

GREETING AND OPENING REMARKS

Our experience of helping homeschoolers feels a little bit like the story of Goldilocks. Some families try too hard to do too much, some try too little, and some get it just right. If you are so uptight that you alphabetize your homeschool catalogs, these evaluations probably aren't for you! If you are so laid back that your friends worry about you, these evaluations may provide some helpful feedback. And if you are somewhere in between, we hope you will pick and choose the evaluations that help you fulfill your goals for your family.

The product that you have purchased is, first and foremost, a *servant*. Please do not allow it to become a master to you or to your students. As you may know, especially if you've used *Tapestry* in previous years, we are firmly committed to the individuality of your family and to the primacy of the Holy Spirit's guidance in your homeschooling endeavor. To that end, we have created a curriculum that employs **guided choice** among a limited number of good options and even among options beyond the immediate resources we recommend. *Tapestry* is a buffet table, if you will, liberally spread with delightful and healthy foods meant to appeal to a variety of palates. No one family will (or should!) use all the educational options that *Tapestry* lists on any one level for any one student.

This is true for reading assignments and hands-on projects; it is just as true for evaluations. We have assembled here a **toolbox of evaluation strategies**, for reasons listed below. Week by week, you will need to choose the best tools for the job of educating your child and, in most cases, *leave some of our tools unused!*

If you have purchased *Tapestry*, you probably already agree with us that you must (and can!) make adjustments and choices in whatever published curriculum you buy, but you may not yet have made the same conclusion for the world of evaluations. The evaluations provided here are perhaps best suited to *Tapestry* users who feel insecure about their children's academic progress, need to provide objective grades to homeschool oversight organizations, or desire extra help with choosing dishes off the *Tapestry* smorgasbord.

The above are all good uses for *Evaluations*. We cannot repeat too often, however, that an overly frequent use of evaluations will not bless you or your students.

- Rightly used, evaluations can give you a good indication of your student's academic progress and provide useful feedback to your student. Overused, evaluations dictate the content of your week, intimidate or overburden students, and kill the love of learning.
- Evaluations that are printed by a curriculum publisher tend to be more widely accepted than teacher-generated tests.¹ On the other hand, they should not be used as the only gauges of the growth and development of your child, academically or spiritually.
- Rightly used, our tests will give you *our idea* of the central information and themes of each week's work (and you should always teach to any test you plan to administer, as we explain below under "Teaching to the Test"). Wrongly used, you will feel constrained to rely on our concept of the main ideas and not remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, nor place enough emphasis on your individual (or family) gifts, talents, or interests.

¹ Note that with the advent of these tests, your record-keeping job just got easier. It is an accepted standard that one high school credit is awarded for the completion of three fourths of a printed textbook (or curriculum) and the grade figured by the student's performance on published tests. Using *Evaluations*, therefore, you can now dispense with the time consuming process of keeping records of hours spent on *Tapestry* subjects and take published tests instead. Remember, though, that even if these printed tests are your primary records, nothing says you need to use all of them. Please use them only as you feel they are needed.

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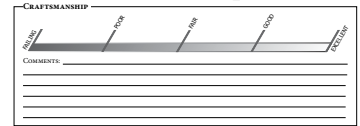
HOW TO USE EVALUATIONS 2

Layout: Types of Tools

On this *Evaluations 2* CD, you will find a series of .pdf files for you to print out as you have need. Here is our organizational strategy:

- You have already encountered our main interface page. Here you will find links to each week’s evaluations tools, organized by week and by learning level.
- Note the color codes for the learning levels in the chart on the main interface page (corresponding to the level colors elsewhere in the redesigned *Tapestry* curriculum). On each test and answer key, you will find these same colors that tell you at a glance what learning level the test has been designed for. As always, you choose your child’s level year to year or week to week.
- We have also created generalized forms that work with a wide variety of projects or presentations. In the interest of simplicity, these are posted once on our main interface page. You will have to use your own judgment in choosing the proper form—there are separate ones for projects, visual displays, writing, and oral presentations or speeches. For the most part, these generalized forms come in two types:

