

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS ASSIGNMENT

Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes

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

THE JACKHAMMER SYNDROME

Once I wanted things so badly
they tended to heat up while I looked at them
glowing cherry red and disappeared
thus it was common on the streets
of my hometown twenty
years ago to hear young ladies utter
cries of dismay as their coiffures started
smoking and they vanished like rainbows
while I stared fixed and lasciviously
They say if you wish hard enough long
enough you'll get what you wish for
I maintain the opposite or nearly
one alternates wanting and not-wanting
at unpredictable intervals which
might be called the jackhammer syndrome
For example
I play pool with my brother-in-law
and nearly always lose at first
until finally I don't give a damn
then start to win
The balls jostle in genetic pairs
drop dead
true in side pockets and caroms click
like new false teeth in orbit with a steak
I play like a blind mathematician
give the ball underspin curves
straight from my draughtsman brain
and realize I'm winning by god winning
fifty mounted horsemen in the red desert
draw swords and swear fealty
my spaceship darts with unerring skill
among excreta of constipated planets

which turn out to be radium in fact
I can do anything
and encounter myself in the past thinking
of hide-and-seek and run-sheep-run
in my old hometown
where the kid was pretty funny
He will not know me now no
one does there
among those dream-circumstances
but patches of emotion hover still
on the streets where I lost all my battles
But I retain the memory of winning
close to my vest as a belly button
which is one advantage of total recall
and totally recall swimming
across a river meeting a girl halfway
along the wet footpath and going
on together to the other
side for an hour doing
nothing dizzily balanced
on the moment managing
to outwit myself carefully
not looking at her
There are moments of such elation
in a man's life it's like being struck
alive on the street by the first
god one meets at an intersection
whom one must believe in a second
time after twenty years of atheism
You press the stomach of your business
suit flat and stride on into the sunset
pretending to be serious

Al Purdy

from THE ORCHID THIEF

John Laroche is a tall guy, skinny as a stick, pale-eyed, slouch-shouldered, and sharply handsome, in spite of the fact that he is missing all his front teeth. He has the posture of al dente spaghetti and the nervous intensity of someone who plays a lot of video games. Laroche is thirty-six years old. Until recently he was employed by the Seminole Tribe of Florida, setting up a plant nursery and an orchid-propagation laboratory on the tribe's reservation in Hollywood, Florida.

Laroche strikes many people as eccentric. The Seminoles, for instance, have two nicknames for him: Troublemaker and Crazy White Man. Once, when Laroche was telling me about his childhood, he remarked, "Boy, I sure was a *weird* little kid." For as long as he can remember he has been exceptionally passionate and driven. When he was about nine or ten, his parents said he could pick out a pet. He decided to get a little turtle. Then he asked for ten more little turtles. Then he decided he wanted to breed the turtles, and then he started selling turtles to other kids, and then he could think of nothing *but* turtles and then decided that his life wasn't worth living unless he could collect one of every single turtle species known to mankind, including one of those sofa-sized tortoises from the Galapagos. Then, out of the blue, he fell out of love with turtles and fell madly in love with Ice Age fossils. He collected them, sold them, declared that he lived for them, then abandoned them for something else—lapidary¹ I think—then he abandoned lapidary and became obsessed with collecting and resilvering old mirrors. Laroche's passions arrived unannounced and ended explosively, like car bombs. When I first met him he lusted only for orchids, especially the wild orchids growing in Florida's Fakahatchee Strand. I spent most of the next two years hanging around with him, and at the end of those two years he had gotten rid of every single orchid he owned and swore that he would never own another orchid for as long as he lived. He is usually true to his word. Years ago, between his Ice Age fossils and his old mirrors, he went through a tropical-fish phase. At its peak, he had more than sixty fish tanks in his house and went skin-diving regularly to collect fish. Then the end came. He didn't gradually lose interest: he renounced fish and vowed he would never again collect them and, for that matter, he would never set foot in the ocean again. That was seventeen years ago. He has lived his whole life only a couple of feet west of the Atlantic, but he has not dipped a toe in it since then.

