

WY-TOPP ELA EXEMPLARS

Grade 7



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2.0 Overview

The WY-TOPP ELA assessment includes a writing component in grades 5, 7, and 9. Each writing task contains one or more passages related to a prompt. Students read the passages and write a response to the prompt, using evidence from the texts to support their ideas. Students do not answer comprehension questions about the passages before responding.

This document provides examples of Grade 7 student responses to a WY-TOPP ELA writing task and illustrates how responses are scored using the WY-TOPP writing rubric.

3.0 Passages & Prompt

3.1 Passage 1

The Bread Baker's Apprentice

by Charles Capaldi

1 At 3 o'clock in the morning, the . . . bell rang three times, even though the whole French village was fast asleep, shutters closed against the night air. A single street lamp flickered in front of the bakery. I rubbed the sleep from my eyes, took a deep breath, and knocked at the door. Having volunteered as the baker's assistant, I hoped to uncover the secrets of French bread baking before returning to the United States. Well, I didn't exactly volunteer . . . I begged. Monsieur le Boulanger reluctantly agreed, grumbling that it was impossible to learn how to bake good bread in just a few days.

2 "Be here at 3 o'clock in the morning," he said, more as a challenge than a command. "We'll see how you hold up."

3 So here I was, Monsieur, in his mitron, looking surprised to see me as he opened the door.

4 "Good. You got here on time—that's a start. Drink this," he said, pouring me a traditional bowl of hot chocolate. "We start in 45 minutes."

5 The wood-fired oven, still hot from the previous day's baking, needed a quick burst of heat to come up to temperature. A cast-iron cone directed the flames from one side of the baking chamber to the other. Monsieur checked on the oven repeatedly as we sipped from our bowls. I soon found myself wrapped in a white apron—a note pad tucked in my waistband, ready to record Monsieur's bread-making secrets should he decide to spill them.

6 As the bell of the village . . . struck 4 a.m., I lost my first name as if by magic and became Fiston. . . .

7 "Fiston, carry the sacks of flour [each weighing a hefty 50 pounds] up the ladder and pile them next to the workbench!"

8 "Fiston, sweep the front end of the bakery!"

9 "Fiston, stack the baskets that hold the baked bread!"

10 "Fiston, take out the trash, bring in more wood, bring me a load of rising dough. . . ."

11 The sourdough loaves, shaped the night before, had been rising for 12 hours and were ready to be baked. Each oven-load required another armload of inch-thick branches bundled by the back door. I fed them into the oven, allowing the heat to distribute itself evenly throughout the masonry. There were no dials, no fancy equipment, not even a thermometer. Monsieur tested the temperature with his closed fist. When he wasn't looking, I tried it and quickly singed my hand. . . .

12 Batches of bread were held overnight in the cooler temperatures near the back door. I wheeled in another towering cart of loaves to finish rising in the warm glow of the oven. Using a small wooden plank, Monsieur taught me to transfer the loaves from their rising baskets to a narrow stretcher covered in a canvas band. The stretcher was inserted into the mouth of the oven and pulled back as the canvas rotated, depositing 30 loaves at a time, right onto the hot hearth.

13 The bread was baked to golden brown perfection, one batch after another. Monsieur handed me a wooden peel.

14 "Plus vite, plus vite! Faster! Faster!" he yelled from the bench where he was shaping loaves. "Take the loaves out and get them into the cooling baskets BEFORE they are too dark."

15 Beads of sweat broke out on my forehead as I pulled hot loaves from the gaping maw of the oven. As it cooled, the sourdough snapped, crackled, and popped, although what it was saying totally escaped me.

16 By 6 a.m., the bread was baked and moved to the front of the bakery where customers could buy it. Monsieur clapped me on the shoulder and a puff of flour filled the air. . . .

17 By 7 a.m., the bakery was open for business. Baskets of loaves were stacked on shelves behind the counter. A table was piled high with croissants. While Madame, the baker's wife, ran the storefront, Monsieur

delivered his loaves around town and I cleaned the bakery. Madame closed the bakery for lunch at 11 a.m. and then served us a hearty meal upstairs in their living quarters. As Monsieur snoozed in his chair, I quietly snuck back downstairs, hoping to write down anything I could remember.

3.2 Passage 2

The Borealis Eclipse

by Cathryn Free

1 “Are you ready, Jedidiah?”

2 “Yes, sir!”

3 “Then fire up those engines!” Professor Valgorium fluttered down the ladder from the main deck and stood behind the helm. His eyes barely peeked over it, and his top hat sat askew.

