



English II Reading

Single Selection Scoring Guide April 2013

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

from The Custom of the Country

by Edith Wharton

- 1 In the great high-ceilinged library of a private *hôtel*¹ overlooking one of the new quarters of Paris, Paul Marvell stood listlessly gazing out into the twilight.
- 2 The trees were budding symmetrically along the avenue below; and Paul, looking down, saw, between windows and tree-tops, a pair of tall iron gates with gilt ornaments, the marble curb of a semi-circular drive, and bands of spring flowers set in turf. He was now a big boy of nearly nine, who went to a fashionable private school, and he had come home that day for the Easter holidays. He had not been back since Christmas, and it was the first time he had seen the new *hôtel* which his step-father had bought, and in which Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt had hastily established themselves, a few weeks earlier, on their return from a flying trip to America. They were always coming and going; during the two years since their marriage they had been perpetually dashing over to New York and back, or rushing down to Rome or up to the Engadine: Paul never knew where they were except when a telegram announced that they were going somewhere else. He did not even know that there was any method of communication between mothers and sons less laconic than that of the electric wire; and once, when a boy at school asked him if his mother often wrote, he had answered in all sincerity: "Oh yes—I got a telegram last week."
- 3 He had been almost sure—as sure as he ever was of anything—that he should find her at home when he arrived; but a message (for she hadn't had time to telegraph) apprised him that she and Mr. Moffatt had run down to Deauville to look at a house they thought of hiring for the summer; they were taking an early train back, and would be at home for dinner—were in fact having a lot of people to dine.
- 4 It was just what he ought to have expected, and had been used to ever since he could remember; and generally he didn't mind much, especially since his mother had become Mrs. Moffatt, and the father he had been most used to, and liked best, had abruptly disappeared from his life. But the new *hôtel* was big and strange, and his own room, in which there was not a toy or a book, or one of his dear battered relics (none of the new servants—they were always new—could find his things, or think where they had been put), seemed the loneliest spot in the whole house. He had gone up there after his solitary luncheon, served in the immense marble dining room by a footman on the same scale, and had tried to occupy himself with pasting postcards into his album; but the newness and sumptuousness of the room

¹A *hôtel* is a city mansion of a person of rank or wealth.

embarrassed him—the white fur rugs and brocade chairs seemed maliciously on the watch for smears and ink-spots—and after a while he pushed the album aside and began to roam through the house.

5 He went to all the rooms in turn: his mother's first, the wonderful lacy bedroom, all pale silks and velvets, artful mirrors and veiled lamps, and the boudoir as big as a drawing-room, with pictures he would have liked to know about, and tables and cabinets holding things he was afraid to touch. Mr. Moffatt's rooms came next. They were soberer and darker, but as big and splendid; and in the bedroom, on the brown wall, hung a single picture—the portrait of a boy in grey velvet—that interested Paul most of all. The boy's hand rested on the head of a big dog, and he looked infinitely noble and charming, and yet (in spite of the dog) so sad and lonely that he too might have come home that very day to a strange house in which none of his old things could be found.

6 From these rooms Paul wandered downstairs again. The library attracted him most: there were rows and rows of books, bound in dim browns and golds, and old faded reds as rich as velvet: they all looked as if they might have had stories in them as splendid as their bindings. But the bookcases were closed with gilt trellising, and when Paul reached up to open one, a servant told him that Mr. Moffatt's secretary kept them locked because the books were too valuable to be taken down. This seemed to make the library as strange as the rest of the house, and he passed on to the ballroom at the back. Through its closed doors he heard a sound of hammering, and when he tried the door-handle a servant passing with a tray-full of glasses told him that "they" hadn't finished, and wouldn't let anybody in.

