

NMSI English Mock Exam Lesson Prose Analysis 2013 Student Activity



NATIONAL
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INITIATIVE

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Prose Analysis

Introduction

The passage for prose analysis is usually an excerpt of prose fiction, taken from a novel or short story, although occasionally the prose analysis question contains an excerpt from a play. The passage that follows is from D. H. Lawrence's novel *The Rainbow*, published in 1915. Before students can write an analysis that will merit an upper score on the exam, they must first know how to do the following:

- read a passage that is part of a larger work
- recognize direct and indirect characterization
- recognize subtle clues about a character's situation and what his/her response reveals about his/her character
- select details to explain the author's use of literary devices
- link literary devices to meaning

I. Analyzing the Prompt (Large Group Activity)

Read carefully the prompt for Question 2 of the 2013 AP* English Literature Exam.

The following passage is from D. H. Lawrence's 1915 novel, *The Rainbow*, which focuses on the lives of the Brangwens, a farming family who lived in rural England during the late nineteenth century. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Lawrence employs literary devices to characterize the woman and capture her situation.

This prompt consists of two parts: **background information** and a **task**.

First examine the **background information** and consider what it tells you:

Does the title suggest anything about the larger work from which this excerpt is a part?

What information does the year of publication, 1915, suggest?

What might the novel be about?

Does knowing the author help you develop an opinion about the work?

Now consider the **task** included in the **prompt**:
What does the task ask you to do?

It also suggests that your analysis will discuss literary devices. What are some literary devices you might examine?

How many should you try to identify?

Points to remember:

- It is not enough simply to recognize these devices within the passage and to “announce” them in the essay.
- Your identification of two or three devices will reveal your understanding of the craft of writing fiction, but your analysis of their connection to the overall characterization will earn you a higher score on your essay.
- Analysis requires that you recognize, announce, and, **most importantly, explain** how these devices connect to the abstract part of the writing assignment, which in this instance is the character and situation of the woman in the passage.

II. Reading the Passage (Individual Activity)

First, silently read the passage from D. H. Lawrence’s novel *The Rainbow* ALL AT ONCE within the time specified.

2013 AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following passage is from D. H. Lawrence’s 1916 novel, *The Rainbow*, which focuses on the lives of the Brangwens, a farming family who lived in rural England during the late nineteenth century. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Lawrence employs literary devices to characterize the woman and capture her situation.

It was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrow to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about; it was enough that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand. So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn around.

But the woman wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy. Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faced outwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom; whereas the Brangwen men faced inwards to the teeming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins.

Looking out, as she must, from the front of her house towards the activity of man in the world at large, whilst her husband looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land, she strained her eyes to see what man had done

in fighting outwards to knowledge, she strained to hear how he uttered himself in his conquest, her deepest desire hung on the battle that she heard, far off, being waged on the edge of the unknown. She also wanted to know, and to be of the fighting host.

At home, even so near as Cossethay, was the vicar, who spoke the other, magic language, and had the other, finer bearing, both of which she could perceive, but could never attain to. The vicar moved in worlds beyond where her own menfolk existed. Did she not know her own menfolk; fresh, slow, full-built men, masterful enough, but easy, native to the earth, lacking outwardness and range of motion. Whereas the vicar, dark and dry and small beside her husband, had yet a quickness and a range of being that made Brangwen, in his large geniality, seem dull and local. She knew her husband. But in the vicar’s nature was that which passed beyond her knowledge. As Brangwen had power over the cattle so the vicar had power over her husband. What was it in the vicar, that raised him above the common men as man is raised above the beast? She craved to know. She craved to achieve this higher being, if not in herself, then in her children. That which makes a man strong even if he be little and frail in body, just as any man is little and frail beside a bull, and yet stronger than the bull, what was it? It was not money nor power nor position. What power had the vicar over Tom Brangwen—none. Yet strip them and set them on a desert island, and the vicar was the master. His soul was master of the other man’s. And why—why? She decided it was a question of knowledge.

III. Reading and Annotating the Passage (Group and Individual Activity)

Now you will read the passage in chunks. Remember to look for evidence that reveals the woman’s character and her situation.

“Character” is the combination of features and qualities that make up the personality, reputation, and morals of a person. “Characterization” is determined by what a character says and does and what others (including the author or narrator) say about him/her.

