

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2011 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

Question 2

(Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*)

The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole — its content, style, and mechanics. Students are rewarded for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

- 9–8** These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how Highway uses literary techniques to dramatize Okimasis' experience. They may consider such literary elements as diction, syntax, point of view, and selection of detail. They sustain their arguments through apt and specific textual references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear, precise, and effectively organized. Essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how Highway uses literary techniques to dramatize Okimasis' experience. They provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, supported by textual references. Although these essays may not be error-free and may be less perceptive or less convincing than 9–8 essays, they present ideas with clarity and control. Essays scored a 7 present better developed analysis and more consistent command of elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but they tend to be superficial or undeveloped in their treatment of how Highway uses literary techniques to dramatize Okimasis' experience. Although exhibiting some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion may be slight, and support from the text may be thin or tend toward paraphrase. These essays demonstrate adequate control of language, but the writing may be marred by surface errors. They are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7–6 essays.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate treatment of how Highway uses literary techniques to dramatize Okimasis' experience. Often relying on summary or paraphrase, they may misread the passage or fail to articulate a convincing basis for understanding the experience. The writing may demonstrate a lack of control over the conventions of composition: inadequate development of ideas, an accumulation of errors, or an argument that is unclear, inconsistent, or repetitive. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of those in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the passage.
- 0** These essays do no more than make a reference to the task.
- These essays are either blank or are completely off topic.

Tomson Highway's passage from Kiss of the Fur Queen uses ~~simple~~ language so strongly, it

The sensations and words in Tomson Highway's Kiss of the Fur Queen take the reader to the cold, intense action of Abraham Okimaris. Highway uses fantastic imagery of all senses and compounds it with intense mood and tone to create an atmosphere filled with the tension felt by Okimaris in the last leg of his race. ~~The~~ Okimaris' experience is dramatized through the effective use of vivid imagery, ~~and~~ ~~strong~~ passionate diction, metaphors and ^{intense} tone.

The imagery used in Okimaris' experience is quick, cutting sensations ~~which~~ ^{that} easily transport the reader into the environment of the story. The tactile imagery of how "the snow creaked underfoot" amid the air that is "so crisp, so dry". The description allows the reader to imagine the harsh conditions, the sounds heard and experienced by the ~~hunter~~ hunter. The exhaustion of the dogs with "shafts of vapour rising from the ~~dogs'~~ ^{dogs'} panting mounds" ~~blows~~ makes their incessant movement, their conditions all the more palpable. Metaphors add ~~the~~ drama to the unfolding scene. ~~All of the dogs are~~ ~~the~~ ~~dogs~~ ~~named~~ ~~dogs~~. ~~The~~ The dogs are made to "look like insubstantial wisps of air" with all of the vapour rising off of their



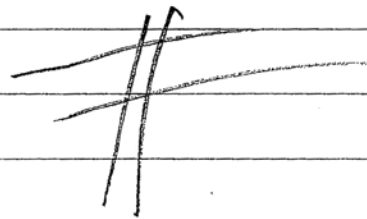
back and out of their mouths. The desperation of their driver is escalated when he shouts "Mush!" the sole word left that could feed men." His words of desperation and determination are likened to the food that nourishes them, the only thing that keeps men alive. This reinforces the importance of the race, the desperate desire for the Okumasis' ~~desire~~ to win, ^{and} the proximity of the finish ^{line} which approaches. The need to win is even equated to religion - his fervor and drive to win the "silver cup, the holy chalice" that he worships, only pushing him harder. This 'chalice' that he's chasing serves to ~~compare~~ compare his devotion to winning the race to the ~~the~~ faithful devotion of religious worshippers.

