



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

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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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.
2. Listen to two stories, then draw and read.
3. Choose one story you would like to write about.
4. Plan your writing.
5. Write an essay in response to the story you chose.

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: Analyzing a Response to Literature

On the next page is an example of an essay in response to a piece of literature. It is based on a story called “Toto” in the Open Court anthology.

## Toto and Suku

The story of “Toto” reminds me of fables where the author wants you to learn a lesson. In “Toto” the main characters learn that by helping each other they can become brave even if they are afraid.

The story takes place near an African village. The main characters are a boy named Suku and a baby elephant named Toto. They each want to leave home but are afraid. Suku is scared to leave his village because of lions. Toto is curious about the world but is afraid to leave his valley.

One day Toto wanders away from his home and is caught in a trap. Suku rescues him and decides to walk Toto home through the bush where they accidentally meet a lion. They are both afraid that the lion is going to attack. Toto trumpets with his long trunk and his herd comes running to save him. Suku’s father has been out looking for him when he hears the elephant’s call for help. He drives up to help scare the lion away.

After learning that helping a friend made them braver even when they were scared, Suku and Toto are both back safe with their families. This story reminds me of a time when my older brother fell into the creek and I helped him out even though I was scared of falling in too. It felt great being able to help someone who didn’t expect it, just like Suku and Toto did in the story.

After reading:

1. Underline the main idea in the first paragraph. The main idea answers the question, “What is this story *really* about?”
2. Circle the setting and the main characters in the second paragraph.
3. In the last paragraph, the story’s main idea is supported by a personal experience. Underline the personal experience.
4. Share your work with a classmate.
  - What answers are the same as your partner? Different?
  - Did you change your mind about anything after seeing your partner’s work?

5. Read each section of the **Graphic Organizer** for “Toto and Suku.” Notice that brief phrases, short sentences and symbols are used to record the important events and significant details.

## Graphic Organizer

Title: “*Toto and Suku*”

### Main Idea:

*Helping someone who needs you = you become a better, braver person even if you are afraid.*

### Important events & significant details:

- *Boy and a baby elephant live near African village--curious about leaving home-- both scared of dangers out in the world*
- *Each leaves home at the same time. Elephant gets trapped. Boy frees Toto and walks him home. Meet a lion-- attack? Toto calls for help.*
- *Elephant’s herd and boy’s father arrive + scare the lion away. Boy feels brave helping the elephant and elephant feels brave calling for help.*

### An experience I had which supports the main idea:

*Helping others can make you a better person. For example when my brother fell in the creek, I saved him even though I was scared.*



### DAY TWO: Listen and Sketch

1. Listen to your teacher read aloud two stories (“Arella’s Answers” and “The Ant and the Grasshopper”). As you listen, images from the story may “pop-up” in your mind. Make a few small sketches of what you want to remember from the beginning, middle and end of each story. *Save the space below the dotted line for another activity.*



## Arella's Answers

**Beginning:**



**Middle:**



**End:**





## The Ant and the Grasshopper

**Beginning:**

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**Middle:**

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**End:**

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## Arella's Answers

Once there was a king who lived in a beautiful palace. He had lots of servants. He told lots of people what to do. He had lots of money, too. The trouble was that the king was lonely.

No one in the kingdom really liked the king because he wasn't very nice. He made the people give him much of their corn and grain. This left the people with very little to eat. The king also demanded half of the wool from the kingdom's sheep. Because of this, the people had very little wool left to make clothing for themselves.

One day the king watched a peasant girl enter the marketplace. Everyone waved and said "Hello" to her. The king wondered why people liked this plain peasant girl. He ordered two servants to bring her to him.

As the girl, whose name was Arella, slowly approached the throne, the king spoke in a loud voice, "Why do people like you so much? What did you do to make people like you?"

Arella thought that the king's question was silly, but she quickly answered. "They smile and greet me so, because I give them corn and grain."

The very next day the king was seen handing out baskets of corn and grain to the people in the marketplace. The people went straight home to make bread in case the king changed his mind. But the king was disappointed. Still no one waved or greeted him with a smile. The king ordered his servants to bring the peasant girl to him again.

