

2020

AP[®]

 CollegeBoard

AP[®] English Literature and Composition

Sample Student Responses - Packet 2

Prose Fiction Analysis Question - Johnson

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Sample Student Responses

Sample A

[1] In this passage from a 1912 novel, the narrator wistfully details his childhood crush on a girl violinist. Through a motif of the allure of musical instruments, and abundant sensory details that summon a vivid image of the event of their meeting, the reader can infer that the narrator was utterly enraptured by his obsession in the moment, and upon later reflection cannot help but feel a combination of amusement and a resummoning of the moment's passion.

[2] The overwhelming abundance of hyper-specific sensory details reveals to the reader that meeting his crush must have been an intensely powerful experience to create such a vivid memory. The narrator can picture the "half-dim church", can hear the "clear wail" of the girl's violin, can see "her eyes almost closing", can smell a "faint but distinct fragrance." Clearly, this moment of discovery was very impactful on the boy, because even later he can remember the experience in minute detail. However, these details may also not be entirely faithful to the original experience; they all possess a somewhat mysterious quality that shows how the narrator may be employing hyperbole to accentuate the girl's allure. The church is "half-dim", the eyes "almost closing" – all the details are held within an ethereal state of halfway, which also serves to emphasize that this is all told through memory. The first paragraph also introduces the central conceit of music. The narrator was drawn to the "tones she called forth" from her violin and wanted desperately to play her "accompaniment." This serves the double role of sensory imagery (with the added effect of music being a powerful aural image) and metaphor, as the accompaniment stands in for the narrator's true desire to be coupled with his newfound crush. The musical juxtaposition between the "heaving tremor of the organ" and the "clear wail" of her violin serves to further accentuate how the narrator perceived the girl as above all other things, as high as an angel. Clearly, the memory of his meeting his crush is a powerful one that left an indelible impact on the narrator.

[3] Upon reflecting on this memory and the period of obsession that followed, the narrator cannot help but feel amused at the lengths to which his younger self would go; this is communicated to the reader with some playful irony and bemused yet earnest tone. The narrator claims to have made his "first and last attempts at poetry" in devotion to his crush, and jokes that he did not know to be "ashamed" at the quality of his poetry. This playful tone pokes fun at his childhood self for being an inexperienced poet, yet also acknowledges the very real passion that the poetry stemmed from. The narrator goes on to mention his "successful" endeavor to conceal his crush from his friends and the girl; this holds an ironic tone because the narrator immediately admits that his attempts to hide it were ill-fated and all parties were very aware of his feelings. The narrator also recalls his younger self jumping to hyperbolic extremes when imagining what he would do if betrayed by his love, calling her a "heartless jade" to ironically play along with the memory. Despite all this irony, the narrator does also truly

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comprehend the depths of his past self's infatuation and finds it moving. The narrator begins the second paragraph with a sentence that moves urgently, emphasizing the myriad ways the boy was obsessed. He also remarks, somewhat wistfully, that the experience of having this crush "moved [him] to a degree which now [he] can hardly think of as possible." Clearly, upon reflection the narrator feels a combination of amusement at the silliness of his former self and wistful respect for the emotion that the crush stirred within him.

[4] In this passage, the narrator has a multifaceted emotional response while remembering an experience that was very impactful on him. The meaning of the work is that when we look back on our memories (especially those of intense passion), added perspective can modify or augment how those experiences make us feel.

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Sample B

[1] Childhood crushes are commonplace for all youth. Many of these short infatuations are fleeting, but at the time it can seem like the whole world relies upon them. Children who are new to affection do not always know how to react or interpret these feelings. In the passage, the author makes use of syntax and imagery to display the nativity of the narrator's childhood crush.