Diction and tone add to the overall impact of the unfolding drama, heightening the emotions of Okumasis and lending to the tension of the scene. The ~~the~~ diction used by Highway emphasizes ~~the~~ the action of the scene, with Okumasis "gripping" and "snapping" the reins of his dogs. The tension held in his grip and the anxiety expressed by his snapping accurately convey Okumasis' feelings ~~at~~ through words. His mindset is depicted as "fevered" as the ^{personal} stakes of the race are revealed for Okumasis. The intensity of the race finish is envisioned ~~through the way~~ by the way Okumasis



"edged" beyond another musher, implying the far-from-straightforward envisioned result of the race for Oumasis, and the amount of energy demanded by his team only to culminate in barely advancing. The tone is kept tense through repetition of phrases, exaggerating the effect of emotions and conditions. Oumasis "was so tired, his dogs beyond tired, so tired they would have collapsed if he were to relent." The repetition of 'tired' drives in the point of the team being utterly exhausted during his final run. The conditions of the ^{race} ~~the race~~ ^{consisted of a} ~~consisted of a~~ "hundred and fifty miles of freezing temperatures and freezing winds." The tension is kept till the concluding sentence, as the finish line gets closer and closer, "so close, so far."

Through imagery, metaphors, diction and tone, ~~the~~ Highway heightens the drama and intensity of the race for Oumasis to the finish line. The drama is made palpable through vivid images ~~that~~ bringing the reader into the story and leading the reader to become more invested in the outcome of the story.



The Finnish line on the distance, so close, yet so exorbitantly far. The moment we all know all too well ^{Tolson Highway captures} ~~the moment~~ in the story of Abraham Okinasis's final push for victory. As he passes Jean Baptiste Duchene, Tolson gives us the desperation in Okinasis through figurative language that helps us understand his feeling. Sharp imagery that impassions the reader, and ties it together through the repetition of a single word - mush, pulling the reader along as Okinasis is pulled by his dogs.

~~The icy tundra is no place for rose petals~~
How can we understand the feelings of ~~exhaustion~~ exhaustion coupled with despair that race through Okinasis's mind? ^{as he nears the Finnish line} Highway's figurative language - specifically powerful similes and personification show the extent of the pain of the experience. First comes his voice; he cries mush "like a man about to sob." ^{perfectly capture...} His desperation is perfectly captured. However, his experience is not simply desperation, ~~like~~ just as he nears sobbing, he nears despair. So ~~the~~ tired, his dogs "sack like insubstantial wisps of air". He is near the Finnish line, but he and his dogs have nothing left to give. However, there ^(physically) are things keeping them going.



Okonasis' promise to his wife motivates him, compels him to keep fighting. He motivates his dogs - he "feeds" them, the word must to keep them going. These powerful comparisons bring the race into the hearts of the reader, making the drama real.

The second aspect of Highway's story is the images, glimpses into the harshness of the climate that paralleled the harshness in Okonasis' life. Vapour is key. "Through the rising vapour of a Northern Manitoba February... through the orange tinted dusk". The imagery conveys the the deep nature of Okonasis' Journey. He needs to win.

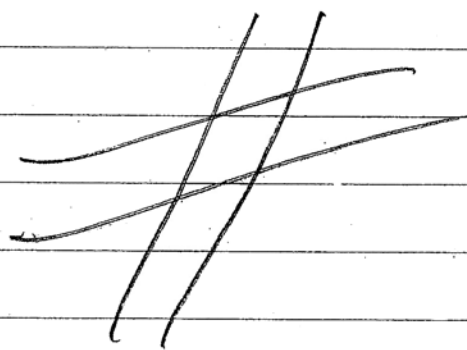
The "holy chalice... silver cup" and the banner "silvery white with black lettering". They don't just represent victory in the race, they are the images that show the real prize - his marriage. But the prize is not easily gained. "one hundred fifty miles of low treed tundra ice covered lakes, blanketed with at least two feet of snow" - pictures the harsh, cold, reality that Abraham might not make it.

Half a mile left - two ahead. One word keeps him going. Highway completes the dramatisation



with the repetition of the word "mush".
"Mush" - into the word, "Mush" about to
sob, "Mush" the sole word. Oknasis is driven
by this word, as is the story. His incessant
repetition draws the reader back to the action,
Bringing him to the edge of his seat, to see
if the hunter will catch his prey.

