



English II

Short Answer Single Selection Scoring Guide

March 2016

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

The Lanyard

by Billy Collins



The other day as I was ricocheting slowly
off the pale blue walls of this room,
bouncing from typewriter to piano,
from bookshelf to an envelope lying on the floor,
5 I found myself in the L section of the dictionary
where my eyes fell upon the word *lanyard*.

No cookie nibbled by a French novelist
could send one more suddenly into the past—
a past where I sat at a workbench at a camp
10 by a deep Adirondack lake
learning how to braid thin plastic strips
into a lanyard, a gift for my mother.

I had never seen anyone use a lanyard
or wear one, if that's what you did with them,
15 but that did not keep me from crossing
strand over strand again and again
until I had made a boxy
red and white lanyard for my mother.

She gave me life and milk from her breasts,
20 and I gave her a lanyard.
She nursed me in many a sickroom,
lifted teaspoons of medicine to my lips,
set cold face-cloths on my forehead,
and then led me out into the airy light

25 and taught me to walk and swim,
and I, in turn, presented her with a lanyard.
Here are thousands of meals, she said,

and here is clothing and a good education.
And here is your lanyard, I replied,
30 which I made with a little help from a counselor.

Here is a breathing body and a beating heart,
strong legs, bones and teeth,
and two clear eyes to read the world, she whispered,
and here, I said, is the lanyard I made at camp.
35 And here, I wish to say to her now,
is a smaller gift—not the archaic truth

that you can never repay your mother,
but the rueful admission that when she took
the two-tone lanyard from my hands,
40 I was as sure as a boy could be
that this useless, worthless thing I wove
out of boredom would be enough to make us even.

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English II Short Answer Single Selection

What does the lanyard symbolize? Explain your answer and support it 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.

The lanyard symbolizes what you wanna
stand for. what you're passionate with.
To believe in yourself at all times
no matter what or who stands in
your way.

Score Point 0

This response is insufficient because the student presents an idea that is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable. The idea that the lanyard is a symbol for believing in yourself no matter what is not specific enough to be a valid answer to the question.

I had never seen anyone
use a lanyard or wear one if that's what
you did with them, but that did not keep me from
crossing strand over strand again and again
until I had made a boxy red and white
lanyard from my mother. she gave me life
and milk from her breasts, and I gave
her a lanyard.

Score Point 0

The student provides textual evidence from lines 13-20 of “The Lanyard” but does not offer an original idea. Because no idea is presented and the student only offers textual evidence, this response indicates a very limited reading performance.

Lanyard symbolizes a piece of rope for fastening something in ships also any various cords. You can also make like key chains yourself "strand over strand again and again until I had made a boxy red and white lanyard for my mother."

Score Point 0

This response is insufficient because the student presents an idea that is incorrect. The student attempts to define the word lanyard but does not indicate what the lanyard symbolizes. Because the idea is incorrect, the textual evidence provided is irrelevant. Therefore, this response indicates a very limited reading performance.

The lanyard symbolize a gift. In "The lanyard" it states "No cookie nibbled by a French novelist could send me more suddenly into the past a past where I sat at a workbench at a camp by a deep Adirondack lake learning how to braid thin plastic strips into a lanyard, a gift for my mother."

Score Point 0

The student presents the incorrect idea that the lanyard symbolizes a gift. The lanyard does not symbolize a gift because it is an actual gift. Because the idea is not valid, the textual evidence the student provides is irrelevant. Therefore, this response indicates 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, 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 lanyard is a gift to his mom symbolizing his love for bringing him into this world. He is happy that he is there with her and he wants to repay her for all the stuff she has done for him. The lanyard is saying that he loves his mom. He doesn't say it the lanyard does.

Score Point 1

This response is partially sufficient because the student offers a reasonable idea but does not provide textual evidence. The student presents the idea that the lanyard symbolizes the love the speaker has for the mother. Although additional analysis is offered (he is happy that he is there with her and he wants to repay her), no textual evidence is provided to support the idea. Therefore, this response can be considered only a basic reading performance.

The lanyard represents the thankfulness a boy has for his mother. In the selection, the author says, "I wish to... repay your mother." (lines 35-37)

Score Point 1

The student presents the reasonable idea that the lanyard symbolizes the speaker's sense of thankfulness toward the mother. However, the textual evidence provided is too partial to support the idea because it is truncated by the use of ellipsis. Because the text evidence is flawed, this response indicates only a basic reading performance.

Lanyard Symbolizes giving back. In the selection the author talks about how much his mom has done for him and he is using a lanyard to give back.

Score Point 1

The student offers the reasonable idea that the lanyard symbolizes the speaker's need to give something back to the mother for the things she has done. However, no textual evidence is provided to support the idea. Therefore, this response is only partially sufficient.

In "The Lanyard" a boy is making a lanyard for his mother to show how much he thanks her. She gave him life so he makes her a gift. As stated " ...strand overstrand again and again until I had made a boxy red and white lanyard for my mother." in line 10.

Score Point 1

The student presents the reasonable idea that the lanyard symbolizes how thankful the speaker is for the mother. The response is only partially sufficient because the textual evidence is weakly linked. The quotation supports only that the speaker made the lanyard, not that the speaker is thankful. Because the text evidence does not adequately support the idea presented, this response indicates only 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.