Laroche tends to sound like a Mr. Encyclopedia, but he did not have a rigorous formal education. He went to public school in North Miami; other than that, he is self-taught. Once in a while he gets wistful about the life he thinks he would have led if he had applied himself more conventionally. He believes he would have probably become a brain surgeon and that he would have made major brain-research breakthroughs and become rich and famous. Instead, he lives in a frayed Florida bungalow with his father and has always scratched out a living in unaverage ways. One of his greatest assets is optimism—that is, he sees a profitable outcome in practically every life situation, including disastrous ones. Years ago he spilled toxic pesticide into a cut on his hand and suffered permanent heart and liver damage from it. In his opinion, it was all for the best because he was able

¹lapidary—the cutting, polishing, or engraving of gemstones

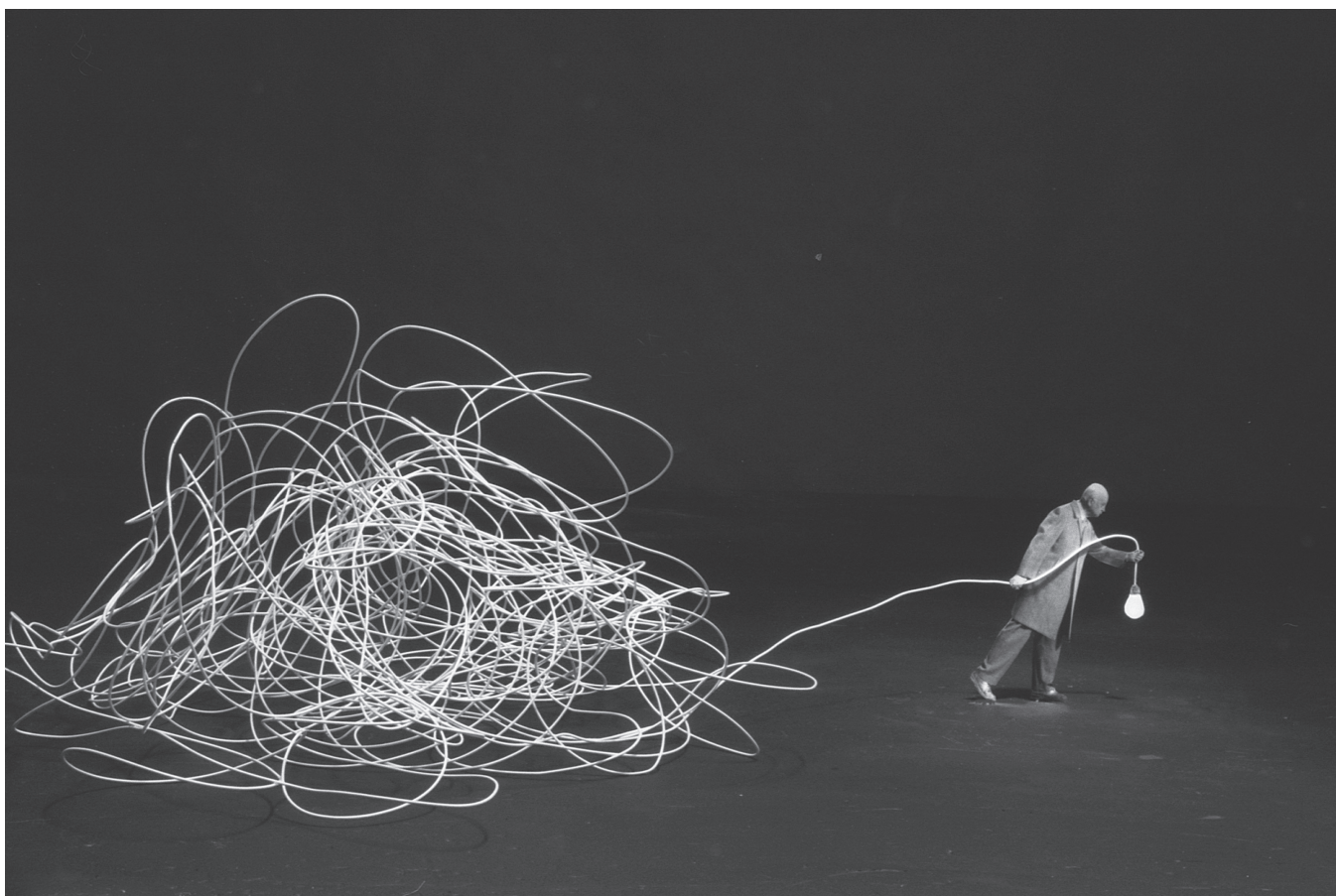
to sell an article about the experience (“Would You Die for Your Plants?”) to a gardening journal. When I first met him, he was working on a guide to growing plants at home. He told me he was going to advertise it in *High Times*, the marijuana magazine. He said the ad wouldn’t mention that marijuana plants grown according to his guide would never mature and therefore never be psychoactive. The guide was one of his all-time favorite projects. The way he saw it, he was going to make lots of money on it (always excellent) *plus* he would be encouraging kids to grow plants (very righteous) *plus* the missing information in the guide would keep these kids from getting stoned because the plants they would grow would be impotent (incalculably noble). This last fact was the aspect of the project he was proudest of, because he believed that once kids who bought the guide realized they’d wasted their money trying to do something illegal—namely, grow and smoke pot—they would also realize, thanks to John Laroche, that crime doesn’t pay. Schemes like these, folding virtue and criminality around profit, are Laroche’s specialty. Just when you have finally concluded that he is a run-of-the-mill crook, he unveils an ulterior and somewhat principled but always lucrative reason for his crookedness. He likes to describe himself as a shrewd bastard. He loves doing things the hard way, especially if it means that he gets to do what he wants to do but also gets to leave everyone else wondering how he managed to get away with it. He is quite an unusual person. He is also the most moral amoral person I’ve ever known.

