



English II

Short Answer Single Selection Scoring Guide

March 2015

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

The Fox

by Faith Shearin



© iStockphoto.com/Christian Riedel

It was an ordinary morning: November, thin light,
and we paused over our pancakes to watch
something red move outside. Our house is on

5 an untamed patch of land and, across the lagoon,
another house surrounded by trees. On the banks
of their shore, facing us: a fox. We thought

he might be a dog at first for he trotted and sniffed
like a dog but when he turned to us
we knew he was nobody's pet. His face was arranged

10 like a child's face—playful, dainty—and his eyes
were liquid and wild. He stood for awhile, looking out,
as if he could see us in our pajamas, then found

a patch of sand beneath a tree and turned himself
into a circle of fur: his head tucked into his tail.

15 It was awful to watch him sleep: exposed,

tiny, his eyes closed. How can any animal
be safe enough to rest? But while I washed
our dishes he woke again, yawned, and ran

20 away to the places only foxes know. My God
I was tired of being a person. Even now his tail
gestures to me across the disapproving lagoon.

"The Fox" by Faith Shearin, from MOVING THE PIANO, Stephen F. Austin Press, 2011. Used by permission.

English II Short Answer Single Selection

In "The Fox," how would you describe the speaker's attitude toward the fox? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

Score Point 0 — Insufficient Response to the Question

Insufficient responses indicate a very limited reading performance.

These responses have one of the following problems.

- ❑ The idea is not an answer to the question asked.
- ❑ The idea is incorrect because it is not based on the text.
- ❑ The idea is too general, vague, or unclear to determine whether it is reasonable.
- ❑ No idea is present. Sometimes the response contains only text evidence. 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 "The Fox" I would describe the speaker's attitude towards the fox to be kind, and kind of open minded. It seems like she could have been rude at times, and other times just whatever. She to me had all kinds of different tones throughout the story.

Score Point 0

The student does not present a reasonable idea. First, the student offers the vague idea that the speaker has a kind, open-minded attitude toward the fox. The student then provides additional ideas, one of which is not based on the poem ("she could have been rude at times") and others that are too unclear to determine whether they are even linked to the poem (e.g., "other times just whatever"). The absence of a reasonable idea causes the response to be insufficient.

In this passage "The Fox" it tells us how this one little animal is free to wander off some place else. In the selection The Fox "he woke again, yawned, and ran away to the places only foxes know". This shows that animals of any kind can wander freely without being harmed. This also shows that animals will do what they please because it's a free place to go. This shows that even though animals are hunted they can hide and run off at anytime.

Score Point 0

This response is insufficient because it does not answer the question asked. The student describes the fox's freedom and its behavior rather than the speaker's attitude toward the fox.

In "The Fox" the speaker's attitude toward the fox is hatred, disapproval because he/she can not do what they want. "My God I was tired of being a Person. Even now his tail gestures to me across the disapproving lagoon." This quote shows the dislike the speaker has toward the fox.

Score Point 0

This response is insufficient because the student presents an idea that is incorrect. The idea that "the speaker's attitude toward the fox is hatred, disapproval because he/she cannot do what they want" cannot be supported with evidence from the poem. Because the idea is incorrect, the direct quotation the student provides is irrelevant.

The author's attitude toward the fox is "It was awful to watch him sleep: exposed, tiny, his eyes closed." You can clearly see that's his attitude.

Score Point 0

This response is insufficient because it lacks an idea. The student restates the question with the statement "The author's attitude toward the fox is..." and then provides textual evidence in the form of a direct quotation, but the student does not offer any description of the speaker's attitude toward the fox. For this reason, the student's reading performance is very limited.

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, but the response contains no text evidence.
- ❑ The idea is reasonable, but the text evidence 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.
- ❑ The idea needs more explanation or specificity even though it is supported with text evidence.
- ❑ The idea represents only a literal reading of the text, with or without text evidence.

The speaker was jealous of the fox. The last stanza shows that the speaker is wanting to connect with nature like a fox.

Score Point 1

In this partially sufficient response, the student presents the reasonable idea that the speaker is jealous of the fox. The student attempts to provide relevant textual evidence by referring to the last stanza (“the speaker is wanting to connect with nature like a fox”), but this evidence is flawed because it functions only as a general text reference and does not sufficiently support the idea presented. Therefore, this response indicates a basic reading performance.

