# PERSONAL RESPONSE

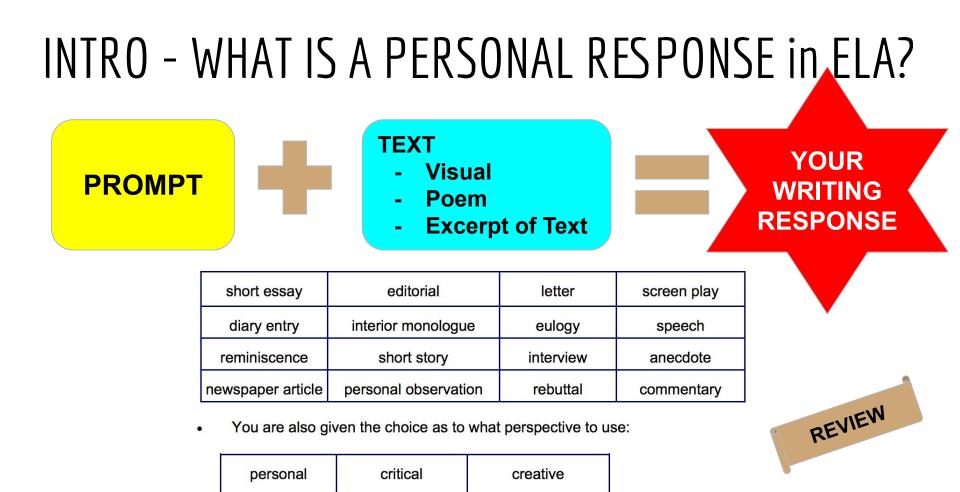
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A Workshop



# Personal Response - information (click to open)

## Personal Responses

#### What IS a Personal Response?

A PeRT (Personal Response to Text) is an academic composition that fully develops, explores and shapes an idea in reaction to an assigned prompt + a text (you have three choices: a poem, an excerpt from a longer fiction o non-fiction, a visual).

You can respond in any form of prose:

- Creative
- Personal
- Critical analysis of a text in the exam
- CPU Critical Personal Universal (a combo of a Personal and a Critical)

# PERSONAL RESPONSE EXEMPLARS (click)

#### English Language Arts 30-1

- Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing January 2019 ↓ (PDF, 6.7 MB)
- Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing January 2018 4, (PDF, 5.6 MB)
- Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing January 2017 业, (PDF, 5.7 MB)
- Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing January 2016 ↓ (PDF, 4.5 MB)
- Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing January 2015 🕁 (PDF, 3.6 MB)
- Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing January 2014 4, (PDF, 6.4 MB)
- Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing January 2013 🕁 (PDF, 3.9 MB)

### PERSONAL RESPONSE EXEMPLARS (click here)

Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes Suggested word count range: 600 to 1200 words

You have been provided with three texts on pages 1 to 4. The speaker in Meghan, O'Rourke's "Poem of Regret for an Old Friend" considers the manner in which a person has lived. In the excerpt from Sean Michaels' novel *Us Conductors*, the narrator and his friend participate briefly in a protest before taking shelter. Thomas Hoepker's photograph shows a wealthy landowner sitting down for his dinner.

#### The Assignment

What do these texts suggest to you about the interplay between satisfaction and regret in an individual's life? Support your idea(s) with reference to one or more of the prompting 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

#### Portugal, 1964



Thomas Hoepke

#### PERSONAL RESPONSE EXAM - Jan 2019

The narrator, Lev Terman, has just presented an invention to his classmates at Petrograd University in Russia. His friend, Sasha, has insisted on taking him out to celebrate.

#### from US CONDUCTORS

It was a winter night, one of those chill evenings when your vision is interrupted by ten thousand wild snowflakes. We were talking science. Probably Sasha was telling me about the paper he was writing. We ducked into a tavern near the grey Fontanka River, took two stools near the window, but the spirits hadn't even started flowing when a commotion blasted through from around the corner. Banging, shouts, and then the procession of a few hundred people, dark coats flying past our window, rippling banners, a gathered effort in the marchers' faces.

"Reds," Sasha said, without any disdain. We were Reds too. This was 1917. Both of us had mustered for protests at the university. Now we watched the parade of Communists and read their slogans and more than anything I remember feeling the rhythm of their drums, the clang of wooden spoons on iron pots.

"Should we join the rascals?" Sasha said. He was already a party member. I hesitated. It was one of those instants when you feel your youth. I glanced back into the safety of the tavern, where drunks were slouched against the tables. Then we threw on our coats and went outside. The mob was boisterous and happy. To be in a parade like that, bold and loud, owning the road, is a messy jubilation. The snow was still falling. The crowd was strident, casual. "Bread and land!" we shouted. We moved together through the city. "Bread and land and freedom!"

Suddenly there was disorder up ahead. The front of the procession stalled. We bumped into our neighbours. Sagging banners, yells, then two loud pops. "What is ...?" Sasha began to say, before a channel opened through the crowd.

There, at the square, a row of riflemen, their guns aimed straight through the snowstorm.

We bolted. Men and women were breaking in all directions, some toward but most of them away from the Imperial soldiers. Bodies pushed into us like shoving hands. Snow was still falling. Cold light. More pops, thin trails of smoke, dark coats, and now glimpses of green uniforms, gold buttons, then rising up, the terrifying silhouettes of horses, cavalry, and we ran and ran and ran, over torn earth, over ice, filled with raw, fierce terror. From the street ahead, another bang-deafening, like an explosion. Reality seemed to be on the diagonal; I was so scared I felt I might be sick. We dashed down a bright alley and I pulled Sasha into a half-open doorway. Pressed together, we caught our breath. "You all right?" I said, finally.

"Limbs intact, You?"

I swallowed, then let out a breath. The city's din had vanished. Before us just snowflakes.

Our bundled coats had pushed the door further ajar and we stood at the entrance to a long, wide room, lit with lanterns, a crackling stove. Eight or ten men, stripped to the waist, stood staring at us.

Most of them were Chinamen, or they looked like Chinamen. At first I thought it must be a dormitory, somewhere workers slept. But almost at once I realized no. It was a gym.

Two of the men were holding long sticks, like shepherds' staves. The air smelled of sandalwood and sweat.

