



# English III Reading

## Connecting Selections Scoring Guide April 2013

**Read the next two selections and answer the questions that follow.**

**Copyright restrictions prevent "Golden Year" from being displayed in this format. It is available at <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v442/n7101/full/442484a.html>.**

# Memories of New York City Snow

*by Oscar Hijuelos*



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1 For immigrants of my parents' generation, who had first come to New York City from the much warmer climate of Cuba in the mid-1940s, the very existence of snow was a source of fascination. A black-and-white photograph that I have always loved, circa 1948, its surface cracked like that of a thawing ice-covered pond, features my father, Pascual, and my godfather, Horacio, fresh up from Oriente Province, posing in a snow-covered meadow in Central Park. Decked out in long coats, scarves, and black-brimmed hats, they are holding, in their be-gloved hands, a huge chunk of hardened snow. Trees and their straggly witch's hair branches, glimmering with ice and frost, recede into the distance behind them. They stand on a field of whiteness, the two men seemingly afloat in midair, as if they were being held aloft by the magical substance itself.

2 That they bothered to have this photograph taken—I suppose to send back to family in Cuba—has always been a source of enchantment for me. That something so common to winters in New York would strike them as an object of exotic admiration has always spoken volumes about the newness—and innocence—of their immigrants' experience. How thrilling it all must have seemed to them, for their New York was so very different from the small town surrounded by farms in eastern Cuba that they hailed from. Their New York was a fanciful and bustling city of endless sidewalks and unimaginably high buildings; of great bridges and twisting outdoor elevated train trestles; of walkup tenement houses with mysteriously dark

basements, and subways that burrowed through an underworld of girded tunnels; of dance halls, burlesque houses, and palatial department stores with their complement of Christmastime Salvation Army Santa Clauses on every street corner. Delightful and perilous, their New York was a city of incredibly loud noises, of police and air-raid sirens and factory whistles and subway rumble; a city where people sometimes shushed you for speaking Spanish in a public place, or could be unforgiving if you did not speak English well or seemed to be of a different ethnic background. (My father was once nearly hit by a garbage can that had been thrown off the rooftop of a building as he was walking along La Salle Street in upper Manhattan.)

3 Even so, New York represented the future. The city meant jobs and money. Newly arrived, an aunt of mine went to work for Pan Am; another aunt, as a Macy's saleslady. My own mother, speaking nary a word of English, did a stint in the garment district as a seamstress. During the war some family friends, like my godfather, were eventually drafted, while others ended up as factory laborers. Landing a job at the Biltmore Men's Bar, my father joined the hotel and restaurant workers' union, paid his first weekly dues, and came home one day with a brand-new white chef's toque in hand. Just about everybody found work, often for low pay and ridiculously long hours. And while the men of that generation worked a lot of overtime, or a second job, they always had their day or two off. Dressed to the hilt, they'd leave their uptown neighborhoods and make an excursion to another part of the city—perhaps to one of the grand movie palaces of Times Square or to beautiful Central Park, as my father and godfather, and their ladies, had once done, in the aftermath of a snowfall.

4 Snow, such as it can only fall in New York City, was not just about the cold and wintry differences that mark the weather of the north. It was about a purity that would descend upon the grayness of its streets like a heaven of silence, the city's complexity and bustle abruptly subdued. But as beautiful as it could be, it was also something that provoked nostalgia; I am certain that my father would miss Cuba on some bitterly cold days. I remember that whenever we were out on a walk and it began to snow, my father would stop and look up at the sky, with wonderment—what he was seeing I don't know. Perhaps that's why to this day my own associations with a New York City snowfall have a mystical connotation, as if the presence of snow really meant that some kind of inaccessible divinity had settled his breath upon us.

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# English III Reading

## Connecting Selections

How is nature important in “Golden Year” and “Memories of New York City Snow”? Support your answer with evidence from **both** selections.

