



# **English I**

## Short Answer Connecting Selections Scoring Guide

April 2014

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

## Jim at Bat

*from Jim the Boy*  
*by Tony Earley*

- 1 A summer pasture at twilight:
- 2 The boy cannot hit the baseball to his satisfaction. Though he makes contact almost every time he swings the bat, he does not strike the mighty blow he sees in his mind. The ball does not leap scalded into the sky, but hops into the tall grass as if startled by a noise; it buzzes mildly, a dying beetle tied to a piece of thread, and rolls to a disappointing stop.
- 3 Uncle Zeno pitches. He tracks the ball into the grass every time the boy hits it, and retrieves it without complaint from each new hiding place. He blames himself for the boy's lack of success. The bat is simply too heavy. He knew this for fact when he bought it; he had not wanted to buy a new bat every time the boy grew an inch. He silently chides himself for being cheap.
- 4 Uncle Coran and Uncle Al man the field at improbably optimistic distances behind their brother. Their faces are indistinct in the coming darkness, their forms identical except that Uncle Coran wears a baseball glove on his left hand, while Uncle Al, who is left-handed, wears one on the right. They shout encouragement each time the boy swings the bat. They pound their fists into their gloves, though only for their nephew's benefit; their bodies no longer believe the ball will ever make it out to their place in the field. They do not creep closer because it would make the boy feel bad.
- 5 All three of the uncles wear the small, pocketless, old-fashioned baseball gloves they have had since they were boys. Uncle Al's mitt was made for a right-handed fielder, but he has worn it on the wrong hand for so long that he no longer notices that it doesn't fit. Each uncle would still gladly play a game of baseball, should anyone ask, although no one has asked for years. They keep their tiny, relic gloves properly oiled, however, as if such invitations were not only commonplace, but imminent.
- 6 The boy studies Uncle Zeno until Uncle Zeno's face seems to light up from the inside, weakly, like a moon seen through clouds. It changes into a hundred unfamiliar faces, twists into a hundred strange smiles, until the boy blinks hard and wills his eyes to see only what is there.
- 7 "Okay, Doc," Uncle Zeno says. "Keep your eye on the ball. Here it comes."
- 8 The baseball in Uncle Zeno's hand is almost invisible, a piece of smoke, a shadow. The woods on the far side of the pasture are already dark as sleep;

the river twists through them by memory. Uncle Zeno tosses the ball gently toward the boy, who does not see it until its arc carries it above the black line of trees, where it hangs for a moment like an eclipse in the faintly glowing sky. The boy is arm-weary; he swings as hard as he is able. The bat and ball collide weakly. The ball drops to the ground at the boy's feet. It lies there stunned, quivering, containing flight beneath its smooth skin. The boy switches the bat into his left hand, picks up the ball with his right, and throws it back to Uncle Zeno.

9 "I hit it just about every time," the boy says.

10 "Batter, batter, batter, batter," Uncle Al chirps in the field.

11 "Say, whatta-say, whatta-say, whatta-say," chants Uncle Coran in the ancient singsong of ballplayers. The uncles are singing to the boy. He has never heard anything so beautiful. He does not want it to stop.

12 "Okay, Doc," says Uncle Zeno. "One more. Now watch."

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# A Crystal-Clear Love Affair

*from Memories of Yankee Stadium  
by Scott Pitoniak*



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- 1 May 30, 1956, remains indelibly etched in Billy Crystal's mind.
- 2 That was the day the future actor, comedian, and director attended his first game at Yankee Stadium, and Mickey Mantle wound up making quite an impression on the eight-year-old boy and the copper facade hanging from the right-field roof.
- 3 During that afternoon contest between the Yankees and Washington Senators, Crystal and thousands of others watched in awe as the blond Bronx Bomber launched a moon shot that barely missed becoming the first fair ball hit completely out of the stadium. Mantle's blast on a 2-2 fastball from Senators pitcher Pedro Ramos ricocheted off the decorative facade, just 18 inches from the top of the roof.
- 4 After the game, Ramos joked to reporters: "If it had not hit the roof, it would have landed in Brooklyn."
- 5 The Mick's loooooong home run capped an extraordinary day for young Billy—a day that would change his life forever.
- 6 His father was a concert promoter who managed the old Commodore Music Shop on 42nd Street in Manhattan. Legendary jazz artist Louis Armstrong had given the elder Crystal his box seats for a Yankees game that late May day, and the father had planned on taking Billy's older brother. But when his big brother hurt his back, the ticket went to Billy. His dad arranged for Yankees trainer Gus Mauch to take Billy down to the home-team clubhouse before the game.



