

CAPT Response to Literature Test

For the Response to Literature test, the student reads a five- to six-page published short story and then answers four open-ended questions. The four open-ended questions measure how well the reader (1) demonstrates basic understanding of the text, (2) interprets or explains the text, (3) connects to the text, and (4) makes judgments about the quality of the text.

Scoring Guidelines for the CAPT Response to Literature Test

The CAPT Response to Literature test is based on the belief that readers construct interpretations of a text based on elements within the text, prior knowledge and experience, and the context in which the text is read. Meaning does not reside solely within the text. This does not mean that *any* interpretation is acceptable. Rather, it opens the door to multiple interpretations, not a single “correct” interpretation, as long as those interpretations are appropriately justified.

For the Response to Literature test, all four of the student’s responses are scored together on a 6-point scale using a holistic scoring system. The written responses to all of the questions are read in total, evaluated in terms of the rubric, and given one overall holistic score. The scores range from a low of 1 to a high of 6. Each set of responses is scored independently by two readers. The two scores are then summed, resulting in a score range of 2–12.

Each student’s Response to Literature holistic score is combined with his or her Reading for Information score to determine the student’s total Reading Across the Disciplines scale score. Each of the two subtests contributes 50% to the total Reading Across the Disciplines score.

The scoring process focuses on evidence of four major dimensions: (1) forming an initial understanding; (2) developing an interpretation; (3) making a connection; and (4) demonstrating a critical stance. These dimensions are described below.

Scorers should not attempt to link any of the four Response to Literature questions with a single dimension. Although some of the questions may seem to be more closely related to some dimensions than others, evidence of a dimension is more likely to cut across multiple questions.

Dimensions Considered When Scoring the Response to Literature Test

Forming an Initial Understanding refers to the student’s ability to derive a general understanding of a short story. Questions such as the following guide the scoring of this dimension:

- Does the student have a basic understanding of the story as a whole (e.g., the main characters, actions, problems or events)?
- Does the student describe the thoughts, opinions and/or questions that arise as he/she reads the story?

Developing an Interpretation refers to the student's ability to reflect upon the story, search for deeper interpretations, and go beyond parts of the story to search for overall meaning. Questions such as the following guide the scoring of this dimension:

- Does the student use clues or evidence from the story to make inferences, draw conclusions, predict events, infer motives, and generalize beyond the text?
- Does the student revise, reshape, and/or deepen his/her initial understanding of the story?
- Does the student demonstrate an engagement with the text (i.e., carrying on an internal dialogue with the author)?

Making a Connection refers to the student's ability to connect or associate the story with life outside the story. Questions such as the following guide the scorers in evaluating this dimension:

- Does the student generalize beyond the story, make associations between the story and other works of art, such as movies, art, music, or dance, and connect the story to his/her life experiences and/or culture?
- Does the student apply his/her understanding of people and life in general to make associations between the story and his/her view of the world?
- Does the student form analogies between the story and his/her view of the world?
- Does the student relate to characters or events in the story and connect them to his/her life experiences or things he/she has read about or seen?

Demonstrating a Critical Stance refers to the student's ability to step outside the text of the story, challenge the text and/or make judgments about the quality of the story or the literary features of the story. Questions such as the following guide scorers in assessing this dimension:

- Does the student demonstrate a literary and aesthetic appreciation of the story, and/or sensitivity to the author's style and/or an awareness of linguistic or literary features?
- Does the student think divergently, challenging the text by disagreeing with or questioning the author?
- Does the student recognize inconsistencies or ambiguities in the story and attempt to deal with them?
- Does the student examine the fit between the text of the story and his/her prior knowledge and life experience and attempt to reconcile differences, if appropriate?
- Does the student go beyond the story to judge its literary quality and support his/her reasons with examples from the story?

Scoring Rubric for the CAPT Response to Literature Test

The following descriptions characterize each score point. However, given the weighing and balancing that are inherent in holistic scoring, a response may not contain all the characteristics of the score it receives.

Each score category contains a range of student responses that reflect the descriptions given below.

Score Point 1

- Demonstrates limited understanding and/or serious misunderstanding of portions of the text or the story as a whole.
- Demonstrates no ability or little ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding.
- Demonstrates no meaningful associations or connections between the story and other texts and/or outside experience.
- Demonstrates no awareness of the literary quality of the story.

Score Point 2

- Demonstrates a literal or superficial understanding of portions of the text or the story as a whole.
- Demonstrates little, if any, ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding.
- Demonstrates difficulty in making or supporting an association or connection between the story and other texts and/or outside experience.
- Demonstrates judgments about the literary quality of the story that are superficial or emotional or are not supported with examples from the story, other texts, or outside experience.

Score Point 3

- Demonstrates some understanding of portions of the text or of the story as a whole. The interpretation lacks insight and/or the support from the text.
- Demonstrates limited ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding.
- Demonstrates an association and/or connection between the story and other texts and/or outside experience, but is superficial, lacks depth, and/or support.
- Demonstrates judgments about the literary quality of the story that tend to be formulaic and/or is lacking examples from the story and/or outside experience to support these judgments.

Score Point 4

- Demonstrates a basic understanding of the story as a whole and provides a plausible interpretation supported with some examples from the text.
- Demonstrates some ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding.
- Demonstrates some association and/or connection between the story and other texts and/or outside experience which may not be supported with examples from the text.
- Demonstrates judgments about the literary quality of the text, but tends to lack depth and/or is not well supported with examples from the story and/or outside experience.

