

Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing

English Language Arts 30–1

From the January 2012 Diploma Examination

Alberta  Government

This document was written primarily for:

Students	✓
Teachers	✓
Administrators	✓
Parents	✓
General Public	✓
Others	

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We would be pleased to hear from you.

Introduction

The written responses in this document are examples of English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination writing that received scores of Satisfactory (S), Proficient (Pf), or Excellent (E). These sample responses are taken from the January 2012 administration. Along with the commentaries that accompany them, they should help you and your students to understand the standards for English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination writing in relation to the scoring criteria.

The purpose of the sample responses is to illustrate the standards that governed the January 2012 marking session. The sample papers and the commentaries were used to train markers to apply the scoring criteria consistently and to justify their decisions about scores in terms of each student’s work and the criteria.

The sample responses included in this document represent a very small sample of successful approaches to the assignments.

Selection and Use of Sample Papers

The teachers on the Standards Confirmation Committee for the January 2012 marking session selected the examples of student responses included here. They also wrote the commentaries that discuss the students’ writing in terms of the scoring criteria used for marking.

During their preparation for the January 2012 marking session, markers reviewed and validated the standards represented by these sample responses. Markers then used these sample responses as guidelines for marking the written-response sections of the January 2012 English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination.

Cautions

1. The commentaries are brief.

The commentaries were written for groups of markers to discuss and apply during the marking session. Although brief, they provide a model for relating specific examples from student work to the details in a specific scoring criterion.

2. Neither the scoring guide nor the assignments are meant to limit students to a single organizational or rhetorical approach in completing any diploma examination assignment.

Students must be free to select and organize their materials in a manner that they feel will enable them to best present their ideas. In fact, part of what is being assessed is the final effectiveness of the content, the form and structure, and the rhetorical choices that students make.

The student writing in this document illustrates *just a few of the many* successful organizational and rhetorical strategies used in January 2012.

We strongly recommend that you caution your students that there is *no preferred approach* to an assignment except the approach that best accomplishes the student writer's goal of effectively communicating his or her own ideas about the topic.

We advise you not to draw any conclusions about common patterns of approach taken by students.

3. The sample papers presented in this document must not be used as models for instructional purposes.

Because these papers are illustrations only, and because they are sample responses to a set topic, students must be cautioned not to memorize the content of any of these assignments or to use them when completing classroom assignments or when writing future diploma examinations.

The *approaches* taken by students at the *standard of excellence*, not their words or ideas, are what students being examined in the future should consider emulating. In fact, it is hoped that the variety of approaches presented here will inspire students to experiment with diction, syntax, form, and structure as a way of developing an individual voice and engaging the reader in ideas and forms that the student has considered.

Examination markers and staff at Alberta Education take any possibility of plagiarism or cheating seriously. The consequences for students are grave.

4. It is essential that you consider each of these examples of student writing in light of the constraints of the examination situation.

Under examination conditions, students produce *first-draft writing*. Given more time, students would be expected to produce papers of considerably improved quality, particularly in the dimensions of Presentation, Matters of Correctness, and Writing Skills.

5. For further information regarding student performance on the Part A: Written Response, access the [English Language Arts 30–1 Assessment Highlights](#).

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Writing Assignments

January 2012

English Language Arts 30–1
Part A: Written Response

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Time: 2½ hours. This examination was developed to be completed in 2½ hours; however, you may take an additional ½ hour to complete the examination.

Part A: Written Response contributes 50% of the total English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination mark and consists of two assignments.

- **Personal Response to Texts Assignment**
Value 20% of total examination mark
- **Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**
Value 30% of total examination mark

Recommendation: Plan your time carefully. Use the initial planning pages. Time spent in planning will result in better writing.

- You may use the following print references:
 - an English and/or bilingual dictionary
 - a thesaurus
 - an authorized writing handbook

Instructions

- Complete the Personal Response to Texts Assignment first. The Personal Response to Texts Assignment is designed to allow you time to think and reflect upon the ideas that you may also explore in the Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment.
- Complete **both** assignments.
- Space is provided in this booklet for planning and for your written work.
- Use blue or black ink for your written work.
- Do not write your name anywhere in this booklet.

Additional Instructions for Students
Using Word Processors

- Format your work using an easy-to-read 12-point font, double space, and use headers and footers as directed.
- It is your responsibility to print and staple your final written response to the designated pages in the examination booklet.
- Verify that the final printed hard copy of your writing is accurately and completely printed and stapled to the booklet.
- Indicate in the space provided on the back cover that you have attached word-processed pages.

Feel free to make corrections and revisions directly on your written work.

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS ASSIGNMENT

Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes

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

Prodigal

You could drive out of this county
and attack the world with your ambition,
invent wonder plasmas,
become an artist of the provocative gesture,
the suggestive nod, you could leave
wanting the world and return
carrying it, a noisy bundle
of steam and libido, a ball of fire
balanced on your tongue,
you might reclaim Main Street in a limo
longer than a sermon, wave at our red faces
while remembering that you were born
a clod hopper, a farmer's kid,
and get over that hump once and for all
by telling A Great Man's stories —
the dirty jokes of dictators, tidbits
of presidential hygiene, insights
into the psychotropic qualities of power
and the American tradition of kissing
moneyed ass. Your uncle would still
call you Roy Boy, pheasants
sun themselves beside the tracks,
waiting for the dew to burn off
before their first flight, and corn
grow so high that if you stood
in the field you'd disappear, the fact
aiming your eyes down the road.

Bob Hicok

Hicok, Bob. THE LEGEND OF LIGHT. © 1995 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. Reprinted by permission of The University of Wisconsin Press.

Set in 1975, this excerpt takes place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Gwen Symon and Dido Paris had no previous radio experience before being hired as announcers at the small radio station managed by Harry Boyd. Eddy, Eleanor, and Ralph are colleagues at the station. Abe Lamont, an experienced, well-respected announcer has been providing on-the-job training to the staff.

from LATE NIGHTS ON AIR

Later, out of curiosity not unmixed with jealousy, Gwen said to Dido, “Well, I can see what you’ll bring to him. But what will he bring to you?”

Dido didn’t answer, stung by the very question that was in the back of her own mind, and irked by Gwen’s presumption. She thought fiercely, defensively, about Eddy’s kindness to his motherless niece, how he phoned her every week and was sending her gifts of toy animals, a seal, an ookpik, a polar bear, a caribou, one at a time, until soon the little girl would have a complete northern menagerie. Ordinary people had no idea how attentive Eddy could be.

“She’s so judgmental,” Dido complained to Eleanor during a quiet moment at the station several days later.

“She’s young.”

“She’s not much younger than I am.” Dido was making herself a cup of instant coffee, and Harry walked in to do the same. “She’ll be twenty-five tomorrow. You heard her say it the other day.”

“I know all that. But compared to you she’s inexperienced and unsure of herself. She’s shy.”

“Is she? Or is she perfectly sure of herself?”

Harry lifted his head. “There’s something to that.” Gwen could be surprisingly self-possessed, an odd mixture of crippling modesty and immodest determination. “She’s improved a lot since she began.”

Dido said, “I think she knows it. I think she knows exactly how good she is.”

In the hallway Gwen had stopped a few feet from the door, brought up short. Her arms were full of record albums.

To hear herself spoken of disparagingly – it hadn’t happened since she was a child at camp. At the age of ten she’d stormed into the tent with her objections: *I heard you. I heard what you said.* And all the other girls looked at her, embarrassed, but also sorry for her. And what had come after the anger? More anger, but in a different form. Anger with herself for having spoken out, and with the situation that goaded her into speaking. After the illicit blaze of indignation, there was the long, dark walk to the shore.

She heard Dido’s damning, dismissive voice. “I think she’s the type that gets called shy and isn’t shy at all.”

She heard Harry clear his throat, then say, “Well, most of us don’t have your confidence and poise.” Ingratiating himself with Dido, not coming to her defence at all.

One of the albums slipped out of her grasp and hit the floor with a bang. She swooped to pick it up – aware of the sudden, awful silence.

“Shit.” Dido drew her head in from the open doorway. She’d glimpsed the back of Gwen beetling into the record library.

“Did she hear us?” whispered Eleanor.

She must have. She must have heard every word.

In the record library Gwen’s eyes smarted, a wounded bear with voices in her head, *she knows exactly how good she is* ... The voices lifted her up off her chair and out of the station and into the low wide town. They transported her over rocky ground, but not high enough to avoid the rocks. So bang and drag and jostle and bump she went on her way through Old Town, which was barely older than she was. She passed the vagabond-like disarray that was Peace River Flats on the left and Willow Flats on the right, then made her way around the base of the Rock to the causeway to Latham Island. On the island she walked past Harry’s house and came to the little dirt road on the left that led to the shore of Back Bay.

Agitated, she went down to the water.

And there she saw a vision of happiness. A young woman with her hair in a braid was throwing a stick for a big, handsome dog. He tore back and forth on the narrow shore, bounding and leaping with pleasure. *Stan*, the woman called. *Good dog*, she praised.

Not far away from the woman and her dog was Ralph Cody. Once again, he had his tripod set up at the water’s edge, and when he saw her, he waved. Her grateful heart propelled her feet. She went over to him

“They’re always changing,” he said of the watery weeds he was enamoured of. “The light, the current, the wind, the way they float and move. I’ve taken dozens of pictures and each one is subtly different.”

The events of the following summer would make these pictures of Ralph’s almost intolerably moving. But Gwen couldn’t know that now. The two of them stood together on the strip of sandy shore under high clouds, white and grey, feathering across a blue sky.

Ralph manoeuvred to get another angle and she asked him what he was looking for and he considered for a moment. “Energy. I recognize energy when I see it. It’s more than just the scene in front of the camera,” he said, peering through the lens. “It’s a kind of electric connection. Almost a union between your intuitive side and your rational side.” He looked up from his Nikon. “I heard Abe Lamont talking about how to shape an interview and write for radio. It’s not so different, is it? One thought in each sentence. Not too many adjectives. Simplicity. Intimacy. Directness. That’s what I’m after too.”

She nodded and heard Abe’s commanding voice in her head: “It’s not about you, it’s about the script, the story; think of that.” And thinking of that, what did she see? Dido. Something the matter between Dido and her, something she didn’t understand. What Abe had dinned into her over the course of the week was the need for excellence, the need to take risks to get excellence. She’d felt excited, raised up, inspired. Maybe she’d even seemed sure of herself. Maybe that’s what Dido was talking about. And Gwen felt lost in the enormous gap between how she felt inside and what others thought of her. Dido was wrong. Wrong about her. Unless, of course, she was right.

Elizabeth Hay



Tamas Dezso, Romania, 2005. © Tamas Dezso / www.tamasdezso.com

Tamas Dezso

Tamas Dezso, Romania, 2005. © Tamas Dezso / www.tamasdezso.com

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS ASSIGNMENT

Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes

You have been provided with three texts on pages 1 to 4. Bob Hicok’s poem “Prodigal” explores ambition’s influence on an individual’s behaviour. In the excerpt from Elizabeth Hay’s novel *Late Nights on Air* an incident at the radio station reflects a conflict. Taken in 2005, in the untitled photograph by Tamas Dezso, a youth looks back as he sets out at daybreak.

The Assignment

What do these texts suggest about the impact of an individual’s ambition on self and others? Support your idea(s) with reference to one or more of the texts presented and to your previous knowledge and/or experience.

In your writing, you must

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

Fold and tear along perforation.

Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Initial Planning

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

What idea do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

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

There is additional space for planning on the following unlined pages.

CRITICAL/ANALYTICAL RESPONSE TO LITERARY TEXTS ASSIGNMENT**Suggested time: approximately 1½ to 2 hours**

Do *not* use the texts provided in this booklet for the Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment. Choose from short stories, novels, plays, screenplays, poetry, films, or other literary texts that you have studied in English Language Arts 30–1. When considering the works that you have studied, choose a literary text (or texts) that is meaningful to you and relevant to the following assignment.

The Assignment

Discuss the idea(s) developed by the text creator in your chosen text about the impact of an individual’s ambition on self and others.

In your planning and writing, consider the following instructions.

- Carefully consider your *controlling idea* and how you will create a strong *unifying effect* in your response.
- As you develop your ideas, support them with appropriate, relevant, and meaningful examples from your choice of literary text(s).

Fold and tear along perforation.

Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Initial Planning

You may use this space for your initial planning. This information assists markers in identifying the text you have chosen to support your ideas. The markers who read your composition will be very familiar with the literary text you have chosen.

Literary Text and
Text Creator

Note: Write the title of your chosen literary text on the back cover of this examination booklet.

Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text

Suggested time: 10 to 15 minutes

Briefly explore your reasons for selecting the literary text as support for your response. Markers will consider the information you provide here when considering the effectiveness of your supporting evidence.

Additional space is provided for *Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text* on the following page.

English Language Arts 30–1 Part A: Written Response Standards Confirmation

Background

For all diploma examination scoring sessions, Assessment Sector staff use a process of standards confirmation to establish and illustrate expectations for students' work in relation to the scoring criteria and to ensure scoring consistency within and between marking sessions. Because there are several diploma examination administrations and scoring sessions each school year, the standards must remain consistent for each scoring session in the school year and, similarly, from year to year.

Standards for student achievement start with both the demands of the [Program of Studies](#) for senior high school English Language Arts and the interpretation of those demands through learning resources and classroom instruction. These agreed-upon standards are also exemplified in the kinds of tasks and the degree of independence expected of students. All these complex applications of standards precede the design, development, and scoring of each diploma examination.

The Standards Confirmation Committee is composed of experienced teachers from representative regions of the province. These teachers work with the Assessment Sector staff responsible for the development, scoring, and results-reporting for each diploma examination. Teacher-members participate over a two-year period and are required to serve as group leaders or markers during at least one of the subsequent marking sessions.

There are two essential parts to applying standards at the point of examination scoring: the expectations embedded in the scoring criteria and the examples of students' work that illustrate the scoring criteria within each scoring category. The scoring categories and scoring criteria are available to teachers and students via the [English Language Arts 30–1 Information Bulletin](#). During each of the January and June marking sessions, example papers selected by members of the Standards Confirmation Committee are used to train markers. Subsequent to each marking session, the example papers that received scores of Satisfactory (S), Proficient (Pf), and Excellent (E) are posted on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca in the documents entitled [Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing](#).

During the standards confirmation process,

- the appropriateness of the standards set by the examination in relation to students' work is confirmed
- student responses that clearly illustrate the standards in the scoring categories and the scoring criteria are selected and are used when training markers
- rationales that explain and support the selection of sample papers in terms of the scoring categories, scoring criteria, and students' work are written

Examples of Students' Writing with Teachers' Commentaries

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012

Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory–1 (S)

Initial Planning

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

Late Nights on Air by Elizabeth Hay, It
notes how people can become angry with they are
ambitioned.

What idea do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

I intend to explore how people will be cruel
to others in order to get what they want. It addresses
how ambition effects not only the ambitioned individual,
but the people around them as well

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

Personal Essay

English Language Arts 30-1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory-1 (S)

Planning

- Ambition can make one become cruel, ~~very~~
focused on their goal, they will cut others down
to achieve it
- Some times people get so swept up in achieving
their goal, they may not realize that they
are being harmful to others

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory–1 (S)

Over-Ambition

Sometimes an individual can become so swept up in achieving a goal, that they forget what is important, and act cruel to others. An excerpt from the short story "Late Nights on Air", by Elizabeth Hay, narrates this through a conversation about Gwen, which she overhears.

