

# Exit Level Scoring Guide for Reading and Written Composition

*July 2004*

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## INTRODUCTION

The reading and written composition sections of the TAKS English language arts test are based on three thematically linked reading pieces, called a “triplet”—a literary selection, an expository selection, and a visual representation. The test includes two performance tasks: three short answer reading items and a written composition. The literary and expository selections are published pieces, and the visual representation is a created piece, although it may include some published elements, such as photographs. Using published selections on TAKS makes the assessment more authentic and, therefore, a more valid and reliable measure of student learning in reading at the high school level.

### Short Answer Items

The three short answer items on each test assess two skills. First, students must be able to generate clear, reasonable, thoughtful ideas or analyses about some aspect of the published literary and expository selections. Second, students must be able to support these ideas or analyses with relevant, strongly connected textual evidence.

On each test one short answer item is based on the literary selection only (Objective 2), one is based on the expository selection only (Objective 3), and one is based on students’ ability to connect the literary and expository selections (also Objective 3). Short answer items are not used to measure Objective 1, since this objective focuses on basic understanding.

#### Objective 2

**The student will demonstrate an understanding of the effects of literary elements and techniques in culturally diverse written texts.**

To appreciate the literature they read in high school, students must develop an understanding of the literary elements that are at the heart of all stories. This understanding must go beyond mere identification to encompass the ways in which the parts of a story, singly and in combination, contribute to its overall meaning. Students must also understand the ways in which an author uses literary techniques and language to craft a story. In short answer items assessing Objective 2, students must write a short response analyzing how literary elements, literary techniques, or figurative language function in a story.

#### Objective 3

**The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze and critically evaluate culturally diverse written texts and visual representations.**

To read well at the high school level, students must go beyond their initial understanding or impressions of a selection. Students must be able to develop their own interpretations, make thoughtful judgments about what they read, examine how a selection relates to their own lives, and find meaningful connections across parts of a single selection or between two selections. Students must also be aware of the way an author crafts a selection. An author’s purpose for writing, organizational decisions, point of view or attitude toward the subject, and unique use of language all affect the way a reader reads and understands a selection. In short answer items assessing Objective 3, students must write a short response analyzing or evaluating some aspect of the expository selection or some aspect of text common to or based upon both selections.

TAKS short answer items are holistically scored on a scale of 0 (insufficient) to 3 (exemplary). For each score point, this scoring guide presents the rubric as well as four student responses with explanatory annotations. Using this scoring guide will help you to better understand not only your students’ reading development but also the strengths and weaknesses of your school’s reading program.

## Written Composition

Writing is a life skill. As students move from grade to grade, writing skills are critical for academic progress. Students who have difficulty putting their thoughts into writing struggle to succeed in social studies, science, and many areas other than English language arts. Because good writing requires good thinking, the act of writing helps students learn to clarify their thoughts and focus their ideas.

The writing prompt is thematically linked to the three reading selections. In this way, students have a built-in context that they may draw from as they plan their compositions. Note, however, that while students may include an analysis or reference to one or more reading selections, this is not a requirement. Students may respond to the prompt in any way they choose.

The composition section of the TAKS English language arts test assesses the knowledge and skills grouped under Objectives 4 and 5. Objective 4 focuses on the quality of the composition's content, while Objective 5 focuses on how clearly and effectively the student communicates his or her ideas. These objectives are inextricably linked because good writing must be both substantial and mechanically sound.

### Objective 4

**The student will, within a given context, produce an effective composition for a specific purpose.**

The ability to communicate thoughts and ideas through writing helps students become successful, not only in school but throughout their lives. In order to communicate effectively, students must organize and develop ideas in a logical, coherent, and interesting manner that is easy for the reader to follow and understand. Objective 4 tests each student's ability to produce an organized and well-developed composition in response to a prompt. The prompt is worded so that students have broad latitude in crafting an individual response. Students can use any organizational strategy that allows them to write an effective piece—they can write a story, a description, a philosophical piece, an expository piece, a response to reading—or they can combine approaches. However students choose to respond, it is important that the composition they write is uniquely theirs—that it is authentic and represents their best thinking and writing.

### Objective 5

**The student will produce a piece of writing that demonstrates a command of the conventions of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.**

To write well, students must be able to apply the conventions of the English language. First, when students write a composition, they are able to follow the rules of correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. Second, they are able to write effective sentences and use words and phrases that enhance the reader's understanding of their ideas. Although students are not expected to produce absolutely error-free writing on the test, they are expected to write as clearly and correctly as possible. The stronger the writing conventions are, the more likely it is that students will be able to produce an effective composition.

TAKS compositions are holistically scored on a scale of 1 (ineffective) to 4 (highly effective). For each score point, this scoring guide presents the rubric as well as four student compositions with explanatory annotations. Using this scoring guide will help you to better understand your students' writing development and the strengths and weaknesses of your school's writing program.

# The Kayak

by Debbie Spring

- 1 The choppy waves rise and fall. I ride the wave. My kayak<sup>1</sup> bobs like a cork in the swirling waters of Georgian Bay.<sup>2</sup> I love it. I feel wild and free. The wind blows my hair into my eyes. I concentrate on my balance. *It's more difficult now.* I stop stroking with my double-bladed paddle and push my bangs from my face.
- 2 This is my special place. Out here, I feel safe and secure. My parents watch from the shore. I have on my life jacket and emergency whistle. I am one with the kayak. The blue boat is an extension of my legs. I can do anything; I can go anywhere. Totally independent. Totally in control of my life. It's so different back on shore.
- 3 I approach Cousin Island, where I have to steer around the submerged rocks in the shallows, a school of largemouth bass darts between the weeds. A wave pushes me towards the rocks. I push off with my paddle and I head out towards the middle of Kilcoursie Bay. Powerful swirls of wind and current toss me about.
- 4 The clouds move in, warning signs. I turn the kayak and head back to the shore. The waves peak wildly as the storm picks up. My arms ache.
- 5 I don't want to go back to shore. Nobody lets me grow up. My parents treat me like a baby. I'm sixteen, too old to be pampered.
- 6 Just off my bow, a loon preens its black mottled feathers. It sounds its piercing cry and disappears under the water. I hold my breath, waiting for it to resurface. Time slows. Finally, it reappears in the distance. I exhale.
- 7 I notice a windsurfer<sup>3</sup> with a flashy neon green and purple sail, gaining on me. My stomach does flip flops as he races, dangerously close. "Look out," I yell. I quickly steer out of the way. He just misses me. *Stupid kid, he's not even wearing a life jacket.* I shake my head. The boy is out of control. He's heading straight for the rocks at Cousin Island. "Drop the sail!" I call.

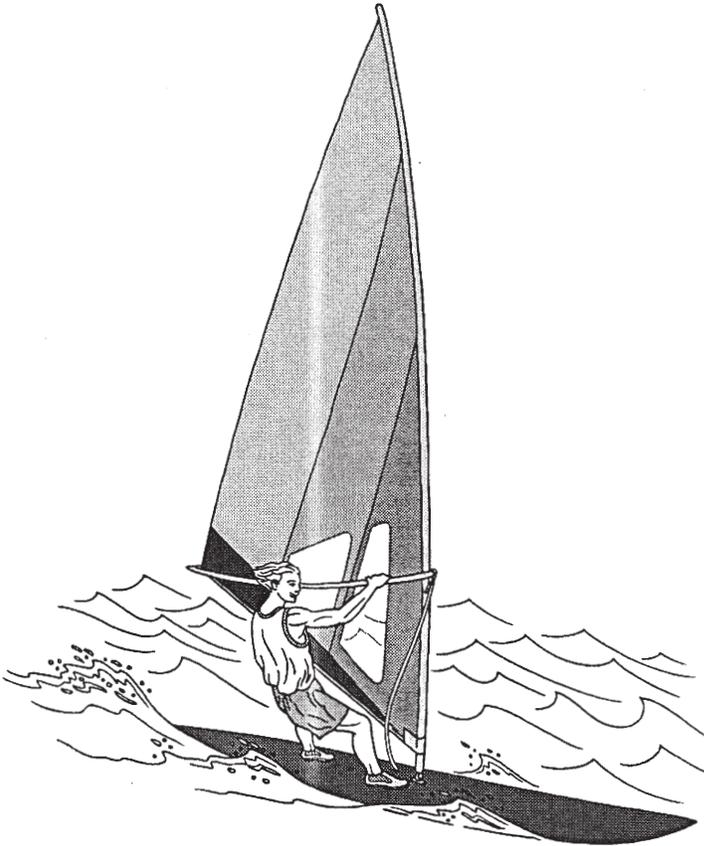
My notes about what I am  
reading

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<sup>1</sup> kayak: an Eskimo-style canoe that has a small opening in the center for a paddler

<sup>2</sup> Georgian Bay: an inlet of Lake Huron, Canada

<sup>3</sup> windsurfer: a term that refers both to a sailboard and to a person who uses one



8 He does and not a second too soon. He just misses a jagged rock. I slice through the waves and grab onto his white surfboard.

9 “Can you get back to shore?” I ask.

10 “The windsurfer belongs to my buddy. It’s my first time. I don’t know how.” His voice trembles. Is it from the cold?

11 The windsurfer looks around eighteen. I take a quick glance at his tanned muscles and sandy, blond hair. He seems vulnerable and afraid. His blue eyes narrow. “Now what?” he asks.

12 I reach into the cockpit and take out a rope. “Hold on.” I toss the rope. He misses. I throw it again and he catches it. “Paddle to my stern with your hands.” His board moves directly behind me. “Tie the other end through that yellow loop.” I point.

13 He fumbles for what seems like several painful minutes. “Got it.”

14 I stroke hard, straining to move us.

15 “Hit it,” the boy calls.

16 “What?”

- 17 "That's what you shout, in water skiing, when you're ready to take off."
- 18 I smile. Slowly, we make our way. My paddle dips into the water, first to the right, then to the left. Beads of sweat form on my forehead. Suddenly, I surge ahead. I turn around. "You let go." I circle and give him back the rope. "Wrap it around your wrist."
- 19 "Sorry."
- 20 "It's okay. What's your name?"
- 21 "Jamie." His teeth chatter. The water churns around his board. He is soaked. I don't like the blue colour of his lips.
- 22 "I'm Teresa. Don't worry, Jamie. It will be slow because we're going against the current. I promise to get you back in one piece." It takes too much energy to talk. Instead, I get him chatting. "Tell me about yourself."
- 23 "I thought I was good at all water sports, but windsurfing sure isn't one of them," he laughs.
- 24 I don't mean to answer. It just comes out. "Maybe with practice."
- 25 "Dumb to go out so far. I don't know what I'm doing." He changes the rope to the other hand, flexing the stiff one.
- 26 The wind changes. A big wave hits Jamie sideways, knocking him into the dark, chilly water. He shoots to the top for air and tangles in my slack rescue rope.
- 27 He is trapped underneath the sail.
- 28 "Jamie!" I scream. The wind swallows my voice. Quickly, I position my boat perpendicular to his board, like a *T*. I drop my paddle, grabbing the top of his sail at the mast. I tug. Nothing. The water on top of the sail makes it heavy. I drop it. I try again. One, two, three, heave. I grunt, as I break the air pocket and lift the sail a couple of inches. It's enough to let Jamie wriggle out. He explodes to the surface, gulping in air. He pulls himself safely onto the surfboard. I reach over to help untangle the rope from around his foot. I can see an ugly rope burn.
- 29 My kayak starts to tip. I throw my weight to the opposite side to keep from flipping. My heart beats fast. "Keep hold of the rope."
- 30 "Got it."
- 31 "Where's my paddle?" My throat tightens. I search the water. "There it is," I sigh with relief. It's floating a few feet away. My hands pull through the water, acting like paddles. I reach out and grab the shaft of my paddle.

