

# 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

**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.

## Literary Elements, Techniques and Rhetorical Devices

1. **Literary Element:** an inherent constituent of all works of narrative fiction—a necessary feature of verbal storytelling that could be found in any written or spoken narrative. All literary pieces contain these elements. Think of them as the “ingredients” that are used to make the cake (flour, sugar, eggs, etc). Look for these when you are stuck. They’re in there!



### Examples:

Character(s)- (characterization, motivation, protagonist, antagonist) (The character may be the speaker for a poem or the narrator for a piece of prose.)

Point of View    Setting    Tone    Conflict    Theme    Structure    Mood    Diction

### Literary Techniques and Rhetorical Devices:

These are tools an author uses to add interest, detail, and emotion to a piece of literature. These techniques devices are not necessary to create the work, but they add “flavor” when they are there. Think of them as the icing and sprinkles on the cake.



2. **Literary Technique:** any of several specific methods the creator of a narrative uses to convey what they want; a strategy used in the making of a narrative to relay information; also called narrative technique, literary device, etc.

Simile	Metaphor	Personification	Onomatopoeia	Irony
Oxymoron	Flashback	Foreshadowing	Imagery	Symbolism

3. **Rhetorical Device:** a technique that an author or speaker uses to evoke an emotional response and to persuade the audience to view or consider an idea, concept, or point of view from a new perspective (\*Rhetorical devices are typically used in speeches).

Logos - appeal to the logic of the audience

Pathos - appeal to the emotion of the audience

Ethos - appeal to the communal tenets of the audience, as women, or a society, or a religion, etc.

Hyperbole	Understatement	Rhetorical Question	Analogy	Repetition
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**Mother to Son**

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,  
And boards torn up,  
And places with no carpet on the floor—  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I've been a-climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now—  
For I've still goin', honey,  
I've still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

**“Mother to Son” - Model Text Analysis****DEVICE= Metaphor**

Good parents strive to teach their children valuable life lessons. In the poem “Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes, a mother tells her son how hard her life has been, but also that when life gets hard, he must persevere. Through the author's use of metaphor, readers grasp the central idea that adversity can be overcome.

The author uses metaphor to illustrate the difficulties in the mother's life. The mother compares her life, which was “no crystal stair,” to having had “tacks in it,/ and splinters,/ and boards torn up,/ and places with no carpet on the floor,/ bare.” This metaphor illustrates the struggles the mother has faced. Whereas crystal is smooth, clear, and sometimes flawless, a floor with torn up boards is a potential pitfall; to traverse it requires constant attention to the task at hand, and a piece of wood with splinters and tacks in it is a rough piece of wood, embedded with the potential for injury. During her life, the mother has found herself constantly facing challenges, without any comfort or support, which was probably a very painful experience.

However, the mother does not allow her son to think that challenges allow one to give up. When discussing the importance of bouncing back, the mother says, "But all the time/ I've been climbin on',/ And reachin' landin's,/ And turnin' corners." This metaphorical reference to someone overcoming obstacles gives the idea of the mother going through a maze which she must navigate. In an effort to survive and eventually see the light at the end of her maze, this mother forged new paths, took needed rests, and accepted small victories, but then continued forward. Every small success was a "landin'," and every "corner" was an opportunity.

The metaphor in this poem helps emphasize the importance of perseverance through the hardships one might face. Life may get hard sometimes; but no matter how hard it gets, people must get back up and keep moving on.

## ***A Doll's House***

### **Final Exam Practice: Text Analysis Response**

**Your Task:** Read the passage below 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.

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*"A Work of Artifice"*

By Marge Piercy

*The bonsai tree  
in the attractive pot  
could have grown eighty feet tall  
on the side of a mountain  
till split by lightning.  
But a gardener  
carefully pruned it.  
It is nine inches high.  
Every day as he  
whittles back the branches  
the gardener croons,  
It is your nature  
to be small and cozy,  
domestic and weak;  
how lucky, little tree,  
to have a pot to grow in.  
With living creatures  
one must begin very early  
to dwarf their growth:  
the bound feet,  
the crippled brain,  
the hair in curlers,  
the hands you  
love to touch.*

1. Identify the literary element you would use.

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2. Connect it to a central idea. Write that idea below:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***A Doll's House***

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#### **Family Name**

by Nelle A. Williams

You got it from your father  
It was all he had to give  
So it's yours to use and cherish  
For as long as you may live

If you lost the watch he gave you  
It can always be replaced;  
But a black mark on your name  
Can never be erased

It was clean the day you took it  
And a worthy name to bear  
When he got it from his father  
There was no dishonor there

So make sure you guard it wisely  
After all is said and done  
You'll be glad the name is spotless  
When you give it to your son

1. Identify the literary element you would use.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Connect it to a central idea. Write that idea below:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Give three examples of how that element proves the central idea:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## ***A Doll's House***

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***The Name is Mine***  
**by Anna Quindlen**