In "Late Nights on Air", Gwen is walking about the radio station she is employed at, when she hears her co-workers talking about her. Her co-workers believe that she is judgmental, and feigns being shy. Dido believes that she is not shy at all, and she "knows exactly how good she is." The reason Dido is saying harsh things about Gwen is that Gwen is her competitor. Neither Gwen nor Dido have previous radio experience, and they have been recently hired. Naturally they want to be more successful than the other one. However, Dido is more affected by her ambition than Gwen is. Gwen does not say things about Dido to get ahead. Gwen is hurt and confused by Dido's comments. Gwen is "lost in the enormous gap between how she [feels] inside and what others [think] of her". Dido, and the others, are so determined to get ahead of Gwen that they will say anything about her, even ironically calling her "judgmental".

I have experienced first-hand how ambitious individuals can be cruel to reach their goals. When I was in Grade 9, my friend and I were competing to be the "valedictorian", to speak at our graduation. It was our principal that would choose the speaker, based upon academics, school participation and general attitude and behavior. We both played on the basketball team, got excellent marks and were well-liked by our teachers. I thought it would be nearly impossible for the principal to pick just one of us. Until my friend become ambitious, and desperately wanted it. He began to make up

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**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

Example Scored Satisfactory–1 (S)

stories about me, and spread them around, hoping to give me a bad reputation. He tried to frame me for cheating, and attempted to put my name in a bullying scandal. He did whatever he could to get me in trouble. However, people caught on to what he was doing, and needless to say, a lot of people lost respect for my friend, including myself, and I was chosen to speak at my graduation.

Humans can be vicious creatures when they become extremely ambitious. They can be downright nasty to get what they want. However, the one that plays fair, will be more successful in the end.

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—SATISFACTORY–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is generalized. • Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and relevant. • Support is adequate and clarifies the student’s ideas and impressions. <p align="center">S</p>	<p>On the Initial Planning page, the student states an intention “to explore how people will be cruel to others in order to get what they want” (1). The student then attempts to clarify the topic in the introductory paragraph by creating a thesis statement equating being “swept up in achieving a goal” (3) to ambition. Ultimately the student settles on a straightforward and relevant generalization that the ensuing impact of ambition is “that they forget what is important, and act cruel to others” (3). Details from the prompting text <i>Late Nights on Air</i> are generalized as in “The reason Dido is saying harsh things about Gwen is that Gwen is her competitor” (3) and “Gwen does not say things about Dido to get ahead” (3). The idea about the two women that “Naturally they want to be more successful than the other one” (3) implies the impact of ambition on self and others, which further emphasizes the straightforward ideas and relevant perceptions. The student’s exploration of the topic as a whole therefore is generalized.</p> <p>The use of a personal anecdote to demonstrate that ambition existed in the competition to be chosen as the “Grade 9” (3) valedictorian adequately supports the controlling idea that being ambitious makes individuals “act cruel to others” (3). Further supporting details of when the competitor, “my friend” (3), became so desperate that “He began to make up stories about me” (3, 4) and “tried to frame me for cheating” (4) clarifies the student’s ideas and impressions that individuals “will be cruel to others in order to get what they want” (1).</p> <p>The student’s concluding thoughts that “Humans can be vicious creatures” (4) signals a return to the topic with a functional re-statement of the initial position, which verifies that the exploration of the topic remains generalized.</p>

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—SATISFACTORY–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is apparent. • Stylistic choices are adequate and the student’s creation of tone is conventional. • The unifying effect is appropriately developed. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">S</p>	<p>On the Initial Planning page, the student proposes writing a “Personal Essay” (1), and in fact writes a hybrid analytical-personal essay. The discussion entails an analysis of text in paragraph two and a personal anecdote in paragraph three, contributing to the overall effect of an apparent voice. A conventional tone is established in such sentences as “Gwen is walking about the radio station she is employed at” (3), and “Neither Gwen nor Dido have previous radio experience, and they have been recently hired” (3).</p> <p>Although the student embeds quotations correctly and recognizes irony, overall the stylistic choices remain adequate, as evidenced in “Gwen is hurt and confused by Dido’s comments (3), and “I have experienced first-hand how ambitioned individuals can be cruel to reach their goals” (3), and “It was our principal that would choose the speaker” (3), and “We both played on the basketball team, got excellent marks and were well-liked by our teachers” (3), and thereby reinforce the conventional tone. Although the student does use a few promising diction choices such as “feigns being shy” (3) and “even ironically calling her ‘judgmental’ ” (3), the stylistic choices and creation of tone remain conventional.</p> <p>As indicated on the Initial Planning page, the student considers the notion that “ambition effects not only the ambitioned individual, but the people around them as well” (1) throughout this personal essay, and then arrives at the conclusion “the one that plays fair, will be more successful in the end” (4). Through an exploration of the prompting text and personal anecdote, the student creates a unifying effect that is appropriately developed.</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory–2 (S)

Initial Planning

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

picture.

What idea do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

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

diary entry.

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory–2 (S)

Dear diary,

It is 5:44 in the morning on February 16th, 2005. When I woke up I packed a small bag and a map, put on my coat, and got on my motorcycle. I plan to leave home this morning, and I know that eighteen sounds too young, but I need something new. I know my father will be disappointed and my mother will be worried and upset, especially with the little information I gave them in the letter, but I'll be back one day, and hopefully by then they will grow to understand. My plan isn't fully thought through, but I have every hope that the uncertainty will add to the spontaneity and the adventure. I know everyone talks about leaving a small town, following their dreams, and never looking back, but I plan on putting actions to these words.

Ever since I was fifteen, I knew that I wanted to see more, learn more, and experience more, but back then I was too young to make those kinds of decisions. Growing up in a small town, seeing the same people every day, and reliving the same routine every day makes you want to get up and leave sometimes. My parents also grew up here, and they want nothing more than for me to want to live the same life as them. My only question is how can I know what I want for my life, when I haven't explored any other options? I've spent eighteen years in this town only and maybe that was enough for me, maybe it's time for change, time for something bigger. My plan today is to leave this town and explore that change, and look for that something bigger, before I decide what I want for my life.

(Page 2 of 4)

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory–2 (S)

This idea came to me about seven months ago, and hasn't left my mind since. As much as I wanted to, I never thought I'd go through with it. It's selfish and risky, and could be one of the most stupid things I've ever come up with. What will my friends think? I didn't tell any one of them, and I left without any sort of goodbye. My father will have nothing to say about it, but I know he'll be angry. He'll be angry that I upset my mother, and he'll be angry that I left them. My mother will be up at night, worrying and over thinking. I can't get the image of her face reading the letter I left out of my head. I don't want my parents to think that they couldn't give me enough, and that I wasn't happy with them, because they gave me everything and more, I just need to see more of this country and see what else is out there.

Here I am, pulled over on the side of this dirt road, watching the sun rise. I've contemplated going back, and I've had thirteen arguments with myself about whether I should stay or go. I've thought about the experience I'd get, the adventure, and of all the good things that could possibly happen to me, and I also can't seem to forget about the worst that can happen. I've thought over and over again of how this one decision can affect the people in my life that I'm leaving behind, and I've also thought of the positive ways it can affect me. After eighteen years of the same, I'm about to drive away to the new. This journey could last a few days, or it could last a lot longer. I might find what I'm looking for, or I might realize that I have what I need. I believe that to know things, you must learn first, and I want to start learning. Before continuing down this long dirt

(Page 3 of 4)

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

Example Scored Satisfactory–2 (S)

road and out of this town, I take one last look back at everything I'm leaving behind, and then I continue on my journey to new experiences.

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—Satisfactory–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is generalized. • Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and relevant. • Support is adequate and clarifies the student’s ideas and impressions. 	<p>For this creative response, the student establishes the persona of an apparently rebellious eighteen year-old whose ambition is “leaving a small town, following their dreams, and never looking back” (2). This narrator reiterates this ambition in the second paragraph: “Growing up in a small town, seeing the same people every day, and reliving the same routine every day makes you want to get up and leave sometimes” (2). In a straightforward manner, the narrator asserts that the plan is “to leave this town and explore that change, and look for that something bigger” (2). In the concluding paragraph, the impact on self is revisited when the motorcyclist thinks “of the positive ways it can affect me” (3). Throughout this “diary entry” (1), the student offers straightforward and relevant ideas about the impact of ambition on self and presents a generalized exploration of the topic.</p> <p>Although the moral dilemma of leaving home is implied by mentioning the “thirteen arguments with myself about whether I should stay or go” (3), the support remains adequate. The student merely outlines the standard reasons for leaving a small town, as in “I know everyone talks about leaving a small town” (2), followed by “maybe it’s time for change” (2), and then “I just need to see more of this country” (3), to arrive at “After eighteen years of the same, I’m about to drive away to the new” (3), resulting in the motorcyclist’s hesitation prior to taking “one last look back at everything I’m leaving behind” (4), thereby demonstrating a generalized understanding of the impact ambition has on self. Similarly, the understanding of the father being “disappointed” (2) and the mother being “worried and upset” (2) is reinforced in the third paragraph with the adequate support “He’ll be angry that I upset my mother, and he’ll be angry that I left them. My mother will be up at night, worrying and over thinking” (3) that clarifies the student’s ideas and impressions. In the last paragraph, the recognition that these actions will “affect the people in my life I’m leaving behind” (3) further maintains a generalized exploration of the impact of an individual’s ambition on others.</p>

S

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—Satisfactory–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is apparent. • Stylistic choices are adequate and the student’s creation of tone is conventional. • The unifying effect is appropriately developed. <p align="center">S</p>	<p>The voice created by the student is apparent, as in “I plan to leave home this morning” (2) and “I plan on putting actions to these words” (2). These statements create a positive character, somewhat rebellious but not malicious, as is evident in the statement “I don’t want my parents to think that they couldn’t give me enough” (3) that confirms the apparent voice. However, further character development is stalled by adequate stylistic choices as demonstrated in phrases such as “I’ve thought about the experience I’d get, the adventure, and of all the good things that could possibly happen to me” (3), and “I want to start learning” (3) that in effect, prevent a distinctive persona from emerging.</p> <p>The student creates a conventional tone through the use of both the first person pronoun and generalized vocabulary, resulting in stylistic choices that are adequate as is evident in: “My plan isn’t fully thought through” (2), and “maybe it’s time for change, time for something bigger” (2), and “could be one of the most stupid things I’ve ever come up with” (3), and “This journey could last a few days, or it could last a lot longer” (3).</p> <p>The narrative arc is appropriately developed with the first paragraph establishing the situation: “It is 5:44 in the morning on February 16th, 2005” (2). The next paragraph then relates to self: “I knew that I wanted to see more, learn more, and experience more” (2), while the third paragraph moves to a focus on others, wondering “What will my friends think?” (3) before considering the parents’ reaction. Finally, the concluding paragraph ends with the requisite “one last look back at everything I’m leaving behind” (3) before continuing “on my journey to new experiences” (3). The result is a unifying effect that is appropriately developed.</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–1 (Pf)

Initial Planning

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

Late Nights on the Air by Elizabeth Hay

What idea do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

The idea of ambition pushing away others and creating insecurity within ones self.

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

personal analytical essay

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–1 (Pf)

Written Work

Ambition is ~~a powerful force~~ is a powerful device, ~~that is~~ but it must be used in ~~the~~ proper moderation and understanding.
- Gwien's own ambition to make it in the ~~the~~ world of radio broadcasting has

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–1 (Pf)

The Pitfall of Ambition

Ambition is a very powerful force, but it can easily get out of control and devour an individual's life, so it must be used in proper moderation and with understanding. In the excerpt from Elizabeth Hay's novel, *Late Nights on the Air*, she exemplifies the difficulties which can arise from the wrong kind of ambition. Hays shows how a person, such as Gwen, can become ensnared in the trap of their own ambitions and lose sight of what they are doing to others and themselves. In my own experience, I understand how difficult a high amount ambition can make life for someone in the physical, social, and mental realms. Ambition has the ability to push people to great heights, but many people do not take the time to understand the nuances of it and fall prey to their own expectations.

Often times, ambition can work to push others away from an individual, make one lose sight of what is actually important to them and fill them with thoughts of failure. In *Late Nights on the Air*, Gwen is one of two new announcers being hired on to a radio station in Yellowknife. Of the two, Gwen is the more ambitious, but she is also blind to what her ambition is doing to those around her. Her drive to become a great announcer like her trainer, Abe Lamont, has caused her to become bitter and caustic with her co-workers. Which has brought up comments like "She's so judgemental," and "But compared to you she's inexperienced and unsure of herself. She's shy." (Hay) which has made Gwen not only feel wounded to hear them speak behind her back, but also doubt the choices she's made. Gwen has not realized how to reign in her ambition to stop it from destroying her dreams. All she sees is the fulfillment of them, but doesn't believe that socializing and resting are both very important parts of her success. In order for ambition to work for an individual they must take it in moderation and understanding,

(Page 3 of 8)

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–1 (Pf)

not blindly and full-on because that can cause them to fail to become detrimental to themselves and others.

In my own experience, ambition has a place in everything, but it can get out of hand and cause a person to become engulfed in it rather than living their own life. I have always had a great understanding of my academic, artistic and physical skills, but in grade eleven and twelve I have watched as my understanding dissolved and I began to struggle with maintaining a balance in my life. Back in grade eleven I had finally began to learn how to socialize, but because I was a late bloomer in that regard I never realized the pressures I would feel with a social life and everything I had built up before. I began to hang out with people often on weekends and even after school, and I was really enjoying myself. The problem with this was that I didn't know how to balance this with my high grades, love of art and drama, and exercise. Being very ambitious, I began to feel depression over the fact that I was losing the grades that I had worked my whole life on maintaining; I started to feel like I didn't know who I was. Thus, I decided in grade twelve to focus more on my work and less on those around me, I also chose to drop my fitness to keep up with my workload. It worked for a while, but I never realized how overbearing the loneliness that came with my choice could be. Instead of friends stopping me from getting work done, my isolation ate away at me to the point where I was in a constant state of self-loathing. After a while of this I began to see the error in my ways, so I started working at controlling my thoughts of ambition and working to learn when it's alright to be social and relax, and when I need to get my work done. I still have high aspirations, but I feel great with who I am and what I have accomplished. In life, an individual must learn to find a

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English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–1 (Pf)

balance between their ambitions, who they are, and when they can just relax or else their ambition can cause them to lose track of their life.

Ambition has the ability to push people very far, but only if it is understood and taken in the proper moderation to stop them from losing who they are, and destroying the life they have built. In the excerpt from Hay's novel, *Late Night on the Air*, Gwen has become trapped within her own ambition and lost sight of what it is doing to herself and those around her. I have a deep understanding of how dangerous ambition can be, especially when it can lead to depression, and the pushing away of others. Ambition is a great thing, but only when it is used properly to not only help yourself but those around you as well.

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–1 (Pf)

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Ambition is a very powerful force, but it can easily get out of control and devour an individual's life, so it must be used in proper moderation and ~~with moderation~~. In the excerpt from Elizabeth Hay's novel, *Late Nights on the Air*, she exemplifies the difficulties which can arise from the wrong kind of ambition. Hays shows how a person, such as Gwen, can become ensnared in the trap of their own ambitions and lose sight of what they are doing to others and themselves. In my own experience, I understand how difficult a high amount ambition can make life for someone in the physical, social, and mental realms. Ambition has the ability to push people to great heights, but many people do not take the time to understand the nuances of ~~ambition~~ and fall prey to their own expectations.

