



## NJSLA Literary Analysis Task Grade 3 Writing

### Lesson 1: Introduction to the Prose Constructed Response on the Literary Analysis Task

#### **Rationale**

- ✚ This lesson serves as an overview of the prose constructed response (PCR) of the NJSLA Literary Analysis Task (LAT), which is the essay writing portion of the exam. The LAT is a significant change from what students have encountered on past standardized tests like the NJASK.

#### **Goal**

- ✚ To understand the requirements of the NJSLA Literary Analysis Task prose constructed response
- ✚ To assess student aptitude for literary analysis with a practice LAT PCR.

#### **Task Foci**

- ✚ **CCSS W.3.1:** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
- ✚ **CCSS RL.3.1:** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- ✚ **CCSS RL.3.3:** Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

#### **Objectives**

- ✚ Students will be able to identify the type of writing that they will be asked to produce on the NJSLA Literary Analysis Task.
- ✚ Students will practice literary analysis skills by completing a sample prose constructed response.

#### **Materials**

- ✚ Sample literary analysis task prompt
- ✚ Literary anchor text and student writing space

#### **Procedures**

- ✚ Tell students that today they will examine the prose constructed response of NJSLA's Literary Analysis Task and then practice with an ungraded writing activity.
- ✚ As a primer, make sure students are clear on the difference between literature and informational text, as distinguished by the CCSS.

- ✚ Next, explain “literary analysis” for them, so that they are clear that it is different from a summary. **“When we write a summary, we select the most important details of a story and write them in our own words to tell our reader what happens in the story. In a literary analysis, we look very closely at those important details and write about how and why they happen and what their significance is.”**
- ✚ **“So, how do we do this?”** Explain that over the next few lessons, you will teach students the skills they need to successfully answer the prompts.
- ✚ Explain the structure of the Literary Analysis Task to students: **“In this section of the exam, you will be asked to read two literary texts (stories, poems, or plays), answer a few questions about what you read, and then write an essay in response to a prompt about the reading.”** For the prose constructed response, students are prompted to write about an element of literature (e.g. How does the author develop the theme of...?) or a combination of elements (e.g. How do character’s words and actions support a theme? or How does the setting affect the mood of the story?).
- ✚ Display the sample prompt and discuss. **“What is the prompt asking us to do?”**
- ✚ Distribute the texts and prompt.
- ✚ Have students read the texts independently.
- ✚ Explain that now students will write a practice prose constructed response. Their essays won’t be graded; this is just to see where they are in terms of writing a literary analysis.
- ✚ Distribute lined paper, two sheets for the essay and one for scrap.
- ✚ Tell the students, **“You have 50 minutes to complete this writing sample. Ready? Begin.”**
- ✚ Remind the class when five minutes remain.
- ✚ When time ends, say, **“Stop! Pencils down!”** Collect papers.
- ✚ Have students discuss the experience. Note what they express having trouble with.

### **Teacher Observations During/After the Task**

- ✚ Which students carefully followed the directions in the prompt?
- ✚ Which students seemed to struggle with developing an argument?
- ✚ How many students included textual evidence to support their reasons?
- ✚ How many students included an introduction and conclusion?
- ✚ How many students used the standard paragraph structure?
- ✚ Did anyone write the response as one long paragraph?
- ✚ Which students finished before the time limit?
- ✚ Which students revised/edited their responses after they had completed their initial response?