The story of Oknasis is intense, driven.
Highway effectively utilizes figurative language
to connect the reader to the story. He paints
stark images to help the reader see what Oknasis
feels. Lastly, through repetition, he ties
the drama together with a single word. ~~He~~
~~applies~~ ~~the~~ ~~word~~ ~~to~~ ~~only~~ ~~Oknasis~~ ~~said~~ ~~in~~
~~Oknasis~~ ~~heart~~ The reader's heart pumps with
Oknasis as he closes in on the end of
his race.



Any form of racing is both physically and emotionally exhausting. Those words could also be used to describe Tomson Highway's character, Abraham Okimasis. In this ~~text~~ passage from Kiss of the Fur Queen, Highway dramatizes Okimasis' experience in a dog sled race through the usage of both diction and tone.

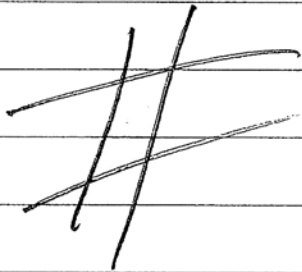
Beginning with a cry of "Mush" instantly triggers the recognition of speed, and a driving urge to move faster. Okimasis is in a dog sled race desperately trying to win. Highway conveys Okimasis' desperation through his diction of adjectives. In the beginning of the second sentence, Okimasis is gripping his handle bars while cracking his whip urging his dogs to move faster. His tight grip on the bar shows the tension Okimasis is feeling. Mush is used several times through the passage adding to Highway's already



tense situation. Okhymasis is not winning the race and Highway makes it very clear, that he might lose.

In the second half of the passage Highway states Okhymasis' need to win, he is racing for his wife. Purpose is a very powerful driving force and one knows feels more of a connection with the character because of the purpose.

Through usage of adjectives and the inclusion of purpose, Highway turns Okhymasis' situation desperate and fevered. One is able to relate to Okhymasis and hope that he wins.



AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2011 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)

Question 2

Sample: 2A

Score: 9

This essay offers a clear, economical analysis of how Highway uses literary devices to bring to life not only a race, but the central figure of that race, Abraham Okimasis. The introduction identifies a number of devices, and in the paragraphs that follow, apt observations linked to imagery, diction, and tone are made, as when the student observes that Okimasis' "words of desperation and determination are likened to the food that nourishes [the dogs], the only thing that keeps them alive." The interpretation of the "silver cup, the holy chalice," which suggests that the main character's "devotion to winning the race" is comparable to "the faithful devotion of religious worshippers," is resonant and persuasive. The essay does a particularly good job of analyzing the idea of dramatization in a prose passage from a novel — a task more challenging than it appears — and earned a top score of 9.

Sample: 2B

Score: 6

The introduction to this well-organized essay identifies the literary devices — "figurative language," "sharp imagery," and "repetition" — that Highway uses to capture the attention of the reader and aptly argues that they serve to pull "the reader along as Okimasis is pulled by his dogs." The body of the essay then examines these devices using citations from the text: The first body paragraph discusses the use of "powerful similes and personification"; the second looks at the way imagery provides "glimpses into the harshness of the climate that parallel the harshness in Okimasis' life," thus connecting the race and the winter scene to Okimasis' marriage; and the third focuses on the repetition of the word *mush*. But as the essay moves toward its conclusion, its own race to the finish seems to overwhelm deeper analysis. Solid organization and often lucid prose placed this essay in the upper half of the scoring range, but fuller development of ideas would have been necessary to achieve a score in the top third.

Sample: 2C

Score: 3

This essay makes an attempt to respond to the prompt, but its usage and syntax problems cloud its ability to communicate and support ideas. This lack of control leads to awkward phrases such as "diction of adjectives" and "the inclusion of purpose." Most significant here is that although the essay demonstrates an understanding of what is happening in the passage, its brevity and reliance on paraphrase result in unpersuasive analysis. More thorough development and a more sophisticated handling of how literary devices operate would have shed greater light on the way Highway captures the attention of the reader.