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English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–1 (Pf)

blindly and full-on because that can cause them to fail to become detrimental to themselves and others.

In my own experience, ambition has a place in everything, but it can get out of hand and cause a person to become engulfed in it rather than living their own life. I have always had a great understanding of my academic, artistic and physical skills, but in grade eleven and twelve I have watched as ^{my} ~~this~~ understanding dissolved and I began to struggle with maintaining a balance in my life. Back in grade eleven I had finally begun to learn how to socialize, but because I was a late bloomer in that regard I never realized the pressures I would feel with a social life and everything I had built up before. I began to hang out with people often on weekends and even after school, and I was really enjoying myself. The problem with this was that I didn't know how to balance this with my high grades, love of art and drama, and exercise. Being very ambitious, I started to feel ^{depression} ~~depressed~~ over the fact that I was losing the grades that I had worked my whole life on maintaining; I started to feel like I didn't know who I was. Thus, I decided in grade twelve to focus more on my work and less on those around me, I also chose to drop my fitness to keep up with my workload. It worked for a while, but I never realized how overbearing the loneliness that came with my choice could be. Instead of friends stopping me from getting work done, my isolation ate away at me to the point where I was in a constant state of ^{self loathing} ~~depression~~. After a while of this I began to see the error in my ways, so I started working at controlling my thoughts of ambition and working to learn when it's alright to be social and relax, and when I need to get my work done. I still have high aspirations, but I feel great with who I am and what I have accomplished. In life, an individual must learn to find a

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English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–1 (Pf)

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**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is purposeful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and considered. • Support is specific and strengthens the student’s ideas and impressions. 	<p>The student’s initial premise is clearly identified in the introduction where ambition is defined as “a very powerful force, but it can easily get out of control and devour an individual’s life” (2). In providing further clarity, the student continues with the thoughtful and considered assertion that the excerpt from <i>Late Nights on Air</i> “exemplifies the difficulties which can arise from the wrong kind of ambition” (2) and, based on the student’s personal experience, understands that “a high amount of ambition can make life [difficult] for someone in the physical, social, and mental realms” (2). Ultimately, the student establishes the thesis that “Ambition has the ability to push people to great heights, but many people do not take the time to understand the nuances of it and fall prey to their own expectations” (2) which leads to a purposeful exploration of the topic.</p> <p>The student’s considered paraphrase of the situation in the excerpt from <i>Late Nights on Air</i> leads to the thoughtful perception that “Gwen is the more ambitious, but she is also blind to what her ambition is doing to those around her” (2). Although the student’s analysis of Gwen is largely focused on the impact on self, the impact on others is implied through the embedding of specific comments made by others such as: “‘She’s so judgemental,’ and ‘But compared to you she’s inexperienced and unsure of herself. She’s shy’” (2), which strengthen the student’s ideas and impressions.</p> <p>In recognizing that “for ambition to work for an individual” (2), it must be taken “in moderation and understanding, not blindly and full-on because that can cause them to fail” (2, 3), the student purposefully provides a link to the personal experience where it is understood that ambition “can get out of hand and cause a person to become engulfed in it rather than living their own life” (3) and subsequently lose a sense of personal identity. Because of the experiences, reflection, and deliberate action to be “working at controlling my thoughts of ambition and working to learn when it’s alright to be social and relax, and when I need to get my work done” (3), the student arrives at the thoughtful and considered perception that “In life, an individual must learn to find a balance between their ambitions, who they are, and when they can just relax or else their ambition can cause them to lose track of their life” (3, 4). The interpretation of Gwen becoming “trapped within her own ambition” (4) and the resultant harm to both self and others draws the student to, on a personal level, the purposeful understanding of the “dangerous” (4) potential ambition has.</p>

Pf

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is distinct. • Stylistic choices are specific and the student’s creation of tone is competent. • The unifying effect is capably developed. <p align="center">Pf</p>	<p>The student creates a voice that is distinct and suitable for the context of a personal essay that provides analysis of text and comparable illustration and analysis of personal experience. Although diction choices are elevated in some cases, such as “exemplifies” (2), “ensnared” (2), “fall prey” (2), and “self loathing” (3), overall the balancing of critical analysis with personal experience results in a distinct voice. For example, “Gwen has not realized how to reign in her ambition to stop it from destroying her dreams” (2) and “Being very ambitious, I began to feel depression over the fact that I was losing the grades that I had worked my whole life on maintaining; I started to feel like I didn’t know who I was” (3).</p> <p>The student makes specific stylistic choices, as in “Her drive to become a great announcer like her trainer, Abe Lamont, has caused her to become bitter and caustic with her co-workers” (2) and “Back in grade eleven I had finally began to learn how to socialize, but because I was a late bloomer in that regard I never realized the pressures I would feel with a social life and everything I had built up before” (3). In addition, the use of parallel structures, such as “great understanding of my academic, artistic and physical skills” (3) and “high grades, love of art and drama, and exercise” (3), allows the student to create a competent tone that is unforced and natural for relating personal experience.</p> <p>By balancing the analysis of the prose excerpt with the explanation of the personal experience, the student’s response demonstrates a capably developed unifying effect. Initially, the student suggests that ambition “must be used in proper moderation and with understanding” (2). By returning to this controlling idea at the end of each body paragraph, but focusing on a particular feature based on the specific content of each paragraph, the student capably maintains the unifying effect, as is evident in: “In order for ambition to work for an individual they must take it in moderation and understanding” (2) and “In life, an individual must learn to find a balance” (3, 4). Juxtaposing the analysis of <i>Late Nights on Air</i> with the personal experience, the student capably draws this response to a close with the concluding statement: “Ambition is a great thing, but only when it is used properly to not only help yourself but those around you as well” (4).</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
 Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS ASSIGNMENT
 Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes

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

Ambition: the will & power
 to achieve
 something.
 To go somewhere.

Prodigal → Biblical the prodigal
son!

You could drive out of this county
 and attack the world with your ambition,
 invent wonder plasmas,
 become an artist of the provocative gesture,
 the suggestive nod, you could leave
 wanting the world and return
 carrying it, a noisy bundle
 of steam and libido, a ball of fire
 balanced on your tongue,
 you might reclaim Main Street in a limo
 longer than a sermon, wave at our red faces
 while remembering that you were born
 a clod hopper, a farmer's kid,
 and get over that hump once and for all
 by telling A Great Man's stories —
 the dirty jokes of dictators, tidbits
 of presidential hygiene, insights
 into the psychotropic qualities of power
 and the American tradition of kissing
 moneyed ass. Your uncle would still
call you Roy Boy, pheasants
 sun themselves beside the tracks,
 waiting for the dew to burn off
 before their first flight, and corn
 grow so high that if you stood
 in the field you'd disappear, the fact
 aiming your eyes down the road.

Bob Hicok

Something to
 look down
 upon →

← trying to
 prove you
 are more than
 a farmer.

↳ looking to still get away

} can go out &
 make something
 of yourself

} come back
 & show how
 you have
 grown

} but you will
 still be the
 same person

} & forgotten in
 time.

YAMA

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)



Tamas Dezso, Romania, 2005 © Tamas Dezso / www.tamasdezso.com

Tamas Dezso

The man

- looking over his shoulder, possibly taking last look @ his home
- unsure of himself

The Scene

- Very long
- looks tiresome
- taking him to new places but away from the ones he loves.

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English Language Arts 30-1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient-2 (Pf)

Initial Planning

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

I am responding to the poem "~~The~~ Prodigal".
I am telling the story of the son who
has gone away & comes home. How his
~~part of life has been~~ feelings at home
are so close to the heart.

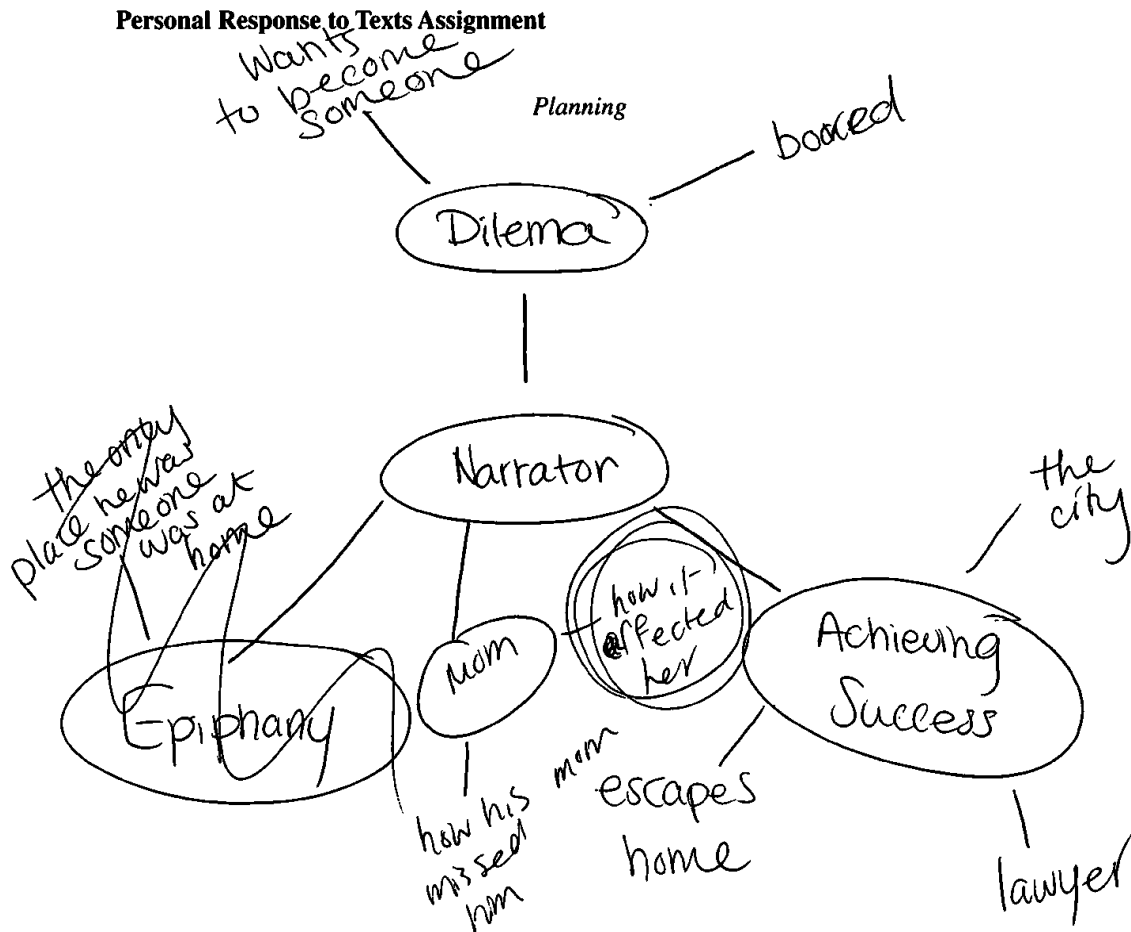
What idea do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

I tend to explore the feeling of being
lost. How you may have conquered the
world & achieved so much but, when it's
all said & done there is no fulfillment. More
pain. Finding the loved ones you want to share
your life w/ is worth more.

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

English Language Arts 30-1, January 2012
 Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient-2 (Pf)



Beginning: Coming back & looking around.

Reflects on his journey from childhood to now.

Middle: Adjusting to life at home

End: ~~realizes that~~
 has epiphany & appreciates what he has

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

It had been years since I had come back to this place. Nothing had changed. People had died off, sure, but the young had become old and the cycle continued. It was a town where everyone knows each other's names and the talk of the town was always the crops. The Henson's grew wheat, alfalfa, and potatoes. The Jansen's had alfalfa and vegetables. My family specialized in Wheat. We had about three hundred acres when I was growing up. We use to run for miles and miles, never exactly sure which way was north. All the kids would come to play hide and go seek; that's if they finished their chores of course. We always chores. My eldest brother Noah was loved by all the girls because he could carry a whole 150 pound bail by himself. When I was younger I wanted to be just like him. As time passed I realized that I was only fooling myself. I was never big and the only thing I seemed to be good at was helping my mama in the kitchen. When I was in school I had the top grades and my mama was so proud of me. My Father had different ideas. If you did well in school that meant that you would go on to college; college meant money. Money that my family couldn't spare. I remember sneaking down the court house and watching the trials. My favourite part was always when the lawyers would make their closing statements; it sent chills down my spine. How I wanted to be one of them. Strutting around with the black robe on, pointing my finger at the defendant and making the jury tremble as the cold details were laid out.

I didn't escape until I was nineteen. I took me six years of working at Mr. Bilge's grocer just to pay for one semester of school. My mama didn't stop crying as I packed my bags. I don't think I will ever get that picture out of my head. Papa drove me to the station

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English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

and I got on the 4 o'clock train to Chicago. The train started to chug along and I felt invigorated. I was finally going to make something of myself.

When I stepped off that train the magnitude of what I had done hit me. I was awestruck at the wonder of the city. Everything moved so fast. I must of looked like some fool, just standing in the middle of the train station, taking it all in. I started school the next day and from then on I spent every waking second in my room studying and writing papers. Occasionally a stroll in the city would help to clear my mind and the new things to see were always abundant. I was able to pass the bar in less than two years and started working at Harvey Mulligans Law Firm. By this time I had created a large debt but I worked full time and paid it off in 3 years' time. The city was never forgetful to draw me back to its power. After work the men and I would go to the pub and tell Great Man's stories, talk of dictators and how Clyde Anderson would never stop kissing ass to the big law firms. The rooms were filled with smoke and bellowing laughter.

It wasn't until thirty-four that I received a letter from my Father. I had almost forgotten that I had a family, a life outside of Chicago. I had become so used to the city that going home seemed like a terrible dream. My mama had fallen ill and they weren't sure what it was. Pops' wrote that she may not be around for much longer and that she had been asking to see me. I didn't leave for four more months. I wrote them telling them that I had to much work to do; that was a lie. I just didn't think I could face going back home. Where people had no clue what went on outside of their own farm. When I finally bought my ticket my stomach was churning every which way. That train ride home seemed to take an eternity.

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Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

My Pops was there on the platform along with my Uncle. They greeted me with great big slaps on the back and the pain shot down my spine and my Uncle said that he had missed his Roy Boy. When we arrived at the house everything was still were it had been fifteen years ago. I went up to my old room, all the posters were still there and the handmade chess board that was given to me by my aunt when I was six. When I went into my mamas room she was sleeping. I just sat by her side and started to cry. Something I hadn't done in a long time. Her hand reached across and gently lay on my own. We just stared into each other's eyes for a while and then she closed hers and went back to sleep. A little smile was placed ever so gently across her face. Her son had come home.

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

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English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

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Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

My Pops was there on the platform along with my Uncle. They greeted me with great big slaps on the back and the pain shot down my spine and my Uncle said that he had missed his Roy Boy. When we arrived at the house everything was still were it had been fifteen years ago. I went up to my old room, all the posters were still there and the handmade chess board that was given to me by my aunt when I was six. When I went into my mamas room she was sleeping. I just sat by her side and started to cry. Something I hadn't done in a long time. Her hand reached across and gently lay on my own. We just stared into each other's eyes for a while and then she closed hers and went back to sleep. A little smile was placed ever so gently across her face. Her son had come home.

