

# English Toolkit: Indicator 4.2.1

## Goal 4.0 Evaluating the Content, Organization, and Language Use of Texts

Expectation 4.2 The student will assess the effectiveness of choice of details, organizational pattern, word choice, syntax, use of figurative language, and rhetorical devices.

Indicator 4.2.1 The student will assess the effectiveness of diction that reveals an author's purpose.

### Assessment Limits:

Evaluating author's choice of words, phrases, sentences, and word order

- for a particular audience or effect
- for a given purpose
- to extend meaning in a context
- to provide emphasis

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## Public Release #1 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 4.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: My People and I, Too

Read these lines from the poem "I, Too."

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.

The poet most likely includes these lines to

- predict social change in the future
- tell where he will eat the next day
- express anger for past treatment
- warn uninvited guests to stay away

## Public Release #2 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 4.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Anna and the King

Read the screenplay *Anna and the King*. Then answer the following:

In the stage directions at the beginning of the scene, details such as "deep red carpet" and "golden throne" create an atmosphere of

- delight
- security
- splendor
- warmth

## Public Release #3 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 4.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: High Tide in Tucson

Read the essay "High Tide in Tucson." Then answer the following.

Read this sentence from the essay.

Then, while we watched in stunned reverence, the strange beast found its bearings and began to reveal a determined, crabby grace.

The author most likely includes the phrase "determined crabby grace" to suggest

- the difficulty with which Buster moved
- the complexity of Buster's movements
- the strength required for Buster to move
- the cramped manner of Buster's movements

Public Release #4 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 4.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: A Sea Worry

Read the essay "A Sea Worry." Then answer the following:

Read this sentence from paragraph 10 of the essay.

The strip of cliff pulverized into sand is Sandy's.

The author most likely uses *pulverized* instead of *crumbled* to

- point out the beauty of the ocean
- identify the location of the beach
- emphasize the power of the waves
- describe the shape of the shoreline

## Sample Assessment #1 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2002

English Indicator 4.2.1

Handout(s):

- English Resource: The Struggle to Be an All-American Girl

Read the story "The Struggle to Be an All-American Girl." Then answer the following:

Read this sentence from the passage.

Forcibly she walked us the seven long, hilly blocks from our home to school, depositing our defiant tearful faces before the stern principal.

The author uses the word *forcibly* to suggest the mother's

- A. cleverness
- B. determination
- C. exhaustion
- D. strength

## Handouts

## My People

The night is beautiful,  
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,  
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.  
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

## I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

—Langston Hughes

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"My People" and "I, Too" by Langston Hughes, from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* by Langston Hughes, copyright © 1994 by the Estate of Langston Hughes. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

# Anna and the King

## Introduction

The year is 1862. Anna Leonowens is an English woman living in India whose husband, a captain in the British Army, has recently died. To support herself and her young son Louis, she accepts a position as tutor to the son of the King of Siam. She arrives in Bangkok with Louis and two Indian servants, knowing no one. Although she has been promised a house of her own, she finds that she has been assigned quarters in the palace; she asks to see the king, but the Prime Minister, known as the Kralahome, tells her that she must wait until the king is ready to see her. He addresses Anna as *Sir* because women are not allowed to stand in the king's presence, and Anna refuses to kneel.

The Grand Palace, Bangkok.  
Several weeks after Anna's arrival.

*The Kralahome escorts Anna and Louis to the Hall of Audience. There, ranged on a deep red carpet is a throng of prostrate<sup>1</sup> noblemen and courtiers facing a raised dais; on it, the imposing figure of Siam's ruler, King Mongkut, sits on a golden throne. Just off the dais stands Alak, his Majesty's highly decorated Consul-General. A French emissary advances to present His Majesty with a jewel-encrusted sword.*

LOUIS (*whispering*): Look at the sword!

ANNA: It's a gift from the French. (*King Mongkut delivers a clapped command to the interpreter, who accepts the sword. The entire assemblage begins a series of bows.*)

KRALAHOME: It appears Sir must wait to meet His Majesty another day.

ANNA: I do not think so. (*She takes her son's hand and hurries down the stairs toward the throne as musicians play the king's exit. Kralahome, caught off-guard, hurries to catch up with her. She curtsies deeply as she approaches the king.*) Your Majesty, my name is Anna Leonowens. (*King Mongkut turns, shocked. His bodyguards draw swords, blocking Anna's path.*) I am the schoolteach—

MONGKUT: STOP!!! (*Startled, Anna does just that. King Mongkut strides toward her.*)  
WHO?!?