Text	Points to Consider	Inference—Evidence— Commentary
<p>It was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrow to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about; it was enough that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand. So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn around.</p>	<p>The first paragraph of the passage does not even mention the woman, but it very pointedly says, “It was enough for the men . . .” What does this statement suggest about <u>the woman</u>? (Watch for evidence of how she feels about this environment.)</p> <p>The paragraph describes the environment in which the woman lives. How would you describe that environment?</p>	<p>Inference (assertion) <i>The men thrive in a very hostile environment.</i></p> <p>Evidence <i>“It was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrow to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about it; . . . that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand.”</i></p> <p><i>“. . .they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed . . .”</i></p> <p>Commentary <i>The men seem to thrive in this environment though they work hard to grow wheat and corn, to help a cow give birth, to rid the farm of pests such as rats and rabbits. Rather than being overwhelmed by the hard work, their lives are “full and surcharged, their senses full fed.”</i></p>

<p>But the woman wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy. Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faced outwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom; whereas the Brangwen men faced inwards to the teeming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins.</p>	<p>What contrast is established in the first sentence of this paragraph?</p> <p>What is suggested by the repetition of the word “out”?</p> <p>What kind of world does the woman imagine exists beyond the farm-buildings and the village?</p>	<p>Inference (assertion) <i>The woman wants more from life than is available to her in this environment.</i></p> <p>Evidence</p> <p>Commentary</p>
<p>Looking out, as she must, from the front of her house towards the activity of man in the world at large, whilst her husband looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land, she strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to knowledge, she strained to</p>	<p>What contrast is established by the description of the woman “looking out . . . from the front of her house” while her husband “looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land”?</p>	<p>Inference (assertion)</p> <p>Evidence</p>

<p>hear how he uttered himself in his conquest, her deepest desire hung on the battle that she heard, far off, being waged on the edge of the unknown. She also wanted to know, and to be of the fighting host.</p>	<p>What is meant by the phrase “the world at large”?</p> <p>How is this world different from the world in which the woman lives?</p>	<p>Commentary</p>
<p>At home, even so near as Cossethay, was the vicar, who spoke the other, magic language, and had the other, finer bearing, both of which she could perceive, but could never attain to. The vicar moved in worlds beyond where her own menfolk existed. Did she not know her own menfolk: fresh, slow, full-built men, masterful enough, but easy, native to the earth, lacking outwardness and range of motion. Whereas the vicar, dark and dry and small beside her husband, had yet a quickness and a range of being that made Brangwen, in his large geniality, seem dull and</p>	<p>How is the vicar different from the woman’s husband and the other Brangwen men?</p> <p>How is the vicar’s world, “beyond where her own menfolk existed,” related to “the world at large”?</p>	<p>Inference (assertion)</p> <p>Evidence</p>

<p>local. She knew her husband. But in the vicar’s nature was that which passed beyond her knowledge. As Brangwen had power over the cattle so the vicar had power over her husband. What was it in the vicar, that raised him above the common men as man is raised above the beast? She craved to know. She craved to achieve this higher being, if not in herself, then in her children. That which makes a man strong even if he be little and frail in body, just as any man is little and frail beside a bull, and yet stronger than the bull, what was it? It was not money nor power nor position. What power had the vicar over Tom Brangwen—none. Yet strip them and set them on a desert island and the vicar was the master. His soul was master of the other man’s. And why—why? She decided it was a question of knowledge.</p>	<p>What does the woman “crave to achieve”?</p>	<p>Commentary</p>
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IV. Composing the Thesis Statement and Introduction (Individual Activity)

Read again the prompt for Question 2 of the 2013 AP* English Literature Exam.

The following passage is from D. H. Lawrence’s 1915 novel, *The Rainbow*, which focuses on the lives of the Brangwens, a farming family who lived in rural England during the late nineteenth century. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Lawrence employs literary devices to characterize the woman and capture her situation.

An effective thesis statement states the assertions and writer’s opinion, which are then supported in the essay. The thesis statement answers the prompt and provides an outline to the essay. Complete the following thesis statement:

In *The Rainbow*, D. H. Lawrence _____

V. Evaluating Your Essay

As time allows, review the essay you wrote on *The Rainbow* for the mock exam. Identify your strongest analytical paragraph. With a partner, discuss something you could now do to revise this paragraph.

VI. Reviewing a High Scoring Essay

With pen in hand, annotate the student essay below. Mark phrases and sentences that are particularly effective in analyzing how Lawrence characterizes the woman and captures her situation. Discuss your findings with a partner or with your class. After reviewing the essay and the scoring guide which follows it, assign a score of 1 – 9 to this essay. Be ready to explain your score.

