

Introduction

This book represents twenty five years' teaching English/Language Arts in California. Some of you may remember the CAP test? In one sense, this book began way back then, in the eighties. Like you, as we faced new challenges in the classroom, we created materials to supplement published ones. Like you, we cast about for effective ways to address an ever-changing and ever-increasing list of curricular goals. CAP was a "high-stakes test." Scores were published, and schools scrambled to get them up. It was during one such scramble that Sheri came up with the idea of color-mapping; we include a refined version of that idea in section one of this binder. It was also during this time that we came to appreciate the value of a well-constructed scoring guide; those included here have been completely aligned with each standard and with the "official" California State Department of Education (CDE) guides. However, ours have been reorganized and expanded for teaching clarity. During CAP testing we teachers were fortunate in that the CDE produced a series of well-written documents outlining the requirements of each writing style and providing model essays with commentary to illustrate those requirements. We found those helpful and, in the absence of similar materials today, we offer you our own version. Then came CLAS, with its greatly expanded requirements. We observed how helpful the graphic organizers and the group work were to our students. You'll find versions of them here. We are indebted to Spencer Kagan for the suggestion to add the Peer Response Sheets found at the end of each section. Spence offered some much-needed inservice on cooperative learning when his son Carlos was one of our students. In the course of that dialogue, the peer response sheets were born. Today we find ourselves addressing the CST: high stakes testing once again, but without the "safety net" that those CDE CAP documents provided. We hope that this binder will begin to fill that gap with useful tools for new teachers and veterans alike.

This binder does *not* address writing at the sentence and paragraph levels. The California Writing Projects and a plethora of textbooks do that beautifully. Instead, we offer resources that we ourselves have not been able to find in print: efficient, practical tools to help our students make sense of "the big picture." As teachers, we want to help our students become flexible writers, capable of competent on-demand writing in a number of styles. However, as a long range goal, we also hope to help them grasp the underlying similarities which unite all good prose. We hope to give them the sense of a structure upon which they may build their arguments and find them sound, not merely for a single assignment or high stakes test, but for a lifetime.

In choosing the model essays, particularly the score level 4 models, we have looked for those which step "outside the box," those which require us to see beyond standard form in favor of substance. Robert Atwan in his "Foreword" to *The Best American Essays of 1998* offers this challenge to the English teacher:

I've grown so accustomed to being asked what makes a good essay that I was taken by surprise recently when someone asked me what I considered a poor essay.

Years ago, when I was instructing college freshmen in the humble craft of writing essays--or "themes," as we called them--I noticed that many students had already been taught how to manufacture the Perfect Theme. It began with an introductory paragraph that contained a "thesis statement" and often cited someone named Webster; it then pursued its expository path through three paragraphs that "developed the main idea" until it finally reached a "concluding" paragraph that diligently summarized all three previous paragraphs. The conclusion usually began, "Thus we see that" If the theme told a personal story, it usually concluded with the narrative cliché, "Suddenly I realized that...." Epiphanies abounded.

What was especially maddening about the typical five-paragraph theme had less to do with its tedious structure than with its implicit message that writing should be the end

product of thought and not the enactment of its process. My students seemed unaware that writing could be an act of discovery, an opportunity to say something they had never before thought of saying. The worst themes were largely the products of premature conclusions, of unearned assurances, of minds made up. As Robert Frost once put it, for many people thinking merely means voting. Why go through the trouble of writing papers on an issue when all that's required is an opinion poll? So perhaps it did make more sense to call these productions themes and not essays, since what was being written had almost no connection with the original sense of "essaying"--trying out ideas and attitudes, writing out of a condition of uncertainty, of not-knowing. "Sleep lingers all our lifetime about our eyes," says Emerson, "as night hovers all day in the boughs of the fir-tree."

The five-paragraph theme was also a charade. It not only paraded relentlessly to its conclusion, it began with its conclusion. It was all about its conclusion. Its structure permitted no change of direction, no reconsideration, no wrestling with ideas. It was--and still is--the perfect vehicle for the sort of reader who likes to ask: "And your point is?"

We ourselves read this essay with some chagrin, having asked the question, "And your point is...." more times than we can count when responding to student work. Further, a casual observer might comment that this binder promulgates the kind of writing Atwan rightly decries. We see it this way: While the most gifted of writers will find "the box" an encumbrance, many others will find it possible to step outside that box only when they possess a firm vision of its dimensions. Then there is the infelicitous truth that some individuals need the box. We are not all gifted with words, but we must all use them to the best effect we can muster when faced with a need to communicate. As long as we teachers expect ourselves to prepare them all, the box will necessary for some.

However, we include Robert Atwan's comments for the simple -- and vast -- reason that, in this era of scoring guides and Standards and on-demand testing, he causes us to think twice. He reminds us that there is a child behind each essay. He challenges us to question, for example, whether the lack of a correctly structured thesis should throw an otherwise brilliant essay into the score 3 level. If the "thesis" is structurally complex and layered throughout an introductory paragraph, then is this not sufficient? We think so.

Thus, we see the box as the point of departure, not the destination. It is then left to each of us to help our students find joy in a journey which *does* permit change, wrestling with ideas, reconsideration, a journey which *is* the enactment of thought.

And we hope these materials will provide *you* with a point of departure.

Sheri Henderson
Flo Ota De Lange

Suggestions For Using These Materials

This book's organization is founded on the philosophical understanding that students have an easier time seeing unfamiliar *substance* if it is presented in a familiar *form*. To this end, each chapter *looks* the same and contains the following:

- a one-page overview of the writing style
- scoring guide
- model essays with commentary (for *you*)
- the same model essays in a scoring set (more on that later)
- the prompt from which the model essays were written
- one or more graphic organizers
- peer response sheet

Students will quickly learn the layout and functions of each page in any given section. We view this as a *good* thing because this familiarity then allows them to focus on the *substance* of the lesson -- the requirements of a new writing style. Over time, familiarity with format also helps students to see connections between and among writing styles. Just as a working knowledge of phonics provides building blocks to reading success, so do these connections between writing styles become a means of "cracking the code."

Systematic presentation of new styles can also help students make the necessary connections. We suggest the following sequence:

1. Introduce and discuss a new writing style with the one-page description page and the scoring guide; to save paper in our classrooms, we duplicate both on a single sheet of paper (front and back) and move freely between them in this initial discussion. You will notice that the descriptive page offers key vocabulary and transitional words. We have added these in response to a research finding that reports that when such words are made available to students, their writing does improve, particularly with regard to transitional devices and fluency.

The most important aspect of the process is the discussion of the scoring guide and its requirements. We spend an entire class period on this step, pulling out all our jokes, stand-up comedy, and teacher tricks to maintain attention. Really. This step is key. We provide goofy examples and challenge students to come up with examples of their own on the spot. We want to give them a firm basis for comparison. What are the differences in each trait between a three and a four? A two and a three? Familiarity with the guides is like giving students a road map for writing, and we want them to have that map *before* they get behind the wheel. Also, once students understand the guides, we can use them for grading. At the end of the process, when the finished essays come to us for grading, we attach one to each essay and highlight sections of each guide that apply. In this way, students get specific feedback on the most commonly repeated traits in a familiar format at little cost in teacher marking time, and we can spend more time on the important comments specific to individual papers. We don't mean to suggest that use of the guides in grading speeds up the process -- it doesn't -- but it does allow us to offer more specific feedback than we may otherwise do in the limited grading time we can give each essay.