This photo diagram shows the path of the two home runs hit by Mickey Mantle on May 30, 1956, the day on which Billy Crystal attended his first New York Yankees baseball game at Yankee Stadium. The flight path of one home run (right) nearly carried the ball over the facade in right field and out of the stadium. Mantle played all of his 18 professional seasons with the Yankees, helping them win seven World Series from 1951 to 1968. He was also named the American League's Most Valuable Player three times.

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- 7 "You can imagine how exciting that was for a little kid," Crystal told the *New York Times* in a 1998 interview. "Gus came out and talked to us and then took my program inside and brought it out with all the signatures on it. [Yankees manager] Casey Stengel came out in the hall, and I remember saying, 'Who's pitching today, Casey?' and he looked at me and said, 'You are, kid, suit up.' How could you not be a Yankees fan after that?"
- 8 Mantle became his idol and the stadium the center of his young universe.
- 9 Crystal would make the 90-minute trek on the Long Island Railroad to the famed ballpark about 25 times a season after that memorable day. And he and the neighborhood kids in the New York suburb of Long Beach would play baseball in the summers from sunrise to sunset.
- 10 Crystal blossomed into an outstanding second baseman and earned a baseball scholarship to Marshall University in West Virginia. But his baseball-playing days ended when the school dropped the program his freshman year.
- 11 He wound up returning to the metropolitan area and eventually studied film and television at New York University, where one of his professors was Academy Award-winning director Martin Scorsese.

- 12 After working for several years as a stand-up comic, Crystal left Long Island for Hollywood in 1976 and, a year later, got his big break when he landed the role of the gay character Jodie Dallas on the ABC sitcom *Soap*. He later became a regular on *Saturday Night Live*, where his “you look mahvellous” impression of Fernando Lamas became a huge hit with viewers. His career peaked in the late 1980s and early '90s when his roles in blockbuster movies such as *When Harry Met Sally . . .* and *City Slickers* established him as a major star. His celebrity status only grew when he became a frequent host of the Academy Awards show.
- 13 Along the way, Crystal developed a friendship with Mantle, his childhood idol. The Mick said on several occasions if anyone ever did produce a movie about him, he'd want it to be Crystal. And in 2001, six years after the Hall of Fame baseball player died, Crystal debuted the film *61\**, which took a behind-the-scenes look at Mantle and Roger Maris's pursuit of Babe Ruth's home-run record during the historic 1961 season.
- 14 Nearly a half-century after his first trip there, Yankee Stadium remains one of the most special places in Crystal's world. Though he lives on the West Coast, he has returned often to the ballpark to watch games and take part in special ceremonies.
- 15 The stadium he first saw in 1956 underwent massive changes during the renovations of the mid-1970s, but it still remains a magical place.
- 16 “I still feel the same way I did when I was a little boy,” he said. “The joy it gave me when I was playing with my friends, pretending to be a Yankee, or pretending with my brother that we were broadcasting the games.
- 17 “I just think of my father. Every time I'm [there], I think of my father. I think of the way he got us to love it without saying, 'Love this.'”



New Yankee Stadium on Opening Day, April 16, 2009

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## English I Short Answer Connecting Selections

What is one similarity between the boy in "Jim at Bat" and Billy Crystal in "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair"? Explain your answer and support it 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.

The boy from "Jim at Bat" "cannot hit the baseball to his satisfaction." but he still keeps trying. So it's basically saying, don't give up on your dreams no matter how bad you are & if you mess up, just try again.

**Score Point 0**

This response contains an idea that is not based on both selections. The student describes Jim and provides textual evidence from "Jim at Bat," but the student does not indicate how Jim and Billy Crystal are similar. The response contains neither an idea nor textual evidence from "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair." Because both selections are not addressed, the response indicates a very limited reading performance.

The uncles still love the game like they were little kids playing it. Billy still remembers the memories of him & his brother playing baseball when they were little kids. Billy said, "I still fill the same way I did when I was a little boy." In the story Jim at Bat the uncles would wear their gloves they had since they were little kids.

**Score Point 0**

This response is insufficient because the idea is not an answer to the question asked. The student offers a similarity between Billy Crystal and the uncles from "Jim at Bat." However, the question requires students to provide a similarity between Billy Crystal and Jim.

In the stories "Jim at Bat" and "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair" the boy and Billy Crystal have a similarity. The narrator of "Jim at Bat" states, "The uncles are singing to the boy. He has never heard anything so beautiful." (paragraph 11). The narrator of "A Crystal-clear Love Affair" states, "The joy it gave me when I was playing with my friends, pretending to be a yonkee, or pretending with my brother that we were broadcasting the games." (paragraph 16)

**Score Point 0**

The student provides textual evidence from both selections but does not offer an idea. Stating that Jim and Billy Crystal have a similarity only repeats the question; it does not constitute an idea. Because no idea is presented, this response is insufficient.