Score Point 5

- Demonstrates a basic understanding of story as a whole. The interpretation is thoughtful and well supported with examples from the text.
- Demonstrates an acceptable ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding.
- Demonstrates associations and connections between the story and other texts and/or outside experience and generally supports these connections with examples from the text.
- Demonstrates thoughtful judgments about the literary quality of the story and generally supports these judgments with examples from the story and/or outside experience.

Score Point 6

- Demonstrates a basic understanding of the story as a whole. The interpretation is richly supported with examples from the text.
- Demonstrates an exceptional ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding.
- Demonstrates perceptive associations and connections between the story and other texts and/or outside experience and supports these connections with examples from the text.
- Demonstrates perceptive judgments about the literary quality of the story and supports these judgments with examples from the text and/or outside experience.

CAPT Response to Literature Test

Overview

In this Response to Literature test you will be expected to read a short story and answer four open-ended questions about the story. You will have one hour and ten minutes to complete this test.

The purpose of this test is to determine how well you can interpret a work of literature. The questions are designed to help you think about the story in ways that will lead you to demonstrate your understanding of the story, interpret the meaning of the story, make connections to the story, and evaluate the quality of the story.

Your four responses will be scored together as a whole, not individually. Your response will be scored by trained readers who will give it a score based on your ideas and how well you develop and support them using examples from the story. Your score will be based on the following criteria:

- **Initial Understanding**—Did you demonstrate a basic understanding of the story?
- **Developing an Interpretation**—Did you use evidence from the story to make inferences, draw conclusions or predict events about the story?
- **Connection**—Did you connect the story with your background knowledge such as other books, stories, movies, life experiences or works of art?
- **Critical Stance**—Did you make judgments about the quality of the story or the literary features of the story?

Remember to READ, THINK, PLAN, WRITE

Reading the Short Story (approximately 30 minutes)

Read the story *A Natural Resemblance* by Linda Barrett Osborne. As you read, you may mark the selection and write notes in the margins that help you think about what you are reading. Your notes will not be scored but might be helpful to you later when you answer the questions.

You may re-read or refer to the story at any time during the test.

A Natural Resemblance

By Linda Barrett Osborne

My thoughts and reactions
to what I am reading.

My grandmother Anna always said that the ideal woman could cook lasagna for twenty-five and still hold down a full-time job. She said it frequently to build my character the year we became housemates in her slim brownstone on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

Angelina, my father's mother, lived there too. Friends since childhood, my grandmothers joined forces in widowhood, sharing the cooking and cleaning. At seventy-four, Anna ran her own dress shop, and Angelina, a year younger, sold jewelry and cosmetics at a Woolworth's where you could still buy goldfish and parakeets and eat grilled cheese and bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwiches at the L-shaped counter at the back.

I had just graduated from Princeton and was looking for an apartment, although my parents couldn't believe I didn't want to live in my old room on Long Island. "For years we kept it nice," my mother accused her unrepentant prodigal daughter. "You belong with us. And anyway, you don't have enough money for a decent place of your own."

But I longed to be in New York, so I spent three weeks walking through every tiny, dark place that grew there: mushroom caves—with closets pretending to be bedrooms; two-dimensional kitchens that were really half a wall. Paint peeled in long strips like potato skins, and hallways smelled of cat, olive oil, and worse. One apartment had a mural of a mermaid amidst conch shells and nets. "Art," said the landlady placidly. "Of course, you pay more for that."

Exhausted, I stopped by Anna and Angelina's for tea. I had always loved their block, the way it grew immediately quieter when we turned off Broadway, the elegant line of narrow houses with their bay windows to catch the light. My grandmothers' house had leaves and scrollwork carved into stone and a finely cut cornice. Inside, the staircases and moldings were oak and the plaster swirled with vines and flowers. Each room had a fireplace and built-in bookshelves, and the bedrooms all had dressing rooms with hand-painted porcelain sinks and marble counters. Anna had inherited the house from her Uncle Guido, who made his fortune as a butcher and wanted a house full of marble to remind him of Italy.

"You wouldn't believe the prices of the rooms I've seen today," I said to them, sitting at the kitchen table, tracing the swirly patterns on the Formica I had traced as a child. "And there's nothing like this place. I love this house."

"Good," said Anna, cutting a giant wedge of cheesecake. "You should live here with us."

"You're kidding," I said, knocking tea onto the table.

"It's a good idea, baby," said Angelina. "You could have the whole top floor. Your own bedroom. It's pretty up there. Lots of sun."

"Thanks, but I want my own place. My own place," I said again, loudly. "No, thanks," I gestured to Anna. "I don't want any more to eat."

"Would we bother you?" Anna handed me the cheesecake. "You'd be on the top floor. We never go up there anymore. At our age, it's hard to climb the stairs."

At their age they were both working, agile as lizards, the envy of every senior citizen in New York. Anna had even attacked a mugger three years before, belting him from behind with a shopping bag full of Italian pastry. He'd fled, and the astonished victim, an English professor at Columbia, could only light his pipe and murmur over and over, "Well done!"

"If you lived with us, you could save money," Anna purred. "You could have your own nice apartment in a year."