I met John Laroche for the first time a few years ago, at the Collier County Courthouse in Naples, Florida. I was in Florida at the time because I had read a newspaper article reporting that a white man—Laroche—and three Seminole men had been arrested with rare orchids they had stolen out of a Florida swamp called the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, and I wanted to know more about the incident. The newspaper story was short but alluring. It described the Fakahatchee as a wild swamp near Naples filled with exceptional plants and trees, including some that don’t grow anywhere else in the United States and some that grow nowhere else in the world. All wild orchids are now considered endangered, and it is illegal to take them out of the woods anywhere, and particularly out of a state property like the Fakahatchee. According to the newspaper, Laroche was the ringleader of the poachers. He provided the arresting officers with the proper botanical varietal names for all the stolen plants and explained that the plants were bound for a laboratory where they were going to be cloned by the millions and then sold to orchid collectors around the world....

Sometimes this kind of story turns out to be something more, some glimpse of life that expands like those Japanese paper balls you drop in water and then after a moment they bloom into flowers, and the flower is so marvelous that you can’t believe there was a time when all you saw in front of you was a paper ball and a glass of water.

Susan Orlean

Diogène ou la Lucidité – Diogenes¹ or Lucidity, 2005



© Gilbert Garcin / Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery

¹Diogenes—a famous Cynic philosopher (404–323 BC), who lived with extreme simplicity, acted without shame, valued the power of reason, critiqued living by convention, and is reported to have lit a lamp in the middle of the day and wandered about saying: “I am looking for an honest man.”

