

# **Assessment Portfolio**



**June 1, 2005**

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Buffy Holling  
English 430  
Brother Keller  
May 30, 2005

### Group Tests

“I’ve Got Gloria,” by M.E. Kerr

As a group of four discuss these questions and submit your collective answer:

1. Discuss the moral of the story. As a group decide what Scott learned from his experience. How can you relate what he learned to the typical 9<sup>th</sup> grader like you?
2. If you were in Mrs. Whitman’s situation how would you feel and how would you react?
3. Do you think that Mrs. Whitman should have failed Scott, why or why not?
4. Quote two places in the text that talks about blame.
5. Do you think a teacher would flunk you because he or she didn’t like you? Why did Mrs. Whitman fail Scott?

Since this story is only ten pages, the assessment should be kept small. The story deals with issues of morality. That is the message the student should remember. The story is only an example of a principle. The group test should allow the students to elaborate on key concepts and ideas that are displayed in the text. They should be given questions that will promote thinking. As a group they will be required to come to a conclusion as to what the single best answer is. If they have a disagreement they will have to discuss it until they agree on the best answer. However, with these questions there is no single right answer.

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### Essential Item Portfolios

“Eva and the Mayor,” by Jean Davies Okimoto

1. Using the professional letter format we learned in class, write a letter to the author. In your letter tell her what you learned from her story and how it could help you in your life. Include how you feel about what the mayor did on the radio (place this in your portfolio).
2. Have you ever had a friend copy off of your paper? Have you ever copied someone’s paper? How did it make you feel? Write a 400-word response and place it in your portfolio.
3. Answer the following questions and place them in your portfolio:
  - What is the name of the main character?
  - Who copies off of her?
  - What class were they in?
  - Where did the copier live? Where had she been?
  - Why was she different when she returned?
  - Why did her mom tell her to turn the other check?
  - Why did the main character keep letting her friend copy her work?
  - How was this problem resolved?
4. How does popularity affect how people are treated? Quote a place in the book where popularity is displayed and explain how the situation could have been different if popularity didn’t affect anyone (remember to use correct punctuation when quoting).

The essential item portfolio allows you to assess in several different ways. Through this portfolio one can assess previous knowledge as well as additional knowledge. This allows the students to continue practicing established knowledge. The example of this is the format for the letter. The portfolio also allows students to explore themes in the reading and practice their writing skills. Third in the portfolio student must display a very basic objective understanding of the text. Fourth, the student has to recall from the book an instance where popularity and peer pressure came forth. This allows them to practice using correct punctuation while quoting and show an understanding of the theme simultaneously. The portfolio allows for a neat organized mode of assessing. It also allows us to assess from different angles. This prevents some mistakes in the grading process.

Phil Savage

Peer Review

“Bliss at the Burger Barn” By Louise Plummer

1. Assess the Manager’s choice in turning away homeless people. Should she have allowed the homeless character to buy food for less than what is on the menu, simply on the merits of his extreme poverty? Write your answer down in a full paragraph, using three strong points to support your point of view.
2. How should we handle situations with abusive relationships? If you know someone who is in an abusive dating relationship, what can you do to help that person get out? List at least three ideas or things you could say or do to help this person. Support your answers
3. Trade papers with people in your small group once you’ve written the answers down. Have them *review* your answer, looking for CLARITY, GOOD SUPPORT, AND CLEAN (MECHANICALLY SOUND) WRITING. Make sure everyone in your group reviews your paper, and judges it and reviews it according to the above criteria.

Assessment explanation

In Peer Review, the students must have something to review. Peer Review by itself cannot be an effective learning tool. Therefore, we first must have some sort of assignment. In this case, I assigned two arbitrary questions from Louise Plummer’s Bliss at the Burger Barn. I also gave the students some criteria to help them evaluate the writing of their classmates.

Phil Savage

Required Categories Portfolios

“The Doi Store Monkey” by Graham Salisbury

Choose one of the activities below:

- Draw the Plot Development Curve (introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) and label each point with a point in “The Doi Store Monkey”.
- Choose a character in the story. Are they a dramatic or static character (in other words, do they change or do they stay the same throughout the story?). Discuss their development (or lack thereof).
- Discuss the setting in “The Doi Store Monkey”. Why was it set in Hawaii? Would it have turned out different at all if it happened in Rexburg? Why was it necessary to happen in a tropical climate? Explain.
- What was the mood of “The Doi Store Monkey”? How was the mood manifest by the vocabulary chosen? How did the discourse and setting affect the mood?

