



Response to Literary or Expository Text

Response to Literature: Short Story

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Quickwrite, Close Reading, SIFT, Think Aloud, Free Writing, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Questioning the Text, Notetaking, Think-Pair-Share, Brainstorming, Webbing, Outlining, Drafting, Sharing and Responding

Focus:

The purpose of a response-to-literature essay is to demonstrate thoughtful understanding of a literary passage. The writer crafts an analysis of the text and the author's stylistic technique and supports it with textual evidence to convey meaning to the reader.

Goal:

Write a multi-paragraph response-to-literature essay that:

- Presents effective introductory and concluding paragraphs.
- Analyzes literature and extends beyond a summary or literal analysis.
- Contains a controlling idea or thesis.
- Provides evidence from the text using embedded quotes.
- Analyzes the aesthetic effects of an author's use of stylistic or rhetorical devices.
- Includes relevant information and valid inferences.
- Uses an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- Uses a variety of rhetorical devices.
- Uses transitions between paragraphs.
- Uses a variety of sentence structures.

To achieve this goal, you will engage in a series of activities in which you work with your teacher and with your classmates to construct two model essays. You will use these models to write your own essay.

Activity 1: Discovering Elements of a Multi-Paragraph Response-to-Literature Essay

1. **Quickwrite:** Describe the purpose, organization, elements, and possible audiences of a response-to-literature essay. Describe your past experiences writing in this genre.

2. Conduct a **close reading** of Liliana Heker’s short story “The Stolen Party.” While reading, mark the text for elements of SIFT in order to analyze how the author uses symbolism, imagery, figurative language, and tone to convey theme. You are preparing to write a response-to-literature essay.

“SIFT” through the parts to comprehend the whole.

Literary Device	Examples from the Text	Interpretation: Consider the author’s use of this device. What is the effect on the reader?
<p>Symbols: Writers use symbols (an object, person, place, or action) to convey meaning beyond the literal object itself to provide insight on something larger, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value.</p>		
<p>Imagery: Writers use language to create sensory impressions and to evoke specific responses to characters, objects, events, or situations in their work.</p>		<p>What effect is the author trying to convey with these images?</p>
<p>Figures of Speech: Writers form images by using figures of speech such as similes, metaphor, personification, irony, allusion, etc.</p>	<p>Find examples of figurative language and other devices.</p>	<p>What effect is the author trying to convey with these figures of speech?</p>
<p>Tone/Theme: A close examination of word choice, imagery, and detail reveals the author’s attitude (tone) toward the conflict and contributes to the reader’s understanding.</p>	<p>Discuss how all the devices reveal tone and theme.</p>	<p>What effect is the author trying to convey with this tone?</p>

A Deeper Analysis of Theme

When analyzing a text for the theme the author is conveying to the reader through the text, it is important that the analysis extends meaning beyond a summary or literal understanding. Use levels of questions to consider three levels of meaning to deepen analysis of theme using the following guidelines:

- **Literal meaning:** What is the central idea or main message about life presented in the text?
- **Interpretive meaning:** What are the personal connections (e.g., what you get out of the story personally in relation to your own life) or moral considerations (e.g., what the story teaches us about how people relate to one another and the world we live in).
- **Universal meaning:** What does the text reveal to the reader about people, life, and issues as they work together in the universe?

3. Identify and discuss possible themes in “The Stolen Party.”

Literal:

Moral:

Universal:

4. Use a few words to identify the subject or conflict of the short story.

Heker’s short story, “The Stolen Party,” is about...

Activity 2: Writing a Class Essay

Prompt: Based on a close reading of Liliana Heker’s short story “The Stolen Party,” write a response-to-literature essay analyzing how the writer uses at least two literary devices and/or stylistic techniques to convey a theme to the reader. Be sure the essay meets the requirements listed in the goal statement for writing an effective multi-paragraph response-to-literature essay.

Prewriting

1. Explore all aspects of the prompt. Based on your reading and SIFT discussion of the story, brainstorm ideas about the theme and what kind of literary devices Heker uses to tell her story.
2. In order to create an effective draft, you will need a thesis to provide focus for the essay. A thesis statement has two purposes: to express a central opinion to be proven and to provide direction as to how the writer intends to show or develop the opinion. An effective thesis should include an opinion to be proven; it is not a fact. Consider a three-part process when developing a working thesis:
 - Define or identify the **task** set by the prompt.
 - Consider **what** needs to be addressed in the response.
 - Decide **how** to best respond.

Generate a working thesis statement, a one-sentence statement that expresses the point you will make about the subject of your essay.

Heker uses _____ and _____
literary device *literary device*
to convey _____.
theme

Preliminary Outline

3. Now that you have a thesis, consider an effective order for presenting your ideas that is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of your topic. Before drafting, organize the main ideas generated from prewriting to support your thesis in a preliminary topic sentence outline:
 - I. Thesis
 - A. Topic Sentence 1
 1. Examples, Details, Quotes
 - B. Topic Sentence 2
 1. Examples, Details, Quotes

Body Paragraphs

A body paragraph has these elements:

- **Topic sentence:** A sentence that has a subject and an opinion that works directly to support the thesis.

