

Free response prose questions—AP English Literature and Composition—1982 – 2004

1982 Read carefully the following statement of veto. In a well-organized essay, analyze the strategies or devices (organization, diction, tone, use of detail) that make Governor Stevenson's argument effective for his audience. Substantiate your observations with specific examples from the text.

To the Honorable, the Members of the Senate of the Sixth-sixth General Assembly:

I herewith return, without my approval, Senate Bill No. 93, entitled, "An Act to Provide Protection to Insectivorous Birds by Restraining Cats." This is the so-called "Cat Bill." I veto and withhold my approval from this Bill for the following reasons:

It would impose fines on owners or keepers who permitted their cats to run at large off their premises. It would permit any person to capture or call upon the police to pick up and imprison, cats at large. It would permit the use of traps. The bill would have statewide application— on farms, in villages, and in metropolitan centers.

This legislation has been introduced in the past several sessions of the Legislature, and it has, over the years, been the source of much comment— not all of which has been in a serious vein. It may be that the General Assembly has now seen fit to refer it to one who can view it with a fresh outlook. Whatever the reasons for passage at this session, I cannot believe there is a widespread public demand for this law or that it could, as a practical matter, be enforced.

Furthermore, I cannot agree that it should be the declared public policy of Illinois that a cat visiting a neighbor's yard or crossing the highway is a public nuisance. It is in the nature of cats to do a certain amount of unescorted roaming. Many live with their owners in apartments or other restricted premises, and I doubt if we want to make their every brief foray an opportunity for a small game hunt by zealous citizens— with traps or otherwise. I am afraid this Bill could only create discord, recrimination and enmity. Also consider the owner's dilemma: To escort a cat abroad on a leash is against the nature of the cat, and to permit it to venture forth for exercise unattended into a night of new dangers is against the nature of the owner. Moreover, cats perform useful service, particularly in rural areas, in combating rodents— work they necessarily perform alone and without regard for property lines.

We are all interested in protecting certain varieties of birds. That cats destroy some birds, I well know, but I believe this legislation would further but little the worthy cause to which its proponents give such unselfish effort. The problem of cat versus bird is as old as time. If we attempt to resolve it by legislation why know but what we may be called upon to take sides as well in the age old problems of dog versus cat, bird versus bird, or even bird versus worm. In my opinion, the State of Illinois and its local governing bodies already have enough to do without trying to control feline delinquency.

For these reasons, and not because I love birds the less or cats the more, I veto and withhold my approval from Senate Bill No. 93.

Respectfully,
ADLAI E. STEVENSON, Governor

1983 The writer of the following passage expresses an attitude toward work and in so doing makes certain assumptions about human nature. In a well-written essay, define precisely what that attitude and those assumptions are and analyze how the writer uses language to convince the reader of the rightness of his position.

For there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean *is* in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it. 'Know thyself:' long enough has that poor 'self' of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to 'know' it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, 'an endless significance lies in Work;' a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seedfields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like hell-dogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labour in him, is it not as purifying fire wherein all poison is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame!

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a Life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever deepening river there, it runs and flows; - draining off the sour festering water, gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making instead of pestilential swamp a green fruitful meadow, with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and its value be great or small! Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness, - to all knowledge, 'self-knowledge' and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The Knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that; for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge, a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. 'Doubt of whatever kind can be ended by Action alone.'

Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (1843)

1984 Read the following passage carefully. Then write a coherent essay showing how this passage provides a characterization and evaluation of Emma more than of Harriet.

As [Emma] sat one morning, looking forward to exactly such a close of the present day, a note was brought from Mrs. Goddard, requesting, in most respectful terms, to be allowed to bring Miss Smith with her; a most welcome request: for Miss Smith was a girl of seventeen, whom Emma knew very well by sight, and had long felt an interest in, on account of her beauty. A very gracious invitation was returned, and the evening no longer dreaded by the fair mistress of the mansion.

Harriet Smith was the natural daughter of somebody. Somebody had placed her, several years back, at Mrs. Goddard's school, and somebody had lately raised her from the condition of scholar to that of parlour-boarder. This was all that was generally known of her history. She had no visible friends but what had been acquired at Highbury, and was now just returned from a long visit in the country to some young ladies who had been at school there with her.

She was a very pretty girl, and her beauty happened to be of a sort which Emma particularly admired. She was short, plump, and fair, with a fine bloom, blue eyes, light hair, regular features, and a look of great sweetness, and, before the end of the evening, Emma was as much pleased with her manners as her person, and quite determined to continue the acquaintance.

She was not struck by any thing remarkably clever in Miss Smith's conversation, but she found her altogether very engaging--not inconveniently shy, not unwilling to talk--and yet so far from pushing, shewing so proper and becoming a deference, seeming so pleasantly grateful for being admitted to Hartfield, and so artlessly impressed by the appearance of every thing in so superior a style to what she had been used to, that she must have good sense, and deserve encouragement. Encouragement should be given. Those soft blue eyes, and all those natural graces, should not be wasted on the inferior society of Highbury and its connexions. The acquaintance she had already formed were unworthy of her. The friends from whom she had just parted, though very good sort of people, must be doing her harm. They were a family of the name of Martin, whom Emma well knew by character, as renting a large farm of Mr. Knightley, and residing in the parish of Donwell--very creditably, she believed--she knew Mr. Knightley thought highly of them--but they must be coarse and unpolished, and very unfit to be the intimates of a girl who wanted only a little more knowledge and elegance to be quite perfect. She would notice her; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners. It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, and powers.

1985 The excerpts below represent early and later drafts of a prose passage that records the writer's thoughts on how the experience of war affected his attitude toward language.

Write a well-organized essay in which you discuss the probable reasons for the writer's additions and deletions and the ways in which those revisions change the effect of the paragraph.

Early Draft

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them and read them now for a long time and I had seen nothing sacred and the only things glorious had no glory and the sacrifices seemed like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of places were all you could say and mean anything and they meant everything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were a little obscene beside the concrete names of places, the numbers of roads, the numbers of regiments and the dates.

Later Draft

I did not say anything. I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them now for a long time, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and we had read them, on posters that were slapped up over other posters. There were many words that you could not stand to hear, and finally only the names of places had dignity. Beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates, abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene. I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the number of regiments and the dates.

1986 The passage below is the opening of a novel. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you define the narrator's attitude toward the characters and show how he directs the reader's perceptions of those characters through his use of such stylistic devices as imagery, diction, narrative structure, and choice of specific details.

CHARLES DICKENS: DOMBEY AND SON

Dombey sat in the corner of the darkened room in the great arm-chair by the bedside, and Son lay tucked up warm in a little basket bedstead, carefully disposed on a low settee immediately in front of the fire and close to it, as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new.

Dombey was about eight-and-forty years of age. Son about eight-and-forty minutes. Dombey was rather bald, rather red, and though a handsome well-made man, too stern and pompous in appearance, to be prepossessing. Son was very bald, and very red, and though (of course) an undeniably fine infant, somewhat crushed and spotty in his general effect, as yet. On the brow of Dombey, Time and his brother Care had set some marks, as on a tree that was to come down in good time—remorseless twins they are for striding through their human forests, notching as they go—while the countenance of Son was crossed and recrossed with a thousand little creases, which the same deceitful Time would take delight in smoothing out and wearing away with the flat part of his scythe, as a preparation of the surface for his deeper operations.

Dombey, exulting in the long-looked-for event, jingled and jingled the heavy gold watch-chain that depended from below his trim blue coat, whereof the buttons sparkled phosphorescently in the feeble rays of the distant fire. Son, with his little fists curled up and clenched, seemed, in his feeble way, to be squaring at existence for having come upon him so unexpectedly.

'The house will once again, Mrs. Dombey,' said Mr. Dombey, 'be not only in name but in fact Dombey and Son; Dom-bey and Son!'

The words had such a softening influence, that he appended a term of endearment to Mrs. Dombey's name (though not without some hesitation, as being a man but little used to that form of address): and said, 'Mrs. Dombey, my—my dear.'

A transient flush of faint surprise overspread the sick lady's face as she raised her eyes towards him.

'He will be christened Paul, my—Mrs. Dombey—of course.'

She feebly echoed, 'Of course,' or rather expressed it by the motion of her lips, and closed her eyes again.