"A year. My, God." I tried to imagine it. TV every evening, the latest cure for cancer to talk about. They would make me eat seven hundred pieces of cheesecake and I'd gain three hundred pounds.

"It's out of the question," I said. "Thanks anyway."

I moved in the following week.

"You're going to live with them?" my mother screamed, as if I'd thrown in my lot with drug dealers.

"It's your mother. I thought you'd be pleased."

"The food isn't good enough here? We don't leave you alone?"

"I told you, I just want to be in the city."

"The city! I don't understand any of you. Here it's quiet and safe. We worked so hard to get out of the city."

They had. It was a ballad of my childhood, how my father, an engineer, saved a little money, bought property just after the war, and managed to erect a house on it within eight years. He took well to suburban living, puttering in the garden, seeding and weeding his infant lawn, setting out his hammock to watch the first stars appear at night.

My mother too thrived in her paradise of burgeoning shopping centers and subdivisions. She bought white wrought-iron lawn furniture topped by a giant, flowered umbrella, where she could linger over coffee on summer mornings with her friends. When she went back to work as a secretary, it delighted her to drive to the office in her own car and never have to take a dirty bus or subway again.

"You could commute," my mother tried one more time. "You could look for a job on Long Island."

"I don't want to waste two hours a day packed like a sardine, and I'd rather work in New York. Besides, I'm too old to live with my parents."

"So you're going to live with your grandparents," she said, and then: "Why should I be surprised? You're just like them. You know everything, and you're stubborn."

I took over the top floor of the brownstone, breaking my mother's heart. I hung my jeans in the walk-in closet, my Matisse prints above the fireplace. I filled the cases with my books.

Angelina had been right, my room was saturated with light. What she didn't tell me was that it only came in the morning, when the sun would insist its way in, spilling over the bed like melted butter. It hit the pillow first, moving toward the foot like a curious, desultory lover. There was no sleeping late in that room. Shades didn't help. The rays seemed to bend around their edges, setting the walls and floor on fire.

I wondered how long Anna had planned to get me into that room. Anna, the early riser, up before 6 A.M., running enough water to quench Mount Vesuvius into her bath. Anna, who never took showers, because nothing is healthy if you stand up to do it. That's a scientific fact, she said. There was Anna, secretly hoping to get me into that prism of a room. "She sleeps too late," she would tell Angelina. "It's not good for her health." And Angelina would nod in agreement, knowing that Anna was right, because in this world, God knows, *nothing is good for your health*.

So I would wake up with the sun, letting my bare feet hit the warmed floorboards. For a while I planned to read through those extra minutes, moving peacefully into the day. But Anna, who had miraculously learned to climb the stairs, could hear my shallow breathing behind the door, sniffed out the turning pages. She would knock on some pretext: "Your pantyhose, Laura, there's still time to rinse them out if you hang them by the radiator." I'd close my book and pad out to the bathroom, pushing my way through jungle vines of underwear.

I had never seen underwear so spacious as Anna and Angelina's. The word "panty" was too small to contain those billowing, silky shorts. Next to them, my bikinis looked like doll clothes.

There were always notes in the bathroom too, fastened to the light switch with Scotch tape: "Towels in hamper," or "Bring Kay \$10," or my favorite, "Angelina, DON'T FORGET LUNCH!" The frayed edges of old tapes were everywhere, and I would stand there in a morning reverie, scraping them off with my nails.

Anna taped notes downstairs too, over doorknobs, on lampshades, scrawled in her turn-of-the-century script. "Buy margarine," a scrap in the living room might read: "Do laundry" on the back door. I could never figure out how the notes got where they did. It was as if Anna's brain couldn't rest until she'd got her thoughts on paper, and after that it didn't matter where they lay. Old notes stayed up, sometimes two or three months, fossils to chart the history of our daily survival. Angelina sometimes did it too. The kitchen was a symphony of themes and responses on torn napkins.

"Cook dinner," I found myself writing three weeks after I'd moved in. I taped it to a burner, and Anna said, "What's this, baby?" as she put water on for coffee.

"I want to make something special for you tonight to celebrate my arrival."

"Should I pick up some fresh pasta from Fontana's?"

"I'm planning this myself," I said. "Just be at the dining-room table at six-thirty. You don't need to do a thing."

"The dining room?" said Angelina. "But you have to carry everything up from the kitchen. We always eat down here."

"The dining room," I said again. "Six-thirty. Trust me on this."

When I carried up the meal on a huge chrome tray they were both sitting, apparently obedient, at the table. "Cloth napkins!" Anna said to Angelina, fingering the linen. "It's extra to wash and you have to iron them."

"I'll wash them. I'll iron them," I said, setting down a platter and a basket of eight-grain bread. I poured white wine into glasses and sat at my place.

"There," I said. "Salmon salad."

They both looked at me.

"Do you want me to serve?" When no one answered, I began putting a portion on each plate.

Anna rummaged around with her fork. "We're having lettuce for supper?"

"This must be the antipasto," Angelina said suddenly.

"No, it's the whole meal. You each get a hard-boiled egg. And all that salmon. Go ahead, take some bread."

They each took a piece. "We usually eat ..." Anna started.

I held up a hand. "I know you buy rye sometimes."

"Without the seeds," said Angelina.