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is purposeful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and considered. • Support is specific and strengthens the student’s ideas and impressions. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Pf</p>	<p>The student purposefully explores the topic through a first-person narrative told from the perspective of the persona in “Prodigal”. In this creative response, a young man leaves the rural environment of his childhood to pursue a career in law in Chicago. His ambition is fuelled by a youthful fascination with the legal system, a time when he would sneak down to the local courthouse to watch trials and imagine himself “Strutting around with the black robe on, pointing my finger at the defendant and making the jury tremble as the cold details were laid out” (3). Despite being initially “awestruck at the wonder of the city” (4), over time the narrator does become a lawyer and fully adapts to the lifestyle his career entails; he regularly associates with fellow lawyers at a pub “filled with smoke and bellowing laughter” (4), where the conversation typically includes a “Great Man’s stories, talk of dictators” (4), and criticizing specific individuals like Clyde Anderson, a man who “would never stop kissing ass to the big law firms” (4). News of his mother’s illness, and the impending need to return home to the farm, give rise to an internal conflict which requires the protagonist to grapple with reconciling his humble beginnings with the urban professional he has become. After time spent in personal reflection, that included lying to his parents, he reluctantly goes home to his mother’s bedside. He realizes that despite his own ambitions and a perceived estrangement from those he has left behind, the attitudes of others toward him have not been negatively impacted. The student communicates the thoughtful and considered ideas expressed on the Initial Planning page that regardless of how much one achieves in life “Finding the loved ones you want to share your life with is worth more” (1) than conquering the world and achieving its definition of success.</p> <p>Throughout the story, the student uses specific support to contrast the rural and urban settings, and to explore how these details contribute to the development of the narrator’s characterization as he transitions from one setting to the other and back again. For example: “My eldest brother Noah was loved by all the girls because he could carry a whole 150 pound bail by himself. When I was younger I wanted to be just like him” (3), and “The city was never forgetful to draw me back to its power” (4), and “I went up to my old room, all the posters were still there and the handmade chess board that was given to me by my aunt when I was six” (5). As a result, the student’s ideas and impressions are strengthened, revealing both a considered perception of the prompting text and a thoughtful perception of the topic.</p>

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Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is distinct. • Stylistic choices are specific and the student’s creation of tone is competent. • The unifying effect is capably developed. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Pf</p>	<p>By choosing a first-person narrative, the student creates a distinctive voice for a character who is looking back on his childhood, teenage years, early adulthood, and later years. This reflective tone is controlled and competent as a result of the specific stylistic choices that the student employs to reflect realistically the various stages of the narrator’s life. For example: “All the kids would come to play hide and go seek; that’s if they finished their chores of course” (3), and “I took me six years of working at Mr. Bilge’s grocer just to pay for one semester of school” (3), and “I was able to pass the bar in less than two years and started working at Harvey Mulligans Law Firm” (4), and “It wasn’t until thirty-four that I received a letter from my Father. I had almost forgotten that I had a family, a life outside of Chicago” (4).</p> <p>The student wisely avoids a clichéd ending, such as the mother’s premature death as a result of his refusal to immediately return to the farm. In doing so, the student is further able to develop a distinct voice that contrasts the static characterizations of the father and uncle with the dynamic characterization of the narrator: “They greeted me with great big slaps on the back and the pain shot down my spine and my Uncle said that he had missed his Roy Boy” (5).</p> <p>In paralleling the three stages of “Prodigal” by depicting, chronologically, the protagonist’s origins, ambitions, achievements, and realization of how little has changed back home, the student creates a capably developed unifying effect that is enhanced by the narrator’s recognition of what truly matters in his life.</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

Initial Planning

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

The poetry and the picture. Both show this longing to escape, but an anxiety, and ~~an~~ realisation that they can never truly escape

What idea do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

I plan to explore the idea of never being able to completely disengage oneself from one's roots and how one's ambition may take one away from them, but never destroy them.

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

The Biggest Impact Is The One On Oneself

-What does the text suggest about the impact of an individual's ambition on self and others?

The story is stereotypical. Young rural teen looking to escape their hum-drum existence in their hum-drum community by travelling somewhere big. Running towards the lights and sounds of the city, relishing the journey, but finding realization that no matter how much they run, no matter how far away they go, they will never lose that rural feel. The little community they were apart of will never relinquish it's hold on their very core. When they are at their lowest, it can bring relief, knowing that somewhere in this huge world, there is a place waiting where they can always return to. This huge ambition that could not be held by such a small place lets them find who they are. Their opinion of themselves changes, whether for better or for worse, and the new people they meet along the way form opinions of them that may not meet their expectations. But the relief comes in knowing that when all is said and done, no matter how much they think they changed, there is a family out there who knew them since before they could talk, and they will never look at that person differently. They knew who that person was long before the person did. But the biggest impact of all is the one they leave on themselves.

In Bob Hicok's poem "Prodigal", that is exactly what happens. There is a boy, one who sets out to become something more than what his father was, and his father before him, and so forth. He has the burning desire to take the world in his hands and become the people he deems important. The ones who travel the world, the artists who create the art of flirtation, the smart alecks and businessmen make money with their intellect on the strange world of urbanization. On his journey, he believes he becomes

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English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

one of them, the people to look up to, the ones his family don't understand, and don't care to. He knows all the right moves, and all the smooth words. He has left behind his embarrassing past, and embraced the life of constant motion. However, while he believes he has changed, the area and the people he left behind stay the same. When they look at him, they still see the same boy that left, they still treat him the same way. They act the same, the pheasants act the same, the crops act the same. He may have set out and returned as different man in his eyes, but in others' eyes, he is still the little boy they raised. The impact of his ambitions is left on the people who never knew him, the people who knew him best, and himself. The people who never knew him will feel little impact, only having known the suave gentleman he has molded himself into, the one who fit in with the rest because he knew the ways of the world. Or, they will see him as he was before. The awkward rural boy looking to prove something, but falling in the alien surroundings he knows so little about. The people who will feel the most impact by his ambitions are the ones he left behind. The ones who feel the disappearance of him every day that he does not return to them. They spend the days looking back to the past, and seeing that boy grow up, and when he does return, all splendor, they will always only see the boy who left, because that is who they saw in the past and that is who they will always see. No amount of time away will change their opinions on him. But he himself is the one who feels the most impact by his ambitions, whether he knows it or not. Every day brings on new challenges, new mistakes, and new successes. By setting out into the world, he has taken control of his destiny and set it on a whole new path. The path may end in sorrow, or contentment, but only he will be able to decide that in the decisions he makes every day. Although others may inspire him, leaving their own little impacts on

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

his choices, only he has the ability to make them. This leaves the biggest impact of all, because it decided who he sees himself as. The others come and go, making their own judgments, but nothing is more important than how one sees oneself, because that is an ever-changing view.

The next piece is a photo without a title. The fact that it doesn't have a title is intriguing. The title is the first thing people read, so it becomes the basis for their judgments on whatever comes next. However, with no title, they can only look at the picture, take in the boy and his surroundings, and make their own opinions on it. The people who don't know him may focus first on the clothes, or the surrounding, and make their judgments based on that. They may see just another lost rural farmboy stumbling around the world they own. However, the people who do know him, they focus instead on the face, the eyes, the emotions. They already know what he is like, they want to know what he is thinking. They want to go deeper because they already know the primary imperfections and flaws that sit on the surface, there is no need for their opinions on that. He himself may look at this, and see someone he left behind, or someone he wants to return to. He sees himself as the ones he deems important see him. The ambition shown in this picture once again seems to be escape. The boy drives a motorcycle, a classic representation of rebellion and is heading down a long, seemingly endless road. What lies at the end is a mystery. However, instead of looking ahead, he is glancing behind him, an almost disconcerting look, uncaring at a distance, but when one gets closer, the anxiety is apparent. He is trying to appear brave as he heads towards the unknown, but the familiarity of the past is too familiar to want to leave. The comfort is all he has known up until his ambition drove him away. However, what is behind him will always be there

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

when/if he decided to return. No matter how many mistakes he makes, no matter how much he screws up, he knows that there is somebody behind him that will always accept him. Once again, the biggest impact he makes is on himself. He may regret doing this, or he may decide that it is the best choice of his life.

There is a difference between the boy in the poem and the boy in the picture. The boy in the poem is eager to jump forward and leave everything behind. He doesn't want to be a farm boy anymore, he doesn't want to be the same person he was in the past. He wants to be known only as the new person, he desires change but what he has left behind will never change. The boy in the picture however, appears worried about going forward. He wants to, but he doesn't know if he should leave everything behind. His glance over his shoulder is the tell-tale sign that he is frightened of the unknown. He doesn't want to take a running jump into the deep end of the pool as the boy from the poem does. He inches towards it, careful but gradually making it. However, their similarities unite them. They both represent the stereotypical tale. Two rural teens, looking for new beginnings, new adventures, one ready to brave anything, the other unsure of whether he should, but doing it anyways. In a perfect world, they would find each other, and balance each other out, either by pulling the other back before he goes too far, or pushing the other forward before he backs away too much. The impacts they make on the people around them are the same, but the impacts they make on themselves are different. While the boy from the poem sees a new person when he looks in the mirror, a person he is proud of, and never wants to leave, the boy from the picture could look in the mirror and regret what he has done.

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Example Scored Excellent–1 (E)

Although this is a stereotypical rural story, almost everybody feels this way at some point in their life. Everyone has the ambition to make a bigger impact in the world than the one they are making right now, but whether they act on it or not is an entirely different matter. But, it's all really a delusion. The people one knows will always see the same person they knew and love, and the people one does not know will always see what they want to see. The only impact that really matters by following one's ambitions is the one made on oneself. This is the biggest, because it will follow one for the rest of their life, ever-changing, but ever constant. This happens whether or not a person chooses to run towards bigger things or stay where they are. It is a part of life, and where a person is and what he is doing does not change it happening. It only changes how it happens.

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is insightful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and discerning. • Support is precise and aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions. 	<p>This critical analysis of “Prodigal” and the visual evolves into an insightful comparison and contrast essay that explores the impact of ambition on others initially, but as the title suggests, ultimately focuses on the premise that with an individual’s ambition, “the biggest impact of all is the one they leave on themselves” (2)</p> <p>The student begins by discussing a “stereotypical” (2) story of the “Young rural teen looking to escape their hum-drum existence in their hum-drum community by . . . Running towards the lights and sounds of the city” (2). Confident in tone, this engaging introduction sets up a common thread for the exploration of the two prompting texts. The student implies a parallel between the persona in the poem and the boy in the visual, using their common rural upbringing as the basis for this juxtaposition.</p> <p>The student uses precise support from “Prodigal” to aptly reinforce the notion that although ambition may lead an individual to become someone “he deems important” (2) and believe he “has changed” (3), the people from the past will “still see the same boy that left” (3) and consequently “they still treat him the same way” (3). The student confidently develops the discerning idea that this lack of an impact on others is due to their clouded perceptions that vary from seeing only “the suave gentleman he has molded himself into” (3) to always viewing him as the “awkward rural boy looking to prove something” (3). The student offers the discerning perceptions that such external “opinions” (3) are out of the persona’s control, and despite the potential to “inspire him” (3), their impact is secondary because the individual “himself is the one who feels the most impact by his ambitions” (3). Consequently, it becomes the individual’s responsibility to make life choices that determine “who he sees himself as” (4). The exploration of the topic in relation to the poem leads the student to the insightful declaration that what is most important is the impact of ambition on the individual, which is internalized, as “nothing is more important than how one sees oneself, because that is an ever-changing view” (4).</p> <p align="right"><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

E

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is insightful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and discerning. • Support is precise and aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions. 	<p>Shifting to the photograph, the “intriguing” (4) observation that it lacks a title, and thus requires a careful examination of its details, allows the student to explore the insightful idea of how regret can, at times, be an intrinsic part of ambition. The student uses precise support such as the symbolic nature of “a motorcycle, a classic representation of rebellion” (4), the perceived “almost disconcerting look” (4) on the boy’s face, and “His glance over his shoulder is the tell-tale sign that his frightened of the unknown” (5) to aptly reinforce the discerning idea that the boy is hesitant about where ambition might lead him. This boy “appears worried about going forward” (5) towards the unknown future, but still he “inches towards it, careful but gradually making it” (5). The student ends this section with the confident and discerning perception that “Once again, the biggest impact he makes is on himself” (5), because although one may regret following the road of ambition, it may also turn out to be “the best choice of his life” (5) so it must be risked to fulfill ambition.</p> <p>The essay progresses to an insightful exploration of how these two boys are foils, representing opposite viewpoints of “the stereotypical tale. Two rural teens, looking for new beginnings, new adventures, one ready to be brave anything, the other unsure of whether he should, but doing it anyways” (5). The student advances to the discerning perception of how these opposing views on ambition could ideally create balance: “In a perfect world, they would find each other, and balance each other out, either by pulling the other back before he goes too far, or pushing the other forward before he backs away too much” (5).</p> <p>The conclusion demonstrates the degree to which the precise support has aptly reinforced the student’s ideas throughout the essay. The student advances from the specifically rural setting to consider the universal human context, philosophically stating that those who witness the effects of ambition will only view “a delusion” (6), seeing only what “they want to see” (6). The student determines that the “only impact that really matters by following one’s ambition is the one made on oneself” (6) because it stays “for the rest of their life, ever-changing, but ever constant” (6). Comparing and contrasting these two prompting texts leads to the insightful conclusion that how one completes the journey of ambition is of less importance than the understanding that the impact of ambition on self is primary.</p>

E

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–1

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is convincing. • Stylistic choices are precise and the student’s creation of tone is adept. • The unifying effect is skillfully developed. 	<p>Throughout the response, the student is able to effectively create a uniquely personal, yet convincingly critical voice. Although, at times, there are some minor mechanical errors such as “were apart of” (2), and “He may have set out and returned as different man in his eyes” (3), and “molded” (3), such errors are overshadowed by the strengths of the writing.</p> <p>A variety of syntactical structures from short poignant sentences, such as “The story is stereotypical” (2), to strong parallel structure, as in “They act the same, the pheasants act the same, the crops act the same” (3), to more elaborately crafted sentences, like “Running towards the lights and sounds of the city, relishing the journey, but finding realization that no matter how much they run, no matter how far away they go, they will never lose that rural feel” (2), enhance the overall complexity of the precise stylistic choices. Confident and complex structures, often displaying intricate use of punctuation, such as “They spend the days looking back to the past, and seeing that boy grow up, and when he does return, all splendor, they will always only see the boy who left, because that is who they saw in the past and that is who they will always see” (3), demonstrate skillfull usage. Through these structures and the precise diction choices, such as “hum-drum” (2), “relinquish” (2), “smart alecks and businessmen make money with their intellect on the strange world of urbanization” (2), “embraced the life of constant motion” (3) and “disconcerting look” (4), the student creates an adept tone and enhances the convincing voice that is consistently individualistic and analytical.</p> <p>By first exploring each prompting text individually, the student establishes a necessary foundation for the effective analysis of their similarities and differences. In concluding with a reflection on the nature of ambition: “almost everybody feels this way at some point in their life” (6), the student discerns a universal truth of the human condition within these texts. Although, dealing with a professed “stereotypical” tale of two types of rural boys, the student skillfully develops a unifying effect for this comparison-contrast essay that is anything but stereotypical.</p>

E

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

Initial Planning

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

I'm responding to prodigal by Bob Hicok, connecting the ideas presented in the poem to a short story that explores the same ideas regarding ambition and the individual.

