



English I Writing

Literary Scoring Guide
April 2013

English I Writing Literary Prompt

Look at the photograph.



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Write a story about taking care of something or someone. Be sure that your story is focused and complete and that it has an interesting plot and engaging characters.

Score Point 1

The story represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the story is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses narrative strategies or literary devices that are only marginally suited to the literary task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The writer presents the story in a random or illogical way, causing it to lack clarity and direction.
- ❑ Many of the details do not contribute to the story. The writer's lack of focus on a specific character, event, or idea weakens the unity and coherence of the story.
- ❑ The writer's presentation of the story is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the story line. At other times the lack of meaningful transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections makes one or more parts of the story unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of the story is weak because the details are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient. They do not contribute to key literary elements such as character development, conflict, and point of view.
- ❑ The story is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt may be vague or confused. In some cases, the story as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the story in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the literary writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the literary purpose. The word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the story.
- ❑ Sentences may be simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, weakening the effectiveness of the story.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

Every thing in life, everything you had, have, or will have in the future involves you taking care of it. The most difficult thing I've ever had to take care of was my dirt bike. It's a 04 kx250f. I have never had to take care of something as I have to with it. My bike is a 4-stroke. A 4-stroke involves you to have to tear down the motor every 3 or 4 times you ride it. You have to tear down the motor, go into the valves and check to see if they need to be adjusted. If they do, then you have to take the valves off and put new hotcams in then get the valves in the right timing again. If the bike will start but won't idle, then that means your carburetor needs to be cleaned. You have to take the carburetor off the engine; take everything off of the carburetor, take the jettings out and spray a can of disinfecting grease inside it and put all the jetting back in it. The carburetor normally has 3-8 different jettings and each cost about 10-12\$. So if you break 4 jettings then that is 40\$ coming out of your wallet. Dirt bikes are hard to maintain and keep up with. But knowing your mechanics work will stop you from guessing the wrong thing with your bike. After all, you find yourself working on the bike more often than you'll be riding it.

Score Point 1

In this very limited response, the writer explains the importance of taking care of a 2004 KX250F dirt bike and then provides explicit instructions on how this should be done. Despite the presence of many details and a good control of conventions throughout the essay, the writer presents the essay in a form that is inappropriate to the specific demands of the prompt. The details the writer includes do not contribute to key literary elements such as character development or conflict. Overall, the writer demonstrates a lack of understanding of the literary writing task.

there was a boy, named david, david was a nice person he was very friendly with everyone he has black hair, brown eyes, he was very intelligent and smart at the school, david loves his friends and family, but david never knew his mom, his grandmother always said to david "you look like your mother, you hereditary, her personality" david thought his mother was a nice person, cause he is a nice person. one saturday david went to the park to play baseball with his friends, so david took off a little inheritance of his mom, was a collar, with a photo of his mom david always taking care of the collar cause its the only thing, that remembered his mom. david put the collar in his backpack, when david comes back at his house, his grandmother told him "david someone wants to see you" "oh!" david said when david was walking to the bedroom he saw his mom david said "mom!" with a lovely david hugged his mom and said "mom i love you this inheritance is a little thing that always will take care and i take care of you!" they started to cry of happiness and they started to be happy.

Score Point 1

The writer of this very limited response creates a story about a boy named David who takes care of a necklace that contains a photo of a mother he has never known. The story is sometimes difficult to follow because the writer demonstrates little or no command of the conventions of punctuation, grammar, and word usage. In addition, there are almost no correct sentence boundaries. These errors disrupt the fluency of the story and interfere with meaning.

Taking care of something is like when you get a new phone, game, TV, or any other type of thing. You always want to take care of what ever you have. I hear this every time.

Every time I get something new, my parents always say "Take care of this your not getting another one." I don't hear that much because I usually take care of my stuff. Whenever I return something I got weeks ago, the checkout person always says "this looks brand-new." That's what you here when you take care of stuff.

I remember buy myself a new tv months ago and it still looks new. Sometime when you take of something you love and something bad happens to it, you just get mad and start talking it out on someone else.

Taking care of something or someone proves what kind of person you are. Also how you take care of it.

Score Point 1

In this very limited writing performance, the writer presents two brief examples illustrating the importance of taking care of her material possessions. Although these examples are centered on the importance of keeping things in an almost new condition, the writer does not clearly link these examples within a coherent story line. Instead, the examples function more as support for the writer's assertion that "Taking care of something or someone proves what kind of person you are." This composition is only marginally suited to the literary task.

