



English I

Short Answer Connecting Selections Scoring Guide

March 2015

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

Copyright restrictions prevent "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" from being displayed in this format. The selection is available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5298083>.

A photograph was included with this selection in the printed version of the English I test and is shown below.

Creativity Abounds



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Frank X Walker is assistant professor of English at Eastern Kentucky University. He coined the word "Affrilachian" to describe African Americans living in Appalachia and helped found a group of Affrilachian poets. Walker is the author of three collections of poetry and was awarded a prestigious Lannan Literary Fellowship in 2005. He believes artists aren't the only creative people: barbers, cooks, janitors, and kids all enrich the world with their creativity as much as the painters, sculptors, and writers.

Back Home

by Emma Stewart

- 1 As a child, I lived some distance back in the woods. The road wandered aimlessly like a writhing snake among huckleberry bushes and briars, along a sloping hillside where mountain laurel and honeysuckle blooms scented the air in late spring. It passed beside a field, which was enclosed with a barbed wire fence. Black Betty, our cow, was pastured there. Growing profusely beside the fence were large lavender violets.
- 2 When the road got tired of winding, and I got tired of walking, we were always at the same place. The huge boxwood bushes stood tall and graceful, as though they were soldiers, guarding a humble little shack, the closest place to heaven—my home.
- 3 There was a two-story frame dwelling, politely asking for a fresh coat of whitewash. It had a tin roof, painted as red as a strawberry, that rattled when the wind blew. A wisteria vine was tightly clinging to the front-porch columns, and a rusty screen door shrieked loudly when it was opened.
- 4 The floor was bare except for a few scatter rugs my grandma had crocheted with a button hook. The ceilings were high, and draped with a few cobwebs. The mantle was decorated by a seven-day alarm clock that had been on vacation for years. A kerosene lamp, its globe black from smoke, stood atop a dresser in the corner.
- 5 To the chimney was attached an old cast-iron heater, cracked down the side, which gave us comfortable warmth in cold weather. There was also a box of neatly sawed oak wood.
- 6 During the summer we waved a palm leaf fan to stir up a little breeze. However, the second floor was air-conditioned rather well by a “balm-o-gilead” tree that swayed with the wind and circulated a gentle breeze through our upstairs windows.
- 7 We ate in a little kitchen which stood out in the backyard away from the main house. The kitchen was like an icebox in the winter and a furnace in summer.
- 8 We had an ugly, old black cookstove, a huge square table covered usually with a bright floral-patterned oilcloth, and some round-back wooden chairs. A bucket of water from the moss-covered well in the backyard was placed on a little table by the stove, and a coconut shell dipper hung beside the bucket. Electricity hadn’t found its way to our part of the country yet.
- 9 But our food was good. Nothing can quite compare to the homemade biscuits, fried ham sizzling in red gravy, cabbage floating in ham grease, or

butter cake with homemade chocolate icing. My mother would stand on the kitchen porch and call out when the meals were ready.

- 10 I spent a lot of time on the barrel-stave hammock in the backyard under the old gnarled trees. I would swing for hours in the fresh air and sunshine and become lost in pleasant reverie. That was my idea of recreation. I didn't know what it was to be lonely.
- 11 Mama was a delightful person. She was tall, stately and slender, with warm brown eyes. Her long black hair was tucked in a bun at the nape of her neck. She was always busy cooking, churning, feeding chickens, washing clothes on an old scrub board, or drawing water with a windlass and rope from a fifty-foot well. But she found time to rock and cuddle me, and sew for my dollies.
- 12 Daddy walked behind a mule and a horse and a double plow all day, turning up fresh ground and putting out of sight old dead grass and broom straw. There were fresh earthy smells everywhere. In the distance a crow would "caw," and Daddy would mock him and try to frighten him away.
- 13 After supper sometimes we'd walk out to a neighbor's house, or else we'd just sit and talk or play the hand-cranked Victrola. Life was simple for us, but it was good.
- 14 Since those days the world has changed a great deal—and so have I. With all our progress though, love is still the greatest force on earth. I saw it in my parents long ago. It was love that made a humble country home seem like heaven.

"Back Home" by Emma Stewart, from *STORIES FOR A WOMAN'S HEART*, Multnomah Publishers, 1999. Reprinted by permission of the author's estate.

English I Short Answer Connecting Selections

In “Creative Solutions to Life’s Challenges” and “Back Home,” what made the authors happy as children? 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.

In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" he states what makes him happy as a child. "I remember mixing tempera paints with powdered detergent and painting the Baskin Robbins windows every Christmas season. Not for money, but for all the ice cream I could eat. And every time I saw people look up at me at the window and smile I knew I was getting the best part of the deal." In "Back Home" the author states, "The huge boxwood bushes stood tall and graceful, as though they were soldiers, guarding a humble little shack, the closest place to heaven - my home."

Score Point 0

The student provides textual evidence from both selections but does not offer an idea. Stating that the authors were happy as children only repeats the question; this statement does not constitute an idea. Because the student does not present an idea, this response is insufficient.

