



# **English I**

## **Short Answer Single Selection Scoring Guide**

**March 2015**

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

*In Emory's Gift, Charlie is a 13-year-old boy just out of seventh grade. His mother's death and his father's grief leave Charlie feeling isolated at school, at home, and even at the junior-lifesaving training class he attends, where he practices his lifesaving skills on seventh-graders, otherwise known as sevies. In the excerpt below, Charlie has returned home after class and has walked to the creek to go fishing.*

## ***from*** **Emory's Gift**

*by W. Bruce Cameron*

- 1        During the spring the waters of the creek were dark and cold, a sharp contrast from the milky pool water from which I'd been saving sevies all morning. From bank to bank the stream was more than thirty feet. In the summer, though, with the runoff down to a trickle, the creek bed was mainly dry, littered with rocks and mud and tree branches. The creek itself shrank back until it was only six feet wide, hugging the far bank and deep enough to swim in. That's where the fish liked to lurk, up under the tree root overhang. From the base of our hill the creek had only another couple hundred yards of independence before it joined the river, adding strength to the flow to town.
  
- 2        I started casting along the banks of the opposing shore, and it wasn't long before I'd hooked and pulled in a nice little brook trout. I put it in the creel, thinking that a couple more just like it and we'd skip the hamburgers that evening.
  
- 3        A few minutes later I had another one, and then another. Man, they were really biting! I left the creel lying on the bank and moved downstream a bit.
  
- 4        The fourth trout was the best of all, fat and glistening, bending my rod with authority while I wrestled it ashore. I was carefully pulling the hook from its mouth when I got the sense of being watched.
  
- 5        I turned and studied the opposite bank. The slight breeze gave the woods an empty sound, but I knew there was someone there, and I felt the hair on my arms stand up as my skin goose-bumped in alarm.
  
- 6        I gave a start when I looked higher up the hill. A pair of amber eyes met mine, unblinking.
  
- 7        It was a cougar, watching me from a jumble of rocks.

- 8        When he saw I'd spotted him, he leaped with nimble ability down the slope, closing the gap between us. With a soaring jump that was almost absurdly graceful, he cleared the part of the creek that was deep water and bounded to a sudden halt in the shallows, making scarcely a spray.
- 9        It all happened so quickly I never even had time to gasp. He stopped, staring at me, evaluating the situation. No more than fifteen feet of rocky creek bed lay between us.
- 10       There was no retreat possible. Behind me the bank was sandy, capable of supporting some sparse grass but no trees—as if climbing a tree would save me from a cat. If I tried to scramble up the bank the cougar could easily take me from behind. The deep water was too far away and there wasn't enough of it anyway. There were no good options.
- 11       The mountain lion was not running away. His rear end was lowered, his gaze intent. I was reminded of what my dad had said: *Ever see a cat jump on a string?* That's what the cougar looked like to me now, a cat getting ready to pounce.
- 12       There were no sticks nearby. My rod was handy but so thin I doubted it would be intimidating. What was it Dad said? *A bite-sized boy like you could make a tasty meal.*
- 13       My fear was so strong and real I was sick with it. *Stand up big and tall,* my father had instructed. *What you want is for that cougar to see you as a meal that's going to cost him, put up a real fight.*
- 14       I took in a shuddering breath, raising my trembling hands over my head.
- 15       The cougar moved again, holding his body low, slinking toward me. There was absolutely no question of his intentions. He stopped, crouching. I stood my ground, quivering.
- 16       "Go away," I said in a whisper.
- 17       The cougar stood motionless. His muscles bunched; he sank lower; his lips drew back.
- 18       I found my voice. "Grrrr!" I roared at him.
- 19       There was no reaction at all.
- 20       "Grrrr!"
- 21       I watched in terrified fascination as the tension built in the big cat's shoulders. His eyes were locked on mine. *This was it.* I braced myself for the attack. I would put up a good fight. I would make him decide that, as meals go, I was too much trouble to bother with.