4 Jedidiah ran to the thrusters, grabbed the handle, and heaved down with all his might. A loud grinding sound filled the air.

5 The engine coughed.

6 It sputtered.

7 Then roared as the giant mechanical wings flapped to life. With a jolt, the flying machine lifted into the air.

8 “It works!” shouted Jedidiah, nearly spitting out the gum he was always chewing. The massive balloon above them lifted up, as the wings provided thrust and speed. The ground dwindled beneath them.

9 “It works!” The professor squeaked and tumbled over in excitement. The steering wheel spun out of control, and Jedidiah rushed over to stop it.

10 “The Borealis Eclipse is up and ready for business!” squealed the Professor, spinning in circles like a turtle on its back.

11 Jedidiah grinned and turned the helm one degree to the left. Professor Valgorium had always been excitable, ever since Jedidiah had known him, but he had never seen the professor this exhilarated.

12 London shrunk down to a model size, the spires of the great city standing up like toothpicks in the sky. Smoke rose from chimneys in little gray puffs.

13 The sky was dappled with bright sunshine and puffy white clouds. They soared through the air, next to birds who squawked in surprise. The engine hummed, and the wind tugged at the ropes that tied the giant balloon to the main deck.

14 Professor Valgorium sprang back to his feet. His top hat toppled to one side. “This is it, Jedidiah! This is the most magnificent thing the world has ever seen!” He ran to the stern of the ship, spread out his short, stubby arms, and yelled, “What a time to be alive!”

15 Jedidiah laughed. He kept his hands on the wheel, adjusting according to the compass mounted on the dash in front of the massive helm.

16 The helm was salvaged from an old steamer ship. Most of the parts of the machine had been pieced together from retired ocean liners, junked steam engine trains, and even old gas lines that were being torn up and replaced with power lines for electric lights. As his apprentice and ward, Jedidiah had spent the last year and a half constructing this monstrous machine alongside Professor Valgorium. This moment was stupendous.

17 Jedidiah’s mouth hurt from smiling so much.

18 “Turn her north!” Professor Valgorium bellowed, waving his arms like a windmill.

19 Jedidiah nodded and slowly spun the helm, tick by tick.

20 The flying machine obeyed and tipped its nose to the right, heading north, away from the city.

21 They soared through the air, coasting like feathers on the wind. Jedidiah shut his eyes and drew in a deep, satisfied breath.

22 Then the Borealis Eclipse lurched.

23 Jedidiah stumbled. He slammed into the helm. The machine jerked.

24 Professor Valgorium shrieked as he fell back down the steps from the stern onto the main deck.

- 25 “What was that?” he cried.
- 26 Jedidiah shook his head and inspected the gauges on the dash. Everything was normal except . . .
- 27 “Professor!” he shouted.
- 28 Professor Valgorium scurried over to Jedidiah, who pointed at the fuel gauge. The little golden arrow, which had been on full, was dropping quickly.
- 29 Too quickly.
- 30 “We’re running out of fuel!” Jedidiah nearly choked on his chewing gum.
- 31 “Great Scott!” Professor Valgorium’s hat toppled over again. “How can that be?”
- 32 The machine lurched, dropping several feet in altitude. Jedidiah’s stomach sprung into his throat. “We’re losing too much fuel!”
- 33 “There’s an extra tank of petrol under the deck on the starboard side.” Professor Valgorium took the helm. “I’ll take us back to London. You fill up the tank!”
- 34 Jedidiah sprinted over the deck and yanked on the metal ring of a trapdoor. Underneath was a hold filled with spare parts, stacks of folded canvas, and a large, heavy can of petrol.
- 35 Jedidiah heaved the can up and lugged it over to the engine.
- 36 The sound of the engine roared in his ears as he unscrewed the top of the fuel tank with shaking hands.
- 37 Steady now! he told himself.
- 38 He poured petrol into the tank, glug after glug, until the entire can was empty.
- 39 “Done!” he shouted to Professor Valgorium.
- 40 The engine hummed pleasantly again. Relief washed over Jedidiah, as he sank against the fuel tank.

3.3 Prompt

You have read the excerpts from “The Bread Baker’s Apprentice” and “The Borealis Eclipse.” Think about the teaching methods Monsieur le Boulanger and Professor Valgorium use.

Write an essay in which you explain the similarities and differences in how Monsieur le Boulanger and Professor Valgorium teach their apprentices. Use details from both passages to support your essay.