One of the most important skills in English class is learning to classify facets of literature. Although not a definitive list, some of these categories that must be addressed in teaching a short story are as follows:

Plot, Character Development, Setting, and Mood.

This is a technique which combines nicely with other elements of learning styles, such as small groups, individual reflection papers, and full-class discussion. After having the students choosing a category, have them write or other wise respond to the question.

Later, group them in discussion groups based on which facet they chose to cover.

Liz Pollack

### Self-Critiques

#### “Bliss at the Burger Barn”

- 1.) Put yourself in the one of the characters shoes. What crucial decisions does that person have to make in the story?
- 2.) Explain the conflict going on in the story with the main character and her boyfriend. Is this the climax of the story? Why or why not?
- 3.) Give at least two examples of a “flight or fright” mentality found in this story.
- 4.) Write a 250 word response to how you would protect yourself if you found yourself in the same situation as the main character.

### Assessment Explanation

Self-Critiques are looking at the situation in the story and relating it to your own life.

Students can better relate to a story when they imagine themselves in an experience like the characters in the story. When assessing this type of writing, read over that answers that the student has written, and if they have put serious thought into their writing, then they have meaningfully fulfilled the assignment.

Liz Pollack

Short Answer

“Bliss at the Burger Barn”

- 1.) Name at least one example when the narrator realizes she is in a situation that she needs to get herself out of because she is uncomfortable.
- 2.) Summarize the conflict in the story in at least three sentences.
- 3.) How does the manager of the Burger Barn handle her employee’s struggles?
- 4.) What is the importance of this story? Why is it told?

Assessment Explanation

Short answer questions are important to have students answer because they allow a student to dig deeper than a surface meaning. A short answer question cannot be easily overlooked, since you either know it or you don’t. The questions should require some form of knowledge beyond the text itself. It should promote higher levels of critical thinking and understanding.



Angela Ricks

### Rating Scales

“Confession,” Gloria D. Miklowitz

Assessment example

Rate your progress from 0-3

1. Did you read “Confession” entirely? 0 1 2 3
2. Did you discuss the story in groups? 0 1 2 3
3. Did you listen to others in your group? 0 1 2 3
4. Did you voice your opinion to your group? 0 1 2 3
5. Did you participate in the class discussion? 0 1 2 3

Assessment explanation

Rating Scales are closely related to checklists. Checklists record the presence or absence of individual behaviors or attitudes. Checklists can be lists of expected behaviors or of actual behaviors. When checklists record frequency or quality, they become more quantitative and might be called rating scales. These scales can count the errors made in writing or the number of pages completed in reading. They are useful when a straightforward tally clarifies performance.

-taken from Bridging English 369

Angela Ricks

## Themed Portfolios

“Confession,” Gloria D. Miklowitz

### Assessment example

After reading the story “Confession,” please complete the following.

1. Write a summary of the short story.
2. Pick a character you relate to and explain why in a journal entry.
3. Find any words you do not understand and define them in your journal.
4. Write a 300 word essay about a major theme in “Confession.”

### Assessment explanation

Portfolios represent a comprehensive collection of a student’s work. There are many different types of portfolios such as writing portfolios or reading portfolios. In a reading portfolio students would add: an introduction to the contents of portfolio, a statement about what the student has learned, a list of items read, a list of favorite characters or novels, written composition about literature, journal entries, glossaries of vocabulary and so forth. By using a themed portfolio the teacher becomes a collaborator with the student and not just the evaluator. The student will also see her progress as the portfolio broadens. This assessment example shows what a teacher may have her students include in their portfolio after a short story reading.

- taken from Bridging English 366

Jeanne Ferland

Required Items Portfolio

“Bliss at the Burger Bar,” Louise Plummer

Include in your portfolio to pass in:

1. Your best journal entry regarding your feelings after reading “Bliss at the Burger Bar”
2. An artistic component about “Bliss”
3. An explanation of the piece of art
4. A final draft of your 5-paragraph essay on “Bliss”

Assessment explanation

Portfolios should cover a broad range of one topic. That is what is so exciting about it. In the above example we have an artistic rendition as well as a written component, thus enabling the student to explore ideas they might not have previously thought of. Another idea of portfolios is that they can be an “on-going” project and the set up allows the student to go back to what they have previously done.

