

GRADE 6 WRITING STANDARD 2.4 -- RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

VOCABULARY WORDS TO OWN: text commentary claim premise image conflict example metaphor simile personification symbol purpose focus audience topic

WHAT IS IT?

- Your purpose is to interpret a literary work with *careful reading* and *insightful* understanding.
- All your ideas should be supported with examples from the literary work and perhaps from life.

MAIN FEATURES: A good writer will...

1. Pose Several Insightful Ideas

- provide just enough background to set the stage for the reader
- take all ideas from the text

2. Support Each Idea

- offer several reasons to explain each idea, possibly discussing:
 - the conflicts the characters face
 - the results of the character's choices
 - the major lessons the characters learn
 - the meaning of any symbolism, imagery, or metaphor
- offer specific, carefully-chosen examples from the text or from real life to illustrate reasons or ideas
- use quotations, paraphrasing, or summary to show examples
- explain how these reasons, ideas and examples relate to the message

3. Create a Satisfying Conclusion

- if necessary, briefly summarize your main ideas
- explain how the author's message is true (or not) in real life and why
- discuss how real people can benefit from remembering these characters and this message

Use Transition Words To Show:

Time: later, finally
before, after
now, next, then

Cause/Effect:
because, since
so that, in order to
for this reason, so

Sequence:
now, since, during
before, while, after

Space: above,
across, before behind,
here, near, next to

Order of Importance:
first, last, mainly
most, more, to begin
with

Comparison: also
another, just as, like
similar, too, and

Contrast: although
however, in spite of
instead, still, yet, but, on
the other hand

REMEMBER TO:

Organize

- read the writing task carefully and cover all its parts
- focus the entire essay on your claims about author's message
- include an introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion
- offer several well-organized paragraphs
- present ideas in a logical sequence
- offer a good balance between examples and commentary

Communicate Clearly

- use precise verbs and nouns to paint a visual picture in the mind of the reader
- speak appropriately for the intended audience
- use a variety of sentence types and transitions for a smooth whole

Display Correctness

- display few, if any, errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, indentation and spelling

"The Emperor's New Clothes"

by Hans Christian Anderson

The Emperor's New Birthday Suit?

(GRADE 6 WRITING STANDARD 2.4 - RESPONSE TO LITERATURE)

GETTING READY TO WRITE

You have just read "The Emperor's New Clothes," a story written by Hans Christian Anderson. In this story, two swindlers play a trick on nearly everyone in the realm. If it weren't for a little child, they would have succeeded. How can this be?

TIME TO WRITE

Write an essay in which you present your understanding of the characters and the overall meaning of the story.

You may wish to use the questions below to help you craft your essay:

First, What kind of ruler is the Emperor? For example, is he just or unjust, generous or greedy, or honest or dishonest? What qualities does the Emperor show under pressure?

Secondly, how do the Emperor's personal qualities affect the plot, the other characters, and the outcome of the story? If he had been a different kind of Emperor, how might the plot and outcome have changed? If he had responded differently to pressure, how might the outcome have changed?

Finally, discuss the author's possible messages to you. Obviously, you will most likely not find yourself in the precise situation that the Emperor faces, but this does not mean that the story has no value to you as a reader and a person. What meaning do you think the author most hoped to convey to you, the reader?

Be sure to find specific quotations from the story that support your views; *specifically* what does the Emperor *do* and *say* that cause you to make this judgment of his character? Your goal is to convince the reader that your ideas are reasonable and valid given what you know about the Emperor's situation and his choices. Use the advance organizers on the next page(s) to help craft your essay.

PEER RESPONSE SHEET
RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

CHECK LIST:

EASY TO FIND? (CIRCLE YES OR NO)

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. | ENOUGH BACKGROUND TO ORIENT THE READER | YES | NO |
| 2. | CLEARLY DEFINED INTERPRETIVE THESIS | YES | NO |
| 3. | 3 OR MORE IDEAS TO SUPPORT THE THESIS | YES | NO |
| 4. | EACH IDEA IS ILLUSTRATED WITH EXAMPLE(S) | YES | NO |
| 5. | THE CONNECTION BETWEEN EACH IDEA AND ITS EXAMPLE(S) IS EXPLAINED | YES | NO |
| 6. | INTERESTING, LIVELY VOICE
YOU CLEARLY CARE ABOUT THE SUBJECT | YES | NO |