One of the Chinamen approached us, an older man maybe my father's age, barrelchested, with a birthmark across his shoulder. "Good evening," he murmured. "Can I help vou?"

"We, er ..." Sasha said. "Well, we-"

"Please come in," he offered. We did and he pulled the door closed behind us. "It's. cold." In the partial dark, the students eyed us. I felt very clumsy in my greatcoat.

"This is a gymnasium?" I asked.

"Yes. Training room. We call kwoon. Are you hurt?"

"No," Sasha and I said together.

A pair of men had lost interest in us and began to spar. One was Asian, the other Russian, They attacked each other in slow motion, with short, fluid punches, pirouetting kicks.

The man beside us called out something in Chinese.

"I tell them, 'Breathe like a child,'" he explained to us.

I watched them dodge and shift. "This is judo?"

"Wing-chun kung-fu," said the man.

"There are soldiers outside," Sasha said.

The man regarded him levelly. "You are Bolsheviks?" I noticed that he had bare feet.

They all had bare feet.

"Yes," I said.

He nodded, "I also,"

He shouted something at the students who still watched us. They laughed and fell

back into their own practices.

"You're a communist?" Sasha said.

The man shrugged. "Yes."

Sticks swung in slow arcs.

"Would you ... fight?" Sasha said.

The man scratched his belly. "Against soldiers with rifles?" he said. "What use would we be?"

"You might be of use."

The man, the teacher, sifu, clicked his tongue. "When you have the right tools-that is

when you serve," he said.

A painting of a slender old man, mid-kick, hung on the wall beside us. He seemed to be floating above a lake. He looked serene.

We never went back to find the protesters, who had bravely rallied, evading the soldiers, gathering at the Winter Palace. They shouted long into the night. Instead we watched the men do kung-fu and then I followed Sasha back to the tavern, where we drank vodka and toasted our safety, pleased with our little adventure.

Only much later that night, lying in my sheets, did shame come and find me. It rose up from the floor like a mist. I kept seeing the whirl of the crowd, the way I had clutched my fists and run. My mindless fear. My premature departure. I hadn't stayed to learn the ending.

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

#### POEM OF REGRET FOR AN OLD FRIEND

What you did wasn't so bad. You stood in a small room, waiting for the sun. At least you told yourself that. I know it was small. but there was something, a kind of pulped lemon, at the low edge of the sky.

No, you're right, it was terrible. Terrible to live without love in small rooms with vinyl blinds listening to music secretly, the secret music of one's head which can't be shared.

A dream is the only way to breathe. But you must find a more useful way to live. I suppose you're right this was a failure: to stand there so still, waiting for-what?

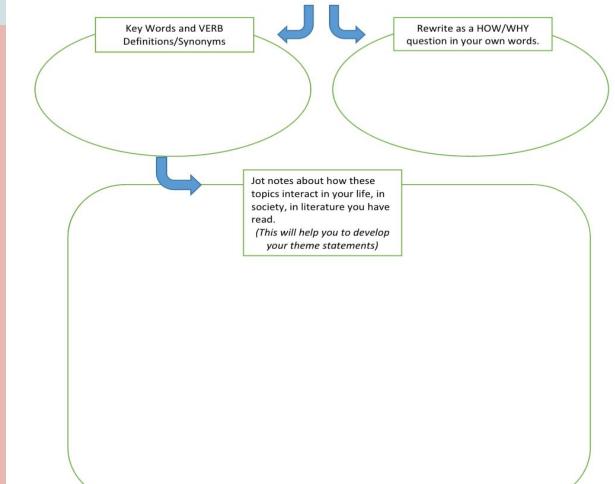
When I think about this life, the life you led, I think of England, of secret gardens that never open. and novels sliding off the bed at night where the small handkerchief of darkness settles over one's face.

Meghan O'Rourke

Sean Michaels

## ... the interplay between satisfaction and regret in an individual's life?

BREAKING DOWN THE PROMPT!



## ANALYSIS SKILL – quotes, excerpts, scenes, chapters, visuals, or poems

### SAY:

LITERAL COMPREHENSION

What does the text say?

TO DO: List details and paraphrase

## **MEAN:**

**INTERPRETATION** 

What does the text mean?

TO DO: Analyze the scene consider elements of literary terms, devices, techniques and tools.

#### MATTER:

SYNTHESIS & EVALUATION

What does it matter?

TO DO: Consider the author's message? Themes? Thesis'?

Answer: "So what"? The "A-ha"!

Develop ideas and insights that are significant, perceptive & illuminating.

# Analysis of the Excerpt

### Chronological/Sequence

### **Signal or Transition Words**

| first, second | next  | not long after |
|---------------|-------|----------------|
| initially     | then  | before         |
| following     | when  | finally        |
| preceding     | after | on (date)      |

### CONSIDER:

- What happens (plot)- and what of the plot is relevant to the prompt? Conflict?
- 2) WHERE and WHEN the story happens and how the setting is relevant to the prompt?
- 3) Who is in the story protagonist? other characters? - consider their relationship, intent towards, impact from - how is it relevant to the prompt?
- 4) Other themes in the excerpt how is it relevant to the prompt?
- 5) Consider words/phrases / quotes and their insightfulness - relevant to the prompt.



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#### **Example Scored Excellent-1 (E)**

#### Satisfaction in the Present versus Future

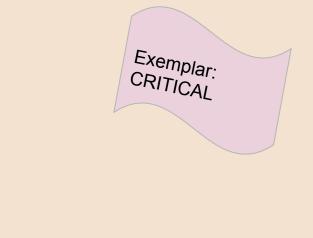
In attempting to find satisfaction, an individual will often need to make important split second decisions. If they choose the wrong option, they will recognize, once it is too late, that they have made a mistake, and this realization will lead them to feel guilt about how they behaved. In his short story "Us Conductors," Sean Michaels develops the idea that achieving satisfaction often goes hand in hand with experiencing regret for how that satisfaction was achieved, and how, in the long run, this regret may prevent an individual from achieving satisfaction in regards to their actions. In examining this interplay, Sean Michaels utilizes the structure of the plot of the story and figurative language to further his message.

