle a space you've come back to,
trying to find some comfort, something that says
you're at home now. Pray for the enlarging hush
of the owl's ear, the hawk's high wide-angle lens
reading the world like a map. Your friend's
been weeding his potato drills. He stops and sits
on a rock for a cigarette. The sun has been shining
for days and days. *It's a gift*, he tells you.

A solitary thrush, with his heart in his mouth,
performs a dozen songs at dusk, none finished,
as if it were just himself and the world. Such
tense composure swells that speckled breast, warm
in late daylight: you see the beak open and close,
shivering into music. Wrapped in the spider's
winding-sheet, a bluebottle makes another music,
sawing the room in half: you note, till it stops,
each repeated live driving note. When you throw
open the door, the scent of fresh-cut grass swims in
and a huge yellow-edged summer moon hangs
alone in a powder-blue sky: a bright dense body
dependent on nothing. Stand back from nothing:
pussyfoot no more from the crux of the matter: you
must travel at the speed of light, not looking back.

Eamon Grennan

By kind permission of the author and The Gallery Press, Loughcrew, Oldcastle, County Meath, Ireland
from *Selected and New Poems* (2000).

Gus, the narrator of the excerpt, has not seen his father in two years. Cathy, Gus's 10-year-old daughter, rarely visits Gus and has never met her grandparents.

from A FEW NOTES FOR ORPHEUS¹

"That's him," I said.

"I see. He's smaller than you."

She was right. I had always thought of him as being bigger, but he was tiny and shrivelled in an old-dog kind of way. I hadn't seen him in over two years and it was like I had forgotten what he looked like.

"This is a surprise," he said. "Who've we got here?"

"This is my daughter, Cathy. This is my father Cathy, your grandfather."

"Well," he said, and took her hand smoothly. They walked away, him holding her hand and talking.

"I was just gettin' the boat ready to do a bit of fishin'. You ever been fishin'?"

She shook her head....

"It okay to bring her along Gus?"

His tone was polite but we all knew the question had been settled. He was already helping her into the boat.

"Sure," I said. "You got an extra rod?"

"She can use mine."

He'd done it again. I stood there feeling awkward, the way I had so often in the past. Like I was a kid again and didn't know what to do with my hands or feet, or the words in my mouth.

"You comin' Gus?" He was behind the motor tugging at the cord, as thin as the cord himself and looking frail in a tough way with an old raggedy wine-coloured sweater dropping from his shoulders. So often in the past when he had offered things in that tone I'd refused. Now I jumped into the boat before he left without me.

He had the kid sitting across from him helping steer the boat as it plowed through the water making miniature rainbows in the spray. He was talking to her but I couldn't make out the words above the sound of the engine....

"This is it," he said, "but don't forget what I said, fish can hear, so you gotta be real quiet."

She put her hand to her mouth and ssshed.

"Right," he said.

So easy for her to get his approval. Was it easier now than it had been for me? He baited the hook for her as she watched intently. He plunked the line in the water and looked up to see me watching him.

"I was just remembering the first time you showed me how to put a worm on a hook," I said. "You remember?"

He laughed drowsily and coughed quietly. He was a quiet man, I thought. A quiet, polite man. He was sitting four feet away dying the same way he had lived.

"You were worse than a girl," he said....

¹Orpheus—an allusion to a figure from Greek mythology who descended into Hell to recover his wife on the condition that he should not look back until they both had reached the upper world.

"Sssh daddy, the fish'll hear," Cathy cautioned, her face serious.

The old man smiled. He had a way. Maybe I was jealous. I was a sickly kid, lousy at sports, anything physical, but he had a way of making it harder for me. He'd just stand there politely smiling at my attempts. He never laughed. Just that damn polite smile. And sometimes, now that I remembered, not even that. He wasn't always around when I tried my stunts; the day I finally made the hockey team and actually scored a goal. The second-place medal for swimming. He was busy playing golf, a game he was so good at different people had encouraged him to turn pro. That made me proud when I heard that. I had day-dreams of caddying for him in the big tournaments, but he just smiled his polite smile and said no....

