



Oakland Unified School District  Process Writing Assessment
Response to Literature - Winter

STUDENT NAME: _____

Writers do their best writing when they have time to read, think, and plan. During the next few days you will:

1. Read an example of a response to literature essay.
2. Listen to a folktale and then draw and read.
3. Identify the main idea of the folktale and support this main idea with evidence from the story.
4. Plan your essay in response to the prompt at the end of this packet.
5. Write your essay.

Teachers hope you will learn more about writing, enjoy these activities and do your best work. When you finish, your teacher will read your essay, score it and then plan lessons to help you become a better writer.



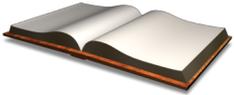
DAY ONE: Introduction

Dear Students,

This week you are going to write an essay in response to the Ethiopian folktale, “Who is the Cleverest?” Teachers in Oakland want to know what students think when they read these kinds of folktales. The best way for a lot of teachers to find out what you think is for them to read your essay. This kind of writing is called a response to literature and it is the writing that most college students do all the time. In fact, if you get really good at this genre of writing you can get money (scholarships) to go to school. Writers do their best writing when they have time to read, think, and plan.

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DAY TWO: Analyze a Response to Literature

1. This is an example of a *response to literature essay* that a student wrote after reading the folktale, Little by Little, Piece by Piece.

A Lesson in Patience

The story Little by Little, Piece by Piece is about three brothers who learn the importance of patience and hard work. When their old father dies, the brothers inherit the family land. Middle Brother and Older Brother wanted to go to the Great City, so they sold their portion of the land and left thinking they would quickly find fortune in the city. Younger Brother was wise and said “our wealth is here in the land.” He decided to stay on the family farm while his brothers moved away. While the younger brother prospers, the other two lose everything in the city. The main idea of the story is that you should patiently keep working until you reach your goal - riches are not earned overnight.

While Middle and Older Brother were in the city discovering luxuries and spending their money, Younger Brother was back on the farm enjoying the small progress that he made growing crops. “Little by little, piece by piece” he would say as he watched the new plants coming up with satisfaction. Like his father before him, Younger Brother used extra money from the crops to improve the farm. Though he didn't have luxuries like his brothers, he was learning and slowly making a better future for himself.

As Younger Brother patiently made the farm and house bigger, his brothers became poorer. Time passed, and Older Brother and Middle Brother arrived to visit on foot and with few gifts. “The Great City is

getting more expensive,” said older brother. Younger Brother explained how he had had a good year and bought some more land back. The third year Middle Brother and Older Brother returned with only the clothes on their body. Again they explained how the city had become more expensive. Meanwhile Younger Brother had made the farm and house bigger through hard work.

I once had an experience like Younger Brother. Each week my sister and I got an allowance. My sister always ran out and spent it right away on candy while I saved mine. One day after two months of saving I was able to buy a new CD. In the end she had nothing to show for her allowance, but I had music to keep forever.

Older and Middle Brother eventually spent all of their money. Younger brother went to the city and brought them back to the farm and gave them jobs. After working for a while, Middle and Older Brother had enough money to buy their land back. This story shows us the author’s idea that if you work patiently at something, little by little you will reach your goal.



2. Analyzing the Response to Literature Essay

- ❖ **Circle** the student's statement of the **main idea** of the story in the first paragraph. The main idea answers the question, "What is this story *Little by Little, Piece by Piece* really about?"
- ❖ **Underline** the topic sentence of one paragraph. Each topic sentence includes details or ideas from the folktale that supports the main idea. In that same paragraph find the **evidence** that supports the topic sentence.
✓ Put a check mark by each supporting piece of evidence.
- ❖  Think of 3 reasons why the **summary** is in the first paragraph.
- ❖ * Put a “star” next to where the student essay connects the folktale to the student’s **prior knowledge** (from experience or another story).



3. Sharing with Classmates

Good readers and writers are always thinking and talking about stories and writing.



DAY THREE: Listening, Visualizing, Sketching, Sharing

As you listen to this folktale from Ethiopia, “*Who is the Cleverest?*” visualize images from the story in your mind. Make a few small sketches of what you want to remember from the beginning, middle and end of the story. Your teacher will tell you when to begin and end each section.

Beginning

Middle

End



2. **Pair Share**

- ❖ Share your sketches with a partner. Tell your partner what is in your sketch and why you drew it. Listen to your partner explain his/her sketch.