When making a decision under threat of harm, often the first thing that an individual will worry about is their safety. Their standards of what satisfaction actually is will be reduced to survival alone, and they will not stop to think about how they may regret having acted in a certain way further along in the future. One of the most noticeable things about this short story is the combination of its sequence of events and its setting. The story begins on an evening "when your vision is interrupted by ten thousand wild snowflakes," giving rise to images of a festive evening, not unlike a sleepy Christmas holiday. The streets of Petrograd, where the story takes place, are calm and the reader is introduced to two friends on their way to celebrate a wellexecuted university presentation. The tavern chosen by Lev Terman and his friend Sasha seems equally quiet—a choice made by the author, seemingly to encourage the reader to settle in and listen to a conversation between two old friends about some of the more mundane aspects of life. In the subsequent lines however, the author suddenly changes the action as a mob rushes through the street. The use of words such as "commotion," "blasted" and "banging" create a scene of



chaos and confusion in the mind of the reader, suddenly rousing them to attention. As the story progresses, the group goes "flying past the window, rippling banners," grabbing the interest of the reader, almost to coax them out into the streets to see what is happening. The action continues to build and eventually leads to tsarist forces firing on this communist mob and dispatching cavalry to disperse them. Much like how the reader was drawn into this situation, and is now tied up in it, so too was Lev. At this point, he is in an absolute panic, confused by what his happening and unable to think about anything but the need for safety-the satisfaction found in escape from what is happening in the streets becomes the only kind that matters. No longer does fighting for the communist ideology, to which he previously admitted that he subscribes, matter. The author is careful not to give a clear description of any single aspect of the scene, instead making rapid and jumbled observations about various aspects of the riot, such as the "pops, thin trails of smoke, dark coats" and "terrifying silhouettes of horses." This decision serves to justify the regret of having taken part in this mob that Lev is undoubtedly feeling and to explain why his only response in the moment of crisis is to run. As they duck into a gymnasium, Lev and Sasha become worried once more that they have made a mistake and stumbled into a group of imperial sympathizers who may turn them over to the government. The action begins to fall again when the men find out that those in the gym are also communist, and Lev seems to be satisfied with the result of the evening, even returning to the pub with Sasha for drinks as if nothing had ever happened. Sean Michaels effectively utilizes the plot action to create a justification for the rollercoaster of emotions that Lev experiences, and to make it clear why it was that, in his panicked state, the only satisfaction that he could think of was an escape from the confusion.

Despite the relief of immediate satisfaction, an individual will often regret some, if not all, of their split-second decisions that needed to be made to ensure there safety. Lev realizes that in prioritizing his own needs above those of his cause, he has abandoned the common good, and therefore the very idea for which he believes communist doctrine to stands, namely extreme Utilitarianism. Sean Michaels furthers this idea through his use of figurative language and literary devices. When describing reality as "on the diagonal," and explaining how Lev "ran and ran and ran, over torn earth," the author makes it clear that there is nothing recognizable in the scene and that nothing about what was happening, not even the unchanging stability of the ground itself, made any sense. This explains why Lev would have chosen to abandon his cause. The gunfire and the confusion in the streets had made one thing indistinguishable from the next, and the only option for Lev was to escape the Chaos so that he could get a grasp of what had happened. While this is a rational reaction, Lev only later realizes that in making such a decision he was proving to himself that he was unfit to fight in a Bolshevik uprising, which would demand the bloodshed of a great number of communists and tsarists alike in order to be successful. Perhaps the best example of the figurative language used by the author to display Lev's regret comes at the very end of the story, when "[the shame] rose up from the floor like a mist" around his bed. This metaphor does an excellent job of showing how the regret that an individual experiences because of the choices of the past will interfere with them whenever they ponder the decision. The guilt does not simply appear and then go away; instead, it seeps into Lev's room as he is trying to fall asleep, an eerie presence slowly creeping up on him, yet one that he knows he cannot escape and that he will have to suffer with through the knowledge that he ran while others fought for the cause. Sean Michaels makes use of figurative language to show how an individual may believe that they are making the right choice due to dread in the



moment, but how, in the end, their inability to act the way which they deem to be suitable for the situation will haunt them for a long period afterwards.

In his story "Us Conductors," Sean Michaels shows how the need for immediate satisfaction can only interfere with the long term, more meaningful, goals of an individual, and how the regret of choosing the need for safety and security in the moment will only inhibit the attainment of future satisfaction. This message is supported through his careful control of the plot action and use of figurative language to highlight how Lev Terman was thinking, but more importantly feeling, at the various important moments in the story. Exemplar: CRITICAL

The laughter died on my lips. But not, it seemed, on anyone else's. All around me, my friends continued to giggle about the last comment I had made about another person we knew, the unknowing subject of our conversation. The friend directly across from me gave me a slightly surprised look, and I knew she was wondering at what I said; she did not expect me to be cruel, not about this particular person anyways, regardless of what the rest of the group thought. I fell silent, and listened to them move on, listened to them forgetting about the other girl, about the comment I made, about the fact that she existed in the first place. I lowered my eyes, already feeling the shame starting to tickle at the bottom of my stomach. Glancing back at my phone screen, my eyes flicked towards the message she had just sent me. It was friendly, even if it did create an unfortunate opportunity for the rest of us to poke fun. If I focused on it intently, stared into it as hard and as blindly as I could, I could almost ignore the blue bubble beneath it. My reply. The one that had us all laughing a moment before. It's not as though it's out rightly cruel, I argued with myself. It's just - dismissive. I groaned inwardly. I had been nothing but dismissive to her lately, even if she hadn't been much better to me. Burning the bridges between us had become somewhat of a pass time, I realized, and the thought snapped my eyes back to my reply, and I jumped off the couch onto my feet, muttered a vague excuse about the bathroom, and tripped down the hallway.

As I braced my arms against the sink, I stared at myself in the mirror. My stomach roiled, and I fought the urge to sink to the floor, instead forcing myself to look into the mirror, look into my own eyes. What was this, this thing I was feeling? On some level, I was aware that I felt bad about what I said to her. But this, this was much more potent than just *bad*. I wanted to take it back. I wanted her to reply, I didn't want to be left wondering. But then, if she replied, I would Exemplar: CRITICAL have to reply back to her again and face the consequences, something that I was not yet ready to do. Taking a deep breath, I willed myself over to the door. *C'mon*, I told myself. *This pity party is over, time to go back out*. I made it three steps, just enough to reach the handle, before I locked the door and slid down it, my knees crunched up to my chest level in front of me. *Why*? I asked myself. *Why did I say that to her*? I knew the others had found it amusing, and I knew that they would before the words even came out of my mouth. Was this who I was now? Someone that made remarks at another person's, no, another friend's, expense just to get a laugh? After all, she was an old friend, an older friend than any of the other girls in the room outside.