"Nothin' bitin'," he said.

"No, not today by the look of it. Could be too hot. Maybe we should go in. The kid's got no hat, she might get sunstroke."...

And suddenly the kid was standing, jerking forward like a Buddhist monk in prayer falling to his knees.

"There's something ..." she yelled and splashed into the water.

It was a short distance to fall from her position at the back of the boat and I watched the bright yellow dress congeal into a dishrag. It was all so strange: once I had fallen off the end of the dock when I was five. I may even have done it on purpose and I kept my eyes open in the water as I sank and I saw the eerie arm of my father reach down and grab me. He used a fish gaff to hook me. I still have the scars on my shoulder. The proof of something.

The old man was right beside her. All he had to do was reach over the side and pull her in. It would be easy for him.

He yelled at me. Something was wrong. He never yelled. A quiet polite man.

"Get her, Gus! Move, you stupid bugger!"

Me.

I plunged in. The water turned my clothes into a smothering blanket. It was cold. I couldn't see her. I had to go up. I couldn't breathe. I didn't want to drown. I didn't want to die. I really didn't....

And then I saw her. She was upside down, her dress over her head. She seemed to be spinning slowly and I grabbed a leg. I pawed upward with my other hand, not knowing any longer that there was anything beyond. The surface was a spot in my mind that had receded to a soft blur. Like a memory of long-ago pain.

But it was there waiting. I punched into the air, my free hand clawing for something to hold but the boat was several yards away. I saw the old man still seated. He spotted me and leaned forward, yelled something and I was under again. I fought to turn the girl around. She was like a shot deer. Stiff-feeling. Her head was up and I cupped her under the chin and swam back to the boat just the way I'd been taught in the Red Cross life-saving course. The old man hadn't been around when I got that certificate either.