- **Spectrum** evaluation tools provide you, the teacher, with a flexible way of recording and gauging your student’s performance, whether on an oral quiz, a narration exercise, or some other project. They are especially well suited for evaluating younger students’ work, at ages when a simple letter grade would be more confusing than instructive. For each aspect that you are evaluating, you can gauge where the student’s work falls along a whole range from “failing” to “excellent” and mark the spectrum accordingly. Our spectrum forms also include space for comments to clarify your evaluation of his work even further. After filling in a separate spectrum for each aspect of his work, look for patterns in your marks to get a sense of his overall performance. (Did you mark his work as “fair” on most things? Was all of his work “good” except for one aspect that you thought was “poor”?) By using a spectrum, rather than traditional grades, you avoid prematurely assigning your student in strict categories (“Is it an A- or a B+?”), and you also create a detailed record of where he is excelling and where he still needs to improve.



	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10
Spelling	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10
Mechanics	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10
Content	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10
Organization	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10
Style	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

“good” you will give points as listed for the good column, usually 35 or 8 per row. You do not need to add the points from the preceding “poor” and “fair” columns.)

- In general, each evaluation tool has a student version, suitable for printing from your home computer, and a teacher’s answer key version, suitable either for your use or for your student’s self-correction.
 - The one notable exception to this rule has to do with oral quizzes, which the teacher administers. With our oral quiz forms, the teacher prints out the quiz and has it in front of her while the student sits across from her and responds to her prompts according to what he remembers from a week’s learning. The first page of an oral quiz includes topics or questions for you to ask your student; we also provide you with answering information on the same page, to give you some sense of how your student might be expected to answer. Subsequent pages supply you with customized spectrum forms on which to record your student’s performance.
- Because of our desire to allow each family as much flexibility as possible in choosing resources and conducting discussions, our teacher’s answer keys merely provide *sample* answers. You will need to individualize your students’ grades based on what you have chosen to require of them. (Please read more about sample answers below, under the appropriate learning level descriptions.)
- We have included two helpful reference documents in *Evaluations 2* as tools:
 - The Vocabulary Glossary is a set of definitions for the vocabulary words given in the yellow Weekly Overview pages, mostly copied or adapted from the *World Book Dictionary*. If you decide that you want to give occasional or regular vocabulary quizzes to upper-grammar students, this appendix provides you with a quick index of their meanings, organized by week-plan. Be aware, however, that most moms do not require mastery of our vocabulary words from their young children, using the words merely to enhance their comprehension of the weekly subject matter. In this case, this appendix can serve you as a quick reference during your readings or discussion times.
 - The People Glossary contains short biographies of all the people listed in the yellow Weekly Overview pages for the entire year-plan, arranged alphabetically (with the weeks in which they appear also noted). As with Vocabulary, “People” lists are supplied as review tools or “hooks” on which to mentally hang the subject matter. The glossary also provides a convenient reference for key figures whom your resources might not discuss, as well as a handy summary for reviewing those whom you have learned about elsewhere.

General Weekly Procedure

Each week, we strongly recommend that you look over the week’s array of evaluation tools for all the levels you are teaching before the week begins. (In fact, it’s not a bad idea to browse all the levels, including those you are not teaching. At times, ideas used for lower or higher levels may suggest ideas to you for evaluating your child’s work more appropriately than our suggestions for his learning level would.) Again, you may choose to use all or none of the tools we suggest in a given week.

As a guiding principle, we believe that any student who wants to achieve an “A” for a project or a week’s learning should know how to do it before he begins his work. Therefore, especially in the case of hands-on projects or writing assignments, the student should know exactly what criteria will be used to judge his effort. For this reason, we recommend that you show your child any grading rubrics, spectrum sheets, etc. at the start of the week and carefully lead him through them if they are new to him. Encourage him to use these tools to self-correct before submitting his work to you for a “final” grade.

