

# Critical Skills Assignment

## Critical Reading and Writing an Opinion (A)

Read the story. Then answer the questions.

### *The Juggling Act*

(1) I'm waiting for Mom in front of the baseball field. She's running late because she has to drop my sister, Ava, off at ballet lessons before coming to get me. From here, I have to go to a half-hour piano lesson. But then I have to wait for Mom to come back to get me after she picks Ava up from ballet. I'm so hungry I could eat a dozen hamburgers right now. But, as usual, there's no time to stop for something to eat. I'm hoping there are some crackers left in the box in the car, unless Ava ate them all.

(2) When I get home after piano, I'll eat dinner quickly because I totally forgot to do my peer review of Simon's paper, which is due tomorrow. It takes time going through someone else's work, and I want to be thorough. I thought I only had to finish my own draft, and I still have to revise it after I get feedback from my reviewer. This has set me back a couple of hours that I had planned to use reading the chapter I missed for my discussion group tomorrow morning. I'll be too tired to read it after I finish the peer review, and I won't have time to read it in the morning because I have to do my paper route. I just got the job, so I don't want to be late. I need to earn money to buy a new pair of cleats for baseball since my old ones are so worn out, plus my feet have grown. A new mitt would be good, too. I have to get up at 5 a.m. to bundle my papers and be ready by 6 a.m. to start delivering them. When I come home, I have house chores to do. I have to put the trash out for pickup. Then I have to walk and feed the dog. After that I have my discussion group. I hope I can grab about 15 minutes beforehand to at least scan the chapter I missed.

(3) Tomorrow is Friday, and I'm planning on spending some time in the afternoon with my friends playing basketball. Caleb asked if I could spend the night and go to the game from his house, but I have my paper route in the morning, and I do need that money. And Mom reminded me that I had promised to help Dad move furniture in Ava's room when I get back from delivering papers and before I leave for the game. Dad is going to start painting Ava's room before the game and hopes to finish it afterwards. I told him I'd help, but he said, "Josh, I'd like you to wash Mom's car instead." Then we're having dinner at Grandma's Saturday night since it's Mom's birthday. Oh, wow, I forgot to get Mom's gift. So now I'll have to find time between the game and Grandma's to go to the store or make her something.

(4) Weekends are supposed to be a time when you can relax, but not in my world. I get tired just thinking about everything I have to do. I wish I could just sleep. Who knows? Maybe Sunday after I get back from delivering papers? I'll pencil it in.

Choose answers to multiple choice questions. Type responses to questions that ask you to write a response. Be sure to save your work.

1. Answer the questions about the story.

- (a) Which phrase **best** explains why Josh got a paper route?

- A. so he can learn how to be responsible
- B. to buy things he needs for baseball
- C. to help his parents with expenses
- D. so he can buy his mother a birthday gift

**Teacher feedback:**

- (b) Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer in Part (a)?

- A. I told him I'd help, but he said, "Josh, I'd like you to wash Mom's car instead." (Paragraph 3)
- B. I need to earn money to buy a new pair of cleats for baseball since my old ones are so worn out, plus my feet have grown. (Paragraph 2)
- C. I'm so hungry I could eat a dozen hamburgers right now. (Paragraph 1)
- D. And Mom reminded me that I had promised to help Dad move furniture in Ava's room when I get back from delivering papers and before I leave for the game. (Paragraph 3)

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

2. Answer the questions about the story.

- (a) Which statement **best** describes a theme of "The Juggling Act"?

- A. Hard work and dedication lead to success.
- B. One should have pride in one's accomplishments.
- C. Working too hard can lead to an unbalanced life.
- D. New experiences can aid in overcoming fears.

**Teacher feedback:**

(b) Which detail in the story **best** helps the reader determine this theme?

- A. Tomorrow is Friday, and I'm planning on spending some time in the afternoon with my friends playing basketball. (Paragraph 3)
- B. I'm hoping there are some crackers left in the box in the car, unless Ava ate them all. (Paragraph 1)
- C. Weekends are supposed to be a time when you can relax, but not in my world. (Paragraph 4)
- D. I'm waiting for Mom in front of the baseball field. (Paragraph 1)

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

3. What is the narrator's point of view in the story? How does the point of view influence the way the events are described?

Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

**Type your answer here:**

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

4. Why does Josh say he will "pencil in" sleep on Sunday after he delivers the newspapers?

Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

**Type your answer here:**

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

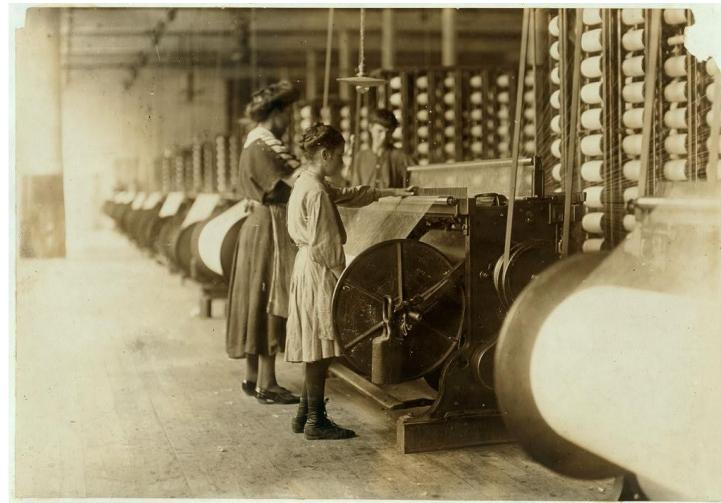
### ***Where Do You Work? When Kids Had Adult Jobs***

(1) Imagine dragging yourself out of bed on a cold, dark morning before the sun has even risen. You dress quickly because you're running late. But instead of a day filled with schoolwork, soccer practice, and a few chores around the house, you head over to the town's mill where you will spend the next 10 to 12 hours. That's what life was like for about 18 percent of American children ages 10 to 15 in the early twentieth century. Instead of going to school, they went to work.

(2) From the early days of America until the late 1930s, there were few laws protecting children from work. In colonial times, children often worked alongside their parents. Girls worked with their mothers, cooking, sewing, gardening, and milking cows. They were expected to act like adults and even dressed like them. Boys worked on their fathers' farms or in their shops. Sometimes, farmers lent their sons to other farmers for pay when an extra hand was needed. Boys from the ages of 10 to 14 often became apprentices. They worked under the care and direction of master craftsmen. In both farming and apprenticeships, children learned the skills of a job from beginning to end. Those in apprenticeships not only learned a trade from their masters, they were also taught basic arithmetic and how to read and write. Plus they were given a place to live and a wage.

(3) By the time of the Civil War in the 1860s, however, the apprenticeship system had fallen by the wayside. The country was becoming more industrialized. After the Civil War, the United States became the world's top industrial power. Children were often hired to work in factories because factory owners found children easy to manage. They could be paid less than adults and were less likely to go on strike. An added benefit was their small size: children could easily move in tight spaces around machinery.

(4) Children worked to help support their families. They usually worked 60 to 70 hours a week, during the day and at night. Their jobs were menial. Unlike those in an apprenticeship, factory workers generally learned one repetitive job. Despite their age, children sometimes worked in hazardous conditions. The noise from the machines could be deafening. They worked in cotton mills in New England and in the South. The windows of the mills were kept shut. This was to keep the cotton moist and warm so it wouldn't break. Child workers would be covered in cotton lint and it would fill their lungs. Towns grew around the mills. Families lived in houses owned by the mills. The mills provided a school. But the children usually didn't have time to attend. A study done in the early twentieth century revealed that half the children under age 14 could not read or write.



Young girl at work in a cotton mill

(5) In the early 1900s, children also worked in glass factories in West Virginia and New Jersey. They worked in canneries in Maine, Mississippi, and Maryland. In Massachusetts they worked in cranberry bogs and in sugar beet fields in Wisconsin and Colorado. They went to work in the mines in Pennsylvania or West Virginia as a “trap boy” or a “breaker boy.” A trap boy sat alone in a dark mine, waiting for mules loaded with coal. His job was to open the door to let the mules pass through, and then close the door. He worked 14 hours and earned 60 cents for the day. Breaker boys sat crouched over a coal chute. Their job was to pick out pieces of slate and rock as the coal rushed past them. The air was thick with coal dust and many of the boys suffered from respiratory illnesses because of it. They earned 60 cents for a 10-hour shift of backbreaking work.