I have a horse he's big and red so I named him Red Fury. I take good care of him and love him a lot. on day I brushed him and cleaned his hooves and rode him around. I fed him in the morning then let him out to graze in the pasture in the afternoon I came up to him and brushed him cleaned his hooves and saddleled him up. After a nice long ride. I took every thing off and brushed him of agin and fed him for the night. Hes very important to me.

Score Point 1

The writer of this essay describes how he takes care of a horse named Red Fury. Although the writer provides a few details recounting what he does to care for the horse in the morning, he repeats the information several times during the essay. This repetition results in a narrative that is only weakly developed and contains details that fail to contribute to character development or to the story line. An inconsistent use of sentence boundaries further disrupts the fluency of this very limited writing performance.

Score Point 2

The story represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the story is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses narrative strategies or literary devices that are only somewhat suited to the literary task. The writer is able to convey some sense of the story.
- ❑ Some of the details do not contribute to the story. The writer may focus on a specific character, event, or idea but may not sustain that focus, limiting the unity and coherence of the story.
- ❑ The writer's presentation of the story is inconsistent. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the story line. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the logical movement of the story.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of the story is minimal and remains at a surface level because there are few details, they are not always appropriate, or they are too general. For the most part, the details contribute only marginally to key literary elements such as character development, conflict, and point of view.
- ❑ The story reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the story in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the literary writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the literary purpose. The word choice may limit the quality and clarity of the story.
- ❑ Sentences may be awkward or only somewhat controlled, limiting the effectiveness of the story.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

It was almost summer, which meant I was almost free to have fun, be with my friends, and not worry about anything... or so I thought.

I had just gotten home from my last day of school, and I was about to go to my friend's house, when my dad called me. I figured he was just calling to tell me that he was finished at work, and asked if I needed anything like every other day, but what he told me was not what I expected. He told me that he had broken his leg and hurt his shoulder. I knew when he told me, that what I had expected for summer, wasn't going to happen.

I spent over half of my summer taking care of my dad, but to my surprise it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I ended up having a lot of fun, and having more responsibility.

Score Point 2

The writer is forced to take care of her father after he breaks his leg and this, to her surprise, does not ruin her summer vacation. The development of the story is minimal, and the few details that the writer includes keep the narrative at a surface level. Some of the details the student presents are not responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. For example, the student chooses to include many details about discovering that her father is hurt and needs help, but the details about taking care of her father are only superficially presented. However, there is some logical movement through the narrative, and the writer is able to convey some sense of her story. In addition, the writer demonstrates an appropriate control of conventions. Overall, this response represents a basic writing performance.

3:2:1! BLASTOFF!!! Nate was strapped in the rocket. Everything around him shook as they blasted off into space as fast as lightning. He looks over next to him is seated R2CPO. The space place gave him a robot to keep him company as they explored space for the next year. Nate knew he had to take care of the robot so he looked him over and over as they race up into space. The robot was turned off right now. Nate had to make sure to wash his copper skin so when they came home the space people would know that he took care of him. 6 months into the journey R2 breaks down, Nate freaked. Then Nate called the people back down on Earth to help him. "Help!" He screamed. Then they told him to reach down into R2's stomach to flip a switch. So he did. Then R2 wakes up. Everything was fine from then on. AND R2 helped Nate with all his experiments.

Score Point 2

In this imaginative third-person narrative, the student creates a tale about an astronaut named Nate taking care of a robot called R2CPO. The development of the story line is minimal because the student glosses over some information and does not take time to develop Nate's character or the inherent conflict that he faces. In addition, the student's word choice is general in places, which hinders the overall quality of the piece. For all these reasons, the story represents a basic writing performance.