Jeanne Ferland

Oral Exams

“The Un-numbing of Cory Willhouse,” Virginia Euwer Wolff

Prepare a short (5minute) explanation on how Cory’s experience will change his life.

Please cite examples from the text. You will present your explanation to the class and will be graded on the effectiveness of your speech, for example; I understand what you are saying. You will also be graded on delivery. I will be looking at body language, eye contact, and how you relate to the audience.

Assessment explanation

Most schools think that students already know how to speak, so grading on speaking is not widely used. Oral exams should note how well the student reached the intended audience and how focused the speech was. Researchers fear the dissection of speech will hinder the student’s speaking abilities much like teachers have hindered the writing and reading abilities of students.

# Christine Boone

## Team Selected Portfolios

“The Photograph” by Will Weaver

Each team must select one of the activities from the list below and add them to their portfolios.

- Select any character from the story and write a response to the question, “How would I have changed the situation, if I was this character.”
- Discuss the consequences that each character in the book received, and write a response explaining if your team feels like they were reasonable consequences.
- As a team discuss if you feel like this is proper reading material for high school age groups, and write a response.

### Assessment Explanation

This assessment gives a variety of topics that bring up thought provoking questions. These questions also allow the students to analyze many of the characters, and situations in the story. As the team discusses each one, they can share their feelings about the topic to each other, and write a response that can potentially reflect many different opinions. This helps the students because they are broadening their horizons and exploring different ideas and ways of thinking. As they work as a team they are also focusing on learning to work together, and collaborating many different ideas into one response.

Christine Boone

## **Mastery Tests**

### **“Bliss at the Burger Bar” by Louise Plummer**

The test will be administered to students in 3 sections. Each test will be given daily on the section assigned for the day.

#### Section 1 Test questions

1. What book inspired the author to be successful?
2. Where did the author find the sign for help wanted?
3. What is the name of the homeless man?

#### Section 2 test questions

1. What is the name of the character that feels bad for the homeless man?
2. Who comes to meet Hannah at the Burger Bar?
3. Why does the author leave to go smoke?

#### Section 3 test questions

1. Why is Hannah crying?
2. What does the author do for Old Faithful at the end of the book?
3. What is Old Faithful's real name?

#### Assessment explanation

The mastery test is designed so that the student can master the information in each section before moving to the next one. As the student takes the test for each day, they will be aware of what they need to learn more about. If they miss a question, they will know they don't understand that part and go back and read it. As the student passes each test for the day they will feel assured that they are not only understanding what is going on, but also that they are on the right track with the story.

### Graded Discussion

“Little Li and the Old Soldier,” Lensey Namioka

#### Teacher Assessment Questions

1. Did the student participate in a meaningful way?
2. Was the student a polite listener while others spoke?
3. From student comments, is it obvious the student read and understood the text?

#### Student Prompt Questions

1. If you were Li, how would you react?
2. Do you feel that Li learned anything from his dream? If so what?

#### Assessment Explanation

Graded discussions require the teacher to sit back and observe the students interaction with each other and the text. After the students are given prompt questions, allow them to discuss as a class their personal response to the assignment. Students will be graded on their participation. Be sure to give open ended prompts that will promote discussion. This allows you as a teacher the chance to observe the students instead of keeping a discussion going. When using this assessment, take into account student personalities. If some students are normally quiet, do not expect them to talk as much. Also, be sure the students know that they will be given a grade for their participation and the validity of their comments in the group discussion.

### Oral Production Interviews

“Little Li and the Old Soldier,” Lensey Namioka

1. How much time did you put into your presentation?
2. What did you learn?
3. Why did you chose this story to present?
4. What grade would you give yourself?
5. What was your strength/weakness in the presentation?

### Assessment Explanation

This technique works well to assess presentations but can also be used as a final holistic assessment of a particular unit. It is a method where the student input about a presentation is part of the grade instead of an impersonal grading rubric. Time should be planned where individual students can be taken aside in order to discuss their outward performance, their effort, and their feelings about what was learned. Avoid making these something the students fear. Make it an opportunity for students to voice their opinions about the class and how they feel they are doing. This is more of a check for understanding and a check for student growth than a concrete test.