Young boys working in Indiana glass factory



**Breaker boys at work at Ewen Breaker, Pennsylvania Coal Company**

(6) Many Americans wanted to end child labor. They felt it was child slavery. One person was Mother Jones, an American labor and community organizer. During a strike at a textile mill in Pennsylvania, in 1903, she fought for the rights of 10,000 children who worked there. She asked local newspapers to publish facts about the children working in the mills. They refused because the mill owners had stock in their papers. So, Mother Jones marched from Pennsylvania to New York with a band of striking children to draw the public's attention. They marched all the way to President Theodore Roosevelt's home to ask for support for child labor laws. But the president refused to see them.

(7) In 1904, a group of reformers founded the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) to abolish child labor. This committee hired investigators to gather evidence for their cause. One person they hired was Lewis Wickes Hine. Hine was a former teacher and photographer. He took pictures of children wherever they worked.

(8) From 1908 to 1912, Hine snapped pictures of children at work. He would hide his camera and trick factory bosses into letting him get inside. Hine wrote notes on a pad hidden inside his pocket. He wanted to accurately describe what he saw without being caught. His photographs showed children working in coal mines, sweatshops, mills, and on farms. When many of Hine's photographs were published, the public was shocked.

(9) Soon many states passed laws protecting children in the workplace. But despite these laws, children still worked hard. The NCLC pushed for a federal law for child workers. In 1916 and 1918, laws were passed. But those laws were overturned by the Supreme Court as being unconstitutional. In 1924, Congress passed an amendment to the Constitution. But not enough states ratified it, so it didn't become law. In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed. It set a national minimum wage and maximum hours to be worked in a day. More important, it set limitations on child labor.

(10) Today, children are protected by child labor laws. The federal government has set the minimum working age at 14 for jobs other than babysitting or delivering newspapers. In some states the minimum working age may be higher. Children's lives are much easier today than they were more than a century ago.

Choose answers to multiple choice questions. Type responses to questions that ask you to write a response. Be sure to save your work.

5. Read this sentence from Paragraph 3:

By the time of the Civil War in the 1860s, however, the apprenticeship system had fallen by the wayside.

Which statement **best** explains the meaning of the idiom “fallen by the wayside”?

- A. Apprenticeships were no longer being done.
- B. Apprenticeships created a shortage of soldiers.
- C. Apprentices left their jobs to go to war.
- D. Many apprentices were being injured.

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

6. Answer the questions about the passage.

- (a) Which statements tell the main ideas of “Where Do You Work? When Kids Had Adult Jobs”?

Choose **all** answers that are correct.

- A. Cotton mills provided housing and schools for workers.
- B. Children worked long hours in dangerous jobs.
- C. Many people fought to end child labor.
- D. Children were easy employees to manage.

**Teacher feedback:**

**(b)** Which sentences from the passage support the answer in Part (a)?

Choose **all** answers that are correct.

- A.** Despite their age, children sometimes worked in hazardous conditions. (Paragraph 4)
- B.** His job was to open the door to let the mules pass through, and then close the door. (Paragraph 5)
- C.** In 1904, a group of reformers founded the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) to abolish child labor. (Paragraph 7)
- D.** After the Civil War, the United States became the world's top industrial power. (Paragraph 3)

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

7. How did the work of Mother Jones, the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC), and Lewis Wickes Hine lead to child labor laws?

Use details from the passage to support your answer.

**Type your answer here:**

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

8. How does the author support the idea that child labor laws were necessary?

Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

**Type your answer here:**

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

### ***Why Do Chores and What Chores Should You Be Doing?***

(1) When parents ask their children to help around the house, the children sometimes grumble or refuse to help. They may finally agree but then make excuses as to why they haven't completed the task yet. Children sometimes feel as though their parents are nagging them to do things that aren't really necessary. Some children might wonder, *Why should I make my bed when I'm going to sleep in it again tonight?* This battle of wills between parents and children can lead to frustration on both sides.

#### **Why Johnny Won't Make His Bed**

(2) There are several reasons why children resist doing chores. Most children don't realize what it takes to run a household. They don't understand that dishes need to be washed after each meal. It takes time to plan meals, shop for groceries, prepare food for the whole family, and clean up afterwards. Children may not realize that before anyone can dust and vacuum, the space needs to be free of clutter. So picking up after oneself is a big help.

(3) Chores are generally not at the top of anyone's list of fun things to do. But being aware of others and taking on responsibility takes maturity, thoughtfulness, and consideration. Children develop these traits as they grow up. And it is a parent's job to teach these traits to their children by giving them age-appropriate responsibilities.