As a little boy I wanted a dog
I begged and begged until I received
a dog on my tenth birthday. I loved my
dog. I played with him, talked to him,
bathed him, my dog was my friend.
As I got older I stopped playing
with him, but I talked to him all
the time I use to call him my
son and I was his daddy. I did
my homework in the backyard to be
close to him. I remember during the
summer I would put shampoo on
him and get the hose and water
him down for a quick bath. Now
I am fifteen and I don't do that
anymore, he is getting old. I think
I will start back from now
on just so I can spend some
time with him before God takes
him away from me plus it is
the right thing to do. I do
miss those times and I always
will. I love you, King and you will
always be the dog that I prayed
and begged for, love

Brian

Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance, the student focuses on the relationship between him and his dog. The writer's narrative strategy is only somewhat suited to the purpose of literary writing. Overall, there is some movement through time, but this movement would have been stronger if the student would have written about a specific time he took care of King. The student is able to establish a wistful tone through word choice that conveys his regret over not spending as much time with King as he would have liked. Although the writer provides some details that help to develop the relationship between him and his dog, other details are glossed over and require further development. In addition, sentence boundary problems affect the overall quality of the response.

It was 2003, I was 6 years old and at that age you don't have much responsibilities. I wanted more responsibilities to make me a more productive person. The new responsibility that I always wanted was a dog. It didn't matter what type of dog, I just wanted one because it was always my dream to have one. I always asked my mom for a puppy but she could never find the right one.

"Come on, we need to go to Walmart to get groceries," my mom said. We get to Walmart, and as I walk up to the automatic doors of Walmart, I see a cage. When I went to see what was in the cage it was a dog and a lady said she was giving him away for free.

As time went by all I did was take care of my new dog whether it was by feeding, bathing, walking, or even clean up after my dog. Even now I still take care of my dog 9 years later. ☺

Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance, the narrator goes to WalMart with her mom to get groceries but comes home with the dog of her dreams. The writer's presentation of the story is somewhat inconsistent. Wordiness at the beginning slows down the logical movement of the story line (you don't have much responsibilities; I wanted more responsibilities; The new responsibility I always wanted). Although this wordiness does not completely stall the progression of the story, the details added by the writer are too few and general to contribute more than marginally to character development, conflict, or point of view. Because of slow progression and surface-level development, this writer demonstrates only a limited understanding of the literary writing task.

Score Point 3

The story represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the story is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses narrative strategies or literary devices that are adequately suited to the literary task. The writer is able to clearly convey the story.
- ❑ Most details contribute to the effectiveness of the story. The writer focuses on a specific character, event, or idea and generally sustains that focus. The story is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- ❑ The writer's presentation of the story is adequately controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the logical movement of the story.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ Specific details add some substance to the story. For the most part, these details contribute to key literary elements such as character development, conflict, and point of view.
- ❑ The story reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the story in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the literary writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is, for the most part, specific and concrete. It reflects an awareness of the literary purpose. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the story.
- ❑ Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the story.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the story.

I was so excited, it had been a whole month since I had seen grandma and grandpa and we were finally on our way to their house. Grandpa and I were close and there was nothing I enjoyed more than spending time with him. As we arrived everything seemed down. The house just didn't have the spunk it had always had before. I could tell that something wasn't right. As I walked into the living room my heart sank. Grandpa was lying in a hospital bed, hooked up to all sorts of little gadgets. Grandma and grandpa told me to sit down and they explained how grandpa was very sick and how he would love it if I would stay with them for the summer. Of course, I didn't hesitate one bit. I knew his time was limited and I wanted to spend every second I could with him. The next four months were the four most amazing months of my life. Everyday I took care of grandpa. Anything he needed, I did it. He always told me that just being there was help enough. As the months passed his health worsened. Those last days, when he was at his worst, I will always know that I was the one that helped him, just by being there.

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory writing performance, the student focuses on the sad surprise of finding her grandfather severely ill on what should have been a routine family visit. Specific details and word choice, such as “The house just didn’t have the spunk” and “hooked up to all sorts of little gadgets,” add some substance. The story reflects some thoughtfulness because the writer uses internal conflict and point of view to convey her deeply-felt need to help take care of her grandfather “just by being there” for the entire summer. Transitions are meaningful, and the story progresses logically from the narrator’s initial visit to the difficult final days. In addition, the overall strength of conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the story.

It was the bright morning of the birthday of beautiful Princess Aria. She lived in a gorgeous white castle with her loving mother, Queen Liz. They were the only two who still lived through the war that her two older brothers and father fought in. It had only been a few months since the passing, but they had survived because they had taken care of each other.

Princess Aria woke up in a great mood and started singing with joy. In the middle of her song Queen Liz opened the door with a huge smile on her face. She hadn't seen Aria so happy in such a long time. Queen Liz grabbed Aria's hands, slipped a box into them, smiled and said "Happy birthday, lovely."