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

You have been provided with three texts on pages 1 to 4. In “The Jackhammer Syndrome” by Al Purdy, the speaker recalls transcendent moments of elation as he walks about in his business suit. In the excerpt from *The Orchid Thief* by Susan Orlean, Laroche is characterized as an individual who pursues his personal obsessions while maintaining an unconventional code of conduct. In Gilbert Garcin’s *Diogenes or Lucidity*, a man in an overcoat and business suit carries a light bulb.

The Assignment

What do these texts suggest about the conflict between pursuing a personal desire and choosing to conform? Support your idea(s) with reference to one or more of the texts presented and to your previous knowledge and/or experience.

In your writing, you must

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

Example Scored Satisfactory–2 (S)

Written Work

I knew this talk would eventually come. It happened to my brother when he graduated two years ago. My father, a well-noted lawyer (and a compulsive liar), had wanted my brother to follow in his footsteps. He had different plans though. Tyler let his partner drag him around, distracting him from any post-secondary education. Now he lives in a condo about two blocks from home.

My day was just a little bit long. I was still recovering from the graduation ceremony (I was a little drunk.) and my bandmates had wanted to jam. I think that we have the potential to make it big, If my dad didn't get in the way. Soon after, I came home, relaxed a bit, then supper time rolled around.

"How was your day?" My father asked.

"Pretty boring. My buddies and I jammed today. We came up with some neat riffs!" I say as I picked the imaginary strings of an air guitar.

Example Scored Satisfactory–2 (S)

"Ah, I see. Have you thought about getting a job yet? Or better yet, a degree? I hear lawyers are in demand in the workforce."

"Well dad, don't get me wrong, but law isn't exactly what I'm looking for. Sure it pays well, but it's so... boring. You should know about that."

"I just want to see you do well in life. What are your goals?"

"The music scene is where my interests lie. I think that we have what it takes to make it big. I might even go to college to study theory. I think it's more rewarding than helping known criminals." ~~That, you just want to be a~~

~~ever~~ "Maybe that limelight you keep dreaming about will shed some light on the truth. The music business can be dangerous."

"Education to be a lawyer is expensive. How should one get the money for that?"

"I would be more than willing to pay for your tuition. Only if you desire to be a lawyer, though."

"You're the only one with that desire! I don't want to lie to bring the next meal on the table. I'm going to achieve stardom!"

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Satisfactory–2 (S)

With that, I wipe my mouth with my
napkin, and toss it on the plate. I excuse
myself from the table, and go upstairs. I sit
down on my bed, where I see my guitar
sitting on its throne. I pick up the guitar,
where I play and dream about the good life.

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—SATISFACTORY–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is generalized. • Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and relevant. • Support is adequate and clarifies the student’s ideas and impressions. 	<p>On the Initial Planning pages (1, 2) the student indicates a straightforward development of the short story based on a conflict between the father and the son. The exploration of the conflict between conformity and personal desire is generalized through the characters of the father who “had wanted my brother to follow in his footsteps” (3) and the son who “wanted to jam” (3). The father in the role of antagonist represents conformity while the son becomes the protagonist pursuing a personal desire.</p> <p>The description of the brother who “let his partner drag him around,” (3) and the protagonist’s own confidence in his “potential to make it big, If my dad didn’t get in the way” (3) supports the relevant perceptions that the child’s personal desires might be in conflict with the parent’s desire for conformity.</p> <p>The cliché characterization of the father as “a well-noted lawyer” (3) and the implied father-son conflict through the parenthetical comment “(and a compulsive liar)” (3) contributes to a straightforward exploration of the topic.</p> <p>Likewise, the direct characterization of the son as one who “might even go to college to study theory” (4) is qualified by the idea that the son’s goal is “to achieve stardom” (4). The perception that the son’s desire and confidence is sufficient to justify his decision to reject the father’s offer is further developed through the relevant idea: “The music scene is where my interests lie. I think that we have what it takes to make it big” (4). The father’s cynicism as evident in “The music business can be dangerous” (4), yet his desire for his son’s success, is reinforced by the detail “I would be more than willing to pay for your tuition. Only if you desire to be a lawyer though” (4). This straightforward development of stock characters and of the father-son conflict adequately clarifies the student’s ideas and impressions.</p> <p>The student provides adequate support for the son’s desires and values relating to his chosen profession, as in “I came home, relaxed a bit”(3), and “We came up with some neat riffs!” (3) and “I think that we have what it takes to make it big”(4). The student also provides adequate evidence of the father’s concerns with “What are your goals?” (4) and “The music business can be dangerous” (4).</p>