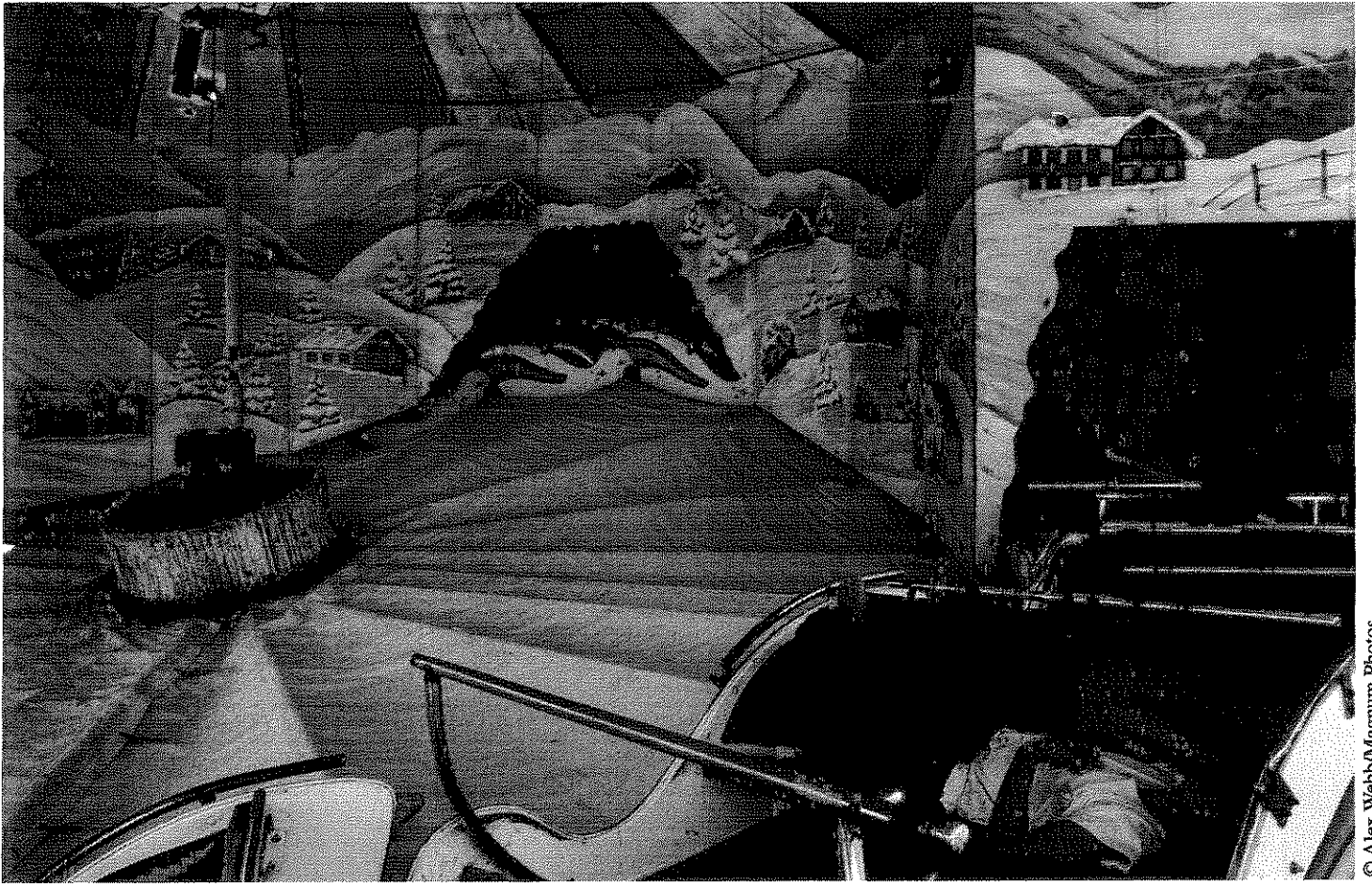
He was waiting and held her arms while I crawled in the boat. Everything was clear now. Pull her aboard, put her on the bottom of the boat with his sweater under her head. Check her mouth for obstructions. Head to one side. Arms in position. Pushing down gently. Pulling back. Counting. And repeating the whole thing over and over again.

The old man watched. He rolled a cigarette and coughed politely several times. He didn't smile and I saw he was sweating.

She began to cough. And then she was sick. That was good. It was okay.

Don Bailey

Dislocations



© Alex Webb/Magnum Photos

Alex Webb

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

Like Father, Like Son

Unanswered questions from the childhood of an individual can haunt him long past what may seem reasonable. Sensibility tends to waver when an emotion cuts so deep as the neglect from a key character in the life of a developing child. Undoubtedly it can be hard to look upon the situation later in life with a different outlook when old pain is continually resurfacing. In the short story “A Few Notes from Orpheus”, Don Bailey uses his narrator to depict that in light of new experiences, the frustrations of the past can be brought back to the foreground with an even more powerful effect than they previously had. As a result of having his own daughter, Gus becomes thoroughly more agitated by his father and his inability to show that he cares; ironically he overlooks key evidence that leads to an assumption of the father’s true feelings.

Despite the fact that Gus holds on so tightly to the pain of his childhood neglect, he does not appear to comprehend that he seems to be showing the same type of parenting towards his own daughter. When Cathy, Gus’ daughter, comes to visit both him and his father, Gus shows little emotion towards her other than jealousy stemming from the desire to be accepted by his father. Rather than encouraging her on her first fishing trip, his mind instead wanders to thoughts of his father’s love – or lack there of – and wonders why it is “so easy for [Cathy] to get his approval”. He refers to Cathy more than once unemotionally as “the kid” which appears uncaring and detached, he is angry at his father for treating him the same way as he is treating his daughter without even acknowledging it. The story makes it apparent that Gus’ father makes him uncomfortable by making him feel emasculated; despite some of the sports he played well such as hockey and swimming, he refers to himself as “lousy at... anything physical” later blaming his father for his seemingly nonexistent shortcomings. With Cathy as a Gus’ daughter it would make sense to the observer that he releases some of his anger towards his father in the form of

(Page 2 of 4)

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

loving his child in the way he was not; despite this, Gus neglects Cathy much like he was by his father.