'His father's name, Mrs. Dombey, and his grandfather's! I wish his grandfather were alive this day!' And again he said 'Dom-bey and Son,' in exactly the same tone as before.

Those three words conveyed the one idea of Mr. Dombey's life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre. Common abbreviations took new meanings in his eyes, and had sole reference to them: A.D. had no concern with anno Domini, but stood for anno Dombei—and Son.

1987 In the selection below, George Eliot presents a conception of leisure that has lost its place in the society of her own time. Write an essay in which you describe her views on "old Leisure" and on leisure in the society of her own time and discuss the stylistic devices she uses to convey those views.

Leisure is gone—gone where the spinning-wheels are gone, and the pack-horses, and the slow waggons, and the pedlars who brought bargains to the door on sunny afternoons. Ingenious philosophers tell you, perhaps, that the great work of the steam-engine is to create leisure for mankind. Do not believe them: it only creates a vacuum for eager thought to rush in. Even idleness is eager now—eager for amusement: prone to excursion trains, art-museums, periodical literature, and exciting novels: prone even to scientific theorising. and cursory peeps through microscopes. Old Leisure was quite a different personage: he only read one newspaper, innocent of leaders, and was free from that periodicity of sensations which we call post-time. He was a contemplative, rather stout gentleman, of excellent digestion,—of quiet perceptions, undiseased by hypothesis: happy in his inability to know the causes of things, preferring the things themselves. He lived chiefly in the country, among pleasant seats and homesteads, and was fond of sauntering by the fruit-tree wall, and scenting the apricots when they were warmed by the morning sunshine, or of sheltering himself under the orchard boughs at noon, when the summer pears were falling. He knew nothing of week-day services, and thought none the worse of the Sunday sermon, if it allowed him to sleep from the text to the blessing,—liking the afternoon service best, because the prayers were the shortest, and not ashamed to say so; for he had an easy, jolly conscience, broad-backed like himself, and able to carry a great deal of beer or port-wine,—not being made squeamish by doubts and qualms and lofty aspirations: life was not a task to him, but a sinecure: he fingered the guineas in his pocket, and ate his dinners, and slept the sleep of the irresponsible; for had he not kept up his charter by going to church on the Sunday afternoons?

Fine old Leisure! Do not be severe upon him, and judge him by our modern standard: he never went to Exeter Hall, or heard a popular preacher, or read *Tracts for the Times* or *Sartor Resartus*.¹

—George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, 1859

¹ Religious, political, and philosophical works published between 1833 and 1841

1988 Below is a complete short story. Read it carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the blend of humor, pathos, and the grotesque in the story.

The last time I saw my father was in Grand Central Station. I was going from my grandmother's in the Adirondacks to a cottage on the Cape that my mother had rented, and I wrote my father that I would be in New York between trains for an hour and a half, and asked if we could have lunch together. His secretary wrote to say that he would meet me at the information booth at noon, and at twelve o'clock sharp I saw him coming through the crowd. He was a stranger to me—my mother divorced him three years ago and I hadn't been with him since—but as soon as I saw him I felt that he was my father, my flesh and blood, my future and my doom. I knew that when I was grown I would be something like him; I would have to plan my campaign within his limitations. He was a big, good-looking man, and I was terribly happy to see him again. He struck me on the back and shook my hand. "Hi, Charlie," he said. "Hi, boy. I'd like to take you up to my club, but it's in the Sixties, and if you have to catch an early train I guess we'd better get something to eat around here." He put his arm around me, and I smelled my father the way my mother sniffs a rose. It was a rich compound of whiskey, after-shave lotion, shoe polish, woolens, and the rankness of a mature male. I hoped that someone would see us together. I wished that we could be photographed. I wanted some record of our having been together.

We went out of the station and up a side street to a restaurant. It was still early, and the place was empty. The bartending was quarrelling with a delivery boy, and there was one very old waiter in a red coat down by the kitchen door. We sat down, and my father hailed the waiter in a loud voice. "*Kellner!*" he shouted. "*Garçon! Cameriere! You!*" His boisterousness in the empty restaurant seemed out of place. "Could we have a little service here!" he shouted. "Chop-chop." Then he clapped his hands. This caught the waiter's attention, and he shuffled over to our table. "Were you clapping your hands at me?" he asked. "Calm down, calm down, *sommelier*," my father said. "If it isn't too much to ask of you—if it wouldn't be too much above and beyond the call of duty, we would like a couple of Beefeater Gibsons."

"I don't like to be clapped at," the waiter said.

"I should have brought my whistle," my father said. "I have a whistle that is audible only to the ears of old waiters. Now, take out your little pad and your little pencil, and see if you can get this straight: two Beefeater Gibsons. Repeat after me: two Beefeater Gibsons."

"I think you'd better go somewhere else," the waiter said quietly.

"That," said my father, "is one of the most brilliant suggestions I have ever heard. Come on, Charlie, let's get the hell out of here."

I followed my father out of that restaurant into another. He was not so boisterous this time. Our drinks came, and he cross-questioned me about the baseball season. He then struck the edge of his empty glass with his knife and began shouting again. "*Garçon! Kellner! Cameriere! You!* Could we trouble you to bring us two more of the same."

“How old is the boy?” the waiter asked.

“That,” my father said, “is none of your Goddamned business.”

“I’m sorry, sir,” the waiter said, “but I won’t serve the boy another drink.”

“Well, I have some news for you,” my father said. “I have some very interesting news for you. This doesn’t happen to be the only restaurant in New York. They’ve opened another on the corner. Come on, Charlie.”

He paid the bill, and I followed him out of that restaurant into another. Here the waiters wore pink jackets like hunting coats, and there was a lot of horse tack on the walls. We sat down, and my father began to shout again. “Master of the hounds! Tallyhoo and all that sort of thing. We’d like a little something in the way of a stirrup cup. Namely, two Bibson Geefeaters.”

“Two Bibson Geefeaters?” the waiter asked, smiling.

“You know damned well what I want,” my father said angrily. “I want two Beefeater Gibsons, and make it snappy. Things have changed in jolly old England. So my friend the duke tells me. Let’s see what England can produce in the way of a cocktail.”

“This isn’t England,” the waiter said.

“Don’t argue with me,” my father said. “Just do as you’re told.”

“I just thought you might like to know where you are,” the waiter said.

“If there is one thing I cannot tolerate,” my father said, “it is an impudent domestic.” Come on, Charlie.”

The fourth place we went to was Italian. “*Buon giorno,*” my father said. “*Per favore, possiamo avere due cocktail americani, forti, forti. Molto gin, poco vermut.*”

“I don’t understand Italian,” the waiter said.

“Oh, come off it,” my father said. “You understand Italian, and you know damned well you do.” *Vogliamo due cocktail americani. Subito.*”

The waiter left us and spoke with the captain, who came over to our table and said, “I’m sorry, sir, but this table is reserved.”

“All right,” my father said. “Get us another table.”

“All the tables are reserved,” the captain said.

“I get it,” my father said. “You don’t desire our patronage. Is that it? Well, the hell with you. *Vada all’inferno*. Let’s go, Charlie.”

“I have to get my train,” I said.

“I’m sorry, sonny,” my father said. “I’m terribly sorry.” He put his arm around me and pressed me against him. “I’ll walk you back to the station. If there had only been time to go up to my club.”

“That’s all right, Daddy,” I said.

“I’ll get you a paper,” he said. “I’ll get you a paper to read on the train.”

Then he went up to a newsstand and said, “Kind sir, will you be good enough to favor me with one of your God-damned, no-good, ten-cent afternoon papers?” The clerk turned away from him and stared at a magazine cover. “Is it asking too much for you to see me one of your disgusting specimens of yellow journalism?”

“I have to go, Daddy,” I said. “It’s late.”

“Now, just wait a second, sonny,” he said. “Just wait a second. I want to get a rise out of this chap.”

“Goodbye, Daddy,” said, and I went down the stairs and got my train, and that was the last time I saw my father.

1989 Read the following passage carefully. Then write an essay that describes the attitude of the speaker toward Captain MacWhirr and that analyzes the techniques the speaker uses to define the captain's character.

Captain MacWhirr, of the steamer Nan-Shan, had a physiognomy that, in the order of material appearances, was the exact counterpart of his mind: it presented no marked characteristics of firmness or stupidity; it had no pronounced characteristics whatever; it was simply ordinary, irresponsible, and unruffled. ...