[2] Imagery is a powerful tool to illustrate a scene. When describing one's crush, it might be expected to describe the appearance of the individual. In a unique move, the author focused their attention on describing the setting in which the narrator discovered his infatuation with the older girl, claiming that it "was just the proper setting to produce the effect upon a boy." In the midst of the girl's violin solo in a "half dim church," the boy was enraptured by the "heaving tremor of the organ" and the "clear wail of the violin." The personification of the organ using the phrase "heaving tremor" brings to mind the connotation of passion, much like an individual gasping for breath or a pounding heart. To a child who is inexperienced in the ways of affection, the atmosphere of the church combined with the vibrancy of the instruments led him to believe that passion could be naught else. This alone is what caused his attraction to the girl playing the violin. In his confusion with the atmosphere of the church, the boy misdirected his fascination to the image he had of the girl, instead of actual attraction to her as an individual. It cannot be mistaken that over the course of the passage, the boy never describes the girl beyond her physical appearance.

[3] The syntax of the passage also contributes to the attitude of naivety. When reflection on his crush, the narrator reflects how he "dreamed of her," how he "built air castles for her," how she was the "incarnation of every beautiful heroine," how when he "played the piano, it was to her," and how "not even music furnished an adequate outlet for [his] passion." All this the narrator does within one sentence. This use of lengthy, run-on sentences repeatedly throughout the passage can make the child's passion towards the girl seem rambling and convoluted. His admission of viewing her as the "incarnation of every beautiful heroine" also proves how he idealized the girl into a larger-than-life individual. This reckless admiration of the girl combined with his idealization of her is a combination that inevitably results in disappointment for the child. The boy dives head first into his idealized version of the world, fixing all of his hopes around a single individual.

[4] Having crushes as a child is commonplace. The boy set himself up for inescapable disappointment due to his blind passion for the girl. This is clear through his long-winded daydreams surrounding the girl and the vivid imagery of the setting in which their interactions take place. When people fall victim to whims and crushes, the danger is caused by not understanding the fleeting and fickle nature of their situation. However, if youth was not filled with the bursts of naive passion, it would be impossible for children to learn from their mistakes in order to build something less artificial in the future.

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Sample C

[1] In this excerpt from a novel published in 1912, the reader follows the rush of emotions of a young boy with a crush. The author explores a theme of repressed sexuality, which is consistent with the time period. This is done primarily through romantic diction and a longing tone in order to convey the complexity of a teenager's mind.

[2] Throughout the piece, the author uses eloquent words to convey his thoughts. When he first meets the girl, he describes the organ as having a "tremor" which mirrors his thoughts at that time. The boy also describes his memory of meeting her as a "fragrance" which has a positive connotation where the reader can almost picture him looking back on that day and smiling. The boy describes his depth of emotion for her with words such as "love", "dreamed", and "beautiful" which are all extremely light and airy as if he is floating on clouds. However, the boy is not always so proud of his emotions, as when other people may find out he describes himself as "ashamed" and "deceived". The complexity of the boy's emotions are portrayed clearly through his words as he switches between adoration and shame.

[3] The tone of this passage also clearly shows the complexity of the boy's emotions. In the beginning, when the boy first meets the girl the tone is excited and whimsical. The boy describes that he is so willing and anxious to play the accompaniment", showing the reader his excitement of his new crush. As the boy's feelings develop the tone becomes even more endearing. The boy says he "dreamed of her" and "built air castles for her" showing his fondness has obviously grown over time. He even goes as far as to say "She was my first love", showing an extreme escalation from a crush to serious emotions. The tone then shifts again whenever others may find out about the boy's feelings. The tone switches from adoration to shame quickly as he says "I was ashamed" and "I don't think I have felt greater embarrassment". The boy eventually has such strong feelings that he starts planning what he would do if she rejects him calling her a "heartless jade". The tone conveys the complexity of the boy's emotions through multiple shifts and a progressive development of feelings.

[4] This passage allows the reader inside the mind of a boy as he develops a crush. The complexity of his emotions is portrayed through multiple shifts in tone and diction in order to convey to the audience the importance of emotions. This passage shows us how deeply people feel without those outside of their mind knowing. This is a reminder to be considerate of others as they may be feeling things others are not aware of.