KRALAHOME (*prostrating himself*): Your Majesty, Mme<sup>2</sup> Anna Leonowens and son, Louis.

ANNA: Your Majesty, I have waited nearly three weeks.

MONGKUT: SILENCE! (*He gazes at Anna, intrigued.*) YOU are teacher?

ANNA (*flustered*): Yes, I am.

MONGKUT: You do not look sufficient of age. How many years have you?

ANNA: Enough to know that age and wisdom do not necessarily go hand in hand, Your Majesty. (*King Mongkut nods. Then he abruptly heads off.*)

KRALAHOME: His Majesty has not dismissed you. Follow him! (*Anna and Louis run to keep up with the king.*)

MONGKUT: You articulate logical answer under pressure, Mme Leonowens—

ANNA: That is very kind of—

MONGKUT: —but irritating superior attitude King find most unbeautiful. However, it will serve you well given decision I now make. (*They reach a pair of massive double doors.*)

Along with Prince Chulalongkorn, you shall teach my children. (*Guards push open the doors and the trio step into the gardens of the children's park. Scores of princes and princesses, none older than eleven, play around pools and pavilions. Peacocks stroll the grounds. A gong announces the king's presence. Everyone turns, sees the king, and drops to the ground.*) Attention, my most blessed and royal family, we have company. (*King Mongkut motions Anna and Louis to follow him. He stops before a teenage boy, and nods his head. This is Prince Chulalongkorn, King Mongkut's oldest son.*) Presenting Heir Apparent, Prince Chulalongkorn. And this, my son, is your new teacher.

PRINCE (*astonished*): Why do you punish me with imperialist schoolteacher? (*King Mongkut, understanding his son's distress, turns to the crowd.*)

MONGKUT: Dearest family, I desire you all to be educated in English language, science, and literature. You must never forget to honor your renowned teacher, Mme Anna Leonowens.

ANNA: Your Majesty, the opportunity to begin a school is exciting. Such devotion to progress is to be commended.

MONGKUT: As father, I understand.

ANNA: Then Your Majesty appreciates why having a home outside the palace is of such importance to me.

MONGKUT (*firmly*): It is my pleasure that you live in the palace.

ANNA (*equally firmly*): But it is not mine, Your Majesty.

MONGKUT (*eyes flashing*): You do not set conditions, and you shall OBEY!

ANNA: May I respectfully remind His Majesty that I am not his servant, but his guest.

MONGKUT (*after a tense moment*): A guest who is paid. (*He heads for the gates.*)

ANNA: And what of our house?

MONGKUT (*without turning*): Everything has its own time. (*He is gone. The entire crowd stares at Anna in awe. A woman has just argued with their king.*)

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<sup>1</sup> prostrate: lying face down, as in submission  
<sup>2</sup> Mme: abbreviation for Madame

## High Tide in Tucson

by Barbara Kingsolver

A hermit crab lives in my house. Here in the desert he's hiding out from local animal ordinances, at minimum, and maybe even the international laws of native-species transport. For sure, he's an outlaw against nature. So be it.

<sup>2</sup>He arrived as a stowaway two Octobers ago. I had spent a week in the Bahamas, and while I was there, wishing my daughter could see those sparkling blue bays and sandy coves, I did exactly what she would have done: I collected shells. Spiky murexes, smooth purple moon shells, ancient-looking whelks sand-blasted by the tide—I tucked them in the pockets of my shirt and shorts until my lumpy, suspect hemlines gave me away, like a refugee smuggling the family fortune. When it was time to go home, I rinsed my loot in the sink and packed it carefully into a plastic carton, then nested it deep in my suitcase for the journey to Arizona.

I got home in the middle of the night, but couldn't wait till morning to show my hand. I set the carton on the coffee table for my daughter to open. In the dark living room her face glowed, in the way of antique stories about children and treasure. With perfect delicacy she laid the shells out on the table, counting, sorting, designating scientific categories like yellow-striped pinky, Barnacle Bill's pocketbook...Yeek! She let loose a sudden yelp, dropped her booty,<sup>1</sup> and ran to the far end of the room. The largest, knottiest whelk had begun to move around. First it extended one long red talon of a leg, tap-tap-tapping like a blind man's cane. Then came half a dozen more red legs, plus a pair of eyes on stalks, and a purple claw that snapped open and shut in a way that could not mean: We Come in Friendship.

Who could blame this creature? It had fallen asleep to the sound of the Caribbean tide and awakened on a coffee table in Tucson, Arizona, where the nearest standing water source of any real account was the municipal sewage-treatment plant.

