

Scoring Model for Response to Literature

Score 4

This writer presents a thoughtful, well-organized response to literature with compelling details and appropriate examples.

Strong Points:

1. Well-written introduction with sufficient background information and clear thesis
2. Logical pattern of organization
3. Insightful explanations supported by precise, well-chosen examples
4. Clear connections to the overall focus
5. Fluent sentence structure and smooth transitions
6. Few mechanical errors

Honor in *The Black Cauldron*

Lloyd Alexander's novel, *The Black Cauldron*, is a fantasy about tests and triumphs. In this story a small group of people search for an evil cauldron to destroy it and keep it from the hands of Arawn, a dark leader who seeks to control the land of Prydain. The different characters in *The Black Cauldron* have different ideas about honor. Three main characters with definite ideas about honor are Ellidyr, Adaon, and Taran.

Ellidyr is proud, selfish, and mean. He believes that honor is the glory you win from fighting a battle. His idea of honor is illustrated in this passage:

"We should make our stand now. Is this the honor we gain from following Gwydion? To let ourselves be tracked down like animals?"

Ellidyr follows his selfish search for glory until the very end of the novel when he finally changes. This quote provides evidence of the change:

"I stole the cauldron out of pride, not evil. I swear to you that I would not have used it."

This quote reveals that Ellidyr is not as selfish as he once was, and that his concept of honor has changed. Despite the fact that with the cauldron, he probably could have ruled the country, he wouldn't have used it. This change demonstrates real growth in Ellidyr. He gains real honor when he sacrifices his own life to destroy the cauldron.

Another character in the novel is Adaon, who is the exact opposite of Ellidyr. Adaon is calm, loving, and pure, and he has a sense of peace and wisdom about him that makes you like him. Adaon's concept of honor is that it doesn't matter how many battles you win. Honor is the feeling inside when you accept a challenge or beat yourself. The following quote explains his concept of honor:

"I have marched in many a battle host, but I have also planted seeds and reaped the harvest with my own hands. I have learned there is greater honor in a field well plowed than in a field steeped in blood."

This comment clearly shows that Adaon finds honor in living life fully and close to nature, not in killing or war. Another quote to support his idea is this:

"Is there not glory enough in living these days given to us? You should know there is adventure in simply being among the ones we love and things we love, and beauty, too."

This is Adaon's concept of honor, and it never changes. His bright outlook on life helps everyone around him.

The last major character in the novel is Taran, the hot-tempered protagonist who changes the most. At the beginning, Taran's view of honor is like Ellidyr's. Honor is won on the battlefield, not by working the earth. These words illustrate his concept:

"I am proud to serve Lord Gwydion, and there is a chance to win much honor, more than by washing pigs and weeding gardens."

Response to Literature—Score 4 (continued)

This quote reveals the similarities between Ellidyr's and Taran's beliefs about honor. Fortunately, Taran doesn't stay with Ellidyr's honor system. Later in the novel, as he changes, his ideas about honor change also. This quote reflects that change:

"It is Ellidyr who has paid the final price," Taran said slowly. "The last honor belongs to him."

In saying these words, Taran is admitting that Ellidyr paid a higher price than he did. At this point, Taran has grown into a man like Adaon, wise, honest, and forgiving. He has changed for the better, to everyone's benefit and become a true leader.

The Black Cauldron is an excellent book that teaches much about honor, growth, and overcoming challenges.

Scoring Model for Response to Literature

Score 3

This writer presents a clearly organized response to literature supported with details and specific examples.

Strong Points:

1. Satisfactory introduction and thesis statement
2. Logical organization
3. Some specific examples used to support main ideas

Problem Points:

1. Limited conclusions drawn from the evidence presented
2. Some unnecessary information
3. Abrupt ending; no conclusion
4. Some mechanical errors

The Concept of Honor in *The Black Cauldron*

Lloyd Alexander's novel, *The Black Cauldron*, tells about a band of people going to and destroying the black cauldron to keep it out of the hands of Arawn who wanted to use it for evil purposes. It is about Ellidyr, Adaon, and Taran's concept of honor.