Aria opened the box, the box was filled with her mother's dangly diamond earrings. She already knew she was wearing them to her party tonight. She didn't let these diamonds out of her sight. She carried them in the satchel that her father gave her right before he left. She thought about her father and knew she would always take good care of them in remembrance of the care her parents had given her.

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory writing performance, the student tells the imaginative story of Princess Aria and her mother taking care of each other after Aria's father and brothers were killed in a war. The story is generally focused on Aria's birthday and her mother's gift of earrings that Aria cares for out of remembrance for her father. The writer's presentation of the story is generally controlled. Although most details are related to the story, they only add some substance to it. A tighter focus would be needed to achieve a higher score point.

Life on the Farm

When we first got the farm I was so excited. I would wake up at four and go feed the pigs, the chickens, the cows, and the donkeys. Last I would go in the barn and hang out with the horses. I would right songs and sing to them. I think they enjoyed it. It was my responsibility to take care of all these animals. One day, I was in a bad mood and woke up late. My mom started yelling at me. She was saying something about how I need to hurry and feed the animals before its too late and miss the bus. I told her I didn't care about the animals anymore then left. When I got home from school, she sat me down and told me that I'm going to have bad days like I did that morning, but that dosen't mean I don't have to do my responsabilitys. She told me that those animals have feelings and if I dont really love them then we need to get rid of them. I told her that that wouldn't have to happen. I said sorry then ran out to the hourses. I sang them my songs and they stood and listioned. I feel bad for what I said, even if I didn't mean it. Living on the farm has taught me responsibility, and I wouldn't want it any other way.

Score Point 3

Caring for a variety of animals on a farm allows the writer to learn a valuable lesson about responsibility. Specific and pertinent details describe a pivotal moment when the narrator shirks responsibility, building his character and developing the conflict of the story. The writer's reflections add some substance to the story (I think they enjoyed it. I feel bad for what I said, even if I didn't mean it.). Transitions could be stronger, but the sentence-to-sentence connections support the logical movement of the story. Although there are some spelling errors, they do not disrupt the fluency of the writing or affect the clarity of the story. Overall, the conventions in this satisfactory writing performance are adequately controlled.

It was a glorious day at Tranquil Nursing Home. James, a young man who worked there a little over a year built a strong bond with an elderly woman named Rose. Rose was supposed to pass away eight months ago, but she is still hanging on. Rose always had a smile on her face no matter what. James was Rose's care taker.

One day Rose was telling James a story like she always does when he noticed a shortness of breath. James was worried, because he has been taken care of Rose for so long, and he couldn't imagine anything bad ever happening to her.

The ambulance was called to take Rose to the hospital. When they got there the doctors diagnosed Rose with lung cancer. They said that the lung cancer was only in the early stages, so with some treatment she would be better. Rose thanked James over and over. Rose said to James, "Thank you! I'm so grateful to have such an amazing care-taker like you."

James felt amazing feeling like he did something right. Rose returned to the nursing home a few months later. She was wheeled into the room when she saw James waiting by her bed. She started tearing up with tears of happiness. Their bond has never been stronger.

Score Point 3

The writer utilizes third-person point of view to tell the story of James and Rose. The consistent use of this point of view allows the writer to clearly convey the story. Specific details about the relationship between James and Rose provide background information that affects the series of events that follow. These details also add some substance to the piece by contributing to character development and conflict. In addition, word choice is mostly specific, and the varied sentences are adequately controlled. In spite of these strengths, the writer repeats information, specifically when Rose is grateful for James's help, which affects the logical movement of the story. Overall, this story represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Score Point 4

The story represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The form or structure of the story is appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses narrative strategies or literary devices that are particularly well suited to the literary task. The writer is able to skillfully convey the story.
- ❑ All details contribute to the effectiveness of the story. The writer focuses on a specific character, event, or idea and sustains that focus, strengthening the unity and coherence of the story.
- ❑ The writer's presentation of the story is well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the logical movement of the story.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ Specific, well-chosen details add substance to the story. These details contribute significantly to key literary elements such as character development, conflict, and point of view.
- ❑ The story is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may respond to the prompt from an unusual perspective, may use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, or may connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the story in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the literary writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is vivid and expressive. It reflects a keen awareness of the literary purpose. The word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the story.
- ❑ Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the story.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the story. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the story.