For dialectic and rhetoric students, unit tests are cumulative. No new ideas or themes are introduced that haven’t been previously tested in weekly quizzes. Many of the questions are taken directly from previous quizzes, especially in the rhetoric short answer sections. While we don’t recommend that students necessarily take quizzes every week, these quizzes do form a good basis for review for a unit (or final) exam.

Finally, remember that, for all learning levels, there are alternative approaches to evaluation beyond the scope of this packet, such as keeping portfolios, audio or video tape recordings of oral tests/quizzes, annotated photo albums, or homeschool journals.

Common Exam Elements

Short Answer

Our short answer sections (which may take many forms, including multiple choice, fill in the blank, short paragraph, or true-false questions) are designed to test factual knowledge central to each week's study, at levels of difficulty appropriate to different learning levels.

Time Line Questions

In your yellow Weekly Overview sections of the curriculum, we provide time line dates. Different families use these differently. We always want to caution you against turning students off with too much memory work, but we feel that students should memorize a limited number of what we call "polestar" dates: those dates most important for remembering the relationships among concurrent events worldwide. To this end, our unit tests for dialectic and rhetoric students include time line sections. (Some weekly quizzes may also include major dates.) Once again, we encourage you to teach to these tests. At the start of the unit, look at the unit (or final) exam and see which dates we'll be testing. As the unit progresses, have your student slowly but steadily commit these dates to memory. (If you do not choose to require this work of your student, or if you simply don't have time to get to it, we recommend that you excuse your student from the time line portion of the exam and adjust the total points accordingly.)

Map Sections

As with time line dates, we assume that your student is engaging in regular geography, though we recognize that different families will do so to different degrees. Quarterly and final exams are your chance to assess how he's doing at remembering important geographic locations. Again, teach to the test. Review the unit exam at the start of the unit, plan your student's course of study week by week, and then adjust the exam according to what you actually accomplish.

Essay Questions

These are only given to rhetoric-level students. They are intended to test both the student's knowledge of the subject at hand and his ability to assemble that knowledge into a well-structured piece of writing. Please read more about this under "Notes on Rhetoric Level Evaluations," below.

Why include both a Unit 4 Exam and a Final Exam?

Because *Tapestry of Grace* is sold by the year-plan and by the unit, we recognize that your student may enter the program partway through one of our year-plans, or may not hit a given Unit 4 right at the end of the year. For this reason, we provide both a Unit 4 test and a final exam covering all four units for those who have taken the entire year-plan in sequence and desire to administer a cumulative final exam. (We do not recommend that you administer both of these tests simultaneously. Choose one or the other, depending on your situation.)

Teaching to the Test

For older students, if you plan to use a quiz or test, *you should teach to it*. This is not cheating! Consider the alternative: if you don't teach to the test, you may not cover material that will be on the test. Is this fair to a student? Of course not! When we say "teach to the test," we include choosing reading assignments, discussion questions, and Student Activity Page questions (both Accountability and Thinking Questions) that will prepare the student adequately for the published test. Reviewing these questions is especially important if you have chosen to use resources different from those that we recommend, since we can only guarantee that our tests correspond to one specific set of resources. This is not to say that you should not substitute your own chosen resources or use our Evaluations with them—you will just have to check more carefully to make sure they correspond to what your student could reasonably be expected to know from his week's work. By "teach to the test," we do not mean that you, personally, must verbally teach each answer on the test ahead of time. And, obviously, we don't teach only the material covered on the test; we simply make sure that the test isn't the first and only place that a student encounters certain information, themes, standards (for hands-on projects), or connections between ideas (essay questions).¹

¹ There may be weeks when your family doesn't own a resource, or chooses not to cover a given thread in the *Tapestry* plan. You can still use these quizzes. Simply tell the student that he is not responsible for certain questions (point them out or cross them off before giving the test or quiz).