32 “Hang on, Jamie.” The waves swell. The current changes and we ride the waves like a bucking bronco.

33 I have to keep away from shore or the waves will crash us against the granite, splitting us in half. Just as we clear the rocks, a cross current hits me. My kayak flips. I’m sitting upside down in the water. *Don’t panic. Do the Eskimo roll.*<sup>4</sup> I get my paddle in the ready position. Then I swing the blade away from the boat’s side. I arch my back around through, keeping my head low. I sweep my blade through the water, pulling hard. I right the kayak and gasp for breath.

34 “You gave me a heart attack,” Jamie looks white.

35 “Caught me by surprise.” We drift, while I catch my breath. The clouds turn black. The water becomes dead calm. “For now, it will be easy going. It’s going to storm any minute.” I paddle fast and hard. The rain comes down in buckets.

36 “I’m already wet, so it doesn’t matter,” Jamie jokes.

37 I like his sense of humor, but I’m not used to talking to a guy. I’ve never had a boyfriend. Who would be interested in me?

38 “You don’t know what it’s like being so helpless,” Jamie says.

39 I bite my lip. The kayak drifts. I see my parents waving from shore.

40 My father runs into the water to help. Everything happens real fast. He takes control. Before I know it, Jamie and I are safely back. My mother runs over with towels. Jamie wraps the towel around himself and pulls the windsurfer onto the sand. I stay in my kayak. Half the kayak is on land. The rest is in the water. I feel trapped, like a beached whale.

41 A turkey vulture circles above me, decides I’m not dead and flies away. I feel dead inside.

42 Jamie comes back and stands over me. “Do you need help?” he asks.

43 I shake my head, no. *Go away!* I scream in my head. *Go away, everybody!*

44 “Thanks for saving my skin,” Jamie says.

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<sup>4</sup> Eskimo roll: a technique used for righting an overturned kayak

- 45 "Next time, wear a life jacket."
- 46 Jamie doesn't flinch. "You're right. That was dumb." It is pouring even harder. Jamie hugs the wet towel around him. "Aren't you getting out?" he asks.
- 47 "Yes." Tears sting my eyes, mixed with the rain. My mother pushes a wheelchair over. My father lifts me. A blanket is wrapped around my shivering shoulders. I motion for my parents to leave me alone. Surprised, they move away, but stay close by. Jamie stares.
- 48 "Say something." My voice quivers. A fat bullfrog croaks and jumps into the water. I want to jump in after him and swim away somewhere safe. I say nothing more.
- 49 "Teresa," he clears his throat. "I didn't know."
- 50 I watch his discomfort. I've seen it all before. Awkwardness. Forced conversation. A feeble excuse and a fast getaway. My closer friends tried a little harder. They lasted two or three visits. Then, they stopped coming around.
- 51 The silence drags on. A mosquito buzzes around my head. So annoying. Why can't they both leave? It lands on my arm and I smack it.
- 52 "Do you like roasting marshmallows?" asks Jamie.
- 53 "Huh?"
- 54 "I like mine burnt to a crisp."
- 55 I hate small talk. My hands turn white, as I clutch the armrests of my wheelchair. "What you really want to know is how long I've been crippled."
- 56 Jamie winces. He doesn't say anything. I wish he would leave. The air feels heavy and suffocating. I decide to make it easy for him. I'll go first. I push on the wheels with my hands. The sand is wet. The wheels bury, instead of thrusting the wheelchair forward. I stop pushing. Another helpless moment. My parents are watching, waiting for my signal to look after me.
- 57 Jamie puts his hand on my shoulder. "Would you like to join me and my friends at a campfire tonight?"
- 58 "I don't need pity," I retort.
- 59 Jamie smiles. "Actually, I need a date. Everybody is a couple, except me. Where's your campsite?"
- 60 "Granite Saddle number 1026." *Why do I tell him? What's the matter with me?* I stare at my wheelchair and then at my kayak. My eyes water. Through tears, I see two images of me: the helpless child on land and the

independent woman on water. I blink and the land and water merge. I become one.

My notes about what I am reading.

61 I smile back at him.

62 Jamie pushes me past my parents. They stare at me, in confusion. "It's okay. I'll take Teresa to your campsite." My parents walk behind at a safe distance, moving slowly, despite the rain. We stop at my tent. I smell the fragrance of wet pine needles.

63 "I'll pick you up at nine." An ember flickers in the wet fireplace, catching our eyes. Sparks rise up into the sky. Jamie takes my hand. "One other thing."

64 "Yes?" I choke out.

65 "Bring the marshmallows."

"The Kayak" by Debbie Spring from *Takes: Stories for Young Adults* (Thistledown Press, 1996).

# Summits in Sight

LIFE MAGAZINE

Page 1

by Stephen Madden

**One of the country's finest rock climbers is many things: courageous, strong, driven, dutiful—and blind.**

1 By the time Erik Weihenmayer was 12 years old, the eyesight that had been deserting him was nearly gone. This didn't slow Erik. "I'd built a plywood ramp in our driveway to jump my bike over," he remembers. "I'd fly ten feet through the air and bounce when I landed. It was great." One day, he couldn't see well enough to navigate the ramp and fell off its side. "I got all cut up on these rocks in our driveway." But his vaulting days were not over. The next day he found the ramp painted a fluorescent orange. "Even I could see it," says Erik, who quickly got back on the bike.



Erik Weihenmayer, climbing partner Chris Morris, and Erik's father Ed Weihenmayer.

2 His father, Ed, had done the painting—yet another encouragement for his son to persevere. "He never said, 'You can't do it,'" says Erik. "He figured out a way for me to see it. Then he let me make my own mistakes."

3 For Ed, a former football captain at Princeton and an extremely vital man, it wasn't easy seeing his son scrape his shins on life's obstacles. Once, Ed watched as Erik ran that bike smack into a parked

car. The boy got up, dusted himself off and pedaled home. Ed never mentioned the incident.

Only by observing could Ed figure out ways to help. He encouraged Erik to try out for his Connecticut high school's wrestling team, and Erik became a champion. After retinoschisis had completely claimed Erik's sight, Ed

enrolled the boy in the outdoors program at the Carroll Center for the Blind in Massachusetts, and soon Erik was climbing New Hampshire's rock faces. He had found a calling.

Erik became an intrepid adventurer and a superb rock climber. He hiked all over the world, often with his father in attendance. On

June 27, 1995—Helen Keller's birthday<sup>1</sup>—Erik conquered Alaska's 20,320-foot Mount McKinley. As he ascended, his dad circled the peak in a plane to share the experience. In 1996, Ed hiked to the top of Yosemite's El Capitan to greet Erik, who had spent four days climbing the sheer rock face. Ed wasn't with Erik for his marriage proposal to Ellen Reeve atop Arizona's 2,700-foot Camelback Mountain last year, but was there as Erik and Ellen

■ see SUMMITS, page 2

<sup>1</sup> Helen Keller (1880–1968) was an inspiring deaf and blind writer and lecturer who had a great effect on how people in the United States and around the world cope with disabilities.

wed, 13,000 feet up Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro.

6 Last winter, Erik joined Ed, a former Marine aviator who flew more than 100 missions over Vietnam, on a 1,200-mile cycle trek through that country. At one point, Erik, riding behind Ed on a tandem bike, teased, "You know, Dad, I ride and hike with you, but you never come rock climbing with me. I think you owe me."

7 "Tell me where and when," Ed replied.

8 And so it is that on this azure morning Ed and Erik Weihenmayer stand at the base of a 200-foot rock face named Wind Ridge, in Colorado's Eldorado Canyon State Park. Today, the son will lead the father.

9 Rock climbing is not for the unfit. Erik has the taut, flat muscles and sandpaper-rough hands of a climber. While Ed is in good shape for a 58-year-old, his regimen of tennis and bicycling doesn't count for much here: You get good at rock climbing by climbing rocks, and Ed has never done that. "Dad's nervous," Erik says, and indeed Ed looks worried. But he is certain that Erik knows what he's doing. Ed trusts Erik.

10 The route goes up a wall that bulges outward, then becomes a series of ledges. Erik moves to the rock and is instantly eight feet off the ground. In some ways he has an edge over sighted climbers, owing to an acute sense of touch many blind people develop—and rock climbing is all about touch. Soon, Erik is standing on a ledge 30 feet up.

11 Now, Ed's turn. He reaches for a handhold, pulls himself up, searches for a foothold. His breathing is labored. Despite the cool mountain air, sweat pours off him. He's 10 feet up the rock when he falls, his helmet making a dull thud as it hits the

cliff. Ed swings like a pendulum on the end of his rope. Forget nervous, he looks scared. Erik's voice floats down: "C'mon, Dad. It's easier up here." Ed wipes sweat from his eyes and yells, "Climbing!" Ed moves to his left and falls again. He moves right and falls a third time. Still he climbs, and you start to understand how Erik learned to face the world with so much courage. You wonder if courage is more important in life than sight.

Ed has very little mobility in his left knee because of a football injury, so rather than move his leg to a foothold, he reaches across his body with his right hand, grabs the foot and jams it in. So it goes, until he is standing on the ledge. Ed, his face a mask of pure exhaustion, says, "I don't know, Erik. Maybe I should call it quits." Erik hands his dad a water bottle. They talk gently to each other, Erik telling Ed what's above, pretending he didn't hear his father. Soon they're climbing again, and Ed doesn't fall anymore today.

Later, at the car, Ed looks back at Wind Ridge, bathed in the warm light of a Rocky Mountain afternoon. It's a beautiful sight, he says. Erik agrees. "Most people get beauty from their vision," Erik says. "The blind get it from other senses. Rock feels beautiful to me—the texture, the temperatures, the way cracks branch out and come back."

Ed smiles. The lessons never end. He takes Erik's hand and shakes it. "Thanks, buddy," he says. "I wouldn't have had the courage to do it if you hadn't been there. I didn't want to let you down."

"I know, Dad."

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# **SHORT ANSWER ITEMS**

Rubrics and Sample Responses

## **Objective 2 – Literary Selection**

29 In “The Kayak,” what does the kayak symbolize to Teresa? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

**READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION  
OBJECTIVE 2**

**SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT**

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- may offer an incorrect theme, character trait, conflict, or change
- may offer a theme, character, conflict, or change that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- may incorrectly analyze a literary technique or figurative expression
- may offer an analysis that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- may present only a plot summary
- may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-1

29 The Kayak to Teresa was important because it would go freely like the wind. It also meant a lot to her because she helped her friend James.

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

In this response the student states why the kayak is important to Teresa, not what the kayak symbolizes to Teresa.

RG-2

29 The KAYAK symbolizes Teresa to accomplish anything that she wants. The KAYAK to Teresa is a test, the test is to test herself that she can do anything.