In "Jim at Bat" and "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair", the similarity between the characters in the stories is they both had the same passion.

**Score Point 0**

This response is insufficient because the student presents an idea that is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable. "They both had the same passion" is not specific enough to be a valid answer to the question asked.

## **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.

One similarity in both these stories is their love for baseball. Both of the boys have a passion for the game. Crystal says "The joy it gave me when I was playing with my friends..." and Jim from Jim At Bat "The baseball in Uncle Zeno's hand is almost invisible, a piece of smoke, a shadow." It clearly shows that Billy Crystal and Jim share a common interest. The love of baseball.

**Score Point 1**

The idea that Billy Crystal and Jim both have a passion for baseball is reasonable. The textual evidence the student provides from "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair" supports this idea by showing the joy Crystal felt while playing baseball. However, the textual evidence from "Jim at Bat" is flawed because it is only weakly linked to the idea. The quotation provided from this selection shows that Jim has difficulty seeing the baseball, but this quotation does not support that Jim has passion for the sport. Because the idea is not supported with relevant text from both selections, the response is partially sufficient.

Both Billy and the boy in "Jim at Bat" have such love for the sport baseball. Jim, the young, stressed boy, is frustrated with his hitting performance. He never gave up though, he worked hard, it showed how much he loved the sport. Crystal from "A Crystal Clear Love Affair" playing and watching the sport, also grew love for the sport. A Yankees game and a good hit, two minor actions started love of baseball. The one similarity the two share is definitely the love for the game of baseball, that continues to grow.

**Score Point 1**

The student presents the reasonable idea that both Jim and Billy Crystal love the sport of baseball and provides an analysis of how this love was evident in each selection. However, the student provides no textual evidence as support. Responses that do not contain textual evidence from both selections indicate that the student's reading performance is basic.

Billy Crystal and the boy had something in common, they played baseball. The boy was playing a game of baseball with his uncles. Billy said, "the joy it gave me when I was playing with my friends, pretending to be a Yankee." That is what similar between the boy and Billy Crystal.

**Score Point 1**

The student offers the reasonable idea that one similarity between Billy Crystal and Jim is that they both played baseball. A direct quotation of relevant text is provided to support this idea for "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair," but no textual evidence is provided to support this idea for "Jim at Bat." Because the idea is supported with relevant textual evidence from only one selection, the response is partially sufficient.

Both stories are talking about baseball, and both main characters are inspired by someone. Jim is inspired to keep going by his uncles, as in paragraph 10-11 they are still cheering him on after he has not hit. Billy was inspired to play baseball by his dad, as he says in paragraph 17.

**Score Point 1**

The student presents the reasonable idea that Jim and Billy Crystal were both inspired by someone: Jim's uncles inspired him to keep trying, and Crystal's father inspired him to play baseball. The student provides paragraph citations but does not support the idea with relevant textual evidence. Because paragraph citations are not considered to be textual evidence, this response represents 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.

One similarity between the boy in "Jim at Bat" and Billy Crystal in "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair" is the passion for baseball. The boy from "Jim at Bat" is "determined to hit the ball and, he does not want [the game] to stop." He loves baseball and has a great passion for the game. Billy Crystal "would play baseball in the summers from sunrise to sunset," when he was a kid. Both boys were so passionate for the game.

**Score Point 2**

The student offers the reasonable idea that Jim and Billy Crystal share a passion for baseball. The direct quotations from each selection fully support the idea because they describe behavior that shows a passion for baseball. Because the student supports a reasonable idea with relevant textual evidence from both selections, this response is sufficient.

The boy in "Jim at Bat", looks up to his uncles while the boy in "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair" looks up to a famous baseball player.  
"Jim at Bat", "The uncles are singing to the boy. He has never heard anything so beautiful. He does not want it to stop."  
"A Crystal-Clear Love Affair", "Mantle became his idol and the stadium the center of his young universe."

**Score Point 2**

The student offers the idea that both Jim and Billy Crystal look up to someone: Jim to his uncles and Crystal to a famous baseball player. The idea is specific and demonstrates the student's ability to make appropriate connections across the selections. The student supports this idea with relevant quotations from each selection. Therefore, this response represents a satisfactory reading performance.

A similarity between the boy in "Jim at Bat" and Billy Crystal in "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair" is that they both have family that love baseball. Jim at Bat: "Each uncle would still gladly play a game of baseball, should anyone ask, although no one has asked for years." A crystal clear love affair: "I think of the way he got us to love it without saying, 'Love this.'" Implying the uncles and the father loved base ball so much.

**Score Point 2**

The student offers the reasonable idea that Jim and Billy Crystal are similar in that they both have family members who love baseball. This idea shows that the student can make appropriate connections across the selections. Direct quotations from both selections are provided to fully support the love the uncles and the father have for baseball, making this a sufficient response.

