

Ohlone College English Learning Center
English 151B: Writing and Reading Program:

MANZANAR

English 151B Students:

The Writing and Reading program for English 151B asks you to write three paragraph responses based on the book Farewell to Manzanar. After writing each of these paragraphs according to the schedule determined for your class, have your paragraph evaluated. You will be given advice for improving your paragraph responses; take notes and refer to them when you write the next paragraph.

FREMONT

If your class is at the Fremont campus, take your paragraph to an English Learning Center (ELC) instructor to be evaluated. After your paragraph has been evaluated, staple the paragraph to the signed and dated response form; then fill out a green paragraph submission form and submit all of them together to the ELC or Tutoring Center staff.

NEWARK

If your class is at the Newark Campus, take your paragraph to an English instructor at the Tutoring Center or to an ELC instructor at the Fremont Campus to be evaluated. After your paragraph has been evaluated, staple the paragraph to the signed and dated response form; then fill out a green paragraph submission form and submit all of them together to the ELC or Tutoring Center staff.

It is very important for you to review this material before proceeding with the program. Here, you will find three key sections: guidelines for writing response paragraphs, sample responses with commentaries, and the response sheets you will use to complete the program.

Guidelines for Writing a Response Paragraph

You will be asked to write three short paragraphs in response to the book. These responses will require you to summarize and analyze particular events or incidents. Carefully reading the book, especially understanding the actions and motivations of the characters, will prepare you to respond to these prompts.

Reading the prompt

Before you can write a paragraph, you must understand the prompt. “Prompt” simply means directions for writing. As you read the prompt, think about what you need to write about in the paragraph.

The prompt will usually be short: one or two sentences. Look for important words in the prompt that tell you how to write your answer. The following is a list of key terms that often appear in writing prompts, along with their definitions:

- Analyze:** discuss how one part of the writing relates to the whole piece of writing
- Compare:** show the similarities between two or more subjects
- Contrast:** show the differences between two or more subjects
- Define:** put into your own words what the author means
- Describe:** give specific details and examples
- Explain:** discuss what the author means in your own words
- Respond:** give your opinion about the author's ideas, for instance, explain why you agree or disagree with the author

A good strategy is to read the prompt until you understand the directions, then underline key terms. Underlining key terms will keep you focused on your writing task. If you do not focus on the correct writing task, your response will not answer the question.

Notice how the key words in the sample prompt are underlined:

Sample Prompt: In Chapter Two, the narrator describes a rather dramatic action her mother takes when a secondhand dealer makes her an offer on a set of china. In one well-developed paragraph, describe what action the mother takes and explain what feeling or feelings are behind her action.

This prompt asks you to first describe an action the mother took then to explain the mother's feelings. You must do both of these in your paragraph to write a complete answer.

Notice, too, that this prompt is composed of two sentences: 1) the first sentence gives information about where in the book you should focus your attention, and 2) the second sentence gives directions for writing. This is a very typical pattern for prompts.

Be sure you understand the prompt before you begin writing. Ask an English instructor or ELC instructional assistant if you have any questions about the prompt.

Writing the Opening Sentence

Since you have been given specific directions about what to write in your paragraph, a good strategy is to begin the paragraph with a direct answer to the prompt. For example, the following opening sentence does this well:

In the second chapter of Farewell to Manzanar, the narrator, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, explains that her mother shatters a set of valuable china rather than sell it for a "humiliating" price to a secondhand dealer.

Besides addressing the prompt in your opening sentence, you should also identify the title and the author of the book. The title of the book should be underlined and the author's full name given.

There are different ways to write a good opening sentence. The following are also good opening sentences:

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, in the second chapter of Farewell to Manzanar, explains that her mother shatters a set of valuable china rather than sell it for a "humiliating" price to a secondhand dealer.

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's mother shatters a set of valuable china rather than sell it for a "humiliating" price to a secondhand dealer, as the narrator explains in the second chapter of Farewell to Manzanar.

It is also easy to write a grammatically incorrect opening sentence. Be sure you do not write a sentence fragment or an ungrammatical sentence, as in the following examples:

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, in the second chapter of Farewell to Manzanar, she explains that her mother shatters a set of valuable china rather than sell it for a "humiliating" price to a secondhand dealer. [NOTE: This sentence is grammatically incorrect because the subject of the sentence is repeated ("Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston" and "she").]