When Cathy is dragged into the water by the fishing rod, Gus does not appear to show the decisive action one would expect from a father in that situation, he waits to be told before he attempts to rescue her. This moment is another example of the emasculation he feels from his father. Though his father is described as old and slight, and Gus has the necessary training, he still believes that his father is a better candidate for rescuing Cathy. The irony here is that even though he holds on so tightly to his anger, he subconsciously recognizes the times at which his father showed his love. Due to the fact that his father saved him from drowning as a child, he believes that he will not be able to accomplish the same himself. After Gus pulls her aboard, he recognizes that his father is sweating, showing obvious nervousness, but it is describes still with the qualities of his father that he does not appreciate. By overlooking these evident moments of caring – which the reader can then assume there have been more of – it shows that Gus wants to remain angry rather than forgive. It is a probably assumption that the anger he displaces towards his father is truly a reflection of the anger he holds inwards for not becoming what his father had wanted of him. Rather than Gus reconciling with the uncertainty of his father's love he instead projects it outwardly onto his father and daughter. Gus has shown to not understand the concept of unconditional love without worry for oneself; even when he is saving his daughter he is considering returning to the surface as not to die. The title connects back to Gus' feelings of insecurity because he is writing to Orpheus, a man who loved wholeheartedly, something Gus has yet to understand, even with a daughter.

Due to the neglect Gus felt as a child he finds it impossible to love unselfishly with his entire heart. Ironically he is causing his daughter the same pain that he holds for his father,

(Page 3 of 4)

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

assumingly something she will never overcome leaving him to a life of his daughter never truly forgiving him – an endless cycle until he finds peace in death. The uncertainties of Gus' past never truly developed into some form of motivation to move on and become a better person, but rather he held tight to them and uncertainty became the only thing he knew. By disallowing his past to be reconciled, he damned the future of his daughter while condemning himself to a life of insecurity.

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is insightful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and discerning. • Support is precise and aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions. 	<p>Through an analytical response, the student explores the topic insightfully by examining the character of Gus: “Don Bailey uses his narrator to depict that in light of new experiences, the frustrations of the past can be brought back to the foreground with an even more powerful effect than they previously had” (2). The student recognizes that it is a challenge for an individual “to look upon the situation later in life with a different outlook when old pain is continually resurfacing” (2), and notes that instead of Gus “reconciling with the uncertainty of his father’s love he instead projects it outwardly onto his father and daughter” (3).</p> <p>The student’s ideas are confident in emphasizing how “Gus shows little emotion towards her other than jealousy” (2) and how “Gus’ father makes him uncomfortable by making him feel emasculated; despite some of the sports he played well” (2). The student also confidently reveals the complexity of Gus’s character in “The irony here is that even though he holds on so tightly to his anger, he subconsciously recognizes the times at which his father showed his love” (3) and in “The uncertainties of Gus’ past never truly developed into some form of motivation to move on and become a better person” (4).</p> <p>Support from “A Few Notes from Orpheus” is used precisely in how the student shows how Gus’s “mind instead wanders to thoughts of his father’s love – or lack there of – and wonders why it is ‘so easy for [Cathy] to get his approval’” (2). The student also aptly notes how Gus “refers to Cathy more than once unemotionally as ‘the kid’ which appears uncaring and detached” (2) and how Gus overlooks “his father sweating, showing obvious nervousness” (3). The student draws an insightful parallel between Orpheus and Gus who are both “returning to the surface” (3), but one is “a man who loved wholeheartedly” (3) and one is a man who “finds it impossible to love unselfishly” (3). This parallel aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions.</p>