"MOO!" THE COW WENT AS AIDEN WALKED THROUGH THE BARN DOOR. IT WAS 5:45 A.M. AIDEN HAD TO GET HIS CHORES DONE BEFORE 6:30, WHEN HE HAD TO GET READY FOR SCHOOL. THAT MEANT, HE HAD TO TEND TO JESSIE'S NEEDS, JESSIE WAS HIS BABY COW, AND SHE WAS A WILD ONE.

"IT SEEMS TO ME, YOU STAYED UP ALL NIGHT TRYING TO PREPARE THE BIGGEST MESS FOR ME TO CLEAN UP THIS MORNING." AIDEN SCOLDED JESSIE PLAYFULLY. "NOW WHERE DO I START?" AIDEN THOUGHT TO HIMSELF. "MOO!" JESSIE SAID AS SHE NODDED HER HEAD TOWARD THE PILE OF POO ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE BARN. "YOU READ MY MIND! THANK YOU JESSIE! YOU'RE AMAZING." AIDEN EXCLAIMED. ALTHOUGH JESSIE WAS A HASSLE, AIDEN LOVED HER. AT TIMES SHE WAS THE ONLY THING HE COULD COUNT ON - AIDEN GOT DONE WITH HIS DUTY AND HEADED ON INTO THE HOUSE TO GET READY FOR SCHOOL.

"AIDEN! HURRY! YOUR BUS IS HERE!" MOTHER EXCLAIMED. "COMING! MO!" AIDEN REPLIED. AIDEN DASHED DOWNSTAIRS LIKE A CHEETAH AND RAN THROUGH THE DOOR. HE BOARDED THE BUS AND HEARD THE WHISPERS "HE SMELLS LIKE COW POO!" "HIS CLOTHES ARE DIRTY." "HE'S SUCH A LOSER!" "Ugh, JUST LET ME GO ON WITH THE DAY SO I CAN COME HOME AND BE WITH JESSIE. AT LEAST SHE CARES." AIDEN MUMBLED.

"I CARE FOR JESSIE SO MUCH." AIDEN THOUGHT TO HIMSELF. "SHE IS MY BEST FRIEND. SHE LISTENS, SHE CARES. SHE LOVES ME FOR WHO I AM."

Score Point 4

Just the thought of returning each day to a beloved calf's comforting "Moo" is enough to insulate a young boy from the unkind remarks of unsympathetic schoolchildren. From the beginning, the writer of this accomplished third-person narrative contributes to character development by establishing the relationship of two unlikely best friends and developing this relationship through playful dialogue. There is a logical movement to the story, and well-chosen details suggest that the calf is, in fact, the one nurturing Aiden. The presentation is thoughtful and engaging, and the tight focus on one experience makes this an accomplished writing performance.

Beautiful green leaves bask in the post-apocalyptic sunlight. A small stem holds the leaves with care and a gentle strength. The dirt that holds its roots, has been freshly fertilized with the rotting organic material of some unknown creature I found outside my desert hut. This plant, is the most precious thing on Earth. It is the only plant on Earth. My duty and sole purpose in life is to make sure it grows into what ever it shall grow into.

The question of how I breath may emerge, and to answer that question would be to go into great detail of how the tanks on my back filter the air I breath and send oxygen to my mask, but I wouldn't know how it works, I just wear it. It has been some years since a great war ravaged the surface of my planet. Almost every living thing is dead. The oceans still exist, rain still falls, but nothing swims, nothing grows.

Nothing grows but this plant. Most of my life has been in a bomb shelter, so I couldn't plant it there, no sunlight. After I left the shelter, I quickly planted the seed in a specialized chamber. Then a few weeks of almost completely tested patience, the plant began to sprout.

This plant is the last hope for any sort of life on this planet. Me caring for it is a small task, but the importance of this quickly magnifies the challenge into caring for it. As I age, so will the plant, and its seeds bear new children and new life, my race, the human race, perishes slowly with each and every breath I take.

Score Point 4

The writer of this descriptive first-person narrative creates a complex story set in a waning post-apocalyptic world where any hopes for the future lay in the narrator's ability to protect a meager, solitary plant. The tone is consistently dismal and desperate. Pertinent details and expressive word choice complement each other, strongly illustrating the contrasts between the plant's physical beauty and its tender strength that will bear the burden of saving the entire world from death. True to this type of genre, the story is organized somewhat like a scientific diary or report. The presentation of the story is well controlled and logical because the student uses strong sentence-to-sentence and paragraph-to-paragraph transitions. The unity and coherence of this accomplished writing performance are strong and show that the student is able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the literary writing task.