- (1) I am on the telephone to the emergency room of the local hospital. My elder son is getting stitches in his palm, and I have called to make myself feel better, because I am at home, waiting, and my husband is there, holding him. I am 34 years old, and I am crying like a child, making a slippery mess of my face. "Mrs. Krovatin?" says the nurse, and for the first time in my life I answer "Yes."
- (2) This is a story about a name. The name is mine. I was given it at birth, and I have never changed it, although I married. I could come up with lots of reasons why. It was a political decision, a simple statement that I was somebody and not an adjunct of anybody, especially a husband. As a friend of mine told her horrified mother, "He didn't adopt me, he married me."
- (3) It was a professional and a personal decision, too. I grew up with an ugly dog of a name, one I came to love because I thought it was weird and unlovable. Amid the Debbies and Kathys of my childhood, I had a first name only grandmothers had and a last name that began with a strange letter. "Sorry, the letters I, O, Q, U, V, X, Y and Z are not available," the catalogues said about monogrammed key rings and cocktail napkins. Seeing my name in black on white at the top of a good story, suddenly it wasn't an ugly dog anymore.
- (4) But neither of these are honest reasons, because they assume rational consideration, and it so happens that when it came to changing my name, there was no consideration, rational or otherwise. It was mine. It belonged to me. I don't even share a checking account with my husband. Damned if I was going to be hidden beneath the umbrella of his identity.
- (5) It seemed like a simple decision. But nowadays I think the only simple decisions are whether to have grilled cheese or tuna fish for lunch. Last week, my older child wanted an explanation of why he, his dad and his brother have one name, and I have another.
- (6) My answer was long, philosophical and rambling - that is to say, unsatisfactory. What's in a name? I could have said disingenuously. But I was talking to a person who had just spent three torturous, exhilarating years learning names for things, and I wanted to communicate to him that mine meant something quite special to me, had seemed as form-fitting as my skin, and as painful to remove. Personal identity and independence, however, were not what he was looking for; he just wanted to make sure I was one of them. And I am - and then again, I am not. When I made this decision, I was part of a couple. Now, there are two me's, the me who is the individual and the me who is part of a family of four, a family of four in which, in a small way, I am left out.
- (7) A wise friend who finds herself in the same fix says she never wants to change her name, only to have a slightly different identity as a family member, an identity for pediatricians' offices and parent-teacher conferences. She also says that the entire situation reminds her of the women's movement as a whole. We did these things as individuals, made these decisions about ourselves and what we wanted to be and do. And they were good decisions, the right decisions. But we based them on individual choice, not on group dynamics. We thought in terms of our sense of ourselves, not our relationships with others.

(8)Some people found alternative solutions: hyphenated names, merged names, matriarchal names for the girls and patriarchal ones for the boys, one name at work and another at home. I did not like those choices; I thought they were middle grounds, and I didn't live much in the middle ground at the time. I was once slightly disdainful of women who went all the way and changed their names. But I now know too many smart, independent, terrific women who have the same last names as their husbands to be disdainful anymore. (Besides, if I made this decision as part of a feminist world view, it seems dishonest to turn around and trash other women for deciding as they did.) I made my choice. I haven't changed my mind. I've just changed my life. Sometimes I feel like one of those worms I used to hear about in biology, the ones that, chopped in half, walked off in different directions. My name works fine for one half, not quite as well for the other. I would never give it up. Except for that one morning when I talked to the nurse at the hospital, I always answer the question "Mrs. Krovatin?" with "No, this is Mr. Krovatin's wife." It's just that I understand the down side now.

(9)When I decided not to disappear beneath my husband's umbrella, it did not occur to me that I would be the only one left outside. It did not occur to me that I would ever care – not enough to change, just enough to think about the things we do on our own and what they mean when we aren't on our own anymore.

1. Identify the literary element you would use.

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2. Connect it to a central idea. Write that idea below:

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3. Give three examples of how that element proves the central idea:

a. 

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b. 

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c. 

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions. Select the best answer for each.

Passage I (the poem) Questions 1-5 refer to Passage I.

1. The poem is written in:
  - a. First person narration
  - b. Second person narration
  - c. Third person narration
  - d. None of the above
2. According to the speaker, what did the subject of the poem get from his father?
  - a. A watch
  - b. A bear
  - c. His name
  - d. His good looks
3. The speaker says in lines 7-8 "but a black mark on your name/ Can never be erased." This means that:
  - a. Something written in ink is difficult to erase.
  - b. A bad reputation is hard to escape.
  - c. Evil is everywhere.
  - d. Bad things happen to good people.
4. The speaker states in line 9, "it was clean the day you took it." What does the word "clean" most likely mean in this context?
  - a. Free of dirt
  - b. White
  - c. Untainted
  - d. Shiny
5. What point is the speaker of the poem trying to make?
  - a. Fathers pass valuable material possessions to their sons.
  - b. Try not to lose sentimental objects.
  - c. Be careful to keep your good name intact.
  - d. Don't give things to people who don't appreciate it

Passage II (the essay) Questions 6-10 refer to Passage II.

6. The narrator of the essay is all of the following *except*:
  - a. A mother
  - b. A wife
  - c. A writer
  - d. A nurse
7. In stanza 4, when the narrator states, "I grew up with an ugly dog of a name," she is using
  - a. A simile
  - b. A metaphor
  - c. Personification
  - d. Imagery
8. The author decided not to change her last name when she married for all of the following reasons *except*:
  - a. She wanted to maintain her own identity.
  - b. She disliked her husband's last name.
  - c. She had to come to love her name for its uniqueness.
  - d. She liked using her name professionally.
9. In the sixth paragraph, the author says her name "had seemed as form-fitting as my skin, and as painful to remove." This is an example of:
  - a. Metaphor
  - b. Simile
  - c. Symbolism
  - d. Onomatopoeia
10. Why does the author sometimes second guess her choice to keep her own last name?
  - a. She has come to like the sound of her husband's name.
  - b. She is tired of her own name.
  - c. She feels left out now that she has children with her husband's last name.
  - d. She never second guessed her decision.