7 The mysterious pronoun somehow increased Paul's sense of isolation, and he went on to the drawing rooms, steering his way prudently between the gold armchairs and shining tables, and wondering whether the wigged and corseleted heroes on the walls represented Mr. Moffatt's ancestors, and why, if they did, he looked so little like them. The dining room beyond was more amusing, because busy servants were already laying the long table. It was too early for the florist, and the center of the table was empty, but down the sides were gold baskets heaped with pulpy summer fruits—figs, strawberries and big blushing nectarines. Between them stood crystal decanters with red and yellow wine, and little dishes full of sweets; and against the walls were sideboards with great pieces of gold and silver, ewers and urns and branching candelabra, which sprinkled the green marble walls with starlike reflections.

8 After a while he grew tired of watching the coming and going of white-sleeved footmen, and of listening to the butler's vociferated orders, and strayed back into the library. The habit of solitude had given him a passion for the printed page, and if he could have found a book anywhere—any kind of a book—he would have forgotten the long hours and the empty house. But the tables in the library held only massive unused inkstands and immense immaculate blotters: not a single volume had slipped its golden prison.

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English II Reading

Single Selection

How would you describe Paul in the excerpt from *The Custom of the Country*? 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.

The main character in from the Custom of the country "Paul". To me his ~~is~~ a person that travels a lot. He goes to Rome, New York & Engadine. Hes a buisness man. He owns a hotels. "He had not been back since Christmas, and it was the first time he had seen the new hôtel which his step-father had bought."

Score Point 0

The student presents an idea that is incorrect because it is not based on the selection.

In the custom of the country. "The mysterious pronoun somehow increased Paul's sense of isolation and he went on to the drawing rooms, steering his way proudly the gold armchairs."

Score Point 0

The student provides textual evidence that could support a reasonable idea; however, the student does not present an idea. Therefore, this response indicates a very limited reading performance.

It talks about the culture and
the custom country in the story
and its about culture. And I think
that's why some countries have culture
on them because they need some kind
of legacy or something.

Score Point 0

The student offers an idea that does not answer the question asked. Therefore, this response indicates a very limited reading performance.

Paul is a nine year old who goes to a private school,
"He was now a big boy of nine, who went to a
fashionable private school."

Score Point 0

This response is insufficient because no idea is present. Although there appears to be an idea, it cannot be considered an answer to the question asked because the presented idea merely "echoes" the text evidence provided.

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.

Paul is a nine year old boy, that just wants to see his mom and spend time with her on his easter break as it says in paragraph 2.

Score Point 1

The student presents the reasonable idea that Paul wants to spend Easter with his mother. However, the student does not provide any textual evidence to support the idea. Therefore, this response is only partially sufficient.

I would describe Paul from the excerpt of "The Custom of the Country" as lonely, because he was by himself, in a huge place. He wondered around looking for something to do, but basically everything was off-limits. I also think he is lonely because there is no one in his life whom he is superbly close with, because he has never known anything else, though, he tolerates his loneliness.

Score Point 1

The student offers the reasonable idea that Paul is lonely because there is no one in his life with whom he is truly close. Although the student attempts to provide textual evidence, it is flawed because it is only a general reference to the text.

Paul was a good kid "He went to all the rooms in turn: his mother's first, the wonderful lacy bedroom, all pure silks and velvets, artful mirrors and veiled lamps, and the boudoir as big as a drawing-room, with pictures he would liked to know about, and topes and cabinets holding things he was afraid to touch"

Score Point 1

The student offers the somewhat vague idea that Paul is a good kid. Although textual evidence is provided, the idea needs more explanation or specificity. Therefore, this response is only partially sufficient.

He was a boy that was sent away to a school when his mother had remarried. They really never worried about him. He was lonely, probably even sad that nothing was ready for his return.
"So sad and lonely."

Score Point 1

The student offers the reasonable idea that Paul is lonely because nothing was ready for his return. However, the textual evidence is flawed because it is used inappropriately and wrongly manipulates the meaning of the text. The student provides a direct quotation from paragraph 5; however, this quotation refers to the boy in the painting, not Paul.

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.

