

Sample of Response Paragraph Writing

Here is an example of a response prompt and a response paragraph to “A Lesson Not Learned” by Carol Sherman Jones.

In this example, the instructions offer you a prompt choice. Once you’ve decided on a question to respond to, underline the key words (for this example, you’ll see that they’re in boldface).

Sample Prompt: Choose ONE of the following to focus your response:

1. How were lessons communicated in your household growing up? **Explain** the ways in which lessons were taught to you as a child.
2. How do you learn things these days, as a teenager? **Narrate** a recent instance that demonstrates either a positive or a negative learning experience as you **focus** your response on the importance (or lack of importance) you place on learning.

PARAGRAPH RESPONSE SAMPLE

Full MLA Heading

Paragraph Sample

1. How were lessons communicated in your household growing up? **Explain** the ways in which lessons were taught to you as a child.

Like, Sherman-Jones, I too was prompted to learn lessons at an early age by my family, but unlike the narrator, my instructions were patient and thoughtful. My mother taught me one very important lesson. One of the lessons I most clearly remember learning was how to load and unload a dishwasher. My mother had a very specific way this was to be done and she took several days to show me how this would work. I watched as she methodically lined up the cups and the plates, ensuring everything fit the correct way and also were facing the same direction. I

was not allowed to load yet, but rather watched her model it four nights in a row after dinner. After I watched, then I practiced, while she watched. She corrected me gently from time to time and told me when I was not following the right order of loading. It sounds silly, today, as an adult to think of this lesson, but it was the first time I had ever been told the correct ways to load a dishwasher and I took my chore seriously. Learning this lesson was important to me as I grew up, and my chore of loading the dishwasher became one I took with great pride. I am grateful my mother taught me patiently and without getting frustrated. I know now that teaching and learning can be both rewarding and inspiring.

Points to appreciate in the model paragraph above:

- Topic sentence provides a smooth transition between the summary paragraph and the response paragraph.
 - 12 point Times New Roman, double spaced, font with an indented beginning, and a title for document (1 tab).
 - Topic Sentence provides focus for this paragraph.
 - Paragraph develops details to support the focus (topic sentence) of the paragraph.
 - These supporting points are interesting and clear.
 - The response paragraph answers the prompt (option one).
 - Paragraph begins clearly with a topic sentence and concludes effectively.
 - Paragraph provides clear transitional words between sentences to provide coherence.
 - Paragraph is effectively organized, well developed, and grammatically correct
- **Please note: How many sentences did it take this author to complete all of this?*