Example Text Response

To Support ELD Lessons 19 and 20
Mid-Unit Assessment Model Response (ELA Lesson 17)

Write an argument evaluating whether Beatty's claim about the "intellectual" as presented in "Montag Takes a Sick Day" is valid and supported by logical reasoning.

Beatty's claim that the word "intellectual...became the swear word it deserved to be" is not valid because his reasoning is based on fear instead of logic. One reason his argument doesn't make sense is that he believes people "must all be alike" so that "all are happy" (59). This ignores how important it is to think and be different. Because Beatty believes being "made equal" will stop people from feeling "inferior," he supports censorship and sameness. This shows that Beatty's real goal is control, not happiness. His logic is flawed since he thinks ignorance brings peace, when it actually keeps people from understanding the truth about their world.

Another reason Beatty's claim is invalid is that he uses unfair examples to justify it. For example, he says people "always dread the unfamiliar" and that smart kids were "selected for beatings and tortures after hours" (59). He uses this story to prove that being different causes problems, but that's not logical. Some people don't like sameness and look forward to variety. Also, not everyone is a bully who beats smart kids up. This shows that Beatty wants to make people afraid of learning instead of encouraging them to understand new ideas. This matters because a society that fears knowledge will never grow or think for itself.

Finally, Beatty's ideas come from a desire to control people, not to help them. He calls books "a loaded gun in the house next door...Take the shot from the weapon," showing that the government fears smart people who can think for themselves (59). Because Beatty believes books cause unhappiness, he wants to destroy them so people will stay distracted by fun and "non-combustible data" (70). This shows that Beatty's claim about intellectuals is not logical or fair. This matters because without intellectuals and free thinkers, people lose their ability to question, learn, and truly be happy.