

Name:
Teacher:

Date:
Class/Period:

- 1) In this passage, adapted from Edwidge Danticat's short story "Women Like Us" (1995), an unnamed narrator reflects on what led her to become a writer. As you read the passage, pay close attention to how the author uses literary elements, such as figurative language and point of view, to convey how the narrator's feelings toward writing were formed.

You remember thinking while braiding your hair that you look a lot like your mother. Your mother who looked like your grandmother and her grandmother before her. Your mother had one rule for living. *Always use your ten fingers*, which in her parlance meant that you should be the best little cook and housekeeper who ever lived.

Writing was as forbidden as dark rouge on the cheeks or a first date before eighteen. It was an act of indolence, something to be done in a corner when you could have been learning to cook.

Are there women who both cook and write? Kitchen poets, they call them. They slip phrases into their stew and wrap meaning around their pork before frying it. They make narrative dumplings and stuff their daughter's mouths so they say nothing more.

"What will she do? What will be her passions?" your aunts would ask. "Her passion is being quiet," your mother would say. "But then she's not being quiet. You hear this scraping from her. Krik? Krak! Pencil, paper. It sounds like someone crying."

When you write, it's like braiding your hair. Taking a handful of coarse unruly strands and attempting to bring them unity. Your fingers have still not perfected the task. Some of the braids are long, others are short. Some are thick, others are thin. Some are heavy. Others are light. Like the diverse women in your family. Those whose fables and metaphors, whose similes, and soliloquies, whose diction and *je ne sais quoi*¹ daily slip into your survival soup, by way of their fingers.

You have always had your ten fingers. They curse you each time you force them around the contours of a pen.

¹a quality or trait that is hard to define or express but is alluring—French for "I don't know what."

Adapted from Edwidge Danticat, *Krik? Krak!* © 1995 by Edwidge Danticat.

Write an essay in which you explain how the author's use of literary elements in this passage helps convey the significance that writing holds for the narrator.

Be sure to use evidence from the passage to support your ideas. You may include references to other texts or authors if you feel these will help you explain or support your ideas about this passage.

Answer Key

Scoring Criteria for Sample EOC Exam—"Women Like Us"

- 1) **An exemplary response may discuss any or all of the following details:**
- The narrator describes writing as an act of defiance against her preordained place in life and her family's wishes for her.
 - The passage describes a formative situation—likely in adolescence—when acts like writing help form one's identity.
 - **The use of second-person point of view/"you":** The passage could be referring to a character, to the reader, or to the author herself. This ambiguity suggests a universal experience shared by all women.
 - **Extended metaphors:** The symbolism of braiding and ten fingers alludes to the hardships and complexities of being a writer and filling various predefined roles for others—suggesting struggle and pain. "Ten fingers" represents the nobility of manual labor passed down through her maternal lineage. "Braiding" also implies an interwoven quality, and the narrator implies that she has taken on a hybrid identity of what her mother wants and of her own pursuits.
 - **Food metaphors:** The references to "narrative dumplings" and "survival soup" relate to both the domestic life of the narrator's female relatives and to the need for writing to provide sustenance and continued inspiration for the narrator. The "survival soup" becomes a complex symbol of all the rich tradition and valuable knowledge/lore passed down from the women in her family.
 - **Irony:** We see an ironic resistance from the narrator's mother and other female relatives who have carefully passed on their traditions and knowledge to the narrator through their "ten fingers" and "survival soup," but who do not want the narrator to continue this transmission of their tradition and history to a wider audience through writing. Their rich tradition of domestic and family work and "fables . . . metaphors . . . *je ne sais quoi*" is ironically left in the shadows of private family life until the narrator breaks with that tradition in order to record it for posterity and to honor, memorialize, and validate it in public discourse.
 - **Deliberate sentences:** The sentences are spare and simple, which shows struggle, yet conviction. The passage is told as a flashback, and the simple sentence structure adds weight to the memory.