What idea do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

I will explore the idea that unsympathetic ambition can alienate an individual from ~~their peers~~ their family and ~~friends~~.

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

Creative

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

The Road Home

It wasn't so long ago that this beat up card table was a mountain to me. It wasn't so many years ago that I would sit here, my feet dangling just a few centimetres above the ground. It wasn't so long ago that this was home.

Mother was there to greet me at the door. She wore with pride the same apron whose string she had, no so long ago, used to teach me how to tie a knot. I can vividly remember sitting next to her feet, tying and untying the strings while Walter Cronkite filled the small room with the events of the day. I couldn't help but notice, as I slipped out of the fine leather of my loafers, how long it had been since I'd even tied a shoelace.

"There's my boy," she had exclaimed, wrapping me in a hug that seemed too tight, too familiar. Father rose to meet me as I stepped further into the house, his worn jeans and cuffed shirt sleeves streaked with dust from a day's work. He did not hug me, the way he had after I threw the game winning pitch; we shook hands, he offered me formal respect.

"Welcome home," he replied, to the unspoken feelings in the room. As he led me, like a stranger, into the dining room i felt huge. Next to the lilt and ramble of his step it seemed I was a robot, a windup toy that moved in unnatural, calculated steps. There on the supper, sat a roast that could have been any Sunday roast, from any Sunday of my childhood.

As we ate, I told them stories of the past five years. I tried hard to paint for them the chaos of Vancouver, the maddening pace of meetings, board rooms, conferences. Recalling business trips to Tokyo, to Dubai, to Milan, I tried to show them how much I had grown, what kind of a man I had become. I kept waiting for their faces to fill with

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English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

awe, with pride. While they smiled, I could see some tiredness, some sadness crouching behind their eyes. they were the same expressions they'd worn the day I left.

We had stood that day at the bus station and they had seemed to me like some strange apparition, a pair of yellowing photographs sending me off to university, off to the future. I had been possessed, as the bus pulled out, with visions of the things I knew were coming. Dreams of grandeur, power, respect and adventure danced in my head like they had all my adolescent life. The hate, the condescension I felt for the place I was leaving flowed through my veins, and I felt dizzy with the possibilities of a new life.

I couldn't imagine, now, what I had been looking for coming back here. When my brother and his wife joined us for dessert the conversation dropped away from the exploits of my six figure life, and back to the wheat board, the canola, the threshing machine. The same conversations I had been bored by for years floated now above my head like an escaped balloon soaring further and further out of reach. Seeing my brother raise his beer to his lips, I could see so much of my father in him I felt weak.

When, for a moment, the conversation trailed off I felt their eyes fall wearily on me. My brother cleared his throat, lifted his bottle and declared,

"But really, here's to the man of the hour, the prodigy, my baby brother Clint!"
Weak smiles and strong facades then drunk to my health.

Later that evening, lying on the bed in my childhood room, my brother's words echoed in my head. As I drifted in and out of sleep, they repeated and repeated themselves, until words began to run together.

Had he really called me prodigy, or had it been prodigal?

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is insightful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and discerning. • Support is precise and aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions. 	<p>In this “creative” (1) response, the student constructs an insightful exploration of the topic with an economy of words, simultaneously advancing the topic both implicitly and explicitly. The impact on others is dealt with implicitly with the characterization of the parents’ lack of reaction to the narrator’s success in Vancouver as evidenced by the mixed greetings of the homecoming itself: the mother’s nurturing “hug” (2) as contrasted with the father’s “formal” handshake (2). The implied impact of the narrator’s ambition is further developed during the mealtime when the narrator “could see some tiredness, some sadness crouching behind their eyes. they were the same expressions they’d worn the day I left” (3). These observations provide precise support that aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions.</p> <p>Additionally, the student constructs an explicit development of the narrator’s character to reveal the impact on self: “I tried hard to paint for them the chaos of Vancouver, the maddening pace of meetings, board rooms, conferences” (2). The student creates tension through the introduction and characterization of the older brother, as “the conversation dropped away from the exploits of my six figure life, and back to the wheat board, the canola, the threshing machine” (3) and through the brother’s comment: “‘But really, here’s to the man of the hour, the prodigy, my baby brother Clint!’” (3) The image constructed is one of alienation as the narrator, feeling “like a stranger” (2) in the familiar setting of his childhood home, attempts to “show them how much I had grown, what kind of a man I had become” (2). This image is furthered with precise support that aptly reinforces the student’s ideas, both in how the narrator initially enters the dining room, following his father like “a robot, a windup toy that moved in unnatural, calculated steps” (2), and in contrast to a short time later “Seeing my brother raise his beer to his lips, I could see so much of my father in him I felt weak” (3).</p> <p>The narrator’s final question aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions. Although unanswered: “Had he really called me prodigy, or had it been prodigal?” (3), the reader is left with the knowledge that the student is confident and discerning in exploring the subtleties of the topic.</p>

E

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Personal Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is convincing. • Stylistic choices are precise and the student’s creation of tone is adept. • The unifying effect is skillfully developed. 	<p>The student employs precise diction to create the convincing voice of the successful businessman humbled by his return to the rural life, a life where the “same conversations I had been bored by for years floated now above my head like an escaped balloon soaring further and further out of reach” (3). In addition, “The hate, the condescension I felt for the place” (3) in the years prior to leaving for post-secondary is replaced by the narrator’s ability to perceive the “weak smiles and strong facades” (3) in response to his success. This informed perspective then evolves into wondering if the older brother had raised a glass and “called me prodigy, or had it been prodigal?” (3), demonstrating an adept tone of self-reflection and even the doubt that may occur late at night “lying on the bed in my childhood room” (3).</p> <p>Precise diction creates the adept tone of realizing that although the narrator resides far from the farm at the present time, his success still is characterized by this childhood setting: “It wasn’t so long ago that this was home” (2), and “as I slipped out of the fine leather of my loafers, how long it had been since I’d even tied a shoelace” (2), and “a roast that could have been any Sunday roast, from any Sunday of my childhood” (2).</p> <p>By utilizing subtle time transitions within the narrative arc, the unifying effect is skillfully developed as it moves from the initial homecoming scene to the mealtime to the dessert and finally to the private minutes at the end of the day, each with its own revelation of the narrator’s mindset. For example: “Mother was there to greet me at the door. She wore with pride the same apron” (2) to “I kept waiting for their faces to fill with awe, with pride” (2, 3) to “the conversation trailed off I felt their eyes fall wearily on me” (3), and to conclude with “my brother’s words echoed in my head” (3). Ending with the poignant rhetorical question adds a layer of complexity to the entire narrative, as the outwardly self-confident and successful businessman is left in a subconscious state of uncertainty that interrupts his sleep, undermines his self-perception, and calls into question the success of his ambition, deemed as “unsympathetic” (1) on the Initial Planning page.</p>

E

Examples of Students' Writing with Teachers' Commentaries

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012

Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory (S)

Literary Text and
Text Creator

Othello

William Shakespeare

Note: Write the title of your chosen literary text on the back cover of this examination booklet.

Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text

Suggested time: 10 to 15 minutes

Briefly explore your reasons for selecting the literary text as support for your response. Markers will consider the information you provide here when considering the effectiveness of your supporting evidence.

Iago had a very dangerous ambition that would be easy to talk about, and be a very good way to get my point across

Iago's ambition was the entire plot of this masterful play, and it directly relates to the assignment in that it affected his choices and

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory (S)

Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text

the people around him. It also
is good evidence of how your
ambitions can affect you adversely.

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Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory (S)

Planning

Roderigo
Iago
Cassio
Othello
Desdemona

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Example Scored Satisfactory (S)

The desires of people can often become so powerful, that the roles they play are life changing. They can lead to anger, jealousy, lust, and even death. These are all emotions that are very powerful, and lead to making very big decisions. In the play, *Othello*, by William Shakespeare, this ambition is so overbearing in many of the characters, and it leads to many ill-willed decisions. The tragedy is centred around the impacts of their ambitions, which leads to much needless suffering and pain. In *Othello*, Iago's hunger for power, Roderigo and Othello's jealousy, and all of their deep hatreds led to the unfortunate ending of the play, and help us understand humanity a little better.

Iago is the sneaky, conniving, and deceitful character that is the backbone of this Shakespeare tragedy. Everything is going well until he decides to stir up trouble, and he does it better than no other. With Michael Cassio getting the job Iago felt he deserved, he sets out to make friends with Othello so that later he can begin his backstabbing. His ambition in this case was clearly his hunger for power. While he resented Othello, he wanted to be his right-hand man so he could trick Othello into hating Cassio. This ambition was very impactful on everyone in the play, as it led to the death of multiple characters, many of whom were innocent. In order to better his position, he was willing to use all of the people who placed their trust in him, and he selfishly sacrificed everyone in his way to his goal. In particular, when Roderigo ambushed Cassio, Iago killed Roderigo who was trusting him and doing his dirty work.

While Iago's ambitions were the most destructive of the play, there were others from the text that caused the situation to escalate immensely. Othello and Roderigo were both very jealous people, and they were fooled easily by Iago's plots. Roderigo was deeply in love with Desdemona, and despite failure and failure, he kept on trying to buy

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her affection. This made it easy for Iago to convince him, as he knew with Cassio and Othello out of the way, they would both win and he would have no competition for Desdemona. Othello had an even larger jealousy than this, as Iago was successful in making him believe that Cassio was having an affair with Desdemona. This led to the rage of Othello, which was one of the largest catalysts of the tragedy.

While Cassio did very little to anyone the entire play, Iago managed to convince all of the key characters to hate him. Iago and Roderigo themselves both harbored a very large amount of hate towards Othello, and used his short fuse to their advantage. When Iago frames Cassio and Desdemona's affair by putting Desdemona's heirloom handkerchief in the hands of Cassio, Othello instantly goes a rage assuming that Cassio must be guilty. Othello is driven to the point of insanity by Iago, and at one point even has a seizure from his anger and disbelief. Iago just keeps on adding fuel to the fire, and eventually Othello feels that it must all be true. This, of course, leads to the tragic ending where Othello is tricked into killing his very faithful and loving wife, and upon learning of her innocence, he throws himself upon his sword.

Whether it was Iago trying to obtain more power, Roderigo trying to win the woman he believes should be his, or Othello lashing out against the crime he thinks has been committed, the theme of ambition is always present in the play, *Othello*. The text is very meaningful, as it teaches us much about humanity and how we will make our decisions when our desires start to take control. People may do things that they know are morally wrong in order to meet these desires. This play in particular also shows the negative side of ambition, and where it can go wrong, compared to when it is commonly shown as always being beneficial. While following through on our decisions can often be

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a good thing, it can also lead to us making unfortunate choices. While the results likely will not be as catastrophic as they end up in *Othello*, we can betray our morals, and do things we know are not right for our ambition.

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EXAMPLE PAPER—Satisfactory

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Thought and Understanding (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas are relevant and straightforward, demonstrating a generalized comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. • Literary interpretations are general but plausible. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">S</p>	<p>The student begins with the relevant and straightforward idea that “The desires of people can often become so powerful, that the roles they play are life changing” (3). In doing so, a context is established for a discussion of Shakespeare’s <i>Othello</i> and how “this ambition is so overbearing in many of the characters, and it leads to many ill-willed decisions. The tragedy is centred around the impacts of their ambitions, which leads to much needless suffering and pain” (3). These assertions demonstrate a generalized comprehension of the literary text and topic.</p> <p>The student then provides a generalized analysis of three characters in order to examine the ways in which “Iago’s hunger for power, Roderigo and Othello’s jealousy, and all of their deep hatreds led to the unfortunate ending of the play, and help us understand humanity a little better” (3). The discussion establishes that “Iago is the sneaky, conniving, and deceitful character that is the backbone of this Shakespeare tragedy” (3), and that his campaign of revenge is motivated by Othello promoting Michael Cassio in “the job Iago felt he deserved” (3). The student then asserts that “Othello and Roderigo were both very jealous people, and they were fooled easily by Iago’s plots” (3) and that “This, of course, leads to the tragic ending where Othello is tricked into killing his very faithful and loving wife, and upon learning of her innocence, he throws himself upon his sword” (4).</p> <p>Ultimately, the response arrives at the general but plausible literary interpretation that “Whether it was Iago trying to obtain more power, Roderigo trying to win the woman he believes should be his, or Othello lashing out against the crime he thinks has been committed, the theme of ambition is always present in the play, <i>Othello</i>” (4).</p>

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EXAMPLE PAPER—Satisfactory

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Supporting Evidence (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is general, adequate, and appropriately chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in an acceptable way but occasionally may lack persuasiveness. • A reasonable connection to the student’s ideas is suitably maintained. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">S</p>	<p>The student’s thesis is reinforced through an appropriately chosen examination of the characters of Iago, Roderigo, and Othello.</p> <p>The student includes adequate support for Iago: “While he resented Othello, he wanted to be his right-hand man so he could trick Othello into hating Cassio” (3). Additional general support includes “Iago’s ambitions were the most destructive of the play” (3) and “Iago frames Cassio and Desdemona’s affair” (4) through his misrepresentation of Desdemona’s handkerchief.</p> <p>Roderigo is depicted as a man “deeply in love with Desdemona, and despite failure and failure, he kept on trying to buy her affection. This made it easy for Iago to convince him” (3, 4) to follow Iago’s plan. Furthermore, the student observes the parallel between characters in stating that “Iago and Roderigo themselves both harbored a very large amount of hate towards Othello, and used his short fuse to their advantage” (4). In doing so, the student provides additional general, adequate support.</p> <p>Occasionally, supporting evidence may lack persuasiveness, as in “While Cassio did very little to anyone the entire play, Iago managed to convince all of the key characters to hate him” (4). Major and significant characters such as Desdemona and Emilia never feel any dislike whatsoever towards Cassio at any time in the play.</p> <p>Throughout the essay, the student’s attempt to handle the topic by using three characters demonstrates that a reasonable connection to the student’s ideas is suitably maintained with the supporting evidence.</p>

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EXAMPLE PAPER—Satisfactory

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Form and Structure (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A straightforward arrangement of ideas and details provides direction for the discussion that is developed appropriately. • The unifying effect or controlling idea is presented and maintained generally; however, coherence may falter. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">S</p>	<p>On the Initial Planning page, the student writes that “Iago’s ambition was the entire plot of this masterful play” (1) and in the <i>Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text</i> further clarifies that “It also is good evidence of how your ambitions can affect you adversely” (2). These notions, coupled with the student’s controlling idea about how ambition can be so overbearing that it “leads to much needless suffering and pain” (3) provide the basis for a discussion that is developed appropriately.</p> <p>In using a five paragraph essay, the student presents ideas and details in a straightforward arrangement. The first body paragraph discusses the significance of Iago to the text and topic, establishing some of his motivation and the manipulations he employs. The second body paragraph explores the ways in which Othello and Roderigo, both victims of Iago’s plotting, “caused the situation to escalate immensely” (3). The third body paragraph examines the role Cassio plays as an object of scorn for both Othello and Roderigo as a result of Iago’s campaign, and the catastrophic deaths of Desdemona and Othello at the end of the play.</p> <p>Ultimately, the unifying effect is maintained generally, as is evidenced by the student’s statements in the concluding paragraph that the play “teaches us much about humanity and how we will make our decisions when our desires start to take control” (4) and that ambition can “lead to us making unfortunate choices” (5). Coherence falters at times due to a lack of analysis of the characters’ motivations and to generalized statements such as “This play in particular also shows the negative side of ambition, and where it can go wrong, compared to when it is commonly shown as always being beneficial” (4).</p>

