Sample Task Shells for Developing Pre, Mid-, or Post-Assessments: Literary Critique - Character Study

Three "opinion-based" task shells piloted at grade 4 are on the following pages. These assessments introduce the concept of "opinions on texts" – also called literary analysis and critique. These task shells could be adapted for use at other grade levels with appropriately selected texts. Both print and non-print texts can be read aloud, viewed, or read independently for instructional and assessment purposes. More scaffolding (e.g., graphic organizers, paired reading) should be included in the pre- or mid-assessments, than on the post assessment.

- The first example is an opinion/critique of a self-selected text. This could be adapted for any independently read text as a pre-, mid-, or post-assessment. Task complexity increases (over time) as the text's complexity increases.
- The second task uses a short text (chosen for students) and asks students to state and support an opinion about how a character changed during the story. Prewriting activities include a short class discussion using only basic comprehension questions about the text. This ensures that all student have a foundation to buid upon. Before students move to analyzing multiple texts, they should "practice" with one text.
- The third task is designed for use with 2 short texts and asks students to compare characters (traits, actions, motivations, etc.) from the stories. While these task shells are for examining characters, they could be used for exploring other aspects of author's craft (e.g., intended use of literary devices, themes).

Each writing assessment should include prewriting discussions about texts read to help students generate ideas and to plan how to locate text evidence to use in their writing. This is to ensure that a student's writing ability is not negatively impacted because they have not been able to understand the text or generate ideas to get started.

Discussions may be as a whole class or a small group and do not need to be in-depth discussions. The purpose is to generate a basic understanding of the text (getting the gist of the text), in order to understand the intent of the prompt (explore author's craft- how the author develops characters, advances the action, uses descriptive language to create sensory images, etc.), and to begin to generate related vocabulary and text evidence that will help them to connect and explain their ideas.

Name _____   **Date** _____

Critique of Literary Texts:
Character Study in a Self-Selected Text

Every story character, even animal characters, have personality traits that we learn about by what they say, think, want, and do, and by how other characters interact with them during the story. Authors use the characters and events in a story to develop themes and to teach lessons.

Select a text that you read earlier this year using a list provided by your teacher. Skim the story again and make some notes about the different characters in the story. Then select the character you think:

      (a) **learned** the most during the story <u>OR</u>

      (b) **taught** others an important lesson.

Write a response that states your opinion (a or b as your focus). Support your focus by analyzing and explaining how the character's traits, actions, and interactions with events and other characters during the story <u>support your reasoning/opinion and focus.</u>

You can use a graphic organizer to help you plan your response.

Be sure to:

1. Have an introduction that sets the context. Include the title and author and a two or three sentence summary of the story (plot).
2. State a focus that <u>includes your opinion</u> about one of the characters (learning a lesson or teaching a lesson) and why you think this is so.
3. Have body paragraphs that have topic sentences and details from the text to support each reason that you identify.
4. Analyze your evidence from the text. Use descriptive words to elaborate on <u>WHY</u> your evidence supports your reasoning.
5. Use transitional words or phrases to connect your ideas.
6. Write a conclusion that connects to or summarizes your focus/opinion.
7. Use correct punctuation and spelling.

My Planning Notes

List 1-3 key characters in the story	Describe traits, actions, and motivation from events at the beginning of the story.	Describe traits, actions, and motivation from events near the end of the story.	Did this character learn or teach a lesson? Was it because of solving a problem? **CIRCLE strongest text evidence**. Then analyze your examples to support your view.
	Thoughts/ Actions + Event (page or line)	Thoughts/ Actions + Event (page or line)	
	Thoughts/ Actions + Event (page or line)	Thoughts/ Actions + Event (page or line)	
	Thoughts/ Actions + Event (page or line)	Thoughts/ Actions + Event (page or line)	

Name _____ Date _____

Analyzing Literary Texts – Character Study

Every story character has a personality and character traits. We learn about characters by what they say, think, and do, and by how other characters interact with them. Sometimes authors use events or problems in the story to show how characters can change.

Read _____. Then write a response that underline describes one character's traits at the beginning of the story. Also tell why or how this character changes attitude and actions by the end of the story. Use specific details and events from the story to support your opinion and analysis.

Use the notes from your graphic organizer to help you plan and write your response.

Be sure to:
1. Have an introduction that sets the context. Include the title, the author, and 2-3 sentences summarizing key events in the story.
2. Have a focus that describes words and actions of one character at the beginning of the story.
3. Have body paragraphs with topic sentences and details to support each example you use to explain why you think this character changed during the story.
4. Use details from the text and descriptive words to elaborate on and explain your thinking.
5. Use simple and compound sentences.
6. Use transitional words to connect your ideas.
7. End with a conclusion that connects to your focus or tells a lesson learned by the character.
8. Use correct punctuation and spelling.

Name _____ **Date** _____

Response to Literary Texts – Character Study:
Comparing Characters

Every story character has a personality. We learn about characters by what they say, think, and do, and by how other characters interact with them. Read the two stories:

_____

_____.

Select one character from each story and develop an analysis that compares them. <u>Determine your focus</u>: Are the main characters **mostly alike** or **mostly different**? Use specific details and events from the stories to support your opinion. Be sure to <u>elaborate on how those text-based examples support your reasoning</u> (and focus).

Use the notes from your graphic organizers for each story to help you plan and write your response.

Be sure to:

1. Have an introduction that sets the context: include story titles and authors and a one or two sentence summary of each story.
2. State a focus that compares the main characters' most important traits, motivations, and reactions.
3. Have body paragraphs that have topic sentences and descriptive details to support each trait you are comparing.
4. Analyze your evidence from the text. Use descriptive words to elaborate on <u>WHY</u> your evidence supports your reasoning.
5. Use transitional words or phrases to connect your ideas.
6. Write a conclusion that connects to or summarizes your focus/opinion.
7. Use correct punctuation and spelling.

My Planning Notes

After reading "_____" analyze how the author develops the main character. **What does the author tell you about this character** (actions, motivations, what the character says, does, thinks, or feels) **that supports your interpretations?**

Name several <u>character traits that would describe this character:</u> _____ . (List one trait in each row. Not all rows must be filled in.)	What <u>examples from the text</u> support your reasons for using each trait to describe this character?	Analyze/explain your interpretation. How do these examples show the trait?