In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" Art work and being creative, doing creative things makes him happy. For example in "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" the kids decorated a neighbors windows for Christmas time, and it made the kids happy when people would walk by and smile at them.

Score Point 0

The student presents an idea that is reasonable for "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" and attempts to support that idea with textual evidence. However, the response contains neither an idea nor textual evidence for "Back Home." Because the student does not address both selections, this response represents a very limited reading performance.

In the Short Story "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" What made the Author happy was the freedom to express. The author believes "happy children are those given the freedom to be expressive, and in the selection "Back Home" the author is happy about how simple life was. He says, "Life was simple for us, but it was good. Each selection has different reasons why the authors were happy.

Score Point 0

The student attempts to answer the question; however, no original idea is present. The student attempts to explain why the authors were happy as children, but these explanations are merely "echoes" because "the freedom to express" and "how simple life was" only repeat the text the student is using as evidence. Because the student has not included an original idea, this response indicates a very limited reading performance.

Well in "creative solutions to life's challenges" art and his mom being creative made him happy, while in "Back home" doing things made life fun.

Score Point 0

In this response the student presents separate ideas for each selection. For "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges," the idea that "art and his mom being creative made him happy" is explained specifically enough to constitute a reasonable idea. However, the response is insufficient because for "Back Home" the idea that "doing things made life fun" is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable.

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.

The authors where happy when they were young because their mom took care of them. They grew up a little poor & so they appreciated every thing their moms did for them

Score Point 1

The student offers the idea that both authors were happy because their mothers took care of them, so even though they were poor, they appreciated what their mothers were able to do. This idea is specific and reasonable for both selections. However, the student does not provide textual evidence for either selection. Because the idea is not supported with relevant text from both selections, the response is only partially sufficient.

In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges", Frank was a happy child, because although they were not the wealthiest he was happy that he got to do things he enjoyed. "I remember mixing tempera paints with powdered detergent... and everytime I saw people look up at the window and smile I knew I was getting the best part of the deal." In "Back home" It made her happy that "I spent a lot of time on the barrel-stave hammock... That was my idea of recreation."

Score Point 1

The student offers an idea that "although [Walker's family was] not the wealthiest, [Walker] was happy that he got to do things he enjoyed." This idea, which is reasonable only for "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges," is supported with relevant textual evidence from that selection. The student provides relevant textual evidence from "Back Home," but there is no corresponding idea offered for that selection. Responses that contain relevant textual evidence from both selections but a reasonable idea for only one selection indicate a basic reading performance.

In both selections *Lifes challenges* and "Back Home" what made the author's happy as children? The mothers make them happy because they care about their children by how would feed them although they were poor. But Text evidence for creative solutions to life challenges "I still appreciate how much a creative cook can do with a single potato" Back home Text evidence "Mama was a delightful person".

Score Point 1

The student offers the reasonable idea that both authors were happy because their mothers demonstrated their care for their children by feeding them. The text evidence for "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" adequately supports the idea because it shows that the author appreciated the food his mother made with limited resources. However, the text evidence from "Back Home" is weakly linked to the idea. The quotation used—"Mama was a delightful person"—does not support the idea that the author's mother showed her care for the author by feeding her. Because the student does not support the idea with relevant textual evidence from both selections, the response is only partially sufficient.

In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" and "Back Home," what makes the authors happy when they were children was, being at home with their mother. An example from "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" is "When I think about my mother...". Another example from "Back Home" "Mama was a delightful person, that found time to rock and cuddle me and sew for my dollies." Both authors were happy as children because they spend quality time at home with their moms and every one they loved.

Score Point 1

The student offers the idea that spending quality time at home with their mothers made the authors happy as children. This idea is specific and reasonable for both selections. The text evidence from "Back Home" supports the idea because it illustrates the enjoyable time the author spent with her mother. However, the response is only partially sufficient because the text evidence from "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" is flawed. The portion of the quotation provided is too partial to support the student's idea. The fact that the author thinks about his mother does not support the idea that he spent quality time with her.

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.

As a child, Frank, author of "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges", enjoyed creativity. "And everytime I saw people look up at the window and smile I knew I was getting the best part of the deal." He liked it when people enjoyed his artwork. As a child, Emma adored nature and the outdoors. "I would swing for hours in the fresh air and sunshine and become lost in pleasant reverie."

Score Point 2

The student offers a reasonable idea for each selection. In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges," the author was happy as a child because he enjoyed having people appreciate his artwork. In "Back Home," the author was happy because she enjoyed nature and being outdoors. The student provides direct quotations from the selections to support these ideas. For both selections, the idea and text evidence used to support it are clearly linked, making this a sufficient response.

The author of "Creative Solutions to Lites Challenges" and the author of "Back Home" find happiness from their mothers love. For example, the author of "Creative Solutions to lifes challenges" wrote "I believe that happy children are those given the freedom to be expressive... "(Walker) His mother allows him to express himself which makes him very happy. Similarly, the author of "Back Home" wrote "... love is still the greatest force on earth. I saw it in my parents long ago" (Stewart). The love from her mother gave her a feeling that love is the most powerful thing.