With red stiletto legs splayed in all directions, it lunged and jerked its huge shell this way and that, reminding me of the scene I make whenever I'm moved to rearrange the living room sofa by myself. Then, while we watched in stunned reverence, the strange beast found its bearings and began to reveal a determined, crabby grace. It felt its way to the edge of the table and eased itself over, not falling bang to the floor but hanging suspended underneath within the long grasp of its ice-tong legs, lifting any two or three at a time while many others still held in place. In this remarkable fashion it scrambled around the underside of the table's rim, swift and sure and fearless like a rock climber's dream.

If you ask me, when something extraordinary shows up in your life in the middle of the night, you give it a name and make it the best home you can.

The business of naming involved a grasp of hermit-crab gender that was way out of our league. But our household had a deficit of males, so my daughter and I chose Buster, for balance. We gave him a terrarium with clean gravel and a small cactus plant dug out of the yard and a big cockleshell full of tap water. All this seemed to suit him fine. To my astonishment our local pet store carried a product called Vitaminized Hermit Crab Cakes. Tempting enough (till you read the ingredients) but we passed, since our household leans more toward the recycling ethic. We give him leftovers. Buster's rapture is the day I drag the unidentifiable things in cottage cheese containers out of the back of the fridge.

We've also learned to give him a continually changing assortment of seashells, which he tries on and casts off like Cinderella's stepsisters preening for the ball. He'll sometimes try to squeeze into ludicrous outfits too small to contain him (who can't relate?). In other moods, he will disappear into a conch the size of my two fists and sit for a day, immobilized by the weight of upward mobility. He is in every way the perfect housemate: quiet, entertaining, and willing to eat up the trash. He went to school for first-grade show-and-tell, and was such a hit the principal called up to congratulate me (I think) for being a broad-minded mother.

It was a long time, though, before we began to understand the content of Buster's character. He required more patient observation than we were in the habit of giving to a small, cold-blooded life. As months went by, we would periodically notice with great disappointment that Buster seemed to be dead. Or not entirely dead, but ill, or maybe suffering the crab equivalent of the blues. He would burrow into a gravelly corner, shrink deep into his shell, and not move, for days and days. We'd take him out to play, dunk him in water, offer him a new frock—nothing. He wanted to be still.

Life being what it is, we'd eventually quit prodding our sick friend to cheer up, and would move on to the next stage of a difficult friendship: neglect. We'd ignore him wholesale, only to realize at some point later on that he'd lapsed into hyperactivity. We'd find him ceaselessly patrolling the four corners of his world, turning over rocks, rooting out and dragging around truly disgusting pork-movementschop bones, digging up his cactus and replanting it on its head. At night when the household fell silent I would lie in bed listening to his methodical pebbly racket from the opposite end of the house.

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<sup>1</sup> booty: treasures

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## A Sea Worry

by Maxine Hong Kingston

THIS SUMMER MY SON body-surfs. He says it's his "job" and rises each morning at 5:30 to catch the bus to Sandy Beach. I hope that by September he will have had enough of the ocean. Tall waves throw surfers against the shallow bottom. Undertows have snatched them away. Sharks prowl Sandy's. Joseph told me that once he got out of the water because he saw an enormous shark. "Did you tell the lifeguard?" I asked. "No." "Why not?" "I didn't want to spoil the surfing." The ocean pulls at the boys, who turn into surfing addicts. At sunset you can see the surfers waiting for the last golden wave.

"Why do you go surfing so often?" I ask my students.

"It feels so good," they say. "Inside the tube, I can't describe it. There are no words for it."

"You can describe it," I scold, and I am very angry. "Everything can be described. Find the words for it, you lazy boy. Why don't you go home and read?" I am afraid that the boys give themselves up to the ocean's mindlessness.

When the waves are up, surfers all over Hawaii don't do their homework. They cut school. They know how the surf is breaking at any moment because every fifteen minutes the reports come over the radio; in fact, one of my former students is the surf reporter.

Some boys leave for mainland colleges, and write their parents heart-rending letters. They beg to come home for Thanksgiving. "If I can just touch the ocean," they write from Missouri and Kansas, "I'll last for the rest of the semester." Some come home for Christmas and don't go back.

Even when the assignment is about something else, the students write about surfing. They try to describe what it is to be inside the wave as it curls over them. Making a tube or "chamber" or "green room" or "pipeline" or "time warp." They write about the silence, the peace, "no hassles," the feeling of being reborn as they shoot out the end. They've written about the perfect wave. Their writing is full of clichés. "The endless summer," they say. "Unreal."