## The Fancy Turkey

by Laura Schaefer

1. It was a special day for Angie. Today, she would spend the whole morning with her Aunt Elise, who was a chef at a fancy restaurant in the middle of the city. Elise made delicious food that thrilled everyone who tried it. Angie had eaten in her aunt's restaurant a few times with her parents and it was one of her favorite things to do. She hoped to be a chef herself one day.
2. Angie felt very happy and important being allowed into Elise's clean kitchen. Everything was clean and bright. She knew Aunt Elise liked to keep her kitchen in good order. The stainless steel gleamed and looked well-loved.
3. "Hi Angie!" Aunt Elise exclaimed. She was wearing an impressive chef's hat and had a sparkle in her eye. "I'm so glad you're here today to help me out. Are you ready?"
4. "I am," Angie replied in her most grown-up voice, with a huge grin on her face. It was hard to contain her excitement at getting to cook with her aunt.
5. "Great! Today we're making turkey. It'll be on a special holiday menu for dinner."
6. Elise said goodbye to Angie's mother and handed her niece an apron. It was a bit big for Angie, who was nine years old, but she was able to cleverly fold it over and tie it tight around her waist twice.
7. "Why are we making dinner, even though it's morning, Aunt Elise?" Angie asked.
8. "Well, the turkey takes some time to prepare properly. You'll see," Elise replied. "First, we need to brine it. Can you pour that salt into this big pot for me?"
9. Angie did as she was asked. Elise added water to the pot and apple cider vinegar. After that, she put in maple syrup and pepper. The bird went into the pot for five minutes. Elise and Angie watched the timer together. Next, they stuffed the turkey with apples and spices and put the bird into a rotisserie roaster.
10. "What's next, Aunt Elise?" Angie asked.
11. "We're going to braise it," Elise answered. She added oil and onions to a new pot along with even more spices. It all smelled tasty and amazing. When the turkey was done roasting, Elise showed Angie how to carefully cut it into small slices. The slices went into the pot. Just when it seemed there couldn't possibly be another step, Aunt Elise added the sliced meat to the pot and let it simmer together with the other **delectable** ingredients.
12. "Now, the most important step," she said, arranging the dish on a fancy square-shaped plate. "Taste testing! Would you like to do the honors?"
13. Angie nodded happily and tried the fancy holiday turkey. It melted in her mouth and tasted wonderful.
14. "It's so good, Aunt Elise."
15. "Thank you. Now you can see why we do so many steps. I'm very proud of you for keeping up."
16. "It's so cool to learn how to make something so good," Angie said. She thought about her little sister, who would never have the patience for such a big job.
17. "Indeed. Sometimes it takes time to do things right, but it's always worth it in the end." Aunt Elise winked.

## Rodney and the Fussy One

by Laura Schaefer

1. When Rodney turned ten years old, his parents announced he would be getting a new baby sister. Rodney wasn't sure how he felt about it, but after several months of his whole family talking about how great it would be to have a new family member, he started to get excited. He'd have someone he could teach all the important things in life, like how to ride a bike and how to draw dragons.
2. Finally, the big day came and little Nala arrived. She was **exquisite**. Rodney stared at her tiny, perfect features and loved her more than he even expected to. There was only one problem: Nala liked to cry. A lot. Rodney's parents had a very hard time trying to get her to go to sleep at night. She didn't like to nap very much either, which was strange, because Rodney had heard that tiny babies needed lots of sleep.
3. "You have to imagine what it's like to be her," Rodney's mom said gently. "Until a few short weeks ago, she was snug as a bug in a rug in my tummy. Everything was warm and cozy and she was floating along. Now, things are bright and loud and strange. She just needs a little time to adjust to things."
4. "I guess you're right," Rodney said. He thought about the last time he felt uncomfortable. It was when he'd had the flu and spent two whole days in bed. During that time, Dad had read him lots of books. Rodney remembered drifting off to sleep to the soothing sound of Dad's voice. Maybe reading to Nala would help, even though she was too young to understand the meaning of a story. "Can I hold her?" he asked.
5. "Of course," Mom said. She had an uncertain look on her face about it, because Nala was being fussy as usual. But Rodney didn't mind. He was getting used to the fussy sounds.
6. Mom made sure Rodney had lots of pillows under his skinny arms before placing his wiggly baby sister in his lap. Rodney made sure he had his favorite book nearby. It was about wizards and dragons and spells and brave boys and girls. When Nala got settled, he began to read aloud to her. He used lots of different voices, but kept his voice steady and low in volume. Nala stared at her big brother, entranced. After a couple of minutes, she stopped squirming and fussing. After a couple more minutes, her eyes closed and she fell asleep, a serene look on her face. It was as if a peaceful spell had come over her. Rodney kept reading, proud of what he had accomplished.
7. Mom was so pleased. She looked at her two children and a tear formed in her eye. They looked so happy together, and it was beautiful.
8. From that day on, Rodney read to Nala a little bit every day and she became much less fussy.
9. "Pretty soon, I'll let you ride my bike, too," he promised his sister. "You'll love it."

**Literary Analysis Task**  
**Prose Constructed Response**

In both stories, the characters do something that gives them a sense of pride. Write an essay explaining what each character did that made them feel proud. Include what challenges Elisa and Rodney faced along the way. Be sure to include details from each story.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]