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—SATISFACTORY–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is apparent. • Stylistic choices are adequate and the student’s creation of tone is conventional. • The unifying effect is appropriately developed. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-top: 100px;">S</p>	<p>The characters are developed through their dialogue and through the use of the son as narrator. The son establishes an apparent voice with the opening sentence: “I knew this talk would eventually come” (3). A negative atmosphere is appropriately reinforced with “My day was just a little bit long” (3). The son’s response to his father’s inquiry “Pretty boring”(3) develops not just the tone of the story but their relationship. The nature of the conflict emerges further when in response to his father’s statement “lawyers are in demand” (4), the son replies: “Sure it pays well, but it’s so ... boring. You should know about that” (4). Such dialogue creates a conventional tone.</p> <p>Stylist choices are adequate as the voice of the protagonist reflects the stock characterization of a stereotypical teenager who, disdainful of a parent’s career, declares: “I think it’s more rewarding than helping known criminals” (4). The voice created for the father also remains apparent as this stock character lacks the articulate talents for oratory expected from a lawyer: “Only if you desire to be a lawyer though” (4).</p> <p>The unifying effect is appropriately developed with a conventional exposition as the characters and conflict are introduced through both the telling incident with the brother that happened “two years ago” (3) and through the rising action when the father comes home and asks the conventional question “‘How was your day?’” (3), leading to the conflict which is then complicated by the son’s disregard for his father’s life choices “but law isn’t exactly what I’m looking for” (4). The conflict is resolved in the protagonist’s mind: “I play and dream about the good life” (5).</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

The Leptons

All my life I have wanted to be in a rock and roll band. My parents utterly despise rock and roll music, for their musical sensibilities will forever be stuck in the long forgotten era of big band and swing. Ever since I could remember, it seemed I always had a guitar in my hand. I have been taking lessons since the age of 7, and over the course of my teenage years, developed a real knack for it. I have never had a girlfriend; my friends like to taunt me by saying that my guitar is my only love interest. The dismal truth is that they are right. To the dismay of my parents, three of my closest friends and I started a rock band in Grade 10. We called ourselves The Leptons (corresponding with a Physics concept we were learning about at the time). We were primarily influenced by classic rock legends like Led Zeppelin, The Velvet Underground, and Hendrix too. Things started out slowly, we practiced a lot and played a show every once in a while but that was about it. Now in Grade 12, we had started to play quite a few more shows and were beginning to amass a sizeable fan base. The question is, what happens after high school?

It was the month of November now and that time when one had to start applying for the post-secondary program of their choice was approaching faster than I could comprehend. My parents were keen on me pursuing a career as a geologist. Does a career in geology sound appealing to me? Not whatsoever. The career I really wanted to pursue more than anything was one in music, but I couldn't just tell my parents that for fear that their heads would explode with disbelief and shame. I knew that I needed to tell them of my true hopes and dreams; all that was left was to conceive the best possible way in which to do so. I decided it would be best to wait and approach them at a different time

(Page 2 of 4)

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

with a more diplomatic resolution in mind. So I settled on the 21st of November as the optimal day on which to break the news to them that I really didn't want to be a geologist, but a musician. Despite my eagerness towards rock and roll, I couldn't help but get the feeling that maybe geology did indeed represent the most stable future I could hope for. I quickly put the thought out of my mind and went on with my life as usual.