Jenna Berry

### Take Home Tests

“The Un-numbing of Cory Willhouse,” Virginia Euwer Wolff

1. Describe the steps Cory goes through as he changes his attitude. How do we know he has changed his attitude and isn't just doing penance? Give specific examples. (200 words)

2. What are the reactions of Cory's friends and family when they find out what he's been doing? How does Cory respond to their reactions? What does this tell us about Cory's motives? (200 words)

### Assessment Explanation

Take home tests can be used to assess students on a higher level. These tests allow students to spend more time on each question and escape from the pressure of being in class. Take home tests should always come with specific instructions. Students should know how long their answers should be and what kind of resources they will be permitted to use. Another type of take home test, teachers give their students several questions in advance and tell them that three of those questions will be on the exam which will be taken in class.

<http://teaching.berkeley.edu>

Jenna Berry

## Surveys

“Little Lee and the Old Soldier,” Lensey Namioka

1. Have you ever been in a situation that you couldn't control? How did you deal with it?
2. What are some ways that you normally deal with your anger? Which work the best?
3. How much credibility do you give your dreams? Have your dreams ever affected a decision you've had to make? Explain.
4. Did you like this story. Place it on a scale along with the other stories we've read so far.

## Assessment Explanation

Survey questions are used before and after the teaching takes place to evaluate how much a student has learned. They are often useful to a teacher trying to improve her course. Questions might ask students to tell the teacher what they feel they've learned from the course. A survey might also ask the students to tell the teacher what their favorite or least favorite part of a course was. Survey questions can also be used to catch student interest and get them thinking about the concepts addressed in the story before they begin reading.

Jared Olsen

### Self-Generated Portfolio

1. The students will include the following chapters in his/her portfolio:

Title Page

Table of Contents

Essay on Idaho

Essay on Man

Poem 1

Poem 2

Sonnet

Letter to the governor

2. All the chapters will be preceded by a prewriting exercise, a rough draft, and a final draft.
3. All portfolios need to include a journal entry that describes how the student's writing has developed throughout the semester.

### Assignment explanation

Self-generated portfolios are just what they sound like. The students generate all of the contents in the portfolio from their own head. This portfolio's main function is not to evaluate the students but to allow the student to evaluate himself/herself. The portfolio acts as an incentive to use all of the prewriting exercises and rough drafts that precede a final paper. This type of evaluation also offers the students an opportunity to see their individual progression throughout the semester.

Jared Olsen

## Rubric

Rubrics should be handed out to the student before the class starts the assignment. It includes a table with a left hand column that states the criteria of the paper and a top row of how well the student preformed. One of the main benefits of a rubric is that the student is able to quickly see his or her strengths and areas that might need some improving. Another benefit that the teacher might consider is that a rubric is an effective way to focus the students on a particular concept that the student has covered in class.

What follows is a simple outline of a possible rubric:

	Good	Could be better
Transitions		
Conclusion		

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Primary Trait Scoring (6+1)

“The Un-numbing of Cory Willhouse,” Virginia Euwer Wolff

Checking for individual voice.

The story of “The Un-numbing of Cory Willhouse” was a touching story of a young boy who stole something when he was nine from a Chinese store owner. Years later the store that he stole from burns down and he volunteers to help rebuild it. I thought that this story was something that teenagers could relate to. Even if the teen has never stolen something from a store, I’m sure that they have all done something that they regret and wish to make right. A few examples would be cheating on a test, calling a friend a bad name, or not obeying their parents.

Assessment explanation

The 6+1 scoring system is good to allow students an opportunity to focus on one point of a paper at a time to learn how to perfect that area. With each point is worked on until the students understand how it applies to the whole paper process. They begin to see how the little parts, like individual voice, adds to the whole picture; or the whole paper experience. Perhaps a student has a difficult time with one area or another, they can learn how to focus on each point to see its effect.

Candace Place  
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May 28, 2005

### Monitoring Progress

“The Un-numbing of Cory Willhouse,” Virginia Euwer Wolff

Journal 1: I wasn't really sure why Cory Willhouse felt like he had to volunteer at the store he stole from. It was years ago, I was sure the Chinese owner didn't remember him anymore. Why couldn't he have just moved on with life? I didn't get why his friends were so against him helping out. I also didn't know why he couldn't forgive himself.

Journal 2: It helped talking in class because I now feel that I better understand Cory Willhouse. He was overcome with guilt about stealing something. He had hoped that volunteering would clear his conscious. It was something that he had to do. And his friends weren't against him really; they were just like me and didn't understand why he felt he had to do this. After all, they had been just as guilty as him.

