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

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

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
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:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Scoring Guide for Grade 6 Standard 2.4</strong></th>
<th><strong>Purpose:</strong> To interpret an author’s message through careful reading and insightful commentary.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Responses:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis:</strong> Poses several insightful ideas about the text. The writer’s comprehensive understanding displays uncommon depth or maturity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting Ideas:</strong> 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Commentary:</strong> Offers thought-provoking commentary to connect the above ideas, reasons, and examples to each other and to the author's message.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organization:</strong> Covers all parts of the writing task. Focuses on the main ideas throughout. Understands the purpose, speaks to the topic, and shows awareness of the audience. Successfully includes: a graceful introduction, well-made thesis, fully supported body, and satisfying conclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Style:</strong> Immediately &quot;hooks&quot; the reader with vivid, descriptive language. Creates a pleasing whole with varied sentences and purposeful transitions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Correctness:</strong> Contains few or no errors. Errors present do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writer's meaning.</td>
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| **Thesis:** Poses several clear ideas about the message. The writer’s understanding is adequate and predictable. |
| **Supporting Ideas:** Provides thoughtful comments to connect ideas and explain the writer’s message. |
| **Commentary:** Thoroughly explores the author’s message, offering a deeper look into the theme and underlying messages. |
| **Organization:** Covers all parts of the writing task. Mostly understands the purpose, speaks to the topic, and shows awareness of the audience. Successfully includes an introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion, but sections may be out of balance: important examples and/or events may be missing...give too much detail...or may let examples "speak for themselves" without connecting them to claims and the message. |
| **Style:** Uses a variety of sentence types and some transitions but mostly commonplace language. Few surprises or delights for the reader. |
| **Correctness:** Contains some errors which do not confuse the reader. |

| **Thesis:** Poses at least one idea about the literary work. The writer's understanding is limited and may lack accuracy. |
| **Supporting Ideas:** Explains the idea with literal reasons. |
| **Commentary:** Provides thoughtful commentary to connect the above ideas, reasons, and examples to each other and to the author’s message. |
| **Organization:** Covers all parts 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: thesis may be missing; may seem more like an outline or advance organizer than an essay; if brief, may...on, lose focus, and include unimportant details; sequence may be illogical; may lack an ending or end hurriedly. |
| **Style:** Uses little sentence variety and elementary language. |
| **Correctness:** Contains several errors which may confuse the reader. |

| **Thesis:** May pose an idea about the literary work, but the writer’s understanding is minimal, confused, and incomplete. |
| **Supporting Ideas:** 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. |
| **Commentary:** Comments are overly simplistic or oversimplified, offering only a single explanation of the idea. |
| **Organization:** Covers only one part of the writing task. Shows no understanding of how to create an essay with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Ideas are not well-organized, and there is too much repetition of ideas beginning middle, and end; lacks organization or flow. Shows no understanding of how to write an essay. |
| **Style:** Uses no sentence variety and little descriptive language. |
| **Correctness:** Contains serious errors which confuse the reader. |