

Student Response

Mini-Assessment for “Who was Marco Polo” by Joan Holub and “The Adventure of Marco Polo” by Russell Freedman*

Writing Prompt: Using information from both sources, write an essay in which you provide an opinion that either Marco Polo told the truth in his book or that Marco Polo made up his stories. Your audience is classmates from your history class who have learned about Marco Polo. Be sure to use information from both texts to support your opinion. Write your essay in the space below.

Student Response: ←

In my opinion Marco Polo made up most his stories. He could have traveled to China but that doesn't mean he had all the experiences he claimed he did. Here are some reasons that I know did not really happen.

First, in his story Marco claimed the Hangchow (A Chinese city) had 12,000 bridges. The problem with that is that when Marco went to Hangchow it had much fewer bridges. Marco also claimed that magicians in Kublai Khan's empire could make glasses of wine fly. Which is physically impossible.

Secondly, Marco also said in his “Journal” that Kublai Khan's empire could change day into night. Which is also physically impossible. They could also turn a sunny day into a rainy day. Which can not be done by humans.

Finally, in Marco's Journal it says that “Kublai sent an army of 360,000 horsemen and 100,000 troops to flight his enemies in 1287.” I know this is not true because there wasn't enough food near for so many troops. Either was there enough grass for all those horses. So, this was not possible.

In conclusion, Marco's stories were not true! They were make believe. What is your opinion about Marco Polo know?

Writing style and word choice appropriate to audience.

Provides a clear central idea and establishes that the essay is an argument/opinion.

Overall, very few grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.

Offers a transition from main idea to textual evidence to support opinion.

Effective introduction.

Accurate analysis of what is stated in text 1

Punctuation error

Another piece of supporting evidence from text 1.

Punctuation error

More support from text 1 for the student's position.

Through use of many examples of textual evidence, the student shows thorough understanding of the text 1.

Again, accurate analysis of what is stated in text 1.

Includes a conclusion to finish out the organizational structure.

*The mini-assessment can be found at <http://achievethecore.org/page/502/mini-assessment-for-who-was-marco-polo-by-joan-holub-and-the-adventure-of-marco-polo-by-russell-freedman-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 a high 3. The response is rich and well-crafted, but the student does not show understanding of BOTH texts, as dictated by the prompt. To reach the 4 level, evidence from both texts should be used in the student's response.

Based on the **“Reading Comprehension”** trait of the rubric, the student clearly understands from reading the texts that Marco Polo most likely did travel to China but that several of Polo's specific claims regarding things he witnessed are suspicious. The student establishes in Paragraph 1 the position taken based on understandings from the texts.

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 cited to create a deep response based on careful analysis. The student uses several pieces of evidence from text 1 to point out particular instances of unbelievable tales. The response would be stronger and more aligned to the Standard RI9 and the prompt itself if evidence from both texts had been used. Because the student doesn't use evidence from both texts, the essay cannot receive a rating of 4.

In regard to **“Organization,”** the response is structured clearly, with the opinion being established in Paragraph 1 then following paragraphs providing specific evidence of the reasons the student uses to support the opinion. The textual evidence is followed by an analysis of why the claim is suspect, and the student uses transition words appropriately. Additionally, the student starts off with a strong introduction and ends with a conclusion.

As for **“Style,”** the student uses a variety of sentence structures in the response and clearly understands the audience, as evidenced by consistent tone, style, and specific vocabulary.

For the **“Conventions”** aspect of the rubric, the student response contains a few errors. For example, in paragraph 1, traveled is misspelled, and in paragraphs 2 and 3 there are punctuation errors that create incomplete sentences. However, none of these errors are serious enough to interfere with clarity of message.

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