"This has rye flour in it, and lots of other things. Just try it."

Angelina took a bite. "It's hard to chew."

"It has texture," I started to rise. "If you want, I'll go down and get your bread."

"Sit," Anna said. "This is your special meal for us. We'll eat it." She picked at the greens on her plate, knocking over a chunk of salmon. She held up a dark leaf on the edge of her fork. "What's this?"

"It's spinach."

"You didn't cook it?"

"It's healthy that way," I said, reaching for my glass of wine. "It keeps all the vitamins when you eat it raw."

Angelina focused on her plate, carefully cutting a tomato wedge. Anna gulped her wine and poured more from the bottle. We ate in surprising silence. I could hear Angelina chewing patiently on the lettuce and the bread. I was the only one to take seconds.

"I'll get dessert," I said, "and start the coffee." I stacked the dishes onto the tray.

"We'll do that, baby," said Anna.

"Whoever doesn't cook does the dishes," Angelina said.

"That's okay. Tonight I'll do everything." I started toward the stairs.

"You can't carry that by yourself. It's too heavy." Anna rose.

"No, it's not," I said, knocking into the stairwell. I puffed downstairs and dropped the tray with a thud onto the counter. While I waited for the coffee I drank another glass of wine. Then I shoved everything on the tray again and clumped back upstairs.

They stopped talking when I entered, smiling as if I'd come onstage at a dancing-school recital. "It's strawberry shortcake," I said.

"Beautiful, baby," Anna said.

"What bakery did you get it from?" asked Angelina.

"I made it myself."

"Of course she did, Angelina," said Anna. "Does that look like cake from a bakery?"

"It looks that good at Romano's."

"Romano's, sure, but that's in Brooklyn. Would she go to Brooklyn for a cake?"

"If they make the best cakes."

"Would anybody like some?" I said, serving.

"Delicious," said Anna.

"As good as Romano's," said Angelina.

"Better." Anna lopped off a large piece with her fork. "Just think, Angelina, our granddaughter can make a cake like this."

I smiled, grown-up Laura, who could cut her own meat now and didn't need to sit on two telephone books to reach the table. "It's only fruit and cream," I said.

"But the cake part is so light. Not everybody can cook so good these days, baby. It will help you find a husband."

"That's ridiculous," I said.

"It's true."

"I don't mean ... First of all, why would I go out and look for a husband, and second of all, why should the fact that I cook matter?"

"Should he pick you because you can't cook?" Angelina sounded surprised.

"He shouldn't pick me at all. That's not how it works."

They looked at each other. "Tell us," said Anna, "how does it work?"

"You fall in love, you ... well, anyway, you have things in common, you get along well. It doesn't matter who cooks and cleans. You both should. If a man likes to cook ..."

"They always leave a mess in the kitchen," said Angelina. "Your grandfather cooked," said Anna, "until Angelina told him to stop. He wanted to make souffles. Six pans with egg stuck on them. He wanted to put thyme in the spaghetti sauce. Who wanted to eat it?"

"I think that's great."

"You didn't have to clean up after him," said Angelina.

"Whoever doesn't cook does the dishes," I said.

Angelina started to rise.

"No, sit. I'll do them," I said. The telephone rang. I ran to answer.

"You didn't call," said my mother.

"But I just talked to you last week," I said, beginning to feel weary.

"It must take up a lot of time, waiting for a crowded subway, shopping in those tiny grocery stores. Your father and I drove to the beach today. We were there in fifteen minutes."

"Great," I said. "I cooked dinner for us tonight."

"They let you?"

When I was growing up, Anna would cook for my mother. She would arrive on Sundays with half the meal packed into shopping bags, kicking at the door with her foot to announce she was there. She dusted too, and even did the laundry. "Ma, it's my home," my mother would sigh, but Anna would say, "Let me. You work. You need help," forgetting that she worked too and didn't.

It made my mother anxious. She and my father had been waiting years to take over. They wanted to be the family adults, the wise ones, but as long as my grandmothers remained healthy and strong and independent, they were still, somehow, children. All their lives, they'd been told what to do, without anyone to tell. They wanted to show that faint condescension of the middle-aged toward the elderly; instead, every solicitation was met by argument and, worse, action which ignored them.

"I know best," said Anna. "I'm your mother." What could my mother do?

"So what's it like living there?" asked my mother, curiosity and anxiety fighting in her voice.

"Great. We watched a special on 'Cancer: The Champion Killer' last night."

"We saw that too. Who would have thought that sun is bad for you? But what is it like?" she pressed. "Who does the housework?"

"We share," I said. "Look, Mom, I'm a big girl now. I'm independent too. *They* know I can take care of myself." For a minute I almost believed it.

"Sure," said my mother. "You wait ..."

"Mom!"

"Let me talk to your grandmothers."

"Hold on, I'll get them," I said, but when I looked in the dining room, nobody was sitting there.

I found them in the kitchen, doing the dishes.