In the second chapter of Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, explains that her mother shatters a set of valuable china rather than sell it for a "humiliating" price to a secondhand dealer. [NOTE: This sentence is a fragment. There is no subject, only a verb ("explains").]

When writing the opening sentence, try modeling your sentence after one of the correct examples. Also, check your sentence against the incorrect examples to be sure you have not written a sentence fragment or an ungrammatical sentence.

To sum up, the first sentence in your response (or the first two sentences, if you can not fit all this information into one sentence) should do the following:

- address the prompt
- state the title of the book
- give the author's name

Writing the Body of the Paragraph

Obviously, what you write in the body of the response paragraph depends on the prompt. Nevertheless, there are a few things that will be similar when answering a question. In fact, you might try following these five steps in preparation for writing your paragraph:

1. Re-read the part of the book related to the prompt and think about how best you can answer the question.
2. Take notes on your ideas; you need to use your own words and thoughts to answer the prompt.
3. Mark examples and details from the reading that will help explain or support your ideas.
4. Select the best two or three examples from your list to use in your paragraph; these examples should be important or obvious examples that will clearly prove your point.
5. Organize the examples in the best order to address the prompt; often the best order is the same order as examples appear in the book, although you could order examples from the easiest or most obvious to more complicated or less obvious ones.

First Draft of the Response Paragraph

Once you have decided how you will answer the prompt and have selected and organized the examples you will use in your paragraph, you can write a first draft of the paragraph.

Here are some tips to writing a good paragraph:

- Alternate between explaining your answer to the prompt and supporting your answer with examples from the book.

- Summarize examples and details from the book, or quote if you use three or more words in a row from the book.
- Use your own words as much as possible and quote only when you cannot effectively restate the author's words or when you want to use the words of characters in the book to prove a point.
- Write a concluding sentence that sums up the answer to the prompt at the end of the paragraph to give the paragraph a sense of closure and remind the reader of the main idea.

Revising First Draft of Response Paragraph

After you write a first draft of your paragraph, you should re-read it. Be sure the writing is clear and correct. Be sure you have answered all parts of the prompt. Be sure your examples and details are written in your own words and they clearly address the prompt. Make any needed changes before giving your paragraph to an English instructor to be evaluated.

Review

Here is a summary of the most important points you should keep in mind as you write your response paragraph:

- Read the prompt carefully, underline key words, and be certain you understand what the prompt is asking you to write about.
- Re-read the relevant parts of the book with the prompt in mind; consider how you can answer the prompt and what examples and details from the reading will help support your answer.
- Formulate your answer to the prompt; select and organize the best examples to support your answer.
- Write a first draft of your response paragraph, using the examples you selected to support your answer to the prompt and writing a closing sentence.
- Re-read and revise your first draft; be sure to keep quotes short and embedded in sentences of your own to avoid plagiarism.

Sample Responses and Response Sheets

The following sample responses to a prompt from Farewell to Manzanar and the commentaries that are presented next to each are intended to help you get a practical sense of what standards and criteria instructors will use when evaluating your responses. The written responses you will receive on your paragraphs will not be as detailed, but from your evaluation and your interaction with an instructor, you should understand where your strengths and weaknesses are and how you can improve your future responses and perform your best on the post-test for the program.

Before reviewing this material, it may be helpful for you to have read to the end of Chapter Two in Farewell to Manzanar, concentrating especially on the pages relevant to the prompt. After reading the sample prompt, begin reading the first sample response and the commentary, which is printed alongside it. Pay close attention to the errors that are pointed out. Continue reading the second sample response, its commentary and, finally, review the last sample response and commentary.

Once you have finished reviewing the samples and any other instructional material provided to you, you should read ahead in Farewell to Manzanar and complete the first Response Sheet, which is attached.

Sample Prompt: In Chapter Two, the narrator describes a rather dramatic action her mother takes when a secondhand dealer makes her an offer on a set of china. In one well-developed paragraph, describe what action the mother takes and explain what feeling or feelings are behind her action.

Sample Response 1: Needs Revision

The mother brakes the china on the floor. She cries while she does this. The whole set lay in scattered blue and white fragments across the wooden floor.

