

2020

AP[®] CollegeBoard

AP[®] English Literature and Composition

Sample Student Responses - Packet 1

Prose Fiction Analysis Question - Eng

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Sample Student Responses

Sample A

[1] Through his penning of the novel, the author encapsulates the complex and multifaceted feelings of the narrator, Philip Hutton, as he travels back to his deceased mother's childhood home. His feelings are justly intense; his mother was ostracized from her family many years ago due to her marriage to an Englishman, of which her father greatly disapproved. By utilizing intimate conversations between Philip and Aunt Mei, beautiful imagery and depictions of nature, and the symbolic role of the fountain, the author illustrates the anger and resentment which our narrator feels, as well as the sense of peace and reconciliation which he experiences toward the conclusion of the passage.

[2] From the outset of the passage, it is apparent that Philip Hutton has not traveled to this house under positive pretenses. There is a sense of sadness and despair, as well as intense longing which one can feel from the emotional initial conversations which Philip engages in with his Aunt Mei, which is how the reader can begin to understand the reason for our narrator's trip. Aunt Mei informs him that "Everything was removed after she married your father. Her clothes were given away, her books donated to the Ipoh Library. Everything." Aunt Mei said. "When I came back one day I found this room as empty as you see it now. I was furious with your grandfather." In these few short lines, a wealth of vital information is revealed: Philip's deceased mother married a man which her father disapproved of, and so she was cast out of her house and family permanently. It is evident that Aunt Mei was not supportive of this binding decision which her father had made concerning her sister, and so Aunt Mei and Philip appear to have a sense of commonality with each other in their bitterness over his mother's exile. As a result of this decision, perhaps Aunt Mei was unable to form a meaningful relationship with her nephew Philip; this would account for the somewhat awkward tone of their conversation, as well as the need for Aunt Mei to explain the entire story of exile which Philip's mother clearly never informed him of. Additionally, Philip clearly made the journey to his grandfather's house for another reason (in addition to wanting to see his mother's childhood home): he would confront his grandfather over his irrational and unfair treatment of his mother. Perhaps Philip believed that by spewing his hatred of his grandfather and his decisions at him, then this would make him feel more at peace with his mother's passing. He states that "I had decided that I would express to him my disappointment at how my mother had been treated. I would let him know that my father had been a good husband to her. Then I would tell him that I saw no point in our meeting again and that I would leave the next day." Indeed, it is evident that anger and resentment are two prominent emotions which our narrator displays during his visit to his grandfather's house.

[3] However, when the moment arrived for Philip to let his anger loose upon his grandfather, he was unable to do so. His grandfather is kind and gentle to him, as he leads him through the lush gardens of his home. The author writes that "He led me out to the garden, pointing out the various flowers to me, their fragrance unabashed and heady." This is reminiscent

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of how a father would lead a small child through a forest, bonding with him over nature. Perhaps this is symbolic of the time which his grandfather has lost with his grandson as a result of his decision to exile his daughter from the family. As the duo continues throughout the garden, they arrive at a beautiful fountain situated at the heart of the garden. This particular structure is immensely symbolic; it encompasses all of the joy, peace, and beauty of his mother's childhood. It is revealed to the reader that this fountain was most likely the singular thing from her childhood home which Philip's mother missed the most. After her passing, Philip's father contacted Aunt Mei to send him the exact specifications of the fountain so that he could recreate it in his own home, as a memorial to his beloved wife. The grandfather is aware of this, which is why he inquires of his grandson, Philip: "Is it very similar?" While this may appear to be a simple question, Philip can sense the underlying emotion which is charged in every syllable. He states that "And so it was that I felt it clearly within me, the hidden mixture of regret, sorrow, and hope. I kept my face as carefully controlled as my grandfather's voice had been, so as not to embarrass him." The emotions of regret and sorrow are easy to understand, given the situation: a father had banished his daughter from his family, and she died without any sort of reconciliation. However, the emotion of hope is recognizable, and this is what gives Philip hope as well for a future with his forebear. When Philip informs him that yes, it bears a striking resemblance to the fountain before him, his grandfather is joyful. The author writes that "When he looked up again I saw the expression on his face softened by the truth of his words. 'That is good,' he said. 'I am glad.'" Clearly, the pair of matching fountains at each house is not simply an architectural cut-and-paste. Rather, it symbolizes the unbreakable bonds of family and kin, which cannot be shattered by mere physical distance and argument. It is this realization which gives the grandfather peace and hope, and which allows Philip himself to let go of his resentment and open himself up to his long-forgotten family once again.

