

Regents Text-Analysis Response

The following is the Regents text-analysis response question as it appears on the NYS Regents Exam:

Your Task: Closely read the text provided on pages 19 and 20 and write a well-developed, text-based response of two to three paragraphs. In your response, identify a central idea in the text and analyze how the author's use of *one* writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis. Do *not* simply summarize the text. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response. Write your response in the spaces provided on pages 7 through 9 of your essay booklet.

Guidelines:

Be sure to:

- Identify a central idea in the text
- Analyze how the author's use of *one* writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Examples include: characterization, conflict, denotation/connotation, metaphor, simile, irony, language use, point-of-view, setting, structure, symbolism, theme, tone, etc.
- Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

NOTE: while the Regents asks for a 2-3 paragraph response, we are instructing you to write **a brief essay of at least four paragraphs**. The following is an outline for writing the Regents text-analysis response:

OUTLINE:

Introduction

1. Begin with a general statement about the central idea. (1-2 sentences)
2. Include a TAG with the writing strategy/literary element that you will be discussing
3. End with a thesis statement that explains how the writing strategy/literary element develops the central idea.

Body Paragraphs (one for each example or set of examples)

For each body paragraph:

1. Begin with a topic sentence about how the writing strategy/literary element is used.
2. Explain using quotes
3. Connect to the central idea.

Conclusion

1. Write 1-2 specific sentences about the text.
2. Write one general statement applying the text to life.

SAMPLE TEXT-ANALYSIS RESPONSE TO MARGE PIERCY'S "BARBIE DOLL"

The contemporary Barbie Doll has been the cause of much debate in contemporary society. Many see the Barbie as perpetuating impossible standards for young women. In her poem, "Barbie Doll," Marge Piercy uses imagery to portray a young woman's struggle with self-image. Piercy suggests that society's emphasis on beauty is detrimental to young women.

Piercy begins by describing the toys the "girlchild" is typically given: "dolls that did pee-pee/and miniature GE stoves and irons/and wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy." The imagery of these toys suggests the roles prescribed for girls from a very young age. Even in the 21st century, girls are expected to play "house," acting as mothers who cook and clean and wear makeup. The girl in the poem attempts to meet these standards and seems successful until she is scrutinized by the eyes of society.

In the second stanza, Piercy again uses imagery, this time to describe the girl's failure to meet societal standards. A classmate taunts her by saying, "You have a great big nose and fat legs." The image created in this statement is not that of the perfect girl; obviously, this is not what the girl aspires to look like, and her failure to meet society's standards results in her apparent suicide.

Finally, the last stanza of the poem utilizes imagery once again, in the portrait of the girl in her casket with "a turned-up putty nose,/dressed in a pink and white nightie." Ironically, the final image portrayed of the girl is one of societal perfection. She has met society's standards with her perfectly sculpted nose and her pink nightgown (a color most associated with little girls), but at a great cost.

Piercy's imagery is seminal to understanding her criticism of society's standards for women. As long as women are held to impossible standards, they will continue to feel inadequate.