I glanced down at my phone. No reply.

I cast myself into the past, watching all the memories of her and I slide past as though I was looking through a kaleidoscope. We had shared so much together, but more and more we were growing apart. A part of me wanted to argue that this was regrettable but natural. This is what happened when people got older; thy grew up, found new friends, new interests, and their lives diverged, heading down two separate paths. In my heart of hearts, however, I knew that our lives had not yet diverged just because we weren't close anymore, but rather that we were trapping each other into our turbulent relationship with our comments and remarks towards each other, our distance fed by continual dismissals and the pressure of others on either side rather than our own lives taking course. I closed my eyes and leaned my head back against the door, and felt that little tickle of shame bubble up inside of me. It had been so easy to imagine that my message to her was only ever going to be an amusing remark, contained within the moment, validated by the reception my friends gave it. It had felt satisfying for a split second, but now that initial satisfaction only deepened my regret, making me ashamed that that had been my first reaction. I knew I would regret it, even if nothing happened. For nothing to happen is

*impossible*, the little voice inside my head told me. *If nothing happens, it means you have finally ruined whatever relationship you two had left once and for all*. I shivered as that thought washed over me. It was true, after all; if she never said anything back, I would most likely be relieved to not engage in anything, and cowardly enough not say anything else, ever. Suddenly, I dreaded what was going to happen. As confused and conflicted as I was, I did not want to destroy the friendship I had with her. I pulled out my phone. Anxiety washed over me.

#### Nothing. No reply.

I closed the screen back down. There was nothing I could do except wait; now that I had made my albeit regrettable move, the words I sent were no longer under my control. The ball was in her court. The only thing I could do now was to deal with whatever she decided to do or say when it came, and believe that there was a chance for at least reconciliation. Perhaps it was my fault, perhaps it was both our faults, or neither of our faults. But regardless of the state of our relationship before today, I had been the one to give it that final push. For that, at least, I could be certain the blame rested on me alone. And now I could see, stretching out before me, a golden thread of what our friendship could have been, if only I had stayed with her long enough to learn the ending.

My phone lit up, and a bubble popped up on the other side of the screen, those three little dots fluctuating back and forth, back and forth, mocking me. Then it disappeared. Nothing. She would not be responding, not right now, anyways.

As I sat there, feeling the hope drain out of me, I realized how much I wanted to salvage our friendship. We had been so good for each other at one point, and she was the star in some of my best childhood memories. She had made her move, and now it was my turn again. I knew



that if I didn't talk to her, I would forever regret not knowing what she was feeling, and how this could have ended.

I got to my feet, and unlocked the bathroom door. I walked down the hall, only distantly hearing the other girls call after me, but I didn't listen. I had someone that I needed to speak to.

### Portugal, 1964



Thomas Hoepker

## VISUAL ANALYSIS - SAY

Consider the visual text: details, techniques, effects, and main idea

What message does the image seem to be sending and what details AND techniques help convey that message?

SUBJECT and FOCAL POINT: What issue, concept, event or person(s) is this work about? Focal Point? Title?

SETTING: when and where does it take place? What place, time and social environment does the piece exemplify? What's the context or situation?

MOOD: How do viewers respond emotionally to the work? (How does it make you feel?) Are there shifts in mood? How are they created?

FRAMING and STRUCTURE: How are the visual elements in the image presented? What is the placement of the subject in relation to other objects? Look into each quadrant for details. Why does the visual make me feel this way? How is it put together?

STYLE: What special techniques/effects did the artist use? What role do colour, lighting, size, shape, line, texture, angle and balance indicate about the piece? How are the details selected and arranged?

## VISUAL ANALYSIS - MEANING

YOUR INTERPRETATIONS (under the lens of the prompt)

# ... the interplay between satisfaction and regret in an individual's life?

- Explore the relevance of the text to you and others: personal connection, other texts, other people
- What is the effect of this image on you as the viewer, and/or how might it affect other viewers?
- Identify and explain how this image reminds you of other texts, personal experiences, and experiences of others.

## VISUAL ANALYSIS - MATTER

SIGNIFICANCE (under the lens of the prompt)

# ... the interplay between satisfaction and regret in an individual's life?

THEME: What does the visual suggest about human behaviour? What is the central idea of the piece? Which Essential Question is most relevant? Why?

### Explore the relevance of the text to society or to the world: world issues?, who's

### affected?

Explore the relevance of the text to society or to the world and the importance of these issues to all people.

WRITE YOUR THEME STATEMENT.

## Exemplar - what score would the following response get?

### CPU

## THEME STATEMENT:

Although preparing for a life of satisfaction through hard work and sacrifice may lead to satisfaction, it is not guaranteed and will lead one to the greatest of regrets afterwards.

### **YOUR JOB: Feedback**

- **Positives**
- **Improvements**? D

|                         | IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS   | PRESENTATION  |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| FOCUS                   | When marking <b>Ideas and Impressions</b> , the marker should consider the quality of   | When marking <b>Presentation</b> , the marker should consider the effectiveness of  |
|                         | <ul> <li>the student's exploration of the topic in relation to<br/>the prompting text(s)</li> <li>the student's ideas and reflection</li> <li>support in relation to the student's ideas and<br/>impressions</li> </ul> | <ul> <li>voice in relation to the context created by the student in the chosen prose form</li> <li>stylistic choices (including quality and correctness of language and expression) and the student's creation of tone</li> <li>the student's development of a unifying and/or aesthetic effect</li> <li>Consider the complexity of the response in terms of its context and length.</li> </ul> |
| Excellent<br>E          | The student's exploration of the topic is insightful.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and<br>discerning. Support is precise and aptly reinforces<br>the student's ideas and impressions.                      | The voice created by the student is convincing.<br>Stylistic choices are precise and the student's<br>creation of tone is adept. The unifying and/or<br>aesthetic effect is skillfully developed.   |
| Proficient<br><b>Pf</b> | The student's exploration of the topic is purposeful.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and<br>considered. Support is specific and strengthens the<br>student's ideas and impressions.                         | The voice created by the student is distinct. Stylistic<br>choices are specific and the student's creation of<br>tone is competent. The unifying and/or aesthetic<br>effect is capably developed.   |
| Satisfactory<br>S       | The student's exploration of the topic is generalized.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and<br>relevant. Support is adequate and clarifies the<br>student's ideas and impressions.                       | The voice created by the student is apparent.<br>Stylistic choices are adequate and the student's<br>creation of tone is conventional. The unifying and/or<br>aesthetic effect is appropriately developed.  |