"It's rude to stare," I gumbled at Eggbert, reminding him of his manners. This, of course, provoked no response from him; it did, however, remind me that talking to a lifeless egg wasn't generally considered normal. Taking care of said egg wasn't something I considered normal either, but Mr. Inane (or Mr. Ingram as the rest of the school called him) had somehow gotten this egg-caring idea stuck inside his thick skull.

I could still see Eggbert's grin when I left the house with him in my hand. I didn't have to even look at him to know the little monster had that stupid smirk painted on his face, mocking me like he knew I didn't even have anywhere to go from here. There were no friends to go hang out with, no car to drive anywhere with, and I had not miraculously gotten a boyfriend after my seventeen years of not having one.

"I am just going for a productive walk," I snapped at him, stressing the word productive. I wanted to slap myself after the words were out of my mouth because I had promised myself I wouldn't talk to the lifeless egg anymore.

The rest of the walk was spent without either of us talking. I didn't talk because I was biting my tongue the whole way; Eggbert didn't talk because he was Eggbert.

When we got home, I collapsed on the couch (being ever so mindful of Eggbert, of course). "This isn't fair," I groaned into the pillows. I hated being a single parent for this egg. Everytime I looked at him, I was reminded that I really was single, not just in the project but in real life as well.

I could hear my mom moving around in the kitchen and remembered that my mom had raised me on her own when she was still a teen. Looking at Eggbert, I realized that she hadn't gotten the chance to grow up and learn what to do before she had been forced to learn as she went. I, however, did have that chance.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer characterizes the complicated relationship the narrator develops with the beneficiary of her care, a fragile egg she names Eggbert. Maintaining a humorous tone throughout, the writer skillfully develops her main characters. In the true spirit of the task, she endows the egg with all the human attributes of a young child. Using specific, well-chosen details, the writer tightly focuses the piece and maintains a consistent first-person point of view. The story moves logically from beginning to end. The presentation of this story is well controlled because the writer includes meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections. The writer's vivid and expressive word choice is conveyed through dialogue, whimsical anecdotes, and the musings of the narrator. All details contribute to the effectiveness of the story in this accomplished writing performance.

Worn, old hands gently caress every wooden surface of the grand old house. Eagerly she pitter patters through its rooms, returning momentarily to childhood, when she met the beach house. Everything is as it should be, with the halls smelling of the Gardenia tree that stands beautifully outside the grand living room. She knows that she has to leave this house she has cared for all her life, but for now it's just her, the house, and memory lane.

Backtracking seventy-nine years, to her eighth birthday, she can still hear her mom announcing their arrival to their new beach house. Her pig tails are swinging freely as she runs to its steps, and her small mouth is a perfect "O" shape. From the moment she laid eyes on this majestic place, she knew she had to care for it. This was her home now; she would keep it clean and lovely as the first day.

The old lady chuckles softly as she remembers her adamant rules that her brother never seemed to follow. He slammed the doors and banged the walls, all while she followed angrily behind him, making sure no real harm was done. Talking to it softly, she'd clean its windows daily, and make sure the Gardenia tree was always trimmed. For her sixteenth birthday, she gave the house a garden that only added to its loveliness.

Shutting the door softly, she stepped outside, and went to sit by the Gardenia tree. Its drooping leaves settled over her puff of white hair. She sighed, and gently patted the nearby wall of the house. It was time for goodbye. Tenderly she began to sing to, her home, her peace, and her everlasting friend.

Score Point 4

In this descriptive story, an elderly woman leaves the family beach house for a final time, saying goodbye to an "everlasting friend," the keeper of her childhood memories. A wealth of expressive and vivid language helps the reader gain access to both character and conflict. A bittersweet and nostalgic tone is established at the beginning and carried through to the end when the protagonist says goodbye to the house one last time. The gentle embrace of the house by twisted hands, the motion of sagging leaves, and the reminiscent fragrance of the gardenia evoke the sweet sorrow of parting. The writer flashes back to the first time the main character sees the house. This flashback is handled well because the reader is never confused as to which time period the narrative currently occupies. This is a thoughtful story with a mature perspective in which all details contribute significantly. In addition, a consistent command of conventions enriches the quality and clarity of the story.