To do this, the mother must of been angry and frustrated. She was frustrated because her family was being force to move she could not take her China. She breaks the china because she was humiliated that the salesman gave her less money than she wanted. Her family had to move because they were Japanese-Americans and it was wartime.

Commentary on Sample Response 1:

This response needs a more effective first sentence which makes reference to the work being discussed. A first sentence which mentions the work and author would help focus the reader's attention and more directly address the prompt.

The first sentence that is presented to the reader contains a misspelled word. Be sure to proofread your work carefully.

The third sentence of the response is very problematic and is a major factor in the evaluation of this paragraph. This sentence is directly copied from the chapter. It is presented without quotation marks or any introduction indicating it is quoted. If wording from a source is copied under these circumstances, it is considered plagiarism.

The next sentence is set apart, beginning a new paragraph. Review the prompt and note that the writer is being asked for a single paragraph. The sentence also contains a language usage error. Frustration, mentioned in the previous sentence, is being developed here, but the sentence itself is a run-on and contains a language usage problem and a capitalization error.

A new idea, humiliation, is being introduced here. Note that the writer previously mentioned only anger and frustration. The idea of anger was mentioned, but never developed. This sentence is also problematic because it doesn't demonstrate clear understanding. The man who came to the house was a secondhand dealer, not a salesman and he did not end up giving the mother any money. The response concludes with rather vague information, which seems not especially related to the prompt. The response ends abruptly and would greatly benefit from further development.

Summary: This response contains serious problems such as a plagiarized passage, some inattention to the prompt, unclear organization and development and poor proofreading. This would not be considered a passing response and would require revision.

Sample Prompt: In Chapter Two, the narrator describes a rather dramatic action her mother takes when a secondhand dealer makes her an offer on a set of china. In one well-developed paragraph, describe what action the mother takes and explain what feeling or feelings are behind her action.

Sample Response 2: Adequate

In Chapter Two of Farewell to Manzanar, the narrator explains that her mother smashes her valuable set of china when a secondhand dealer offer her a low price for them. The mother smashes some of the china because she is angry. She is angry that she has to get rid of the china because her family is being forced to move from their home and they are not able to keep many of their possessions. She is also anger because the set of china is valuable, but the man who comes to by it offers her only a very little amount of money to buy it. She knows that the man is trying to take advantage of the situation.

Commentary on Sample Response 2:

This response contains a fairly strong first sentence. It provides some context for the response and clarifies the name of the work that is being discussed. Compare this sentence to the first sentence in Sample Response 1. The sentence does contain a language usage error, however.

The writer continues the response and begins to answer the prompt's request to explain a feeling. The writer has chosen to discuss anger. However, notice that the writer has only very briefly described the action taken by the mother, which is also asked for in the prompt. Further development would help. The sentence is a bit confusing, since the text makes it clear that all of the china, rather than "some" was destroyed.

The writer adds some further development here, elaborating on another cause of the mother's anger. The sentence here contains two spelling/language usage errors.

Additional development explaining the situation the family is in would help this response.

Summary: This is an adequate response. It lacks full development in one area and does not consistently demonstrate full understanding of the material. The passage contains some significant proofreading errors. It is adequate but could certainly be improved with additional work in the composition process.

Sample Prompt: In Chapter Two, the narrator describes a rather dramatic action her mother takes when a secondhand dealer makes her an offer on a set of china. In one well-developed paragraph, describe what action the mother takes and explain what feeling or feelings are behind her action.

Sample Response 3: Good

In the second chapter of Farewell to Manzanar, the narrator, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, explains that her mother shatters a set of valuable china rather than sell it for a “humiliating” price to a secondhand dealer. Even after the dealer leaves, the mother “stood there smashing cups and bowls and platters.” She destroys the whole set. She takes this action because she is both humiliated and frustrated. She is humiliated by the small amount of money offered by the dealer for her valuable china. She finds this offer humiliating since the china is a family heirloom that she thinks is worth “at least two hundred” dollars. She is also frustrated because she is being forced to get rid of the china because her family is being forced from their home.

Commentary on Sample Response 3:

This response begins with a very clear sentence which makes references to the work and the author. The sentence also provides some detailed information which directly relates to the prompt. The only concern in this sentence is that the title of the text is not underlined.