NOTES ON LOWER GRAMMAR EVALUATIONS

Tapestry subjects are the “ice cream and cake” for students at this level, not the “meat and potatoes.” A healthy diet for children who are not yet fluent readers will include far more time spent in learning phonics, concrete mathematical concepts, and handwriting than in mastering the stories of history or the works of great literature. Thus, children at the lower grammar level don’t really need any evaluations unless some oversight organization requires you to assign grades or unless you feel that giving the student evaluations will motivate him to do his best work.

Most young students have not developed fine motor skills or long attention spans. Many boys will have trouble sitting still, while young girls can often do more traditionally valued academic seatwork. For this reason, young boys are often discouraged by typical evaluation tools, which tend to focus on what is easily measured through traditional written tests. One of the benefits of *Tapestry* is that students can excel in things you might not find evaluated in other curricula, which commonly look only at written work the student produces.

Because we seek to recognize visual, auditory, and tactile approaches to subjects, we have created rubrics for hands-on projects (such as the “Project Rubric” and the “Project Spectrum” under our “Generic” category) which we encourage you to use in place of our given quizzes whenever you think that they would better assess your student’s progress. Our general rubrics allow you to assess and value such things as perseverance, following directions, and attention to detail. In oral presentations (“Oral Presentation Spectrum” or “Speech/Oral Report Rubric”), we seek to reward diligence, clear speech, and poise before an audience as well as the factual content or how interesting the overall presentation was. Our general rubric for visual representations (“Visual Display Rubric” or “Visual Display Spectrum”) gives credit for neatness, good color choices, and clarity of communication. Again, choose week by week to use one or none of these!

Each week, we have offered some variety in evaluation strategies and tools. Again, you may use none or all of these. For those who use fewer evaluations, we’ve included suggestions of ways to review students’ knowledge of the unit as a whole in Weeks 9, 18, 27, and 36. You may well decide to use only these cumulative review guides this year.

Remember, for children this age, entire numerical grades can be fashioned solely from evaluating hands-on projects, drawings, and oral presentations. Demonstrated effort, positive character qualities, and creativity may be just as important to recognize as the ability to parrot a correct factual answer.

NOTES ON UPPER GRAMMAR EVALUATIONS

As students develop into fluent readers, evaluations become more and more motivational in that they provide objective measures of learning. Students may even begin to enjoy “proving themselves” by them. Additionally, your oversight organization may require you to keep grades for these older learners. Your oversight agent probably won’t dictate the content of your evaluations, however, so we recommend again that you use evaluations to underscore what’s most important to a developing learner: careful work, diligence, perseverance, creativity, following directions, etc. As with other students, you will need to choose the style and the frequency of evaluations for students at this level.

As with younger students, we have recognized visual, auditory, and tactile learning styles in our test offerings for this learning level. Again, there may be many weeks when you do not use any of our tools. We do suggest, though, that you begin to teach these students how to take tests that are most often used in traditional settings. In other words, though your child may be a strong tactile or auditory learner, at this stage, it’s important to begin to acquaint him or her with written test forms and the strategies for succeeding at them. The written tests that we offer at the end of each unit provide good opportunities to practice this.

At the end of each unit, we’ve provided specific ideas for reviewing with students in differing degrees of intensity. Should you choose to give students unit tests, we have provided ideas for you to review with your child; we also specify ways for you to begin to develop in your student habits of independent study for many different kinds of tests.

One last thing to consider at this level is the question, “Can my student write in a quick, clear, and legible hand?” Handwriting still matters! Even though most high school and college students type their papers these days, many moms are surprised to learn that most college exams are still handwritten. These are important years to develop fully (by daily practice and strict requirements for final work) legible and swift handwriting abilities.¹

NOTES ON DIALECTIC EVALUATIONS

The main idea behind *Tapestry* evaluation strategies for dialectic students is to answer this question: “Do they see the connections?” What we are pointedly *not* emphasizing is essay, or even prose, writing in our weekly quizzes or unit tests, though these do become an emphasis with rhetoric students. Rather, we have sought to create two different types of evaluations that should work together to give you, the teacher, a fairly full representation of your student’s achievement and to provide him with accountability for factual learning and practice in reviewing for larger tests.