2. As teachers we learned the value of scoring as a training device early in our careers, when we attended Advanced Placement seminars, then just catching on. We have since come to appreciate the value of training students on sample essays before they write. To continue the analogy of the road map, scoring a model essay lets them take a practice run. In addition, while many students feel they cannot write a score level 4, most can do better than a score level 1, and many can top a score level 2. The models give them hope.

All chapters in this book have writing samples, and these are repeated twice. First, for the teacher, they are presented in order from score 4 to score 1, with commentary provided for each essay. Sometimes multiple essays are given for a particular score level to illustrate the range of possible responses that still would merit the score. Secondly, the scoring sets offer the same essays in mixed-up order and without commentary to facilitate "blind" scoring. We have used these essays in numerous ways over the years. We once duplicated only one class set of the "scoring set." Students completed the group scoring process but did not mark the essays, and the stack went into the closet at the end of the lesson to await next years' group. However, as students have increasingly come to appreciate the value of a good model -- and a poor one --they have asked to be allowed to keep them or at least to borrow the set for awhile. Therefore, depending on the status of the ongoing "paper and duplicating wars," usually tied to funding, we try to make the models available.

In our classrooms, the process looks like this: Students are asked to form cooperative learning groups. Each student is then provided with one set of the model essays and the scoring guide (some will have already lost theirs from the previous day's discussion.). They are instructed to score the essays *silently*, committing themselves *in writing* to their scores on a separate sheet of paper. We do allow them to use a plus or minus but require them to come to a decision regarding score levels. That is, they may mark 2+ or 3- but not 2/3. We judge the quantity of scoring by the capabilities of the group. Weaker students may find value in scoring one essay at a time with discussion between each one. Others will find such a pace a real snoozer and tell us so. Whatever you may choose to do, the goal is productive discussion, and that does require a reasonable pace, however it is accomplished.

When everyone has a score for the first assigned models, ask them to discuss their scores by group. We sometimes require the group to come to a score consensus. In this case, a spokesperson for each group then reports the score for each essay to the class and defends it -- *from the scoring guide*. This is key. Students must be able to find *words on that paper* upon which they have based their judgment. They may not just decide a score without analysis. We put it this way: In this exercise, *they* are the teachers. Just as they expect their teachers to justify a poor score on an essay with objective data, so are *they*, as teachers, required to do so.

Alternatively, you may wish to allow each individual to place a "vote" for each essay, placing tick-marks on a grid on the board or overhead. Discussion then centers on disagreements and on objective reasons for the vote. This approach appeals to students who enjoy arguing their points of view, as in honors and some remedial groups. Remember also that disagreement is inevitable; we fully expect that *you* will not agree with all of *our* score assessments, and that is fine! The value of the exercise lies more in process than in product. For the most part, however, we are impressed by the accuracy with which our students do see the models and the excellence of their reasoning. They may not yet be able to produce a score level 4 or even 3 essay, but they *can* articulate what is done well in the models, and this becomes another building block for them as writers. Finally, we try to remember that contiguous scores are of less concern than scores where, say, one hold-out swears that a 3 should receive a 1 due to some fault in mechanics or a single line in the scoring guide. Here is the chance to demonstrate that, while one aspect here or there may be out of range, a holistic score seeks to reward what is done *well* over the *majority* of the essay. (This, of course, requires us to leave our "pet peeves" at the door and do the same in scoring, yes?) The process of group scoring and discussion can be accomplished in one class period but may also require a second depending on the quality of the discussion.

3. At this point, the color-mapping techniques discussed later in this chapter are often useful. You may choose to present one or more pre-mapped essays, map a sample essay with the class, or, in the best of all worlds, ask students to do so. More on mapping later. Hang on.
4. We give students one to three essay assignments to *plan*, telling them that one or more of these may be assigned for possible completion. These are drawn from issues and material found in recent literature study, possibly asking for comparison or contrast of characters, themes, issues, positions, etc. depending on the writing style. For example, we may ask students to write on a controversial topic but to take it from a particular characters' point of view, a particularly useful assignment for persuasion.

While we are on the subject of prompt writing, you may have noted that the prompts used in the 2001 statewide writing test were vague, barely differentiated from the standards themselves. These stand in stark contrast to the carefully shaped prompts we have been accustomed to offering our students. We do not like them. We consider them quite poor. Teachers across the state have gone on record stating that the lack of specificity in the prompt was one cause of our students' lackluster scores. However, we believe that, if prompts like this represent reality for our students, then we should be training those students to face them even as we lobby to get the prompts improved. Let's pit the kids against a prompt that is so vague it looks like a reworded version of the Standard. If they can wrest a decent essay from a prompt like that, just imagine how they'll fly with a good prompt. Therefore, the prompts provided in this book reflect the state's current direction. When that direction changes, so will the prompts we offer.

Students are asked to plan essays frequently in our classes. They know they will not be writing the essay itself every time. We also do our best to give students choices of topics on important assignments. We do hand out graphic organizers and require students to turn in a completed organizer with each completed essay, with this caveat. Some student do not know what they think until they hear themselves say it. For them, planning is moot. They may get "some" useful information from a cluster or brainstorming session, but for the most part, they just have to sit down and start writing. That's okay with us, as long as they go back when finished to complete the graphic organizer. This will help them analyze whether or not all the required elements have been addressed, a deconstructionist method, if you will.

5. Once the students have written one or more essays in the style, use the peer-scoring guides on the first drafts. Again, we make use of cooperative groups of 3-5 students. Each essay is given a Peer Response Sheet. This sheet travels around the group with the essay. Students begin with their own essays in hand, and everyone passes to the left (or right). Each student then reads an essay, circles two yes/no answers, fills in one sentence and turns the Peer Response Sheet over, where we have duplicated the scoring guide. Students underline salient sentences on the guide and may, if you wish, assign a score. Then all essays shift left (right) again, and the process is repeated until everyone in the group has read all the essays. In a group of 3-5, some sentences on the Peer Response Sheet will remain blank, since there are more sentences to fill in than there are group members. Spence Kagan reminds us that this is where the students should focus their attention. The areas which remain blank will show possible weaknesses in the essay. In this way, no student has been asked to criticize, an important aspect of cooperative group work. The guides ask for personal responses only. Again, thank you, Spence.
6. Color-mapping is often useful at this point, too. By this time, students are usually ready to color-shade on their own (see next section).
7. Most students are now as ready as they can be at this point in their development to choose

their best work, revise, edit, and publish.

8. But what about mechanics and grammar? Don't they count? *Unequivocally, yes!* We believe they are not adequately addressed by *any* scoring guide. Mechanics need to be marked, not scored. In our own classrooms, we address them in the editing stage, and we mark them the old fashioned way: one error at a time. This is not to suggest that we mark every error every time. This is overwhelming to both students and to us. We hold students accountable to some criteria at all times: basic punctuation, spelling, basic usage. Then we add various aspects as we study them throughout the year.