Responding to the Short Story (approximately 40 minutes)

Answer the following four questions related to the story you just read. You are provided with four pages to respond to these four questions. You may answer the questions in any order you wish. Respond to each question as completely as possible remembering to use examples from the story to support your conclusions. **Write your answers in your answer booklet. Only what is written in the answer booklet will be scored. If you are answering question 1, write your response on the page labeled Response to Literature, Session 1, number 1.**

1. What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect on the characters, their problems, the author's use of symbolism, the title or other ideas in the story.
2. Choose **one** of the following quotations from the story. Explain what you think the quotation means as it relates to elements of the story such as the characters or the theme. **Write the letter of the quotation you choose and your response in your answer booklet.**
 - A. "So you're going to live with your grandparents," she said, and then: "Why should I be surprised? You're just like them. You know everything, and you're stubborn." (*page 77*)
 - B. She and my father had been waiting years to take over. They wanted to be the family adults, the wise ones, but as long as my grandmothers remained healthy and strong and independent, they were still, somehow, children. All their lives, they'd been told what to do, without anyone to tell. (*page 81*)
 - C. "Look, Mom, I'm a big girl now. I'm independent too. *They* know I can take care of myself." For a minute I almost believed it. (*page 81*)
3. What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read, or movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.
4. How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

Scored Student Responses for Response to Literature

This is an example of score 6:

1. What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect on the characters, their problems, the author's use of symbolism, the title or other ideas in the story.

1. When reading Linda Barrett Ashbarn's short story A Natural Resemblance I had many thoughts and questions. Laura, the main character, was struggling for complete independence, after graduating from a school like Princeton, she proved more than capable of tackling the task. Anna and Angelina are the comical characters. Their age does not mimic their capabilities and their small talk is somewhat juvenile making them funnier. Laura's mother and father seem like the typical concerned parents. I think the title of the story is appropriate. Being family they will have things in common, but specifically, Laura and her parents are the same, wishing for independence. Laura's dinner that she prepared was a symbol of her independence. She wanted to prove she could make a full dinner herself and everything that came along with it. She was prepared to wash the napkins and do the dishes. In the end, when she was on the phone, her grandparents stepped in to wash the dishes. Maybe it was a sign Laura was not ready to do it all on her own. Maybe some things will never change and her grandparents will be like that till the grave. I think it helped Laura connect with her parents.

2. Choose **one** of the following quotations from the story. Explain what you think the quotation means as it relates to elements of the story such as the characters or the theme. **Write the letter of the quotation you choose and your response in your answer booklet.**

B. She and my father had been waiting years to take over. They wanted to be the family adults, the wise ones, but as long as my grandmothers remained healthy and strong and independent, they were still, somehow, children. All their lives, they'd been told what to do, without anyone to tell. (page 81)

2. B. From the beginning, Laura's parents had been uneasy about her moving in with her grandparents in the city. "You're going to live with them?" my mother screamed as if I'd thrown in my lot with drug dealers." It's hard enough for parents to see their children move away from home, but for Laura's parents, seeing their daughter move in with her grandparents made it worse. They wanted to be the people their daughter would come to. As middle-aged people, they too wanted their independence. They felt it was their time to be "family adults." Anna and Angelina weren't ready to give away that position yet. Being grown parents, Laura's mom and dad felt more than capable of taking care of situations with the grandparents still around, they felt like they had no authority. This is ironic because Laura is going through the same thing, a generation lower. She feels capable and that her parents are keeping her from total independence. She was ready to live alone in the city and provide for herself. Her parents weren't deliberately holding her back, but for them to gain independence, it would mean Laura would lose some.

3. What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read, or movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

3. This story examines a common universal theme that many people go through: becoming independent. This is different than growing up, everyone grows up. Being independent means something more. Not everyone will experience this. Laura's parents are in their middle ages and yet aren't independent. They live in their own house, have steady jobs, and managed a daughter, yet still aren't truly independent. Some people get to this stage at earlier ages, but it is something the people around you control. As much as you may be ready, the people surrounding you may not be. It works the opposite way as well. Young children may still be dependent on others, yet if a mother leaves, have to learn to be on their own. The road to independence is a long and often difficult process. This story reminds me of my family. There is a constant power struggle between my mom and brother because he is 18. He feels he knows what is best for him, but of course mother knows best." He is ready to gain new independence. I think my mother might be ready to go, because my grandparents finally reached the age where they are no longer head of the family. Now my mom runs the show. Besides, she still got me to boss around and that should satisfy her for a while.

4. How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

4. I think Linda Barrett Osborne was successful in creating a good piece of literature. A Natural Resemblance had timeless universal themes. Everyone can relate to a time when they wished they were older and away from the arms of their parents. Even though it seemed targeted more towards females with its grandmother-mother-daughter bonding through conflict, all genders can relate on some level. The passage when Laura says "I had never seen underwear so spacious as Anna and Angelina's" almost had me laughing out loud. It seemed random and a little out of place but most people have come across a joke involving "grandma panties." The grandparents were someone to look up to. They were both widowed but 'at the ripe age of 74, were still holding down jobs. When I read the story, I felt as if they were the ideal grandparents, someone to sit down and talk with. I'm sure other readers did too. The only part I didn't like about the story was that the conflict wasn't resolved as much as I wanted it to be. It left the reader questioning whether Laura, as well as her parents discussed their feelings more. Instead, it ends with proof that Anna and Angelina are still running the family, washing dishes is in their blood.