### Satisfaction from Interaction

The potential of what one can do in their life is boundless, enabling them to forge a life that they feel satisfied in. Regret comes with equal potential in one's life, where they find that they could have done more in the situation that they have been given. In Thomas Hoepker's photograph of a wealthy landowner sitting down for his dinner in Portugal, 1964, it can be seen that the landowner is alone on a table with only one light lit in his house. Hoepker's photograph suggests that satisfaction is only possible through personal human interaction, that there is a need for human life to interact with other human beings in order to feel justification in what should give them satisfaction or regret.

The photo containing only one man under one light exhibits what a life of regret may be. Darkness surrounding the landowner suggests that his experience in life has lead him to a situation where he only knows one place where he belongs in. His work, leading him to be wealthy as a landowner has left him with the necessities but in a regretful state, where he can only think of the possibilities of what is in the darkness as his only light shows the extent of what if possible for him at the current moment. It can also be considered that metaphorically, it is the brightest part of his day, the pinnacle, however brightest part of what is a depressing darkness. From this light, food is revealed on his table meant for three of what looks like to be some bread and wine. With this food, he has no one to share it with except himself in which he knows what the food already tastes like, assuming that he has purchased it as a desirable meal. This is his

"satisfaction", coming home after work everyday to a dinner table at night under one light, which does not seem to necessarily give him the greatest joy. The experience of what might have given him satisfaction in the past has been dulled down by having no one to share his joy with and instead giving him regret, a regret that has left him thinking of what he could have done better to have others around him, to have a life filled with people to care about him. Without others around, the perspective the photograph is taken from makes the landowner look small in a large room. This can be symbolic of his contentment in life, that his satisfaction from working and then coming home to this setting is very little. In essence the landowner's wealth may have bought him his small satisfactions of bread and wine, but it has not guaranteed him a future where he is entirely satisfied, instead leaving him with possibly his greatest regret: void of a bright life, void of friends, and left with no compassion for what he works for. He has instead forgotten how satisfaction feels as he is left with no motivation for him to discover what more is there in the darkness.

Having no one to share an aspect of life that one finds interesting can be

disheartening, especially when working towards a life that one expects to give

them satisfaction. When working hard in school, I will plan out what I need to do

get the grades that I want in which a priority needs to be set for what I should be

doing. The first priority is getting the work done along with understanding it, and

making sure I can retain the information. This can be time consuming and can

often lead me to having no leisure time. I find that I simply work to get results and

then that will be the end of it. Although this method of doing school can give me

success, what it will not bring me is time to compare and understand what others

consider a success, leaving me unable to distinguish what should be a

successful life versus an undesirable life. Without others to interact and justify

that what I am doing can be considered as correct, there is no satisfaction and no

value in doing what I work hard on. I therefore need to rely on others, and

understand what they value.

Anybody can work hard, get a good job, have a house, and get good food, but missing from that is human nature, showing a greater satisfaction in exploring life with other human beings than just working for a function. Human interaction is vital in understanding what is satisfying and what is regretful.

### IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS

#### PRESENTATION

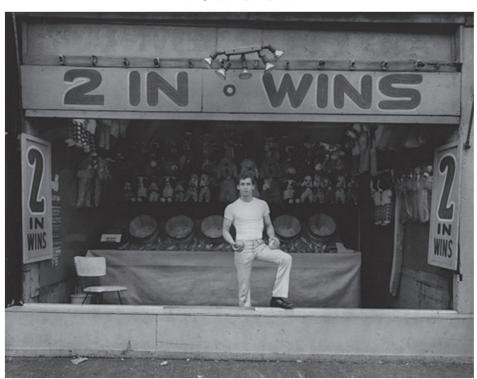
| FOCUS<br>Score?         | <ul> <li>When marking Ideas and Impressions, the marker should consider the quality of</li> <li>the student's exploration of the topic in relation to the prompting text(s)</li> <li>e student's ideas and reflection</li> <li>support in relation to the student's ideas and impressions</li> </ul> | <ul> <li>When marking Presentation, the marker should consider the effectiveness of</li> <li>voice in relation to the context created by the student in the chosen prose form</li> <li>stylistic choices (including quality and correctness of language and expression) and the student's creation of tone</li> <li>the student's development of a unifying and/or aesthetic effect</li> <li>Consider the complexity of the response in terms of its context and length.</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Excellent<br>E          | The student's exploration of the topic is insightful.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and<br>discerning. Support is precise and aptly reinforces<br>the student's ideas and impressions.   | The voice created by the student is convincing.<br>Stylistic choices are precise and the student's<br>creation of tone is adept. The unifying and/or<br>aesthetic effect is skillfully developed.   |
| Proficient<br><b>Pf</b> | The student's exploration of the topic is purposeful.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and<br>considered. Support is specific and strengthens the<br>student's ideas and impressions.  | The voice created by the student is distinct. Stylistic choices are specific and the student's creation of tone is competent. The unifying and/or aesthetic effect is capably developed.  |
| Satisfactory<br>S       | The student's exploration of the topic is generalized.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and<br>relevant. Support is adequate and clarifies the<br>student's ideas and impressions.  | The voice created by the student is apparent.<br>Stylistic choices are adequate and the student's<br>greation of tone is conventional. The unifying and/or<br>aesthetic effect is appropriately developed.  |

## Visual – Excellent Exemplars (click here)

## Page 49-59

- CPU
- Creative

"the forces that inhibit or encourage an individual's actions?" Coney Island, NY, 1969