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EXAMPLE PAPER—Satisfactory

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Matters of Choice (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diction is adequate. • Syntactic structures are straightforward, but attempts at complex structures may be awkward. • Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a conventional composition with an appropriate voice. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">S</p>	<p>Throughout this response the diction is adequate, as is evident in: “Everything is going well until he decides to stir up trouble” (3), “Iago killed Roderigo who was trusting him and doing his dirty work” (3), “Othello had an even larger jealousy than this” (4), and “Iago just keeps on adding fuel to the fire” (4).</p> <p>The student’s response is typified by straightforward syntactic structures: “Othello is driven to the point of insanity by Iago, and at one point even has a seizure from his anger and disbelief” (4) and “People may do things that they know are morally wrong in order to meet these desires” (4). Attempts at complex structures may be awkward, such as “These are all emotions that are very powerful, and lead to making very big decisions” (3) and “Everything is going well until he decides to stir up trouble, and he does it better than no other” (3).</p> <p>Overall, stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a conventional composition with an appropriate voice. For example: “In order to better his position, he was willing to use all of the people who placed their trust in him, and he selfishly sacrificed everyone in his way to his goal” (3) and “This led to the rage of <i>Othello</i>, which was one of the largest catalysts of the tragedy” (4) and “While the results likely will not be as catastrophic as they end up in Othello, we can betray our morals, and do things we know are not right for our ambition” (5).</p>

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EXAMPLE PAPER—Satisfactory

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Matters of Correctness (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This writing demonstrates control of the basics of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. • There may be occasional lapses in control and minor errors; however, the communication remains clear. <p align="center">S</p>	<p>Considering the essay’s relative brevity, coupled with its adequate diction and use of straightforward syntactic structures, markers must consider the proportion of error in terms of the complexity and length of the response when assessing Matters of Correctness.</p> <p>While the student demonstrates control of the basics of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics, there are occasional lapses in control and minor errors. Some examples include: “This ambition was very impactful on everyone in the play, as it lead to the dead of multiple characters, many of whom were innocent” (3) and “When Iago frames Cassio and Desdemona’s affair by putting Desdemona’s heirloom hankerchief in the hands of Cassio, Othello instantly goes a rage assuming that Cassio must be guilty” (4). Despite these occasional lapses, the communication remains clear.</p>

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Example Scored Proficient (Pf)

Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Initial Planning

You may use this space for your initial planning. This information assists markers in identifying the text you have chosen to support your ideas. The markers who read your composition will be very familiar with the literary text you have chosen.

Literary Text and
Text Creator

Death of a Salesman - Arthur Miller

Discuss the ideal(s) developed by the text creator in your chosen text about the impact of an individual's ambition on self and others?

Note: Write the title of your chosen literary text on the back cover of this examination booklet.

Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text
Suggested time: 10 to 15 minutes

Briefly explore your reasons for selecting the literary text as support for your response. Markers will consider the information you provide here when considering the effectiveness of your supporting evidence.

- Willy's ambitions - wrong, extreme, unrealistic
 - Effects himself & others around him (Biff, Linda, himself)
-
-

Example Scored Proficient (Pf)

Death of a Salesman

Thesis: ~~Willy's ambitions lead him to ruin his relationships with himself and with his family.~~
or

~~Having the wrong ambitions in life could lead to losing one's self & others around him.~~
or

(One's ambitions could ~~lead to~~ ^{with} extremes & obsession, ~~could~~ ^{could} mean losing oneself & others around them.)

Intro: • American Dream
• Thesis
• Supporting details

Body 1: • Biff
• Pressures Biff to make his dreams come true for him
& follow in his steps

Body 2: • Linda
• setting, climax
• symbolism,

Body 3: • Himself
• plot, characterization

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Example Scored Proficient (Pf)

Ambitions Too Extreme

In the 1950s, the mythical American Dream was something everyone yearned for. Having a steady business, one's own house, and a family was what everyone's ambition was. Everyone worked towards it and whoever reached it was respected by all. Not everyone reached it though. Some people did not try, others tried and could not reach it, and yet others took it to extremes. One's ambitions taken to extremes and obsession could lead to emotionally hurting oneself and others around him. Willy Loman, the protagonist of the drama *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, was one who took the American Dream to extremes. He ended up hurting himself; his eldest son, Biff; and his wife, Linda.

Willy Loman was a salesman who had to drive every week to New England to sell products for the company he worked for. He believed that he was a successful salesman and was "well-liked" by everyone in the towns he travelled to. He came home every week and told his family that he had made more money than he essentially did and that everyone bought from him and liked him. He built a lie for himself and his family to live on as he did not want to believe that he failed to follow his ambition in the correct way. He became obsessed with American Dream to the point that he lost himself in it and lost all sense of reality. At the beginning of the play, while he was talking to his wife Linda, he said, "Why does everyone contradict me around here?" This is verbal irony as Willy was the one who contradicted himself yet and yet again. He lied to himself and his family about being the great businessman he wasn't, but deep down he knew the truth and even admit it at one point. In a memory of his past, he comes home and tells his sons that he sold much that week and that everyone smiled at him and liked him in the towns he travelled to. A few minutes later, he tells his wife that the

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Example Scored Proficient (Pf)

people don't like him because he talks a lot. Here, he is contradicting himself as he has lost himself in the obsession of his ambition. He knew that he was not selling the products anymore, but he was selling himself, though he did not want to face this as he still had hope that he will somehow become like the mythical great businessman that died successful and well-liked at the age of eighty-four. When he sees Ben, his dead brother, he talks to him and continually asks him how he became so successful. Ben became so rich merely of luck, and tells Willy that he walked into the jungle of Africa and he came out rich. The questioning of Ben in this way tells us that Willy knew he was not successful, but he was not about to give up the American Dream. He knew that he had gotten nowhere in life and that he would not leave anything for his sons after he died, except the American Dream that he expected them to take on for him. This is when Willy becomes obsessed with seeds. The seeds represent the success or failure of Willy. After his sons desert him in Frank's Chop House, he rushes to buy seeds and says that he has nothing planted in the ground. This means that he has not planted anything for his family and nothing has come out of his wrong ambitions. Eventually, after talking to Ben, he is convinced that the only way for him to leave anything for his family is to die and gain the insurance money. This is the symbolic diamond that Ben constantly talks about: the money from the insurance after his death.

Biff Loman at thirty-four years old was the eldest of Willy Loman's two sons. He was the one who Willy put all his trust into. He wanted Biff to follow in his footsteps and reach the American Dream that he could not reach himself. During Biff's youth, his father was the only source of confidence for him. Willy's ambitions led him to raise his son in the wrong way. He praised his son and encouraged him even when he had done something wrong and made a mistake that should have been fixed. He continually taught his son that nothing was more

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Example Scored Proficient (Pf)

important than being “well-liked” and knowing how to sell. Willy’s constant pressures on Biff lead Biff to become confused about himself as he grew and to become angry with his father. He knew where his own ambitions were, out in the west where he worked on a farm, but he did not believe it would cause him to be successful, and that was what his father wanted. He did not understand why he should follow his father’s wrong ambitions about becoming successful when he had his own ambitions that could bring him success on his own. His father continuously upset him by telling him that he was of no use because he had not been successful at a job yet at the age of thirty-four years old. Even so, Willy still had hope for Biff. “Biff’s a lazy bum,” he tells his wife, Linda. A couple minutes later he says, “No, Biff, he’s not lazy.” Willy’s ambitions that he had set for Biff, to make lots of money and become well-liked by following the American Dream, caused him to lose Biff as Biff decided to break out of his father’s caged dream and follow his own ambitions. At the climax of the play, Biff fought with his father and told him, “I’m a dime a dozen and so are you.” He also brought out the rubber hose that his father used to attempt to commit suicide a few times. This shows us that Biff was the one who was most hurt from Willy’s actions and he was the only one who faced him with this and decided to leave on his own. The impact of Willy’s ambitions on Biff led Willy to lose his relationship with his son.

Linda Loman, Willy’s loving wife, was another character who went through a lot of emotional turmoil by sticking by Willy through his extreme ups and downs as he obsessed over the American Dream and being a successful seller. She knew the truth about him, yet she did not face him with this as she did not want to hurt him. Willy’s extreme ambition to reach the American Dream caused Linda to live a lie with Willy that led him to his death. She constantly told him that he was liked by everyone and that he was a great man, though she believed that

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he was headed in the wrong direction. She knew that if he were to leave his ambitions, he would die, and she did not want that. This caused a lot of pressure for her, but she did not let this show to her husband. She told her sons that Willy did all he did for them and that they were disappointing him by not helping him and doing as he wants. She tells them that they are killing him. She foreshadows Willy's death when she tells her sons of the rubber hose that she tried to get rid of once and again, but always failed and returned it to its place behind the furnace before Willy came home. Willy's extreme obsession with his ambitions lead Linda to do anything she can to keep him from committing suicide, even if it meant emotionally hurting herself and her sons.

Willy Loman held onto the American Dream too strongly and took it to extremes only to find that the only way to gain it at the end was to die. He lost a lot in the process and ruined relationships within his family. Willy teaches us that taking our ambitions too far and becoming obsessed with them doesn't necessarily mean they are the right ambitions for us and following them to extreme levels could mean ruining ourselves, our relationships, and our lives.

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EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Thought and Understanding (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are thoughtful and considered, demonstrating a competent comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are revealing and sensible. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Pf</p>	<p>Opening with the thoughtful and considered idea that “One’s ambitions taken to extremes and obsession could lead to emotionally hurting oneself and others around him” (3), the student is able to demonstrate a competent comprehension of the literary text and the topic by applying this idea to <i>Death of a Salesman</i>. Focusing on “the mythical American Dream” (3), the student seeks to discuss the considered idea that “Not everyone reached it though” (3) by explaining how Willy “ended up hurting himself; his eldest son, Biff; and his wife, Linda”. (3)</p> <p>In explaining the negative impact of ambition on self, the student offers the thoughtful understanding that Willy “believed” (3) he was a successful salesman who “lied to himself” (3) but “deep down he knew the truth and even admit it at one point” (3), resulting in the revealing literary interpretation that Willy “became obsessed with American Dream to the point that he lost himself in it and lost all sense of reality” (3). In addition, the student explains Willy “knew that he was not selling the products anymore, but he was selling himself, though he did not want to face this as he still had hope”(4) of attaining his ambition. Acknowledging Willy’s self-perceived monetary failure, the student offers the considered ideas that Willy had nothing to leave his sons “except the American Dream that he expected them to take on for him” (4) and “nothing has come out of his wrong ambitions”(4).</p> <p>To address the negative impact Willy’s “obsession” (4) with his personal ambition had on others, the student examines Biff and Linda. The student offers the sensible literary interpretation that Willy wanted Biff to “follow in his footsteps and reach the American Dream” (4) because Willy himself was incapable of achieving that desired ambition. Furthering this interpretation, the student acknowledges that although Biff “knew where his own ambitions were” (5), he was incapable of pursuing them because they were not consistent with Willy’s beliefs. The understanding that Biff is the one “most hurt” (5) by Willy’s ambition but also is the “only one who faced him” (5) completes the analysis of Biff on a revealing note. Explaining that Linda “knew the truth about” (5) Willy but “did not want to hurt him” (5) leads to the revealing and sensible interpretation that “Willy’s extreme obsession with his ambitions lead Linda to do anything she can to keep him from committing suicide” (6), including hurting herself and her sons, because her ambition is to keep Willy alive.</p> <p>The student concludes with the considered idea that “taking our ambitions too far and becoming obsessed with them doesn’t necessarily mean they are the right ambitions” (6) and could lead to tragic ruin.</p>

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EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Supporting Evidence (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is specific and well chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in a persuasive way. • A sound connection to the student’s ideas is capably maintained. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Pf</p>	<p>Throughout this essay, the choice of specific support from the play reinforces the student’s ideas in a persuasive way. To address the idea of Willy’s lack of success as a salesman in “New England” (3) and his resultant need to perpetuate the lie he constructed “for himself and his family to live on” (3), the student notes how in a memory Willy “comes home and tells his sons that he sold much that week and that everyone smiled at him and liked him in the towns he travelled to” (3).</p> <p>In considering how the playwright employs literary techniques, such as irony and symbolism, a sound connection to the student’s ideas is capably maintained through numerous references to the text. The student’s paraphrase of Willy’s question “Why does everyone contradict me around here?” (3) is well chosen to reinforce the student’s idea in a persuasive way: “This is verbal irony as Willy was the one who contradicted himself yet and yet again”(3). The student also demonstrates this strength with specific supporting evidence when discussing both Willy’s legacy: “the symbolic diamond that Ben constantly talks about: the money from the insurance after his death” (4), and in explaining Biff’s rejection of his father’s beliefs: “Biff decided to break out of his father’s caged dream and follow his own ambitions” (5).</p> <p>In the analysis of Linda, specific supporting evidence focuses on explaining her awareness of Willy’s situation that “caused Linda to live a lie” (5) because she was fearful “that if he were to leave his ambitions, he would die” (6). Details about “the rubber hose” (6) and “its place behind the furnace” (6) capably maintain a sound connection to the student’s ideas about how Linda endures “emotional turmoil by sticking by Willy through his extreme ups and downs as he obsessed over the American Dream” (5), and thus fundamentally is willing to risk everything in a vain attempt to save Willy from himself.</p>

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EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Form and Structure (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A purposeful arrangement of ideas and details contributes to a controlled discussion that is developed capably. • The unifying effect or controlling idea is coherently sustained and presented. 	<p>The student offers a purposeful arrangement of ideas and details, through a deductive approach, involving Willy “hurting himself; his eldest son, Biff; and his wife, Linda” (3). In this character-driven essay, the decision to examine the characters in this order, despite the original intention on the Planning page (2), allows the student to capably develop a controlled discussion focused on the inherent dangers of “the mythical American Dream” (3) and how “Not everyone” (3) is destined to nor capable of reaching it. In discussing Willy, the student provides essential characterization to advance the discussion of Willy’s particular obsession with the “American Dream” (3). Including Ben, who “became so rich merely of luck” (4), as a contrast to Willy expands the analysis of his “success or failure” (4).</p> <p>While the first body paragraph establishes the student’s central argument about taking the American Dream “to extremes” (3), there is an implicit transition to the paragraph on Biff that results in a coherently sustained unifying effect. In discussing Biff, the student examines the emotional impact as a consequence of “Willy’s constant pressures” (5) that “lead Biff to become confused about himself as he grew” (5), and later caused Biff “to become angry with his father” (5). The student completes this analysis with the abrupt yet logical statement: “The impact of Willy’s ambitions on Biff led Willy to lose his relationship with his son” (5).</p> <p>Progressing to the discussion of Linda, “Willy’s loving wife” (5), the essay’s structure deviates slightly but the unifying effect remains coherently presented. The student draws on details about Linda that have been presented in the previous two paragraphs to enter a discussion about the effects of Willy’s “extreme ambition to reach the American Dream” (5) on Linda. Focusing on Linda’s choice “to live a lie with Willy” (5) rather than face the increasing possibility of losing him to “suicide” (6) demonstrates a purposeful arrangement of ideas and details.</p> <p>By considering Willy’s mistakes with his obsessive ambition as a cathartic lesson for humanity to avoid, for risk of “ruining ourselves, our relationships, and our lives” (6), the student demonstrates the overall purposeful arrangement of a controlled and capably developed discussion.</p>