NOTE: If all of this seems like a great deal of trouble to teach a single writing type, it is, *the first time through*. After that, students quickly become familiar with the format, the techniques, and the similarities between the types. The process speeds up, particularly if our method -- or any systematic method -- is repeated from teacher to teacher and grade to grade. Uniformity of methodology simplifies the work for everyone.

Grade 7

1.0. WRITING STRATEGIES: Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

Organization and Focus:

- 1.1. Create an organizational structure that balances all aspects of the composition and uses effective transitions between sentences to unify important ideas.
- 1.2. Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.
- 1.3. Use strategies of note-taking, outlining, and summarizing to impose structure on composition drafts.

Research and Technology:

- 1.4. Identify topics; ask and evaluate questions; and develop ideas leading to inquiry, investigation, and research.
- 1.5. Give credit for both quoted and paraphrased information in a bibliography by using a consistent and sanctioned format and methodology for citations.
- 1.6. Create documents using word-processing skills and publishing programs; develop simple databases and spreadsheets to manage information and prepare reports.

Revising and Evaluating Writing:

- 1.7. Revise writing to improve organization and word choice after checking the logic of the ideas and the precision of the vocabulary.

2.0. WRITING APPLICATIONS (GENRES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS): Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive text of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre. The writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the Grade 7 writing strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1. Write **fictional or autobiographical narratives.**

- (a) Develop a standard plot line (beginning, conflict, rising action, climax, denouement) and point of view.
- (b) Develop complex major and minor characters and a definite setting.
- (c) Use a range of appropriate strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense, naming of specific narrative action, including movement, gestures, and expressions).

2.2. Write **responses to literature.**

- (a) Develop interpretations which exhibit careful reading, understanding, and insight.
- (b) Organize interpretations around several clear ideas, premises, or images.
- (c) Justify interpretations through sustained use of examples and textual evidence.

2.3. Write **research reports.**

- (a) Pose relevant and tightly drawn questions about the topic.
- (b) Convey clear and accurate perspectives on the subject.
- (c) Include evidence compiled through the formal research process (e.g., use of a card catalog, *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, computer catalog, magazines, newspapers, dictionaries).
- (d) Document references sources with footnotes and a bibliography.

2.4. Write **persuasive compositions**.

- (a) State a clear position or perspective in support of a proposition or proposal.
- (b) Describe the points in support of the proposition, employing well-articulated evidence.
- (c) Anticipate and address reader concerns and counterarguments.

2.5. Write **summaries** of reading materials.

- (a) Include the main ideas and most significant details.
- (b) Use the student's own words, except for quotations.
- (c) Reflect underlying meaning, not just the superficial details.

Grade 8

1.0. WRITING STRATEGIES: Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

Organization and Focus:

- 1.1. Create compositions that establish a controlling impression, have a coherent thesis, and end with a clear and well-supported conclusion.
- 1.2. Establish coherence within and among paragraphs through effective transitions, parallel structures, and similar writing techniques.
- 1.3. Support thesis or conclusions with analogies, paraphrases, quotations, opinions from authorities, comparisons, and similar devices.

Research and Technology:

- 1.4. Plan and conduct multiple-step information searches using computer networks and modems.
- 1.5. Achieve an effective balance between researched information and original ideas.

Evaluation and Revision:

- 1.6. Revise writing for word choice, appropriate organization, consistent point of view, and transitions between paragraphs, passages, and ideas.

2.0. WRITING APPLICATIONS (GENRES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS): Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive essays of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the Grade 8 writing strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1. Write **biographies, autobiographies, short stories, or narratives.**

- (a) Relate a clear, coherent incident, event, or situation by using well-chosen details.
- (b) Reveal the significance of, or the writer's attitude about, the subject.
- (c) Employ narrative and descriptive strategies (e.g., relevant dialogue, specific action, physical description, background description, comparison or contrast of characters).

2.2. Write **responses to literature.**

- (a) Exhibit careful reading and insight in their interpretations.
- (b) Connect the student's own responses to the writer's techniques and to specific textual references.
- (c) Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.
- (d) Support judgments through references to the text, other works, other authors, or to personal knowledge.

2.3. Write **research reports**

- (a) Define a thesis.
- (b) Record important ideas, concepts, and direct quotations from significant information sources, paraphrasing and summarizing all perspectives on the topic, as appropriate.
- (c) Use a variety of primary and secondary sources, distinguishing the nature and value of each.
- (d) Organize and display information on charts, maps, and graphs.

2.4. Write **persuasive compositions**

- (a) Include a well-defined thesis (i.e., one that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment).
- (b) Present detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning, to support arguments, differentiating between facts and opinion.
- (c) Provide details, reasons, and examples, arranging them effectively by anticipating and answering reader concerns and counterarguments.

2.5. Write **documents related to career development**, including simple **business letters** and **job applications**.

- (a) Present information purposefully and succinctly and meet the needs of the intended audience.
- (b) Follow the conventional format for the type of document (e.g., letter of inquiry, memorandum).

2.6. Write **technical documents**.

- (a) Identify the sequence of activities needed to design a system, operate a tool, or explain the bylaws of an organization.
- (b) Include all the factors and variables that need to be considered.
- (c) Use formatting techniques (e.g., headings, differing fonts) to aid comprehension.

Color Mapping

Back in 1984 Sheri devised this practice as a way of making the logic of expository form more visible to her students. At that time, the idea was original, a natural step from her CAP Card posters which some "old hands" may remember. Independent of Sheri's work, others have arrived at their own versions of color mapping, most notably Jane Shaffer. While we respect and admire Jane's work, the format you will find here is Sheri's. This is a necessary distinction, since Jane has assigned other choices of color to some of the same elements, and each makes distinctions that the other does not make.

We start by listing the four most important elements of the writing style on the board or on an overhead, assigning a different color to each.

For example, all essays (proposal, response to literature, expository), require similar elements:

- 1) Main idea
- 2) Several supporting points or reasons
- 3) Example(s) illustrating each point or reason
- 4) Commentary about or explanation of the relationship between the supporting points or reasons, their example(s), and the main idea

We show students the first color transparency. Removing the distraction of words from this 4 essay allows students to focus more clearly on the argument and its balance. Compare the 4 with the 3 and then the 2 and 1 on the following transparencies. The missing or imbalanced elements of the essays are quite clear, even though, *or perhaps because*, there are no words on the page.

Showing the same transparencies a second time, this time placing the color map over the essay itself, can invite discussion of how one writer achieved a balance, how another could improve it, etc. Having first seen the scaffold of the argument, students are better able to focus on each sentence's function in the whole.