Think about how this essay compares to the essay you wrote for the mock exam. What are some things you can do to improve the writing you do to analyze a prose passage?

In the hours of sun, heat, and dust, the Brangwen family illustrates the typical rural family: a dominant husband, a subservient wife, and many unknowing children. Yet beneath this façade lies a greater battle over power, knowledge, and dominance. D. H. Lawrence’s The Rainbow passage captures

the caged situation of a rural woman who yearns for more than she possesses through contrasting rural earth and alien urban imagery, a yearning tone, and an evolving form.

Through images of farming and urban life, Lawrence presents the tension of the Brangwen woman's situation. The passage begins in the fields of Brangwen male dominance. Outside, the men rule the "pain and death" in "their blood, earth and sky". The domain of the farm is enough for them. The "staring at the sun" makes them "unable to turn around" to any other source of knowledge. In contrast, the "cities and governments" are presented as a "magic land". They depict a land of the "pulsing heat of creation", facing "outwards" and to the future. These contrasting images illustrates the indecision and tension of the Brangwen woman, who, caught in the house, is in the middle of the two and yet, part of neither. Although she may long for the "knowledge" of the men of the city, she is an onlooker to both processes. The woman is depicted as "looking out, as she must" to everything she desires in the distance. Both the "vicar" and the men of the earth are separated from her. The contrasting images of urban and rural life demonstrate the division between the Brangwen woman and the world at large.

Lawrence's use of a yearning tone demonstrates the woman's inquisitive nature and caged situation. The introduction of the woman in the second paragraph comes with the use of words like "cities", "governments", and "creation", demonstrating the woman's

desire for knowledge. She sits within her house, dreaming of cities of "creation" and "freedom", whereas she has none. Furthermore, her captivity is further shown in the tone of the phrase "as she must". The word "must" implies a sort of bondage for the woman, as though she is only allowed to look but not touch. Finally, the tone within the final paragraph demonstrate the woman's superior knowledge. The paragraph itself is full of question of "what?" and "why?", illustrating the woman's questions. She yearns for answers, unlike her husband, who is happy with so-called "blood intimacy". Words like "crave" showing the woman's longing and her curious character, always wanting to wanting to know why. The narrator's tone of desire and longing illustrate the Brangwen woman's curiosity within her confined life.

Finally, the evolving form starkly contrasts the Brangwen men and women. The passage begins with the men of the farm and their "blood intimacy". The first paragraph holds no thoughts, only aesthetic images and basic human responses. This simplicity reflects the nature of the farm men: unquestioning and basic, not exceeding confines of knowledge or curiosity. Yet, once the woman's viewpoint begins, that dramatically changes. The sentences are long and dynamic, with many questions and answers within them. The woman pokes and prods at the confines society has put before her, straining "her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to knowledge". Furthermore, the woman's questions demonstrate her admiration and want of knowledge. The

final paragraph is full of questions, much like the woman, questions of her status, of the world outside, and of the nature of life. The changing form reflects the shift of Brangwen men to Brangwen women.

A yearning tone, shifting form, and contrasting urban and rural imagery illustrate the Brangwen woman's curious nature and unfortunate separation from the knowledge she seeks. The Brangwen woman and her situation demonstrate the significance of the journey for knowledge.

2013 AP[®] English Literature Scoring Guide

Question #2: Lawrence, *The Rainbow*

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but in problematic cases, please consult your table leader. The score that you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, style, and mechanics: **Reward the writers for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

9-8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how Lawrence employs literary devices to characterize the woman and capture her situation. The writers make a strong case for their interpretation. They may consider a variety of literary devices, and they engage the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear and effectively organized. Essays scored a nine (9) reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an eight (8).

7-6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how Lawrence employs literary devices to characterize the woman and capture her situation. The writers provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to a variety of literary devices. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than 9-8 essays, the writers present their ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Essays scored a seven (7) present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a six (6).

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but tend to be superficial or thin in their discussion of how Lawrence employs literary devices to characterize the woman and capture her situation. While containing some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how literary devices contribute to characterizing the woman and capturing her situation may be slight, and support from the passage may tend toward summary or paraphrase. While these writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7-6 essays.

4-3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; the writers may ignore how Lawrence employs literary devices or how the woman and her situation are characterized and captured. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Essays scored a three (3) may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

2-1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers 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 writer's ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a one (1) contain little coherent discussion of the passage.

0 These essays give a response that is completely off topic or inadequate; there may be some mark or a drawing or a brief reference to the task.

-- These essays are entirely blank.