QualityCore[®] Analytic Scoring Rubric for English 10
Purpose: To Present a Response to Literature

	Interpretation	Development	Organization	Language
Score: 6 Essays at this score point demonstrate effective skill in writing a response to literature.	The essay thoughtfully and accurately analyzes the literary elements in the text. The essay makes insightful connections between the literary elements and the text's meaning and/or their effect on the reader.	The essay uses ample convincing evidence drawn from the passage to support the writer's analysis. Ideas are thoroughly explained. The essay maintains a clear and consistent focus on critical analysis. If the essay includes references to other authors or texts, their relevance to the analysis is consistently clear and effective.	Organization is unified and coherent, with a logical progression of ideas and effective transitions to clarify relationships among ideas. The essay includes a clear, engaging introduction and an effective conclusion that may extend or elaborate ideas.	Well-constructed sentences and precise word choice clearly and effectively convey ideas. Voice and tone are appropriate to the writer's purpose and are maintained throughout the essay. Although there may be a few minor errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, meaning is clear throughout the essay.
Score: 5 Essays at this score point demonstrate competent skill in writing a response to literature.	The essay clearly and accurately analyzes the literary elements in the text. The essay addresses the connections between the literary elements and the text's meaning and/or their effect on the reader.	The essay uses sufficient convincing evidence drawn from the passage to support the writer's analysis. Ideas are clearly explained. The essay usually maintains focus on critical analysis. If the essay includes references to other authors or texts, their relevance to the analysis is clear.	Organization is coherent, with some logical progression of ideas and clear transitions that clarify relationships among ideas. The essay includes a clear, well-developed introduction and a developed conclusion.	Well-constructed sentences and some precise word choice clearly convey ideas. Voice and tone are appropriate to the writer's purpose and are maintained throughout most of the essay. There are a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, but they are rarely distracting and meaning is clear.
Score: 4 Essays at this score point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a response to literature.	The essay provides primarily accurate analysis of the literary elements in the text. The essay establishes the connections between the literary elements and the text's meaning and/or their effect on the reader.	The essay uses some valid evidence drawn from the passage to support the writer's analysis. Ideas are adequately explained. The essay maintains focus on ideas appropriate to the interpretive task. If the essay includes references to other authors or texts, their relevance to the analysis is generally clear.	Organization is apparent, with ideas logically grouped and some transitions to clarify relationships among ideas. The essay includes a clear, somewhat developed introduction and conclusion.	Sentences and word choice are usually clear and adequately convey ideas. Voice and tone are appropriate to the writer's purpose, though they may not be consistently maintained. There are some distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, but meaning is usually clear.
Score: 3 Essays at this score point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a response to literature.	The essay provides some accurate analysis of the literary elements in the text, although some analysis provided may be inaccurate, incomplete, or irrelevant. The essay offers a little recognition of the connections between the literary elements and the text's meaning and/or their effect on the reader.	The essay uses a little valid evidence drawn from the passage to support the writer's analysis. Ideas are only somewhat explained. The essay usually focuses on ideas appropriate to the interpretive task. If the essay includes references to other authors or texts, their relevance to the analysis may be unclear.	Organization is simple, with most ideas logically grouped. A few transitions are used to clarify relationships among ideas. The essay includes an underdeveloped introduction and a brief conclusion.	Most sentences convey ideas clearly, and word choice is general. Voice and tone are somewhat appropriate to the writer's purpose, but they are inconsistently maintained. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are distracting and occasionally impede understanding.
Score: 2 Essays at this score point demonstrate inconsistent or weak skill in writing a response to literature.	The essay provides little accurate analysis of the literary elements in the text. There is little or no recognition of the connections between the literary elements and the text's meaning and/or their effect on the reader.	The essay makes a few claims, but there is little and only weak evidence drawn from the passage to support the writer's analysis. Explanations are unclear or incomplete. The essay only sometimes focuses on ideas appropriate to the interpretive task. If the essay includes any references to other authors or texts, their relevance to the analysis is unclear.	Organization is simple, with some ideas logically grouped and a few transitions used. The essay has a brief introduction and may have a brief conclusion.	Some sentences convey ideas clearly, and word choice is basic. Voice and tone are inconsistent and may not be appropriate for the writer's purpose. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are frequently distracting and sometimes impede understanding.
Score: 1 Essays at this score point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a response to literature.	Although the response may include some claims about the specified elements in the text, it includes no accurate analysis of the literary elements. There is no recognition of the connections between the literary elements and the text's meaning and/or their effect on the reader.	The essay provides no evidence from the text for any valid claims and lacks explanation of ideas. The essay focuses very little on ideas appropriate to the interpretive task. If the essay includes any references to other authors or texts, their relevance to the analysis is unclear.	Organization of ideas is not clear, with little or no evidence of the logical grouping of ideas. The essay has a very brief introduction but may have no conclusion.	A few sentences and some word choices convey ideas clearly. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the writer's purpose. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are frequently distracting and significantly impede understanding.

	Interpretation	Development	Organization	Language
Score: 0	Unscorable: essay is blank, off-topic, illegible, or written in another language.			