Surfing is like a religion. Among the martyrs are George Helm, Kimo Mitchell, and Eddie Aikau. Helm and Mitchell were lost at sea riding their surfboards from Kaho'olawe, where they had gone to protest the Navy's bombing of that island. Eddie Aikau was a champion surfer and lifeguard. A storm had capsized the *Hokule'a*, the ship that traced the route that the Polynesian ancestors sailed from Tahiti, and Eddie Aikau had set out on his board to get help.

Since the ocean captivates our son, we decided to go with him to Sandy's.

<sup>10</sup>We got up before dawn, picked up his friend, Marty, and drove out of Honolulu. Almost all the traffic was going in the opposite direction, the freeway coned to make more lanes into the city. We came to a place where raw mountains rose on our left and the sea fell on our right, smashing against the cliffs. The strip of cliff pulverized into sand is Sandy's. "Dangerous Current Exist," said the ungrammatical sign.

Earl and I sat on the shore with our blankets and thermos of coffee. Joseph and Marty put on their fins and stood at the edge of the sea for a moment, touching the water with their fingers and crossing their hearts before going in. There were fifteen boys out there, all about the same age, fourteen to twenty, all with the same kind of lean v-shaped build, most of them with black hair that made their wet heads look like sea lions. It was hard to tell whether our kid was one of those who popped up after a big wave. A few had surfboards, which are against the rules at a body-surfing beach, but the lifeguard wasn't on duty that day.

As they watched for the next wave the boys turned toward the ocean. They gazed slightly upward; I thought of altar boys before a great god. When a good wave arrived, they turned, faced shore, and came shooting in, some taking the wave to the right and some to the left, their bodies fish-like, one arm out in front, the hand and fingers pointed before them, like a swordfish's beak. A few held credit card trays, and some slid in on trays from McDonald's.

"That is no country for middle-aged women," I said. We had on bathing suits underneath our clothes in case we felt moved to participate. There were no older men either.

Even from the shore, we could see inside the tubes. Sometimes, when they came at an angle, we saw into them a long way. When the wave dug into the sand, it formed a brown tube or a golden one. The magic ones, though, were made out of just water, green and turquoise rooms, translucent walls and ceiling. I saw one that was powder-blue, perfect, thin; the sun filled it with sky blue and white light. The best thing, the kids say, is when you are in the middle of the tube, and there is water all around you but you're dry.

The waves came in sets; the boys passed up the smaller ones. Inside a big one, you could see their bodies hanging upright, knees bent, duckfeet fins paddling, bodies dangling there in the wave.

Once in a while, we heard a boy yell, "Aa-who!" "Poon tah!" "Aaroo!" And then we noticed how rare a human voice was here; the surfers did not talk, but silently, silently rode the waves.

Since Joseph and Marty were considerate of us, they stopped after two hours, and we took them out for breakfast. We kept asking them how it felt, so they would not lose language.

"Like a stairwell in an apartment building," said Joseph, which I liked immensely. He hasn't been in very many apartment buildings, so had to reach a bit to get the simile. "I saw somebody I knew coming toward me in the tube, and I shouted, 'Jeff. Hey Jeff,' and my voice echoed like a stairwell in an apartment building. Jeff and I came straight at each other—mirror tube."

"Are there ever girls out there?" EarlI asked. "There's a few who come out at about eleven," said Marty.

"How old are they?"

"About twenty."

"Why do you cross your heart with water?"

"So the ocean doesn't kill us."

I describe the powder-blue tube I had seen.

"That part of Sandy's is called Chambers," they said.

I am relieved that the surfers keep asking one another for descriptions. I also find some comfort in the stream of commuter traffic, cars filled with men over twenty, passing Sandy Beach on their way to work.

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# The Struggle to Be an All-American Girl

by Elizabeth Wong

*Introduction:* Born in 1958, Elizabeth Wong began her writing career as a journalist for the *Hartford Courant* and then the *San Diego Tribune*. Wong entered the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University with hopes of becoming a playwright. The following essay, "The Struggle to Be an All-American Girl," which she wrote as a young adult, first appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1980.

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It's still there, the Chinese school on Yale Street where my brother and I used to go. Despite the new coat of paint and the high wire fence, the school I knew 10 years ago remains remarkably stoically<sup>1</sup> the same.

Every day at 5 P.M., instead of playing with our fourth- and fifth-grade friends or sneaking out to the empty lot to hunt ghosts and animal bones, my brother and I had to go to Chinese school. No amount of kicking, screaming or pleading could dissuade my mother, who was solidly determined to have us learn the language of our heritage.