[4] Through his writing of this novel, the author delves into the rush of emotion which our narrator, Philip Hutton, experiences as he visits his mother's childhood home for the first time. Through the usage of intimate conversations between Philip and Aunt Mei, peaceful vintages of nature, and the deeply symbolic role of the fountain, the author illustrates the anger and resentment which our narrator feels, as well as the sense of peace and reconciliation which he experiences toward the conclusion of the passage. By the end of the passage, Philip is no longer an angry and resentful young man traveling to his grandfather's house to relieve his wrath, but rather is a man at peace with his family's checkered past, accepting of his present situation, and embracing the opportunities of a future with his newly-discovered family.

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Sample B

[1] The author uses vivid imagery, subtle characterization, and deeply personal anecdotes to describe how Philip is more open to forgiving his grandfather for the past than he may realize.

[2] The author's use of vivid imagery when describing the fountain turns it into something that is almost alive, and gives the narrator and his grandfather something to bond over. In lines 40 through 45, the author describes the fountain outside of the narrator's mother's bedroom window in great detail, emphasizing the carvings of birds, trees, and an angelic figure on it. The author also describes the dragonflies in the fountain, saying that they look like "long, red chilies". A few lines earlier, on line 39, the narrator's grandfather asks him if he recognizes the fountain, and if it is any similar to the one that is present back at home. When the narrator describes the fountain, they use words that give it life and more of a personality. By bringing the fountain to life and describing it in terms that make it sound beautiful and alive, the narrator and his grandfather have something to bond over, even though the narrator isn't initially thrilled to see him.

[3] The author's characterization of Philip's grandfather paints him in a way that makes him seem calm and reasonable. In lines 36 and 37, the narrator describes the way his grandfather asked him if the fountain at home was similar as having a "faint, controlled timber of emotion". Though his face isn't displaying a lot of emotion, Philip can feel his grandfather's sorrow and regret from his tone of voice, even though it isn't obvious by looking at him. The controlled yet emotional way that Philip's grandfather asks the question implies that he is a calm and careful individual, and has put a lot of thought into the matter of Philip's mother (his daughter). Since Philip is able to sense that his grandfather is a calm and collected person who feels remorseful for what he did to his daughter in the past, he feels less angry at his grandfather and is more willing to sit down and talk about the past instead of telling him off and going home.

[4] The author's use of the dragonfly anecdote in lines 49 through 52 makes the fountain feel more personal to Philip and introduces another thing that Philip and his grandfather are able to bond over: Philip's mother. According to lines 49 through 52, when Philip was younger, he and his older brother caught dragonflies in the fountain. Philip's mother caught them and was upset by their act of cruelty. Mentioning this story in the first place added more depth to the story because it showed that Philip had history with the fountain too, and everything he knows about the fountain isn't just his mother's and aunt's memories. By remembering this story at exactly this moment in time, when he's with his grandfather and he's finding out exactly why his mother loved the original fountain so much, Philip is using his memories to build new connections with his mother's childhood home and with his grandfather.

[5] The vivid images of the fountain, the characterization of Philip's previously elusive grandfather, and the bits of his past that Philip shares with the reader all contribute to the narrative

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because they show the reader the beginnings of forgiveness between Philip and his grandfather. The afternoon they spent in the garden and near the fountain made it possible for Philip's grandfather to atone for his past sins and for Philip to repair his relationship with his mother's side of the family because they found something that they can form a bond over.