I think the speaker admires the fox. She describes his features in a good way like the fox was just so adorable. I think the speaker cares for the fox also.

Score Point 1

The student offers two reasonable ideas: the speaker admires the fox and cares for it. However, the student does not provide textual evidence from the poem to support these ideas. For this reason, the response represents a basic reading performance.

The speaker's attitude towards the fox is envious. Growing up, humans are required to live by multiple rules that deal with every aspect of our lives. The speaker states that the fox is free to do whatever it pleased. When the speaker says the fox is "arranged like... dainty" it means the fox is like a child who has no worries. While the fox was out being free the human was busy with chores, and was "tired" because she didn't enjoy the responsibility humans have, and instead would prefer the fox's freedom.

Score Point 1

In this partially sufficient response, the student offers the reasonable idea that the speaker is envious of the fox. The student strengthens this idea by contrasting the fox's childlike freedom with the limits and responsibilities the speaker feels in her own life. Although the student attempts to support the idea with direct quotations from the poem, this textual evidence is too partial to support the explanation. The student's use of ellipses omits the relevant portion of the quotation (the comparison of the fox's face to a child's face), which is needed to support the idea that the speaker is envious.

In "The Fox" the speaker's attitude towards the fox is curiosity. She asks "How can an animal be safe enough to rest?" She doesn't understand how the fox just lays there sleeping not knowing what's around him.

Score Point 1

This response is partially sufficient because the student's idea represents a literal reading of the poem. While it is true that the speaker of the poem demonstrates some curiosity about the fox's actions, the student does not connect this temporary curiosity to the speaker's feelings, or attitude, toward the fox. In addition, this response indicates only a partial understanding of the poem since the student interprets the question "How can any animal be safe enough to rest?" as a simple question of curiosity rather than the speaker's search for a deeper understanding. Therefore, this response indicates 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.

- ❑ 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 text and draw valid conclusions.
- ❑ The text evidence used to support the idea is accurate and relevant.
- ❑ The idea and text evidence used to support it are clearly linked.
- ❑ The combination of the idea and the text evidence demonstrates a good understanding of the text.

The speaker's attitude towards the fox was positive since she used the diction "playful" and "dainty" to describe the fox. In lines 9-10, she characterized the fox to seem innocent by writing the simile "like a child's face". Thus, the author's attitude towards the fox is positive.

Score Point 2

The student offers the reasonable idea that the speaker's positive attitude toward the fox is evident through her use of language. To support this idea, the student points out the diction the speaker uses to describe the fox ("playful" and "dainty") as well as the simile the speaker uses to characterize the fox as innocent ("like a child's face"). The idea and textual evidence are clearly linked and show that the student has a good understanding of the poem.

Single — 10

In the poem "The Fox" the speaker is amazed by the fox's vulnerability. "Like a child's face - playful, dainty." "It was awful to watch him sleep: exposed, tiny, his eyes closed." The speaker watches the fox sleep and worries for him. The speaker is very caring for the fox even though she is just watching it.

Score Point 2

The student presents the reasonable idea that the speaker is amazed by the fox's vulnerability. The student supports this idea with clearly linked direct quotations that illustrate the speaker's awareness of how vulnerable the fox is and how worried she is as she watches it sleep. The combination of the idea and textual evidence indicates that the student's reading performance is satisfactory.

The speaker's attitude towards the fox is yearning to be free like the fox. As she washes the dishes, she thinks, "My God I was tired of being a person."

Score Point 2

The student offers the reasonable idea that the speaker yearns to be free like the fox. The student uses a paraphrase of lines 16–17 ("while I washed/our dishes") to establish that this yearning takes place in the context of completing a daily chore. The direct quotation the student provides as support underscores the speaker's strong desire to escape her everyday responsibilities. Overall, the student's response to the question is sufficient.

The poet seems to admire the fox described in the selection. The speaker describes the creature as liquid and wild and goes on to state a wish to be in a form other than human. Being mammothly aware of the dangers the animal faces sleeping exposed in the sand, the narrator shows concern for the fox. The poet also seems to envy the fox because it is able to journey to places the narrator will never discover. The speaker's attitude toward the fox is filled with a plethora of emotions, but most prevalent are the feelings of admiration and envy.

Score Point 2

The student presents several reasonable ideas that demonstrate the ability to draw valid conclusions: the speaker admires the fox, shows concern for it, and envies it. The student paraphrases parts of lines 11–20 to support these ideas. The ideas and textual evidence are clearly linked, indicating 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.