This well-developed response discusses the story with a comfortable confidence. Understanding is demonstrated as the student synthesizes each of the characters and his or her role ("the main character...struggling for complete independence [*sic*]," "Anna and Angelina are the comical [*sic*] characters," and "Laura's mother and father seem like the typical concerned parents"). Reflective thinking runs throughout the paper ("In the end, when she was on the phone, her grandparents stepped in... Maybe it was a sign... Maybe, some things will never change and her grandparents will be like that till the grave."). The interpretation is perceptive and well supported ("With the grandparents still around, [the parents] felt like they had no authority. This is ironic because Laura is going through the same thing..."). The connection—the obstacles to achieving true independence and how that relates to the student's family—is perceptive and particularly well developed. The judgments about the literary quality—both pro and con—are perceptive and supported with examples from the story. Excellence in all dimensions precludes assignment of a lesser score.

This is an example of score 5:

1. What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect on the characters, their problems, the author's use of symbolism, the title or other ideas in the story.

1. As I read this story A Natural Resemblance, I first didn't understand the title. By the end I realized that the title could have been both literal and symbolic. It is symbolic of the way the two grandmothers treat their generations of offspring. In the end their unwillingness to accept their daughter's independence also prevailed in their granddaughter. I kept thinking how we so often treat the elderly, how we commonly baby them and take care of them and treat them as if they were little children who have forgotten how to live. This story demonstrated the exact opposite, the older, yet still strong two grandmothers treat their children and grand children as if they aren't mature, or responsible enough to do every day chores like cooking and cleaning. Anna always treated her perfectly capable daughter, as though she was a child and this stubborn attitude persisted through her grandchild. I enjoyed the ideas in the story because they are easily relatable to many people, whether you're looking for an apartment, have a stubborn grandmother, or treat your grandmother the same way Anna and Angelina treated their loved ones, there are many concepts and ideas people can relate to.

2. Choose **one** of the following quotations from the story. Explain what you think the quotation means as it relates to elements of the story such as the characters or the theme. **Write the letter of the quotation you choose and your response in your answer booklet.**

A. "So you're going to live with your grandparents," she said, and then: "Why should I be surprised? You're just like them. You know everything, and you're stubborn." (page 77)

2. A. Towards the middle of the story when her mother said this to Laura, readers didn't know why she said this. However by the end we realize the stubbornness Laura's mother is talking about. We notice that Laura is stubborn when it comes to proving her independence and intelligence, and Angelina and Anna are stubborn in not letting people younger than they are to be independent. It is evident that Laura's mother is frustrated because she was never treated with respect from her mother, Anna. Knowing of Laura's stubbornness, and the way her mother and mother-in-law are not willing to accept the fact that people are younger and can still be independent, causes Laura's mother to openly say this to her. By the end of the story when the Grandmothers are doing the dishes for Laura despite the fact that Laura insisted upon doing them herself, exhibits the stubbornness Laura's mother was conveying.

3. What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read, or movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

3. In general, this story says a lot about the stubbornness of different age groups of people. We see that Laura is longing to be accepted as independent and capable while Laura's Grandmothers are unwilling to allow her to be as independent and able as they are. My Grandfather, whom I call Pepere, is stubborn to accept my independence. Over the years, he has begun to accept my father's independence, but he is too stubborn to accept the fact that my sister and I are growing up and would be fine living on our own. When my parents leave us at home alone and go out to eat, and my grandfather finds out, he always tells my parents it is not safe to leave children home alone. My sister is 17 and I am 16 and I feel we are capable of taking care of ourselves without supervision. This story also really reminds me of Marie on the popular CBS sitcom Everybody Loves Raymond. She is constantly babying her two grown sons and telling her daughter in law what to do. She is not willing to claim them grown and capable men because she constantly feels she has to care for them as if they were children. The character Marie is much like Angelina and Anna in A Natural Resemblance.

4. How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

4. I think the author created a good piece of literature. Linda Barrett Osborne uses the title to symbolize adults not accepting the fact their children are grown up. She exhibits this concept and theme throughout the story by giving a real-life example of a time this has occurred. She uses Laura, her mother, and her grandmothers to illustrate this theme and communicate to readers how adults can baby their children. I think it is also a very easy concept to relate to. A reader can connect with the characters whether they are the ones not being noticed as capable, or they are stubborn in not recognizing their children as fully agile adults. It could also work in the opposite way if you have come to realization that you are treating your riders as children. The title really demonstrates how the grandmothers persisted to baby their granddaughter as they did their daughter. It is a Natural Resemblance, or the same thing as before. Therefore I believe this was a good piece of literature and I enjoyed reading the story.

This paper is characterized by an understanding of the story as a whole and cogent reflective thinking throughout the response ("I kept thinking how we so often treat the elderly..." and "It is evident that Laura's mother is frustrated...."). Thoughtful connections with the student's grandfather as well as a character in a TV sitcom are well developed and supported. The judgments about the literary quality of the story are diverse and clearly explained. Each dimension contains levels of thoughtfulness and support beyond that in Score Point 4 responses; more perceptive interpretation and richer support would be necessary for a higher score.

This is an example of score 4:

1. What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect on the characters, their problems, the author's use of symbolism, the title or other ideas in the story.