Having just enough imagination to carry him through each successive day, and no more, he was tranquilly sure of himself; and from the very same cause he was not in the least conceited. It is your imaginative superior who is touchy, overbearing, and difficult to please; but every ship Captain MacWhirr commanded was the floating abode of harmony and peace. It was, in truth, as impossible for him to take a flight of fancy as it would be for a watchmaker to put together a chronometer with nothing except a two-pound hammer and a whip-saw in the way of tools. Yet the uninteresting lives of men so entirely given to the actuality of the bare existence have their mysterious side. It was impossible in Captain MacWhirr's case, for instance, to understand what under heaven could have induced that perfectly satisfactory son of a petty grocer in Belfast to run away to sea. And yet he had done that very thing at the age of fifteen. It was enough, when you thought it over, to give you the idea of an immense, potent, and invisible hand thrust into the ant-heap of the earth, laying hold of shoulders, knocking heads together, and setting the unconscious faces of the multitude towards inconceivable goals and in undreamt-of directions.

His father never really forgave him for this undutiful stupidity. "We could have got on without him," he used to say later on, "but there's the business. And he an only son, too!" His mother wept very much after his disappearance. As it had never occurred to him to leave word behind, he was mourned over for dead till, after eight months, his first letter arrived from Talcahuano. It was short, and contained the statement: "We had very fine weather on our passage out." But evidently, in the writer's mind, the only important intelligence was to the effect that his captain had, on the very day of writing, entered him regularly on the ship's articles as Ordinary Seaman. "Because I can do the work," he explained. The mother again wept copiously, while the remark, "Tom's an ass," expressed the emotions of the father. He was a corpulent man, with a gift for sly chaffing, which to the end of his life he exercised in his intercourse with his son, a little pityingly, as if upon a half-witted person.

MacWhirr's visits to his home were necessarily rare, and in the course of years he dispatched other letters to his parents, informing them of his successive promotions and of his movements upon the vast earth. In these missives could be found sentences like this: "The heat here is very great." Or: "On Christmas day at 4 P. M. we fell in with some icebergs." The old people ultimately became acquainted with a good many names of ships, and with the names of the skippers who commanded them—with the names of Scots and English shipowners—with the names of seas, oceans, straits, promontories—with outlandish names of lumber-ports, of rice-ports, of cotton-ports—with the names of islands—with the name of their son's young woman. She was called Lucy. It did not suggest itself to him to mention whether he thought the name pretty. And then they died.

1990 Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the style and tone of the passage below, explaining how they help to express the author's attitudes.

Once, in a dry season, I wrote in large letters across two pages of a notebook that innocence ends when one is stripped of the delusions that one likes oneself. Although now, some years later, I marvel that a mind on the outs with itself should have nonetheless made painstaking record of its every tremor, I recall with embarrassing clarity the flavor of those particular ashes. It was a matter of misplaced self-respect.

I had not been elected to Phi Beta Kappa. This failure could scarcely have been more predictable or less ambiguous (I simply did not have the grades), but I was unnerved by it; I had somehow thought myself a kind of academic Raskolnikov, curiously exempt from the cause-effect relationship which hampered others. Although even the humorless nineteen-year-old that I was must have recognized that the situation lacked real tragic stature, the day that I did not make Phi Beta Kappa nonetheless marked the end of something and innocence may well be the word for it. I lost the conviction that lights would always turn green for me, the pleasant certainty that those rather passive virtues which had won me approval as a child automatically guaranteed me not only Phi Beta Kappa keys but happiness, honor, and the love of a good man; lost a certain touching faith in the totem power of good manners, clean hair, and proven competence on the Stanford-Binet scale. To such doubtful amulets had my self-respect been pinned, and I faced myself that day with the nonplussed apprehension of someone who has come across a vampire and has no crucifix at hand.

Although to be driven back upon oneself is an uneasy affair at best, rather like trying to cross a border with borrowed credentials, it seems to me now the one condition necessary to the beginnings of real self-respect. Most of our platitudes notwithstanding, self-deception remains the most difficult deception. The tricks that work on others count for nothing in that very well-lit back alley where one keeps assignations with oneself: no winning smiles will do here, no prettily drawn lists of good intentions. One shuffles flashily but in vain through one's marked cards—the kindness done for the wrong reason, the apparent triumph which involved no real effort, the seemingly heroic act into which one had been shamed. The dismal fact is that self-respect has nothing to do with the approval of others—who are, after all, deceived easily enough; has nothing to do with reputation, which, as Rhett Butler told Scarlett O'Hara, is something people with courage can do without.

—Joan Didion

1991 Read the following passage from *The Life of Samuel Johnson* by James Boswell. Then, in a well-organized essay, discuss the ways Boswell differentiates between the writing of Joseph Addison and that of Samuel Johnson. In your essay, analyze Boswell's views of both writers and the devices he uses to convey those views.

It has of late been the fashion to compare the style of Addison and Johnson, and to depreciate, I think very unjustly, the style of Addison as nerveless and feeble, because it has not the strength and energy of that of Johnson. . . . Addison writes with the ease of a gentleman. His readers fancy that a wise and accomplished companion is talking to them; so that he insinuates his sentiments and taste into their minds by an imperceptible influence. Johnson writes like a teacher. He dictates to his readers as if from an academical chair. They attend with awe and admiration; and his precepts are impressed upon them by his commanding eloquence. Addison's style, like a light wine, pleases everybody from the first. Johnson's, like a liquor of more body, seems too strong at first, but, by degrees, is highly relished; and such is the melody of his periods,¹ so much do they captivate the ear, and seize upon the attention, that there is scarcely any writer, however inconsiderable, who does not aim, in some degree, at the same species of excellence.

¹ sentences

1992 In the following excerpts from the beginning and ending of Tillie Olsen's short story "I Stand Here Ironing," a mother's reflections are prompted by another person's concern about her daughter. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the narrative techniques and other resources of language Olsen uses to characterize the mother and the mother's attitudes toward her daughter.

TILLIE OLSEN: I STAND HERE IRONING

I stand here ironing, and what you asked me moves tormented back and forth with the iron.

"I wish you would manage the time to come in and talk with me about your daughter. I'm sure you can help me understand her. She's a youngster who needs help and whom I'm deeply interested in helping."

"Who needs help." Even if I came, what good would it do? You think because I am her mother I have a key, or that in some way you could use me as a key? She has lived for nineteen years. There is all that life that has happened outside of me, beyond me.

And when is there time to remember, to sift, to weigh, to estimate, to total? I will start and there will be an interruption and I will have to gather it all together again. Or I will become engulfed with all I did or did not do, with what should have been and what cannot be helped.

She was a beautiful baby. The first and only one of our five that was beautiful at birth. You do not guess how new and uneasy her tenancy in her now-loveliness. You did not know her all those years she was thought homely, or see her poring over her baby pictures, making me tell her over and over how beautiful she had been—and would be, I would tell her—and was now, to the seeing eye. But the seeing eyes were few or nonexistent. Including mine.

I nursed her. They feel that's important nowadays. I nursed all the children, but with her, with all the fierce rigidity of first motherhood, I did like the books then said. Though her cries battered me to trembling and my breasts ached with swollenness, I waited till the clock decreed.

Why do I put that first? I do not even know if it matters, or if it explains anything.

She was a beautiful baby. She blew shining bubbles of sound. She loved motion, loved light, loved color and music and textures. She would lie on the floor in her blue overalls patting the surface so hard in ecstasy her hands and feet would blur. She was a miracle to me, but when she was eight months old I had to leave her daytimes with the woman downstairs to whom she was no miracle at all, for I worked or looked for work and for Emily's father, who "could no longer endure" (he wrote in his good-bye note) "sharing want with us."

I was nineteen. It was the pre-relief, pre-WPA world of the depression. I would start running as soon as I got off the streetcar, running up the stairs, the place smelling sour, and awake or asleep to startle awake, when she saw me she would break into a clogged weeping that could not be comforted, a weeping I can hear yet.

.....

She is so lovely. Why did you want me to come in at all? Why were you concerned? She will find her way.

She starts up the stairs to bed. “Don’t get me up with the rest in the morning.” “But I thought you were having midterms.” “Oh, those,” she comes back in, kisses me, and says quite lightly, “in a couple of years when we’ll all be atom-dead they won’t matter a bit.”

She has said this before. She *believes* it. But because I have been dredging the past, and all that compounds a human being is so heavy and meaningful in me, I cannot endure it tonight.