- 22 I swallowed. I would put up a good fight, or I would die.
- 23 He was coiling to spring and then he froze, raising his head sharply, his eyes widening. I actually saw the irises turn dark with alarm. The cougar stood still for only a second and then turned and rocketed away, scampering up the bank and disappearing into the brush.
- 24 My legs were still weak and trembling. I wasn't sure what had happened. How had I gone from bite-sized to intimidating in midpounce? I stared after the big cat, terrified he might return, but after ten seconds, then twenty, there was no sign of him.
- 25 I was safe.

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## English I Short Answer Single Selection

In the excerpt from *Emory's Gift*, what does the narrator learn about himself? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from the selection.

## **Score Point 0 – Insufficient Response to the Question**

**Insufficient responses indicate a very limited reading performance.**

These responses have one of the following problems.

- The idea is not an answer to the question asked.
- The idea is incorrect because it is not based on the text.
- The idea is too general, vague, or unclear to determine whether it is reasonable.
- No idea is present. Sometimes the response contains only text evidence. At other times there appears to be an idea; however, this idea cannot be considered an answer to the question because it merely repeats verbatim, or “echoes,” the text evidence.

The narrator learns that no matter what situation you're in just stay strong and keep your head up.

**Score Point 0**

This response is insufficient because the student presents an idea that is too general to determine whether it is reasonable. The idea that the narrator learns to stay strong and keep his head up no matter the situation is not specific enough to be a valid answer to the question.

The narrator learns this about himself: My legs were still weak and trembling. I wasn't sure what had happened. How had I gone from bite-sized to intimidating in midpounce.

**Score Point 0**

The student provides textual evidence from paragraph 24 but does not offer an original idea. Stating that “the narrator learns this about himself” simply rephrases the question. Because this response contains textual evidence only, it indicates that the student’s reading performance is very limited.

I think the narrator learn that he shouldn't fight back with a wild animal alone. He should of brought a friend with him or a relative.

The evidence is "I would put up a good fight or I would die." This proves that what the narrator learned is to not fight alone.

**Score Point 0**

This response is insufficient because the student presents an idea that is incorrect. The idea that "the narrator learns that he shouldn't fight back with a wild animal alone" cannot be supported with evidence from the selection.

The character learns that he is brave.

**Score Point 0**

The student asserts that the narrator learns he is brave but neither explains the idea nor clarifies it with evidence from the selection. Without further explanation or relevant textual support, this assertion is too vague to constitute a reasonable idea. For this reason, this response represents a very limited reading performance.



## **Score Point 1 — Partially Sufficient Response to the Question**

**Partially sufficient responses indicate a basic reading performance.**

These responses have one of the following characteristics.

- The idea is reasonable, but the response contains no text evidence.
- The idea is reasonable, but the text evidence is flawed and does not adequately support the idea. Text evidence is considered inadequate when it is
  - only a general reference to the text,
  - too partial to support the idea,
  - weakly linked to the idea, or
  - used inappropriately because it wrongly manipulates the meaning of the text.
- The idea needs more explanation or specificity even though it is supported with text evidence.
- The idea represents only a literal reading of the text, with or without text evidence.

He is brave because at first he was scared to do anything and then he grew courage; was going to fight if he needed to.

**Score Point 1**

This response is partially sufficient because the student offers a reasonable idea but does not provide textual evidence. The student states that the narrator is brave and then explains why he is brave (“at first he was scared to do anything and then he grew courage; was going to fight”). This explanation is reasonable because it represents the narrator’s actions in the selection. However, because the student has not supported her idea with textual evidence, this response can be considered only a basic reading performance.

That he is strong “stand up big and tall my father had instructed. what you want is for that cougar to see you as a meal that’s going to cost him, put up a real fight.”

**Score Point 1**

In this partially sufficient response, the student presents the general idea that the narrator is strong. Although the student presents relevant textual evidence that supports how the father’s advice helped the narrator to be mentally strong, the idea itself lacks the explanation or specificity needed for a sufficient response. For this reason, the student’s reading performance is basic.

in Emory's gift the narrator learns that he has courage. In paragraph 21 he got himself ready to fight the mountain lion. This shows that he was ready to protect himself. In conclusion the narrator learned he had courage.