### Assessment Explanation

Monitoring progress is a good way to know how far the students are coming in their understanding. This can be done in a number of ways. The one used above is an example of a student's journal entries. The first one is after reading the story; the second is after a class discussion. The teacher can read the journals and see if the students' understanding is evolving and growing. The teacher can also compare one paper with another to see how the students' skills and styles are also growing and evolving.

Anya Ogden  
English 430  
May 31, 2005

**Student Generated Test**  
“Neighbor Rosicky” by Willa Cather

An example of a test a student would make up for the story “Neighbor Rosicky.”

1. How did Anton Rosicky get out of Bohemia?
  - A. He sold a bird
  - B. He begged to some Americans who bought his plane ticket.
  - C. He earned the money by playing the piano in front of a crowd.
  - D. He won the money for his plane ticket by fighting.
  
2. Why were Neighbor Rosicky and his wife never as well off as their neighbors?
  - A. They felt they must share their earnings with the less fortunate
  - B. They saved the cream for their children instead of selling it.
  - C. They did not have as big of a farm as their neighbors.
  - D. They had more mouths to feed than their neighbors had.
  
3. How did Anton and his wife try to help their son’s marriage?
  - A. They let Rudolph borrow the car on the week-ends.
  - B. They invited Rudolph and Polly over often.
  - C. They tried to stay away so they did not add to the fighting.
  - D. They bought them a house away from the country.
  
4. How does Anton die?
  - A. The stress of Polly and Rudolph’s unhappy marriage is too much for him.
  - B. When he’s milking the cows he has a heart attack
  - C. He is out on his farm and has a heart attack.
  - D. He rakes thistles and has a heart attack.

The definition of student generated tests is basically allowing the students to write the test questions. The teacher should be specific on the format she wants the students to use depending on other course exams. These questions may be used as test questions or just to generate a discussion about the subject. Some of the benefits of student generated tests include: an opportunity for students to evaluate the topic, reflect on what they have learned, and even determining what a good test question is.

Anya Ogden  
English 430  
May 31, 2005

**Performance Assessment**  
“Neighbor Rosicky” by Willa Cather

Your assignment is to give a three minute presentation of why you would or would not like to live in the country. You must support your answer from what you have learned from the story, “Neighbor Rosicky.” You must have some kind of visual aid.

**Example of what you may say:** I would like to live in the country because first of all, I do not like the fast moving pace of the city life. In Neighbor Rosicky, Anton points out how people do not take the time to enjoy life in the city. He also stresses that people valued money so much more in the city. I agree with him. People are so busy and always in a hurry. People that work on farms may not make as much money, which is prevalent in this story; but they do have so much more than those that live in the city. This story made me aware that country people may often have strong family ties, a less stressful life, and hard work ethics when they are younger. These are all characteristics that I find important in a family. This is why I want to live in the country.

Performance assessment is a form of evaluating students’ knowledge by having them perform a task, rather than having them do a standard paper-pencil assessment. The teacher then grades the student based on the criteria. This type of assessment is beneficial because a teacher is able to definitely know if her student understands a concept when they are able to apply it correctly.



Ashley Klepinger

### **EXIT INTERVIEW**

“Bliss at Burger Bar”

1. Get into groups of two. Imagine that one of you are a reporter from a newspaper who heard about the abusive incident and you will be interviewing Hannah before she leaves the scene to go home. What questions do you have to ask?
2. For the other person in the group, imagine that you are Hannah. What answers do you have?
3. Write out the interview together.
4. Write a 200 word-essay explaining what each of you learned about this character from having the interview.

### **ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION**

An exit interview is an interview given before departure. From using this technique, students are able to get into the mindset of the characters and are able to relate to the story because they feel that they are a part of it. They are also able to ask questions that aren't answered in the story. This way they are diving into the story. It should promote deeper thinking about characters and their actions.

## **HOLISTIC SCORING OF PAPERS**

“Bliss at Burger Bar”

1. Put students in groups of 3 or 4.
2. Have them discuss what they thought of the story overall and what their criteria is for determining whether a story is good.
3. Have each of the students write a 250 word essay explaining what they thought of the story holistically.
4. Have them draw examples from the story to validate their stance.

## **ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION**

Scoring a work or paper holistically is grading a work based on the overall product. A holistic approach for students is a good way for them to determine if they enjoyed a story or not. It is also good to build upon that and have them determine what, in their opinion, makes a story enjoyable overall.