I will never total it all. I will never come in to say: She was a child seldom smiled at. Her father left me before she was a year old. I had to work her first six years when there was work, or I sent her home and to his relatives. There were years she had care she hated. She was dark and thin and foreign-looking in a world where the prestige went to bloneness and curly hair and dimples, she was slow where glibness was prized. She was a child of anxious, not proud, love. We were poor and could not afford for her the soil of easy growth. I was a young mother, I was a distracted mother. There were the other children pushing up, demanding. Her younger sister seemed all that she was not. There were years she did not want me to touch her. She kept too much to herself, her life was such she had to keep too much in herself. My wisdom came too late. She has much to her and probably little will come of it. She is a child of her age, of depression, of war, of fear.

Let her be. So all that is in her will not bloom—but in how many does it? There is still enough left to live by. Only help her to know—help make it so there is cause for her to know—that she is more than this dress on the ironing board, helpless before the iron.

1993 In the following excerpts from an essay, Lytton Strachey presents his conception of Florence Nightingale. In a well-organized essay, define Strachey's view and analyze how he conveys it. Consider such elements as diction, imagery, syntax, and tone.

LYTTON STRACHEY: EMINENT VICTORIANS

Everyone knows the popular conception of Florence Nightingale.¹ The saintly, self-sacrificing woman, the delicate maiden of high degree who threw aside the pleasures of life of ease to succour the afflicted, the Lady with the Lamp, gliding through the horrors of the hospital at Scutari, and consecrating with the radiance of her goodness the dying soldier's couch—the vision is familiar all. But the truth was different. The Miss Nightingale of fact was as facile fancy painted her. She worked in another fashion, and towards another end; she moved under the stress of an impetus which finds no place in the popular imagination. A Demon possessed her. Now demons, whatever else they may be, are full of interest. And so it happens that in the real Miss Nightingale was more that was interesting than in the legendary one.

...

What was that secret voice in her ear, if it was not a call? Why had she felt, from her earliest years, those mysterious promptings towards ... she hardly knew what but certainly towards something very different from anything around her? Why, as a child in the nursery, when her sister had shown a healthy pleasure in tearing her dolls to pieces, had *she* shown an almost morbid one in sewing them up again? Why was she driven now to minister to the poor in their cottages, to watch by sick-beds, to put her dog's wounded paw into elaborate splints as if it was a human being? Why was her head filled with queer imaginations of the country house at Embley turned, by some enchantment, into a hospital, with herself as matron moving about among the beds? Why was even her vision of heaven itself filled with suffering patients to whom she was being useful? So she dreamed and wondered, and, taking out her diary, she poured into it the agitations of her soul.

...

A weaker spirit would have been overwhelmed by the load of such distresses—would have yielded or snapped. But this extraordinary young woman held firm, and fought her way to victory. With an amazing persistency, during the eight years that followed her rebuff over Salisbury Hospital, she struggled and worked and planned. While superficially she was carrying on the life of a brilliant girl in high society, while internally she was a prey to the tortures of regret and of remorse, she yet possessed the energy to collect the knowledge and to undergo the experience which alone could enable her to do what she had determined she would do in the end. In secret she devoured the reports of medical commissions, the pamphlets of sanitary authorities, the histories of hospitals and homes. She spent the intervals of the London season in ragged schools and workhouses. When she went abroad with her family, she used her spare time so well that there was hardly a great hospital in Europe with which she was not acquainted, hardly a great city whose slums she had not passed through.

¹ English nurse and founder of modern nursing (1820 – 1910)

...

Three more years passed, and then at last the pressure of time told; her family seemed to realise that she was old enough and strong enough to have her way; and she became the superintendent of a charitable nursing home in Harley Street. She had gained her independence, though it was in a meagre sphere enough; and her mother was still not quite resigned: surely Florence might at least spend the summer in the country. At times, indeed, among her intimates, Mrs. Nightingale almost wept. "We are ducks," she said with tears in her eyes, "who have hatched a wild swan." But the poor lady was wrong; it was not a swan that they had hatched; it was an eagle.

1994 Read the following passage carefully. Then write an essay showing how the author dramatizes the young heroine's adventure. Consider such literary elements as diction, imagery, narrative pace, and point of view.

SARAH ORNE JEWETT: A WHITE HERON

Half a mile from home, at the farther edge of the woods, where the land was highest, a great pine-tree stood, the last of its generation. Whether it was left for a boundary mark, or for what reason, no one could say; the woodchoppers who had felled its mates were dead and gone long ago, and a whole forest of sturdy trees, pines and oaks and maples, had grown again. But the stately head of this old pine towered above them all and made a landmark for sea and shore miles and miles away. Sylvia knew it well. She had always believed that whoever climbed to the top of it could see the ocean; and the little girl had often laid her hand on the great rough trunk and looked up wistfully at those dark boughs that the wind always stirred, no matter how hot and still the air might be below. Now she thought of the tree with a new excitement, for why, if one climbed it at break of day, could not one see all the world, and easily discover from whence the white heron flew, and mark the place, and find the hidden nest?

What a spirit of adventure, what wild ambition! What fancied triumph and delight and glory for the later morning when she could make known the secret! It was almost too real and too great for the childish heart to bear.

All night the door of the little house stood open and the whippoorwills came and sang upon the very step. The young sportsman and his old hostess were sound asleep, but Sylvia's great design kept her broad awake and watching. She forgot to think of sleep. The short summer night seemed as long as the winter darkness, and at last when the whippoorwills ceased, and she was afraid the morning would after all come too soon, she stole out of the house and followed the pasture path through the woods, hastening toward the open ground beyond, listening with a sense of comfort and companionship to the drowsy twitter of a half-awakened bird, whose perch she had jarred in passing. Alas, if the great wave of human interest which flooded for the first time this dull little life should sweep away the satisfactions of an existence heart to heart with nature and the dumb life of the forest!

There was the huge tree asleep yet in the paling moonlight, and small and silly Sylvia began with utmost bravery to mount to the top of it, with tingling, eager blood coursing the channels of her whole frame, with her bare feet and fingers, that pinched and held like bird's claws to the monstrous ladder reaching up, up, almost to the sky itself. First she must mount the white oak tree that grew alongside, where she was almost lost among the dark branches and the green leaves heavy and wet with dew; a bird fluttered off its nest, and a red squirrel ran to and fro and scolded pettishly at the harmless housebreaker. Sylvia felt her way easily. She had often climbed there, and knew that higher still one of the oak's upper branches chafed against the pine trunk,

just where its lower boughs were set close together. There, when she made the dangerous pass from one tree to the other, the great enterprise would really begin.

She crept out along the swaying oak limb at last, and took the daring step across into the old pine-tree. The way was harder than she thought; she must reach far and hold fast, the sharp dry twigs caught and held her and scratched her like angry talons, the pitch made her thin little fingers clumsy and stiff as she went round and round the tree's great stem, higher and higher upward. The sparrows and robins in the woods below were beginning to wake and twitter to the dawn, yet it seemed much lighter there aloft in the pine-tree, and the child knew she must hurry if her project were to be of any use.

The tree seemed to lengthen itself out as she went up, and to reach farther and farther upward. It was like a great main-mast to the voyaging earth; it must truly have been amazed that morning through all its ponderous frame as it felt this determined spark of human spirit wending its way from higher branch to branch. Who knows how steadily the least twigs held themselves to advantage this light, weak creature on her way! The old pine must have loved his new dependent. More than all the hawks, and bats, and moths, and even the sweet voiced thrushes, was the brave, beating heart of the solitary gray-eyed child. And the tree stood still and frowned away the winds that June morning while the dawn grew bright in the east.

Sylvia's face was like a pale star, if one had seen it from the ground, when the last thorny bough was past, and she stood trembling and tired but wholly triumphant, high in the tree-top. Yes, there was the sea with the dawning sun making a golden dazzle over it, and toward that glorious east flew two hawks with slow-moving pinions. How low they looked in the air from that height when one had only seen them before far up, and dark against the blue sky. Their gray feathers were as soft as moths; they seemed only a little way from the tree, and Sylvia felt as if she too could go flying away among the clouds. Westward, the woodlands and farms reached miles and miles into the distance; here and there were church steeples, and white villages, truly it was a vast and awesome world

1995 Read the following short story carefully. Then write an essay analyzing how the author, Sandra Cisneros, uses literary techniques to characterize Rachel.