For the most part, our weekly forms and strategies employ graphics-heavy representations of relationships, which the student is to use to express his understanding of the connections between facts or events. (We have sought to make these as visually interesting as possible, so much so that younger students may feel envious of their format. Do not be fooled by the illustrations. Real upper-level learning is being tested, but it is the connections between facts, not factual learning *per se*, that we are looking for.)

On unit tests, by contrast, we use more common elements of traditional testing: short answer, true-false, fill in the blanks, and multiple choice formats, along with elements from time line work and geography lessons. These more traditional tests should give students motivation first to learn and then to review such information. They will also give them an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the factual data at their level.

While we recommend that you continue to include project evaluations (tactile) or presentations (oral) in their overall grade using supplied rubrics, we also recommend that you make sure that dialectic students are increasingly comfortable demonstrating their knowledge of given subjects with pencil and paper in traditional testing formats. (See the rationale for this above, in the upper grammar section.)

NOTES ON RHETORIC EVALUATIONS

Our goal for your child in the rhetoric years is worth restating here so that you understand the ideas that guided us as we wrote these evaluations. Succinctly stated, we believe high school students should learn to analyze the big picture and synthesize a well-informed, biblically-grounded worldview. The tests we offer were developed according to the following principles:

- Analysis and synthesis are key skills that these students must learn. We believe that a combination of copious reading of the classics of Western Civilization, mentor-led Socratic discussions, and much practice in the correct formation of written essays is the best means to this end. The quizzes we have written enable you to give weekly practice in timed essay-test taking, in particular. Again, your student does not need to take a weekly test simply because we have provided one. The sheer volume of tests should give you confidence to pick and choose between them.
- Fact retention is a crucial component of analysis and synthesis. Students who are new to argumentation can fall into “squishy” reasoning, stating bald opinions based on emotions or hearsay, not on facts. It is important that students develop opinions, but it is equally important that they seek to support such opinions with facts.
- All arguments start with the Great Fact: God’s revelation given in His divine Word. God’s Word must stand as the organizing paradigm that informs and measures all others; His is the Great Opinion of all time. Consider 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” We want

¹ In case you are unaware, cursive handwriting was scientifically developed to be the fastest and most legible handwriting possible, while being the least fatiguing to the hand. We recommend remedial handwriting work for students who have not yet developed the ability to write a quick, clear, legible hand.

students to develop their worldviews in light of biblical truth, so they should seek both to analyze and to support arguments with facts that align with the Bible.

- An important goal for us in writing *Tapestry* has been to aid you in helping your child prepare for both college and life. By this, we mean we want to help you develop in your older child such academically related (but somewhat invisible) skills as managing time when carrying a full task load, developing strategies for studying for tests and memorizing facts, and practicing ways to learn material efficiently but thoroughly. Our Accountability Questions and Thinking Questions have this underlying goal, yet students often have perceived them as “busy work.” In writing these rhetoric-level evaluations, we often drew from the questions we asked students in the Student Activity Pages. Thus, these Accountability and Thinking questions become more important to the student, since in mastering them the student is helped towards a good grade. A benefit to you as a teacher is that, if you read the quiz questions ahead, you can use our quizzes to guide you in what you should emphasize in your discussion times.

Scheduling Quizzes and Unit Exams

Our rhetoric-level quizzes are designed to be administered once a week, generally in about 30 minutes.¹ In some weeks, 45-minute essay tests are also offered as alternatives (mostly for older students). Be sure that you look over each quiz before administering it and that your student has the full recommended time needed to be able to take the quiz in one sitting.

While quizzes generally occur once a week in a 30-minute time block, the *Tapestry* unit exams are administered at the end of the unit and are 2 hours in length. As always, we encourage you the teacher to determine the best way to evaluate your student. However, if you choose to use our unit exams, here are some helpful suggestions for you to consider as you schedule time to administer them.