Over the course of November I thought long and hard about what I really wanted to do. I was still torn with indecision about my future. I felt like music and geology each had hold of one of my arms and were engaged in a vicious never-ending tug-of-war. The last few weeks had been pretty spectacular. The Leptons won the city's Junior Battle of the Bands competition, which was a pretty big deal to us. But at the same time my grades in Physics just kept going up and up to the point where I was practically top of my class. How I could do so well in a class that I loathed just utterly astounded me. Today was the 21st of November and that meant I had to talk with my parents. The future was upon me now; there was nothing I could do to stop it. The wheel had begun to turn. I had reached a fork in the road of life. Two paths lay at my feet, to the left my career in music and to the right my career in geology. Each had its pros and cons. Geology was wildly uninteresting but it represented a more stable future, and it was what my parents and all my teachers wanted me to pursue. Music is the love of my life but it is a high risk-high return type of situation. As I walked home from school that day I thought about the countless number of people that have also come directly between the conflicting forces of conformity and personal aspiration. To know what every other person had chosen wouldn't have eased the weight of the decision that was weighing heavily on my mind by even a little bit. As I walked in the door I knew what I had to do. I had finally taken a side. I knew what I had

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Proficient–2 (Pf)

to do to truly be happy in this life. The world will get by just fine without another geologist. The Leptons will live on forever.

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is purposeful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and considered. • Support is specific and strengthens the student’s ideas and impressions. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Pf</p>	<p>The student purposefully explores the topic by creating a narrative that involves a protagonist who comes to realize that “Even though conformity is a powerful force, one must pursue their own personal desires if they wish to find happiness in life” (1) and that “Conformity vs. personal desire is a neverending battle that could go either way” (1) as stated on the Initial Planning page.</p> <p>A narrative that juxtaposes the protagonist’s desire to become a rock musician, “a high risk-high return” (3) profession, rather than pursue the more conventional of “Two paths” (3) and become a geologist, is thoughtful. The implicit, but unmistakable, references to both John’s moment of regret over medical school in “The Orchid Thief” through “Geology was wildly uninteresting but it represented a more stable future” (3) and to the speaker’s tendency in “The Jackhammer Syndrome” to win at pool only when he stopped trying through “How could I do so well in a class that I loathed just utterly astounded me” (3) are considered.</p> <p>The student’s choice to contrast the protagonist’s musical tastes: “Led Zeppelin, The Velvet Underground, and Hendrix too” (2) with his parents’: “the long forgotten era of big band and swing” (2); the naming of his band “The Leptons (corresponding with a Physics concept we were learning about at the time)” (2); and his selection and repetition of a specific date: “the 21st of November as the optimal day on which to break the news to them that I really didn’t want to be a geologist, but a musician” (3) are all specific. The narrator’s feeling that “music and geology each had hold of one of my arms and were engaged in a vicious never-ending tug-of-war” (3), his reflection “about the countless number of people that have also come directly between the conflicting forces of conformity and personal aspiration” (3) and the recognition the “The world will get by just fine without another geologist” (4) strengthens the student’s two-pronged controlling idea as outlined on the Initial Planning page.</p>