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Sample C

[1] Life is blessed, or perhaps ridden, with emotion. Yet no emotion is truly pure- to feel untainted sadness or relentless happiness is extremely rare. Most emotions that we feel are complex and ambiguous. The narrator of the prose given, Philip Hutton, begins to feel an array of conflicting emotions while visiting the home of his maternal grandfather- years after the estrangement and death of his late mother. Ambiguous emotions can cause internal confusion, but are often necessary to one's inner journey of enlightenment and forgiveness. The author uses imagery pertaining to all senses, unrevealing dialogue, and symbolism of the fountain- the epicenter of the time capsule that Hutton must confront- to convey how complex emotions are necessary in order to reach inner harmony and understanding.

[2] Most striking in the entirety of the prose is the author's heavy emphasis on inclusion, or rather *highlighting* of all senses when describing the grandfather's residence. Scent and sound is deeply intertwined with memory, perhaps because they are constantly present yet easiest to let sink into the background of the visual wonders of the world. The imagery descriptions of sound begin after the narrator's first night of sleep in his mother's old room. The "birds [that] whisted and chirped outside and the strong smell of frangipani" only become noticeable once the author has slept on the conversation he had with his Aunt Mei the previous night. This conversation brought him feelings of disappointment and anger towards his grandfather and his past actions towards the late mother. Yet we see the author separate these negative feelings with the feelings of a new day. Later, as the grandfather tours Hutton through the garden courtyard, their noses are blessed with the exciting scent of flowers, "their fragrance unabashed and heady". Now, the reader is able to connect the two men, for they are both experiencing the same scents and likely reliving the nostalgia of these scents in their own personal memories. Yet the most important reference to the senses comes from Hutton, as he tells his grandfather that "the fountain at home is very similar. It even sounds the same", cementing the positive power of nostalgia. Humanity as a whole, as much as we would like to deny our pasts, is very defined by them. And looking back on happy moments in the past and allowing yourself to feel nostalgia for them is often healing. It's almost like you are given the trusting and innocent lens of a child, and painting them with the maturity and wisdom of an adult.

[3] But although Hutton has a very important dialogue line towards his grandfather, most of the dialogue is quite simple. No verbal apologies are given, no speeches of love and remorse, and no arguments. Instead, as Endo-san had taught Hutton, "there is often movement in stillness and stillness in movement". Although emotion is not verbally expressed by the grandfather and grandson, both who contain complex emotions towards their relationship with each other due to their relationship with the late mother, they are still about to sort through these emotions in order to understand each other. Most of their conversations revolve around the imagery previously described, talking about the "sound of the water and the smell of the flowers", and

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discussing the fountain and how similar it is to the Istana residence. The conversations between the narrator and Aunt Mei are necessarily more complex, for it is the Aunt that reveals the true story of the grandfather's reaction to the mother's wedding. She must speak more truthfully in order to tell Hutton how the grandfather wanted to both forget the daughter (by emptying her room and giving everything away) and bless her with a happy life (by building a replica of her childhood fountain for her and her new family to enjoy). But since the relationship between the grandfather and Hutton is strained by the invisible hand of the past, unlike Aunt Mei and Hutton, such blunt dialogue could have brought out the angry and remorseful side of emotion that Hutton was battling. Some experiences, and some healing, does not need many words. It merely needs understanding, which the pair learned to do by sharing their personal nostalgias, connected through the two fountains.

[4] The fountain is, perhaps, the eye of the hurricane. It is in the "center of the garden", and is a host to life- to the same dragonflies that Hutton and his brother "snared... in the fountain in Istana" when they were younger. The fountain is also surrounded by an array of beautiful and fragrant flowers- the scent of which the grandfather and Hutton shared when touring the garden. The dragon flies and the flowers were both important aspects of Hutton's journey through his ambiguous emotions, and both are associated with the fountain. The grandfather's connection to the fountain is perhaps the most meaningful. He carefully crafted it, including its intricate "carvings of birds and trees that ran around its wall, and the plump angel that stood poised with a jug in the center", so detailed that even the sound of cascading water would sound the same in the mother's replica. The fountain was the grandfather's nonverbal way of forgiving his daughter, and perhaps forgiving himself for so rashly throwing away all of her possessions. And, once again invoking the feelings of nostalgia, a fountain is a fairly permanent fixture, one that can be enjoyed for ages. The grandfather gifted the mother such a permanent gift so that she both could enjoy its nod to her childhood for as long as she lived, but also so that her future family could grow up with the same. The fountains, with its cleansing water, host of life, and delicate angel represents the innocent and forgiving nature of childhood, and its important in molding our lives.