SANDRA CISNEROS: ELEVEN

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five. And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one hundred and two instead of eleven because if I was one hundred and two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

"Whose is this?" Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. "Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month."

"Not mine," says everybody. "Not me."

"It has to belong to somebody," Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.

Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldivar says, "I think it belongs to Rachel." An ugly sweater like that all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price

believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

“That’s not, I don’t, you’re not...Not mine.” I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

“Of course it’s yours,” Mrs. Price says. “I remember you wearing it once.” Because she’s older and the teacher, she’s right and I’m not.

Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page thirty-two, and math problem number four. I don’t know why but all of a sudden I’m feeling sick inside, like the part of me that’s three wants to come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me for tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater’s still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine. In my head I’m thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the schoolyard fence, or leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends Mrs. Price says loud and in front of everybody, “Now, Rachel, that’s enough,” because she sees I’ve shoved the red sweater to the tippy-tip corner of my desk and it’s hanging all over the edge like a waterfall, but I don’t care.

“Rachel,” Mrs. Price says. She says it like she’s getting mad. “You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense.”

“But it’s not –“

“Now!” Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn’t eleven because all the years inside of me—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one—are pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms apart like if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of germs that aren’t even mine.

That’s when everything I’ve been holding in since this morning, since when Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets go, and all of a sudden I’m crying in front of everybody. I wish I was invisible but I’m not. I’m eleven and it’s my birthday today and I’m crying like I’m three in front of everybody. I put my head down on the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown-sweater arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can’t stop the little animal noises from coming out of me until there aren’t any more tears left in my eyes, and it’s

just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Sylvia Saldivar, says she remembers the red sweater is hers. I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything's okay.

Today I'm eleven. There's a cake Mama's making for tonight and when Papa comes home from work we'll eat it. There'll be candles and presents and everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it's too late.

I'm eleven today. I'm eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. I wish I was anything but eleven. Because I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny o in the sky, so tiny—tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.

1996 Read the following passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The House of the Seven Gables*. Then write a careful analysis of how the narrator reveals the character of Judge Pyncheon. You may emphasize whichever devices (e.g. tone, selection of detail, syntax, point of view) you find most significant.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

To apply this train of remark somewhat more closely to Judge Pyncheon.--We might say (without in the least imputing crime to a personage of his eminent respectability) that there was enough of splendid rubbish in his life to cover up and paralyze a more active and subtle conscience than the judge was ever troubled with. The purity of his judicial character, while on the bench; the faithfulness of his public service in subsequent capacities; his devotedness to his party, and the rigid consistency with which he had adhered to its principles, or, at all events, kept pace with its organized movements; his remarkable zeal as president of a Bible society; his unimpeachable integrity as treasurer of a widow's and orphan's fund; his benefits to horticulture, by producing two much-esteemed varieties of the pear, and to agriculture, through the agency of the famous Pyncheon-bull; the cleanliness of his moral deportment, for a great many years past; the severity with which he had frowned upon, and finally cast off, an expensive and dissipated son, delaying forgiveness until within the final quarter of an hour of the young man's life; his prayers at morning and eventide, and graces at meal-time; his efforts in furtherance of the temperance cause; his confining himself, since the last attack of the gout, to five diurnal glasses of old sherry wine; the snowy whiteness of his linen, the polish of his boots, the handsomeness of his gold-headed cane, the square and roomy fashion of his coat, and the fineness of its material, and, in general, the studied propriety of his dress and equipment; the scrupulousness with which he paid public notice, in the street, by a bow, a lifting of the hat, a nod, or a motion of the hand, to all and sundry his acquaintances, rich or poor; the smile of broad benevolence wherewith he made it a point to gladden the whole world;--what room could possibly be found for darker traits, in a portrait made up of lineaments like these? This proper face was what he beheld in the looking-glass. This admirably arranged life was what he was conscious of, in the progress of every day. Then, might not he claim to be its result and sum, and say to himself and the community,--"Behold Judge Pyncheon there"?

And allowing that, many, many years ago, in his early and reckless youth, he had committed some one wrong act, -- or that, even now, the inevitable force of circumstances should occasionally make him do one questionable deed among a thousand praiseworthy, or, at least, blameless ones, -- would you characterize the Judge by that one necessary deed, and that half-forgotten act, and let it overshadow the fair aspect of a lifetime? What is there so ponderous in evil, that a thumb's bigness of it should outweigh the mass of things not evil which were heaped into the other scale! This scale and balance system is a favorite one with people of Judge Pyncheon's brotherhood. A hard, cold man, thus unfortunately situated, seldom or never looking inward, and resolutely taking his idea of himself from what purports to be his image as reflected in the mirror of public opinion, can scarcely arrive at true self-knowledge, except through loss of property and reputation. Sickness will not always help him do it; not always the death-hour!

1997 Read carefully the following passage from Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, a novel about the relocation of Japanese Canadians to internment camps during the Second World War. Then in a well-organized essay, analyze how changes in perspective and style reflect the narrator's complex attitude toward the past. In your analysis, consider literary elements such as point of view, structure, selection of detail, and figurative language.

JOY KOGAWA: OBASAN

1942.

We are leaving the B.C. coast -- rain, cloud, mist -- an air overlaid with weeping. Behind us lies a salty sea within which swim our drowning specks of memory -- our small waterlogged eulogies. We are going down to the middle of the earth with pick-axe eyes, tunnelling by train to the Interior, carried along by the momentum of the expulsion into the waiting wilderness.

We are hammers and chisels in the hands of would-be sculptors, battering the spirit of the sleeping mountain. We are the chips and sand, the fragments of fragments that fly like arrows from the heart of the rock. We are the silences that speak from stone. We are the despised rendered voiceless, stripped of car, radio, camera and every means of communication, a trainload of eyes covered with mud and spittle. We are the man in the Gospel of John, born into the world for the sake of the light. We are sent to Siloam, the pool called 'Sent'. We are sent to the sending, that we may bright sight. We are the scholarly and the illiterate, the envied and the ugly, the fierce and the docile. We are those pioneers who cleared the bush and the forest with our hands, the gardeners tending and attending the soil with our tenderness, the fishermen who are flung from the sea to flounder in the dust of the prairies.

We are the Issei and the Nisei and the Sansei, the Japanese Canadians. We disappear into the future undemanding as dew.

The memories are dream images. A pile of luggage in a large hall. Missionaries at the railway station handing out packages of toys. Stephen being carried on board the train, a white cast up to his thigh.

It is three decades ago and I am a small child resting my head in Obasan's lap. I am wearing a wine-coloured dirndl skirt with straps that criss-cross at the back. My white silk blouse has a Peter Pan collar dotted with tiny red flowers. I have a wine-coloured sweater with ivory duck buttons.

Stephen sits sideways on a seat by himself opposite us, his huge white leg like a cocoon.

The train is full of strangers. But even strangers are addressed as "ojisan" and "obasan," meaning uncle or aunt. Not one uncle or aunt, grandfather or grandmother, brother or sister, not one of us on this journey returns home again.

The train smells of oil and soot and orange peels and lurches groggily as we rock our way inland. Along the window ledge, the black soot leaps and settles like insects. Underfoot and in the aisles and beside us on the seats we are surrounded by odd bits of luggage—bags, lunch baskets, pillows. My red umbrella with its knobby clear red handle sticks out of a box like the head of an exotic bird. In the seat behind us is a boy in short gray pants and jacket carrying a wooden slatted box with a tabby kitten inside. He is trying to distract the kitten with his finger but the kitten mews and mews, its mouth opening and closing. I can barely hear its high steady cry in the clackity-clack and steamy hiss of the train.

A few seats in front, one young woman is sitting with her narrow shoulders hunched over a tiny red-faced baby. Her short black hair falls into her birdlike face. She is so young, I would call her “o-nesan,” older sister.

The woman in the aisle seat opposite us leans over and whispers to Obasan with a solemn nodding of her head and a flicker of her eyes indicating the young woman.

Obasan moves her head slowly and gravely in a nod as she listens. “Kawaiso,” she says under her breath. The word is used whenever there is hurt and a need for tenderness.

The young mother, Kuniko-san, came from Saltspring Island, the woman says. Kuniko-san was rushed onto the train from Hastings Park, a few days after giving birth prematurely to her baby.