- Because *Tapestry* is set up in 36 week plans and does not set aside time specifically for testing, the unit exam typically will be administered during the last week of each unit. Not only will the student have an exam to take, but he will also be responsible for that week-plan’s material. Therefore, you might consider having the student review the unit’s studies in the last part of the week, perhaps on a Thursday and Friday, and administering the test on a Saturday or even on the Monday of the following week.
- Another option is to divide the exam into parts, giving your student the short answer and essay questions at the end of the week on a Friday and the timeline and geography sections on a Saturday.
- As stated previously, you may decide to adjust different sections of the exam, tailoring it to your student’s particular studies. For example, you may choose to test him on 15 of the 25 timeline questions, or to skip that section altogether.
- There may be other creative options. Once again, you can determine how to best use evaluations for your student.

Remember that *Tapestry of Grace* aims primarily at showing students connections by introducing them to the main “colors and threads” of the tapestry of time. We do not aim at leading students to master fully all the details of history. *Tapestry* (and all high school) studies are better thought of as survey courses that lay a solid foundation for later, in-depth studies at the collegiate (or mature adult) level. Still, a good case can be made for the value of regular accountability in motivating students to master what they can, and it is in this spirit that we offer these tests. Put another way, as with our reading lists, we offer more than you need so that you will have what you need in the weeks you choose to use them.

Short Answer Questions and Answers

Some of these are taken directly from the student’s weekly Accountability Questions, found in the Student Activity Pages. When there weren’t enough existing Accountability Questions to supply ten short answer questions for a quiz, we took major points from the discussion outline in the Teacher’s Notes, information from student charts recom-

¹ Again, for the sake of emphasis, we repeat that in most families, once-a-week testing is overkill! Weekly testing is not necessary, and parents should be wary of overburdening students and thereby killing their love of learning. Balancing this concern, however, is the reality that taking such a weekly test does hold students accountable for the factual information (highlighted mostly in their Accountability Questions) and gives students much needed practice in taking essay tests. The choice to test weekly or not is, as always, up to you.

mended in the Student Activity Pages (and answered in the Teacher’s Notes), or details and themes from students’ weekly reading assignments. The fact that so many of these quiz questions are drawn directly from his previous work should motivate your student to answer his Accountability Questions thoroughly as he progresses through his reading assignments, since he will meet them again and again on weekly quizzes and unit tests.

For some families—especially those in which students are new to analytical thinking or do not have a strong base in writing—we recommend that for the first unit or two you use ONLY the short answer work, making each question worth ten points. You can allow the student to answer the essay question orally, or you can use the essay questions and sample answers as teaching tools to help your student start thinking about how to take such tests and thereby catch him up. As always, you are the teacher. You know your student better than anyone; you alone know how much groundwork you have laid before the high school years and whether these quizzes will benefit or harm his academic progress and love for learning.

Essay Test Questions and Answers

These essay questions were first culled from the questions listed in the weekly Student Activity Pages, especially the weekly Thinking Questions, or from the discussion outlines in the Teacher’s Notes. We occasionally reused a topic or even a specific essay assignment from the Writing Assignment Charts. In this case, you can choose either to let your student write on a question for which he is more than usually prepared (seeing how much stuck in his mind out of what he learned by writing the paper), or you can assign him one of our alternate questions.

ALWAYS read the quizzes at the beginning of each week, and teach to them! It is unfair to test a student on material that has not been clearly, and even repeatedly, presented to him, either in his reading or in his discussion time, or both. BEFORE a student begins work on a quiz, make sure that you have presented him with reading assignments, Student Activity Page questions (blue pages), and oral discussion such that he should easily recognize what the questions are asking of him and be able to answer them. (If an essay question topic was not covered during the week, simply ask him to write on a different topic that was. This is why we try to give at least two essay questions each week for the student to choose from.)