E

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is convincing. • Stylistic choices are precise and the student’s creation of tone is adept. • The unifying effect is skillfully developed. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-top: 100px;">E</p>	<p>Using an analytic prose form, the student creates a convincing voice in “Unanswered questions from the childhood of an individual can haunt him long past what may seem reasonable” (2) and “it would make sense to the observer that he releases some of his anger towards his father in the form of loving his child in the way he was not; despite this, Gus neglects Cathy much like he was by his father” (2–3). The student’s voice is logical and convincing in “Due to the neglect Gus felt as a child he finds it impossible to love unselfishly with his entire heart” (3).</p> <p>The student’s stylistic choices are precise, as in “jealousy stemming from the desire to be accepted” (2), “his seemingly nonexistent short comings” (2), and “the emasculation he feels” (3). The student’s creation of tone is adept, as in “When Cathy, Gus’ daughter, comes to visit both him and his father, Gus shows little emotion towards her other than jealousy” (2) and “Though his father is described as old and slight, and Gus has the necessary training, he still believes that his father is a better candidate for rescuing Cathy” (3). Despite the student’s grammatical slips, readers are reminded to <i>consider the proportion of error in terms of the complexity and length of the response</i>.</p> <p>The unifying effect is skillfully developed as the student begins by noting how “Gus holds on so tightly to the pain of his childhood neglect” (2) and pursues this argument by analyzing how “Gus neglects Cathy much like he was by his father” (3). The student elaborates on how Gus causes “his daughter the same pain that he holds for his father” (3) and creates an “endless cycle” (4). In recognizing the possibility of this cycle, the student comes to this logical unifying conclusion: “By disallowing his past to be reconciled, he damned the future of his daughter while condemning himself to a life of insecurity” (4).</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

Initial Planning

To which of the provided texts are you responding? What is the connection between the text(s) and your response?

"Itinerary" by Eamon Grennan.

- "friend" in poem is friend in my story (enhancing life)
- main choice is to broaden perspective, as poem suggests

What idea about the prompting text(s) do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

In "Itinerary", the idea is developed that individuals must respond positively to the uncertainty and ambiguity of the past. Individual's roads go by broadening his or her perspective and looking forward. He or she can achieve fulfillment and happiness.

State your choice of prose form. Choose from prose forms that you have practised in English Language Arts 30–1. You may respond using a personal, creative, or analytical perspective. Do NOT use a poetic form.

Creative – short story

English Language Arts 30-1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent-2 (E)

Planning

Her uncertainty
of her desires
led to her
unhappiness

→ Responded
negatively
to the
uncertainty
of her
future
and
so "gave
up."

- invisibility

- travel → birds = freedom

↳ Symbolic freedom

- stays home → comfort in old things but no
growth → feeling lost in life

→ 1/ spontaneous - her desires for the future, also at

2/ Robin → uncertainty in her desires.

and shows
how she

finally reached
happiness.

Broken glass - 1221's view of her life were
shattered by her rejection

- causes her to look for a new way of happiness
(change of perspective.)

sun rising → new perspective, new life.

mother's friends represent society

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

When I was younger, my mother's friends would always ask me what I wanted to be when I was older. I would always have two answers for them, safe at the back of my throat to be released like baby sparrows whenever I was asked. My first response was always to be invisible. I liked the idea of shrinking away from the crowds, of being the unseen in a mob of unkind eyes, and even at such a young age I reveled in the idea of disappearing. But my mother's friends never understood. They laughed at such a childish wish and soon I began to doubt my desire to be unseen.

My second answer came later, when I was in elementary school. This answer was bathed in sunshine and I believed it was a perfectly reasonable desire. I believed this was a wish that wouldn't be laughed at by my mother's friends. And yet, when I told them I wanted to live in Morocco, they would sneer at me and tell me that I should give up now, because I would need a job, and money, and a lot of other things I didn't understand.