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Sample D

[1] Using literary devices/techniques such as imagery and tone, the author of the novel published in 1912 convey's the narrator's complex response to having a crush as passionate yet desperate and obsessive.

[2] In the first two paragraphs of the text, the narrator addresses the reader and goes into detail about the girl in which he was infatuated with. In the line "Perhaps the reader has already guessed why I was so willing and anxious to play the accompaniment to this violin solo" The narrator addresses the reader with the purpose to give the audience insight into his reasoning. He does so then introduces his motivation, which was a young girl he was in love with. The narrator mentions the setting in which he had first seen the girl and how he was compelled by more than just her performance. "Who had moved me to a degree... i do not think it was due to her wonderful playing". This shows the reader that the narrator was not only infatuated by her talent, but by the setting he had found her in. "And she, her eyes almost closing...pale face... slender body" This use of imagery in his description of the girl shows his infatuation with her down to her details. This also hints at the reader that her physical appearance was enough to distract him from her performance. "She was my first love, and I loved her as only a boy loves." The narrator directly expresses his feelings for his crush to the reader as being normal and what he thought was a natural way to admire a girl.

[3] In the last two paragraphs, the narrator starts off by explaining that though he is expressing his feelings to the reader, the girl does not know about his infatuation. "The reader must know that all of this adoration was in secret" The narrator must have felt comfort in admiring this young lady from afar as he had not revealed his feelings yet. He also reveals to the reader how he would dread if she ever found out; meaning he was scared for her eventual epiphany. Though he did not exactly want to come clean about his feelings, he was presented in a mental dilemma after his crush joked about the idea of the narrator possibly having feelings for her. His tone then switches from admiration to frustrated and desperate "that if she deceived me I should do something desperate... and the heartless jade, how she led me on!" This quick shift in tone from the narrator proposes his unstable attraction to the girl. He was so caught up in his feelings for her that he briefly "my heart beating with pleasurable excitement over the fact i was going to be near her" This unstable tone from the narrator shows his growing obsession and impulsive thoughts and actions regarding this girl. As he was once comfortable in admiring her from afar, he longs to be close to her and "to have her attention placed directly upon me" His desperation and obsessive personality is shown through the last two paragraphs in contrast to his original calm and distant one. This shows how quick one's emotions can take over them and make them act in sometimes irrational ways.

[4] In the novel published in 1912, the narrator's complex response to having a crush is

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conveyed as infatuating yet desperate and obsessive. The narrator once held a distance admiration for a girl but later finds himself obsessed in the idea of her, so much so that his thoughts and motivations become irrational.

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Sample E

[1] It is often difficult for one to communicate his or her love and affection for another. It is both intimidating and exciting to be in love, which is shown by the narrator in the excerpt. He is extremely observant and entranced by the woman at his church, and he can not help but care deeply about her. The narrator's descriptive writing of the setting and flashback, as well as his shift from a light-hearted and exaggerated tone to a serious and longing tone, confirms he is completely in love and yet completely hopeless, as he fails to share his feelings with the young girls.

[2] The excerpt begins with the narrator removing himself from the present and returning to the past: the day he meets his "first love." He speaks of every possible detail: her assumed age, the lighting in the church, the silence of the audience, "the heaving tremor of the organ under the clear wail of the violin," and even her facial features. It is obvious that the narrator is completely enthralled by the young woman before him. Through his attention to detail and his extreme description of the setting, the reader can not help but acknowledge the narrator's state of love.

[3] Throughout his writing, the narrator uses a somewhat playful, light-hearted, and airy tone, one that mimics his present state of infatuation. He speaks of how he daydreams of her, how he envisions their future together, and how happy he is just looking at her and listening to her play the violin. He is unable to accurately put into the words, the love and adornment he has towards the young girl. Though the narrator writes blissfully, hopefully, and as though he is part of a fairytale, he quickly shifts his writing as he reveals he is actually concerned, and longing for the young girl's affection. The narrator claims, "I wanted to be taken seriously. I had definitely made up my mind that I should never love another woman". It is obvious in his writing the man is not satisfied by merely admiring the girl from a distance. Though he does enjoy the sensational feeling the girl brings him, he hopes the idea of being in love with her is realistic and may, at some point, be reciprocated.