4.0 Reading ECR Informative and Opinion/Argumentative Writing Rubric (Grades 3-10)

4.1 Reading Comprehension and Written Expression

	4	3	2	1	0
Reading Comprehension and Written Expression	The student response to the prompt is characterized by all or most of these criteria: • shows full comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and inferentially in the passage by providing an accurate explanation (G3) or analysis (G4–10) • responds to the prompt and provides effective and complete development of the claim or topic that is consistently appropriate to task, purpose, and audience • uses clear reasoning supported by appropriate text-based evidence in development of the claim or topic • uses appropriate organization, with clear and coherent writing • establishes and maintains an effective style	The student response to the prompt is characterized by all or most of these criteria: • shows comprehension of ideas stated explicitly or inferentially in the passage by providing a mostly accurate explanation (G3) or analysis (G4–10) • responds to the prompt and provides mostly complete development of the claim or topic that is mostly appropriate to task, purpose, and audience • uses mostly clear reasoning supported by appropriate text-based evidence in development of the claim or topic • uses good organization, with mostly clear and coherent writing • establishes and maintains a style that is mostly effective	The student response to the prompt is characterized by all or most of these criteria: • shows basic comprehension of ideas stated explicitly or inferentially in the passage by providing a generally accurate explanation (G3) or analysis (G4–10) • responds to the prompt and provides some development of the claim or topic that is somewhat appropriate to task, purpose, and audience • uses some reasoning and text-based evidence in the development of the claim or topic • is somewhat organized, with somewhat coherent writing • has a style that is somewhat effective	The student response to the prompt is characterized by all or most of these criteria: • shows limited comprehension of ideas stated explicitly or inferentially by providing a minimally accurate explanation (G3) or analysis (G4–10) • responds to the prompt and provides minimal development of the claim or topic that is limited in its appropriateness to task, purpose, and audience • uses limited reasoning and text-based evidence • uses limited organization and coherence • has a style that is minimally effective	The student response to the prompt is characterized by all or most of these criteria: • shows no comprehension of ideas and provides an inaccurate explanation (G3) or analysis (G4–10) or no explanation or analysis • is undeveloped or inappropriate to task, purpose, and audience • uses little to no text-based evidence • lacks organization and coherence • has an inappropriate style

A response is considered unable to be scored if it cannot be assigned a score based on the rubric criteria, including but not limited to those responses that are blank, illegible, indecipherable, off topic, written in a language other than English, insufficient, or state a refusal to respond.

4.2 Knowledge of Language and Conventions

	3	2	1	0
Knowledge of Language and Conventions	The student response to the prompt shows full command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be minor errors in spelling, mechanics, grammar, and usage, but the meaning is easily comprehended.	The student response to the prompt shows some command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in spelling, mechanics, grammar, and usage that occasionally impede understanding, but the meaning can usually be comprehended.	The student response to the prompt shows limited command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in spelling, mechanics, grammar, and usage that frequently impede comprehension.	The student response to the prompt does not show command of the conventions of standard English at the appropriate level of complexity. There may be many errors in spelling, mechanics, grammar, and usage that impede comprehension.

A response is considered unable to be scored if it cannot be assigned a score based on the rubric criteria, including but not limited to those responses that are blank, illegible, indecipherable, off topic, written in a language other than English, insufficient, or state a refusal to respond.

5.0 Student 1 – Score Point 4/3

5.1 Student 1 – Response

Monsieur le Boulanger and Professor Valgorium treat their apprentices in very different ways. Both teachers use real work instead of book lessons, but their styles are almost opposite. Monsieur teaches through hard chores, strict rules, and pressure. Professor Valgorium teaches by letting Jedidiah help with the invention and take on important jobs.

In both passages, the apprentice learns by doing real work. In the bakery, Monsieur challenges the narrator right away. He says learning to bake good bread in three days is “impossible.” Then he tells him to arrive at 3 o’clock in the morning and says, “We’ll see how you hold up.” Instead of teaching him directly, Monsieur makes him carry 50-pound sacks of flour, sweep, bring wood, and dump trash. The narrator wants to learn the secrets of bread making, but Monsieur makes him watch and work for them. This method works, but it is not kind. The apprentice has to prove he is serious before Monsieur explains much.

Professor Valgorium treats Jedidiah more like a helper than a servant. Jedidiah helped build the machine for a year and a half, and he works on the crew. When the fuel gauge drops, the professor tells him to “fill up the tank!” Jedidiah does it because the job matters. He also turns the helm, watches the compass, checks the gauges, and pours petrol into the tank. These details show that Professor Valgorium trusts him with real responsibility.