“She has nothing,” he woman whispers. “Not even diapers.”

Aya Obasan does not respond as she looks steadily at the dirt-covered floor. I lean out into the aisle and I can see the baby’s tiny fist curled tight against its wrinkled face. Its eyes are closed and its mouth is squinched small as a button. Kuniko-san does not lift her eyes at all.

“Kawai,” I whisper to Obasan, meaning that the baby is cute.

Obasan hands me an orange from a wicker basket and gestures towards Kuniko-san, indicating that I should take her the gift. But I pull back.

“For the baby,” Obasan says, urging me.

I withdraw farther into my seat. She shakes open a furoshiki—a square cloth that is used to carry things by tying the corners together—and places a towel and some apples and oranges in it. I watch her lurching from side to side as she walks toward Kuniko-san.

Clutching the top of Kuniko-san’s seat with one hand, Obasan bows and holds the furoshiki out to her. Kuniko-san clutches the baby against her breast and bows forward twice while accepting Obasan’s gift without looking up.

1998 Read carefully the following passage from George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* (1871). Then write an essay in which you characterize the narrator's attitude toward Dorothea Brooke and analyze the literary techniques used to convey this attitude. Support your analysis with specific references to the passage

GEORGE ELIOT: MIDDLEMARCH

Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible, -- or from one of our elder poets, -- in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper. She was usually spoken of as being remarkably clever, but with the addition that her sister Celia had more common-sense. Nevertheless, Celia wore scarcely more trimmings; and it was only to close observers that her dress differed from her sister's, and had a shade of coquetry in its arrangements; for Miss Brooke's plain dressing was due to mixed conditions, in most of which her sister shared. ...

Dorothea knew many passages of Pascal's *Pensees* and of Jeremy Taylor by heart; and to her the destinies of mankind, seen by the light of Christianity, made the solitudes of feminine fashion appear an occupation for Bedlam. She could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in gimp and artificial protrusions of drapery. Her mind was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there; she was enamoured of intensity and greatness, and rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects; likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractations, and then to incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it. Certainly such elements in the character of a marriageable girl tended to interfere with her lot, and hinder it from being decided according to custom, by good looks, vanity, and merely canine affection. With all this, she, the elder of the sisters, was not yet twenty, and they had both been educated, since they were about twelve years old and had lost their parents, on plans at once narrow and promiscuous, first in an English family and afterwards in a Swiss family at Lausanne, their bachelor uncle and guardian trying in this way to remedy the disadvantages of their orphaned condition. ...

The rural opinion about the new young ladies, even among the cottagers, was generally in favor of Celia, as being so amiable and innocent-looking, while Miss Brooke's large eyes seemed, like her religion, too unusual and striking. Poor Dorothea! compared with her, the innocent-looking Celia was knowing and worldly-wise; so much subtler is a human mind than the outside tissues which make a sort of blazonry or clock-face for it.

Yet those who approached Dorothea, though prejudiced against her by this alarming hearsay, found that she had a charm unaccountably reconcilable with it. Most men thought her bewitching when she was on horseback. She loved the fresh air and the various aspects of the country, and when her eyes and cheeks glowed with mingled pleasure she looked very little like a devotee.

Riding was an indulgence which she allowed herself in spite of conscientious qualms; she felt that she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it.

She was open, ardent, and not in the least self- admiring; indeed, it was pretty to see how her imagination adorned her sister Celia with attractions altogether superior to her own, and if any gentleman appeared to come to the Grange from some other motive than that of seeing Mr. Brooke, she concluded that he must be in love with Celia: Sir James Chettam, for example, whom she constantly considered from Celia's point of view, inwardly debating whether it would be good for Celia to accept him. That he should be regarded as a suitor to herself would have seemed to her a ridiculous irrelevance. Dorothea, with all her eagerness to know the truths of life, retained very childlike ideas about marriage. She felt sure that she would have accepted the judicious Hooker, if she had been born in time to save him from that wretched mistake he made in matrimony; or John Milton when his blindness had come on; or any of the other great men whose odd habits it would have been glorious piety to endure; but an amiable handsome baronet, who said "Exactly" to her remarks even when she expressed uncertainty, --how could he affect her as a lover? The really delightful marriage must be that where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it.

1999 In the following passage from Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Crossing* (1994), the narrator describes a dramatic experience. Read the passage carefully. Then in a well-organized essay, show how McCarthy's techniques convey the impact of the experience on the main character.

CORMAC McCARTHY: THE CROSSING

By the time he reached the first talus¹ slides under the tall escarpments² of the Pilates the dawn was not far to come. He reined the horse in a grassy swale and stood down and dropped the reins. His trousers were stiff with blood. He cradled the wolf in his arms and lowered her to the ground and unfolded the sheet. She was stiff and cold and her fur was bristly with the blood dried upon it. He walked the horse back to the creek and left it standing to water and scouted the banks for wood with which to make a fire. Coyotes were yapping along the hills to the south and they were calling from the dark shapes of the rimlands above him where their cries seemed to have no origin other than the night itself.

He got the fire going and lifted the wolf from the sheet and took the sheet to the creek and crouched in the dark and washed the blood out of it and brought it back and he cut forked sticks from a mountain hackberry and drove them into the ground with a rock and hung the sheet on a trestlepole where it steams in the firelight like a burning scrim standing in a wilderness where celebrants of some sacred passion had been carried off by rival sects or perhaps had simply fled in the night at the fear of their own doing. He pulled the blanket about his shoulders and sat shivering in the cold and waiting for the dawn that he could find the place where he would bury the wolf. After a while the horse came up from the creek trailing the wet reins through the leaves and stood at the edge of the fire.

He fell asleep with his hands palm up before him like some dozing penitent. When he woke it was still dark. The fire had died to a few low flames seething over the coals. He took off his hat and fanned the fire with it and coaxed it back and fed the wood he'd gathered. He looked for the horse but could not see it. The coyotes were still calling all along the stone ramparts of the Pilates and it was graying faintly in the east. He squatted over the world and touched her fur. He touched the cold and perfect teeth. The eye turned to the fire and gave back no light and he closed it with his thumb and sat by her and put his hand upon her bloodied forehead and closed his own eyes that he could hear her running in the mountains, running in the starlight where the grass was wet and the sun's coming as yet had not undone the rich matrix of creatures passed in the night before her. Deer and hare and dove and groundvole all richly empaneled on the air for her delight, all nations of the possible world ordained by God of which she was one among and not separate from. Where she ran the cries of the coyotes clapped shut as if a door had closed upon them out of the leaves and held it or he reached to hold what cannot be held, what already ran among the mountains at once terrible and of a great beauty, like flowers that feed on flesh. What blood and bone are made of but can themselves not make on any altar nor by any wound of war.

¹ A sloping mass of rock debris at the base of a cliff

² Steep slopes

What we may well believe has power to cut and shape and hollow out the dark forms of the world surely if wind can, if rain can. But which cannot be held never be held and is no flower but is swift and a huntress and the wind itself is in terror of it and the world cannot lose it.

2000 In the following passage from *The Spectator* (March 4, 1712), the English satirist Joseph Addison creates a character who keeps a diary. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the language of the passage characterizes the diarist and his society and how the characterization serves Addison's satiric purpose. You may wish to consider such elements as selection of detail, repetition, and tone.

MONDAY, *Eight-o'clock*.—I put on my Clothes and walked into the parlour.
Nine o'clock ditto.—Tied my knee-strings, and washed my hands
Hours Ten, Eleven and Twelve.—Smoked three pipes of Virginia. Read the *Supplement* and *Daily Courant*.—Things go ill in the North. Mr. Nisby's Opinion thereupon.
One o'clock in the Afternoon.—Chid Ralph for mislaying my tobacco-box.
Two o'clock.—Sat down to Dinner. *Mem.* Too many plums, and no suet.
From Three to Four.—Took my Afternoon's Nap.
From Four to Six.—Walked into the Fields. Wind, S. S. E.
From Six to Ten.—At the Club. Mr. Nisby's Opinion about the Peace.
Ten o'clock.—Went to Bed, slept sound.