Taken one sentence at a time, most students can readily see the difference between a main idea and a reason or supporting idea. They may have a bit more difficulty understanding the difference between example and commentary. Carol Booth Olson of the UCI Writing Project offers the clearest explanation of this difference we have encountered: If you can say with certainty that this is something the author either said directly or intended the reader to understand through narrative (showing) strategies, then it is an example. The commentary then becomes the writer's own attempt to tie examples to meaning or to make draw connections and make the point. Students frequently ask us what they can possibly add by way of commentary without merely repeating the example they have just provided. They are frequently correct. In this case, we tell them to look to their premises or assertions. Are they superficial, predictable, obvious? If a point need only be illustrated to be proven, then the point itself is probably lacking in depth, thought, originality. Good thinking requires elucidation. We tell them that the lack of necessity for commentary in their work is a sign that they need to go back to the drawing board, to keep digging, to think more deeply. And wonder of wonders, sometimes they do!

The color-mapped examples offered in this book are from the Response to Literature style. However, color-mapping lends itself to many, many uses. Students may be asked to color map virtually anything upon which you want them to focus. For example, in narrative form, we ask students to map the writer's use of specific narrative strategies, assigning a different color to several of the following: showing the character in action, allowing the reader to hear the character speak, describing the characters' appearance, revealing the characters' thoughts and feelings, and showing how others react to the character. We ask our own students to hand in their final drafts with at least two different strategies included and mapped.

You may ask your students to take colored pencils, markers, or crayons to map, first a practice essay, later their own. Or you may wish to discuss a single essay as a class, deciding sentence by sentence which colors to map, while one person marks an overhead transparency. However you make use of it, this is a time-tested practice; it works! Every year we see lightbulbs go on during this lesson, and we see writing improve, particularly in kinesthetic and the visual learners. Best of all, it's fun for our students.

NOTE: If you decide to go ahead with color-mapping in your classroom, consider the following:

- Crayons are inexpensive but very difficult to read through. Also, teachers find it difficult to add comments; most pens are defeated by the wax in crayons.
- Colored pencils are moderately expensive initially but last quite a while with reasonable care. An electric pencil sharpener is a must! Even better, get a sharpener for use ONLY with colored leads. They also contain waxes which will eventually "gum" the works, and "regular" pencils do not sharpen well after use with colored ones. Even so, this is the choice of many for one unforeseen reason: students have much more freedom of expression with colored leads. They can shade heavily or lightly, erase, combine colors, outline, etc. Some go through a pencil in a class period; one could scrape the wax off their papers with one's nails. Others shade so delicately and lightly that the color is barely noticeable. Teachers report many interesting differences between their students, and these would be lost if using either of the other methods.
- Felt-tip highlighters are the most expensive and last least well. They offer clear, readable results, but they cannot accommodate shading, erasures, or changes. Be prepared to hand out extra sample essays to counter student "mistakes."

GRADE 7 WRITING STANDARD 2.2 -- 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 an author's message through careful reading and insightful commentary.
- 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 Claims About the Author's Message
 - provide just enough background to set the stage for the reader
 - base all claims on ideas, premises or images taken from the text
2. Support Each Claim
 - offer several reasons or ideas to explain each claim, possibly discussing:
 - the conflicts the characters face
 - the results of the character's choices
 - the major lessons the characters learn
 - the meaning of any metaphor, simile, personification, or symbols
 - 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 about the message
 - 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 lively, confident, interesting vocabulary
- 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

	4	3	2	1
Thesis	Poses several <i>insightful</i> claims about the message. The writer's comprehensive understanding displays uncommon <i>depth or maturity</i> .	Poses several <i>clear claims</i> about the message. The writer's understanding is <i>adequate and predictable</i> .	Poses at least one claim about the literary work. The writer's understanding is <i>limited and may lack accuracy</i> .	May pose a claim about the literary work, but the writer's understanding is <i>minimal, confused, and incomplete</i> .
Supporting Ideas	Offers just enough background for the essay to make sense to the reader. Gives several thoughtful ideas or reasons to explain each claim. Supports these ideas 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> ideas or 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 claims are too often left to the reader to understand. Overall, this writer needs to think more deeply about the author's message.	Explains at least one claim with <i>literal</i> ideas or 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 claim(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 ideas, if offered, are very <i>incomplete, unclear, or confusing</i> and may contain errors about the text. The writer may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retell or recopy 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 <i>only 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 <i>only one part</i> 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 some 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.

Response to Literature Prewrite Grade 7: Brainstorm

This page will help you brainstorm your essay. Think about the text(s) you have been asked to consider. List a few of the ideas, premises, or images from the work that you might discuss in your essay. Think of several examples for each idea that could serve as a source of evidence and support for the idea you wish to argue. Other examples may be taken from other literary texts and your prior knowledge. Also jot down how you will explain the relationship between the examples and your ideas; how will you *use* the examples to advance your argument or prove your points about the literature?

What are some of the ideas, premises, or images from this work upon which you might base your essay?

Explanation/commentary for each idea, premise, or image:

Idea, Premise or Image 1	Example 1:	<hr/> <hr/>
	Example 2:	<hr/> <hr/>
	Example 3:	<hr/> <hr/>
Idea, Premise or Image 2	Example 1:	<hr/> <hr/>
	Example 2:	<hr/> <hr/>
	Example 3:	<hr/> <hr/>

Interpretation Prewrite continued:

Examples/Explanations for each reason:

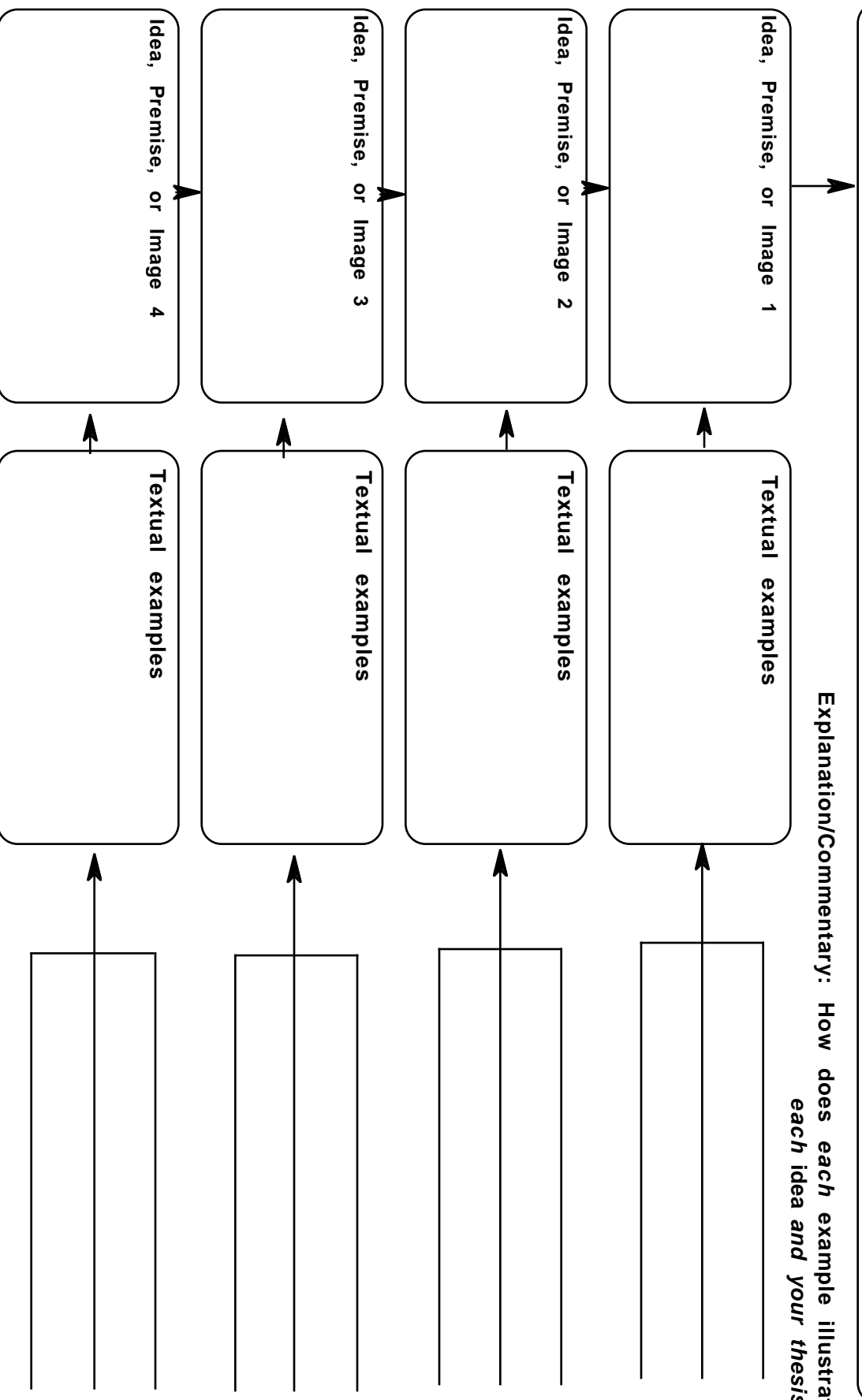
Idea, Premise or Image 3	Example 1:	
	Example 2:	
	Example 3:	
Idea, Premise or Image 4	Example 1:	
	Example 2:	
	Example 3:	

**Of the interpretations you considered, which can best be supported from the text? Why?
Of the supporting examples you considered, which best support your argument?**

Response to Literature Essay Organizer: Develop a thesis regarding this work of literature, and then offer several clear ideas, premises, or images that will elaborate that thesis. Next, find several quotations or short paraphrased sections from the text that will help you support *each* idea. Finally, jot down how you will explain your reasoning to the reader; in other words, how will you use each example to illustrate your ideas and prove that the "big idea" at the top is accurate, reasonable, or valid?

Thesis: One "big" idea about the text. All ideas, premises, or images are cited below in order to support and explain this idea.

Explanation/Commentary: How does each example illustrate each idea and your thesis?



"The Smallest Dragonboy"

by

Anne McCaffrey

The Smallest Dragonhero?

(RESPONSE TO LITERATURE)

GETTING READY TO WRITE

How does a "regular" person show she or he possesses the qualities of heroism? Must he rush in to save someone from a fire or from some other peril? Can she show habits of character that let you know she will be there, will be reliable, if there is a need? Must he be tall and strong? When "The Smallest Dragonboy" ends, Keevan and Heth leave the Hatching Ground cavern together forever. Anne McCaffrey suggests that these two will have a glorious future together. All the signs point to heroic deeds and great adventures, yet Keevan is the same boy at this point as he was throughout the story. He has not had time to prove himself, yet the reader is certain he will live up to Heth's belief in him. Even though he is a boy, and the smallest one at that, the reader knows that Keevan is capable of heroism if his life demands it of him.

TIME TO WRITE

Write an essay in which you discuss Keevan's heroic qualities. To do so, you may wish to complete the following planning pages. First, define your terms: what personal qualities should a hero possess? Second, take a look at Keevan's character; which of his personal qualities do you admire? Which could be defined as heroic? Third, find specific quotations, actions, and events from the story that support your views of Keevan; *specifically* what does he *do* and *say*? Finally, complete the advance organizer to plan your essay.

Your goal is to convince the reader that your ideas are reasonable and valid given what you know about the character. To do this, clearly present and develop your ideas, giving appropriate support and reasoning. Organize your information to help the reader comprehend how you arrived at your viewpoints. Be sure also to *explain* how the quotations prove your point about Keevan in particular and about heroism in general.

**SAMPLE ESSAYS
GRADE 7
RESPONSE TO LITERATURE WITH COMMENTARY**

ESSAY ILLUSTRATING SCORE POINT 4 (HIGH RANGE)

Clifton Davis' story "A Mason-Dixon Memory" reveals several different kinds of heroism. He refers to Abraham Lincoln, one of our country's heroes. He talks about those who gave their lives fighting for freedom, another definition of heroism. He shows us a young man named Dondré and another--himself--named Clifton, both heroes of a different sort. And then he remembers eleven kids from Long Island and a golf team from Monroe, Louisiana. These, of all Davis' characters, most show what everyday heroism means.

Davis describes Lincoln's statue as having, "...no smile and still no sign of hope in his sad and tired eyes." It is well known that Lincoln took the deaths of both Northern and Southern soldiers and civilians personally. He believed in the cause of freedom and persevered in leading the bloody Civil War because of the rightness of the cause. He believed that it is unjust to enslave anyone. However, the war cost him a great deal personally, and he agonized over decisions which would cost more bloodshed, no matter how important the cause. His was a sacrifice for his country every bit as great as those who died in the battles. And in the end, he paid the ultimate price. Those who serve their country, especially those who die in that effort, deserve honor for a certain kind of heroism. For Clifton Davis, Abraham Lincoln's heroism gained a new meaning as he confronts segregation for the first time in his young life.

Clifton and Dondré, both heroes, experience racism of a similar sort. Dondré must deal with being denied access to a golf club where his team is scheduled to play; Clifton remembers having been denied entry to an amusement park that was to be the crowning glory of a trip during his youth. Both boys experience a wonderful sort of affirmation: when their white teammates hear of their predicaments, they side with their friends. Dondré's team unanimously leaves the golf course. Clifton's pals decide to stay at the hotel with him. These are defining moments in each boy's life.

Dondré's story made him a celebrity, but that is not what made him a hero. Both Clifton and Dondré did not let the hatred of others stand in the way of their dreams. They did not let their feelings of being "different" or the racist comments they surely had to deal with every day keep them from doing what mattered to them. Dondré loved golf and kept at it until he made the team at St. Frederick High School. Clifton sold candy bars, mowed lawns, and just didn't quit until he had enough money to go on the trip of his life, even though he would be the only Negro boy there. This is another kind of heroism, a special kind of courage. It takes a strong heart and will to believe in your own worth no matter what others are trying to tell you, especially when you're isolated, with few or no others like you around.