Our essay answers are drafted by our staff writers. We try to keep the writing as simple and straightforward as possible, but we do not attempt strict realism: for instance, we do not include the spelling errors, punctuation errors, or bad grammar that would be expected in the work of young writers who are just now learning to write to a time deadline. Stylistically, our answers probably represent better writing than your high school student will be capable of, especially at first. Additionally, though our sample answers are written within the time period specified in the directions for each answer, we are typing, and your student should hand-write his answers. For all these reasons, think of our sample answers as A++ papers—ideal and unrealistic answers, even. Give your high schooler lots of grace, encouragement, and instruction as to proper form and typical content, especially if he’s new to essay tests.

“What’s the use, then, for these A++ answers?” you might ask. There are several answers:

- Our sample answers provide a lot of guidance for you in grading essays. Though your child’s essay will never mimic our answers exactly, our samples provide you with an example of how one could analyze and synthesize key facts from the week’s lesson. We also give you additional bulleted points of facts or concepts that allow you to know if your student has included enough (or correct) points from the lesson in his answer and whether he has done so in a correct structure.¹ Remembering that ours are A++ answers, you must take into account the unique stage of your own child. We suggest that you use our generalized rubrics to indicate to the student specific ways that he fell short of our model.
- Sample answers are useful purely as writing samples, demonstrating a level of composition to which you and

¹ Remember, please, that our sample answers do not include all possible points, facts, or analyses. We seek, rather to give a sample of about the right amount of factual/analytical information that a student could produce in the 20 minutes he is given. The bulleted “points” list is meant to be more exhaustive as a tool for you, the teacher, to use in grading the content of your student’s essay. From time to time, students may include points we don’t list. Be sure to check these against the resources you have provided before marking them as right or wrong, as historical resources do differ, sometimes even on central information.

your student should aspire. In other words, the sample answers give you a mark to shoot at. They show you in concrete ways where you should be headed as a teacher helping your student learn to write quickly, concisely, and effectively.

- The sample answers show you and your student how the essay question could be answered. They are demonstrations that there is a good way to answer the question your student has been asked.
- They demonstrate proper structure for the essay. The sample answers contain the proper number of paragraphs and proper paragraph structures (e.g. the inclusion of an introductory paragraph that states the thesis and three supportive categories, a concluding paragraph with a twist, etc.).
- The sample answers are “model” answers. Using them, your child can gain vision for where he needs to improve. It is commonly thought that an effective method for teaching children to write is to give them a model passage from an excellent writer and ask them to mimic, or even just copy, the passage. If you agree with this pedagogical technique, our sample answers can provide some simple models for teaching your child to write essays.

Some students are extremely literal in their interpretation of directions. Explain to such students that phrases in our essay directions such as “use specific facts” or “well-structured argument” are merely reminders to pay attention to the structure and facts necessary to support their arguments. They are NOT intended to overburden such students with an oppressive number of requirements in writing their essay.

As you begin to look at our sample essay answers, please note the following criteria for successful essays. Basically, we look for the student to demonstrate two things in every essay test: 1) an ability to remember specific facts or concepts that he’s been taught, and 2) an ability to assemble these into a strictly structured and well-written prose essay.

1. Content was discussed above. We have done our best to provide you a guide to the correct content for your student’s essays. Our essay-grading rubric can also help you decide how to distribute points for the content portion of essays.
2. Essays are structured strictly, and structure is an equal factor with content in grading considerations.¹ For the most part, we have confined ourselves to two main essay-test types in Year 2 *Evaluations*.
 - **Expository Essays** are typically structured in five paragraphs.
 - These include an introductory paragraph, a concluding paragraph, and three supportive, fact-filled paragraphs that comprise the body of the essay. (Very rarely, in later units, you may find an essay that offers the student only two supportive categories.)
 - Usually, we give the student an indication of what his three supportive categories of fact should be. This is because we are working with young writers. He may not find these ready-made for him in college exams, and should be told this fact.
 - Expository essays present the thesis in the first (introductory) paragraph, along with phrases or sentences that give the reader a summary of the three supportive points that will be presented.
 - Each body paragraph is centered on one of the three supportive points introduced in the first paragraph, and should parallel them exactly. In other words, if the student says, “The kingdom developed because of factors X, Y, and Z” he should not introduce first, in the body, a paragraph about Y or Z; X should come first, followed by Y and Z in proper order. Mark students down if they wander, within any body paragraph, from the basic supportive point that they summarized in their introductory paragraph.
 - Each body paragraph, ideally, should end with a “tie back” sentence. These are sentences which remind the reader of how the paragraph’s contents relate to the original thesis.
 - The conclusion should restate the original thesis and the three supportive points. In an excellent essay, the student may add an additional concluding remark or idea—a “twist”—that follows from the previous points but was not explicitly stated therein.
 - The whole expository essay can be summed up this way: “Tell them what you’re going to say, say it, then tell them what you said.”