Stephen Salmieri

# Poem Analysis

|   | EVIDENCE from Poem         | Ideas/Explanation |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------|
| T: TITLE  |                            |                   |
| (Prediction pre-read; post-read<br>– what is the purpose of the title<br>after analysis?)   |                            |                   |
| P:paraphrase  |                            |                   |
| (Summarize the Poem in your own words)  |                            |                   |
| C:connotation<br>(you need to interpret<br>meanings of words, lines,<br>images, etc anything<br>Symbolic???)  |                            |                   |
| A: ATTITUDE<br>(SOAP: How does the speaker<br>feel about the subject/<br>occasion/audience?)  |                            |                   |
| S: SHIFT<br>(Where does the poem shift in<br>tone, plot, language, style, etc)  | Explain the Shifts:        |                   |
| Consider attitude and speaker -   |                            |                   |
| describe and identify the tone.)  | A)Themes (list 5 minimum): |                   |
| <ul> <li>A) List the themes in singular<br/>words (i.e. home, certainty,<br/>security)</li> </ul>   |                            |                   |
| B) Choose the most dominant<br>Theme and write a theme<br>statement.  | THEME STATEMENT:           |                   |
| (i.e. Home serves as the main<br>source of certainty in its ability to<br>provide security and belonging.<br>Conversely, the absence of Home is<br>the source of uncertainty. |                            |                   |

## LINE-BY-LINE

Is there a specific line, word that is evidently connected to the prompt? Can you connect each line - connotatively - to the prompt? Interpret the images, the figurative language to the prompt. Interpret the structure and order in the poem to the prompt. Interpret the sound effects and devices to the prompt. Is there a story in the poem that connects to the prompt?



# Poem of Regret for an Old Friend (Meaghan O'Rourke)

What you did wasn't so bad.

You stood in a small room, waiting for the sun.

At least you told yourself that.

I know it was small,

but there was something, a kind of pulped lemon, at the low edge of the sky.

No, you're right, it was terrible. Terrible to live without love in small rooms with vinyl blinds listening to music secretly, the secret music of one's head which can't be shared. A dream is the only way to breathe. But you must find a more useful way to live. I suppose you're right this was a failure: to stand there so still, waiting for—what?

When I think about this life, the life you led, I think of England, of secret gardens that never open, and novels sliding off the bed at night where the small handkerchief of darkness settles over one's face.

## Exemplar - what score would the following response get?

|                          |                        | IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS  | PRESENTATION   |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| eedback<br>es<br>ements? | ocus                   | <ul> <li>When marking Ideas and Impressions, the marker should consider the quality of</li> <li>the student's exploration of the topic in relation to the prompting text(s)</li> <li>the student's ideas and reflection</li> <li>support in relation to the student's ideas and impressions</li> </ul> | <ul> <li>When marking Presentation, the marker should consider the effectiveness of</li> <li>voice in relation to the context created by the student in the chosen prose form</li> <li>stylistic choices (including quality and correctness of language and expression) and the student's creation of tone</li> <li>the student's development of a unifying and/or aesthetic effect</li> <li>Consider the complexity of the response in</li> </ul> |
| E                        | xcellent<br>E          | The student's exploration of the topic is insightful.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and<br>discerning. Support is precise and aptly reinforces<br>the student's ideas and impressions.   | terms of its context and length.<br>The voice created by the student is convincing.<br>Stylistic choices are precise and the student's<br>creation of tone is adept. The unifying and/or<br>aesthetic effect is skillfully developed.  |
| Pi                       | roficient<br><b>Pf</b> | The student's exploration of the topic is purposeful.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and<br>considered. Support is specific and strengthens the<br>student's ideas and impressions.  | The voice created by the student is distinct. Stylistic<br>choices are specific and the student's creation of<br>tone is competent. The unifying and/or aesthetic<br>effect is capably developed.  |
| Sa                       | atisfactory<br>S       | The student's exploration of the topic is generalized.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and<br>relevant. Support is adequate and clarifies the<br>student's ideas and impressions.  | The voice created by the student is apparent.<br>Stylistic choices are adequate and the student's<br>creation of tone is conventional. The unifying and/or<br>aesthetic effect is appropriately developed.   |

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## YOUR JOB: Feedback

- a) **Positives**
- b) Improvements?

#### Theme Statement:

An individual with failure in their life will build an illusion of satisfaction as a means of shielding others from the truth. However, this will crumble over time, thus revealing the regret that has haunted them for so long.

#### Your Response:

Baba's pride towers over his fifty-three years of life.

It sits as a centerpiece in our home like a black hole that consumes every bit of conversation that does not revolve around him. It boasts proudly about his travels around the world, making a life for himself with the grit and determination unmatched by any other human being in the universe. Every few weeks at dinner, he would retell his life story like an old man with all the wisdom in the world. When I was young, his stories used to mesmerize me.

"You children growing up in Canada," he says in disgust, "We had none of your luxuries. I had one pair of sandals that I wore for the entire school year. Whenever it broke, I would take it to the shoe store, and the uncle would resew the plastic into the hole. I would wear it for a few days, and then it would rip again. I would have to fix it by myself, using your grandmother's flimsy string as best as I could. Look where I am now. Look at what I have made out of my life."

Running his fingers through his thinning hair, Baba would call his aunts and uncles back home, reverberating his story verbatim across the poem. He could write a novel about himself back then, and he would have if life had gone according to his desires.

Baba jumped from country to country, living in stinky college dorms of the top engineering universities of Bangladesh. He flew across the world to Sydney, Australia, where, without ever having touched a computer, managed to graduate with a masters in mechanical engineering. Baba jumped from space junk to comets, gathering the momentum to scale dangerous planets that circled incessantly trying to take him away from his destination. He only returned to Bangladesh to marry my mother, and was off again on his quest to reach the sun. Never satisfied with his present, Baba barely came home, always out in the universe looking for his dream.

His goal was America, the land of opportunity, where he could finally rest and be satisfied with the life that he had made for himself. And he did make it there, managing to get a student visa for 2 and a half years. He was at Mercury, inches from the sun. He could feel the heat, the opportunity, the chance to breathe again. The universe was in his hands, and he knew that.