But the most powerful form of heroism, of courage, that Clifton Davis shows us in his story comes from two groups of boys, most of whom don't even have names in the story. When they found that one of them was treated like *less than* one of them, they knew what to do. They walked out. My Grandmother called that "voting with your feet." It doesn't take a lot of talking to make a point; non-participation is sometimes the best way to do it. If those who are offered a privilege refuse that privilege, people notice! They want to know why. The unanimous statement made by Dondré's teammates created new laws in Maryland to help prevent others from having to go through what Dondré did. Clifton's story was more personal, but I'll bet not one of those boys ever forgot the experience of standing up--at the age of *eleven*--for what is right. It is more than many adults can say they have done at *any* age. It is this kind of every day heroism that helps to make a better world, and that is why I think it is them most important heroism in the story.

There are so many ways to be a hero. But they all have in common that they require certain personal qualities: the ability to recognize the right thing to do and the courage to do it.

All of the characters in Davis' story, even the chaperones who improvise last-minute tickets to a *real baseball game* in place of the amusement park, show some kind of heroism. These were two experiences that the young men will never forget. It must be a wonderful feeling to know that your friends will stand by you when the "grownup" world says they shouldn't, you are inferior. And this story shows the reader that you can be a hero any time you want to, by doing the right thing no matter what others think.

Commentary: This high range score four essay skillfully blends discussion of the story with a thoughtful analysis of what it means to be a hero in everyday life. The writer discusses heroism on more than one level and relates all aspects of these heroic traits to one or more of the characters in this personal account. The scope of the essay is more universal than most, and the writer shows impressive control of the material, even to the extent of bringing in historical examples in the form of Abraham Lincoln's struggles.

ESSAY ILLUSTRATING SCORE POINT 4 (MID RANGE)

"The Smallest Dragonboy"

How do you define heroism? Does it require a particular body type? Of course not. Heroes come in many shapes and sizes. Does heroism require amazing acts of daring? Not really. A person does not have to save people's lives or do anything physical to be considered a hero. I think heroism is the readiness to cope with whatever happens and do whatever is necessary, no matter what your size and shape, or even your age, may be. In "The Smallest Dragonboy" by Ann McCaffrey, Keevan is the smallest, weakest, youngest boy. In Keevan's world, the heroes are the Dragon Riders who protect and defend the colony. Newly-hatched dragons choose their lifelong companions from the young boys in the colony. It is said that dragons look for goodness, confidence, honesty, a flexible mind, patience, courage, and, most of all, compassion. These are the author's ingredients of heroism. Even though Keevan is the least obvious candidate, he still has all of the qualities of a hero. And more importantly, he puts those qualities to good use.

One of Keevan's heroic traits is confidence in himself. When Keevan overhears the men talking during dinner about disqualifying the youngest and oldest candidates, he does not give up hope. Keevan continues to work hard and shows indifference when Beterli, the colony's bully, tells him that he has been eliminated. He does not let Beterli push him around but sticks up for himself even though Beterli is older and larger. This doesn't mean that Keevan does not have doubts. Of course he does. But Keevan understands that, although he cannot argue directly with these men, he can at least make them see by his behavior and his effort that he is certainly as qualified as anyone else. He has the confidence to do what he knows is right.

Keevan is also full of compassion and goodness. A statement Keevan makes in the story supports this statement: "I didn't ask to have Beterli turfed out." Keevan does not tattle on Beterli when the Weyrwoman, Lessa, asks Keevan to tell her what happened when he was shoveling coal at the bunkers. Keevan knows how terrible Beterli will feel if he is eliminated because it is Beterli's last chance to Impress a dragon. This is an excellent example of being a hero. Beterli has given Keevan every reason to want to get even, but even when Beterli has injured Keevan, taking from him the thing he wants most, which is to have a chance to Impress a dragon the first year he is eligible, Keevan refuses to hurt him. That comes from Keevan's goodness.

Keevan is not selfish, spoiled, or stuck up. He doesn't try to get away with doing less just because he is smaller and younger than the other boys. He is not slothful. In fact, he works twice as hard to prove himself worthy of being a candidate. Although Keevan's father is a brown dragonrider, Keevan doesn't act as if he is better than the other boys. Being small has inspired him to work twice as hard, and it has also required him to learn patience. Keevan has

used adversity to build the character a hero needs.

Keevan has a truckload of courage. Although he has an injured leg and head, he drags himself to the Impression. He struggles across the hot sands of the hatching ground. Keevan falls down every few steps, but keeps on going. It isn't that he is oblivious to the pain. He just does it in spite of his pain. He does not want to miss his opportunity. He calls on his courage and his determination to get there.

To Keevan, it is imperative that he earn the respect of the Weyr colony. When Keevan impresses Heth, he is lying on the hot sand and is having difficulty moving. When F'lar wants to help him up, Keevan says, "We'll be just fine, thank you." He is letting everyone know that he is independent and can take care of himself and Heth. His flexible mind is already adjusting to the change in his situation, and his confidence and courage come to his aid to meet the challenge.

In conclusion, when Mende says, "I like to believe dragons see into a man's heart. If they find goodness, honesty, a flexible mind, patience, courage--and you've got that in quantity, dear Keevan--that's what dragons look for," we see that Keevan is mentally every inch a hero. And what about the rest of us? I think that anyone who has those qualities can be called a hero. They may never be called on to do the kind of heroic act that you see on the news. But there are many ways of being a hero. If we can live so that we know that we have developed even some of those qualities, then heroism can't be very far off. It doesn't take a dragon to make a hero. It takes a person who knows what is right and does it, every day, for a whole life long. That is the kind of heroism that changes the world.

Commentary: This lively score level four paper clearly forecasts its intent and provides enough context to orient the reader without belaboring its point. The writer never loses sight of the claims made and takes care to relate those claims back to the main idea of heroism. Direct quotations are aptly employed, although the chief means of support is paraphrased summary. The essay is strongly organized, insightful, and convincing.

ESSAY ILLUSTRATING SCORE POINT 3

"The Smallest Dragonboy"

I think Keevan is a hero because he has the three best qualities of a hero. They are determination, compassion, and courage. He uses each of these qualities in the story, "The Smallest Dragonboy." That is why I think he is a hero.

The time he showed determination is when he was beat up by Beterli and had a hurt leg. That was the time they had to go to the hatching ground to get their dragons. Whoever got there first might get the bronze dragon, and they are the best kind. If he does not get one, he will be pushed around and be dominated by the others. He had to get there first, but he was hurt. Everybody thought he would not be able to make it to the hatching ground. He tried and he made it, not first, but he made it. He was made fun of, but he was happy, he was going to be a dragon rider.

Keevan showed compassion when Beterli beat him up. He thought of telling on him, but he knew how it felt to be left out of competitions. He knew how bad it felt when people made fun of others and would say to him, "Don't cry little baby." They would play practical jokes on him, and he didn't like it. Still Keevan did not say a word to the Winged Second. If Keevan had told on Berterli, Berterli would have been eliminated from the hatching.

Keevan showed courage when he stood up to Berterli. Then he felt better about himself. This happened when they were fighting over the shovel. They were inside the rock bunker. But this is not his only courageous act. Being smaller and younger takes courage every day, and Keevan never let himself give up. He faced the facts of how he wasn't the same size as the

others and then just got on with his life. That takes courage too.