TUESDAY (*being holiday*), *Eight o'clock*.—Rose as usual.
Nine o'clock.—Washed hands and face, shaved, put on my double-soled shoes
Ten, Eleven, Twelve.—Took a walk to Islington.
One.—Took a pot of Mother Cob's mild.
Between Two and Three.—Return'd, dined on a knuckle of veal and bacon. *Mem.* Sprouts wanting.
Three.—Nap as usual.
From Four to Six.—Coffee-house. Read the news. A dish of twist.¹ Grand Vizier² strangled.
From Six to Ten.—At the Club. Mr. Nisby's Account of the Great Turk.
Ten.—Dream of the Grand Vizier. Broken sleep.

WEDNESDAY *Eight o'clock*.—Tongue of my shoe-buckle broke. Hands but not face.
Nine.—Paid off the butcher's bill. *Mem.* To be allowed for the last leg of mutton.
Ten, Eleven.—At the Coffee-house. More work in the North. Stranger in a black wig asked me how stocks went.
From Twelve to One.—Walked in the fields. Wind to the South.
From One to Two.—Smoked a pipe and an half.
Two.—Dined as usual. Stomach good.
Three.—Nap broke by the falling of a pewter dish. *Mem.* Cookmaid in love, and grown careless.
From Four to Six.—At the coffee-house. Advice from Smyrna, that the Grand Vizier was first of all strangled, and afterwards beheaded.
Six o'clock in the Evening.—Was half an hour in the club before anybody else came. Mr. Nisby of opinion that the Grand Vizier was not strangled the sixth instant.

¹ a beverage

² chief administrative officer of the Ottoman Empire

Ten at Night.—Went to bed. Slept without waking till nine next morning.

THURSDAY *Nine o'clock.*—Stayed within till two o'clock for Sir Timothy; who did not bring me my annuity according to his promise.

Two in the Afternoon.—Sat down to dinner. Loss of appetite. Small beer sour. Beef over-corned.

Three.—Could not take my nap.

Four and Five.—Gave Ralph a box on the ear. Turned off my cookmaid. Sent a message to Sir Timothy. *Mem.* I did not go to the Club to-night. Went to bed at nine o'clock.

FRIDAY Passed the morning in meditation upon Sir Timothy, who was with me a quarter before twelve.

Twelve o'clock.—Bought a new head to my cane, and a tongue to my buckle. Drank a glass of purl¹ to recover appetite.

Two and Three.—Dined, and slept well.

From Four to Six.—Went to the Coffee-house. Met Mr. Nisby there. Smoked several pipes. Mr. Nisby of opinion that laced Coffee² is bad for the head.

Six o'clock.—At the Club as steward. Sat late.

Twelve o'clock.—Went to bed, dreamt that I drank small beer with the Grand Vizier.

SATURDAY Waked at eleven, walked in the fields. Wind N. E.

Twelve.—Caught in a shower.

One in the Afternoon.—Returned home, and dried my self.

Two.—Mr. Nisby dined with me. First course marrow-bones, Second ox-cheek, with a bottle of Brooks and Hellier.

Three o'clock.—Overslept my self.

Six.—Went to the Club. Like to have fallen into a Gutter. Grand Vizier certainly dead.
etc.

¹ a liquor

² coffee containing spirits

2001 The passage below is taken from the novel *Tom Jones* (1749) by the English novelist and playwright Henry Fielding. In this scene, which occurs early in the novel, Squire Allworthy discovers an infant in his bed. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the techniques that Fielding employs in this scene to characterize Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Deborah Wilkins.

Mr Allworthy ... came to his house very late in the evening, and after a short supper with his sister, retired much fatigued to his chamber. Here, having spent some minutes on his knees--a custom which he never broke through on any account--he was preparing to step into bed, when, upon opening the clothes, to his great surprise he beheld an infant, wrapped up in some coarse linen, in a sweet and profound sleep, between his sheets. He stood some time lost in astonishment at this sight; but, as good nature had always the ascendant in his mind, he soon began to be touched with sentiments of compassion for the little wretch before him. He then rang his bell, and ordered an elderly woman-servant to rise immediately, and come to him; and in the meantime was so eager in contemplating the beauty of innocence, appearing in those lively colours with which infancy and sleep always display it, that his thoughts were too much engaged to reflect that he was in his shirt when the matron came in. She had indeed given her master sufficient time to dress himself; for out of respect to him, and regard to decency, she had spent many minutes in adjusting her hair at the looking-glass, notwithstanding all the hurry in which she had been summoned by the servant, and though her master, for aught she knew, lay expiring in an apoplexy, or in some other fit.

It will not be wondered at that a creature who had so strict a regard to decency in her own person, should be shocked at the least deviation from it in another. She therefore no sooner opened the door, and saw her master standing by the bedside in his shirt, with a candle in his hand, than she started back in a most terrible fright, and might perhaps have swooned away, had he not now recollected his being undressed, and put an end to her terrors by desiring her to stay without the door till he had thrown some clothes over his back, and was become incapable of shocking the pure eyes of Mrs Deborah Wilkins, who, though in the fifty-second year of her age, vowed she had never beheld a man without his coat. ...

When Mrs Deborah returned into the room, and was acquainted by her master with the finding the little infant, her consternation was rather greater than his had been; nor could she refrain from crying out, with great horror of accent as well as look, "My good sir! what's to be done?" Mr Allworthy answered, she must take care of the child that evening, and in the morning he would give orders to provide it a nurse. "Yes, sir," says she; "and I hope your worship will send out your warrant to take up the hussy its mother, for she must be one of the neighbourhood; and I should be glad to see her committed to Bridewell, and whipped at the cart's tail. ... but for my own part, it goes against me to touch these misbegotten wretches, whom I don't look upon as my fellow-creatures. Faugh! how it stinks! ... If I might be so bold to give my advice, I would have it put in a basket, and sent out and laid at the churchwarden's door. It is a good night, only a little rainy and windy; and if it was well wrapped up, and put in a warm basket, it is two to one but it lives till it is found in the morning. But if it should not, we have discharged our duty in taking

proper care of it; and it is, perhaps, better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence, than to grow up and imitate their mothers; for nothing better can be expected of them."

There were some strokes in this speech which perhaps would have offended Mr Allworthy, had he strictly attended to it; but he had now got one of his fingers into the infant's hand, which, by its gentle pressure, seeming to implore his assistance, had certainly out-pleaded the eloquence of Mrs Deborah, had it been ten times greater than it was. He now gave Mrs Deborah positive orders to take the child to her own bed, and to call up a maid-servant to provide it pap, and other things, against it waked ...

Such was the discernment of Mrs Wilkins, and such the respect she bore her master, under whom she enjoyed a most excellent place, that her scruples gave way to his peremptory commands; and she took the child under her arms, without any apparent disgust at the illegality of its birth; and declaring it was a sweet little infant, walked off with it to her own chamber.

2002 In the following excerpt from a recent British novel, the narrator, a young man in his early twenties, is attending a play with his new girlfriend Isabel when she unexpectedly discovers that her parents are in the theater. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author produces a comic effect.

“Oh my God, I think that’s my mum over there,” she gasped.

“Where?”

“By the pillar. Careful, don’t look. What is she *doing* here? And what’s that dress? It looks like a willow tree. Where’s Dad? I hope she didn’t come with one of her gentlemen friends. She’s really too old for that.”

“Did you tell her you were going?”

“No. I mean, I said I wanted to see the play, but I didn’t let on I had tickets for tonight.”

“She’s talking to someone. Can you see?”

“Phew, it’s my dad. He must have gone off to buy programmes. And he’s about to sneeze. Look, there we go, aaahhtchooo. Out comes his red handkerchief. I just hope they don’t spot us and we can escape quickly at the end. With any luck, they’ll be too busy arguing to glance up here. This is prime argument territory for them, Mum will be asking Dad where he put the car park ticket and he’ll get flustered because he’ll just have dropped it into a bin mistake.”

Luck was not on Isabel’s side, for a moment later, Christopher Rogers happened to glance up to the gallery and recognized his eldest daughter, in the midst of trying her best not to recognize him. So that she might cease to dwell in ignorance, Christopher stood up in the middle of the elegantly suited and scented audience, and began making the vigorous hand gestures of a man waving off a departing cruise ship. In case Isabel had not spotted this maniac, her mother was in turn informed of her eldest daughter’s location, and decided that the presence of four hundred people in the auditorium should be no impediment to her desire to shout ‘Isabel’ at top pitch and with all the excitement of a woman recognizing a long-lost friend on the deck on an in-coming cruise ship.

Isabel smiled feebly, turned a beetroot shade and repeated in panicked diction, “I can’t believe this, please let them shut up.