In both stories, both the boy and Billy Crystal have sports-related goals that they each visualize. In "Jim at Bat", "Though he makes contact almost everytime he swings the bat, he does not strike the mighty blow he sees in his mind." In "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair" "[Crystal was]...pretending to be a Yankee or pretending <sup>with</sup> [his] brother that [they] were broadcasting the games." Both characters each possess sports related goals in their mind that they each fantasize.

**Score Point 2**

The student offers the reasonable idea that Jim and Billy Crystal both have fantasies related to baseball: Jim that he can hit the ball hard and Crystal that he is a member of the Yankees as a player or broadcaster. This idea is specific and reasonable and is fully supported with relevant textual evidence from both selections. Therefore, this response is considered sufficient.

## **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 boy in "Jim at Bat" and Billy Crystal in "A Crystal-clear Love affair" have a passion for baseball. For instance, in "Jim at Bat" it is stated, "The boy is arm-weary; he swings as hard as he is able" (8). This implies that the boy is tired, yet he continues to try because he wants to hit it further which shows the passion he has for baseball. Another example may be found in "A Crystal-clear Love affair", which states, "Though he lives on the west coast, he has returned often to the ballpark to watch games and take part in special ceremonies" (14). This proves that Crystal, too, has a passion for baseball because he is willing to travel just to watch the game. Both, Crystal and the boy are willing to go out of their ways to either make it to a game or practice while tired because of the love they have for the sport.

### Score Point 3

The student presents the reasonable idea that Jim and Billy Crystal have a similar passion for baseball. The student extends this idea by explaining just how far Jim and Crystal are willing to go to show their passion for the game. This additional analysis demonstrates the student's ability to make discerning connections across selections. The direct quotation the student uses from each selection is well chosen and strongly supports the validity of the analysis.

In both selections, a shared theme of the wonder of baseball is present. At first, Jim, from "Jim at Bat", is disappointed with his failure at the sport. While he is about to give up, he hears his uncles sing and express their love for the sport. He then realizes, "he has never heard anything so beautiful. He does not want it to stop." This helps him see that baseball brings joy and inspires him to keep trying. Similarly, Billy Crystal states that throughout his career, the stadium is still a "magical place". He recalls, "The joy it gave me when I was playing..." Just like Jim, baseball inspired Billy to go on and continue chasing his baseball dream, as it brought him delight. In conclusion, both readings show how baseball changed the lives of the two characters.

### Score Point 3

The student demonstrates an accomplished reading performance by developing a coherent explanation of how the lives of both Jim and Billy Crystal were changed by their love of baseball. This explanation reflects an awareness of the complexities of the texts. The student strongly supports the explanation with paraphrased text and well-chosen direct quotations.

The boy in "Jim at Bat" and Billy Crystal in "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair" were both drawn into the game of baseball by the home run hit. Although the boy "cannot hit the baseball to his satisfaction," which is to "strike the mighty blow he sees in his mind," he persists in hopes of eventually achieving the hit. In Billy's story, "the home run capped an extraordinary day" for him that "would change his life forever." Billy meant that throughout the course of his life, he kept a love for the game, even when he could no longer play. The boy and Billy Crystal share a love for baseball that was sparked by the captivating symbol of the home run ball, which they can always picture from their first memories of baseball.

### Score Point 3

The student offers the idea that Jim and Billy Crystal are similar in that they were both inspired by a home-run hit. By explaining how the home run becomes a symbol in their lives, the student is able to present a perceptive analysis and demonstrate the ability to make discerning connections across both selections. Specific and well-chosen quotations from each selection support the idea, making this an exemplary response.

One similarity between the boy and Billy Crystal is that they both were inspired and connected to baseball by family members. In "Jim at Bat", "...the ancient song of ballplayers. The uncles are singing to the boy. He has never heard anything so beautiful. He does not want it to stop." This shows that the boy was inspired by his uncles to keep trying to play baseball even if he failed so many times before. In "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair", "Every time I'm [joked], I think of my father. I think of the way he got us to love it without saying, 'Love this.'" This shows that Billy Crystal's dad had greatly influenced his love for baseball just by taking him to a game. Crystal was so amazed at the sights, and was inspired. The boy and Billy Crystal have been affected by their family members whether being inspired by ballplayer songs or going to baseball games.

### Score Point 3

The student presents the perceptive idea that both Jim and Billy Crystal were inspired by family members to love the game of baseball. The student draws parallels between how the uncles have affected Jim's love for the game and how Crystal's father has affected Crystal's love. The well-chosen direct quotations from both selections strongly support the validity of the analysis. The combination of the analysis and text evidence demonstrates the student's deep understanding of the texts, indicating an accomplished reading performance.