When Ellidyr, Prince of pen-Larcau, was first met "his hair was tawny, his eyes black and deep set in a pale, arrogant face." To Ellidyr, honor is about being the best and not letting other people tell you what to do. About half way through the book Taran tries to help Ellidyr's horse. Ellidyr keeps saying no. Finally he says yes. Taran sees there is a stone in his horse's shoe. He gets it out with a knife. Ellidyr says to Taran "you have tried to steal honor from me, pig-boy. Will you now rob me of my horse?" Taran replies "Your honor is your own and so is your steed. What stone is in your shoe, Prince of Pen-Larcau?" Ellidyr is always concerned about his honor. He is always trying to be the best.

Our next character, Adaon, has a totally different concept of honor. "Adaon, Taran saw, was tall, with straight black hair that fell to his shoulders." Adaon's concept of honor is that it does not matter about glory and pride. Adaon once said, "I have marched in many a battle host, but I have also planted seeds and reaped the harvest with my own hands. And I have learned there is greater honor in a field well plowed than in a field steeped in blood." This is saying it is better to give than to get. Adaon died later in the novel.

Our last character, Taran, is the main character in this novel. He says, "I am Taran, Assistant Pig-Keeper." Taran and Ellidyr keep competing to see who has more honor. In the beginning Taran and Ellidyr are racing. Ellidyr pushed Taran off a cliff. Taran got blamed for it. When Adaon dies, he gives Taran his brooch.

Scoring Model for Response to Literature

Score 2

While this writer presents a clear focus in this response to literature, the essay's weaknesses outweigh its strengths.

Strong Point:

Clear focus and organization

Problem Points:

1. Insufficient background information
2. Inadequate explanation and details to support main points
3. Lack of specific examples from the text
4. Vague evaluative terms
5. Awkward and faulty sentence structures
6. Numerous mechanical errors
7. Abrupt ending

Honer in *The Black Cauldron*

Lloyd Alexander's book, *The Black Cauldron*, has danger, evil, and fantasy all brought together to make a wonderful book. This essay is about concepts of honor between three different peoples, Prince Ellidyr, Adaon, and Taran. Prince Ellidyr's concept of honor at the beginning of the novel was who could shed the most blood in battle. Later in the book he realized that not everything was about blood shed and battle and he gives up his honor of bringing the cauldron back by himself when he freed Taran and everyone by throwing himself into the cauldron and destroying it.

In addition to Prince Ellidyr, Adaon was another character in this book. Adaon's concept of honor was not about blood shed or who won the most battles. He thought honor meant doing all of your work well. Adaon said, "My concept of honor is not a field steeped in blood but a field well plowed"

Also there was Taran, that was the assistant pig keeper of Caer Dallben. Taran was the main character of the book. At the beginning Taran's concept of honor was the same as Ellidyr but Taran changed later in the novel and realized that there was really more honor in a field well plowed. At the end both Ellidyr and Taran learn the truth about honor.

Scoring Model for Response to Literature

Score 1

This writer's attempts to explore the concept of honor in *The Black Cauldron* are unsuccessful.

Problem Points:

1. No clear thesis statement
2. Scattered, inconsistent focus
3. Limited details
4. Unclear how quotations support insights
5. Few insights and conclusions
6. Many mechanical errors

The Black Cauldren

Lloyd Alexander's novel *The Black Cauldren* explains about honor, The Black Cauldren, and the adventure of a pig keeper's assistant named Taran. The Black Cauldren is a pot that a dark evil king uses to get warriors. When you put a dead body into the cauldren, the body's spirit becomes a warrior that can't be killed. One of the characters is an impatient man named Elidyer. Elidyer believes that honor is only for knights like him and not Taran. As Elidyer said, "There is no honor in a pig boy!!" Another character, totally opposite of Elidyer is a peaceful man named Adaon. Adaon has a brooch which allows him to be a leader. Adaon's concept of honor is everyone can share. "Many people deserve honor not just you." Taran is the star of the book. He starts out as a hot temperd man, but turns to be a leader. Taran thinks honor doesn't matter. This relates to both men by they all think honor is important. Taran at first thought about nothing but honor and grew up to be a leader. Taran and everyone change throughout the story in each way.