Not a second too soon, Lorca¹ came to the rescue, the lights faded, and Mr. and Mrs. Rogers reluctantly took their seats, pointing ominously to an exit sign by way of interval rendezvous.

An hour and a quarter of Spanish domestic drama later, we found ourselves at the bar.

“What are you doing here, Mum?” asked Isabel.

¹ Federico Garcia Lorca (1898 -1936), Spanish poet and playwright

“Why shouldn’t I be here? You’re not the only one who does fancy things with your evenings. Your father and I have a right to go out once in a while.”

“I’m sure, I didn’t mean it like that, it’s just I’m surprised at the coincidence.”

“Where did you buy this dress? Is that the one I paid for a Christmas?”

“No, Mum, I got it myself last week.”

“Oh, well, it’s very nice, pity you don’t have more of a cleavage for it, but that’s your father’s fault. You know what all the women in his family are like.”

“How are you, Dad?” Isabel turned to her father, who was looking up at the ceiling with an intent expression.

“Dad?” Isabel repeated.

“Yes, darling, how are you, my bean? Enjoying the show?”

“Yup, and you? What are you staring at up there?”

“I’m looking at the light fixtures they have. They’re new tungsten bulbs, Japanese things, quite wonderful, they use only a small amount of electricity but give off a very nice light.”

“Oh, great, Dad. And, ehm, there’s someone I’d like you to both meet.”

“Delighted,” said Mrs. Rogers, confiding in me almost at once. “She’s a lovely girl, really,” in case my theatre companion had inspired doubts to the contrary.

“Thanks, Mum,” said Isabel wearily, as though the statement were no one-off.

“Don’t mind her, bean, she’s had a hard day.” explained Dad, now looking more horizontally at the world.

“My day would be fine if I wasn’t lumbered with someone who kept losing tickets to the car park,” snapped Mrs. Rogers.

“Dad! You haven’t?”

“Yes, I’m afraid I have. They’re so fiddly these days, they fall right out of one’s hands.”

—Alain de Botton, *Kiss and Tell*

2003 The following is an excerpt from “The Other Paris,” a short story by the Canadian writer Mavis Gallant. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, explain how the author uses narrative voice and characterization to provide social commentary.

If anyone had asked Carol at what precise moment she fell in love, or where Howard Mitchell proposed to her, she would have imagined, quite sincerely, a scene that involved all at once the Seine, moonlight, barrows of violets, acacias in flower, and a confused, misty background of the Eiffel tower and the little crooked streets. This was what everyone expected, and she had nearly come to believe it herself.

Actually, he had proposed at lunch, over a tuna-fish salad. He and Carol had known each other less than three weeks, and their conversation, until then, had been limited to their office – an American government agency – and the people in it. Carol was twenty-two; no one had proposed to her before, except an unsuitable medical student with no money eight years’ training still to go. She was under the illusion that in a short time she would be so old no one would ask her again. She accepted at once, and Howard celebrated by ordering an extra bottle of wine. Both would have liked champagne, as a more emphatic symbol of the unusual, but each was too diffident to suggest it.

The fact that Carol was not in love with Howard Mitchell did not dismay her in the least. From a series of helpful college lectures on marriage she had learned that a common interest, such as liking Irish setters, was the true basis for happiness, and that the illusion of love was a blight imposed by the film industry, and almost entirely responsible for the high rate of divorce. Similar economic backgrounds, financial security, belonging to the same church – these were the pillars of the married union. By an astonishing coincidence the fathers of Carol and Howard were both attorneys and both had been defeated in their own attempt to get elected a judge. Carol and Howard were both vaguely Protestant, although a serious discussion of religious beliefs would have gravely embarrassed them. And Howard, best of all, was sober, old enough to know his own mind, and absolutely reliable. He was an economist who had sense enough to attach himself to a corporation that continues to pay his salary during his loan to the government. There was no reason for the engagement or the marriage to fail.

Carol, with great efficiency, nearly at once set about the business of falling in love. Love required only the right conditions, like a geranium. It would wither exposed to bad weather or in dismal surroundings; indeed, Carol rates the chances of love in a cottage or a furnished room at zero. Given a good climate, enough money, and a pair of good-natured *intelligent* (her college lectures had stressed this) people, one had only to sit back and watch it grow. All winter, then, she looked for these right conditions in Paris. When, at first, nothing happened, she blamed it on the weather. She was often convinced she would fall deeply in love with Howard if only it would stop raining. Undaunted, she waited for better times.

Howard had no notion of any of this. His sudden proposal to Carol had been quite out of character – he was uncommonly cautious – and he alternated between a state of numbness and a state of self-congratulation. Before his engagement he had sometimes been lonely, a malaise he put down to overwork, and he was discontented with his bachelor households, for he did not

enjoy collecting old pottery or making little casserole dishes. Unless he stumbled on a competent housemaid, nothing ever got done. This in itself would not have spurred him into marriage had he not been seriously unsettled by the visit of one of his sisters, who advised him to marry some nice girl before it was too late. "Soon," she told him, "you'll just be a person who fills in at dinner."

Howard saw the picture at once, and was deeply moved by it.

(1953)

2004 The following passage comes from the opening of “The Pupil” (1891), a short story by Henry James. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the author’s description of the three characters and the relationships among them. Pay particular attention to tone and point of view.

The poor young man hesitated and procrastinated: it cost him such an effort to broach the subject of terms, to speak of money to a person who spoke only of feelings and, as it were, of the aristocracy. Yet he was unwilling to take leave, treating his engagement as settled, without some more conventional glance in that direction than he could find an opening for in the manner of the large affable lady who sat there drawing a pair of soiled gants de Suede through a fat jewelled hand and, at once pressing and gliding, repeated over and over everything but the thing he would have liked to hear. He would have liked to hear the figure of his salary; but just as he was nervously about to sound that note the little boy came back the little boy Mrs. Moreen had sent out of the room to fetch her fan. He came back without the fan, only with the casual observation that he couldn’t find it. As he dropped this cynical confession he looked straight and hard at the candidate for the honour of taking his education in hand. This personage reflected somewhat grimly that the thing he should have to teach his little charge would be to appear to address himself to his mother when he spoke to her especially not to make her such an improper answer as that.

When Mrs. Moreen bethought herself of this pretext for getting rid of their companion Pemberton supposed it was precisely to approach the delicate subject of his remuneration. But it had been only to say some things about her son that it was better a boy of eleven shouldn’t catch. They were extravagantly to his advantage save when she lowered her voice to sigh, tapping her left side familiarly, "And all overclouded by THIS, you know; all at the mercy of a weakness !" Pemberton gathered that the weakness was in the region of the heart. He had known the poor child was not robust: this was the basis on which he had been invited to treat, through an English lady, an Oxford acquaintance, then at Nice, who happened to know both his needs and those of the amiable American family looking out for something really superior in the way of a resident tutor.

The young man’s impression of his prospective pupil, who had come into the room as if to see for himself the moment Pemberton was admitted, was not quite the soft solicitation the visitor had taken for granted. Morgan Moreen was somehow sickly without being "delicate," and that he looked intelligent it is true Pemberton wouldn’t have enjoyed his being stupid only added to the suggestion that, as with his big mouth and big ears he really couldn’t be called pretty, he might too utterly fail to please. Pemberton was modest, was even timid; and the chance that his small scholar might prove cleverer than himself had quite figured, to his anxiety, among the dangers of an untried experiment. He reflected, however, that these were risks one had to run when one accepted a position, as it was called, in a private family; when as yet one’s university honours had, pecuniarily speaking, remained barren. At any rate when Mrs. Moreen got up as to intimate that, since it was understood he would enter upon his duties within the week she would let him off now, he succeeded, in spite of the presence of the child, in squeezing out a phrase about the rate of payment. It was not the fault of the conscious smile which seemed a reference to the lady’s expensive identity, it was not the fault of this demonstration, which had, in a sort, both

vagueness and point, if the allusion didn't sound rather vulgar. This was exactly because she became still more gracious to reply: "Oh I can assure you that all that will be quite regular."

Pemberton only wondered, while he took up his hat, what "all that" was to amount to people had such different ideas. Mrs. Moreen's words, however, seemed to commit the family to a pledge definite enough to elicit from the child a strange little comment in the shape of the mocking foreign ejaculation "Oh la-la!"