3. **Discuss**

- ❖ Does this folktale remind you of any other stories you have heard or read?

This folktale reminds me of _____

because _____

- ❖ Does this folktale remind you of any events or people and/or any personal experiences from your own life?

This folktale reminds me of the time _____

4. **Vocabulary**

Read the words from the folktale and write your own definition for each word next to the word. If you are not sure, make a good guess.

clever

amount

undisturbed

inherit

wisely

4. Read the folktale, "Who is the Cleverest?" silently or with a partner. As you read, underline words that you are curious about.

Who is the Cleverest?

Adapted from an Ethiopian folktale

Many years ago, a clever man lived with his three sons. As he grew old, he became ill and spent much of his time in his room. During the day, his room had light from a small window. But in the evening, the room was like walking in a forest on a moonless night.

One day, the man called his three sons to him. He said, "I wonder which of you has the gift of cleverness. I have decided that my cleverest son will inherit my money." The sons looked at each other and waited for their father to say more.

The father continued, "I will give each of you the same amount of money. Use it to buy something to fill this room." Each son took his share of the money.

The oldest son said, "This will not take long. I will go to the market, since it is close by. I will find something there." At the market, the oldest son bought the first thing he saw, which was straw.

The second son wondered what would fill the room. Then he, too, went to the market. As he looked he said to himself, "This is like looking for a needle in a haystack. It is hard to find something for this amount of money that will fill the room." But finally, he bought some feathers.

The youngest son went to a quiet place. He wanted to think through his ideas undisturbed. He carefully thought about each possibility. Finally, when he knew just what to buy, the third son also went to the market. He bought two small items. He wrapped them in a scarf and put them in his pocket.

At dusk, just as the sun was beginning to set, the father called his three sons to him. "Show me what you have found to fill my room," he said.

The first son stepped forward and quickly spread out his straw. Sadly, everyone saw that the straw only filled one corner of the room. Then, the second son threw out his feathers. Sadly, everyone saw that the feathers only filled two corners of the room.

"Hurry," the man said to his third and youngest son. "It is growing dark. Did you find something that will fill my room?"

The youngest son came forward. He held two items in his hand, covered with the scarf. He smiled as he slowly showed his family what he had bought—a match and a candle. Then, he used the match to light the candle. Instantly, the soft light filled the room.

This pleased the father. The man said, "That is a fine idea. You are my cleverest son! You inherit my riches. Use them wisely to take care of yourself and your brothers, and you shall be happy."



DAY FOUR: Thinking about the Story

1. What is a summary of the story?



❖ Take a minute to tell your partner a **summary** of "Who is the Cleverest?" Include the beginning, middle and end. Remember that a summary is not a retelling. It only includes the main idea and important events and relevant details. When you are done, listen to your partner's summary.

❖ Now, see if you can write a summary of the story in just three written sentences. Share your summary with a partner.

2. Writing about the Main Idea

This story has a main idea that the author wants the reader to think about and understand. The author includes important events and relevant details that support this main idea. Remember that the main idea answers the question, "What is this story **really** about?"

Here are some questions to help you think about the main idea:

- What does the youngest son do before he goes to the market?
- How is what he does different from what the other sons do?
- How is the youngest son's purchase different from the others?

I think that the main idea of the story is _____

because (use evidence from the story) _____



DAY 5: Writing

Response to "Who is the Cleverest?"

Teachers in Oakland want to know what students think are important ideas in folktales. Write an essay that explains what you think is the important idea in the folktale "Who is the Cleverest?" What is the main idea that the author is trying to communicate? As you explain your thinking, be sure to include evidence from the story that supports your idea. You can also include connections to your own life or to other stories that support your thinking. You may use the work you did in this packet to help you.

Writing Reminders:

Keep the following points in mind since you won't have time to rewrite:

- Begin in an interesting way that includes the title of the story and the main idea.
- Briefly summarize the story using only important events and significant details.
- Organize your ideas in paragraphs so that they are easy to follow.
- Show that you really understand your topic by using clear and lively words and phrases.
- Use the text and personal experiences to support your ideas. *Do your best!*

After you write:

- Check your punctuation. Use capital letters, commas, periods, quotation marks correctly.
- Check your spelling for accuracy.
- Give your essay a title. (Choose a title that states what your essay is about).