As Arella quietly approached, the king tapped his fingers on the arm of his throne. "What else did you do to make people like you?"

Arella thought this question was silly, but she quickly answered. "They smile and greet me so, because I bring warm woolen cloth to their homes."

The very next day the king was seen delivering warm woolen cloth to people's homes. The people began making blankets and pants and coats right away, in case the king changed his mind. Later that day, he stood in the marketplace, waiting for people to greet him. No one did. Again he called for the peasant girl.

As Arella calmly approached, the king said to her, "What else?"

Arella thought that the question was silly, but she quickly answered. "They smile and greet me because in addition to giving them corn and grain and warm woolen cloth, I smile and greet them."

The very next day the king was seen smiling and waving to the people in the marketplace. The people's bellies were full of the king's corn and grain. Wearing their new warm woolen coats and pants, the people cheerfully waved back to the king.



### The Ant and the Grasshopper

A very busy ant hurried back and forth, collecting food for the winter. He carried everything he could find back to his nest. He knew his nest must be full of food by winter. A passing grasshopper remarked on how hard the ant was working. "It's a lovely summer day. Why don't you rest under this maple tree with me? We can watch the leaves flutter in the breeze."

"Oh, no, no, I couldn't," replied the ant breathlessly. "I'm much too busy. I must store up food for winter."

"Bah!" laughed the grasshopper. "Winter is far away. There's time for storing food later."

"Oh, no, no, there's not," warned the ant. "Winter will come sooner than you think."

The grasshopper moved on to the maple tree and watched the leaves on the trees blow in the wind. Many times that summer he watched the busy ant. He thought the ant was silly for working so hard in the middle of summer. Many times the grasshopper tried to get the ant to stop and watch the leaves blow in the wind or listen to the frogs or play with the crickets. But the ant's answer was always the same.

"Oh, no, no, I couldn't. I'm much too busy. I must store up food for winter."

Summer turned to autumn, and the days grew shorter. Still the busy ant went on, dragging food into his tunnels. Still the grasshopper couldn't be bothered. He was more interested in looking at the colorful leaves on the trees.

Autumn turned to winter, and snow fell at last. The ant crawled deep and safe into his tunnels and ate the food he had stored. The grasshopper, who had stored no food, starved.



### DAY THREE: Share, Connect, Select, Caption

1. Share your sketches you made yesterday with a partner and talk about the details of your sketches from each story. Listen to your partner.
2. Now, by yourself, skim through both stories and pick the one you can write the most and best about.

I am going to write about “\_\_\_\_\_.”

3. Silently reread the story you selected and underline a sentence from each section of the story (beginning, middle, and end) that best fits what you sketched on page 4 or 5. Copy each sentence under each sketch (like a caption) below the dotted line.



### DAY FOUR: Summary, Main Idea and Connections

1. Take a minute to tell your partner a summary of the story you will write about. Include the beginning, middle and end. Remember that a summary is *not a retelling*. It only includes the main idea and the important events and significant details. Listen to your partner.
2. Now, see if you can summarize the story you selected in just three written sentences. Share your three-sentence summary with a partner.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Each of the stories has a main idea that the author wants the reader to think about and understand. The author includes important events and significant details that support this main idea. Remember that the main idea answers the question, “What is this story *really* about?” What do you think is the main idea of the story you selected? What evidence from the story supports your thinking?

I think the main idea is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Do you have any personal experiences that connect to the main idea of the story you selected? Discuss with a partner.

The main idea reminds me of the time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



## DAY FIVE: Plan and Write

1. Plan for 10 -15 minutes. Using the work you have already done in your booklet, fill out the graphic organizer. You don't have time to write complete sentences so use words, phrases, and symbols.

The main idea of the story “\_\_\_\_\_” is:

Important events and significant details from the beginning, middle and end that support the main idea:

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Restate the main idea in your own words and if you can, include a personal connection:

*Writing Prompt:*

We are all unique and special and sometimes think differently about the same stories. You have selected one story to write about. Your teacher wants to know what *you* understand about the story.

Write an essay that shows you understand the story by stating the main idea and summarizing the story's important events and significant details. Use the text and your own experiences to support your ideas.

*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).