But he slipped, right when he thought he was there. The visa expired, and he was forced to step back to Venus. Money was running low, and Toronto was the only option. He worked as a security guard there, laboring night after night without any fulfilment from his actions. A friend advised him to move to Calgary at a time when the economy was booming. He stepped back to Mars, and Earth. The sun, once ever so close, became separated from him by thousands of light years. Though he did work on and off as an engineer, Baba finally walked on the *low edge of the sky* on December 1, 2015 with his empty briefcase and pink notice, signaling the end of his dream.

I never saw the pink notice, but I did see his proud face, glaring at his children, challenging us to question his fate. "It was not my fault. I worked incredibly hard. It was my circumstances that put me in this situation. I am proud of what I have accomplished. I am proud."

He said it like a mantra, almost as if he was trying to convince himself of the fact. Over the years, I saw him refusing to leave the house, now finding comfort in reliving his past life by sharing it to his kids. This time, however, none of his stories would match. He would add new details, an extra polishing to his words, oblivious to how we learned to never trust his words anymore. It was as if, instead of fixing the sandal of his life, he was throwing it into the dark, denying he ever had one in the first place.

My mother would narrow her eyes in confusion, squinting to see the truth, but never commented on anything, as she would later tell me, "Your Baba's face changes when he makes himself sound better than he is. Let him. Let him be satisfied. He is an old man after all." And, he was. In his stories, his hair was full, facing glowing with the heat and passion of youth, something that, according to my mother, he had never regained since leaving America.

To me, Calgary was home, but Baba saw it as returning to the space junk he had left behind in Bangladesh. He spits on this city, blaming it for all of his problems, "No jobs in this place. We need to move to the east, so that when you turn twenty-one, Nazeefa, you can apply for your family to move to America. We can still go there, you know."

Baba would say these things, and then sit in front of the TV screen, passively watching the lives of others, barely noticing his novel of life sliding off the couch and landing with a thud on the dusty floor. I had thought that he would go back to work, but everyday, he would stand beside the kitchen table, the overhead light revealing his balding head and silently rock back and forth within his mind. Other fathers who had been laid off from the oil and gas sector had taken on jobs, such as taxi and uber driving. Yet Baba, a ghost of the jumper he once was, hid in the cold darkness of *small rooms with vinyl blinds* where the sun's light would never touch his skin. He had enveloped himself in darkness for so long, that he had become it: a black hole absorbing all the light within my house. His regret reeked from out of every one of his moves, but he tried to mask it with his illusion of satisfaction - his illusion of pursuing a dream without jumping towards it like he did before.

The universe was in his hands, and he knew that, but his illusion of satisfaction envelopes him to this day, and I do not dare to shatter it. But if I could, I would tell him this:

### Baba,

You stood in a small room waiting for the sun, waiting for it to come to you, waiting for it to open your front door and dust of your dreams for you, waiting for it to spill light and glory of the past into you. You were once a jumper, a shaking finger fixing a sandal that allowed you to jump to great heights. But just because you didn't reach the sun does not mean that your life is over. Yes, a dream is the only way to breath, but you must find a more useful way to live than this.

I would tell him this and much more. I would pick up his novel and read it out to him, without the lies, so that he would feel content with all of his achievements. I want my Baba to see that he is not a broken sandal, that he is not frayed with time and circumstance.

But his pride towers over all of us - over his fifty three years of achievement. No matter how high I jump, he will never let me see the regret hidden within his darkness.

## Exemplar – what score would the response get?

a

b)

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS

student's ideas and impressions.

#### FOCUS When marking Presentation, the marker should When marking Ideas and Impressions, the marker should consider the quality of consider the effectiveness of YOUR JOB: Feedback the student's exploration of the topic in relation to voice in relation to the context created by the the prompting text(s) student in the chosen prose form · the student's ideas and reflection stylistic choices (including guality and **Positives** support in relation to the student's ideas and correctness of language and expression) and the impressions student's creation of tone **Improvements**? the student's development of a unifying and/or aesthetic effect Consider the complexity of the response in terms of its context and length. Excellent The student's exploration of the topic is insightful. The voice created by the student is convincing. Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and Stylistic choices are precise and the student's E discerning. Support is precise and aptly reinforces creation of tone is adept. The unifying and/or aesthetic effect is skillfully developed. the student's ideas and impressions. The student's exploration of the topic is purposeful. Proficient The voice created by the student is distinct. Stylistic Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and choices are specific and the student's creation of Pf considered. Support is specific and strengthens the tone is competent. The unifying and/or aesthetic student's ideas and impressions. effect is capably developed. Satisfactory The student's exploration of the topic is generalized. The voice created by the student is apparent. Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and Stylistic choices are adequate and the student's S relevant. Support is adequate and clarifies the creation of tone is conventional. The unifying and/or

PRESENTATION

aesthetic effect is appropriately developed.

### **Escaping Regret Through Illusion**

...the interplay between satisfaction and regret in an individual's life

Format: CPU Text: Poem

Theme Statement: An individual who is overcome by the regret of their past actions will only be able to find satisfaction through fantasizing about the future; however, this satisfaction is ingenuine and will leave only a stronger feeling of regret for the individual. The key to finding true satisfaction lies in understanding that the actions of the past can no longer be influenced, and that one should seek to create a more meaningful future for themselves.

## INTRO

There is one absolute truth to life: time presses on eternally. As individuals with such limited time to live, we often feel regretful about our actions, and being trapped in the state of regret offers one no satisfaction within their life, as they are constantly thinking about the hypotheticals of the past. Everyone has the desire to feel as though their life is fulfilled, and it can be devastating to constantly be aware of one's past actions and feel anguish. It is tempting to try and disillusion oneself by conceding to fanciful dreams about the future to ignore the past; however, this only creates a greater sense of regret ultimately. Meghan O'Rourke's poem, Poem of a Regret for an Old *Friend*, displays an individual's regrets as the character relives past events with someone who is important to them. The speaker retreats to her mind by imagining an alternate reality, but this fails to bring her any real satisfaction. I too have experienced the conflict between my regret regarding past actions and the desire to feel satisfied with my life. O'Rourke's poem as well as my own experiences provide insight to the idea that an individual who is overcome by the regret of their past actions will only be able to find apparent satisfaction by fantasizing about an alternate future; however, this satisfaction is ingenuine and will only lead an individual to perpetual regret. The key to finding true satisfaction lies in understanding that the actions of the past can no longer be influenced, and that one should seek to create a more meaningful future for themselves.