Pf

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EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Matters of Choice (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diction is specific. • Syntactic structures are generally effective. • Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a considered composition with a capable voice. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Pf</p>	<p>The student frequently chooses specific diction as is evident in phrases like “yearned for” (3), and “he had made more money than he essentially did” (3), and “mythical great businessman” (4), and “Willy becomes obsessed with seeds” (4), and “his father was the only source of confidence for him” (4) to effectively communicate ideas.</p> <p>Syntactical structures are generally effective, as demonstrated in: “Everyone worked towards it and whoever reached it was respected by all” (3), and “Here, he is contradicting himself as he has lost himself in the obsession of his ambition” (4), and “He knew where his own ambitions were, out in the west where he worked on a farm, but he did not believe it would cause him to be successful, and that was what his father wanted” (5). Parallelism, as seen in “he lost himself in it and lost all sense of reality” (3), also contributes to the capable voice.</p> <p>Despite occasional unevenness in usage, that includes interjecting informal language as seen in “went through a lot of emotional turmoil by sticking by Willy” (5) and “this caused a lot of pressure for her, but she did not let this show to her husband” (6), the overall effect is of stylistic choices that contribute to the creation of a considered composition with a capable voice. For example: “He built a lie for himself and his family to live on as he did not want to believe that he failed to follow his ambition in the correct way” (3) and “The questioning of Ben in this way tells us that Willy knew he was not successful, but he was not about to give up the American Dream” (4).</p>

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Matters of Correctness (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This writing demonstrates competence in control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. • Minor errors in complex language structures are understandable considering the circumstances. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Pf</p>	<p>In terms of total effect, the student demonstrates competence in control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics, as is evident in: “Some people did not try, others tired and could not reach it, and yet others took it to extremes” (3), and “At the beginning of the play, while he was talking to his wife Linda, he said, ‘Why does everyone contradict me around here?’”(3), and “Eventually, after talking to Ben, he is convinced that the only way for him to leave anything for his family is to die and gain the insurance money” (4), and “He continually taught his son that nothing was more important than being ‘well-liked’ and knowing how to sell”(4, 5), and “She constantly told him that he was liked by everyone and that he was a great man, though she believed that he was headed in the wrong direction”(5, 6).</p> <p>As indicated in the gray box, markers are reminded to <i>consider the proportion of error in terms of complexity and length of the response</i>. Given the thoughtfulness of the student’s ideas juxtaposed with the revealing and sensible literary interpretations, and in the context of first draft writing in exam conditions, minor errors in usage, punctuation, verb tense, or sentence construction in terms of missing words, are understandable.</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent (E)

Literary Text and
Text Creator

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by
Ken Kesey

Note: Write the title of your chosen literary text on the back cover of this examination booklet.

Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text
Suggested time: 10 to 15 minutes

Briefly explore your reasons for selecting the literary text as support for your response. Markers will consider the information you provide here when considering the effectiveness of your supporting evidence.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest is a book
that explores the idea of how one individual
can impact many others. McMurphy's strong sense of
ambition affects every last patient in the hospital.
He shows a desire to overthrow Nurse Ratched's
matrarchy.

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent (E)

Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text

The novel is perfect for this essay

Example Scored Excellent (E)

Striving Towards Ambitions

The ambitions and goals that an individual develops through life, are the very factors that play an important role in shaping their identity and character. In fact, these same factors have the potential to influence the minds and behaviors of many other individuals. In Ken Kesey's novel, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, the character of R.P. McMurphy is depicted as being a rowdy and carefree man who eventually becomes a symbol of resilience and determination in the mental hospital that the novel takes place in. This novel demonstrates how an individual can start off with an insignificant and meaningless purpose, but then become so altered by the environment that they are placed in that they establish ambitions and aspirations that radically impact both themselves and others around them.

McMurphy's initial view of the mental hospital that he is admitted into, is to see it as a new opportunity to take control and become the "bull goose loony" or "top dog" of the place. This desire of his is seen almost immediately when he enters the ward of the hospital and exhibits an arrogant and egotistical presence. Chief Bromden describes McMurphy to be different from all the other patients and his assumption proves to be true as the novel continues. Although McMurphy jokes around and tries to make the patients laugh, he is unsuccessful and notices that "there's something strange about a place where men won't let loose and laugh". When McMurphy begins to ask the other patients to point him to the leader of their group, it becomes clear that McMurphy has a strong ambition to be in control of what ever environment he is placed in. During one of the meetings with Nurse Ratched and the other patients, McMurphy observes the manipulative ways of the nurse and how she seems to instigate the other

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Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent (E)

patients into turning against one another. When the meeting comes to a close, McMurphy points this observation out to the other patients. He describes them all as a "pecking party", and mentions how the nurse uses carefully calculated moves to turn everyone against each other and then uses her authority to make every last individual in the ward feel like less of a man. McMurphy decides that "the nurse ain't some kinda monster" but that rather, she is a "ball-cutter" who emasculates the men in the ward in order to keep a strong hold on all the patients. With this new found knowledge, McMurphy makes a bet that he can make the nurse loose her cool composure in one week. By making this bet, the readers are shown yet another ambition of McMurphy's: the desire to create chaos. McMurphy begins by asking for simple things, such as toothpaste in the washroom and lowering the music in the dayroom; however, by asking for these, McMurphy slowly begins to fracture the hard self-control that the nurse possesses. Eventually, he is able to get the tub room open as a game room with the help of Dr. Spivey. These small victories that are accomplished by McMurphy, create a sense of hope and optimism in the other patients. The patients begin to ask for things themselves, something they would not have dared to do before McMurphy arrived at the ward. Unfortunately, when McMurphy requests that the schedule be changed so that the patients could watch the World Series on the television, no other patient has the courage to stand up to the nurse and support McMurphy. To help the other patients realize their cowardice, McMurphy bets the other patients that he can lift the control panel in the tub room. Knowing that it is impossible, McMurphy still attempts this feat. When he fails, he tells the other patients that "at least [he] tried". These simple words evoke a sense of shame within all the patients and they realize that, without trying, they will never know if they can make a difference. In the next meeting, the patients decide to take a stand against the nurse, and they vote to watch the World Series. At seeing the number of hands, the nurse is stunned and

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Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent (E)

thus makes the excuse that the Chronics have not voted and that it is a tie. Even when the Chief votes, she does not count his vote. This part of the novel, shows how the nurse is beginning to fear the overthrow of her power and she begins to see McMurphy as an actual threat to her authority. Also, it shows how McMurphy is slowly restoring confidence into the patients. When the time comes for the World Series, and the nurse does not put it on, McMurphy has all the patients sit down in front of a blank television screen and pretend to be watching the game. This act finally sets off the nurse, and all of the patients in the ward witness the calmness and poise of the nurse disappear for the first time. McMurphy's ambition to create disarray, in a place of perfect order, is finally complete. He creates the turmoil that he had set out to create, and he finds pleasure in this. However, his desire to create havoc soon vanishes, and he begins to develop another, more significant ambition.

McMurphy quickly goes from being a disorderly individual, to a man who matures and develops an ambition to create an actual and meaningful change in the ward. When the patients go for a swim, and McMurphy learns that he is committed in the hospital and cannot leave until the nurse says that he can, he becomes despaired and withdraws from the rest of the patients in an attempt to lessen the time that he will be required to stay in there. However, when Cheswick commits suicide, McMurphy is given a wake up call. He learns that, even though the rest of the patients are voluntary, they cannot leave the hospital because they have become so emasculated and dependant, that they do not have the courage to leave. It is at this point that McMurphy's ambitions change. He realizes that, in order to help the others in the ward, he will have to risk lengthening his stay at the hospital. Even with this threat hanging in the air, McMurphy does not hesitate to help the patients realize their true potential. McMurphy first sets out to prove to the other patients that Nurse Ratched is just another human, and that she too can be broken. By

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Example Scored Excellent (E)

continuously breaking the nurse's window to her station, McMurphy is symbolically breaking the nurse's authority and control. This act helps to strengthen the men into thinking that they are strong enough to stand up to the power of the nurse. McMurphy also decides to help Chief Bromden realize his true potential. In his own eyes, the Chief views himself as small and irrelevant. In truth, the Chief is a tall and wide man, stronger than almost any man that McMurphy has ever encountered. The Chief believes in a "Combine", a group of people who control all others. He believes that the Combine puts people that are "defective", like himself, into places like the hospital so that they can become "fixed". Also, the Chief believes in a fog that covers all of the patients. This fog is a retreat for the Chief, although he is the only one that can see it. With the arrival of McMurphy, the fog seems to slowly disappear and the Chief can see more clearly. McMurphy promises the Chief that he will help him to feel "big" again, so that he can one day lift the heavy control panel in the tub room. When McMurphy is finally given an accompanied leave from the hospital, to take the patients fishing, he views this as an opportunity to re-emasculate the men of the ward. On the trip, McMurphy shows the men how they can use their mental disabilities against others, like the man at the gas pump. When the men stand up to the man at the gas pump, they feel as if they are not cowards like they were in the hospital. Nonetheless, the patients seem to be unable to stand up the men at the dock that are hollering at Candy. Out at sea, McMurphy does not help the men when they yell for his assistance at catching the fish, so when the patients single-handedly catch large fish out at sea, they feel like true men. Back at the hospital, McMurphy continues to help the patients regain their courage and hope. During one night, McMurphy sneaks two girls into the ward by bribing the watchman. That night, all of the patients drink and enjoy themselves without the threat of the nurse to loom over them. To help Billy Bibbit feel more like a man, McMurphy puts him into a room with

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Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent (E)

Candy so that she can take his virginity. Although having intentions to leave that night, McMurphy ends up sleeping too late and wakes up the next morning to complete and utter chaos. The Nurse, having seen Billy in bed with a woman, threatens to tell his mother about it. Billy, who is still babied by his mother, cannot take the thought of her finding out. Fearing the disappointment of facing his mother, Billy takes his life. At this point, McMurphy has the chance to escape the hospital, but he does not take it because he feels anger towards the nurse for causing the death of one of his friends. McMurphy, disregarding the possible consequences of his actions, attacks the nurse. Ripping open her shirt, all of the men are able to clearly see just how human the nurse really is. They see clearly for the first time, that the nurse is just another human being, and that she cannot truly control them.

McMurphy is absent for weeks when he is sent up to another ward to be punished for his actions, but the impact of his presence is not forgotten. Having their confidence restored, and feeling less feeble, many of the patients leave the ward and venture out into the real world. The patients who do stay, have seen the truth behind the nurse and so they no longer view her as an actual threat. Nurse Ratched becomes powerless against the other patients, and her authority is never regained. The Chief notices how there is "no more fog anyplace" and that everything is so much more vivid and real. When McMurphy returns to the ward, he is in a vegetable state after having lobotomy preformed on his brain. Chief Bromden cannot stand to see McMurphy in this condition and he realizes that McMurphy would not want to remain as "an example of what can happen if you buck the system". To put McMurphy out of his misery, the Chief takes McMurphy's life. With the help of McMurphy, the Chief feels as if he is "big" again, and so he has the power needed to lift the control panel and make his escape into the world.

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Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent (E)

McMurphy stands as an example of how an individual's ambitions and goals can impact those around them to make changes to themselves. Although someone can start out being naive, and wish for things that are insignificant, if they are placed into a new environment, their ambitions can change and therefore impact others around them. When an individual strives to make a change in a place, they create lasting impressions on other people as well.

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Thought and Understanding (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas are insightful and carefully considered, demonstrating a comprehension of subtle distinctions in the literary text(s) and the topic. • Literary interpretations are perceptive and illuminating. 	<p>On the Initial Planning page, the student identifies that “McMurphy’s strong sense of ambition affects every last patient in the hospital. He shows a desire to overthrow Nurse Ratched’s matriarchy” (1). This premise forms the basis for the opening statement that, for individuals, ambitions “are the very factors that play an important role in shaping their identity and character” (3). The student shapes the topic and establishes the insightful and carefully considered idea that “these same factors have the potential to influence the minds and behaviors of many other individuals” (3). This over-arching idea is connected to a perceptive and illuminating analysis of R.P. McMurphy “who eventually becomes a symbol of resilience and determination” (3) and “stands as an example of how an individual’s ambitions and goals can impact those around them to make changes to themselves” (8).</p> <p>The student initially establishes a carefully considered link between the essay’s thesis and McMurphy by identifying his desire “to take control” (3) and his inherently “strong ambition to be in control of whatever environment he is placed in” (3). This ambition is further fuelled as he observes “the manipulative ways of the nurse” (3) and his conclusion that she “uses carefully calculated moves to turn everyone against each other” (4). The student’s perceptive interpretation of McMurphy is enhanced by recognizing how he “begins to develop another, more significant ambition” (5) as he moves from desiring control and needing to “create chaos” (4) to helping “the patients realize their true potential” (5).</p> <p>The student’s discussion of McMurphy’s evolving ambition gains nuance and depth through the parallel and ongoing discussion of Chief Bromden. As a result of McMurphy’s decision to help the Chief “realize his true potential” (6), the Chief “feels as if he is ‘big’ again, and so he has the power needed to lift the control panel and make his escape into the world” (7). This growth is effectively contrasted with the student’s observation that the patients who choose to remain in the hospital also “have seen the truth behind the nurse” (7), leaving her “powerless against the other patients, and her authority is never regained” (7). The student’s demonstrated ability to consider the evolving and shifting dynamic between characters, and McMurphy’s role in effecting needed change, demonstrates an awareness of subtle distinctions in the literary text and topic.</p>

E

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Supporting Evidence (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is precise, and astutely chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in a convincing way. • A valid connection to the student’s ideas is efficiently maintained. 	<p>Utilizing a combination of effective paraphrasing of events with astutely chosen precise details, the student embeds supporting evidence into the analysis to reinforce the ideas in a convincing way. For example: “Although McMurphy jokes around and tries to make the patients laugh, he is unsuccessful and notices that ‘there’s something strange about a place where men won’t let loose and laugh’” (3), and “McMurphy decides that ‘the nurse ain’t some kinda monster’ but that rather, she is a ‘ball-cutter’ who emasculates the men in to ward in order to keep a strong hold on all the patients” (4), and “Out at sea, McMurphy does not help the men when they yell for his assistance at catching the fish, so when the patients single-handedly catch large fish out at sea, they feel like true men” (6).</p> <p>Throughout the essay, the student weaves together thought and understanding with supporting evidence to create a valid connection that is efficiently maintained and integrated. For example: “Unfortunately, when McMurphy requests that the schedule be changed so that patients could watch the World Series on the television, no other patient has the courage to stand up to the nurse and support McMurphy. To help the other patients realize their cowardice, McMurphy bets the other patients that he can lift the control panel in the tub room. Knowing that it is impossible, McMurphy still attempts this feat” (4) and “By continuously breaking the nurse’s window to her station, McMurphy is symbolically breaking the nurse’s authority and control” (5, 6).</p> <p>This essay features astutely chosen details that in less able hands often degenerates into plot summary, but in this case, the student forges direct and meaningful connections between precise support and the thematic ideas being explored. For example, after explaining McMurphy’s bet with the men, the student efficiently maintains a valid connection to the central ideas by suggesting that “By making this bet, the readers are shown yet another ambition of McMurphy’s: the desire to create chaos” (4), and when McMurphy says “‘at least I tried’” (4) after failing to lift the control panel, the student observes: “These simple words evoke a sense of shame within all the patients” (4).</p> <p>Moreover, the student’s discussion of details relating to multiple characters, such as how “Chief Bromden cannot stand to see McMurphy in this condition and he realizes that McMurphy would not want to remain as ‘an example of what can happen if you buck the system’” (7), reinforce the student’s ideas in a convincing way.</p>

