What is a Response Synthesis?

An essay that compares two texts. These text can be anything from a short story, news article, photo essay, podcast, video etc. You are to look at the guiding question and compare the two pieces given to you.

Paragraph 1: A short introduction

- You must provide **your answer to the guiding question**.

  - “Civility is the responsibility of every individual in society and is a parent’s responsibility towards their child.”

  - Your answer is **not just one sentence**. You must **elaborate and explain** - “Civility is kindness towards others, treating others how we wish to be treated and realizing that sometimes, we need to help each other out. These are things that you learn at home, from an early age, and civility is therefore a parent’s responsibility.”

- You must provide a **brief description of both texts**, and be sure to mention the title and author of both texts.

  - **MAX one or two sentences per text**- “The short story “What’s a bum, Mom?” by Kathleen Rockwell Lawrence depicts a mother’s struggle to teach compassion and civility to her daughter when dealing with homeless people. The photo essay “State Street Family” by Glenn H. Austen also deals with homeless people, but focuses instead on the humanity of individuals living on the streets instead of people’s reactions towards them.”
Paragraph 2: Explain the meaning and message of text A, using examples from the text to back up your meaning.

- Your examples need to be related to the codes and conventions of the text.

Address at least two codes or conventions.

- “The short story shows a mother’s struggle in teaching her daughter civility when dealing with homeless people. The choice of first person narration allows the reader to focus on the questions the mother has for herself, and the lack of answers she has for her daughter’s questions. The narrator’s lack of answers and abundance of questions is referred to several times; “I take after my daughter. I’ve got a lot of questions”, and “I have plenty more questions than I have answers. I’ve always been good at putting questions to others”. The first person narration also allows the reader to know the narrator’s thoughts; she is no longer seen as an insensitive person who ignores homeless people, but rather a confused woman who wishes to right but is unsure or afraid of the steps needed to be taken.

The author uses imagery effectively, allowing the reader to recreate the incidents experienced by the narrator. The language used to describe the homeless people create a stereotypical image of uncleanness and filth, “stepping over a streak of urine that has made its way from one man to the curb”, “wearing ripped high tops and a sheer slip…his beard is matted filth and his head is bandaged”, “That one stinks!”, “a woman with oozing ankles”. Since the story is told from the narrator’s point of view, she obviously finds something about homeless people unsettling or unclean. If civility is the responsibility of a parent, the narrator in “What’s a bum, Mom?” clearly fails at teaching her daughter the morals needed for a more civil society.”
Paragraph 3: Explain the meaning and message of text B, using examples from the text to back up your meaning.

- Your examples need to be related to the codes and conventions of the text. Address at least two codes or conventions.

Paragraph 4: Pick ONE text, A or B, and make a connection to either:

- Text to Text
- Text to Self
  - “When I was younger, the homeless people of Montreal used to be quite frightening but as I matured, I began to realize that they were people just like myself and family…”
- Text to World
  Explain the relationship between the themes, conflicts etc.

Paragraph 5: Offer your judgment on ONE text, A or B, and explain why that text BEST answers the guiding question. Support your answer with at least two examples.

- “The photo essay answers the guiding question of who’s responsibility is civility because it effectively demonstrates that civility is the responsibility of everyone in society, especially that of parent’s towards their children. The photograph labeled “Babysitting” looks to be like that of a father teaching their child something, which could symbolize the role a parent plays in their child’s upbringing. The photo labeled “Collaboration” demonstrates what exactly civility is- helping others despite what it may cost you. The short story dealt with the topic of who’s responsibility is civility, but the mother failed in her task of teaching her daughter civility.”
Outline of Response Synthesis


**APPENDIX 8**

**CODES AND CONVENTIONS OF A SHORT STORY**

A short story can usually be read in one sitting. Unlike a novel, it is very concise and contains only information that is relevant to the story being told. A good short story will create a single impression or effect and is most often, though not always, built around one character, place, idea or act.

A short story will contain most, although not all, of the following elements:

1. an engaging opening
2. a significant theme(s) or message(s) about important aspects of life that is/are clear to the reader
3. a well-structured plot with tension created by suitable action(s), some complication(s), unexpected development(s) and a positive or negative resolution
4. a clearly recognizable climax
5. an effective ending that may be either positive or negative but which fully reveals/explains the significance of the elements of the story
6. a setting that situates the story and enhances the atmosphere, mood, action, plot
7. a well-developed central character who experiences some change, growth or new knowledge of self, the world, and/or life situation(s)
8. supporting character(s) that are not fully developed but increase the reader’s understanding of the central story line and/or character
9. an arresting, consistent, narrative voice/point of view, e.g. first person, third person, interior dialogue
10. dialogue that develops the plot and/or characters
11. effective stylistic devices and imagery that describe the characters, setting or action of the story, e.g. irony, juxtaposition
12. skillful use of language conventions, e.g. word choice, punctuation and grammar
A photo essay is a media text constructed of still images. One should not assume that it is easy to read and understand these images, but rather be mindful that still images contain many different elements deliberately arranged and framed to create meaning. An interpretation of this meaning requires an analysis of these elements and their intended impact on the reader. According to the composition and subject of the photographs, readers of photo essays should refer to the most relevant of the following list of codes and conventions:

1) Subject of the Photograph
Readers should decide what the main idea(s) in the photographs is/are and what elements influence their interpretation. Questions about the time a picture was taken and the social, cultural and historic contexts of the photo should arise. Readers should also decide what elements of the photograph(s) are dominant and consider a variety of possible intentions of the photographer and purposes for the photograph(s). Captions can highlight central ideas.

2) Mise En Scène (Composition)
This term concerns the design and arrangement of the image. Every element of an image contributes to its meaning. Although readers may be focus on characters in the foreground, they should also notice the background for additional clues to meaning. An image will display a series of objects or people arranged in particular ways. Meaning is created by juxtaposing objects, e.g. making one larger, central, better lit, and/or with varied amounts of surrounding space. When a photo essay contains more than one photo, the order of the photos is very important and should develop the topic of the essay sequentially and/or logically.

3) Organization
While separate elements of an image are important, readers should also consider the total organization of the photo. Photographers always decide exactly what they want their readers to look at. Certain elements are highlighted while others are in the background. Objects or people may be arranged in a symmetrical or asymmetrical way to suggest balance or imbalance. The size of the objects is also a way to convey meaning.

Technical Codes:
4) Framing
Framing of a photograph determines where an image begins and ends, and often what is left out is as important as what is included. Photographers may create interest and multiple interpretations through what is missing from the picture. Lighting, use of colour and camera angles are also aspects of the framing.

A) Lighting
Most photographs use artificial light. However, with new digital technologies, natural lighting is increasingly used. Readers of photographs need to consider the brightness of the light and also whether the light is coming from the front, back or sides. The use of shadow and strong contrasts of light and dark are also important.

B) Colour
Colour creates mood and atmosphere in photographs that are read according to the culture of the reader. Texture is created in a photograph through use and/or absence of colour.
C) Camera Angles
The position and distance of the camera from the object being photographed give information to the reader. Camera angles have a significant impact on the meaning of a photograph and include the following:

i) The Bird’s-Eye View
This shows a scene from directly overhead, a very unnatural and strange angle. Familiar objects viewed from this angle may become unrecognizable, but the reader is put in an all-seeing position in which people and objects become less individually significant and more like parts of a larger tableau.

ii) High Angle
High angles also make the object photographed seem smaller but less insignificant than from the bird’s-eye view.

iii) Eye Level
This is an emotionally neutral shot showing objects from a normal eye-level perspective.

iv) Low Angle
This angle increases the height of people and objects and may create a sense of confusion or powerlessness in the reader of the photograph. There is a lack of detail which adds to the disorientation of the viewer. In addition, added height of objects may create fear and insecurity.

v) Oblique Angle
When the camera is tilted, it produces an image that suggests imbalance and instability.

vi) Focus
Some parts of a photograph may be in sharp focus while others are blurred. The range between the nearest and farthest objects or people is a deliberate technique used by photographers to highlight the importance of specific messages.

vii) Close-up
The camera zooms in on the focal point of the photo.

Codes and Conventions Photo Essays Share with Print Texts

Both print and visual texts can be based on either fact or fiction and are produced for specific purposes and audiences. The use of codes and conventions of both types of text depends on shared cultural understandings; for example, representations of social groups are often based on stereotyping. The meaning of a text is determined by the context in which it is read, and a text may have different meanings for different people. Codes and conventions common to both print and visual texts include the following:

1. point of view
2. plot and sub-plot
3. exposition and/or resolution
4. introduction and conclusion
5. setting
6. characters
7. codes such as symbols, stereotypes and juxtaposition