In conclusion, being a hero is a challenge. Keevan faced this challenge by standing up to Beterli, not telling on him, and showing courage. He wanted to help protect his planet by being a Dragon rider.

Commentary: This essay makes clear, if predictable, claims. Each aspect of heroism (determination, compassion, and courage) is supported with direct evidence from the text in the form of paraphrased plot summary. No quotations are used; however, the paraphrased material cited does support each claim, even though it lacks specific detail. There is little attempt by the writer to argue a point; instead, this writer relies on the evidence to carry the argument. This is a good example of the score point 3 "thin" essay to which the scoring guide refers. There is a need for more of everything: thought, specificity, and most of all, commentary. The bare bones are in place. Now the writer needs to add some meat.

ESSAY ILLUSTRATING SCORE POINT 2

"The smallest dragon boy" is about a boy named Kevan who is very determined to be a dragon rider. I will write about how he was and how he overcame the young. Keevan demonstrated a lot of courage in the entire story. Keevan never gave up hope for being a dragon rider he never gave into Betterly's teasingness. Betterly and Keevan did not really like each other because Betterly always made fun of Keevan.

Keevan demonstrated a significant amount of determination throughout the story. To be a dragon boy you do not have to save someone from a fire. You can be tall or short and still be a hero, Keevan was a hero in the story because he would always do all work that had to be done. He wanted to be a dragon rider so he went to the caverns and picked out a dinosaur egg and it was a shiny one and he waited there. The next morning came and the older boys kicked him out and Keevan was so mad so he would not listen to Betterly at all. Betterly was so mad at him so he picked a fight with Keevan but Keevan said no I will not fight you. So that is what I mean about being a hero.

Commentary: The writer's proposed purpose is contradictory. The last sentence suggests that the prompt asked students to discuss the heroic qualities of Keevan, the main character. However, until this point, the essay advances only the plot-based claim that Keevan has the courage and determination to be a dragon rider. Both of these are qualities of heroism, but that connection is left to the reader to make. The essay's argument relies on plot summary, and no effort is made to convince the reader. However, there are two somewhat organized sections, one dealing with courage and one dealing with determination, that set this essay apart from the straightforward plot summary of the score two paper. Even though the argument is unsuccessful in terms of the prompt, the writer understands the structure of expository form and makes the attempt to meet its requirements.

ESSAY ILLUSTRATING SCORE POINT 1

This story is about a boy named Kevn who wants to be a dragon rider. but he's small. there's a bullie who teases Kevn a lot. he calls him little baby and makes life hard for him. then the dragons will hatch. the bullie wants a big one and doesn't let anyone near his egg. but Kevn goes there anyway. he really wants a dragon like his dad's. now it is the day but Kevn has a hurt leg and head. but he goes anyway. the bullie did it to Kevn and can't be a rider now. Kevn gets the dragon and gets his dragon name Heth. Kevn is very happy.

Commentary: This essay relies on plot summary rather than discussion of claims. No clear claims are made; therefore, there is no attempt to convince the reader that claims are valid. Displays a better sense of chronological events than do some score 1 essays, but mechanical errors confuse the reader.

ESSAY ILLUSTRATING SCORE POINT 1

A hero is a person that saves people lifes. A hero is a person who shows loyalty, understanding, and compassion. A hero is a person that you can talk to. A hero is a person who is honest. A hero is a person that has courage.

Commentary: This writer summarizes the qualities of a hero but does not offer claims about any work of literature. No attempt is made to convince the reader of a point of view, and no personal reactions are offered.

**SAMPLE ESSAYS
GRADE 7
RESPONSE TO LITERATURE**

----- **Essay S** -----

"The smallest dragon boy" is about a boy named Kevan who is very determined to be a dragon rider. I will write about how he was and how he overcame the young. Keevan demonstrated alot of courage in the enteir story. Keevan never gave up hope for being a dragon riger he never gave into betterly's teasingness. Betterly and Keevan did not realy like each other because batterly always made fun of keevan.

Keevan demonstrated a significant amount of determination throuout the story. To be a dragon boy you do not have to save someone from a fire. You can be tall or short and still be a hero, Keevan was a hero in the story because he would always do all work that had to be done. He wanted to be a dragon rider so he went to the cavernes and picked out a dinosaur egg and it was a shiny one and he waited their. the next morning came and the older boys kicked him out and keevan was so made so he would not listen to betterly at all. Betterly was so made at him so he picked a fight with keevan but keevan said no I will not fight you. So that is what I mean about being a hero.

----- **Essay T** -----

"The Smallest Dragonboy"

I think Keevan is a hero because he has the three best qualities of a hero. They are determination, compassion, and courage. He uses each of these qualities in the story, "The Smallest Dragonboy." That is why I think he is a hero.

The time he showed determination is when he was beat up by Beterli and had a hurt leg. That was the time they had to go to the hatching ground to get their dragons. Whoever got there first might get the bronze dragon, and they are the best kind. If he does not get one, he will be pushed around and be dominated by the others. He had to get there first, but he was hurt. Everybody thought he would not be able to make it to the hatching ground. He tried and he made it, not first, but he made it. He was made fun of, but he was happy, he was going to be a dragon rider.

Keevan showed compassion when Beterli beat him up. He thought of telling on him, but he knew how it felt to be left out of competitions. He knew how bad it felt when people made fun of others and would say to him, "Don't cry little baby." They would play practical jokes on him, and he didn't like it. Still Keevan did not say a word to the Winged Second. If Keevan had told on Berterli, Berterli would have been eliminated from the hatching.

Keevan showed courage when he stood up to Berterli. Then he felt better about himself. This happened when they were fighting over the shovel. They were inside the rock bunker. But this is not his only courageous act. Being smaller and younger takes courage every day, and Keevan never let himself give up. He faced the facts of how he wasn't the same size as the others and then just got on with his life. That takes courage too.

In conclusion, being a hero is a challenge. Keevan faced this challenge by standing up to Beterli, not telling on him, and showing courage. He wanted to help protect his planet by being a Dragon rider.

----- **Essay W** -----

A hero is a person that saves people lives. A hero is a person who shows loyalty, understanding, and compassion. A hero is a person that you can talk to. A hero is a person who is honest. A hero is a person that has courage.

----- **Essay X** -----

"The Smallest Dragonboy"

How do you define heroism? Does it require a particular body type? Of course not. Heroes come in many shapes and sizes. Does heroism require amazing acts of daring? Not really. A person does not have to save people's lives or do anything physical to be considered a hero. I think heroism is the readiness to cope with whatever happens and do whatever is necessary, no matter what your size and shape, or even your age, may be. In "The Smallest Dragonboy" by Ann McCaffrey, Keevan is the smallest, weakest, youngest boy. In Keevan's world, the heroes are the Dragon Riders who protect and defend the colony. Newly-hatched dragons choose their lifelong companions from the young boys in the colony. It is said that dragons look for goodness, confidence, honesty, a flexible mind, patience, courage, and, most of all, compassion. These are the author's ingredients of heroism. Even though Keevan is the least obvious candidate, he still has all of the qualities of a hero. And more importantly, he puts those qualities to good use.