And so my next wish became one that was forced on me, one that I let myself think I wanted because I was unsure I would ever make it to Morocco.

I began to study harder. I rarely left the comforts of my home anymore, and I never went out with friends. I felt as if all I had left was my school work, and the only thing left for me was my future: I had promised my mother's friends weakly- like a robin hopelessly searching the snow for worms- that I wanted to go to medical school. The promise of a future outside of the mundane seemed to be so farfetched to me that I almost laughed at my former self: I agreed with my mother's friends.

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

And so it was such a shock to me when I was rejected. Now, looking back on it, my rejection was probably the best thing to happen to me. And yet, in the moment, it took such a toll on me. I remember standing in my mother's kitchen, sifting through the mail. I was really looking for the envelope that would direct my future. And there it was! I remember reaching for it, feeling my heart soar and pump and burst with excitement and regret and uncertainty in what I had done with my life and yet I had gone too far to turn back now and go to Morocco and live the life I had always dreamed of. In my heart I knew what I wanted, and yet I kept telling myself it was impossible and unreasonable.

I ripped open the envelope and saw the words, "We regret to inform you..." in bold on the top. I dropped the glass of water I had been holding. It shattered on the ground. My mother rushed downstairs. She saw the letter in my hand.

"Oh, Izzie, dear. It's alright. You can rewrite the MCAT. You can try again next year." She was saying, patting my back while reaching for a broom. She seemed almost absentminded. I walked over the broken glass and left her standing alone in the kitchen.

That night I had dreams of flying above the clouds. I hadn't had such vivid dreams since before high school, and when I woke up I heard birds chirping outside my window. That day, I called my old friend, Amy. She had worked on a farm after high school, which I had found strange, and now it seemed like the most wonderful thing in the world to me. She gave me her address and told me to visit her.

I left the house, ignoring my mother's small attempts at comforting me, and drove to Amy's house. It was on the outskirts of the city, it was small, and clearly hand painted. I saw Amy standing outside gardening. She was barefoot and had mud on her face and

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

grass in her hair. She looked like a female version of Tarzan who just happened to find herself living in the city. I smiled when I remembered her eating grass in Grade One during gym class, or making "mud pies" during recess in Grade Four. She really hadn't changed a bit.

"So, no med school for you, huh?" She said, once we had settled down inside. She grabbed a pitcher of iced tea from the 80's style fridge and offered me some.

"I guess not. I don't really know now." I muttered. Amy's chirpiness and straightforwardness almost intimidated me, as it never had when we were children. I was struck with the simple fact that I had been more her equal at the age of nine than I was now.

"What happened to Morocco and traveling the world?" Amy asked with a laugh. I knew she wasn't making fun of me, but the question still stung. What *had* happened to my dreams? And why couldn't I still accomplish everything I wanted?

"I guess med school was a safer option. There was nothing... Sure about travel, if that makes sense." I trailed off, staring at a speck of mud in the middle of Amy's forehead.

"But you didn't even get into med school, so where are you now?" Amy rebutted with a soft smile. She rubbed her forehead and the mud flaked off onto the floor. "You know, I took the more risky route, and I just did whatever I wanted. And I feel so free. Like I could go anywhere whenever I wanted and I'm not tied down to anything or anyone."

I took a sip of iced tea and almost gagged on how bitter it was. Amy beamed at me. I faked a smile. "This is good."

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

She laughed, one of her full and childish laughs that seemed to back up the statement she had just made. "Put some sugar in it." She pushed an antique looking bowl towards me. "And think about going to Morocco. Your whole life could change."

I lay in bed that night and considered everything that Amy had said to me. Leaving behind everything I had worked so hard to accomplish seemed almost as awful as the fact that I had been rejected. And yet... The idea of freedom struck me as comfortable in a way that home wasn't. It seemed like something that could make me happy.