1. After reading this story, there were a few things that stuck out in my head. Laura, the main character seems to really pride herself in a way that she's surviving living with her grandparents. They seem to be constantly on her back, and they don't think she can cook the meal for them when she's trying to prove that she can be strong. I also found it ironic how Angelina said "whoever doesn't cook does the dishes" on pg 7, when Laura says she'll clean-up herself when Anna and Angelina say they'll do it. But then, when Angelina is complaining how she had to clean-up after her husband, and Laura says "whoever doesn't cook does the dishes", on pg. 9, I found that ironic because here her grandmother's were trying to use it against her, and here she is trying to show that she's all grown-up too. She can handle doing the dishes and cooking a meal by herself. I think the title really shows the true meaning of the story, because of Laura being "a natural resemblance" to her grandmother's. This story seems to be very well-written because the author is getting their message across.

2. Choose **one** of the following quotations from the story. Explain what you think the quotation means as it relates to elements of the story such as the characters or the theme. Write the letter of the quotation you choose and your response in your answer booklet.

A. "So you're going to live with your grandparents," she said, and then: "Why should I be surprised? You're just like them. You know everything, and you're stubborn." (page 77)

2. A "So you're going to live with your grandparents," she said, and then: "Why should I be surprised? You're just like them. You know everything, and you're stubborn." (pg 5.) First of all, this quote directly relates to the title "a natural resemblance" because this is the first time this idea of similarity has been introduced. Also, I think what her mother means by "you know everything" is that she thinks she knows what she's doing, but she's trying to appear strong/independent in front of her elders, just like the issues her grandparents are having. Laura complains that she's "too old to live with her parents" (pg 5) but she's not too old to live with her grandparents. That is what is stated above the quote that's being analyzed. Laura's grandparents try to be independent, yet they are so stubborn like when they leave little sticky notes around to remind them of what to do throughout the day. Laura is just as stubborn because she's trying to prove herself independent and grown-up through making some pretty hasty decisions, like choosing to live with her grandparents, even after she claimed she wanted her own place a little while earlier. Her mother is very right in saying this to her.

3. What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read, or movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

3. This story says a few things about people in general. It first shows how sometimes people are willing to stick up for what they want and they'll push through thick and thin to get what they want like Laura did with her mother's approval of moving into her grandparents' house, then the approval of Laura as an adult by her grandparents. They try to control her because they are scared that they might lose some of their freedom if she becomes too independent. You can tell she understands this when she says this to her mother on the phone:

"Look mom, I'm a big girl now. I'm independent too. They know I can take care of myself." "For a minute I almost believed it." (pg 9.) This quote shows how Laura knows her grandparents don't want to see her grow up. This story is related to real life in the sense that many elders I know don't want help doing things because they don't want to lose their freedom, or they still want to be independent. This story mixes in very well with some real-life situations, and shows many things about people in general.

4. How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

4. In my opinion, the author was very successful in creating a good piece of literature. As I stated in a previous response, the author used irony very well to show how the main character is starting to "grow up" or "mature" in a way because she's now trying to stick up for herself. She also sticks up for herself when her mother doesn't agree with her going to live with her grandparents. "I don't want to waste two hours a day packed like a sardine, and I'd rather work in New York. Besides, I'm too old to live with my parents." (pg 5) That's what Laura says to her mother's disapproval to her living with her grandparents. This piece of literature is a good one because it shows the hardships that people go through during their lives to earn people's respect, and when people are afraid to lose their independence. I found it very interesting how the story ended, when the grandmother's went into the kitchen and started washing the dishes, because of what Laura said earlier to them when they were complaining about their husbands, and when they said that to Laura. It seems like they sort of understand by the end of the story. In my opinion, the author was very successful in creating a good piece of literature.

This response demonstrates a basic understanding of the story and a plausible, though not insightful, interpretation ("I think the title really shows the true meaning of the story, because of Laura being 'a natural resemblance' to her grandmother's [*sic*]"). The student looks into the characters' behaviors and motivations and draws conclusions ("Laura's grandparent's [*sic*] try to be independent, yet they are so stubborn... Laura is just as stubborn because she's trying to prove herself independent and grown-up through making some pretty hasty decisions, like choosing to live with her grandparent's [*sic*], even after she claimed she wanted her own place a little while earlier."). The student presents connections with "people...willing to stick up for what they want" and "many elders...don't want help doing things because they don't want to loose [*sic*] their freedom." A critical stance lacks depth ("the author used irony" and "I found it very interesting how the story ended") but is supported and developed. The level of understanding and interpretation is beyond that seen in Score Point 3 papers, but more thoughtful interpretation, reflective thinking, and critical stance would be required for a higher score.

This is an example of score 3:

1. What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect on the characters, their problems, the author's use of symbolism, the title or other ideas in the story.

1. One question I have about the story is why was it ended so abruptly. One minute she was talking on the phone w/ her mom the next minute it was just over. I think the characters in this story are all alike. The mom, the girl, and the grandmothers are all the same very strongheaded. The mom is strong headed about her daughter moving in with them. The daughters strong headed when it comes to wanting to live on her own. The grandmothers are strongheaded when it comes to cooking so they all have their disagreements but that's just because there so alike.

2. Choose **one** of the following quotations from the story. Explain what you think the quotation means as it relates to elements of the story such as the characters or the theme. **Write the letter of the quotation you choose and your response in your answer booklet.**

C. "Look, Mom, I'm a big girl now. I'm independent too. *They* know I can take care of myself." For a minute I almost believed it. (page 81)

2. **C.** This quote is about the girl trying to become independent but always knowing she won't be. No matter where she lives, or who she's living with there's always going to be someone checking in on her. She thought living w/ her grand parents would be ok but when it comes down to it no matter how old you get, your never completely independent. Even the girls MOM, being a full grown woman has to deal with her own mother. So this quote just tries to show that people make know you can take care of yourself but that doesnt mean that they're going to stop caring, no matter how much you wish they would.