There are also many common strategies for interpretation of both print and visual texts:
1. using the title to establish expectations
2. drawing on personal experience or knowledge of a topic to predict events and information
3. using knowledge of the structure of text types to predict events or information
4. predicting plot development based on cause and effect relationships
5. making connections between illustrations or images and written text
6. self-correcting earlier predictions or interpretations on the basis of more experience of the text
7. using knowledge of narrative structures to predict likely endings
8. adjusting strategies for different texts and different purposes
9. drawing on experiences with objects, clothing, gestures and expressions to interpret characters
10. scanning for information
11. making predictions about plot based on setting and character types
12. identifying the purpose of a text and using this to guide interpretive strategies
### APPENDIX 5 - RUBRIC FOR RESPONSE/SYNTHESIS TASK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADVANCED</td>
<td>THOROUGH</td>
<td>ACCEPTABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>The reader demonstrates a superior understanding of the task: a preference is supported with perceptive references to the texts, presenting a discerning world view when interpreting, synthesizing and justifying critical ideas about the preferred text.</td>
<td>The reader demonstrates a thorough understanding of the task: a preference is supported with supportive references to the texts, defining a firm position when interpreting, synthesizing and justifying significant ideas about the preferred text.</td>
<td>The reader demonstrates an acceptable understanding of the task: a preference is indicated with general references to the texts, offering opinions when interpreting, synthesizing and justifying logical ideas about the preferred text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes and Conventions</td>
<td>The student interprets the texts: - provides perceptive and concise content; - draws extensive meaning from the texts with attention to the guiding question; - analyzes audience and purpose for the texts.</td>
<td>The student interprets the texts: - provides thoughtful and clear content; - draws thorough meaning from the texts with attention to the guiding question; - identifies audience and purpose for the texts.</td>
<td>The student interprets the texts: - provides commonplace and insubstantial content; - draws straightforward meaning from the texts with attention to the guiding question; - refers to an audience and purpose for the texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>The reader critiques codes, conventions and structures of the texts and indicates preferred text: - evaluates the codes, conventions, structures of the texts; - justifies own preference with perceptive references to the texts (synthesis).</td>
<td>The reader critiques codes, conventions and structures of the texts and indicates preferred text: - identifies the codes, conventions, structures of the texts; - supports own preference with thoughtful references to the texts (synthesis).</td>
<td>The reader critiques codes, conventions and structures of the texts and indicates preferred text: - refers to the codes, conventions, structures of the texts; - explains own preference with vague or general references to the texts (synthesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>The reader makes connections, putting the text in context: - makes perceptive connections and references to the preferred text and other texts, world issues/events (synthesis).</td>
<td>The reader makes connections, putting the text in context: - makes interpretive connections and references to the preferred text and other texts, significant issues/events (synthesis).</td>
<td>The reader makes connections, putting the text in context: - makes general connections with the preferred text and other texts, general issues/events (synthesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>The reader judges the preferred text within the context of the guiding question: - offers a discerning judgment about the effectiveness of the preferred text with reference to the guiding question.</td>
<td>The reader judges the preferred text within the context of the guiding question: - offers a thoughtful judgment about the effectiveness of the preferred text with reference to the guiding question.</td>
<td>The reader judges the preferred text within the context of the guiding question: - offers a sensible judgment about the effectiveness of the preferred text with reference to the guiding question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
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<td>4+</td>
<td>3+</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>88%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<td>77%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>Criteria</td>
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<td><strong>LEVEL 1 MINIMAL</strong></td>
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</table>
| **Meaning** | The reader interprets the texts:  
- provides undeveloped content;  
- draws limited meaning from the texts with little attention to the guiding question;  
- suggests an intended audience and/or purpose for the texts. | The reader interprets the texts:  
- provides imprecise or unsubstantiated content;  
- draws literal meaning (no inferences) from the texts with little attention to the guiding question;  
- disregards intended audience and/or purpose for the texts. |
| **Codes and Conventions** | The reader critiques codes, conventions and structures of the texts and indicates preferred text:  
- comments on basic codes, conventions and/or structures of the texts;  
- expresses a tentative preference with occasional reference to the texts (synthesis). | The reader critiques codes, conventions and structures of the texts and indicates preferred text:  
- disregards the codes, conventions and/or structures of the texts;  
- states a vague or unsubstantiated preference with no reference to the texts (synthesis). |
| **Connections** | The reader makes connections, putting the text in context:  
- makes occasional personal and superficial connections between the preferred text and other text(s), general issue(s)/event(s) (synthesis). | The reader makes connections, putting the text in context:  
- makes unrelated or illogical connections between the preferred text and other text(s), general issue(s)/event(s) (synthesis). |
| **Judgment** | The reader judges the preferred text within the context of the guiding question:  
- offers a judgment with comments/opinions about the preferred text. | The reader judges the preferred text within the context of the guiding question:  
- offers a judgment using restated ideas from the preferred text. |
| **Score** | 2+ | 2 | 2- | 1+ | 1 |
|          | 55% | 50% | 45% | 40% | 35% |