It was three in the morning when I turned on my laptop to buy a plane ticket. By the time I had made all the necessary arrangements for my year abroad, I could hear sparrows chirping outside my window, and the sun was rising on a new day.

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is insightful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and discerning. • Support is precise and aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions. 	<p>On the <i>Initial Planning</i> page, the student establishes the confident idea that a character can “respond positively to the uncertainty and ambiguity of the past” (1) by “broadening his or her perspective” (1). The student further clarifies this idea by stating that the character’s “uncertainty of her desires led to her unhappiness” (2). In doing so, the student establishes the framework for an insightful exploration of the topic.</p> <p>The first-person narrative begins with the narrator, Izzie, reminiscing about being asked “what I wanted to be when I was older” (3) and reflecting upon her initial, authentic responses: “to be invisible” (3) and “to live in Morocco” (3). The student then describes the mockery from her “mother’s friends” (3), which leads Izzie to adopt a goal “forced on me” (3). By addressing the tension between Izzie’s first “two answers” (3) and what “I let myself think I wanted” (3), the student establishes confident and discerning ideas about Izzie’s uncertainty about the past. Even before opening the letter of rejection, Izzie expresses a complexity of response to her possible future: “feeling my heart soar and pump with excitement and regret and uncertainty in what I had done with my life” (4). Izzie then deals with the “shock” (4) of “rejection” (4) from medical school and the subsequent advice from an “old friend, Amy” (4). The insightful exploration culminates with Izzie realizing that her past “childish” (3) desires were, ironically, the “safer option” (5), in the strongest sense of “safer,” and that “The idea of freedom struck me as comfortable in a way that home wasn’t” (6).</p> <p>Precise support for the narrative is indicated on the <i>Planning</i> page: “birds = freedom” (2), “Broken glass – Izzie’s views of her life were shattered” (2), and “sun rising → new perspective” (2). Support such as the bookending “sparrows” (3, 6) and the futility of the “robin hopelessly searching the snow for worms” (3) aptly reinforce the student’s ideas and impressions by providing a motif of freedom from uncertainty that is carried through the “dreams of flying” (4).</p>

E

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2015
Personal Response to Literary Texts Assignment

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is convincing. • Stylistic choices are precise and the student’s creation of tone is adept. • The unifying effect is skillfully developed. 	<p>The voice created by the student is convincing throughout the response, as in “And yet, when I told them I wanted to live in Morocco, they would sneer at me and tell me that I should give up now, because I would need a job, and money, and a lot of other things I didn’t understand” (3) and “She laughed, one of her full and childish laughs that seems to back up the statement she had just made” (6).</p> <p>The student creates an adept tone that shifts from a self-reflective, slightly uneasy beginning, as in “I liked the idea of shrinking away from the crowds, of being the unseen in a mob of unkind eyes” (3), to a forward-looking, optimistic perspective at the end: “By the time I had made all the necessary arrangements for my year abroad, I could hear sparrows chirping outside my window, and the sun was rising on a new day” (6). These statements demonstrate precise stylistic choices that mirror the student’s ideas and impressions. The dialogue of Izzie and Amy reinforces the convincing voice and precise stylistic choices through contrasting the flippant but pointed Amy, “‘What happened to Morocco and traveling the world?’” (5), with Izzie’s characteristic hesitancy and insecurity as an adult, “‘There was nothing... Sure about travel, if that makes sense’ I trailed off” (5).</p> <p>The response begins with subtle thematic references to freedom in the “baby sparrows” (3) and an optimistic perspective “bathed in sunshine” (3) that become more overt as the response moves toward Izzie’s epiphany. This progression demonstrates a unifying effect that is skillfully developed. The conversation with Amy acts as a catalyst for Izzie’s change and parallels the friend in the prompting poem. At the end of the story, Izzie’s simple confidence in “It seemed like something that could make me happy” (6) is a deliberate return to the purity and clarity of her childish ambitions to disappear to Morocco.</p>