#### **The Benefits of Chores**

(4) Kids may not realize it, but there is a benefit to children when they help around the house. They develop a greater feeling of self-esteem. When children finish a household chore, no matter how small, it gives them a feeling of accomplishment and pride. It also makes them feel that they are competent, or capable of completing a task successfully. In addition, they are learning to put aside instant gratification by doing chores first before playing. This helps them to become more responsible. Learning to juggle chores, schoolwork, and outside activities helps children learn valuable time-management skills. It also teaches them basic life skills. By helping with the family's laundry, they learn how to wash their own clothes. This is a skill they will need when they're out on their own. By learning to keep things neat and tidy in their rooms and in other areas of the home, children develop an appreciation for order and cleanliness. Children learn the importance of routine by doing chores consistently. It also helps them to develop a strong work ethic. This will lead them to become hardworking, industrious adults. By working with other family members, children learn the value of teamwork.

#### **Age-Appropriate Chores**

(5) Children can begin doing chores as young as age two or three. Toddlers can put their toys away and stack books and magazines. They can also put clothes in the hamper and dust. As children grow older, they can do those tasks and more. Five- and six-year-olds can make their beds and empty wastebaskets. They can also clear the table, vacuum

up crumbs, and wash plastic dishes in the sink. At ages six and seven, children can sort laundry, sweep the floor, set the table, and keep their rooms neat. Eight and nine-year-olds can load the dishwasher and put away groceries. They can also vacuum, mop the floor, and put away their own laundry. By the time a child is 10 or 11, he or she can do all of those things plus more. These older children can unload the dishwasher, clean the bathroom, and change the sheets. They can wash windows and the family car and babysit younger siblings. They may even cook a simple dinner with adult supervision.

(6) So the next time your parents ask you to help around the house, lend them a hand. Think of all the skills you'll be learning that will help you later in life. And you'll appreciate living in a clean and tidy house even more because you've helped to make it that way.

Choose answers to multiple choice questions. Type responses to questions that ask you to write a response. Be sure to save your work.

**9.** Answer the questions about the passage.

- (a)** Which statements tell the main ideas of “Why Do Chores and What Chores Should You Be Doing?”

Choose **all** answers that are correct.

- A.** Children should learn to do their own laundry for later in life.
- B.** Children benefit from doing chores around the house.
- C.** Children don’t understand what it takes to plan a meal.
- D.** Children of all ages can do age-appropriate chores.

**Teacher feedback:**

- (b)** Which sentences from the passage support the answer in Part (a)?

Choose **all** answers that are correct.

- A.** Chores are generally not at the top of anyone’s list of fun things to do. (Paragraph 3)
- B.** When children finish a household chore, no matter how small, it gives them a feeling of accomplishment and pride. (Paragraph 4)
- C.** Children can begin doing chores as young as age two or three. (Paragraph 5)
- D.** Children sometimes feel as though their parents are nagging them to do things that aren’t really necessary. (Paragraph 1)

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

**10.** Answer the questions about the passage.

- (a)** Why is it important for children to do chores?

- A.** so their parents won’t nag them
- B.** so they learn responsibility
- C.** so they realize what their parents do
- D.** so their rooms aren’t a mess

**Teacher feedback:**

- (b) Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer in Part (a)?
- A. This battle of wills between parents and children can lead to frustration on both sides. (Paragraph 1)
  - B. They can also put clothes in the hamper and dust. (Paragraph 5)
  - C. This will lead them to become hardworking, industrious adults. (Paragraph 4)
  - D. They may finally agree but then make excuses as to why they haven't completed the task yet. (Paragraph 1)

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

11. How does the structure used in "The Juggling Act" differ from that in "Why Do Chores and What Chores Should You Be Doing"?

Support your answer with at least one detail from each passage.

**Type your answer here:**

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

12. How are the children described in "Why Do Chores and What Chores Should You Be Doing?" similar to those described in "Where Do You Work? When Kids Had Adult Jobs"? How are they different? How do the authors' presentations of information about children's lives show the authors' opinions?

Use evidence from the passages to support your answers.

**Type your answer here:**

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

13. Read what Robin wrote about her friend Cassandra.

Cassandra's room is always a mess. To get into her room, I always have to climb over stuff on the floor. There's dust everywhere. The other day, I went to Cassandra's house, and her room was clean! I think it's the first time I've ever seen the floor of her room! Cassandra told me her mother made her organize dust and vacuum her room.