3. What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read, or movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

3. I can relate this story to myself. Being 16 means being more independent, people in general want to feel independence but you never really on your own. When you are a teenager you think you can do everything on your own. But no one can be right all the time and never need anyone. People in general are very stubborn like the characters in this story. But there comes times in your life when you do need other people and do need support and you realize you're lucky that you're not completely independent from everyone. Even though the girl wanted complete independence she still needed her grandmothers around and right then she didn't realize that but in the long run, she will.

4. How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

4. In this story I like the message the author was trying to send about never being completely independent, but I don't think he wrote it well. The story itself was boring I think he could have portrayed the message he was trying to say in a better way. The story wasn't very interesting it was boring, in order to be more into the story the plot should have been better. There was a lot of going back and forth with he said, she said stuff. For example when there at the dinner table it was just very boring. Also, the ending was very abrupt, it ended all of a sudden with no real ending it just was cut-off. So overall the message being sent was good but it should have been more attention grabbing.

Some understanding of at least portions of the story is evident in this response, along with brief support ("The mom, the girl, and the grandmothers are all the same very strongheaded [sic]."). The interpretation of the message of the story, however, seems a bit off the mark ("Even though the girl wanted complete independence she still needed her grandmothers around and right then she didn't realise [sic] that but in the long run, she will."). The connection follows the same thought pattern ("People in general are very stubborn [sic] like the characters in this story. But there comes times in your life when you do need other people and do need support and you realise your [sic] lucky that your [sic] not completely [sic] independent."). That conclusion/connection is not supported with evidence from the story. The critical stance is more emotional than substantive and lacks support as well ("...don't think he wrote it well...boring...wasnt [sic] very interesting...plot should have been better..."). The level of understanding and reflective thinking is better than that exhibited in Score Point 2 papers, but a more thoroughly supported connection and substantive critical stance with support would be needed for a higher score.

This is an example of score 2:

1. What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect on the characters, their problems, the author's use of symbolism, the title or other ideas in the story.

1. I thought this story depicts many families with older children well. Parents never want to fully let go of their child. And grandparents are always there to spoil their grandchildren.

2. Choose **one** of the following quotations from the story. Explain what you think the quotation means as it relates to elements of the story such as the characters or the theme. **Write the letter of the quotation you choose and your response in your answer booklet.**

C. "Look, Mom, I'm a big girl now. I'm independent too. *They* know I can take care of myself." For a minute I almost believed it. (page 81)

2. C - Though she is grown up and independent, her grandmothers want to spoil her and take care of her. It's their nature to do so. That's how it was when they grew up. The grandmothers do not fully let Laura live on her own. Though Laura would like them to

3. What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read, or movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

3. This story shows the bonds between families well. It reminds me of my family. More so my grandmother. Though she knows we are growing older she still insists on buying us everything and cooking for us. She thinks spoiling her grandchildren is her job and it is what she is intended to do.

4. How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

4. This was a good piece of literature b/c you could easily relate to the topic and pertain it back to your life. Many could relate to Laura and the relationship she had with her family. More importantly her parents.

This response indicates a literal understanding of the story without evidence of revising or deepening that understanding ("Parents never want to fully let go of their child. And grandparents are always there to spoil there [sic] grandchildren."). An association is presented, but it is quite superficial ("It reminds me of my family. More so my grandmother... She thinks spoiling her grandchildren is her job..."). The critical stance is superficial and not well supported ("Many could relate to Laura and the relationship she had with her family."). Some evidence of reflective thinking and a better supported connection and critical stance would be required for a higher score.

This is an example of score 1:

1. What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect on the characters, their problems, the author's use of symbolism, the title or other ideas in the story.

1. The story was very describing as if the author wanted you to be there and feel what the characters felt. And I liked that about this story.

2. Choose **one** of the following quotations from the story. Explain what you think the quotation means as it relates to elements of the story such as the characters or the theme. **Write the letter of the quotation you choose and your response in your answer booklet.**

A. "So you're going to live with your grandparents," she said, and then: "Why should I be surprised? You're just like them. You know everything, and you're stubborn." (page 77)

2. (A) I think that it meant she was just like other people. Maybe people in that household like they all wanted it their way or they HAD TO HAVE it and didn't listen or care about what others said

3. What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read, or movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

3. The story reminds me of a friend of mine who came from the city and wants to move back when she gets out of school.

4. How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

4. The Author was successful cause he explained himself
so people could feel what he meant

This brief response displays little evidence of understanding other than a very literal one ("Maybe people in that household like they all wanted it there [sic] way..."). Other comments are vague and unsupported ("The author was successful [sic] cause [sic] he explained himself so people could feel what he meant."). No reflective thinking occurs, nor is there a meaningful connection other than a very superficial one ("The story reminds me of a friend of mine who came from the city and wants to move back when she gets out of school."). The critical stance is extremely sparse ("The story was very describing... And I liked that about this story."). Improvement in all areas would be necessary for a higher score.