Paul from "The Custom of the Country" seemed very lonely and melancholic. "He feels like the boy in the painting, "So sad and lonely that he too might have come home that very day to a strange house in which none of his old things could be found".

Score Point 2

The student offers the reasonable idea that Paul seems lonely and full of melancholy and further explains it by comparing Paul's circumstances to that of the boy in the painting. She supports this idea with relevant textual evidence from paragraph 5. This response represents a satisfactory reading performance.

I would describe Paul as curious. "He went to all the rooms in turn. "... wondering whether the ... heroes on the walls represented Mr. Moffat's ancestors, and why, if they did, he looked so little like them."

Score Point 2

The student offers the reasonable idea that Paul is curious. Direct quotations are provided to support the idea, making this a sufficient response.

I would describe paul in the excerpt
From "The custom of the country" that he
loves books and likes to read in the
story "The library attracted him the most:
there were rows and rows of books."

Score Point 2

The student presents the reasonable idea that Paul loves books and likes to read. A direct quotation is provided to support the idea, indicating a satisfactory reading performance.

I would describe Paul as neglected. "Mr. and Mrs.
Moffatt... were always coming and going... Paul never
knew where they were except when a telegram announced
that they were going somewhere else." Paul's parents
are always taking trips without him and almost
never contact him.

Score Point 2

In this sufficient response the student offers the reasonable idea that Paul is neglected by his mother and stepfather. The student provides accurate and relevant text evidence to support the idea, making this a sufficient response.

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 Custom of the Country", Paul can be described as lonely, and neglected. He does not get to see his family much ("Paul never knew where they were going except when a telegram announced that they were going somewhere else") and does not have a prevalent father figure in his life ("the father he had been most used to, and liked best, had abruptly disappeared from his life"). He finds the mansion isolating and lonely ("...the new hotel was big and strange, and his own room... seemed the loneliest spot in the house").

Score Point 3

The student presents the idea that Paul is lonely and neglected and does not get to see his family much. The idea is strengthened by a perceptive explanation of how he is affected by these circumstances. Well-chosen text evidence strongly supports the idea; therefore, this response indicates an accomplished reading performance.

Paul can be described as an observing person. That is because whenever he sees something like a picture or just a scene in general, he would look at it closely and figure something out of it that can relate to him. "So sad and lonely that he too might have come home that very day to a strange house in which none of his old things could be found" Paul related the picture to his own life here. By that you can tell Paul is very observing person.

Score Point 3

The student presents the perceptive idea that Paul is an observant person because he relates the things he sees to himself. Well-chosen textual evidence is provided to strongly support the validity of the idea. Overall, the combination of the idea and the text evidence demonstrates a deep understanding of the text.

Paul from "The Custom of the Country" is a very matured 9-year-old who has little or no love and care from his mother. He doesn't live at home with his mom because he goes to "... a fashionable private school..." and "... had not been back since Christmas..." They communicate by a "... telegram..." and they didn't communicate often. Paul is very lonely that his "... habit of solitude had given him a passion for..." "reading."

Score Point 3

In this exemplary response the student offers an idea that reflects an awareness of the complexities of the selection. Overall, the direct quotations strongly support why Paul feels so lonely, demonstrating an accomplished reading performance.

Paul is a boy who has grown accustomed to the lonely life he lives, but does not conform to high society's unreasonable opinions. He feels "embarrassed" by the "sumptuousness" of the "white fur rugs and brocade chairs." He thinks books that are "too valuable to be taken down" useless. His "sense of isolation" is not muted by the beauty of "gold baskets... crystal decanters... little dishes full of sweets... and branching candelabra." The only comfort he finds from his "habit of solitude" is his "passion for the printed page." Paul sadly realizes material things are no substitute for the love and affection every child needs.

Score Point 3

The student offers a perceptive idea and develops a coherent explanation of how Paul has become accustomed to a lonely life. Overall, the text evidence strongly supports the validity of the idea, and the student shows a deep understanding of the text in this accomplished reading performance.