[4] There is a unique shift in the narrator's writing, and this exemplifies the complexity of his feelings. The narrator demonstrates that being in love is exciting, unknown, and playful, as well as scary, difficult, and deceitful. The narrator reveals his postulations towards being in love but ends his writing, stating that there is a certain excitement to its mystery. Shown through his use of detail, and the shift in tone, the narrator, clearly responds to having a crush in different ways.

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Sample F

[1] In this excerpt from the novel published in 1912, the narrator is a young boy who clearly believes he is in love with an older girl from his church. Throughout the passage, he talks only of this girl and ponders on what he can do to make her like him the way he likes her. The author uses literary devices including imagery and tone in this passage to help the reader better understand the thoughts of the narrator and his feelings toward this girl.

[2] Imagery is a visual description or figurative language used to represent ideas, actions, or thoughts. The narrator has intense thoughts and feelings toward this girl, and the reader is able to see these through the use of imagery. During the beginning of the passage, the narrator describes the girl he believes he is in love with. “Her eyes almost closing, the escaping strands of her dark hair wildly framing her pale face, and her slender body swaying to the tones she called forth, all combined to fire my imagination and my heart with a passion, though boyish, yet strong and, somehow, lasting”. The way he describes the girl lets the reader not only imagine the appearance of this girl, but also understand how the boy sees the girl and the perfections he uses in his description of her. The reader is also able to imagine what it was like when the boy accidentally handed in the wrong notebook to his teacher. The description of this allows the reader to picture the embarrassment and confusion of the narrator when he is confronted about the notebook. After the teacher confronted him, he told us that he “was ashamed not only that my teacher should see this nakedness of my heart, but that she should find out that I had any knowledge of such affairs”. The description of this embarrassment allows the reader to picture this scene and create an image of what the narrator’s appearance was with the embarrassment that he had. Imagery plays a large part in this passage of creating a picture for the reader to see to better help them understand the events and thoughts that take place.

[3] Tone is the attitude of a specific writer toward one individual or a group of people as a whole. The young boy believes he has strong feelings for this older girl, and the reader is able to see these feelings with the use of tone. In the middle of the passage, the boy describes what his feelings for this girl are, writing “She was my first love, and I loved her as only a boy loves. I dreamed of her, I built air castles for her, she was the incarnation of each beautiful heroine I knew; when I played the piano, it was to her, not even music furnished an adequate outlet for my passion”. The narrator is clearly talking about his attitude toward this individual girl. He creates an intense tone with the description of his feelings for the girl, and shows his effort to attract the girl’s attention by only playing the piano for her. The tone created in this passage plays a very important part of the story by allowing the reader to understand on a deeper level how much the young boy has feelings for this older girl and how much effort he is willing to put into getting her attention.

[4] Throughout the passage, imagery and tone are used multiple times. These literary devices

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play a vital role in helping the reader become more engaged in the story and allowing them to feel as if they are in the story next to the young boy. Imagery and tone not only play a large part in this story, but also help lots of other stories create a similar situation to allow the reader to better understand the story as a whole and help them become more engaged and interested in the events taking place.

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Sample G

[1] The narrator provides many complex responses to his development of a crush for a young violinist. He describes his crush as that of which only a boy can dream of, build an imaginary life with this girl and provide her with everything they could ever dream of. His physical reactions are that of playing the piano and writing poetry, although it seems that his poetic endeavors did not seem to be all that successful. The author describes this girl as almost an angel, using extremely descriptive words to describe her, such as describing “the escaping strands of her dark hair wildly framed her face” as she was playing the violin. These reactions are complex as it seems the narrator is wildly in love with this girl, and any young man who has had this feeling can attest that it can drive them mad with desperation for the one they wish to be with.