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

In this brief response the unsupported analysis is too general (to accomplish anything that she wants, to test herself that she can do anything) to determine whether it is reasonable.

29 To her It represents safety + a feeling of comfort to her because without She would not know what to do. But then again It's also a sign of hurt + unwillingness to try other things.

**Score Point 0—Insufficient**

This response lacks clarity. The analysis is too vague (because without it she would not know what to do) to determine whether it is reasonable to conclude that the kayak represents safety and comfort. The contradictory final statement that it signifies “hurt and unwillingness” is confusing.

29 The kayak symbolizes the limits she can do being handicapped. This is my special place she says, meaning that it is a challenge and she wants to do it to be fearless.

**Score Point 0—Insufficient**

In this response the student appears to misunderstand the symbolic meaning of the kayak to Teresa (the kayak symbolizes the limits she can do). The textual evidence (This is my special place) fails to support this inaccurate premise.

**READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION**  
**OBJECTIVE 2**

**SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT**

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- may offer a reasonable theme, character trait, conflict, or change but provide only general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- may offer a reasonable analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression but provide only general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- may offer a reasonable idea or analysis and may provide textual evidence, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea or analysis
- may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence without providing an idea or analysis

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
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RG-5

29 The Kayak symbolizes everything to Teresa. When she is in the kayak she feels wild and free. The wind blowing through her hair into her eyes. She feels like she is the helpless child on land and independent woman on water.

### Score Point 1—Partially Sufficient

In this response the student paraphrases accurate, relevant textual evidence (she feels wild and free, the wind blowing through her hair, like she is the helpless child on land and an independent woman on water) to support a vague, somewhat unclear analysis (the kayak symbolizes everything for Teresa).

RG-6

29 The kayak symbolizes two things for Teresa, strength + freedom. Freedom because while kayaking, Teresa has no limitations and she is equal to everyone else. She feels free to move as she wants. Strength because being in the rough waters alone makes her feel strong and independent.

### Score Point 1—Partially Sufficient

The student provides a strong analysis of why the kayak symbolizes strength and freedom. However, this response is only partially sufficient because the student fails to provide any textual evidence to support this analysis.

29 Her kayak is her symbol of her inner strength.  
"I don't want to go back to shore. Nobody lets  
me grow up." She is trying to say she is ready  
to face her challenges.

**Score Point 1—Partially Sufficient**

In this response the student states that the kayak is a symbol of Teresa's inner strength and provides textual evidence. However, this textual evidence (I don't want to go back to shore. Nobody lets me grow up) is only weakly connected to the idea of Teresa's inner strength and therefore cannot be considered sufficient support.

29 The kayak is life for Teresa. It symbolizes strength,  
courage and that she is independent, and in control  
of her life. As she mentions in the passage "I see  
two images of me: the helpless child on land,  
and the independent woman on water."

**Score Point 1—Partially Sufficient**

This response is partially sufficient because the student provides only incomplete textual evidence (The helpless child on land, and the independent woman on water). While the evidence directly supports the idea that the kayak symbolizes Teresa's independence and control over her life, this evidence does not support her strength or courage.

**READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION**  
**OBJECTIVE 2**

**SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT**

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- must offer a reasonable theme, character trait, conflict, or change and support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
  
- must offer a reasonable analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression and support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, sufficient responses must be clear and specific.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-9

Because she is  
29 trapped in a wheelchair on land, Teresa's kayak represents freedom. She emphasizes her feelings of being "wild and free" and "independent" while kayaking. The restrictions she experiences on land are nonexistent in a kayak that "is an extension of [her] legs," only on the water does she feel "in control."

### Score Point 2—Sufficient

In this response the student states that the kayak represents freedom to Teresa because she is trapped in a wheelchair (the restrictions she experiences on land are nonexistent in a kayak). The student provides several examples of direct textual evidence and paraphrase ("wild and free" and "independent," in a kayak that is "an extension of [her] legs," only on the water does she feel "in control") to support and confirm this analysis.

RG-10

29 The kayak symbolizes a gateway. It's a place where she can feel in peace and independence. For example in paragraph two she says, "This is my special place." "Out here, I feel secure." "She feels so close to the kayak that she feels it's a part of her, as in paragraph two. "I am one with the kayak." The blue boat is an extension of my legs. "The kayak is basically like a sanctuary away from the world."

### Score Point 2—Sufficient

In this response the student states that, for Teresa, the kayak symbolizes a gateway to peace and independence and is a sanctuary away from the world. The student provides specific, relevant textual evidence to support this reasonable conclusion (This is my special place, out here I feel secure, I am one with the kayak, the blue boat is an extension of my legs).

The Kayak.  
29 The Kayak Symbolizes freedom and independence to Teresa. "I am one with the kayak. I can do anything; I can go anywhere. Totally independent. Totally in control of my life." When she rides the kayak she is in control of her life but back home is different. "It's so different back on shore. Nobody lets me grow up. They treat me like a baby."

Score Point 2—Sufficient

In this response the student presents clear and specific textual evidence to contrast the freedom and independence the kayak represents (I can do anything; I can go anywhere. Totally in control of my life) with Teresa's dependence on land (Nobody lets me grow up. They treat me like a baby).

29 The kayak symbolize independence to Teresa. In the water she has strength. She is able to single-handedly save Jamie. Once on land, all of that disappears. She states that she feels like a helpless child on land and like a strong, independent woman while in the water.

Score Point 2—Sufficient

In this response the student states that the kayak symbolizes freedom to Teresa because on the water she has the strength to save Jamie, while on land her strength disappears. The student presents this idea with relevant textual evidence in order to provide a strong link between the idea and its support.

**READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION**  
**OBJECTIVE 2**

**SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY**

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful theme, character trait, conflict, or change and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
  
- must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, exemplary responses must demonstrate the student’s depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea or analysis.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-13

29 The kayak symbolizes freedom for Teresa on land she cannot experience this which is demonstrated by her thoughts "I push on the wheels with my hands. The sand is wet. The wheels bury, instead of thrusting forward. I stop pushing, another helpless moment." Teresa has no freedom in her wheelchair, she is completely limited, always reliant on others. Only in her kayak is she unconstrained. "I am one with the kayak. The blue boat is an extension of my legs. I can do anything, I can go anywhere."

### Score point 3—Exemplary

This effective response demonstrates a depth of understanding by providing strong textual evidence for the constraints of the wheelchair and Teresa's reliance on others while she's in it (I push the wheels with my hands...another helpless moment) and the freedom afforded by the kayak (I am one with the kayak...I can do anything, I can go anywhere).

RG-14

29 Teresa believes that the kayak is independence. With her disability she is the "helpless child on land", yet with her kayak she is "the independent woman on water." Her inability to walk is compensated by her ability to ride the waves. Teresa is "totally in control" in her "special place"; a place where she can expand her horizons and push herself further and not "feel trapped like a beached whale".

### Score Point 3—Exemplary

This response extends the idea that the kayak represents independence with a thoughtful analysis (her inability to walk is compensated by her ability to ride the waves, a place where she can expand her horizons and push herself further). Textual evidence effectively supports the analysis (the helpless child on land, the independent woman on water, totally in control in her special place, not feeling trapped like a beached whale).

29 The Kayak represents Teresa's independent self where she is freed from the fetters of society, and completely at peace with her disability. "I ride the wave...I love it, I feel wild & free...I am one with the kayak. The blue boat is an extension of my legs." With these words Teresa shows the unbridled passion she feels when she is left alone to do things by herself, for herself. The kayak allows her to forget the helpless "beached whale" she becomes ashore, and permits Teresa to be the strong, independent young woman she is in reality.

**Score Point 3—Exemplary**

This insightful response offers an in-depth analysis of the idea that "the kayak represents Teresa's independent self where she is freed from the fetters of society and completely at peace with her disability." Through skillful presentation of relevant text (I ride the wave...I love it...I feel wild and free...) interwoven with analysis (The kayak allows her to forget the helpless "beached whale" she becomes ashore), this student achieves an exemplary score.

29 In the story "The Kayak", Teresa sees her kayak as the freedom she doesn't have on land because she is confined to a wheelchair. Besides the obvious limitations of being handicapped, Teresa's parents are over-protective of her, treating her like a baby, which she no longer wants to be. But in the water, Teresa is free-free from her parents, free from her wheelchair, free from feeling pitiful. On water she is "one with the kayak" but on land Teresa feels "like a beached whale". Teresa's kayak is her freedom to express the strength and courage in her heart. We see that when she makes the promise to Jame to get him back to shore safely, which she does.

**Score Point 3—Exemplary**

In this particularly thoughtful response, the student contrasts the freedom the kayak represents with the confinement Teresa feels on land. The student effectively interweaves analysis with a quotation from the text to provide a strong sense of completion.

## **Objective 3 – Expository**

30 In “Summits in Sight” what does Ed learn from Erik? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

**READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION**  
**OBJECTIVE 3**

**SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT**

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not based on the text
- may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that does not address the question
- may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not reasonable
- may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- may incorrectly analyze or evaluate a characteristic of the text
- may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-17

30 Erik learns many things from his father. In "Summits in Sight" Erik learns that anything is possible because his father never told him, "You can't do it." Erik also learned how to be courageous because his father always encouraged Erik at whatever he did.

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

In this response the student answers a different question than the one being asked. Instead of analyzing what Ed learns from Erik, the response addresses the lessons Erik learns from his father.

RG-18

30 He learns that no matter what kind of obstacle gets in your way there is always gonna be a way around it.

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

In this response the unsupported analysis is too general (no matter what kind of obstacle, you can get around it) to determine if it is reasonable.

30 Ed learns how to spend time with his son. His son is blind and they do a lot of activities together. He goes rock climbing with Erik. He also learns never to give up on anybody.

**Score Point: 0—Insufficient**

This response presents lessons learned by Ed that are incorrect (how to spend time with his son, never to give up on anybody).

30 Though Erik is blind he has courage and he can teach his dad new things and helps his dad feel safe even though he can't see anything he can sense, which helps his dad to feel safe.

**Score Point: 0—Insufficient**

This response offers the vague idea that Erik can teach his father "new things." The student states that Erik makes his father "feel safe" but does not specifically tell us what Ed learns.

**READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION**  
**OBJECTIVE 3**

**SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT**

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the text that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- may offer a reasonable idea, analysis, or evaluation and may provide textual evidence, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea, analysis, or evaluation
- may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence without drawing a conclusion, offering an interpretation, making a prediction, or providing an analysis or evaluation

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-21

30 In "Summits in Sight," Ed learns about the value of courage from his son, Erik. Erik has overcome whatever obstacles are placed in front of him because he is persistent and fearless. He convinces his father to try these new and dangerous things as well. This shows Ed that he too can accomplish his goals if he has the courage to try.

### Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient

In this response the student offers a reasonable analysis of the idea that Ed learns about the value of courage from Erik (he is persistent and fearless, he convinces his father to try, he shows Ed he too can accomplish his goals). However, the response cannot receive a higher score because there is no textual support.

RG-22

30 In "Summits in Sight" Ed teaches Erik lessons throughout Erik's younger years. When Erik becomes older they switch roles and Erik teaches Ed a few things. One lesson Ed learns from Erik is to never give up. "I don't know Erik maybe I should call it quits... soon they were climbing again." Erik also teaches Ed that the blind learn from touch and Ed replies "The lessons never end."

### Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient

The student presents two reasonable ideas in this response. However, the student provides textual evidence (I don't know, Erik. Maybe I should call it quits) that is only weakly connected to the lesson Ed learns from his son about never giving up. When attempting to support the second idea—that the blind learn from touch—the student mistakenly attributes the quotation "The lessons never end" to Ed rather than to the author.

30 Ed learns from his son Erik that if you want to accomplish something you have to keep trying. Ed remembers how Erik always had accidents with his bike when he was little and still accomplishes his goal while Ed kept on falling off the cliff and he finally accomplishes his goal.

**Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient**

In this response the student provides a reasonable analysis of the lesson Ed learned from Erik (if you want to accomplish something you have to keep trying). However, the references to the text (Erik always had accidents with his bike, Ed kept falling off the cliff) are too general to qualify as supporting evidence.

30 In the story Summits in Sight Ed learns from Erik that goals can be achieved with determination and support. "I wouldn't have had the courage to do it if you hadn't been there."

**Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient**

In this response the student states that Ed learns "that goals can be achieved with determination and support." However, the textual evidence (I wouldn't have had the courage to do it if you hadn't been there) addresses only the effect of Erik's support of his father. It does not clearly or specifically illustrate how determination has affected Ed's success on the climb.

**READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION**  
**OBJECTIVE 3**

**SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT**

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- must draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
  
- must offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the selection and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, sufficient responses must be clear and specific.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-25

30 In "Summits in Sight," Ed learns how to be more determined and courageous from Erik. For example, when Ed first attempts to climb West Ridge with Erik, he falls three times and thinks of giving up, but when he sees Erik overcome climbing with his handicap, he is drawn to finish the climb even with a bad knee.

**Score Point: 2—Sufficient**

This student presents a clear and specific synopsis of relevant text to sufficiently support the idea that "Ed learns to be more determined and courageous from Erik."

RG-26

30 Erik teaches Ed about determination and courage. "Maybe I should call it quits." Erik's only answer to his father is to push on. By not quitting during tough obstacles, Erik shows his father what determination can achieve. Ed follows that example. When his knee hinders his progress, Ed finds the courage and a way to push through. He "grabs the foot and jams it in... until he is standing on the ledge."

**Score Point: 2—Sufficient**

In this response the student combines a reasonable analysis with accurate, relevant text to illustrate that Erik teaches Ed about determination and courage. Although Ed's inclination is to give up (Maybe I should call it quits), Erik's example (to push on) gives Ed courage and helps him "push through" (He grabs the foot and jams it in...until he is standing on the ledge).

30 Ed views his son Erik as a man of courage and perseverance. Ed learns that when obstacles come across your path, the best thing to do is face them. Although Erik "scraped his shins on life's obstacles," it did not stop him from trying even harder. Whether the obstacle is a ten-foot "...plywood ramp..." or a "...20,320-foot mountain," Ed learned that "the lessons never end."

**Score Point: 2—Sufficient**

This student integrates analysis with textual evidence from the beginning, middle, and end of the selection (scraped his shins on life's obstacles, a ten-foot plywood ramp, a 20,320-foot mountain, the lessons never end) to support the idea that Erik taught Ed that "when obstacles come across your path, the best thing to do is face them."

30 By observing his blind yet admirable son, Erik, achieve his goals of rock climbing, Ed learns that through perseverance and acts of courage, one can attain the seemingly impossible. On one occasion, Erik convinces his father to scale a mountain alongside him. After this experience, Ed tells his son, "Thanks, buddy. I wouldn't have had the courage to do it if you hadn't been there." Erik's courageousness radiates to all who see how he overcomes his disability to pursue his dreams.

**Score Point: 2—Sufficient**

The student offers a strong analysis of the lesson Ed learns from Erik (through perseverance and courage, one can attain the seemingly impossible) and supports it with sufficient textual evidence (Thanks, buddy, I wouldn't have had the courage to do it if you hadn't been there). To achieve an exemplary score, however, the student would need to offer stronger textual support.

**READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION**  
**OBJECTIVE 3**

**SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY**

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful conclusion, interpretation, or prediction and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
  
- must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the text and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, exemplary responses show strong evidence of the student’s depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea, analysis, or evaluation.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-29

Ed learns that you can never give up or begin to doubt your abilities. As Ed swings like a pendulum on the end of the rope, Erik's voice floats down: "C'mon, Dad, it's easier up here." Ed begins to feel motivated by Erik's words of encouragement and even with his bad knee, Ed pushes through his pain and makes it to the lodge, even though he's exhausted. When Ed is discouraged and says, "Maybe I should call it quits," Erik just pretends not to hear him and continues upward. In the end, Ed succeeds because of Erik's support, accomplishing something he doubted he could do.

### Score Point: 3—Exemplary

In this skillful response the student demonstrates a deep understanding of the lesson Ed learns (you can never give up or begin to doubt your abilities). The student provides strong support for this analysis with a combination of specific synopsis and direct quotations.

RG-30

ERIK TEACHES HIS DAD THAT YOU DON'T NEED TO BE ABLE TO SEE IN ORDER TO BE CONNECTED TO NATURE. WHEN THEY GO ROCK CLIMBING, ED MARVELS AT ERIK'S ACUTE SENSE OF TOUCH, AND WHEN THEY REACH THE TOP OF THE RIDGE, ERIK AGREES WITH HIM THAT THE MOUNTAINS ARE A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT. "ROCK FEELS BEAUTIFUL TO ME—THE TEXTURE, THE TEMPERATURES, THE WAY CRACKS BRANCH OUT AND COME BACK." ED LEARNS FROM ERIK THAT THERE'S OTHER WAYS THAN SIGHT TO EXPERIENCE THE WORLD'S BEAUTY.

### Score Point: 3—Exemplary

This insightful response focuses on Ed's lesson from Erik that you don't need sight to be connected to nature. Particularly thoughtful analysis (Ed marvels at Erik's acute sense of touch) supported with strongly connected, relevant textual evidence (Rock feels beautiful to me—the texture, the temperatures, the way cracks branch out and come back) reinforce the lesson of a different way "to experience the world's beauty."

30 After going rock climbing with his son, Ed knows how challenging life has been for Erik. Being older and less agile than Erik, Ed really struggles up the mountain. Even though he can see and Erik is blind, Ed falls several times and is very scared. "Ed swings like a pendulum on the end of his rope. Forget nervous, he looks scared". He keeps climbing, and falls again and again. He now begins to understand what it's like to go through life with a handicap. The author emphasizes Ed's realization by commenting, "You wonder if courage is more important in life than sight."

Score Point: 3—Exemplary

In this response the student offers an insightful analysis of the realization Ed acquires, through firsthand experience, of just how challenging life has been for Erik. The student understands Ed's "handicaps" (being older and less agile) and struggles (Ed swings like a pendulum...Forget nervous, he looks scared). In the last sentence, the student includes a comment by the author (You wonder if courage is more important than sight) to emphasize Ed's new understanding.

He learns to be courageous. His son shows him that even though he's 58 years old and with a bad knee, he can still engage in a  
30 high risk sport like rock climbing. Erik motivates his dad to go on by staying positive the whole time, "C'mon, dad. It's easier up here". At the end of the story Ed is grateful for the encouragement his son gave him. "Thanks, buddy," he says. "I wouldn't have had the courage to do it if you hadn't been there. I didn't want to let you down." When Ed was ready to give up, his son's positive attitude gave him the strength he needed to keep climbing.

Score Point 3—Exemplary

In this effective response the student demonstrates depth of understanding of the lesson in courage that Ed learns from Erik. Relevant textual evidence in the form of direct quotations supports the idea that Erik motivated his father through positive encouragement and that Ed, even at 58, has the strength to "engage in a high risk sport like rock climbing."

## **Objective 3 – Literary/Expository**

31 What is one characteristic that Teresa and Erik share? Support your answer with evidence from both selections.

**READING RUBRIC**  
**LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER**  
**OBJECTIVE 3**

**SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT**

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not based on the selections
- may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that does not address the question
- may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not reasonable
- may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- may incorrectly analyze or evaluate a characteristic of text based on both selections
- may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence from one or both selections

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-33

31 The two readings showed similar characteristics of both Teresa and Erik. They had to go through the same struggles, causing many distractions from the tasks that they were trying to perform.

**Score Point: 0—Insufficient**

In this response the unsupported analysis is too general (same struggles causing many distractions from the tasks they were trying to perform) to determine whether it is reasonable.

31 Teresa and Erik shared their adventures with their parents because they wanted to show their feelings with their parents. Like when Erik had shared rock climbing with his father Ed and Teresa shared with both of her parents how important her kayak is to her.

Score Point: 0—Insufficient

In this response the overarching idea (Teresa and Erik shared their adventures with their parents because they wanted to show their feelings with their parents) applies to Erik only. Teresa did not share her adventure or her feelings about the kayak with her parents.

31 The courage to pass the obstacles.  
They confront their feelings of  
helplessness and embarrassment.

**Score Point: 0—Insufficient**

In this response the first sentence (courage to pass the obstacles) is vague, and the second sentence (They confront their feelings of helplessness and embarrassment) can be applied only to Teresa, since Erik does not feel helpless or embarrassed. Overall, there is not a clear overarching idea.

31 Erik and Teresa both are overachievers. When Teresa found herself in a dangerous position she was alone. Without anyones help she overcame it. Erik went over his limits to learn how to rock climb- although at first he wasn't successful.

**Score Point: 0—Insufficient**

This response presents an analysis that is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable (both are overachievers). In addition, there are inaccuracies. "In a dangerous position" describes Jamie more than Teresa, and it was Ed, not Erik, who was at first unsuccessful at rock climbing.

**READING RUBRIC**  
**LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER**  
**OBJECTIVE 3**

**SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT**

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections but supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence from one or both selections
- may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections but may offer textual support from only one selection or may offer no textual support at all
- may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence from one or both selections
- may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections but may offer textual support from only one selection or may offer no textual support at all
- may offer a reasonable idea, analysis, or evaluation based on both selections and may provide textual evidence from both selections, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea, analysis, or evaluation
- may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections but may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, make a prediction, or provide an analysis or evaluation based on only one selection
- may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections without drawing a conclusion, offering an interpretation, making a prediction, or providing an analysis or evaluation

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague or may indicate that the student has difficulty making connections across selections.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-37

31 Erik and Teresa both share courage and their love for nature. In both of these passages the characters show that they are not afraid to go to the extreme. Even though they both have handicaps, they do not let their blindness or wheelchair be an excuse for them.

### Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient

In this response the student presents several characteristics that Erik and Teresa share (their courage, love of nature, handicaps they do not let be an excuse) but fails to provide any textual support.

31 One of the characteristics that Teresa and Erik share is never giving up. For example in both selections both persons have a disabilities and neither let it stop them from what they love doing. Teresa save a guy from getting hurt and got them both back to share on her own. And Erik no matter how many times he ran into things or fell he never let him stop him from getting up and trying again.

Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient

In this response the student presents a reasonable characteristic that Teresa and Erik share (never giving up despite disabilities). However, the textual references are too general (saves a guy from getting hurt, ran into things...never let [it] stop him) to qualify as supporting evidence.