- **Transitions:** Words and phrases used to connect ideas within and between paragraphs (e.g., *for example, for instance*).
- **Supporting information:** Textual evidence in the form of the most appropriate examples and/or details.
- **Commentary:** Sentences that explain how the information is relevant to the thesis/topic sentence. These sentences are vital as they serve to reflect, analyze, explain, and interpret. Sentences of commentary also bring a sense of closure to the paragraph.

Integrating Quotations

4. On a separate sheet of paper, draft the body paragraphs and include a quotation where appropriate from Heker's text. Consider using the following process to embed a quote into your body paragraph smoothly.
 - **Introduce the quote** (use a transition).
 - **Use the quote** (use an appropriate quote from the text and be sure to place quotation marks around the author's words).
 - **Explain the quote** (explain how the quote supports your topic sentence).

Now that you have co-constructed a thesis statement and body paragraphs, you are ready to create the introduction and conclusion of the essay.

Introduction and Conclusion

Introductory paragraphs consist of:

- A **hook/lead:** Question, Quote, Anecdote, or Statement of Intrigue (**QQAS**) that is related to the topic. If you ask a question, answer it; if you use a quote, analyze it; if you use an anecdote or statement of intrigue, explain it.
 - A connection between the QQAS and the thesis using a TAG (title, author, genre) statement (e.g., Heker's short story "The Stolen Party" conveys....).
 - **Thesis statement** describing a subject and an opinion.
5. Concluding paragraphs bring a sense of closure to the essay by synthesizing insights presented in the text and examining the larger ramifications of those ideas. Use levels of questions to guide your thinking in crafting a conclusion:
 - What did you say? (Literal)
 - What does it mean? (Interpretive)
 - Why does it matter? (Universal)

Revising

6. Now that the class essay has been drafted, consider the language used to convey ideas. A writer makes stylistic choices in language to achieve an intended effect. Revise the class essay to incorporate some or all of the following rhetorical devices.

One stylistic choice writers often make is incorporating **rhetorical devices**. Well-chosen rhetorical devices show ideas in interesting ways and help your ideas have a lasting effect on your reader. Examples of rhetorical devices are parallelism, analogy, rhetorical questions, allusion, and anaphora.

- **Parallelism** is using the same structure for similar parts of a sentence. Use parallelism to add balance, rhythm, and clarity to a sentence. Examples: *I stand here today, grateful for clean air to breathe, humbled by enough food to eat, and thankful for fresh water to drink.* (parallel adjectives)
The ecologist's briefcase held three environmentally friendly notebooks, two biodegradable writing utensils, and one recyclable water bottle. (parallel objects)
- An **analogy** compares two things and expresses the relationship between them. Use an analogy to explain or clarify an idea or object. Example: *My need to recycle is like my need for food and water.*
- A **rhetorical question** is one for which the writer expects no reply, or the writer clearly directs the reader to one desired reply. Use rhetorical questions to emphasize an idea or to draw a conclusion from the facts. A rhetorical question may help remind your reader of a main point. Example: *Is that truly what we want for the environment? How can these facts lie?*
- **Allusion** is the direct or indirect reference to a person, place, or event in history, artwork, or literature that the writer expects the reader to recognize. Writers use an allusion to extend meaning on a subject; for example, *Jan has a good voice, but her talent will not land her a spot on American Idol.*
- **Anaphora** is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of a clause. Writers use anaphora to emphasize an idea's importance; for example, *For those writers who want to be read, for those writers who want to be published, for those writers who want to be accepted, I say, never give up.*

Analyzing Rhetorical Devices for Effect

7. Select a rhetorical device from the short story studied in class that you thought was particularly effective, and explain how or why the rhetorical device affects the reader.
8. Choose a sentence from your own draft and revise it to include or refine a rhetorical device. Share your revised sentence with a partner and discuss the effect it has on your reader. Revise as necessary to achieve your intended effect.

Coherence

9. Revise the essay for **coherence**. A coherent essay presents ideas that tie together and flow smoothly, making the essay easy to follow. Create coherence by using transitional words within and between paragraphs and by using varied sentence structures. Review your draft and add appropriate transitions.
 - **Transitions to show comparison and contrast:** *similarly, on the other hand, in contrast, different from, like, unlike, same as, in the same way, nevertheless, likewise, by contrast, conversely*
 - **Transitions to show examples:** *for example, for instance, in this case, on this occasion, in this situation, to demonstrate, take the case of, as an illustration, to illustrate this point*
 - **Transitions to prove:** *because, since, for the same reason, obviously, evidently, furthermore, besides, indeed, in fact, in any case*