## Score Point 0—Insufficient Response to the Question

**Insufficient responses indicate a very limited reading performance.**

These responses have one of the following problems.

- ❑ For one or both selections, the idea is not an answer to the question asked.
- ❑ The idea is incorrect because it is not based on one or both selections.
- ❑ For one or both selections, the idea is too general, vague, or unclear to determine whether it is reasonable.
- ❑ No idea is present from either selection. Sometimes the response contains only text evidence from one or both selections. At other times there appears to be an idea; however, this idea cannot be considered an answer to the question because it merely repeats verbatim, or “echoes,” the text evidence.

Nature is important in both stories because it shows something new in the person's life.

**Score Point 0**

This response is insufficient because the student presents an idea that is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable.

"The memory of those visits was a time lapse film of the trees' growth, from seedlings to saplings to giants that now almost completely blocked the artificial daylight streaming down from the underside of the habitats dome." "For immigrants of my parents' generation, who had first come to New York from the much warmer climate of Cuba in the mid-1940s, the very existence of snow was a source of fascination."

**Score Point 0**

Although the student provides text evidence from both selections, this response is insufficient because no idea is presented for either selection. Providing only text evidence indicates a very limited reading performance.

In the story "Golden Year" nature is very important. Nature plays a huge role in the story. It shows how two peoples love was strong because of their interest in nature and became even stronger because of that. "Will's heart, and his throat, and his thoughts seized up then; he missed Alice more acutely than he ever had, and he loved her more deeply than ever."

**Score Point 0**

The student presents an idea and text evidence for "Golden Year." However, no idea or text evidence is provided for "Memories of New York City Snow," making this an insufficient response.

Personally I think that nature is important in these stories because the way they describe the nature it makes it like you can imagine that you're there. It also sets the mood for each story.

**Score Point 0**

The student presents an idea that is too general to determine whether it is reasonable. Because of the lack of explanation or specificity, the response represents a very limited reading performance.



## Score Point 1—Partially Sufficient Response to the Question

**Partially sufficient responses indicate a basic reading performance.**

These responses have one of the following characteristics.

- ❑ The idea is reasonable for both selections, but the response contains no text evidence (from one or both selections).
- ❑ The idea is reasonable for both selections, but the text evidence (from one or both selections) is flawed and does not adequately support the idea. Text evidence is considered inadequate when it is
  - only a general reference to the text,
  - too partial to support the idea,
  - weakly linked to the idea, or
  - used inappropriately because it wrongly manipulates the meaning of the text.
- ❑ For one or both selections, the idea needs more explanation or specificity even though it is supported with text evidence from both selections.
- ❑ For one or both selections, the idea represents only a literal reading of the text, with or without text evidence (from one or both selections).
- ❑ The response contains relevant textual evidence from both selections, but the student offers an idea that is reasonable for only one selection.
- ❑ The response contains an idea and relevant text evidence for both selections, but the idea for one selection contains an inaccuracy.

"...as he cried, leaves began to fall around him, like tears of gold." In "Golden Year," Nature represents Alice's love for him. "Snow, such as it can only fall in New York City... It was like a purity that would descend upon the grayness of its streets like a heaven of silents." This shows that nature is important.

**Score Point 1**

The student offers the reasonable idea that nature is important in "Golden Year" because it represents Alice's love for Will. The student supports this idea with relevant textual evidence describing Will's reaction to his wife's gift. However, the student provides only text evidence from "Memories of New York City Snow." Because the statement that nature is important simply repeats the question, it cannot be considered a reasonable idea. Therefore, this response is only partially sufficient.

Nature is important in "The Golden Year" because when Will and Alice moved to the moon, he missed seeing Autumn. Alice knew this, so for their Golden Anniversary, her gift to him was Autumn on the moon. In "Memories of New York City Snow" nature is an important factor because although the snow is beautiful it gives his dad a feeling of homesickness.

