

How to Address a Short Answer Prompt (ACE)

QUESTION: *Do you think that Character X is courageous? Support your answer with evidence from the text.*

STEP #1: *Answer* the question.

- *First Sentence:*
- ✓ Express your opinion in a statement that is general enough that it can be supported with specific evidence.
 - ✓ Use some of the original wording, so that your response is a meaningful statement that is independent of the question.
 - ✓ Be sure to use the present tense when talking about literature.
 - ✓ Be sure to include the title of the text and punctuate it correctly. Underline book titles and place short story titles in quotation marks.

STRONG Response: In the short story “ABC,” Character X is courageous because of how he responds to a life-and-death situation.

WEAK Response: In the short story “ABC,” Character X can be described as courageous because he saves himself when he is trapped underwater. (too specific)

- *Second Sentence:* Add details to support your answer.*

STRONG Response: When faced with danger, many people panic and forget to think about what they should do; however, Character X does not.

*When addressing the crossover question, use this section to compare the two texts. In short, explain why the answer you've chosen is superior to the alternative.

How to Address a Short Answer Prompt (ACE)**STEP #2:** Use a *citation*.

- *Third Sentence:*
 - ✓ Elaborate with a quoted word, phrase, or sentence from the text that exemplifies your answer.*
 - ✓ Be sure to weave your quote into a sentence.

STRONG Response: In fact, Character X “quit struggling and began to think.”

*When addressing the crossover question, use quotes from both texts.

STEP #3: *Explain* and elaborate.

- *Fourth Sentence:* Explain how the quotation supports your answer.

STRONG Response: Although Character X panics at first, he quickly remembers that his friend on the surface can help him.

- *Fifth Sentence:* Conclude your analysis by rephrasing the main idea.

STRONG Response: In short, *true* courage is a person’s ability to overcome his panic when it arises.

COMPLETE Example Response

Do you think that Walt is courageous? Support your answer with evidence from the story.

In the short story "ABC," Character X is courageous because of how he responds to a life-and-death situation. When faced with danger, many people panic and forget to think about what they should do; however, Character X does not. In fact, Character X “quit struggling and began to think.” Although Character X panics at first, he quickly remembers that his friend on the surface can help him and becomes perfectly calm. In short, *true* courage is a person’s ability to overcome his panic when it arises.*

*Mrs. Taylor adapted this example from a response written by one of her students during the 2002-2003 academic school year.