The first and second sentences also effectively and correctly make use of quoted material from the text. Note that the quotes are integrated into the writer’s own sentences.

The writer begins to address the second part of the prompt, mentioning two feelings that the mother is experiencing, humiliation and frustration.

The first idea, humiliation, is developed by closely examining the events in the story. Notice that an integrated and appropriate quote is used in this sentence.

The ending is slightly weak and would benefit from a bit more development. Just as the idea of humiliation is explained in two sentences, the idea of frustration should be developed in a similar way. The ending is also rather abrupt. Perhaps some additional information about the reason the family is being forced to move would help.

Summary: This is a good response. It addresses the prompt directly, provides details and is written clearly. The response is well-organized, demonstrates a good understanding of the reading and uses quotes effectively. The second idea being developed and the ending are rather weak and could benefit from further development.

Sample Prompt: In Chapter Two, the narrator describes a rather dramatic action her mother takes when a secondhand dealer makes her an offer on a set of china. In one well-developed paragraph, describe what action the mother takes and explain what feeling or feelings are behind her action.

Sample Response 4: Excellent

In Chapter Two of Farewell to Manzanar, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston describes how her mother smashed her entire set of precious blue and white china rather than sell it to a secondhand dealer for only fifteen dollars. The family had been given only forty-eight hours to move out of their home and Houston's mother could not take her china even though it was one of her "most valuable possessions" because their car was packed full of their belongings and all of the kids. Houston explains that "the secondhand dealers had been prowling around for weeks like wolves," knowing they would be able to take advantage of families who were desperate to sell their remaining possessions. Exhausted after staying up all night packing, Houston's mother was at her wits' end, and when the dealer offered her only fifteen dollars for this precious set of china, she snapped and started smashing it to pieces right in front of him. She didn't yell; she just stared at him in "rage" as she did this, "quivering and glaring...with tears streaming down her cheeks," having finally snapped from the pressure of her husband being taken away, the family being forced to move, the uncertainty of what was to become of them, and the humiliation and unfairness of the situation. Smashing the china was her violent reaction to all this, and it was her way of refusing to be taken advantage of. She was pushed beyond her breaking point, but she still had her pride.

Summary: This is an excellent response. It clearly addresses the prompt, the information is presented in an organized fashion and it is clear that the essay has been carefully composed and proofread.

Commentary on Sample Response 4:

This response begins with a clear topic sentence which makes reference to the work and the author and which responds directly to the prompt with specific information from the book. This introductory sentence has no grammar or language usage errors and uses language in a vivid and clear way.

The first few sentences of the response provides some background information to help explain what is happening to the family and why Houston's mother is in the position of needing to sell her set of china. Note that the writer effectively blends quotes from the book into her own sentences and provides detailed descriptions to fully illustrate what is happening.

The writer then describes the mother's actions, using vivid language and specific details from the book. Note that she uses a variety of sentence types in her writing as well as a combination of paraphrasing and quoting to help describe the events in the book.

The response continues with an explanation of the feelings the mother was experiencing in this scene, in response to the second part of the prompt. The writer provides explanation of why the mother might be feeling the way she does and what she might be saying through her actions.

Note the way the concluding statement briefly summarizes what the writer is explaining overall in this paragraph.

Ohlone College English Learning Center
English 151B: Writing and Reading Program

Response # 1 for Farewell to Manzanar

Date: _____ Student's Name: _____
151B Instructor's Name: _____ 151B Section # _____

Directions to the Student: After reading Farewell to Manzanar, carefully read the following prompt and respond to it with a well-developed, typed paragraph.

Prompt for Response # 1: In Chapter Eight, the narrator describes her father's isolation at the camp, writing that "it seemed he didn't go outside for months." In a well-developed paragraph, explain why the narrator's father is so isolated from others and how he copes with this isolation.

Continue reading Farewell to Manzanar and complete Response # 2 by the deadline indicated to you on your deadline sheet.

FREMONT

If your class is at the Fremont campus, take your paragraph to an English Learning Center (ELC) instructor to be evaluated. After your paragraph has been evaluated, staple the paragraph to the signed and dated response form; then fill out a green paragraph submission form and submit all of them together to the ELC or Tutoring Center staff.