31 Eagerness! Teresa and Erik where both delt the short straw in life, however they were able to rise above their short commings because they were strong willed. The reader is not aware of Teresa's paralytic state until the end of Spring's piece. It is it just believed that she is a brave with a good heart who is mentally strong. It is not until she "sav(es) his skin," that she shows who she really is. Erik however had his disability all his life and he also chose to work hard at achieving his goals. Through Erik being eager his father also started being just a little more like him. Eagerness -it's contagious!

**Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient**

This response demonstrates the student's ability to make connections between Teresa and Erik (eagerness, both dealt the short straw, able to rise above their shortcomings, strong-willed). The analysis is accurate and thorough, but the student fails to provide enough solid textual evidence to be considered sufficient support.

31 Teresa and Erik both display the courage to overcome their disability to enjoy life and what they love. They both face and succeed in physical sports where eyesight and legs would be an advantage. In "The Kayak" Teresa risks her own life to save another, "I promise to get you back in one piece." In "Summits in Sight" Erik faces daily the danger of falling off faces of cliffs and even common obstacles, but he manages to conquer them also. "...ran smack into a parked car... got up, dusted himself off and pedaled home."

**Score Point: 1—Partially Sufficient**

In this response the student presents a shared characteristic (the courage to overcome their disability to enjoy life and what they love). While the textual support for Erik (ran smack into a parked car...got up, dusted himself off and pedaled home) is directly linked to the overarching idea, the support offered for Teresa (I promise to get you back in one piece) is only weakly connected to her courage to overcome a disability in order to do what she loves.

**READING RUBRIC  
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER  
OBJECTIVE 3**

**SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT**

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- must draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections
  
- must offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections

In addition, sufficient responses indicate that the student is able to make clear and specific connections across selections.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-41

31 They are both courageous and they don't allow their disability to hold them back. They push themselves + get everything they can out of their bodies + the abilities they do have. When they are doing "their thing" they feel in total control. Even though Teresa was at a physical disadvantage she told Jamie "Don't worry... I promise to get you back in one piece." When Erik took his dad rock climbing it said, "Today, the son will lead the father."

### Score Point: 2—Sufficient

In this response the student presents a shared trait that is reasonable: having the courage not to let their disabilities hold them back. The student uses the second sentence to extend this idea with additional explanation. The phrases "Even though Teresa was at a physical disadvantage" and "When Erik took his dad rock climbing" provide a strong context for understanding the link between the idea and the textual evidence (Don't worry...I promise to get you back in one piece. Today, the son will lead the father).

31 One characteristic that Teresa and Erik share is desire. Each of them, even with their disabilities had the desire to do something that they both enjoy, but at the same time was incredibly dangerous. For Teresa, it was kayaking. It was her escape from her life of helplessness, "This is my special place. Out here, I feel safe and secure." For Erik it is rock climbing. "Erik became an intrepid adventurer and a superb rock climber." These two escapes led Teresa and Erik to be better people, as their desire helped the people around them become better people.

**Score Point: 2—Sufficient**

In this response the student states that Teresa and Erik's shared characteristic is a desire to do something they both enjoy despite their disabilities. The analysis for Teresa (kayaking, her escape from helplessness) combined with relevant text (This is my special place. Out here I feel safe and secure) supports this premise. While the analysis for Erik is weaker than for Teresa, Erik's desire to do something he enjoys is sufficiently supported with relevant textual evidence (Erik became an intrepid adventurer and a superb rock climber).

3 Teresa and Erik are both fearless people. Teresa helped a young man that could have almost died in the storm. She did everything she could to get him on shore safely. When she flipped upside down she told herself not to panic. When Jamie went under water she did everything she could to save him, all despite the fact that she is an invalid. Erik has done many things not giving a second thought that he is blind. He became a champion wrestler at his high school. Many obstacles never stopped him. He climbed Kilimanjaro, Mount McKinley and lived a normal life getting married to Ms. Ellen Reeve. When his father went with him rock climbing, he didn't give up on him despite the fact that he fell numerous times and just about quit.

Score point: 2—Sufficient

In this response the student presents the shared characteristic of fearlessness. The student uses a specific synopsis to effectively recount the key events supporting Teresa's fearlessness while rescuing Jamie and Erik's accomplishments despite the obstacles created by his blindness.

31 Teresa and Erik share the ability to help others, even with their own impairments. Teresa saves a physically stronger male from getting hurt or drowning in the ocean, even with her being bound to a wheelchair. "Thanks for saving my skin," Jamie says. Erik helps keep his father motivated while they climb rocks even though he is blind. Erik's dad states, "I wouldn't have had the courage to do it if you hadn't been there." The sheer fact that both characters have a disability that draws them back from some advantage in life, they continued to strive to help others in need.

Score Point: 2—Sufficient

In this response the student focuses on the shared "ability to help others, even with their own impairments." Effective use of direct quotations provides support for the notion of the wheelchair-bound Teresa helping another by saving Jamie from drowning and the blind Erik helping his father stay motivated.

**READING RUBRIC  
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER  
OBJECTIVE 3**

**SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY**

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful conclusion, interpretation, or prediction based on both selections and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections
  
- must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections

In addition, exemplary responses indicate that the student is able to make meaningful connections across selections. These responses show strong evidence of the student’s depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea, analysis, or evaluation.

**Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.**

## Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

RG-45

31 Persistence is the key in any challenging situation, especially for the handicapped. Erik shows more passionate determination than most people who have the luxury of sight. One time he was bike riding and crashed into a car, "The boy got up, dusted himself off and pedaled home." Erik climbs mountains regularly and loves every minute of it. He is "one of the country's finest rock climbers", and he is completely blind. Teresa demonstrates perseverance as she rescues an inexperienced windsurfer amidst a horrendous storm. "Slowly, we made our way. My paddle dips into the water first to the right, then to the left. Beads of sweat form on my forehead." Teresa's legs are paralyzed but this doesn't stop her from saving a potential drowning victim, a feat most of us could not accomplish. For both Erik and Teresa, their determination is stronger than their handicaps.

### Score Point: 3—Exemplary

In this response the student draws the thoughtful conclusion that, for both characters, their determination is stronger than their handicaps. By interweaving analysis with synopsis and direct quotations, the student details how each has overcome handicaps to accomplish feats most people could not. The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of an important similarity between Teresa and Erik.

31 Although one is paralyzed and the other is blind, they both possess the quality of spirit that enables them to face danger with confidence and resolution. When Teresa's kayak flips over she stays calm and gets out of her predicament all on her own. "Don't panic, Do the Eskimo roll..." I right the kayak and gasp for breath." When Erik's dad starts to feel fearful while rock climbing, Erik, who is blind, encourages him to go on. "C'mon, Dad. It's easier up here." At the end Erik's dad comments that he couldn't have done it without his son's help.

Score Point: 3—Exemplary

In this exemplary response, the student presents the insightful analysis that Teresa and Erik possess the quality of spirit that enables them to face danger with confidence and resolution. The student strongly supports this analysis with a combination of paraphrased text and direct quotations from each selection.

Both Teresa and Erik have shown courage in the face of adversity. Teresa is confined to a wheelchair but she enjoys kayaking because it allows her to feel stronger and independent. With great determination, she managed to save the life of a boy who was windsurfing. "Don't worry, Jaimie. It will be slow because we're going against the current. I promise to get you back in one piece." Erik lost his eyesight at an early age, but that never stopped him from doing anything, he even became an avid adventurer. He fearlessly took on many challenges a fully able person might not be able to do. "He hiked all over the world," "conquered Alaska's 20,000 foot Mt. McKinley." He proposed to his girlfriend atop 2,700 foot Camelback Mountain in Arizona. Both Teresa and Erik have actually been motivated by their disabilities.

**Score Point: 3—Exemplary**

In this response the student effectively connects textual evidence to a thorough analysis of how Teresa and Erik have shown courage in the face of adversity. The response begins with a specific synopsis of how each has overcome their disabilities (Teresa is confined to a wheelchair but she kayaks, Erik lost his eyesight but became an avid adventurer). The student includes specific text from each selection to describe their courage in the face of their disabilities. The last sentence, which focuses on the more global idea that both Teresa and Erik have been motivated by their disabilities, gives the response a sense of completeness.

31 For Teresa and Erik, their love for an outdoor activity gives them the opportunity to overcome their physical limitations and makes them feel whole. Teresa lives for kayaking in the open waters of an ocean bay. "I love it. I feel wild and free. This is my special place." On the water her paralyzed legs don't dominate her life. "I am one with the kayak. The blue boat is an extension of my legs. I can do anything." Erik too lives for an outdoor activity—rock climbing. For Erik rock climbing serves as an equalizer to his lack of sight. When he's climbing, he is wholly connected to the world and is able to see the beauty in it. "Rock feels beautiful to me—the texture, the temperatures, the way cracks branch out and come back."

Score Point: 3—Exemplary

This response presents an insightful analysis of the premise that the characters' love for an outdoor activity gives them the chance to overcome physical limitations and feel whole. Specific, relevant textual evidence strongly supports the idea of Teresa's love for kayaking and the wholeness she feels in the open waters (I love it. I feel wild and free. I am one with the kayak. The blue boat is an extension of my legs). The student's depth of understanding is particularly evident in the section on Erik. The interweaving of analysis and textual evidence effectively illustrates Erik's connection to the world and ability to "see" the beauty in it through rock climbing.

# **WRITTEN COMPOSITION**

Rubrics and Sample Responses

Write an essay explaining what courage means to you.

The information in the box below will help you remember what you should think about when you write your composition.

**REMEMBER—YOU SHOULD**

- write about the assigned topic
- make your writing thoughtful and interesting
- make sure that each sentence you write contributes to your composition as a whole
- make sure that your ideas are clear and easy for the reader to follow
- write about your ideas in depth so that the reader is able to develop a good understanding of what you are saying
- proofread your writing to correct errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure

The names of individuals mentioned in the compositions have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the students whose responses appear in this guide.

## SCORE POINT 1

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS AN INEFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

### *Focus and Coherence*

- Individual paragraphs and/or the composition as a whole are not focused. The writer may shift abruptly from idea to idea, making it difficult for the reader to understand how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- The composition as a whole has little, or no, sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion, if present, may be perfunctory.
- A substantial amount of writing may be extraneous because it does not contribute to the development or quality of the composition. In some cases, the composition overall may be only weakly connected to the prompt.

### *Organization*

- The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and/or paragraph to paragraph is not logical. Sometimes weak progression results from an absence of transitions or from the use of transitions that do not make sense. At other times, the progression of thought is simply not evident, even if appropriate transitions are included.
- An organizational strategy is not evident. The writer may present ideas in a random or haphazard way, making the composition difficult to follow.
- Wordiness and/or repetition may stall the progression of ideas.

### *Development of Ideas*

- The writer presents one or more ideas but provides little or no development of those ideas.
- The writer presents one or more ideas and attempts to develop them. However, this development is so general or vague that it prevents the reader from understanding the writer's ideas.
- The writer presents only a plot summary of a published piece of writing, a movie, or a television show.
- The writer omits information, which creates significant gaps between ideas. These gaps prevent the reader from clearly understanding those ideas.