**Score Point 1**

The student presents the reasonable idea that the narrator learns he has courage because he was ready to protect himself. The student attempts to provide textual support by providing a general reference to what the narrator did in paragraph 21 (“In paragraph 21 he got himself ready to fight the mountain lion”). However, this reference is inadequate because it does not provide specific evidence from inside paragraph 21 that would sufficiently support the idea. As a result, this response is partially sufficient.

In “Emory’s Gift” Charlie learns that he can do anything if he just puts his mind to it. “My fear was so strong and real I was sick with it.” Even though Charlie was scared he thought about what his dad told him to do, and he stayed calm. Charlie realized that what his dad told him saved his life. Charlie had faith in himself and what he knew, because of that he’s alive.

**Score Point 1**

The student offers the reasonable idea that the narrator learns he can do anything he puts his mind to because he thinks about his father’s advice and stays calm despite his fear. However, the textual evidence is too partial to support the idea. The quotation proves that the narrator’s fear is intense but does not support how the narrator uses his father’s advice to deal with his fear and save his own life. Because the text evidence is flawed, this response indicates only a basic reading performance.

## **Score Point 2 – Sufficient Response to the Question**

**Sufficient responses indicate a satisfactory reading performance.**

These responses have the following characteristics.

- The idea is reasonable and goes beyond a literal reading of the text. It is explained specifically enough to show that the student can make appropriate connections across the text and draw valid conclusions.
- The text evidence used to support the idea is accurate and relevant.
- The idea and text evidence used to support it are clearly linked.
- The combination of the idea and the text evidence demonstrates a good understanding of the text.

In the story Emory's Gift the narrator learns that he has a lot of courage because in the story paragraph 22 he tells himself to put up a good fight against the cougar or die because without the courage he had he might have panicked, and the cougar would have attacked him.

**Score Point 2**

At the beginning of the response, the student presents the idea that the narrator learns he has a lot of courage. At the end of the response, the student explains why this character trait is important to the narrator (without it the narrator might have panicked and been attacked by the cougar). Sandwiched in between the idea and the explanation is the textual support in the form of a paraphrase of paragraph 22 (“he tells himself to put up a good fight against the cougar or die”). The combination of the reasonable idea and the text evidence indicates that the student has a good understanding of the selection.

The narrator learned he had a good sense of danger. The narrator conveyed how, the slight breeze gave the woods an empty sound, but I knew there was someone there, and I felt the hair on my arms stand up as my skin goose-bumped in alarm. When the narrator was about to be attacked by a wild cougar, he knew something was around him watching him. He learned about his good sense of danger when he felt the presence of a cougar.

**Score Point 2**

The student presents the reasonable idea that the narrator learns he has a good sense of danger when he feels the presence of the cougar. The student supports this idea by providing a direct quotation from the selection that clearly illustrates the narrator's acute sense of being watched. The combination of the idea and textual support demonstrates that the student's reading performance is satisfactory.

In the story "Emory's Gift" the narrator learns that what his father had told him had saved his life. "Stand up big and tall, my father had instructed. What you want is for the cougar to see you as a meal that's going to cost him, put up a real fight!" This shows that the boy believes in the words of his father and he knows that he will be safe because he trusts in his father.

**Score Point 2**

The student offers the reasonable idea that the narrator learns that trusting his father's words has saved his life. The quotation the student provides as textual support is accurate and relevant because it shows the narrator recalling his father's instructions during a moment of danger. The idea and text evidence are clearly linked, making this a sufficient response to the question.

In the excerpt from Emory's Gift the narrator learned he is a quick thinker and has good memory. The narrator is a quick thinker because he analyzed the area and knew "There was no retreat possible." The narrator has a good memory because when the cougar was getting ready to pounce he remembered to "stand up big and tall" to intimidate the cougar. This proves the narrator is a quick thinker and has a good memory.