One of Keevan's heroic traits is confidence in himself. When Keevan overhears the men talking during dinner about disqualifying the youngest and oldest candidates, he does not give up hope. Keevan continues to work hard and shows indifference when Beterli, the colony's bully, tells him that he has been eliminated. He does not let Beterli push him around but sticks up for himself even though Beterli is older and larger. This doesn't mean that Keevan does not have doubts. Of course he does. But Keevan understands that, although he cannot argue directly with these men, he can at least make them see by his behavior and his effort that he is certainly as qualified as anyone else. He has the confidence to do what he knows is right.

Keevan is also full of compassion and goodness. A statement Keevan makes in the story supports this statement: "I didn't ask to have Beterli turfed out." Keevan does not tattle on Beterli when the Weyrwoman, Lessa, asks Keevan to tell her what happened when he was shoveling coal at the bunkers. Keevan knows how terrible Beterli will feel if he is eliminated because it is Beterli's last chance to Impress a dragon. This is an excellent example of being a hero. Beterli has given Keevan every reason to want to get even, but even when Beterli has injured Keevan, taking from him the thing he wants most, which is to have a chance to Impress a dragon the first year he is eligible, Keevan refuses to hurt him. That comes from Keevan's goodness.

Keevan is not selfish, spoiled, or stuck up. He doesn't try to get away with doing less just because he is smaller and younger than the other boys. He is not slothful. In fact, he works twice as hard to prove himself worthy of being a candidate. Although Keevan's father is a brown dragonrider, Keevan doesn't act as if he is better than the other boys. Being small has inspired him to work twice as hard, and it has also required him to learn patience. Keevan has used adversity to build the character a hero needs.

Keevan has a truckload of courage. Although he has an injured leg and head, he drags himself to the Impression. He struggles across the hot sands of the hatching ground. Keevan falls down every few steps, but keeps on going. It isn't that he is oblivious to the pain. He just does it in spite of his pain. He does not want to miss his opportunity. He calls on his courage and his determination to get there.

To Keevan, it is imperative that he earn the respect of the Weyr colony. When Keevan Impresses Heth, he is lying on the hot sand and is having difficulty moving. When F'lar wants to help him up, Keevan says, "We'll be just fine, thank you." He is letting everyone know that he is

(Continued on page 3)

independent and can take care of himself and Heth. His flexible mind is already adjusting to the change in his situation, and his confidence and courage come to his aid to meet the challenge.

In conclusion, when Mende says, "I like to believe dragons see into a man's heart. If they find goodness, honesty, a flexible mind, patience, courage--and you've got that in quantity, dear Keevan--that's what dragons look for," we see that Keevan is mentally every inch a hero. And what about the rest of us? I think that anyone who has those qualities can be called a hero. They may never be called on to do the kind of heroic act that you see on the news. But there are many ways of being a hero. If we can live so that we know that we have developed even some of those qualities, then heroism can't be very far off. It doesn't take a dragon to make a hero. It takes a person who knows what is right and does it, every day, for a whole life long. That is the kind of heroism that changes the world.

----- **Essay Y** -----

This story is about a boy named Kevn who whant to be a dregonridder. but hes small. theres a bullie who teses Kevn alot. hi calls him little baby and maks life hard for him. then the dregons will hach. the bullie whant a big one and dont let ayione neer his egg. but kevn goes their anyhow. hi reilly whant a dregon like his dads. now it is the day but kevn has a hurt leg and head. but hi gos anyway. the bullie did it to kevn and cant be a ridder now. kevn get's their and get's his dreggon name heth. kevn is verry happy.

----- Essay Z -----

Clifton Davis' story "A Mason-Dixon Memory" reveals several different kinds of heroism. He refers to Abraham Lincoln, one of our country's heroes. He talks about those who gave their lives fighting for freedom, another definition of heroism. He shows us a young man named Dondré and another--himself--named Clifton, both heroes of a different sort. And then he remembers eleven kids from Long Island and a golf team from Monroe, Louisiana. These, of all Davis' characters, most show what everyday heroism means.

Davis describes Lincoln's statue as having, "...no smile and still no sign of hope in his sad and tired eyes." It is well known that Lincoln took the deaths of both Northern and Southern soldiers and civilians personally. He believed in the cause of freedom and persevered in leading the bloody Civil War because of the rightness of the cause. He believed that it is unjust to enslave anyone. However, the war cost him a great deal personally, and he agonized over decisions which would cost more bloodshed, no matter how important the cause. His was a sacrifice for his country every bit as great as those who died in the battles. And in the end, he paid the ultimate price. Those who serve their country, especially those who die in that effort, deserve honor for a certain kind of heroism. For Clifton Davis, Abraham Lincoln's heroism gained a new meaning as he confronts segregation for the first time in his young life.

Clifton and Dondré, both heroes, experience racism of a similar sort. Dondré must deal with being denied access to a golf club where his team is scheduled to play; Clifton remembers having been denied entry to an amusement park that was to be the crowning glory of a trip during his youth. Both boys experience a wonderful sort of affirmation: when their white teammates hear of their predicaments, they side with their friends. Dondré's team unanimously leaves the golf course. Clifton's pals decide to stay at the hotel with him. These are defining moments in each boy's life.

Dondré's story made him a celebrity, but that is not what made him a hero. Both Clifton and Dondré did not let the hatred of others stand in the way of their dreams. They did not let their feelings of being "different" or the racist comments they surely had to deal with every day keep them from doing what mattered to them. Dondré loved golf and kept at it until he made the team at St. Frederick High School. Clifton sold candy bars, mowed lawns, and just didn't quit until he had enough money to go on the trip of his life, even though he would be the only Negro boy there. This is another kind of heroism, a special kind of courage. It takes a strong heart and will to believe in your own worth no matter what others are trying to tell you, especially when you're isolated, with few or no others like you around.

But the most powerful form of heroism, of courage, that Clifton Davis shows us in his story comes from two groups of boys, most of whom don't even have names in the story. When they found that one of them was treated like *less than* one of them, they knew what to do. They walked out. My Grandmother called that "voting with your feet." It doesn't take a lot of talking to make a point; non-participation is sometimes the best way to do it. If those who are offered a privilege refuse that privilege, people notice! They want to know why. The unanimous statement made by Dondré's teammates created new laws in Maryland to help prevent others from having to go through what Dondré did. Clifton's story was more personal, but I'll bet not one of those boys ever forgot the experience of standing up--at the age of *eleven*--for what is right. It is more than many adults can say they have done at *any* age. It is this kind of every day heroism that helps to make a better world, and that is why I think it is them most important heroism in the story.

There are so many ways to be a hero. But they all have in common that they require certain personal qualities: the ability to recognize the right thing to do and the courage to do it. All of the characters in Davis' story, even the chaperones who improvise last-minute tickets to a *real baseball game* in place of the amusement park, show some kind of heroism. These were two experiences that the young men will never forget. It must be a wonderful feeling to know that your friends will stand by you when the "grownup" world says they shouldn't, you are inferior. And this story shows the reader that you can be a hero any time you want to, by doing the right thing no matter what others think.

**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:

