

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

(Louise Erdrich, *The Beet Queen*)

The score should reflect the quality of the essay as a whole — its content, style, and mechanics. **Reward the students for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

9–8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children through such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view. The essays make a strong case for their interpretation of the impact of the environment on the two children. They may consider a variety of literary devices, and they engage the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear and effectively organized. Essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.

7–6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children. The writers provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than 9–8 essays, the ideas are presented with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Essays scored a 7 present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but they tend to be superficial or thin in their analysis of how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children through such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view. While the essays contain some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the analysis of the impact of the environment or the use of literary devices may be slight, and support from the passage may tend toward summary or paraphrase. While these essays demonstrate adequate control of language, they may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7–6 essays.

4–3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; the essays may ignore the impact of the environment on the two children or the use of literary devices. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

2–1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the essays in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the passage.

0 These essays give a response that is completely off topic or inadequate; there may be some mark or a drawing or a brief reference to the task.

— These essays are entirely blank.

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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2A
10f4

Environment, not just society and culture, play a key factor on the emotional impact of an individual. In Louise Erdrich's novel, "The Beet Queen", Erdrich utilizes the literary techniques of specific selection of detail and imagery to depict the bleak tone of the environment. As such, the hopelessness and lack of beauty impacts the children negatively towards their environment, leaving them without hope or comfort.

The emphasis on imagery is an intended literary technique by Erdrich to depict the bleak impact the environment has on the children. When Karl and Mary arrive in Agass, the town is depicted as very mundane, "They walked east, down the dirt road, reading the signs on each false-front clapboard as they passed" (Erdrich 32-35). Erdrich utilizes a relatively large amount of imagery, rather than a specific selection of detail, to depict the environmental impact. By categorizing the environment as a wide-array of mundanity rather than possessing individual characteristics, the environment emits a bleak, depressing outlook on the future. When the stores end, the equally identical, random housing begins, "A string of houses, weathered gray or peeling gray paint, with dogs tied to their porches, began" (Erdrich 39-40). Erdrich's literary imagery depicts the mundane



bleak environment in front of the children. The negativity does not seem to cause or differentiate, a menacing image of a never-ending bleak environment. Rather than possessing unique characteristics, the environment possesses conformed, familiar details that Endlich utilizes to depict the hopelessness brought onto the children by their environment.

Amidst the bleak imagery, Endlich also utilizes the literary technique of specific selection of one important detail to emphasize how the environment impacts the kids. When Karl spots the one beautiful tree, differentiating from the bleak environment, he is unable to stop himself from clinging to it, "long transfixed motion he flung to the tree and buried his face in the white petals" (Endlich 48-49). The tree, a part of the environment, brings hope and euphoria to Karl, impacting him emotionally. Endlich emphasizes the tree in specific detail, "Such a small tree" (Endlich 63), from its white petals and its perfume, much more than anything else in her piece. By the selection of a specific detail, Endlich utilizes the tree as a symbol of hope to Karl, bringing him emotional euphoria, affecting his outlook on his situation and the environment around him. →

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Through Erdrich's emphasis on the mundane imagery and spectrally focusing on details, she conveys the tone of the piece, a bleak, hopeless situation, and the impact on the children. As Karl is taken in by the sudden hope of the environment, he is suddenly about to be ripped away from it. Karl attempts to take the hope with him, "... as to seize the blossoms, Karl reached out and tore a branch from the tree" (Erdrich 60-62). The environment plays an impact on the children by causing Karl to act irrationally in desperation to rid himself of his dark future. Erdrich's tone, however, depicts the environment's inevitable hopelessness, as any chance of happiness is taken away, "she saw that there were no more blossoms" (Erdrich 67-68). Rather than staying alive, the petals fall from the branch and the tone is secured, conforming it to the rest of the bleak environment. Seeing this inevitable hopelessness in the tone and environment causes an emotional impact on the children. When faced with a decision, Karl reacts out of impulsive emotion, "But Karl ran back to the boxcar and the town" (Erdrich 73-74). The bleak tone of the piece is evident in the environment and Karl is aware that it is inevitably bleak

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Rather than staying, the environment impacts him emotionally through the death of all hope and he flees. Through Erdrich's bleak tone, the hopeless environment impacts the children with extreme emotion.

Surroundings and environment impact emotion. In Erdrich's "The Beet Queen", her use of literary devices such as imagery, selection of detail and tone present a bleak environment that impacts the children with a feeling of hopelessness.

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Question 2

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Karl and Mary Adare, although siblings, are very different people. Mary is a very simple, dispassionate person, while Karl is easily swayed and distracted by things of nature. Louise Erdrich uses devices such as tone, imagery, detail, and the narrator's objective point of view to contrast the siblings in their new environment.

Mary Adare's practical and ordinary personality match the formulaic model of the town they arrive to. Erdrich uses colloquial language to convey the simplistic nature of Argus. "Between the buildings there was only bare horizon for her to see, and from time to time men crossing it." There is irony in that although "times were generally much better in Eastern Dakota than in most places," there is still a sense of decay in the gray houses and the barren town. Mary is unfazed by the town. Mary focuses on whatever task is at hand and pays no mind to things that may distract her. Mary does not seem to care about the monotonous similarity in the town, while her brother, despite the cold and exhaustion of their journey, clings to the first beautiful thing he sees.

Erdrich uses ordinary detail paired with vivid imagery to show the children's reactions. The reader is able to easily imagine the setting through the explicit detail given. "The tree drew him with its delicate perfume." The personification



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of the tree shows ~~the~~ tree and Karl's singularity.

"Many trudged solidly forward, hardly glancing at it, but Karl stopped" to look at the "one tree, weak, a scratch of light against the gray of everything else, tossed in a film of blossoms." The two different paths taken regarding the tree show the stark contrast in Karl and Mary's personalities.

The gray town of Argus happily welcomed Mary into its routine lifestyle, while it drove Karl away back to the train. Argus is familiar with gaining and losing things quickly due to the railroad. Once the freezing children arrive in the town, one coincides with the mundane reality of the town, while the other is scared away.

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From this excerpt, the impact on the two children is evident based on the way they act, ^{and} the imagery. ~~and~~ The children are clearly affected by the bad times they've endured from where they came.

The kids act strangely numb to the world's decrepid nature, most likely referring to their hardships back home. They don't seem to notice all the dirty and rusty places they're walking past, and don't seem to care all that much about scraping themselves coming out of the boxcar.

The imagery is also evident in showing this impact. It focuses on ~~deary~~ dreary, unappealing notions, such as peeling paint and the ~~over~~ overuse of the color grey. The greatest example of showing the impact of their environment would be when Karl becomes mesmerized by the tree. In a place that is so grey and dreary, and also enduring what was probably an equivalent life, the tree, full of life and color, seduces him instantly, playing ~~to~~ to the previous impact of their environment. The selection of details are also useful ~~to~~ in showing how much of an effect the tree had on Karl. The excerpt leaves out all pleasant notions and details up until the tree. The tree is the one thing pleasant about their trips. Even though the tree was so small, Karl hadn't ^{probably} ~~endured~~ seen anything like it in so long, thus his reaction. This was most likely the reason for him going back into the boxcar. The environment plays a large role in the excerpt, it creates the characters' motivations, and their emotions and



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Overall has a large impact on the children.

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Question 2

Overview

Students were asked to read carefully an early passage from Louise Erdrich's 1986 novel *The Beet Queen* and to write a well-developed essay analyzing how devices such as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view aided Erdrich in depicting the impact of the environment on the two children.

In the free-response prose question, students were presented with the challenge of analyzing how the author employed literary devices to introduce and establish characters. In the case of the children, Karl and Mary, though they are relatively young (14 and 11, respectively), complexities of character are already discernible through their varied responses to their circumstances and surroundings. Many students could quickly grasp these complexities and could analyze the presentation of the characters through apt discussions of suggested devices, though many ventured beyond the list to offer their own take on devices at work in the passage. In sum, the prose question was designed to assess students' ability to read closely, to extract pertinent details, and to write well about the passage within the context of the prompt.

Sample: 2A

Score: 7

This competent upper-half essay focuses from the outset on the bleakness and uniformity of the environment. The essay initially seems to lack an awareness that the environment affects Karl and Mary differently, e.g., "the hopelessness and lack of beauty impacts [*sic*] the children negatively towards their environment." However, the essay goes on to reference details such as the blossoms on the tree to offer the insight that "[t]he tree, a part of the environment [*sic*], brings hope and euphoria to Karl, impacting him emotionally." The essay develops this idea further and sustains it, suggesting that "[a]s Karl is taken in by the sudden hope of the environment, he is suddenly about to be ripped away from it. Karl attempts to take the hope with him." The essay perceptively characterizes Karl's behavior as irrational and desperate. Although this essay is not as thorough in its analysis as one would expect to see in the very top range on the scoring guide, or as comprehensive in identifying and analyzing literary devices that show the different responses of the two children to their environment, it is perceptive. While the composition contains some lapses in syntax and word choice, it does present ideas with clarity and control.

Sample: 2B

Score: 5

This mid-range essay immediately establishes that Mary and Karl respond to the environment differently and swiftly characterizes the two children to show that their responses to the environment are bound up with their distinct personalities: "Mary is a very simple, dispassionate person, while Karl is easily swayed and distracted by things of nature." Although the essay's reading of the children's responses is plausible, it is oversimplified (e.g., "Mary is unfazed by the town"). The essay makes only superficial observations such as "Erdrich [*sic*] uses colloquial language to convey the simplistic nature of Argus" without providing convincing supporting evidence, as it proceeds to summary rather than more detailed analysis of the passage. The contrast between Karl and Mary that the essay identifies in the introduction is implied rather than analyzed in detail; the essay focuses primarily on Mary. Though the writing is generally adequately controlled, it is marred in places by errors such as tense shift. The essay overall is not as well conceived or developed as an essay scored 7 or 6.

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Question 2 (continued)

Sample: 2C

Score: 3

This brief, lower-level essay mentions literary devices such as imagery and selection of detail, but the majority of the essay simply provides plot details. The essay also persistently speculates rather than analyzes, for example when it asserts that the children “don’t seem to care all that much about scraping themselves coming out of the boxcar.” It makes unsupported assumptions about the situation in which the children find themselves (e.g., “[t]he tree is the one thing pleasant about their trips”) and generalizes about both children while overlooking Mary’s reaction altogether. The essay offers an inadequate analysis and little textual support for its insufficiently articulated claims (e.g., the environment “plays a large role in the excerpt” and “has a large impact on the children”) and is expressed in language that is often uncontrolled (e.g., [t]he greatest example of showing the impact of their environment would be when Karl becomes mesmerized by the tree”). The unconvincing and unsupported analysis earned this essay a score of 3.