## Body 1

Constantly dwelling on the past brings rise to personal feelings of discontentment that prevent an individual from ever feeling satisfied. The speaker in *Poem of Regret for an Old Friend* displays this through her reminiscing of her past life with someone important to her: "No, you're right, it was terrible. / Terrible to live without love... / listening to music secretly... / which can't be shared." In these lines, the speaker explains how in the past, she lived a life devoid of love and it was terrible for her. This expresses her main regret - not loving enough in her past, and not loving openly. As she is discussing these thoughts with someone else, it can be assumed that she is specifically regretting not having loved this particular individual. "Listening to music secretly" can be interpreted as meaning that she used to have feelings of love, but hesitated to show them. In the end, her love was unable to be "shared" - showing how the individual she loved never truly understood the feelings that the speaker had for her. Within the next stanza, the speaker tries to justify her illusory thinking, by saying that "A dream is the only way to breathe." Here, she is conceding to the fact that the only way she can subdue the pain of her past regret is by giving into a dream. For her, this dream is a life in England. However, within the last stanza, it is pointed out that her dream is a place where "darkness settles over one's face," showing how this dream is actually false and full of darkness. The speaker is in anguish when thinking about how the person she's talking to did not know how much she loved them, and thus tries to escape into an alternate future in order to feel satisfied with her life. However, she is unable to do so because her dream is just that: a mere dream. Her regret will continue to haunt her in the real world, making her unable to achieve true satisfaction within her life.

## Body 2

Though it may not be regarding loving another, I too feel regret about my past actions and lament upon my previous decisions. Whenever faced with multiple opportunities, no matter how the future unfolds for me, I find myself always thinking back about the path I didn't take. Often, I am able to see how the road I followed turned out, and then be filled with regret once I recognize that the other path would have been much more beneficial. During the summer, a friend of mine asked me if I'd like to invest my money by starting a dropshipping business with him: where we'd collect pre-orders for in-demand items and ship them directly to our customers. I didn't think the plan would be successful at all due to the pandemic causing so many delays with international shipping, so I declined the offer. However, his business skyrocketed, making thousands of dollars in sales to this day. If I had accepted the offer, I could've had a passive source of income to put towards my upcoming university expenses. When the business first took off, I was regretful about my decision and fell into self-loathing as I was ashamed at having passed up such a bountiful opportunity. However, unlike the speaker in *Poem of Regret for an Old Friend*, I did not try to escape my reality by transporting myself into a dream, as eventually I realized that I could only shake the feeling of regret by accepting the past and making realistic goals for my future in order to be satisfied. So, I am currently working on establishing my own business - a wellness and productivity service that will make revenue through subscription and advertising. Although I missed an opportunity in the past, I took command of my own future and did not allow myself to become disillusioned, consequently developing a feeling of satisfaction within me while erasing my regret. The commitment to establishing a more meaningful tomorrow is what causes individuals to begin to lose their past regret and live a more satisfied life.

## Conclusion

As individuals, we have to make conscious choices within our lives. Most of these decisions will be irreversible, and so some regret is inevitable when we realize the alternate path we could've taken. However, being overcome by this regret like the speaker from Megan O'Rourke's *Poem of Regret for an* Old Friend causes one to feel totally dissatisfied with their life. The speaker regrets not having expressed her love towards another, but by trying to escape the regret by entering a dream and fantasizing about a false future, she condemns herself to eternal dissatisfaction. "The handkerchief of darkness" will cover such individuals who do not let go of their regret and move into the future. Within my own life. I have felt severe regret and a lack of satisfaction when I passed up on a chance to bring myself financial gain. Rather than retreating into a dream, however, I created an opportunity for myself in order to develop a meaningful future for myself instead of a fake one like the speaker's dream of England within the poem. Should the speaker want to find true satisfaction, she must accept the past and look into the future with the desire to create a meaningful life - which could include properly expressing her love for those she is intimate with, as not doing so was the source of her dissatisfaction. It is impossible to reverse the passage of time; it charges on and solidifies everything it touches, which is bound to leave feelings of regret within individuals. To overcome this and achieve true satisfaction, one must let go of the past and establish a meaningful future for themselves instead of conceding to the illusion of a dream.

## Exemplar - what score would the response get?

|   |                 | 8  | IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS  | PRESENTATION   |
|---|-----------------|--|--|--|
|   |                 | FOCUS  | When marking <b>Ideas and Impressions</b> , the marker should consider the quality of  | When marking <b>Presentation</b> , the marker should consider the effectiveness of   |
| YOU   | R JOB: Feedback |  | <ul> <li>the student's exploration of the topic in relation to<br/>the prompting text(s)</li> <li>the student's ideas and reflection</li> </ul>  | <ul> <li>voice in relation to the context created by the student in the chosen prose form</li> <li>stylistic choices (including quality and</li> </ul>   |
| <ul><li>a) Positives</li><li>b) Improvements?</li></ul> |                 | <ul> <li>support in relation to the student's ideas and impressions</li> </ul> | <ul> <li>correctness of language and expression) and the student's creation of tone</li> <li>the student's development of a unifying and/or aesthetic effect</li> </ul>                            |  |
|   |                 |  |  | Consider the complexity of the response in terms of ite context and length   |
|   |                 | Excellent<br>E   | The student's exploration of the topic is insightful.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and<br>discerning. Support is precise and aptly reinforces<br>the student's ideas and impressions. | The voice created by the student is convincing.<br>Stylistic choices are precise and the student's<br>creation of tone is adept. The unifying and/or<br>aesthetic effect is skillfully developed.          |
|   |                 | Proficient<br><b>Rf</b>  | The student's exploration of the topic is purposeful.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and<br>considered. Support is specific and strengthens the<br>student's ideas and impressions.    | The voice created by the student is distinct. Stylistic<br>choices are specific and the student's creation of<br>tone is competent. The unifying and/or aesthetic<br>effect is capably developed.          |
|   |                 | Satisfactory<br>S  | The student's exploration of the topic is generalized.<br>Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and<br>relevant. Support is adequate and clarifies the<br>student's ideas and impressions.  | The voice created by the student is apparent.<br>Stylistic choices are adequate and the student's<br>creation of tone is conventional. The unifying and/or<br>aesthetic effect is appropriately developed. |