1. I THINK THE MAIN POINT OF YOUR PAPER IS:

2. THE WAY YOU DESCRIBE THIS PART HELPS ME TO SEE IT CLEARLY:

3. YOUR BEST PART IS WHEN YOU SAY:

BECAUSE _____

4. I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT:

BECAUSE _____

5. I AM CONFUSED ABOUT:

Scoring Guide for Grade 6 Standard 2.4 • RESPONSE TO LITERATURE • Purpose: To interpret an author's message through careful reading and insightful commentary

	4	3	2	1
Thesis	Poses several <i>insightful</i> ideas about the text. The writer's comprehensive understanding displays uncommon <i>depth</i> or <i>maturity</i> .	Poses several <i>clear</i> ideas about the message. The writer's understanding is <i>adequate</i> and <i>predictable</i> .	Poses at least one idea about the literary work. The writer's understanding is <i>limited</i> and <i>may lack accuracy</i> .	May pose an idea about the literary work, but the writer's understanding is <i>minimal, confused</i> , and <i>incomplete</i> .
Supporting Ideas	Offers just enough background for the essay to make sense to the reader. Gives several thoughtful reasons to explain each idea. Supports these reasons with specific, carefully-chosen examples from the text and possibly personal knowledge or experience. The argument is not oversimplified. Provides <i>thoughtful</i> commentary to connect the above ideas, reasons, and examples to each other and to the author's message.	Offers background information. Gives several <i>expected</i> reasons to explain each claim. Supports with important examples mixed with less important ones. Examples are more <i>general</i> and details are less well-chosen than in the score level 4. Commentary is lacking; connections between examples and ideas are too often left to the reader to understand. Overall, this writer needs to think more deeply about the author's message.	Explains the idea with <i>literal</i> reasons. Gives examples from the text, but these may be copied OR may be included without a clear purpose. May offer personal experience without connecting it to the text. Examples given may argue against the idea(s). Does not explain. The reader must guess why the writer has included the examples and how the ideas are related. This writer shows little awareness of the author's message beyond a basic, plot-based understanding.	The supporting reasons, if offered, are very <i>incomplete, unclear</i> , or <i>confusing</i> and may contain errors about the text. The writer may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retell or re-copy the text • merely list reasons or ideas • offer unrelated ideas • retell personal experience with little connection to the text • argue against the claim or ideas
Organization	Covers all parts of the writing task. Focuses on the main ideas throughout. Understands the purpose. Speaks to the topic. Shows awareness of the audience. Successfully includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a graceful introduction, well-made thesis, fully supported body, and satisfying conclusion • a logical sequence of ideas • effective balance between examples and the writer's explanation (commentary) • a conclusion which reaches beyond summary 	Covers all parts of the writing task. Mostly understands the purpose. Speaks to the topic. Shows awareness of the audience. Successfully includes an introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion, but sections may be out of balance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • important examples and/or events may be missing or need detail • (or) may give too much detail • (or) may let examples "speak for themselves" without connecting them to claims and message 	Covers only <i>parts</i> of the writing task. May understand the purpose but does not successfully achieve it. Speaks to the topic. May not show awareness of the audience. Organization is lax or too mechanical: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thesis may be missing • may seem more like an outline or advance organizer than an essay • if brief, may offer lists or summarize without enough detail • if long, may ramble on and on, lose focus, and include unimportant details • sequence may be illogical • may lack an ending or end hurriedly 	Covers only one part of the writing task. Shows no understanding of the purpose. May not speak to the topic. Shows no awareness of the audience. Shows no understanding of how to create an essay with a clear beginning, middle and end. Ideas are not well organized, or there is too little to organize.
Style	Immediately "hooks" the reader with vivid, descriptive language. Creates a pleasing whole with varied sentences and purposeful transitions.	Uses a variety of sentence types and <i>some</i> transitions but mostly commonplace language. Few surprises or delights for the reader.	Uses little sentence variety and elementary language.	Uses no sentence variety and little descriptive language.
Correctness	Contains few or no errors. Errors present do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writer's meaning.	Contains some errors which do not confuse the reader.	Contains several errors which may confuse the reader.	Contains serious errors which confuse the reader.