### *Voice*

- The writer does not engage the reader, therefore failing to establish a connection.
- There may be little or no sense of the writer's individual voice. The composition does not sound authentic or original. The writer is unable to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

### *Conventions*

- There is little or no evidence in the composition that the writer can correctly apply the conventions of the English language. Severe and/or frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure may cause the writing to be unclear or difficult to read. These errors weaken the composition by causing an overall lack of fluency.
- The writer may misuse or omit words and phrases and may frequently write awkward sentences. These weaknesses interfere with the effective communication of ideas.

# Score Point 1 Guide Papers

TAKS Exit Level  
July 2004

WG-1a

Has anyone ever asked you what courage is? Have you ever thought about "What does courage mean to me"? Well I am going to tell you what courage means to me. I have three ideas they are a person who will be a leader, will face dangers, and stand up for what is right. I will now explain my three ideas.

My first idea is someone who will be a leader. I believe a person who will stand up and take charge of a situation is a leader. A person who will help people and encourage people is a leader. To be a leader takes courage. You can't be a leader if you are afraid to stand up and take charge.

My second idea is someone who will face dangers. Someone who isn't afraid to face risks when someone needs help. When someone is in trouble and needs help a person who will jump in and help has courage. A person who will defy all odds to help has courage.

My third idea is someone who will stand up for what is right. Someone who will stand up and not back down has courage. A person who has integrity and will not back down has courage. Someone who will never back down and never give in to pressure. Someone who will always stand strong and for what is right.

I have written what courage means to me and what it takes to have courage. I had three ideas they are again a person who will be a leader, will face dangers, and stand up

for what is right. I believe everyone has courage. Also, that one day they will show it. I have one question for you. What does courage mean to you?

**Score Point: 1**

In a perfunctory introduction, the writer states that there are three ideas that represent courage (a person who will be a leader, face danger, stand up for what is right). The absence of connections between these ideas interferes with the overall coherence of the response. Repetition within paragraphs (a person who will stand up and take charge of a situation is a leader; you can't be a leader if you are afraid to stand up and take charge) weakens the sentence-to-sentence progression. In addition, the development is so general and vague that the reader does not have a clear understanding of what the writer is attempting to say. There is little or no sense of individuality in this composition.

What does courage mean to you? To me courage is when you go for something you want. When you think something is impossible for you to do, but you pass through all those obstacles and you meet your goal, that is courage. You had enough courage to believe in yourself.

Courage means different things to everyone. For me, courage could mean to go out with nature and rock climb, surf, ride, hike or snow or water skiing. To others, courage is when you stand for what you believe is right, even if your standing alone. So, there's not necessarily one kind of courage because there are a lot of ways a person could have courage.

Teresa has courage because she was able to help Jamie when he needed help. Teresa loves to be in the water with her kayak. One day she was riding the waves, when all of the sudden there was warning signs of a storm. Then Jamie who thought that he was good at all water sports, but realizes that he's not, runs into Teresa. With the storm coming Jamies gets scared but Teresa assures him that she will take him back to the shore alive in one piece. Then, when they get back to shore he finds out that she's on a wheelchair and he thanked her.

To him that was very courageous.  
Erik completely lost his sight when he was 12. Even though he was blind he would ride his bike. Once he fell and crashed against a parked car. His dad would help him, in that situation he painted the ramp bright orange that way he could see it. After he turned 12, Ed, his father, enrolled Erik at the Carroll Center for the Blind. There Erik found his calling, rock climbing. He became an intrepid adventurer and a superb rock climber. Then once Erik told his dad to go rock climbing with him. At the age of 58, Ed was in good shape, but not he had never rock climbed. But Ed trusted Erik and Ed was able to rock climb a 200-foot rock face named Wind Ridge, in Colorado's Eldorado Canyon state Park with Erick's help.  
Courage could mean anything to different persons. It could mean to rock climb even if you're blind or to ride the waves even if you need a wheelchair.

**Score Point: 1**

This composition is ineffective because it is, for the most part, a plot summary of "The Kayak" and "Summits in Sight" with little or no sense of the writer's own ideas. In the first two paragraphs, the writer attempts to discuss the definition of courage but ends up merely listing several definitions without focusing on one and developing it.

To me courage is something you don't play with or abuse it be it can hurt you in many different ways. But the words means is you have courage don't let no one persuade you of doing something you don't want to do.

When the words courage come to mind is means to me that you want to doing something not something any body elise tell you to do like the world today every body is face with courage wear down the line. Like teenagers we have to have courage and want to go to school. we have to want that not no one but us. Like playing sports is a type of courage, going to practice everyday to play in games pass classes to be able to play. you have to want that in your self. In the world today alot of people don't have enough courage scared what every body elise is going to say then to believe in your self that you have courage. Can nobody make you doing you don't want to do it is your choice. courage is a words that it come in a different way all most every time it come. But what my parents always to me if you believe that you have and enjoy doing something nothing can take that away from you. Not no body.

**Score Point: 1**

The writer of this composition defines courage as the ability to do what you want and not be persuaded to do things that you do not want to do. Although the composition is focused and has some development, the frequent and severe errors in grammar and spelling as well as a recurrent lack of sentence boundaries overwhelm the composition's strengths, interfering with the reader's understanding of the writing. This lack of control of the conventions of written English results in an ineffective presentation of the writer's ideas.

What is courage? It could be many different things to many different people. To me, it's a lot of things combined in one.

Courage is not something you are born with, it is something you obtain as you grow and learn. Being afraid comes first. Everyone is afraid of something, but courage is what one must find to face those fears. Courage is what gets many of us through life. Without courage we would have nothing. Everyone would be afraid to fight our wars, invent new things, or fall in love.

Courage also helps bring out the real "you." It lets one show the world who they really are. All the great athletes like Michael Jordan would not have gotten anywhere without courage. Our great heroes like Davy Crockett wouldn't have died fighting for our country without courage.

To me, courage is the most important characteristic anyone could have. Without it we are nothing.

**Score Point: 1**

In a weak introduction, the writer states that courage is a lot of things combined into one. In an attempt to develop this theme, the writer briefly discusses overcoming fear and bringing out the real "you." The lack of transitions between ideas weakens the sentence-to-sentence progression. In addition, the overall development is so general that it prevents the reader from understanding the writer's ideas.

## SCORE POINT 2

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

### *Focus and Coherence*

- Individual paragraphs and/or the composition as a whole are somewhat focused. The writer may shift quickly from idea to idea, but the reader has no difficulty understanding how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- The composition as a whole has some sense of completeness. The writer includes an introduction and conclusion, but they may be superficial.
- Some of the writing may be extraneous because it does not contribute to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

### *Organization*

- The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and/or paragraph to paragraph may not always be smooth or completely logical. Sometimes the writer needs to strengthen the progression by including more meaningful transitions; at other times the writer simply needs to establish a clearer link between ideas.
- The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses do not enable the writer to present ideas effectively.
- Some wordiness and/or repetition may be evident, but these weaknesses do not completely stall the progression of ideas.

### *Development of Ideas*

- The writer attempts to develop the composition by listing ideas or briefly explaining them. In both of these cases, the development remains superficial, limiting the reader's understanding and appreciation of the writer's ideas.
- The writer presents one or more ideas and attempts to develop them. However, there is little evidence of depth of thinking because this development may be somewhat general, inconsistent, or contrived.
- The writer may omit small pieces of information that create minor gaps between ideas. However, these gaps do not prevent the reader from understanding those ideas.

### *Voice*

- There may be moments when the writer engages the reader but fails to sustain the connection.
- Individual paragraphs or sections of the composition may sound authentic or original, but the writer has difficulty expressing his/her individuality or unique perspective.

### *Conventions*

- Errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure throughout the composition may indicate a limited control of conventions. Although these errors do not cause the writing to be unclear, they weaken the overall fluency of the composition.
- The writer may include some simple or inaccurate words and phrases and may write some awkward sentences. These weaknesses limit the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

Courage

When I hear the word courage it seduces me to associate it with physical strength, film heroes, who rescue the weak and innocent after going through dangerous adventures. But then I think, 'What about the courage in real life?' There are so many ways to show courage, which do not nearly have to do anything with what you see at the movies, but therefore are so much more realistic. A good example is the courage it takes to apologize for a mistake one made and that is something <sup>troubling</sup> everybody has to face. Sometimes it is very brave to represent your own opinion about something everybody thinks different about. I saw a poster in my school that said: "Stand up for what is right, even if you stand alone". People, who are able to do that show real courage. I also got told how I showed courage when I came over to the U.S., without knowing anybody, thousands of miles away from family and friends, not being used to the language, etc. So courage is not only bringing yourself into dangerous situations, it is much more those little things, that happen every day and everywhere that take courage and nothing takes more courage than to be true to your self and that always, because only if you are accepting and loving who you are, you can take this to others and this courage is real and much more worth than a movie can show us.

**Score Point: 2**

In this composition the writer presents the theme that courage is more than physical strength and film heroes. To support this thesis, the writer lists and briefly explains several instances of everyday courage (apologizing, standing up for what is right, moving to a new country). Although the writer attempts to add some insight in the conclusion (nothing takes more courage than to be true to yourself), the overall development remains superficial.

Courage, what is courage? I mean courage can be defined by a dictionary or by someone's personal experience. Therefore, I'd like to tell you what courage means in my own words.

Courage is stepping up to the challenge when no one has the guts to. For instance, yesterday at my soccer game we went to shoot outs. In shoot outs five players are chosen from each team to shoot. Well, on our side nobody wanted to shoot so I raised my hand and told the coach I would shoot. I missed, but truely out of all my teammates I think I displayed the greatest courage of all.

I read a passage called "The Kayak", the girl in the story shows a lot of courage. She's physically challenged, but yet has the audacity to kayak. Then, throughout the story an inexperienced windsurfer falls off his board and she offers to tow him back to shore. While she's towing him back he goes under the sail and she once again saves his life.

Another passage I read was "Summits in Sight" the man in that story shows a great deal of courage.

He, as well, is physically challenged he can't see. What made me interested in this story was that no matter how many times he fell, he would get back up and would never give up. He even inspired his dad to climb with him and his dad had a bad knee, so he too struggled and while he was struggling he began to understand what his son had to face.

I guess I could say what courage is. Although, I can't say that I've been through what Teresa and Erik have experienced. I think courage is defined through these two stories of I've read.

**Score Point: 2**

In this composition the writer focuses on the thesis that courage is stepping up to challenges. The writer uses a personal anecdote (volunteering for soccer shootouts) as well as a brief discussion of the literary and the expository selections to support this thesis. Although there is good sentence-to-sentence progression and coherence within paragraphs, the progression from paragraph to paragraph is weak. Because the writer is not "building" meaning from paragraph to paragraph, the composition is not developed with enough depth to be considered more than somewhat effective.

Many people believe that courage is something that goes along with super heroes and muscles, but to me it is something much deeper. Just battling everyday life needs courage. Being able to face your fears or stand up for yourself and what you believe in takes so much courage.

My older brother is severely handicapped. He cannot walk, can only use one arm, and can say few understandable words. Despite his disabilities, he has more courage than I have or would ever have.

Just to go in public, knowing people will stare, makes him upset, but he does it and shows no fear.