**Score Point 1**

The student presents a reasonable idea for each selection: Will misses the change of seasons, which Alice eventually gives him, and the snow gives the narrator's father a feeling of homesickness. However, no text evidence is provided for either selection. Therefore, this represents a basic reading performance.

Nature is important in the "Golden Year" because Will's wife Alice not only spent a lot of time in a grove planting and taking care of the park, but she also planted beautiful trees for Will to remember her by as stated in paragraph 11. and nature is important in "Memories of New York City snow" because the narrator's father and godfather that were outdoors and got to experience snow as stated in paragraphs 1 and 2.

**Score Point 1**

The student presents a reasonable idea for each selection: Alice plants beautiful trees so that Will can remember her, and the men are able to experience snow. However, the student provides only paragraph citations to support the ideas. By themselves, paragraph citations are not considered specific textual evidence. Because the text evidence is inadequate, this response is only partially sufficient.

In "Golden Year", nature is important because Will is reminded of Alice's love for him. "She had prepared it decades ago..." In "Memories of New York City Snow", nature is important because the snow symbolizes hope. "...They were being held aloft by the magical substance itself." Nature plays an important role in both stories.

**Score Point 1**

The student presents a reasonable idea for each selection: Will is reminded of Alice's love for him, and the snow symbolizes hope. The student is able to provide relevant textual evidence to support the idea for "Memories of New York City Snow." However, the text provided from "Golden Year" is flawed because it is too partial to demonstrate how Alice's love is represented by nature. The student is unable to support both ideas with relevant textual evidence, demonstrating a basic reading performance.

## **Score Point 2—Sufficient Response to the Question**

**Sufficient responses indicate a satisfactory reading performance.**

These responses have the following characteristics.

- ❑ For both selections, the idea is reasonable and goes beyond a literal reading of the text. It is explained specifically enough to show that the student can make appropriate connections across the selections and draw valid conclusions.
- ❑ For both selections, the text evidence that is used to support the idea is accurate and relevant.
- ❑ For both selections, the idea and text evidence used to support it are clearly linked.
- ❑ For both selections, the combination of the idea and the text evidence demonstrates a good understanding of the text.

Nature in both selections is important in evoking awe in the characters. In "Golden Year" Will "could not begin to imagine what miracles of genetics & biochemistry had made the trees' transformation." In "Memories of New York City Snow" the narrator says, "my father would stop & look up at the sky, with wonderment." Nature causes amazement in the characters.

**Score Point 2**

The student offers the reasonable idea that nature is important in both selections because it evokes awe from the characters. The student includes direct quotations that are clearly linked to the idea, making this a sufficient response.

In the story Golden Year, nature represents Alice's love and final gift for Will.  
"...For their golden wedding anniversary, Alice had given him autumn."  
In the story Memories of New York Snow, nature represents purity and calmness.  
"Snow... was about a purity that would descend upon the grayness of its streets like a heaven of silence, the city's complexity and bustle abruptly subdued."

**Score Point 2**

The student presents a reasonable idea for each selection: nature represents Alice's love and final gift for Will, and nature represents purity and calmness to the immigrants. Relevant textual evidence is provided from each selection to support these ideas. Therefore, this response indicates a satisfactory reading performance.

It is important to the people from the stories because it makes them think of the place they loved and are no longer there. "But as beautiful as it could be, it was also something that provoked nostalgia; I am certain that my father would miss Cuba on some bitterly cold days." "It not only looked but, on a visceral level, felt like the spot where he'd pretended to trip and met Alice's concern with a ring and a question."

**Score Point 2**

The student presents the reasonable idea that nature is important because it makes people think of a place they love but no longer inhabit. For both selections, the text evidence provided by the student is clearly linked to the idea and demonstrates a good understanding of the texts.

Nature is important in these stories because it sets the mood and tone. In "Golden Year," the mood and tone is loving and emotional. "leaves began to fall around him like tears of gold." In "Memories of New York City," tone is magical & awe filled. "They stand on a field of whiteness, the two men seemingly afloat in midair."