E

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Form and Structure (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A judicious arrangement of ideas and details contributes to a fluent discussion that is developed skillfully. • The unifying effect or controlling idea is effectively sustained and integrated. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 20px;">E</p>	<p>The student effectively establishes a fluent and skillfully developed discussion with the central focus on R.P. McMurphy who demonstrates how “an individual can start off with an insignificant and meaningless purpose, but then become so altered by the environment that they are placed in that they establish ambitions and aspirations that radically impact both themselves and others around them” (3). Utilizing a simple chronological ordering of events, the student judiciously arranges ideas and details in order to sustain and integrate the thesis through an analysis of the evolution of McMurphy’s character. McMurphy begins as someone who first “exhibits an arrogant and egotistical presence” (3) upon arrival at the hospital who undergoes a significant change “from being a disorderly individual, to a man who matures and develops an ambition to create an actual and meaningful change in the ward” (5).</p> <p>In addition to illustrating McMurphy’s character change, the student also sustains and integrates a parallel discussion of Chief Bromden, who initially describes “McMurphy to be different from all the other patients” (3). Bromden’s belief “in a fog that covers all of the patients” (6) is dissipated because of McMurphy’s ambition. As a result of McMurphy “disregarding the possible consequences” (7) and attacking the nurse, “The Chief notices how there is ‘no more fog anyplace’ and that everything is so much more vivid and real” (7). The student’s ability to integrate parallel discussions of McMurphy and Bromden, culminating in the realization that “When an individual strives to make a change in a place, they create lasting impressions on other people as well” (8), results in a unifying effect that is effectively sustained and integrated.</p>

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Matters of Choice (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diction is precise. • Syntactic structures are effective and sometimes polished. • Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a skillful composition with a convincing voice. 	<p>Although the overall tone may be described as somewhat matter-of-fact, the student utilizes precise diction throughout the essay. McMurphy is variously characterized as “a symbol of resilience and determination” (3), exhibiting “an arrogant and egotistical presence” (3) who accomplishes “small victories” (4) in his “ambition to create disarray, in a place of perfect order” (5). By contrast, the student describes Nurse Ratched as having “manipulative ways” (3) and “carefully calculated moves” (4) while she “emasculates the men in the ward” (4) without losing her “cool composure” (4).</p> <p>Syntactic structures are effective and sometimes polished. The student is confident in the use of inversion and participial construction: “To help the other patients realize their cowardice, McMurphy bets the other patients that he can lift the control panel in the tub room. Knowing that it is impossible, McMurphy still attempts this feat” (4) and “At seeing the number of hands, the nurse is stunned and thus makes the excuse that the Chronics have not voted and that it is a tie. Even when the Chief votes, she does not count his vote” (4, 5).</p> <p>In addition to the polished choices in syntactic structures, the student skillfully maintains fluency through paraphrase and analysis: “With this new found knowledge, McMurphy makes a bet that he can make the nurse lose her cool composure in one week. By making this bet, the readers are shown yet another ambition of McMurphy’s: the desire to create chaos. McMurphy begins by asking for simple things, such as toothpaste in the washroom and lowering the music in the dayroom; however, by asking for these, McMurphy slowly begins to fracture the hard self-control that the nurse possesses” (4). By employing such variety, the student is able to guide the reader through the analysis, resulting in the creation of a skillful composition with a convincing voice.</p>

E

**English Language Arts 30–1, January 2012
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Matters of Correctness (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This writing demonstrates confidence in control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. • The relative absence of error is impressive considering the complexity of the response and the circumstances. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">E</p>	<p>The student demonstrates confidence in control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar and mechanics. For example: “During one of the meetings with Nurse Ratched and the other patients, McMurphy observes the manipulative ways of the nurse and how she seems to instigate the other patients into turning against one another” (3, 4), and “When the time comes for the World Series, and the nurse does not put it on, McMurphy has all the patients sit down in front of a blank television screen and pretend to be watching the game” (5), and “At this point, McMurphy has the chance to escape the hospital, but he does not take it because he feels anger towards the nurse for causing the death of one of his friends” (7).</p> <p>Minor errors, such as “loose” (4), “becomes despaired” (5) and “re-emasculate” (6) do not detract from the quality of the essay nor the ability to read it with ease. Hence, the relative absence of error is impressive considering the complexity of the response and the circumstances.</p>

Scoring Categories and Criteria

Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2011–2012 Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Because students' responses to the *Personal Response to Texts Assignment* vary widely—from philosophical discussions to personal narratives to creative approaches—assessment of the *Personal Response to Texts Assignment* on the diploma examination will be in the context of Louise Rosenblatt's suggestion:

...the evaluation of the answers would be in terms of the amount of evidence that the youngster has actually read something and thought about it, not a question of whether, necessarily, he has thought about it the way an adult would, or given an adult's "correct" answer.

Rosenblatt, Louise. "The Reader's Contribution in the Literary Experience: Interview with Louise Rosenblatt." By Lionel Wilson. *English Quarterly* 14, no.1 (Spring, 1981): 3–12.

Markers will also consider Grant P. Wiggins' suggestion that we should assess students' writing "with the tact of Socrates: tact to respect the student's ideas enough to enter them fully—even more fully than the thinker sometimes—and thus, the tact to accept apt but unanticipatable or unique responses."

Wiggins, Grant P. *Assessing Student Performance: Exploring the Purpose and Limits of Testing*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993, p. 40.

Ideas and Impressions (10% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 2.1 2.2 2.3 4.1

When marking **Ideas and Impressions**, the marker should consider the quality of

- the student's **exploration** of the topic
- the student's **ideas** and **reflection**
- **support** in relation to the student's ideas and impressions

Excellent

E

The student's exploration of the topic is insightful. Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and discerning. Support is precise and aptly reinforces the student's ideas and impressions.

Proficient

Pf

The student's exploration of the topic is purposeful. Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and considered. Support is specific and strengthens the student's ideas and impressions.

Satisfactory

S

The student's exploration of the topic is generalized. Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and relevant. Support is adequate and clarifies the student's ideas and impressions.

Limited

L

The student's exploration of the topic is vague. Perceptions and/or ideas are superficial and/or ambiguous. Support is imprecise and/or ineffectively related to the student's ideas and impressions.

Poor

P

The student's exploration of the topic is minimal. Perceptions and/or ideas are underdeveloped and/or irrelevant. Support is lacking and/or unrelated to the student's ideas and impressions.

Insufficient

INS

Insufficient is a special category. It is not an indicator of quality. Assign Insufficient when

- the student has responded using a form other than prose **OR**
- the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Ideas and Impressions **OR**
- there is no evidence that the topic presented in the assignment has been addressed **OR**
- there is no connection between the text(s) provided in the assignment and the student's response

**Scoring Categories and
Scoring Criteria for
2011–2012
Personal Response
to Texts Assignment
(continued)**

Presentation (10% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 3.1 3.2 4.1 4.2

When marking **Presentation**, the marker should consider the effectiveness of

- **voice** in relation to the context created by the student in the chosen prose form
- **stylistic choices** (including quality of language and expression) and the student’s creation of **tone**
- the student’s development of a **unifying effect**

Consider the proportion of error in terms of the complexity and length of the response.

Excellent

E

The voice created by the student is convincing. Stylistic choices are precise and the student’s creation of tone is adept. The unifying effect is skillfully developed.

Proficient

Pf

The voice created by the student is distinct. Stylistic choices are specific and the student’s creation of tone is competent. The unifying effect is capably developed.

Satisfactory

S

The voice created by the student is apparent. Stylistic choices are adequate and the student’s creation of tone is conventional. The unifying effect is appropriately developed.

Limited

L

The voice created by the student is indistinct. Stylistic choices are imprecise and the student’s creation of tone is inconsistent. The unifying effect is inadequately developed.

Poor

P

The voice created by the student is obscure. Stylistic choices impede communication and the student’s creation of tone is ineffective. A unifying effect is absent.

Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2011–2012 Critical / Analytical Response to Texts Assignment

Because students’ responses to the *Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment* vary widely—from philosophical discussions to personal narratives to creative approaches—assessment of the *Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment* on the diploma examination will be in the context of Louise Rosenblatt’s suggestion:

...the evaluation of the answers would be in terms of the amount of evidence that the youngster has actually read something and thought about it, not a question of whether, necessarily, he has thought about it the way an adult would, or given an adult’s “correct” answer.

Rosenblatt, Louise. “The Reader’s Contribution in the Literary Experience: Interview with Louise Rosenblatt.” By Lionel Wilson. *English Quarterly* 14, no.1 (Spring, 1981): 3–12.

Markers will also consider Grant P. Wiggins’ suggestion that we should assess students’ writing “with the tact of Socrates: tact to respect the student’s ideas enough to enter them fully—even more fully than the thinker sometimes—and thus, the tact to accept apt but unanticipated or unique responses.”

Wiggins, Grant P. *Assessing Student Performance: Exploring the Purpose and Limits of Testing*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993, p. 40.

Thought and Understanding (7.5% of total examination mark)
 Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 2.1 2.2 4.1 4.2

When marking **Thought and Understanding**, the marker should consider

- how effectively the student’s **ideas** relate to the assignment
- the quality of the **literary interpretations and understanding**

Excellent

E

Ideas are insightful and carefully considered, demonstrating a comprehension of subtle distinctions in the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are perceptive and illuminating.

Proficient

Pf

Ideas are thoughtful and considered, demonstrating a competent comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are revealing and sensible.

Satisfactory

S

Ideas are relevant and straightforward, demonstrating a generalized comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are general but plausible.

Limited

L

Ideas are superficial or oversimplified, demonstrating a weak comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are incomplete and/or literal.

Poor

P

Ideas are largely absent or irrelevant, and/or do not develop the topic. Little comprehension of the literary text(s) is demonstrated.

Insufficient

INS

Insufficient is a special category. It is not an indicator of quality. Assign Insufficient when

- the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Thought and Understanding and/or Supporting Evidence **OR**
- no reference has been made to literature studied **OR**
- the only literary reference present is to the text(s) provided in the first assignment **OR**
- there is no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the task presented in the assignment

Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2011–2012 Critical / Analytical Response to Texts Assignment (continued)

Supporting Evidence (7.5% of total examination mark)
 Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 2.3 3.2 4.1 4.2

When marking **Supporting Evidence**, the marker should consider

- the **selection** and **quality** of evidence
- how well the supporting evidence is **employed, developed, and synthesized** to support the student’s ideas

Consider ideas presented in the *Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text(s)*.

Excellent
E Support is precise and astutely chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in a convincing way. A valid connection to the student’s ideas is efficiently maintained.

Proficient
Pf Support is specific and well chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in a persuasive way. A sound connection to the student’s ideas is capably maintained.

Satisfactory
S Support is general, adequate, and appropriately chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in an acceptable way but occasionally may lack persuasiveness. A reasonable connection to the student’s ideas is suitably maintained.

Limited
L Support is inadequate, inaccurate, largely a restatement of what was read, and/or inappropriately chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas and thus lacks persuasiveness. A weak connection to the student’s ideas is maintained.

Poor
P Support is irrelevant, overgeneralized, lacks validity, and/or is absent. Little or no connection to the student’s ideas is evident.

Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2011–2012 Critical / Analytical Response to Texts Assignment (continued)

Form and Structure (5% of total examination mark)
 Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 2.2 3.1 4.1 4.2

When marking **Form and Structure**, the marker should consider how effectively the student’s organizational choices result in

- a **coherent, focused, and shaped** arrangement and discussion in response to the assignment
- a **unifying effect** or a **controlling idea** that is developed and maintained

Excellent
E A judicious arrangement of ideas and details contributes to a fluent discussion that is developed skillfully. The unifying effect or controlling idea is effectively sustained and integrated.

Proficient
Pf A purposeful arrangement of ideas and details contributes to a controlled discussion that is developed capably. The unifying effect or controlling idea is coherently sustained and presented.

Satisfactory
S A straightforward arrangement of ideas and details provides direction for the discussion that is developed appropriately. The unifying effect or controlling idea is presented and maintained generally; however, coherence may falter.

Limited
L A discernible but ineffectual arrangement of ideas and details provides some direction for the discussion that is underdeveloped. A unifying effect or controlling idea is inconsistently maintained.

Poor
P A haphazard arrangement of ideas and details provides little or no direction for the discussion, and development is lacking or obscure. A unifying effect or controlling idea is absent.

**Scoring Categories and
Scoring Criteria for
2011–2012
Critical / Analytical
Response to
Texts Assignment
(continued)**

Matters of Choice (5% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for
Senior High School English Language Arts* 4.2

When marking **Matters of Choice**, the marker should consider how effectively the student’s choices enhance communication. The marker should consider

- **diction**
- choices of **syntactic structures** (such as parallelism, balance, inversion)
- the extent to which **stylistic choices** contribute to the creation of **voice**

Excellent

E

Diction is precise. Syntactic structures are effective and sometimes polished. Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a skillful composition with a convincing voice.

Proficient

Pf

Diction is specific. Syntactic structures are generally effective. Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a considered composition with a capable voice

Satisfactory

S

Diction is adequate. Syntactic structures are straightforward, but attempts at complex structures may be awkward. Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a conventional composition with an appropriate voice.

Limited

L

Diction is imprecise and/or inappropriate. Syntactic structures are frequently awkward or ambiguous. Inadequate language choices contribute to the creation of a vague composition with an undiscerning voice.

Poor

P

Diction is overgeneralized and/or inaccurate. Syntactic structures are uncontrolled or unintelligible. A lack of language choices contributes to the creation of a confused composition with an ineffective voice.

Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2011–2012 Critical / Analytical Response to Texts Assignment (continued)

Matters of Correctness (5% of total examination mark)
Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 4.2

When marking **Matters of Correctness**, the marker should consider the correctness of

- **sentence construction** (completeness, consistency, subordination, coordination, predication)
- **usage** (accurate use of words according to convention and meaning)
- **grammar** (subject-verb/pronoun-antecedent agreement, pronoun reference, consistency of tense)
- **mechanics** (punctuation, spelling, capitalization)

Consider the proportion of error in terms of the complexity and length of the response.

Excellent

E

This writing demonstrates confidence in control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. The relative absence of error is impressive considering the complexity of the response and the circumstances.

Proficient

Pf

This writing demonstrates competence in control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. Minor errors in complex language structures are understandable considering the circumstances.

Satisfactory

S

This writing demonstrates control of the basics of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. There may be occasional lapses in control and minor errors; however, the communication remains clear.

Limited

L

This writing demonstrates faltering control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. The range of errors blurs the clarity of communication.

Poor

P

This writing demonstrates lack of control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. Jarring errors impair communication.