The teachers are both hands-on, but their attitudes are different. Monsieur is rough and bossy. He yells, “Faster! Faster!” and calls the narrator “Fiston” instead of using his name. This shows that Monsieur wants control. His apprentice learns by watching, copying, and surviving the work. Professor Valgorium is also loud, but he is excited, not mean. He says, “This is it, Jedidiah!” and “What a time to be alive!” He still gives orders when there is danger, but he depends on Jedidiah. That makes his teaching feel more like teamwork.

Overall, both apprentices learn through experience. The biggest difference is the relationship between teacher and student. Monsieur believes the apprentice must earn knowledge through hard work and patience. Professor Valgorium believes Jedidiah can learn by sharing the excitement and responsibility of invention. Both methods teach, but one feels strict and demanding while the other feels trusting and encouraging.

5.2 Student 1 – Annotation

Reading Comprehension Written Expression

Score Point 4

The response shows full comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and inferentially in the passage by providing an accurate analysis (*Both teachers use real work instead of book lessons, but their styles are almost opposite*). The writing provides effective and complete development of the topic (*Monsieur is rough and bossy. He yells..... Professor Valgorium is also loud, but he is excited, not mean.... That makes his teaching feel more like teamwork*). The response uses clear reasoning supported by appropriate text-based evidence (*He says learning to bake good bread in three days is “impossible.” Then he tells him to arrive at 3 o’clock in the morning and says, “We’ll see how you hold up.” Instead of teaching him directly, Monsieur makes him carry 50-pound sacks of flour, sweep, bring wood, and dump trash....When the fuel gauge drops, the professor tells him to “fill up the tank!” Jedidiah does it because the job matters. He also turns the helm, watches the compass, checks the gauges, and pours petrol into the tank*). The writing is consistently appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (*...both apprentices learn through experience. The biggest difference is the relationship between teacher and student. Monsieur believes the apprentice must earn knowledge through hard work and patience. Professor Valgorium believes Jedidiah can learn by sharing the excitement and responsibility of invention*). It uses appropriate organization, with clear and coherent writing. The response establishes and maintains an effective style (*Both methods teach, but one feels strict and demanding while the other feels trusting and encouraging*).

Conventions

Score Point 3

The response shows full command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. Sentences are controlled. Minor errors in mechanics (*...and “What a time...”*) and usage do not affect meaning and comprehension.

6.0 Student 2 – Score Point 1/1

6.1 Student 2 – Response

Monsieur le Boulanger and Professor Valgorium both teach kids how to do stuff but its not the same. They both are like the boss and the kid has to do work and learn by doing it. Like in the bread story the narrator has to come at 3 in the morning and theres a bell and he gets hot chocolate. Then he has to do alot of things like load flour, sweep, and put wood in the oven. So thats kind of teaching because he is making him do it. In the flying machine story the professor is teaching Jedidiah to fly the ship thing and fix it. Jedidiah pulls the handle and the engine “cughed” and “sputered” than it works. And they got a compass and Jed got to steer. Then they start losing fuel and the professor tells him to fill it. So its also hands on like the bakery.

But the difference is Monsieur is more nice because he gives him hot chocolate and calls him Fiston like a nickname. The professor is more mean because he is yelling at him and its kind of dangerous. Also Monsieur teaches bread by just baking and the professor teaches like science and machines. So one is about food and one is about flying. They both teach by making the apprentice do chores but they do it in diffrent places and diffrent ways.

6.2 Student 2 – Annotation

Reading Comprehension Written Expression

Score Point 1

The response shows limited comprehension of ideas stated explicitly or inferentially by providing a minimally accurate analysis (...*both teach kids how to do stuff but its not the same*). The response provides minimal development of the topic that is limited in its appropriateness to task, purpose, and audience (*They both are like the boss and the kid has to do work and learn by doing it*). The writing uses limited reasoning and text-based evidence (*Then he has to do alot of things like load flour, sweep, and put wood in the oven. So thats kind of teaching because he is making him do it.... And they got a compass and Jed got to steer. Then they start losing fuel and the professor tells him to fill it*). The response uses limited organization and coherence. The writing has a style that is minimally effective (...*both teach by making the apprentice do chores but they do it in diffrent places and diffrent ways*).

Conventions

Score Point 1

The response shows limited command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There are be errors in spelling (*alot, cughed, diffrent*), mechanics, grammar (*more nice*), and usage (*theres, thats*) that frequently impede comprehension.