¹ For a fuller explanation of the varying structures of standard exam essays, please refer to *Writing Aids*.

- **Compare/Contrast Essays** are structured a bit differently, but still strictly.
 - The student has a choice of arranging his paragraphs either according to fact-categories, in which each paragraph has a separate category to compare similarities and differences, or according to the two things being described, with one paragraph for each. Thus, his essay body may contain either three normal-sized paragraphs or two longish ones.
 - Example: Say the question asks the student to compare the characters, policies, and social standing of two men: A and B. Retaining strict parallelism, students may either...
 - a. Choose to write three paragraphs on character, policy, and social standing, discussing within each one the qualities of A first, then B.
 - b. Choose to discuss the similarities between A and B, then use a paragraph to describe how A differs from B, and finally use a paragraph to tell how B differs from A.
 - c. Choose to say all that he has to say about A's character, policy, and social standing in one longish paragraph, then talk about the character, policy, and social standing of B.
 - In all three cases, the body of the essay will be bracketed by introductory and concluding paragraphs, where the student will tell the reader what he is going to say, and then tell him what he's said.
- Occasionally, questions will dictate that the student structure his essay a little differently from the strict five-paragraph or compare-contrast models outlined above. Here is our rationale for these aberrations:
 - When we craft the essay questions, because we are working with young essay-writers, we want to give them as much indication of the intended structure as we can. We call these indications "training wheels."
 - As the year progresses, our questions are, in places, either more open-ended or more generalized, and they leave the student more discretion to choose his own categories from scratch. In some cases, it would be artificial to include three main points, or categories, so the sample answer may contain two main paragraphs.
 - As you begin to instruct the student in essay structures, make him aware that in *Tapestry* evaluations, only occasionally will the question not dictate the categories. Whether two or three categories are indicated, the student should "go with the flow" and not seek alternative categories. The question gives those particular categories for guidance and also because they indicate what the teacher wants the student to demonstrate that he understands.
 - Tell the student that these are training years. When the student enters college, professors will rarely give him categories. If he's aware of basic internal essay structures, he should be able to transition effortlessly to more advanced structures like research papers, two-point essays, etc. In anticipation of that day, we give him a few "wonkie" essays now and then.

Use of Rhetoric Level Tests

A savvy teacher will learn to look at the test at the beginning of the week as a teaching resource. Tests give teachers an indication of the curriculum writer's concept of the "main idea" of the week's work. Our essay-test answers provide great insights into each week's lesson, whether or not you use them.

This brings us to our exhortation one more time: you simply must CHOOSE between options! Please do NOT use all of our beautiful tests, no matter how much you feel like you are wasting them!

Finally, do note that, on some quizzes, questions are specific to certain resources, cover aspects of a subject at a more advanced level of thinking or detail than your studies may allow, or simply represent a thread that you may not have covered. While we have attempted to make these evaluations as versatile as possible so as to serve the largest possible number of users, such shortcomings are inevitable in a curriculum with the scope and flexibility of *Tapestry*. Therefore, when administering the test, make sure the student chooses an essay question that he is equipped to answer. You can also just use the Short Answer section of a given test (or indeed any given section) in isolation, and ignore the rest of it, especially if the week has been busy. You will then have to adjust the point system for yourself.

That's all we have to tell you! May God bless you and give you wisdom as you get on to the great and real business of assessing your individual student!