NEWARK

If your class is at the Newark Campus, take your paragraph to an English instructor at the Tutoring Center or to an ELC instructor at the Fremont Campus to be evaluated. After your paragraph has been evaluated, staple the paragraph to the signed and dated response form; then fill out a green paragraph submission form and submit all of them together to the ELC or Tutoring Center staff.

Important Note: Ohlone College abides by guidelines for academic honesty. It is expected that the work you submit to fulfill this assignment is your own. If your work is copied from someone else, you may lose all credit for lab work completed this semester.

For Staff Use Only:

Circle one only: 5 --Inadequate 10--Adequate or above

Note: 0 points if not submitted or late

Instructor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Rec. Computer _____ **(Staff initials)**

Ohlone College English Learning Center
English 151B: Writing and Reading Program
Response # 2 for Farewell to Manzanar

Date: _____ Student's Name: _____
151B Instructor's Name: _____ 151B Section # _____

Directions to the Student: After reading Farewell to Manzanar, carefully read the following prompt and respond to it with a well-developed, typed paragraph.

Prompt for Response # 2: At the close of Chapter Sixteen, the narrator explains that feelings of fear seemed to be very strong even though the camps were closing and internees were free to leave them. In a well-developed paragraph, explain what—specifically—the narrator feels the former internees had to fear once they left the camps.

Continue reading Farewell to Manzanar and complete Response # 3 by the deadline indicated to you on your deadline sheet.

FREMONT

If your class is at the Fremont campus, take your paragraph to an English Learning Center (ELC) instructor to be evaluated. After your paragraph has been evaluated, staple the paragraph to the signed and dated response form; then fill out a green paragraph submission form and submit all of them together to the ELC or Tutoring Center staff.

NEWARK

If your class is at the Newark Campus, take your paragraph to an English instructor at the Tutoring Center or to an ELC instructor at the Fremont Campus to be evaluated. After your paragraph has been evaluated, staple the paragraph to the signed and dated response form; then fill out a green paragraph submission form and submit all of them together to the ELC or Tutoring Center staff.

Important Note: Ohlone College abides by guidelines for academic honesty. It is expected that the work you submit to fulfill this assignment is your own. If your work is copied from someone else, you may lose all credit for lab work completed this semester.

For Staff Use Only:

Circle one only: 5 --Inadequate 10--Adequate or above

Note: 0 points if not submitted or late

Instructor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Rec. Computer _____ **(Staff initials)**

Ohlone College English Learning Center

English 151B: Writing and Reading Program

Response # 3 for Farewell to Manzanar

Date: _____ Student's Name: _____

151B Instructor's Name: _____ 151B Section # _____

Directions to the Student: After reading Farewell to Manzanar, carefully read the following prompt and respond to it with a well-developed, typed paragraph.

Prompt for Response # 3: In 1988, President Ronald Reagan authorized legislation which formally apologized to Japanese-Americans who were sent to relocation camps during World War II. In his speech on that occasion, he called the wartime decision to send families to camps a "mistake." In a well-developed paragraph, respond to the idea that what happened to the family in Farewell to Manzanar was a "mistake." Does that word appropriately capture what happened? Is it too mild? Is it too strong? Use specific examples from the text to support your response.

FREMONT

If your class is at the Fremont campus, take your paragraph to an English Learning Center (ELC) instructor to be evaluated. After your paragraph has been evaluated, staple the paragraph to the signed and dated response form; then fill out a green paragraph submission form and submit all of them together to the ELC or Tutoring Center staff.

NEWARK

If your class is at the Newark Campus, take your paragraph to an English instructor at the Tutoring Center or to an ELC instructor at the Fremont Campus to be evaluated. After your paragraph has been evaluated, staple the paragraph to the signed and dated response form; then fill out a green paragraph submission form and submit all of them together to the ELC or Tutoring Center staff.

Important Note: Ohlone College abides by guidelines for academic honesty. It is expected that the work you submit to fulfill this assignment is your own. If your work is copied from someone else, you may lose all credit for lab work completed this semester.

For Staff Use Only:

Circle one only: 5 --Inadequate 10--Adequate or above

Note: 0 points if not submitted or late

Instructor/IA Signature: _____

Date: _____

Rec. Computer _____ **(Staff initials)**