

English 1301: Composition 1

Portfolio #1—Reading and writing prompts Answer the questions thoroughly and in complete sentences. Type your answers.

I. Responding to Alice Walker’s “Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self,” TLR, p. 408.

1. In “Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self,” how does Walker remember herself as a young child? What descriptive details or narratives does she include that illustrate this earlier self?
2. How does Walker change, and what causes this change? What details or narratives does she include to illustrate her changed self?
3. What incident causes Walker as an adult to re-evaluate her childhood experiences?
4. This essay is a series of narratives, or short stories about the writer’s experiences. What techniques does the writer use to stitch these narrative together?

5. Paragraph response to Alice Walker’s essay:

Describe your feelings about Walker’s writing, your reaction, or an experience of your own that Walker’s writing brings to your mind.

II. Responding to Gary Soto’s essay “The Jacket”

As you read this essay, pay close attention to the writer’s word choice.

1. Writers use figurative language such as metaphors and similes to compare unlike things in order to make us see something in a new and fresh way. Similes include the words “like” and “as” in these comparisons (“my love is like a red, red rose”; “my mistress is nothing like the sun”). Metaphors indicate one thing is another thing quite different (“the road was a ghostly ribbon over the purple moor”). Highlight the similes and metaphors in the essay and then list them in your response.
2. What effects do these metaphors and similes have on the writing? That is, how do they indicate how the writer felt or experienced the jacket?
3. How does the jacket that Soto’s mother gives him differ from the jacket he wants?
4. What effects does Soto claim the jacket has on him and his life?

5. Paragraph response to Soto’s essay:

Describe an article of clothing that has had special meaning to you, either positive or negative. Include specific details in your description.