Varied Sentence Structure

10. Review your draft to see where you can vary your sentence structure in your paragraphs by using different sentence types to add interest and bring balance and emphasis to your writing.
 - A **compound sentence** consists of two more independent clauses, usually joined by a conjunction (*and, but for, nor, or, so, yet*). Use a semicolon between parts of a compound sentence if they are not joined by a conjunction. Example: *The house is beautiful, and its lawn seems to stretch for miles.*
 - A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. Example: *Although the house is small, its charm is grand.*
 - A **compound-complex sentence** contains two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. Example: *The house is beautiful, and although its roof was replaced last summer, it maintains its original charm.*
 - An **appositive** is a noun or noun phrase that adds information to sentences by renaming nouns (person, place, or thing). Appositives and appositive phrases are located next to the nouns that they rename and are offset by a dash or commas.
 - **Appositive using commas:** The raccoon, a midnight scavenger who roams campsites looking for food, can be a destructive nuisance.
 - **Appositive using a dash:** The qualities of a writer’s images—the details, colors, shapes, and movement—derive from visual perception. — Harry Noden

Analyzing Sentences for Effect or Purpose

11. Select a sentence pattern from the short story studied in class that you thought was particularly effective and explain how or why the structure of the sentence affects the reader.
12. Choose a sentence from your own draft and revise it to include or refine a rhetorical device. Share your revised sentence with a partner and discuss the effect it has on your reader. Continue to revise it as necessary to achieve your intended effect.
13. Reflection: What additional support do you need in writing a response-to-literature essay?

Activity 3: Writing an Essay with Peers

Prompt: Write a response-to-literature essay analyzing how the writer uses at least two literary devices and/or stylistic techniques to convey meaning or theme. Be sure the essay meets the requirements listed in the goal statement for writing an effective multi-paragraph response-to-literature essay.

Generating Content

1. In your writing group, review and make meaning from the prompt.
2. Next, read Eugenia Collier’s short story “Marigolds,” located in your SpringBoard book on page 122. Use the SIFT strategy to analyze the text.

3. Use a prewriting strategy to explore ideas you generate from the prompt. Select the best ideas from your prewriting to construct a working thesis for your essay.
4. Co-construct a preliminary outline for your essay that includes your thesis and supporting topic sentences with relevant examples and details.

Drafting

5. Review the ideas from your prewriting and co-construct a draft of your body paragraphs. Where appropriate, embed quotes from the short story in your essay.
6. Read your body paragraphs and discuss an effective way to introduce and conclude your key ideas. Use a prewriting strategy to generate a draft that demonstrates the parts of effective introductions (e.g., hook/lead, connection, and thesis) and conclusions (response to the levels of questions).

Revising

7. Reread the goal of this workshop. Use the criteria as a checklist for revision. Read aloud your draft to your writing group, and gather feedback based on the criteria of an effective response-to-literature essay.
8. Review your draft for language use. Select ideas to emphasize by incorporating appropriate rhetorical devices, such as appositives and parallelism.
9. Review your draft for coherence:
 - Discuss which transitions can be used to link ideas effectively within and between your body paragraphs. Incorporate at least two into your draft.
 - Discuss ways to revise your draft to enhance style by adding rhetorical devices here appropriate.
 - If your draft contains too many simple, short sentences, try combining them. Discuss sentences that could be improved for clarity or to provide better description. Revise at least three sentences to make a compound, a complex, and a compound-complex sentence.

Editing for Publication

10. Read your draft and peer edit to correct errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
11. Discuss the key ideas present in your essay and generate a list of potentially creative titles. Rank them and select one. Place a title at the top of your essay.

Activity 4: Independent Writing

Prompt: Choose a short story of interest to you, and write a response-to-literature essay. Analyze the text to examine how the writer uses at least two literary devices and/or stylistic techniques to convey meaning or theme. Be sure the essay meets the requirements listed in the goal statement for writing an effective multi-paragraph response-to-literature essay.

Writing Workshop 9

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SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging
Development of Ideas	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains a focused and insightful thesis skillfully incorporates details and quotes from the text that enhance the thesis analyzes and uses sophisticated commentary that relates back to the thesis. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains a focused thesis skillfully incorporates details from the text that support the writer’s position analyzes and uses commentary that relates back to the thesis. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains a limited thesis contains few, if any, supporting quotes contains superficial analysis or states the obvious.
Organizational Structure	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents an organizational structure that engages and guides the reader with smooth transitions that establish strong connections between and among ideas creates a sustained focus that yields a coherent and unified essay. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains an organizational structure that is appropriate to the purpose and links ideas with transitional elements generally maintains a focus that produces a clear and consistent essay. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains an organization that is incomplete or lacking in cohesion includes ideas or evidence that interfere with the focus and coherence of the essay.
Use of Language	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses effective and sophisticated diction and sentence variety to convey a clear and commanding understanding of ideas uses language that contributes to the rhetorical effectiveness of the essay contains few or no errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, or capitalization. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses purposeful diction and sentence variety to convey ideas appropriately uses language effectively to support the writer’s purpose may contain minor errors that do not detract from the general effectiveness of the essay or interfere with meaning. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses inappropriate or inadequate diction and sentence variety to convey ideas with clarity and purpose uses language inappropriately or in a way that does not support the writer’s purpose contains errors that interfere with meaning and detract from the effectiveness of the essay.
Writing Process	The composition shows careful revision for coherence and style and is ready for publication.	The composition shows revision for coherence and style and is ready for publication.	The composition shows limited revision for coherence or style and is not ready for publication.