In this story the lanyard symbolizes something that the narrator gives to his mother in order to pay back for everything she has done for him. In paragraph 40, he says this "worthless thing I have wave out of boredom would be enough to make us even." This shows that he gives it to her as a symbol. So, the narrator gives the lanyard to his mother to show that he appreciates what she has done for him.

Score Point 2

The student presents the reasonable idea that the lanyard symbolizes the speaker's effort to pay back the mother for everything she has done. The student supports this idea by providing a direct quotation that shows how the speaker intends to repay the mother with the lanyard. The combination of the idea and text evidence demonstrates a good understanding of the text.

Single — 10

The lanyard represents the relationship between him and his mother. "She nursed me in a sick room, I in turn presented her with a lanyard." He continuously compares the things his mother has done for him to his gift; this shows the representation of their relationship.

Score Point 2

At the beginning of the response, the student presents the reasonable idea that the lanyard symbolizes the relationship between the speaker and the mother. At the end of the response, the student explains that the speaker "continuously compares the things his mother has done for him to his gift." In between the idea and explanation, the student provides relevant textual evidence to sufficiently support the idea. The combination of the reasonable idea and text evidence demonstrates a satisfactory reading performance.

In my opinion, the lanyard symbolizes love and thankfulness. He is being thankful for his breathing body and his beating heart, said in line thirty one. He is also being thankful for his thousands of meals, the milk from her breast, the life she gave him, the clothing and good education, and for his strong legs, bones and teeth, and two clear eyes to read the world. In conclusion, the lanyard symbolizes love, and thankfulness.

Score Point 2

The student presents the reasonable idea that the lanyard symbolizes love and thankfulness for all the things the mother has given the speaker. The student uses both direct quotations (strong legs, bones and teeth, and two clear eyes to read the world) and paraphrase (his thousands of meals, the milk from her breast, the life she gave him, the clothing and good education) from different parts of the poem that show all of the things the mother has done. Overall, the student's response to the question is sufficient.

In "The Lanyard," the lanyard symbolizes the author's guilt for not returning love to his mother the way she did to him. "I wish to say to her now... the rueful admission that when she took the two-tone lanyard from my hands, this useless, worthless thing... would be enough to make us even." (The Lanyard).

Score Point 2

The student offers the reasonable idea that the lanyard symbolizes the speaker's guilt for not properly returning the mother's love. The direct quotation the student provides is clearly linked to the idea because it illustrates how useless the lanyard is and how it isn't enough to make them even. Overall, the student demonstrates a good understanding of the text.

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.

The lanyard symbolizes the author's appreciation of his mother. Throughout the piece, the author reflects all the things that his mother has given him, "a breathing body... a beating heart" (31), and compares it to this lanyard which he wants to give to his mother. Though he feels inadequate, calling the lanyard, "useless, worthless", and he knows, "you can never repay your mother" (37), this lanyard is the best way he can symbolize his appreciation and love for his mother. "I was sure that this [lanyard]... would be enough to make us even" (42).

Score Point 3

The student presents the perceptive idea that the lanyard symbolizes the speaker's appreciation for the mother. The student develops a coherent explanation of the speaker's appreciation by comparing the things the mother has done to the lanyard the speaker wishes to give her. 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 a deep understanding of the text.

I believe the lanyard symbolizes love and regret. The author states, "...that you can never repay your mother, but the useful admission that when she took the two-tone lanyard from my hands, I was as sure as a boy could be that this useless, worthless thing I wove out of boredom would be enough to make us even." This quote shows us, the readers, that he loves his mother very much. It also shows us that he knows nothing will ever be able to make up for all that his mother did for him, but that still doesn't keep him from showing his love by giving his mother a hand-made gift. His regret is symbolized by him feeling as if the lanyard is not enough.

Score Point 3

The student presents the perceptive idea that the lanyard symbolizes both the speaker's love for the mother and the speaker's regret that the handmade gift was inadequate repayment. Overall, the text evidence the student provides strongly supports the validity of the idea, indicating an accomplished reading performance.

The lanyard symbolizes the immense gap between the gifts bestowed upon children by their selfless mothers, and what children, unaware of the magnitude of these gifts, give back on a childish whim. The author compares the "useless, worthless thing" created "out of boredom" against the grandness of his mother's gifts, including "a breathing body, and a beating heart". The simple, seemingly meaningless object the author presents to his mother underlines the selflessness of maternity, never expecting anything in return.

Score Point 3

In this exemplary response, the student presents the perceptive idea that the lanyard symbolizes the gap between the gifts given to children by their mothers and what children offer in return. The text evidence is well chosen and clearly demonstrates the contrast noted in the student's analysis. Overall, this response represents an accomplished reading performance.

In "The Lanyard," the lanyard symbolized the boy's desire to show appreciation for all his mother had done for him. The boy had received food, clothing, protection, life - love from his mother and he felt there had to be some way to repay her. Later in his life, after being flashbacked by mere glance of the word "lanyard" he wishes to say to his mother the "rueful admission" of how feels, given her a "worthless thing he wore out of boredom." Looking back, he feels much guilt out of trying to "repay [his] mother," with a lanyard, something, the author says "you can never [do]."

Score Point 3

The student presents the perceptive idea that the lanyard symbolizes the speaker's desire to show appreciation toward the mother. The student makes discerning connections across the text by linking the speaker's childhood desire to show appreciation with the adult guilt at having given her a simple lanyard. The idea reflects an awareness of the complexities of the text and well-chosen textual evidence strongly supports the idea. Overall, this response demonstrates a deep understanding of the text.