He has always been strong willed and independent. He rarely asks for help and is always eager to help.

In other cases, such as standing up for yourself and/or what you believe in, some people are ridiculed for their style of thinking, dressing, acting, or talking.

I'm sensitive when it comes to my opinions. I rarely speak out against anyone, but sometimes it needs to be done. There have been times when my opinions are criticized or completely ignored. That doesn't stop me. All it does is make the need to opine myself stronger and gives me the courage to stand up for myself.

Like I said, many people associate courage with super heroes and muscles. If that's the case there there

is a world full of body builders and Supermen  
and Superwomen.

**Score Point: 2**

The writer of this somewhat effective response asserts that courage is about battling everyday life. The writer supports this with an anecdote about a handicapped brother and a philosophical, though personalized, discussion of standing up for what you believe. Although there is some sense of individuality present, neither body paragraph is developed enough to provide evidence of depth of thought.

Courage comes in many shapes and sizes.

A person is Courageous if they are able to Face their Fears, overcome something holding them back, or cope with horrible tragedies.

People show great courage if they are able to overcome their Fears. Many people are afraid to do certain things because they Fear something bad may happen. Little kids are often afraid of the dark, so they hide behind their night lights. The courageous kids are they who will sleep in the dark in order to overcome their Fear of it. If one has the courage to overcome their Fears they will have the opportunity to do anything. Bravery is also shown by those with disabilities.

If someone is unable to participate in certain activities because of a physical or mental disability, and they work to get past this obstacle they show great courage. The people able to jump the hurdles holding them back in order to accomplish whatever they want to, show an extraordinary amount of courage.

It is amazing to see someone overcome their weakness, and accomplish their goals.

Courage is also shown with the ability to cope with a tragedy.

IF a person who has lost a loved one, has the ability to overcome their loss and move on with their life, they show great courage. Many Americans showed great bravery a while ago on September 11 when the Twin Towers fell. Many Americans lost people that were close to them in the tragedy, but they were able to move on, and continue their lives. This disaster was a tragedy to all of America, and America as a whole showed great bravery overcoming the disaster.

Courage can be found in many places of the world. Almost everyone will act with courage in their lifetime. Courage is the power to overcome all obstacles in life.

**Score Point: 2**

Although each idea in the composition (facing fears, overcoming something, coping with tragedies) is somewhat focused, the unifying link is weak, which limits the overall coherence. While there is some development of these ideas, the composition remains superficial, with little evidence of depth. The writer achieves some voice through the effective use of language (able to jump the hurdles holding them back), but this voice is not sustained throughout the composition.

### SCORE POINT 3

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A GENERALLY EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

#### *Focus and Coherence*

- Individual paragraphs and the composition as a whole are, for the most part, focused. The writer generally shows the clear relationship between ideas, making few sudden shifts from one idea to the next.
- The composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion add some depth to the composition.
- Most of the writing contributes to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

#### *Organization*

- The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is generally smooth and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and the links between ideas are logical.
- The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses are generally effective.
- Wordiness and/or repetition, if present, are minor problems that do not stall the progression of ideas.

#### *Development of Ideas*

- The writer attempts to develop all the ideas included in the composition. Although some ideas may be developed more thoroughly and specifically than others, the development overall reflects some depth of thought, enabling the reader to generally understand and appreciate the writer's ideas.
- The writer's presentation of some ideas may be thoughtful. There may be little evidence that the writer has been willing to take compositional risks when developing the topic.

#### *Voice*

- The writer engages the reader and sustains that connection throughout most of the composition.
- For the most part, the composition sounds authentic and original. The writer is generally able to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

#### *Conventions*

- The writer generally demonstrates a good command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. Although the writer may make minor errors, they create few disruptions in the fluency of the composition.
- The words, phrases, and sentence structures the writer uses are generally appropriate and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

There are a lot of different characteristics that make up a person. Many of them are good but there are some negative ones as well. Some examples are humorous, witty, intelligent and serious, but the one that I think which would help us out a lot is courageous.

I feel that courage is the one state of mind in which we can't live without. Courage is what allows us to face danger, our fears, and overcome several obstacles in life. Without it, the whole world would be helpless.

Of course everyone has at least a little bit of it inside them, but those who have more of it, I feel, are those who become successful. After<sup>all</sup> it does make sense because if you have nothing to stop you mentally or physically, you will get things done.

The main reason why I value courage so much is because it allows you to overcome your fears. Living in fear is not a good thing. It really messes you up. Being able to face your fear feels so much better and is a lot better for us. As little kids, many of us were scared by horror movies or scary stories which weren't even true. We were so gullible that we didn't know what to do but believe these movies, which left us helpless until we learned to face our fears. Until we built up some courage to look under the bed or in the dark closet or sleep with the door closed or without a nightlight we weren't able to do anything but live with fear. Now that we are older and have a lot more courage than what we had then, we look back at ourselves and laugh.

With courage, we can do so much more than what we thought we could. The thoughts in our mind really determine whether or not you are going to do something. One little doubt will make us think twice or even hold us back completely. That is why being negative doesn't really help us. I myself have

experienced this first hand, and I'm sure many other guys have as well because for us it takes alot of courage to go up to a girl and ask to dance, or to just talk to. I think that we make it hard by ourselves, thinking negative about the situation because if you keep thinking you don't have a chance, chances are you won't even bother to find out for sure and you'll live the rest of your life wondering "what if." On the other hand, if you relax yourself and build up some courage, you will then have a 50/50 chance of her saying yes. It really depends on whats going through your head, and if some courage happens to pass by, you will more than likely be successful.

Of course we also need other things besides courage, but I feel it ranks up with the other top necessities in state of mind. In the end, what does courage mean to me? It means a lot!!

**Score Point: 3**

The writer focuses on the theme that courage is what allows people to accomplish things and be successful in life. The writer supports this idea with a philosophical discussion of overcoming childhood fears and asking a girl out on a date. The reflective comments throughout (we were so gullible; we look back at ourselves and laugh; wondering "what if") add a sense of individuality and depth to the response.

For someone to put his or her self in danger to achieve something they want is courage. The bell rang, and the fighters distracted the bull as the rider cleared the ring. After they led the bull out, RICK mounted Thunder and began to set his hand up. The sweat was rolling down his face as he fumbled to get the ropes fastened. His eyes were jumping from one place to another and every bit of his body was fearful. He could feel a twitch in his cheek and his heart pounding. When he finally got set, he glanced over to the man at the gate, took a deep breath and gave him the final nod. As the gate opened, they tightened the strap, and the bull began to buck. For a few eternal seconds it was just RICK, the bull, and the fear of death. RICK didn't even attempt to breath. When the bell rang again, RICK dismounted and ran for freedom, his chest heaving with relief.

Now came the wait. It wasn't until hours later that all the riders had finally finished, and the results were announced. RICK was proclaimed the new bull riding champion. Courage leads people to put themselves in a position they might not want to be in, but they are there because they want what comes after it. Although

RICK was fearful of what he was about to do, he did it anyway because he wanted to be a champion.

**Score Point: 3**

In this concise narrative about winning a bull riding championship, the writer focuses on the theme that courage is evident when a person is willing to put himself in danger to achieve a goal. The composition sounds authentic and original, and the writer's description (he could feel a twitch in his cheek; it was just Rick, the bull, and the fear of death) adds depth to the story. In addition, strong sentence-to-sentence progression and writing conventions enhance the overall response.

Courage, to different people, can have very a different meaning. To some it means bravery, to others, simply perseverance. Courage also means overcoming enormous obstacles, even when society says a person can not. It is a very admirable quality to have.

Courage means bravery. Knights of medieval fairytales, such as King Arthur or Sir Lancelot, displayed this aspect of courage. Fearless, they rode straight into the jaws of danger to rescue a helpless, fair maiden. Bravery is still emphasized today. In the literary piece "The Kayak", the main character Teresa displays courage in the form of bravery. Even with the ominous threat of the looming storm, she stays calm and in control, and is able to tow the stranded windsurfer to shore with her kayak. Bravery is the most noticeable aspect of courage.

Courage is defined as "mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty." Perseverance is a very important quality of courage. It works hand in hand with bravery to define courage. A person can be brave, but if they do not demonstrate perseverance through tough times, they are not considered courageous. Both Teresa and Erik (Life magazine's "Summits in Sight") demonstrate the admirable quality of perseverance. Instead

of relinquishing their lives to self-pity, they found their calling. They did not give in and give up, even when they were alone. Perseverance is a very important attribute of courage.

The last pertinent characteristic of courage is overcoming obstacles. Even when odds are overwhelmingly stacked against them, a courageous person will overcome. By using perseverance to overcome enormous obstacles, nothing is impossible for a courageous person. Both Teresa and Erik overcame their immense obstacle, a physical disability. Teresa overcame the uselessness of her legs by becoming involved in kayaking, an upper body sport. Erik persevered through his deteriorating eyesight to become a rock climber, a sport based on touch. A courageous person can overcome any obstacle, no matter how enormous or miniscule.

Although courage can be defined many ways, bravery, perseverance, and overcoming obstacles are three characteristics that best describe courage. They work together to make up all facets of a person considered courageous. The main characters in the story "The Kayak" and the Life Magazine article "Summits in Sight" effectively demonstrate these qualities.

**Score Point: 3**

The writer of this generally effective composition uses elements from "The Kayak" and "Summits in Sight" to explore different facets of courage (bravery, perseverance, overcoming obstacles). The writer's ability to use the reading selections effectively enhances the coherence of the response as well as adds depth. The writer also demonstrates a good command of conventions, which contributes to the overall effectiveness of the response.

Courage, as stated in the Webster's II New College Dictionary means - The quality or state of mind or spirit to enabling one to face danger or hardship with confidence and resolution: Bravery. I actually like the last word, Bravery!

While my little Brother <sup>ROBBIE</sup> was growing up, we noticed something was wrong with his learning abilities. He seemed to be slower than others when it came to certain subjects such as Reading. After taking my little brother to be tested, it turned out he had dyslexia. The first few years of his school was really hard for him. Teachers didn't know about the 504 Program, so they would make him do regular reading activities which would cause him a lot of stress everyday. When <sup>ROBBIE</sup> was in the fifth grade he was only able to read at a first grade reading level. He would feel uncomfortable to read aloud, even in front of me. Many times my brother wanted to give up. Sometimes he would even cry because he could not read through one sentence. Threw it all though, I never let him give up. I told him about Cher and Tom Cruise and how they are very successful people, and both could barely write their own name. After much encouragement and will power, he decided he would like to make something of himself too. Everyday after school, instead of playing out side, or watching T.V, <sup>ROBBIE</sup> would pull out a book that he checked out

from the library and would read aloud to me. When I noticed his confidence level, as well as his reading level boosted, I felt proud of him! I noticed my little brother <sup>ROBBIE</sup> over came his fear. No longer was he afraid to read, but he was not afraid to admit he had dyslexia. As of today my brother is doing 110% better in his reading class. He actually looks forward as to going.

In my eyes my little brother is the most courageous person I know. He over came his fear, and learned to love himself for who he is. That is courage, to be brave, bold, and over come ones fear. As did my brother and his challenges.