**English Language Arts 30–1 January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment**

EXAMPLE PAPER—PROFICIENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (Pf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is distinct. • Stylistic choices are specific and the student’s creation of tone is competent. • The unifying effect is capably developed. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-top: 100px;">Pf</p>	<p>By choosing a first-person narrative, the student creates a distinctive voice for a protagonist faced with making a decision about his future, as in “that time when one had to start applying for the post-secondary program of their choice was approaching faster than I could comprehend” (2), and “I knew I needed to tell them of my true hopes and dreams” (2), and “Over the course of November I thought long and hard about what I really wanted to do” (3).</p> <p>The tone of uncertainty, as the protagonist works through the dilemma between pursuing his personal desire and conforming to his parents’ wishes is competently established with the questions: “The question is, what happens after high school?” (2) and “Does a career in geology sound appealing to me?” (2), as well as the statements: “the feeling that maybe geology did indeed represent the most stable future I could hope for” (3) and “I was still torn with indecision about my future” (3). Despite some awkward phrasing and cliché expressions, the student makes specific stylistic choices in diction: “My parents utterly despise rock and roll music” (2), “keen on me pursuing a career as a geologist” (2), “for fear that their heads would explode with disbelief and shame” (2), and “Geology was wildly uninteresting” (3). The student also demonstrates specific stylistic choices in syntax: “I have never had a girlfriend; my friends like to taunt me by saying that my guitar is my only love interest” (2), “I quickly put the thought out of my mind and went on with my life as usual” (3), and “Each had its pros and cons” (3).</p> <p>The student has capably developed a unifying effect, not only by weaving the thread of uncertainty throughout the narrative before the final realization: “As I walked in the door I knew what I had to do” (3), but also in the opening and closing lines: “All my life I have wanted to be in a rock and roll band” (2) and “The Leptons will live on forever” (4).</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

Diogenes sits along in his study. The light from his lamp dimly illuminates the shady room. The feather quivers in his hand as it races along the parchment as rain streaks the window in a continuous downpour. His mind is aflutter with all of his many ideas fighting to secure their spot as written words for the world to see. Sleep pulls at his eyelids and soon his writing hand begins to falter and he drifts into a deep slumber. The people of the village know of Diogenes. The old man who lives alone in the stone house on the corner of town. Some of the children, when telling ghost stories use Diogenes as the main personality. They speak of fabricated accounts of the birds the old man would catch out of mid air and brings them back to his study to open up their soft bellies and prod at their tiny inner workings and if he caught one of them alone at night he might give them the same treatment. The children's parents are nearly as insolent. Every time Diogenes leaves his home to walk the streets with his familiar lamp in his hand the women dart behind walls to occasionally peer through stained windows and the men snicker at the lonesome unfortunate fate the aged man has come to. Diogenes did not however, give any of his neighbours one reason to speak of him the way they do. Although he kept to himself, he was polite the rare occasions he was spoken to and he by no means caused an innocent bird harm never mind a child. He lived by his own means and his alone and that was the thing that made him different, the thing the townspeople feared.

The sun shone through the glass prying open the eyes of the sleeping man. He stands up slowly from his chair to awaken his stiff body. Diogenes reaches for the lamp on the table and

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

dons his coat. The morning air is crisp but the town is awake, people jostle on the streets getting ready for the day ahead of them. Diogenes holds the lamp high above his head. Once, one of the valiant young men of the town had asked him why he needed a lamp to see in broad daylight. Diogenes coolly replied that he was looking for an honest man, he had then held the lamp directly in the face of the young man. "Not you," he had said and carried on his way. Diogenes now recognizes that as soon as he was on the street and heading towards the heart of the town the people seemed to have evaporated. He carries on a while longer then decides to return home. His life studies lay splayed out on his desk. Notes on what it means to live true to one's own self, sincerely, truthfully and honestly. Notes on what it means to be an honest man. Looking down at his work he suddenly has an epiphany, maybe the man he was seeking was so hard to find because he merely lived in the night, so he waits for the blanket of darkness to fall on the town and embarks on his midnight discovery. The town sleeps as Diogenes holds the lamp in front of him lighting the way of his feet. Far up the street he hears a din, a shuffle of some sort. He is certain that it is the man he is looking for. Diogenes hurries as hasty as his aged joints will allow. There is a small stone structure he can see past the light of his lamp that the sound had come from and at last he reaches it. He ambles up to the window, lifts his lantern up to the glass and presses his forehead against its cold surface. At first he sees nothing but darkness, he steps back disappointed with himself for getting so enthused -but then, he sees him. The man he has always been searching for, the man who is honest. Diogenes can see the knowledge within the man's mind as an aura that radiates behind his head, a light powered by insightful ideas. He can feel his determined and self-assured character fill his own lungs with

(Page 4 of 5)

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Example Scored Excellent–2 (E)

strength. The man looking back at him is the one he has constantly been looking for, the man looking back at him is the one he has known all along.