Forcibly she walked us the seven long, hilly blocks from our home to school, depositing our defiant tearful faces before the stern principal. My only memory of him is that he swayed on his heels like a palm tree, and he always clasped his impatient twitching hands behind his back. I recognized him as a repressed maniacal child killer, and knew that if we ever saw his hands we'd be in big trouble.

We all sat in little chairs in an empty auditorium. The room smelled like Chinese medicine, an imported faraway mustiness. Like ancient mothballs or dusty closets. I hated that smell. I favored crisp new scents. Like the soft French perfume that my American teacher wore in public school.

There was a stage far to the right, flanked by an American flag and the flag of the Nationalist Republic of China, which was also red, white and blue, but not as pretty.

Although the emphasis at the school was mainly language—speaking, reading, writing—the lessons always began with an exercise in politeness. With the entrance of the teacher, the best student would tap a bell and everyone would get up, kowtow<sup>2</sup> and chant, "Sing san ho," the phonetic<sup>3</sup> for "How are you, teacher?" Being 10 years old, I had better things to learn than ideographs<sup>4</sup> copied painstakingly in lines that ran right to left from the tip of a *mooc but*, a real ink pen that had to be held in an awkward way if blotches were to be avoided. After all, I could do the multiplication tables, name the satellites of Mars and write reports on "Little Women" and "Black Beauty." Nancy Drew, my favorite book heroine, never spoke Chinese.

The language was a source of embarrassment. More times than not, I had tried to dissociate myself from the nagging loud voice that followed me wherever I wandered in the nearby American supermarket outside Chinatown. The voice belonged to my grandmother, a fragile woman in her 70s who could outshout the best of the street vendors. Her humor was raunchy, her Chinese rhythmless, patternless. It was quick, it was loud, it was unbeautiful. It was not like the quiet, lilting romance of French or the gentle refinement of the American South. Chinese sounded pedestrian. Public.

In Chinatown, the comings and goings of hundreds of Chinese on their daily tasks sounded chaotic and frenzied. I did not want to be thought of as mad, as talking gibberish. When I spoke English, people nodded at me, smiled sweetly, said encouraging words. Even the people in my culture would cluck and say that I'd do well in life. "My, doesn't she move her lips fast," they'd say, meaning that I'd be able to keep up with the world outside Chinatown.

My brother was even more fanatical<sup>5</sup> than I about speaking English. He was especially hard on my mother, criticizing her, often cruelly, for her pidgin speech—smatterings of Chinese scattered like chop suey in her conversation. "It's not 'What it is,' Mom," he'd say in

exasperation. "It's 'What *is*, what *is*, what *is!*'" Sometimes, Mom might leave out an occasional "the" or "a," or perhaps a verb of being. He would stop her in mid-sentence. "Say it again, Mom. Say it right." When he tripped over his own tongue, he'd blame it on her: "See, Mom, it's all your fault. You set a bad example."

What infuriated my mother most was when my brother cornered her on her consonants, especially "r." My father had played a cruel joke on Mom by assigning her an American name that her tongue wouldn't allow her to say. No matter how hard she tried, "Ruth" always ended up "Luth" or "Roof."

After two years of writing with a *mooc but* and reciting words with multiples of meanings, I finally was granted a cultural divorce. I was permitted to stop Chinese school. I thought of myself as multicultural. I preferred tacos to egg rolls; I enjoyed Cinco de Mayo more than Chinese New Year. At last, I was one of you; I wasn't one of them.

Sadly, I still am.

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- <sup>1</sup> stoically: showing calm during suffering or bad fortune
  - <sup>2</sup> kowtow: the act of kneeling and touching the ground with the forehead to show respect
  - <sup>3</sup> phonetic: speech sounds
  - <sup>4</sup> ideographs: graphic symbols representing an idea
  - <sup>5</sup> fanatical: excessively enthusiastic or unreasonable

"The Struggle to Be an All-American Girl"  
by Elizabeth Wong as published in the Los Angeles Times, September 7, 1980, copyright © 1980 by The Los Angeles Times. Used by permission.

## English Indicator 4.2.1 Answer Key

Public Release Item #1 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005

A. predict social change in the future

Public Release Item #2 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006

C. splendor

Public Release Item #3 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006

B. the complexity of Buster's movements

Public Release Item #4 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007

C. emphasize the power of the waves

Sample Assessment Item #4 - Selected Response (SR) - 2002

B. determination