**Score Point: 3**

The writer uses a narrative organizational strategy to show how a younger brother demonstrates what it truly means to be courageous. The writer's progression of thought is generally smooth, from the discovery of Robbie's learning difficulty to his discomfort to his decision to rise to the challenge. The writer's obvious admiration for Robbie adds depth and authenticity to the response. Overall the composition has a sense of completeness.

## SCORE POINT 4

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER'S IDEAS.

### *Focus and Coherence*

- Individual paragraphs and the composition as a whole are focused. This sustained focus enables the reader to understand and appreciate how the ideas included in the composition are related.
- The composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion are meaningful because they add depth to the composition.
- Most, if not all, of the writing contributes to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

### *Organization*

- The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is smooth and controlled. The writer's use of meaningful transitions and the logical movement from idea to idea strengthen this progression.
- The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses enhance the writer's ability to present ideas clearly and effectively.

### *Development of Ideas*

- The writer's thorough and specific development of each idea creates depth of thought in the composition, enabling the reader to truly understand and appreciate the writer's ideas.
- The writer's presentation of ideas is thoughtful or insightful. The writer may approach the topic from an unusual perspective, use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, or make interesting connections between ideas. In all these cases, the writer's willingness to take compositional risks enhances the quality of the content.

### *Voice*

- The writer engages the reader and sustains this connection throughout the composition.
- The composition sounds authentic and original. The writer is able to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

### *Conventions*

- The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the composition. The writer demonstrates a consistent command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. When the writer attempts to communicate complex ideas through sophisticated forms of expression, he/she may make minor errors as a result of these compositional risks. These types of errors do not detract from the overall fluency of the composition.
- The words, phrases, and sentence structures the writer uses enhance the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

The last wrestling tournament of the year is today and I quiver with excitement, hoping that my boyfriend, MARK, can pin another state champion for the win. As the megaphone sounds the first half of the day, I sit on the edge of my seat, cheering and yelling out tips to the \_\_\_\_\_ team. I'm as excited as the person on that mat hoping the right combination of moves will defeat the other opponent. After hours of watching the boys sweat and tire slowly, I finally see MARK hop with energy to the weight table to begin his match. He wrestles today at 135, weighing a mere 128. The state champion from last year's school looks huge and determined to make himself look good. As the boys line up in the circle and start to dance around each other, I begin to shake, as my eyes widen. His senior year, his last match, his last chance. Knowing all of these things MARK keeps his head up with his game face on. The opponent makes the first move and whips MARK around as he brings him to his knees. MARK tries to stand up and jump on top of him, but when he does the other boy cross-faces him and pushes MARK'S head back in a rush. MARK pulls it together and

and wrestles him to the mat, where MARK wraps his legs around the other boy's waist. The opponent cries for MARK to let go as MARK tightens his legs, but the move is legal and the helpless boy can do nothing to escape this painful wrath. As the opposing man rolls over, MARK'S back hits the mat. In a fury he rolls over, again to put the opponent on his back and hopefully pin him. He hears the ref calling out points for MARK. As the opponent panics, he wiggles free and jumps on MARK. The opponent uses the ball and chain move and MARK falls painfully on his back. one, two, three, four, five. "Oh my gosh, I scream, "get up, get up!" "Kick out of it, come on! MARK ! come on!" The ref hits the mat and sounds his annoying whistle as the match ends. MARK is defeated but his courage to try so hard will never leave my mind. As I comfort the saddened wrestler, I tell him "great job," and that I think he is the most courageous man I know. He never gave up and he never let up and for that, he is courageous. MARK is my definition of hope and courage.

Score Point: 4

In this highly focused composition, the writer uses a narrative organizational strategy to explore the meaning of courage. The writer's thorough and controlled account of an exciting wrestling match (whips Mark around as he brings him to his knees; can do nothing to escape this painful wrath; as the opponent panics, he wiggles free) creates depth of thought and clearly demonstrates a strong sense of voice and authenticity. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the piece.

I believe courage is a trait that everyone possesses, but few are brave enough to use. Courage is standing up for what you believe in, in the face of adversity. It is taking a risk because you know deep in your heart that it is worth it. Courage is something that we are all born with, but we let it get smothered by the precautions that we acquire throughout the years. Everywhere and nowhere all at once, it needs to be bottled and distributed before it is too late.

If you ever observe a toddler, you will soon discover that they are fearless. To them, there is nothing in this world that was not created for the sole purpose of being put in their mouth. As experience worn adults, some of the impromptu "lollipops" send us reeling, and our consciences demand that we impart our vital information like, "no!" or "yucky!" immediately. But is it really necessary for a child to be "saved" from the experience of finding out that dirt tastes bad on their own? By discouraging children from taking necessary risks, we can actually cause them to be afraid of trying something new; whether it be tasting dirt, or catching a baseball.

In many cultures, the oldest individuals are also considered the wisest, and thus most respected. Experience helps to teach life's lessons; therefore, those with the most experience are considered to know the most. The problem

with that assumption is that along with age and wisdom come precautions. There is nothing wrong with being careful, or trying to avoid danger, but it is not difficult to quickly become too cautious. The phrase, "I know better than that" can become a common excuse to avoid adventures, and the mind becomes preoccupied with, "what if". Worry can be one of the most incapacitating diseases of all. It can start with a tiny spark, and then spread like wild fire until you are soon too frightened to go on. Courage, on the other hand, has to be built up, reinforced over time, causing it to often lose out to the more powerful forces.

In society today, many people exhibit great courage, but how many more sit at home and watch them on T.V.? Safe behind a wall of worry and caution, they have convinced themselves that it is better to leave courage to others. Courage does exist - human nature just keeps pushing it down and subduing it into oblivion. Something must change.

**Score Point: 4**

The writer of this engaging and focused composition uses a philosophical discussion of the fearlessness of childhood and the cautiousness of old age to explore the meaning of courage. This unusual perspective engages the reader and adds authenticity to the response. The thoughtful comments throughout (our consciences demand that we impart our vital information; by discouraging children from taking necessary risks...; worry can be one of the most incapacitating diseases) add depth to the response. In addition, a meaningful introduction and conclusion enhance the writer's presentation of ideas.

Courage takes many forms. There is the gut-wrenching courage we saw in the hours following September 11<sup>th</sup>. There is the courage to stand-up for what you believe in, even if it means ridicule or personal harm. However, there are also quieter, more subtle forms of courage. In "The Kayak" and "Summits in Sight," we see characters who have the courage to accept

Ceresa in "The Kayak" is at war with herself. On the water, in her kayak, she feels free and in control of her life. On land, it is a different story; she feels "trapped, like a beached whale." You see Ceresa is wheelchair bound and although the reader is not told what happened or when it happened, it is clear that she is still grappling with her handicap. After she rescues Jamie and is back on shore, she raises her defenses. When Jamie tries to engage her in conversation, she jumps to conclusions. "What you really want to know is how long I've been crippled." When Jamie tries again, her reply is "I don't need pity." Because Ceresa cannot reconcile her two selves, she believes no one else can either; consequently, she spurns Jamie's efforts at friendship. Jamie persists and when Ceresa finally accepts his offer, her two images of herself merge. This happens rather quickly in the story and we're left to wonder why. Maybe because Jamie first saw her strength rather than her weakness, after all she did save him from drowning, and this enables her to continue to see her strength even when she is out of her element.

It takes courage for Teresa to see herself in a new way and accept Jamie's offer, despite her fear of being pitied and even rejected.

Like Teresa, Ed in "Summits in Sight," must also learn a lesson in acceptance to move forward in life. For many years Ed Weihenmayer supported and encouraged his son Erik to try out for wrestling, and enrolled him in an outdoor program for the blind. Then after years of being the supporter and encourager, Ed had to have the courage to accept support and encouragement from his son. After accepting Erik's offer to go rock climbing in Eldorado Canyon State Park, Ed had himself climbing a 200-foot rock face named Wind Ridge. Not too long into the climb Ed falls! He falls a second and a third time. He finally makes it to the ledge where Erik is standing and says "I don't know, Erik. Maybe I should call it quits." In the next few moments Ed has the courage to change roles with his son and accept him as a leader and teacher. He accepts the quiet encouragement and the lessons that Erik has to offer, and later, he even admitted to Erik and himself that he needed Erik's help to succeed on the climb.

In life we are taught that it is better to give than to receive, but maybe sometimes it takes more courage to accept a gift of friendship or of encouragement. Teresa and Ed show this kind of courage. Their courage to accept these gifts from others allows them to push past barriers and cover new territory. We need to remember that it's not always the splashy forms of courage that take us new places.

Score Point: 4

In this highly focused and coherent composition, the writer analyzes "The Kayak" and "Summits in Sight" to explore the theme that courage can be as simple as learning to accept. Within each paragraph, as the writer explores how Teresa and Ed demonstrate courage through acceptance, the writer's progression of thought is smooth and controlled, with every sentence contributing to the development as a whole. The body paragraphs are effectively linked through a meaningful transition (Like Teresa, Ed in "Summits in Sight," must also learn a lesson in acceptance). Consistent control of conventions, along with a meaningful introduction and conclusion, enhance the presentation of the writer's ideas.

To me, courage is defined as the knowledge & will to achieve your life goal, and to assert yourself as an individual despite outside influences.

I speak from first-hand experience. Ever since I was young, in primary school, I've always loved to write, whether it be fiction, essays, or poetry. Yet, unless one is a child prodigy, best-selling author, or newspaper journalist, there is little promise of steady income for aspiring writers. Oftentimes, teachers and parents emphasize that I have so many possibilities, and not to limit myself to pursuing a career as a writer or journalist. But one teacher in particular told me that there is much to be said for following your dreams. Too often, students & citizens are concerned merely with their salaries or leisure time, and not with the prospect of life itself. My philosophy is that life should be challenging & something for one to enjoy. Our days are numbered, so seize the moment, & if one has the opportunity, make a living out of one's passion, one's vocation. In Ayn Rand's "The Fountainhead", maverick architect Howard Roark avidly pursues his interest, refusing to let petty items like love, the law, & public opinion mold his work. His are the actions of the confident competent individual who knows what he wants & will stop at nothing to achieve it.

Yet, often the problem is not in pursuing our goals.

but discovering them. For some, talent & virtuosity come naturally in one field, whether it be in writing, athletics, acting, the arts, music, or mathematics. Most, however, wander aimlessly through life, settling for less than their best because, frankly, they don't know what they're best at. Courage, then, means taking the initiative to explore oneself & discover what one intends to do with his or her life. As Henry David Thoreau cries in Walden "Know thyself!" & the rest will come naturally. The masses are purposeless vagabonds, drifting from job to job, from relationship to relationship like flotsam on the swelling sea, utterly lost & carrying on the semblance of life until they've lost their chances to do anything at death. Would they but rally their courage & dive within, they could set goals to their existences. Courage is overcoming the fear of the self, of conquering the uncertainty of the individual, & rising to meet the challenge of life.

Thus, courage means primarily finding one's vocation & summoning the strength to realize one's dreams.

**Score Point: 4**

In this focused, insightful composition, the writer uses a philosophical discussion to support the idea that courage is the knowledge and will to achieve your life goal. The writer skillfully weaves together personal reflection on wanting to be a writer, discussion of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, and thoughts on discovering one's goals. The writer's willingness to take the compositional risk to make strong connections between these ideas enhances the quality of the composition.