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Literary Texts Assignment
EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Ideas and Impressions (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s exploration of the topic is insightful. • Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and discerning. • Support is precise and aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 48pt; margin-top: 100px;">E</p>	<p>The student utilizes the Initial Planning page to indicate that Diogenes is “living according to his own beliefs and not conforming to those that are more conventional” (1) as the central issue for an insightful exploration of the topic. In the short story, the student confidently asserts that Diogenes does not “give any of his neighbours one reason to speak of him the way they do” (3); rather, he “lived by his own means and his alone and that was the thing that made him different, the thing the townspeople feared” (3). Precise evidence of the townspeople’s fear is developed in their avoidance of Diogenes and his discerning recognition that “as soon as he was on the street and heading towards the heart of the town the people seemed to have evaporated” (4).</p> <p>Much of the student’s insightful exploration of the topic is achieved through implied references and through the precise use of symbolism that aptly reinforces the ideas and impressions. The student uses the light from “Diogene ou la Lucidite” as one of the controlling symbols for Diogenes’ personal desire that begins with Diogenes’ “light from his lamp dimly [illuminating] the shady room” (3). Using light as a motif for the quest for understanding is reinforced with the parallel motif of windows that begin with rain streaking down “in a continuous downpour” (3). The student’s confident and discerning development of perceptions is evident in Diogenes’ moment of understanding when the two symbols are brought together: Diogenes “lifts his lantern up to the glass and ... at first he sees nothing but darkness” (4). However, when “he steps back ... he sees him. The man he has always been searching for, the man who is honest” (4). The student’s planning indicates that Diogenes’ conflict in “resisting conformity” (2) would result in a realization of self-awareness and is aptly reinforced in the final lines: “The man looking back at him is the one he has constantly been looking for, the man looking back at him is the one he has known all along” (5). “The man” (5) is Diogenes himself.</p>

English Language Arts 30–1, January 2011
Personal Response to Literary Texts Assignment
EXAMPLE PAPER—EXCELLENT–2

SCORING CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Presentation (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice created by the student is convincing. • Stylistic choices are precise and the student’s creation of tone is adept. • The unifying effect is skillfully developed. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">E</p>	<p>The student employs precise detail and description to create the convincing voice of a character who the people in the village know as “The old man who lives alone in the stone house on the corner of town” (3). Furthering this sense of an alienated protagonist are details such as: “Some of the children, when telling ghost stories...speak of fabricated accounts of the birds” (3) that Diogenes allegedly “would catch out of mid air” (3) and then “open up their soft bellies and prod at their tiny inner workings” (3). The adults, too, contribute to Diogenes’ isolation, with the “women [who] dart behind walls to occasionally peer through stained windows and the men [who] snicker at the lonesome unfortunate fate the aged man has come to” (3).</p> <p>The student’s strong establishment of character also carries through in the development of other elements expected in a short story. In order to establish the setting, the student adeptly uses precise stylistic choices such as personification to create the atmosphere of a living town that in the “crisp” (4) morning air “is awake” (4) and “sleeps” (4) under the “blanket of darkness” (4). The student also uses precise diction, skillful parallel repetition and deliberate sentence fragments in describing Diogenes’ work: “His life studies lay splayed out on his desk. Notes on what it means to live true to one’s own self, sincerely, truthfully and honestly. Notes on what it means to be an honest man” (4).</p> <p>The student’s narrative, although lacking distinct paragraphing, employs clear time transitions and incorporates antecedent action when “Once, one of the valiant young men of the town had asked him why he needed a lamp to see in broad daylight” (4). The student also skillfully establishes a window motif and creates the contrasting patterns of light and dark, as well as sleep and waking, to further the unifying effect of the entire piece.</p>