[5] After Hutton confirms the grandfather's hopes that his fountain was successful in bringing joy and understanding between the two households, he sits down on the rim of the fountain, surrounded by the flowers he kept so carefully tended. This action, of sitting whilst Hutton still stands above, shows the true remorse and honesty of the grandfather's actions. AND this small act of sitting on the fountain was what granted Hutton the ability to understand the validity of his complex emotions.

[6] Eye of the hurricane

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Sample D

[1] In the passage, narrator Philip Hutton recounts his visit to his maternal grandfather's home. His mother, estranged from the family, had died when he was seven. Utilizing tranquil imagery and slowing syntax the author reveals Philip's dynamic thought towards his grandfather, his mother's old home, and his complex battle with his own emotions.

[2] Set in a Malaysian home, the story begins with Philip waking up in his mother's old, empty room. Conveying the serene and calm nature of the home by saying, "Birds whistled and chirped outside and the strong smell of frangipani came in from the garden and sought refuge in the room." The tranquil imagery of the scene is depicted as much less anxious than Philip himself. Battling with his emotions about his family's history, the calm essence of the Malaysian home works to ease his struggles. As he initially says, "I would let him know that my father had been a good husband to her. Then I would tell him that I saw no point in our meeting again and that I would leave the next day." His original intentions were bitter and reactionary. However, as the story develops and he begins to see the environment and background his mom came from, Philip's tensions with his family ease. Therefore, within the garden, the tranquility of the imagery helps to show Philip's dynamism as his character's mentaitly switches from actionary to accepting. At the turning point of his attitude, he sees a connection with his mom's past and how it shaped her to parent him. Through the Dragonflies as he describes them as "looking like long, thin red chilies" he is reminded of his mother's parenting and is able to understand that the calm environment of her home shaped her as a parent and did not let her lost connections with family interfere with her life.

[3] To slow down and soften the atmosphere of the story, the syntax of the passage uses many short apostrophe clauses. By doing so, it successfully loosens the tension between not only Philip and feelings but also Philip and his grandfather. For example, when Philip says, "I circled the fountain that my mother had loved so much, crouching to examine the carvings of birds and trees that ran around its wall and the plump angel that stood poised with a jug in the center," the added clauses in the thought serve to convey Philip's hesitant approach to the conversation and slow down the progression of the story to give insight on the character's thoughts, emotions, and observations. Slowing down the story is also utilized to emphasize the importance of the scene to the narrator. Because this is a substantial event in Philip's life, confronting his grandfather and seeing his mother's old room, the slowed syntax enhances the relevance of the moment. However, the syntax, while using slowing techniques, is also simple in nature. Complementing Philip's more complex detailed sentences, the structure used to depict his grandfather is short simple sentences. For example in the last paragraph Philip says, "He sat down on the rim of the fountain and looked at his feet. When he looked up again I saw the expression on his face softened by the truth of his words." The clean use of simple sentence reflects the reserved nature of the grandfather and his reservations talking with Philip about his

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daughter.

[4] The narrator's complex feelings upon visiting his mother's childhood home are reflected through the tranquil imagery and the contrast between slowing apostrophe clauses and simple sentences. Because of the loss of his mother and her relationship with her family Philip is first portrayed as actionary towards his grandfather. However, as he sees his mother's childhood home and the connection he feels with his own childhood, Philip changes to a more reserved and calm mentality when talking to his grandfather.

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Sample E

[1] In the excerpt provided, Philip Hutton describes a past visit to his (now deceased) mother's childhood home. Within this piece, Hutton describes the home in all its beauty and grace, and conveys his deep rooted feelings throughout the passage. Feelings of both anger and resentment towards his grandfather, along with feelings of remorse and emptiness from the loss of his mother, in other words, the visit seems to resurface the sadness and memories of losing his mother. Hutton expresses these feelings by using poised and graceful diction, along with making multiple allusions to his now deceased mother.