**Score Point 2**

The student offers two reasonable ideas: the narrator shows he is a quick thinker by analyzing the surrounding terrain, and he shows he has a good memory by remembering to intimidate the cougar. The student uses direct quotations from the selection as textual evidence. Although these quotations are short, they are clearly linked to and provide sufficient support for the ideas. Overall, the student demonstrates a satisfactory reading performance.

## **Score Point 3 – Exemplary Response to the Question**

**Exemplary responses indicate an accomplished reading performance.**

These responses have the following characteristics.

- The idea is perceptive and reflects an awareness of the complexities of the text. The student is able to develop a coherent explanation of the idea by making discerning connections across the text.
- The text evidence used to support the idea is specific and well chosen. Overall, the evidence strongly supports the validity of the idea.
- The combination of the idea and the text evidence demonstrates a deep understanding of the text.

The narrator learns that he has the courage needed in desperate times. During the climax of the passage, after the cat shows himself and the narrator realizes that he will have to fight, he gets his resolve: "I would put up a good fight." which gave him the strength. During the midst of the confrontation the narrator recalls when his father told him "what you want is for that cougar to see you as a meal that's going to cost him." Charlie's ability to follow this advice is what allowed him to come out on top.

**Score Point 3**

The student offers the reasonable idea that the narrator "learns that he has the courage needed in desperate times." By analyzing the narrator's thinking process as he confronts the cougar, the student develops a coherent explanation of the idea. The student also provides direct quotations from the selection that strongly support the validity of the idea, making this an exemplary response.

In the excerpt from "Emory's Gift," the narrator learns that he is resourceful and brave. When the narrator is face to face with the cougar, he is very scared and has no idea what to do. However his resourcefulness is shown when he remembers that his dad told him to "stand up big and tall" in a situation like this. The narrators' bravery is shown when he says, "I would put up a good fight, or I would die," telling us that he refuses to run away. Since the narrator went from being afraid to being resourceful and brave, he then learned that he possesses the two traits.

**Score Point 3**

In this accomplished reading performance, the student presents the insightful idea that the narrator learns he is resourceful and brave. The student makes discerning connections across the text by recounting how the narrator's perception of himself changes during the encounter with the cougar: although initially afraid and unsure, the narrator remembers his father's advice and decides to put up a fight rather than run away. Well-chosen direct quotations support the validity of the idea. The combination of the coherent explanation and the textual evidence indicates that the student has a deep understanding of the excerpt.



In the story "Emory's Gift" what the narrator learned about himself was that he can be brave and scared at the same time and that he can stand up for himself at the scariest times. For example, "I braced myself for the attack. I would put up a good fight..." and "My legs were still weak and trembling I wasn't sure what had happened. How had I gone from bite-sized to intimidating in midpounce?" showing that he actually faced something life threatening and he dealt with it.

### Score Point 3

The student offers the perceptive idea that when the narrator stands up for himself in a life-threatening situation, he learns that "he can be brave and scared at the same time." Direct quotations illustrating the narrator's simultaneous fear and courage strongly support the validity of the idea presented. By recognizing the complexities of the narrator's reactions during the encounter with the cougar, the student demonstrates an accomplished reading performance.

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The narrator was obviously scared, but he was also being incredibly brave. The narrator realized his bravery when he "found [his] voice..." and roared at the cat. He was showing the cat that he would not be messed with, even though the cat was much larger. When he realizes the cat's lack of fear, he says, "I [will] make him decide that, as meals go, I was too much trouble to bother with." He understands that he will probably die, but he was not going down without a fight. The narrator is scared and knows his fate; however, it would take more than a cougar to kill his bravery.

### Score Point 3

The student presents the perceptive idea that the narrator learns the extent of his own bravery. The student's analysis focuses on the narrator's decision to face the cougar despite his own fear, the cat's size advantage, and his realization that he may die in the encounter. The student strongly supports this analysis with direct quotations ("he 'found [his] voice'...and roared at the cat"; "I [will] make him decide that, as meals go, I was too much trouble to bother with") and paraphrase ("He understands that he will probably die, but he was not going down without a fight"). The student demonstrates a deep understanding of the excerpt, making this an exemplary response.