

Sample E

[1] How do you reconcile your former understanding of someone with the new person she appears to be? In the given passage, Nathaniel Hawthorne's narrator struggles to accept the seemingly new version of Zenobia, and frustrated with the superficiality she employs, attempts to break her façade and to gauge a more honest understanding of who she has become. Through the use of strongly unfavorable diction to underscore Zenobia's unpleasant and false disposition and repeated insinuations on her actions as performance, Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia as one of contempt and disapproval.

[2] The passage opens with the narrator observing, in awe, the luxuries of Zenobia's home. It is beautiful, "the fulfillment of every fantasy of the imagination," but although the narrator is "dazzled," he is uneasy and feels a "bitter sense of shame." Hawthorne magnifies this feeling of shame through terms such as "costly self-indulgence" and "redundance of personal ornament," the narrator expresses his disapproval of Zenobia's overly-indulgent lifestyle, which is fundamentally different from the values of his own community. He further states his dislike of Zenobia when he says he "malevolently [beholds] her true character," implying Zenobia has been hiding her true personality. By claiming she is a "passionate, luxurious" woman "lacking simplicity, not deeply refined, incapable of pure and perfect taste," the narrator harshly criticizes her debauchery and makes evident his disapproval.

[3] Throughout the passage, the narrator's contempt for Zenobia is also stated by his criticism of her superficiality. He describes her as an "illusion," "a great action," underscoring her habit of hiding her true self and authentic emotions. The narrator repeatedly states that Zenobia "[seems] to be acting" and wonders when, or if ever, he has "beheld [her] in her truest attitude." Evidently, this defining falseness causes the narrator to both distrust and detest Zenobia. He longs to witness and genuine reaction from her, whether good or bad, simply to learn if she is capable and willing of any form of emotional vulnerability. This thirst for "a glimpse of something true" reveals his struggle to accept this new version of the woman he once knew, who has now become "self-complacent, condescending," and inauthentic.

[4] Throughout the passage, the narrator's criticism of Zenobia and her extravagant lifestyle reveal his attitude towards her to be one of extreme disapproval and contempt. It is clear that he is deeply frustrated at her false exterior and long for her to abandon such toxic superficiality and unabashedly expose her true character. Although the narrator momentarily succeeds in getting Zenobia to "show [him] the true flesh and blood of her heart," however, she quickly returns to her "proud" and "self-processed" act and shows that she desires to continue her life of pretense.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample I

[1] There is often a great divide in society between the selfish and the selfless. It takes a noble courage and sometimes self sacrifice to be selfless, especially because it can be deliciously easy to give in to selfishness. Hawthorne, in these two characters, has created an analysis of both sides options and revealed how one looks to the other.

[2] The narrator, a selfless character living in equality on the Blithedale farm, appears at first lost in the opulence and decadence of Zenobia's house. She struggles at first to "bear up against the effect which Zenobia sought to impose on [her]". Though disgusted by the excess of luxury, the narrator cares briefly to the conflicting sides with herself, and momentarily accepts the belief that Zenobia has every right to "make herself as gorgeous as she pleased," and indulge herself however she wishes. Though the narrator begins confused by the "illusion" and act that Zenobia puts on, she is able to resolve her internal conflict.

[3] The shift and internal resolution that the narrator experiences create a resolution in her attitude towards Zenobia. Where at first she was complacent in her acceptance of Zenobia's opulent lifestyle, she turns scornful and resentful as she regains control over Zenobia's proud aura and farad. She even calls to exorcise her of the connotated demonic clutches of this selfishness that she has given into. Though disdainful of Zenobia's luxurious life, the narrator believes that deep down she is ashamed of this selfishness, and endeavors to catch a "glimpse of something true; some nature, some passion, no matter whether right or wrong, provided it were real". And thus with the execution of this endeavor, the narrator's ultimate view of Zenobia is reached. The metaphor of lightening and flame used to describe Zenobia's actions reveal not only the power of her true emotions, but also the sense of victory the narrator feels in her selfrighteousness.

[4] The narrator, though portrayed as selfless, is not perfect in her opinions, and Zenobia's selfishness is not wholly consuming either. The shifts of the narrators attitudes towards Zenobia, first submissive and accepting, then irritated, and lastly righteous and sure, help create the realization that labels, such as selfish or selfless, are not perfect, and people cannot be defined by just one word.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample F

[1] As a species, humans are proud. They are often selfish, narrow minded, and, despite strong efforts to prove otherwise, morally unsound. This is not to say that mankind is evil, or bad, but simply human: a species that is characterizes by these and many more truths. This excerpt from Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1852 novel creates a compelling display on mankind's view of human nature. The narrator's attitude towards their companion, Zenobia, is characterized by their view of her as lofty and exuberant. The narrator is digusted by the mask she wears to hide her true nature. Hawthorne employs disaproving diction and a scornful tone to convey the narrators cold, distasteful attitude towards Zenobia in this excerpt.

[2] The narrator describes their _____ on Zenobia's current situation as being "self-indulgent," "brillant", & "costly." The diction used creates a sense that the narrator is in are of what Zenobia has surrounded herself with. However, they also see these furnishings as a reflection on Zenobia being "proud," "imposing" and "incapable of pure and perfect taste." Through the diction used to describe Zenobia's ornate ornamentations, it is clear that the narrator sees them as too beautiful and impressive. They stated that the narrator saw through the "gorgeousness with which she [Zenobia] had surrounded herself" to her true nature, of which she was using the beauty as a mask to hide.

[3] The tone with which the narrator addresses Zenobia is scornful, showing their dissaproval of the beautiful mask & mantle she has adorned and hidden herself with. They speek to her with an "inated" tone, and cooly scorns her so that she reveals her true nature is an unbecoming, passionate moment. The narrator characterizes Zenobia as being "proud", "self-possessed", "lacking simplicity" and "condescending" Through their tone & disaproving diction it is clear that the narrator is dissatisfied and disgusted by Zenobias' true nature.

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Question 2: Prose Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample A

[1] In the given by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the two contrasting characters of the narrator and Zenobia undoubtedly have a complex and deeply developed relationship. These complexities stem mainly from the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia and their corresponding actions, most clearly expressed through Hawthorne's use of parallel contrasts and character monologue. It is through these techniques that it is revealed that although the narrator is fond of Zenobia, they are also criticizing of the choices she has made.

[2] The beauty of the room in which the characters are found in is the main focus of the first paragraph. It is described as "gorgeous" and as having many "shapes of luxury", most notably expensive vases and chandeliers. In the same paragraph, the farm house which the pair come from is described as "homely", containing only a "few wicker chairs in the best parlor," providing a stark contrast to the marble and riches of the new house. This description is paralleled with the similar contrast of Zenobia constantly being described as "gorgeous" in following paragraphs and the assumed plainness of the narrator having from the farmhouse. This description of Zenobia unveils the narrator's fondness for her (or at least her appearance) However his disdain for the house as expressed through the narrator preferring to stay at the farm and suggesting Zenobia do the same, reflects his disdain for her actions. In this case, the farm is representative of the narrator and the lavish house of Zenobia, so therefore, the narrator's critique of Zenobia's excessive wants.

[3] In paragraphs 7 and 8 after a brief conversation between characters, the narrator is not afraid to voice his criticism. Hawthorne has him do so in a brief monologue directed at Zenobia. It is within this monologue that his true feelings come out, and have a strong affect on Zenobia's state, causing her to become flustered. By having the narrator express his criticism in the form of a monologue, a stronger effect is delivered on the audience, and, in this case, Zenobia. This reflects the narrator's strong attitude towards Zenobia.

[4] Ultimately, the narrator does not approve of Zenobia's delusion of leaving the farm to live a luxurious life, and he does not allow his high opinion of her and her beauty prevent him from speaking his true feelings on the subject in a way that reflects how he truly feels about the situation.

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Sample D

[1] In the following interchange, excerpted from Nathaniel Hawthorne novel portrays the narrator's love and obsession for Zenobia. Throughout the section, the author uses a lot of diction and imagery to signify the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia.

[2] The first sentence of the interchange caught the narrator's eye for Zenobia. "Her manner bewildered me" and being "dazzled by the brilliancy of the room" already shows the reader that Zenobia stands out with her well-being and wealth. The diction used is positive towards Zenobia. She has a "proud figure", "passionate", "luxurious", "lack of simplicity". Everything about Zenobia that the narrator thinks is perfect. The narrators attitude towards her is compelling since "she was too powerful for all my opposing struggles". Zenobia didn't think too much of others since she already had everything. However, her god-like figure made the narrator curious about her true well-being. If all of this is fake and if she has another side. He wanted to know if "she seemed to be acting". Soon enough with the diction, it soon broke her.

[3] The imagery in this interchange is full with rich details. The description throughout this section shows how powerful Zenobia seems and how wealth controls one-self. Although the narrator doesn't say much about wealth, the first paragraph of the interchange says it all. Zenobia wasn't introduced yet but the detail of the Blithedale farm already hinted out how hi attitude was going to be towards her. It starts with the chandelier that glowed with so many lights. The furniture was "exceedingly rich". It was fresh and it chocked the narrator that "the fulfillment of every fantasy of an imagination", something everybody dreams of. The pictures, marbles, vases etc were everything that's luxurious. It revelled the "methods of costly self-indulgence and splendid ease". The imagery of the form shows the wealth and power Zenobia has.

[4] Nathaniel Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia through the use of literary techniques. Two big devices were diction and imagery with the help of the narrators thoughts and emotions towards Zenobia.

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Sample Student Responses

Sample B

[1] Nathaniel Hawthorne shows the way the narrator feels about Zenobia in the se few paragraphs. The narrator feels as though Zenobia may not be entirely authentic. He feels spite towards her and her new life after Blithedale. Hawthorne is able to portray these feelings through the use of first person point of view and sophisticated diction. These literary techniques establish the tense tone of the excerpt.

[2] The first person point of view gives the reader insight on how they narrator is feeling. The reader is able to see the betrayal and disgust the narrator begins to feel for Zenobia and the façade she is attempting to create. He does not know the tree Zenobia and even states, “To this day, however, I hardly know whether I then beheld Zenobia in her truest attitude, or whether that were the truer one in which she had presented herself at Blithedale.” The narrator is unaware of what Zenobia is truly like. The narrator is openly discussing his feelings towards Zenobia. He seems to believe that she is fake.

Sample C

[1] In the excerpt of the novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hawthorne portrayed the narrator’s attitude twords Zenobia as a liar or as an unhoneat person through the use of the literary techniques such as imagery and violent diction.

[2] Hawthorne’s use of imagery is vital twords his attitude. For example in the last paragraph when he gives the reader a clear image of how Zenobia looks when he discovers the truth about her.