- ❑ 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 the text.
- ❑ The text evidence used to support the idea is specific and well chosen. Overall, the evidence strongly supports the validity of the idea.
- ❑ The combination of the idea and the text evidence demonstrates a deep understanding of the text.

In the poem, the speaker is jealous of the fox's freedom. The fox has the freedom to run and play and not worry about anything. In the poem it is said that the speaker is washing dishes, which indicates work and responsibilities. While this is going on, it states that the fox who is "playful (and) dainty" has "tucked his head into his tail", to sleep. This shows that the fox has the freedom to do what it wants and has no worries. These are things that the speaker is jealous of. Later in the poem, the fox "woke again yawned, and ran", which shows freedom to do what it wants. The speaker then says "I was tired of being a person", which suggests he or she is jealous of the freedom the fox has and wants the fox's freedom.

Score Point 3

In this exemplary response, the student presents the reasonable idea that the speaker is jealous of the fox's freedom. The student further explains this idea by contrasting the speaker's burdens and responsibilities with the fox's freedom to do what it wants. This explanation shows that the student can make discerning connections. In addition, the direct quotations the student uses are well chosen and strongly support the idea and explanation. Overall, this response demonstrates that the student has a deep understanding of the poem.

The speaker's attitude towards the fox was envy, as they were envious of the freedom the fox possessed. The speaker says, "It was awful to watch him sleep: exposed, tiny, his eyes closed," (line # 15-16). The speaker used awfully chosen words such as "sleeping", "exposed", and "eyes closed" to imply the fox was letting its guard down, trusting its surroundings to be completely safe, because only when you know nothing can hurt you, you will let your vulnerability show. Here, the speaker can only watch, displaying her jealousy towards the fox's freedom because she cannot be like the fox and let her guard down and be comfortable.

Score Point 3

The student develops a coherent analysis of why the speaker is envious of the fox's freedom. The student analyzes the speaker's jealousy by focusing on her use of descriptive language to contrast the sense of safety and trust the sleeping fox exudes with her own feelings of vulnerability. The speaker can watch but not experience the freedom the fox has because, unlike the fox, she is not free to let her guard down. The student uses a specific, well-chosen direct quotation to support the validity of the idea. The combination of perceptive analysis and strong textual evidence indicates an accomplished reading performance.

In "The Fox" by Faith Shearin, the speaker's tone gives insight into her deep admiration and desire to protect the fox and the freedom it symbolizes. The speaker's awe shows in her description of his eyes, "liquid and wild." While her description of "his child's face-playful, dainty" and horror^{of} watching him sleep "exposed, tiny, his eyes closed," evoke images of protecting a child. Those images depict her desire to protect him, and the natural freedom he symbolizes. The speaker's attitude is a longing for the protection of her freedom. That deep passion speaks of a deeper feeling of repression and confinement, as many in the modern, high-tech society feel today.

Score Point 3

The student offers a coherent explanation of how the speaker's tone reveals the depth of her admiration for the fox and her desire to protect her own freedom, as symbolized by the fox. The student makes discerning connections across the poem to explain how the speaker's feelings of protectiveness toward the fox actually represent her own longing for the "natural freedom he symbolizes." The student supports the idea with well-chosen direct quotations from the text, demonstrating an accomplished reading performance.

In "The Fox," the speaker carries an attitude of wistfulness towards the freedom the fox enjoyed. After the fox trotted off to the distance, the speaker longingly thought "My God I was tired of being a person. Even now his tail gestures to me across the disapproving lagoon." The carefree, childlike animal appealed to the speaker + made her feel dissatisfied with her own stressful, human life. Even after the fox was out of view, she continued to covet its simple, happy existence, even feeling attacked as nature judged her for staying put. Although she couldn't join the fox out in the lagoon, she remained pensive because of its impact.

Score Point 3

The student presents the perceptive idea that observing the fox's freedom causes the speaker to feel wistful and dissatisfied with her life. The student contrasts the fox's carefree lifestyle with the speaker's "stressful, human life," noting that the speaker's wish to escape a tedious life is so strong that even the lagoon "judged her for staying put." The direct quotation that student uses is particularly apt, as it strongly supports the speaker's overpowering and lingering desire to be free like the fox. The combination of idea, explanation, and textual evidence demonstrates a deep understanding of the poem.