Score Point 2

The student offers the reasonable idea that both authors were made happy as children by "their mothers' love." The student's explanation that Walker's "mother allows him to express himself" and "The love from [Stewart's] mother gave her a feeling that love is the most powerful thing" shows that he is able to draw valid conclusions across the selections. The student supports the idea and explanations by providing quotations of relevant text. This response is sufficient because the student demonstrates a good understanding of the texts.

In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" and "Back Home" their mothers food made them happy as children. In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" "I still appreciate how much a creative cook can do with a single potato." His mom made great meals for 7 kids with very little food. In "Back Home" "Nothing can quite compare to the homemade food." She also had very little growing up except her mom's cooking every night made up for all that.

Score Point 2

The student offers the reasonable idea that despite coming from humble beginnings, the authors were made happy by their mothers' food. The student provides relevant quotations from both selections to support that the authors enjoyed their mothers' food, making this a sufficient response.

What made the authors happy in "Creative Solutions" and "Back Home" was the charming home environment because their moms did everything they could to make them happy. For example, in "Creative Solutions" "She made being creative as normal as breathing and encouraged our participation by telling us that idle hands and minds were the devil's workshop." For instance, in "Back Home" "Mama was a delightful person, she found time to rock and cuddle me." This clearly shows that there is nothing that can make you happier than a mother's pure love.

Score Point 2

The student offers the reasonable idea that the authors' childhood happiness resulted from good home environments provided by loving mothers. The direct quotations from each selection clearly support the idea because they describe how the mothers created a loving home environment. The combination of the idea and the text evidence for each selection indicates a satisfactory reading performance.

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.

In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges" and "Back Home," their mothers made the authors happy as children. In the first selection the author states, "She made being creative as normal as breathing and encouraged our participation..." She introduced her kids to the creative activities that are fun for them, and that makes them happy throughout their childhood and that creativity is what shapes the authors happiness for his hole life In the second selection "But she found time to rock and cuddle me, and sew for my dollies" is the same idea. She can always seem to make time for the little ones and that open arms makes childhood and later life as happy as possible. Overall, both selections clearly state that their mothers care and found ways to make childhood happy.

Score Point 3

The student offers the idea that their mothers made the authors happy as children. By analyzing how each mother gave her child the skills or attention necessary to be happy for a lifetime, the student is able to make a discerning connection across the selections. The idea is supported with direct quotations of specific and well-chosen textual evidence from each selection, making this an exemplary response.

Both authors, Frank X Walker and Emma Stewart, were happy as children, enjoying the simple things in life because of their circumstances and family backgrounds. In "Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges," Walker was "mixing tempera paints with powdered detergent and painting the Baskin Robbins windows... and every time I saw people ... smile I knew I was getting the best part of the deal" as a child. Similarly, in "Back Home," Stewart "spent a lot of time in the barrel-stave hammock in the backyard... [and] would swing for hours in the fresh air." As Walker found joy in painting, Stewart was delighted while swinging on the hammock. Both actions were ordinary and normal, yet these little things have the impact to make the children's days and it is these times that they remember as the happiest moments as children.

Score Point 3

The student presents the perceptive idea that as children both authors found happiness in simple circumstances and actions that most people just see as normal. For both selections, the text evidence used to support the idea is specific and well chosen. The combination of idea and text evidence demonstrates a deep understanding of the selections and indicates an accomplished reading performance.

Both authors did not have lavish upbringings, however they did have a loving family that was there to care for them. In "Creative Solitaires" his mother "fed all seven of [them] and 'made all my sisters' prom and wedding dresses." This is indicative of a loving mother simply because if she did not care, she would not have gone to such great lengths to keep her children happy. In a similar scenario, the mother in "Back Home" would always find time to rock and cuddle me and sew for my dollies. "This clearly shows that the mother is, in fact, kind and loving. She always makes it a point to rock and cuddle with her child even though she was constantly busy. Based on the long list of chores she had, she must have been exhausted and yet, she still added the chore of sewing for her child's doll to the list."

Score Point 3

The student presents the idea that although the authors "did not have lavish upbringings," they were happy because they had a loving family that cared for them. The student extends this idea by drawing discerning parallels between the mothers, analyzing how they go to great lengths to keep their children happy. The student shows a deep understanding of the texts by providing well-chosen text evidence that strongly supports this perceptive analysis, making this an exemplary response.

Both authors used their minds to escape the realities of their lives. This escape made them happy as children. Walker used poetry to escape from his harsh reality. He composed truly heroic rhyming couplets in his head when confronted by neighborhood bullies. And still today, he tells us, "words have continued to serve as my first weapon of choice." Stewart would "swing for hours in the fresh air and sunshine and become lost in a pleasant reverie," and lost in her own thoughts, she didn't know "what it was to be alone." Although she was alone, she was truly not alone because she had her imagination.

Score Point 3

In this exemplary response, the student presents the perceptive idea that both authors used their own minds to escape the realities of their lives. Further analysis clarifies the idea (Walker uses poetry as an escape, while Stewart uses her imagination) and shows that the student can make discerning connections across the selections. In addition, the paraphrased text and direct quotations the student provides are well chosen and strongly support the validity of the analysis.