**Score Point 2**

The student presents the reasonable idea that nature is important in both selections because it sets the mood and tone. The student specifically explains the mood and tone of each selection: it is loving and emotional for "Golden Year" and magical and full of awe in "Memories of New York City Snow." Direct quotations from both selections are clearly linked to the ideas the student presents, making this a sufficient response.

## **Score Point 3—Exemplary Response to the Question**

**Exemplary responses indicate an accomplished reading performance.**

These responses have the following characteristics.

- ❑ For both selections, the idea is perceptive and reflects an awareness of the complexities of the text. The student is able to develop a coherent explanation of the idea by making discerning connections across both selections.
- ❑ For both selections, the text evidence that is used to support the idea is specific and well chosen. Overall, the evidence strongly supports the validity of the idea.
- ❑ For both selections, the combination of the idea and the text evidence demonstrates a deep understanding of the text.

The use of nature is significant in not only describing the setting but also to set the tone/mood for the passage. In "Golden Year," the author writes, "A cool breeze caressed the back of his neck, leaves rustled overhead, the air was filled with a [familiar] scent." The author's use of imagery and diction help set a peaceful, relaxed tone. In "Memories of NYC," the author writes, "Their NYC was a city of incredibly loud noises, of police and air-raided sirens, factory whistles and subway rumble." The author's description of NYC helps convey the frantic tone of the nature of the family's new environment.

**Score Point 3**

The student offers a perceptive analysis that reflects an awareness of the complexities of the selections. Well-chosen text evidence strongly supports the validity of the student's analysis for each selection, indicating an accomplished reading performance.

Nature is an important metaphor in both "Golden Year" and "Memories of New York." In "Golden Year" the season of autumn in nature is used to represent the love between Will and Alice, regardless of location. On earth, when Will lovingly asked Alice to marry him, "the trees were the most brilliant golds and crimsons of autumn." And 50 years later, on the moon when the trees reflect autumn again, Will realizes how deeply "Alice had planted her love." In "Memories of New York" the contrasting nature of a "warmer climate of Cuba" and a "snow-covered meadow in Central Park" represent the extreme change of life styles immigrants have to adjust to.

**Score Point 3**

In this exemplary response, the student provides the perceptive idea that nature is an important metaphor in both selections. The student explains how the metaphor functions in each selection and links the explanation to well-chosen text evidence from both selections. Overall, the student demonstrates that he can make a discerning connection across the selections.



Nature is shown to be important in that it is depicted in both stories as a sort of manifestation of their feelings for their respective locations. In Will's case, the leaves of Alice's trees are described as "fall[ing] around him, like tears of gold. This reflects the sorrow he feels at Alice's absence from his life.

On the other hand, the narrator's father in "Memories of New York City Snow" indicates that the "bitterly cold days," polar opposite to the "much warmer climate" of Cuba, was "something that provoked nostalgia," thus indicating that his father felt Cuba's absence in the weather of New York.

**Score Point 3**

The student presents the perceptive idea that nature is depicted in both selections as a manifestation of the feelings Will and the narrator's father have for their respective locations. The combination of additional analysis and specific text evidence demonstrates a deep understanding of the texts.

In "Golden Year" and "Memories of New York City Snow" nature is used as a symbolic element that represents something important to the men in each story. In "Golden Year" the main character, Will, returns to the grave that is "Alice and Will's special place," a source of memory for Will. It was "the soil where Alice had planted her love" for him, and so the nature there was representative of their life, marriage, and love. The narrator's father in "Memories of NYC Snow" recognized the snow as "a purity that would descend on NYC's gray streets. To him it represented the wonder of the new world he had immigrated to.

**Score Point 3**

The student presents the idea that the authors both use nature to represent something important to Will and the narrator's father. The student's ability to make discerning connections across the selections reflects an awareness of the complexities of the texts. The student supports a perceptive analysis with well-chosen direct quotations and specific paraphrased text in this accomplished reading performance.