[2] Hutton's diction throughout the passage conveys a crucial component of his emotions. When describing the home, his mother's room, the garden etc., Hutton speaks of everything in a poised and, or beautiful manner. For example, beginning in the second line of the passage Hutton describes his mother's room, "High wooden shutters opened out to a narrow balcony, which curled over a garden hidden..." (line 2) This diction allows readers to see the direct connection Hutton is making to his mother, he sees her as beautiful and graceful, and connects her into that when describing her room and balcony.

[3] This connection Hutton continually makes throughout the piece of describing all this mother's "things" in a poised manner, directly correlates to his high views of his mother. In another instance - Hutton uses this diction. Still poised but more aggressive than before to express his anger towards his grandfather. Hutton rants to himself, "I would express to him my disappointment" and "I would leave the next day" Here, Hutton clearly expresses that he has resentment towards his grandfather because of how he treated his mother, that being said he still respects and cares for his grandfather, and readers can feel that by the poised and respectful manner in which he speaks to him in.

[4] In addition to diction, Hutton's use of allusions further develop his feelings of sorrow in missing his mother. The whole visit clearly brings back memories of his mother - and audience members can feel just how Hutton consistently alludes to his mother when describing the house and garden. Towards the beginning of the excerpt Hutton states, "The fan on the ceiling spun slowly, reflecting fragments of sunlight. Birds whistled and chirped outside..." These components allude to his mother in the way that they're poised, graceful and seem to be almost heavenly - which represent his mother, along w/ her death.

[5] Throughout the excerpt Hutton conveys his anger along w/ his reminiscence of his mother which develop the narrator's character and advance the story as a whole.

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Sample F

[1] In the excerpt, the author depicts the narrator's thoughts and feelings as they visit their mother's childhood home. It is shown throughout the reading the feelings of resent of the narrator towards their grandfather and understanding of their mother's past. The author accomplishes this by utilizing setting and tone to make the experience of the narrator come alive.

[2] The author describes the narrator's feelings and thoughts as they walk through the house where their mother once lived through the setting of the excerpt. For example, the author firstly makes notice of the "high wooden shutters [that opened] out to a narrow balcony, which curled over a garden hidden from the world" in the first paragraph. The author then explains that this scene reminds the narrator of their mentor Endo-san. The author also uses the outdoor setting to show that the narrator feels relief as they step inside out of the hot and dry air. The setting and sounds of the fountain is also used to describe the feeling of serenity as the narrator tries to sleep in his grandfather's home. Furthermore, the house and the dragonflies the author depicts in the excerpt ultimately make the author feel nostalgia from when they were younger and explained their mother's disdain from their past.

[3] The author also utilizes tone to highlight their character's takeaway from the experience. The narrator's aunt tells them that the grandfather had given away all of their mother's belongings after marrying their father. This presents a sadder tone to the excerpt and thus making the narrator's attitude toward their grandfather resentful. The author then changes the tone from bitter to calming in the excerpt when the grandfather takes the narrator out to the garden. The narrator feels the serene garden and begins to see their grandfather's regret and turns their resentful attitude into understanding towards their experience from the visit.

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Sample G

[1] The author uses literary elements such as imagery and flashbacks to convey the narrator's experiences as she visits her mother's childhood home.

[2] The author uses imagery to convey the narrator's feelings. In paragraph 3 the narrator walks into her mother's old room and finds it empty. This raises questions for her grandfather on why he gave all her stuff away. In paragraph four, Aunt Mei explains how she was furious with her grandfather when she first found the room empty.

[3] The author uses flashbacks to convey the narrator's feelings. In paragraph 17, the author recalls a time when she was little, when her and her sibling tied threads to dragon flies. This displeased her mother. Now she realizes why her mother was displeased. Dragonflies hovered the surface of the fountain her mother loved. To sooth the tension between the grandfather and the narrator. The grandfather built an exact replica of the fountain from the narrator's mother's youth.

[4] Imagery and flashbacks are literary elements used to convey the narrator's feelings about visiting her mother's childhood home.