

Student Response

Mini-Assessment for “Cactus Jam” by Ruth J. Luhrs*

Writing Prompt: Pretend that you are a member of the Tohono O’odham and live in the Arizona desert. Write a story about the day you helped make jam from the fruits of the saguaro. Start your story when you woke up in the morning and finish your story when you went to bed at night. Use information from the passage in your story, but you may make up details also.

Student Response:

One day, when I had woke up I noticed that fruits were ripe and it was a day to make jam. **First**, I went outside and **got my pole** and I hit 40 fruits like a ninja hitting a pinata. **The kids also came out to help me gather the fruits**. While we were gather fruits. ~~we made~~ Men who were stronger than me made a tent and a small fire. I also helped women peel, cook, and strain the fruit. Then we wait for a long time before the jam was ~~was~~ ready. Last, we put the jam into clay pots and we also had ~~and~~ dance party. **I ate some jam with ~~bea~~ bread and then I went to bed and slept.**

This response demonstrates a strong use of transitions, including “First” in this sentence.

Textual evidence that supports student’s understanding that fruit is up high and must be retrieved with a pole.

More evidence of student comprehension of text follows, with various groups being assigned specific roles as documented in the text.

Student offers a logical conclusion to a day’s worth of activities.

*The mini-assessment can be found at <http://achievethecore.org/page/848/mini-assessment-for-cactus-jam-by-ruth-j-luhrs-detail-pg>.

Analysis of Student Response:

Based on an overview of the traits in the [Scoring Rubric for Text-Based Writing Prompts](#), this student response would receive 4. The response is well organized and well-developed through textual evidence.

Based on the “**Reading Comprehension**” trait of the rubric, the student clearly understands from reading the text what steps are necessary to make cactus jam, and who assumes each role. The response gives an excellent statement of a full day of a member of the Tohono O’odham actively participating in the making of jam.

To receive a top score and meet the expectations of the “**Development of Ideas/Use of Evidence**” trait on the rubric, multiple examples of textual evidence should be used to create a deep response based on careful analysis, and this student response includes several examples of textual evidence.

In regard to “**Organization**,” the response is structured clearly, with student explaining chronologically the various steps of the jam-making process, as well as how each group contributes. The student uses transitions well to link the steps.

As for “**Style**,” the student uses a variety of sentence structures in the response and clearly recognizes the audience, as there is consistent tone and style.

For the “**Conventions**” aspect of the rubric, the student response contains a few errors but none serious enough to interfere with clarity of message. For example, the dependent clause “While we were gather fruits” is used as a complete sentence and “gather” should have been used in its progressive form. However, the reader can still understand that despite punctuation and grammar issues, the student is aware this is an important step and other activities (the building of the tent and the making of the fire) are occurring at the same time.

Student Response

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