Which revision of the last sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. Cassandra told me her mother made her, organize, dust and vacuum her room.
- B. Cassandra told me her mother made her organize, dust, and vacuum, her room.
- C. Cassandra told me, her mother made her organize dust, and vacuum her room.

- D. Cassandra told me her mother made her organize, dust, and vacuum her room.

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

**14.** Read what Colin wrote about what he did this past weekend.

When we moved into our house two years ago, my room was painted dark green and had old shaggy orange carpet that had a weird smell. We didn't have time or the money to change it. But with the money I earned mowing lawns all summer, I bought some paint. This past weekend I painted my room and pulled up the old carpet. I thought the color was too light at first. But I liked the color much better after I painted a second coat on the walls.

Which sentence is the **best** revision of the last sentence?

- A. But I liked the color much better after I had painted a second coat on the walls.
- B. But I liked the color much better after I have painted a second coat on the walls.
- C. But I liked the color much better after I will have painted a second coat on the walls.
- D. But I liked the color much better after I shall have painted a second coat on the walls.

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

**15.** Read this paragraph Sophie wrote about a book she is reading.

My mother told me that her grandfather worked in a coal mine in West Virginia when he was a boy. She said he was a breaker boy. He started when he was only eight years old. After hearing stories of his life as a coal miner, I decided to go to the library and find a book about it. The book is called *Growing Up in Coal Country*.

Which revision of the last sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. The book is called "Growing Up in Coal Country."
- B. The book "is called Growing Up in Coal Country."
- C. The book is called *Growing Up in Coal Country*.
- D. The book *is called Growing Up in Coal Country*.

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

**16.** Read about what Jonathan did over the weekend.

Last weekend was super busy. We had a game on Friday night and another one Saturday morning. After the game, I had to mow the lawn and

trim the bushes. Then Dad asked me to help put a new bookcase together for my sister. On Sunday, we went for a family bike ride, and then we eat dinner at my grandmother's house.

Which sentence is the **best** revision of the last sentence?

- A. On Sunday, we gone for a family bike ride, and then we ate dinner at my grandmother's house.
- B. On Sunday, we went for a family bike ride, and then we ate dinner at my grandmother's house.
- C. On Sunday, we went for a family bike ride, and then we had eaten dinner at my grandmother's house.
- D. On Sunday, we go for a family bike ride, and then we will have eaten dinner at my grandmother's house.

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

17. Read what Sam told his friend about his new chores.

The other night, my parents told my twin brother and me that we needed to start helping around the house. With schoolwork, sports, and our band, it's hard to do chores. But our parents told us neither we start doing chores or we can't get new guitars.

Which sentence is the **best** revision of the last sentence?

- A. But our parents told us either we start doing chores nor we can't get new guitars.
- B. But our parents told us we start doing chores nor we can't get new guitars.
- C. But our parents told us neither we start doing chores nor we can't get new guitars.
- D. But our parents told us either we start doing chores or we can't get new guitars.

**Teacher feedback:**

**Score:**

18. You have read a story and two articles about responsibilities of children in the past and in modern times. What do you believe children your age should be responsible for doing in their homes or in their communities (outside world)? Write a persuasive essay of at least three paragraphs stating your opinion about the appropriate amount of responsibility for children your age and explain why you feel it is appropriate. Use evidence from the readings as well as your own knowledge to support your opinion.

- (a) Write a cohesive argument of at least three paragraphs.
- (b) Take a stand on the appropriate amount of responsibility for children your age.

- (c) Use relevant evidence from the texts you have read as well as your own ideas to introduce your opinion and acknowledge alternate or opposing opinions.
- (d) Give at least three important reasons for your opinion, and support them with evidence from the texts and your own ideas.
- (e) Organize facts and ideas logically in support of your opinion
- (f) Use appropriate transitions between sentences and paragraphs to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- (g) Use precise language to explain your stand.
- (h) Provide a strong concluding statement to your essay.

**Type your answer here:**

### Purpose and Content

**Score:** (of 5)

**Teacher feedback:**

### Structure and Organization

**Score:** (of 5)

**Teacher feedback:**

### Language and Word Choice

**Score:** (of 5)

**Teacher feedback:**

### Grammar and Mechanics

**Score:** (of 5)

**Teacher feedback:**

Final Score for Assignment: ( of 50)