

## Brief Historical Fiction Response

Some units will include brief historical fiction responses. The purpose of these tasks is the same as the regular short-term memory task: to help you learn the material using writing.

Preparation is mostly the same: learn the facts that will be needed to write your story. Some students may want to actually create the skeleton of the story in advance and that is OK. Some may want to learn the facts just like for any quiz and then “wing it” on the response. That’s OK too.

These are **two draft tasks**. This means your paper will be graded, commented, and then returned to you for revision if you score lower than 100.

These are stories. They should have a clear beginning with a strong hook to draw the reader in, middle, and end without any confusing parts. They should have descriptions and should fit in the time period. Above all else, there should be lots of history in there.

Here is the rubric for grading these responses:

5		4	3		2	
100	94	85	76	65	55	44
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possesses a strong dramatic tension that keeps reader interested -- grounded in a significant problem.</li> <li>• Clarity leaves no surface questions (i.e. "What happened in this part?")</li> <li>• Brings time &amp; place &amp; character alive; vividly describes her/his experiences and values;</li> <li>• Refers to relevant, historically accurate details.</li> <li>• Has a strong lead, a developed middle, and a satisfying ending, all in an order that makes sense, flows, and hangs together.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possesses some dramatic tension and attempts to keep the reader interested.</li> <li>• There is a strong sense of history in the work, but the characters actions in this world seem only marginally involved.</li> <li>• Works in this category may read more like an essay, designed to convey information, than a story that is designed to help the reader experience something.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work is a good story outline, but is far too short for what the author seems to be trying to accomplish.</li> <li>• There is a definite beginning, middle, and end, but some elements do not fit well.</li> <li>• Inclusion of historical elements seems "forced" or "contrived".</li> <li>• There may be some anachronisms.</li> <li>• There is very little descriptive writing.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work has a beginning, middle, and end.</li> <li>• The work is very short.</li> <li>• There is no dramatic tension or "hook" to interest the reader, and little historical setting or data.</li> </ul>	

Sample brief historical fiction responses

5		<i>Thoughts of a Valley Forge Soldier A Winter Morning</i>
100	94	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possesses a strong dramatic tension that keeps reader interested -- grounded in a significant problem.</li> <li>• Clarity leaves no surface questions (i.e. "What happened in this part?")</li> <li>• Brings time &amp; place &amp; character alive; vividly describes her/his experiences and values;</li> <li>• Refers to relevant, historically accurate details.</li> <li>• Has a strong lead, a developed middle, and a satisfying ending, all in an order that makes sense, flows, and hangs together.</li> </ul>	<p>I followed the bloody footprints in the snow to the parade ground after fellows whose only shoes are rags knotted around their freezing toes. It was hard to see the point in these useless drills, day after day. That German and his constant discipline and marching. Left, right, halt. While the British are encamped in this winter of 1778 warm and snug in Philadelphia, we put up with this terrible winter at Valley Forge.</p> <p>General Washington gives us a pep talk nearly every day, especially since so many have already run off back home to their wives and warm homes far away. He says fresh supplies and money are on their way. He says we'll have a good chance to defeat the British. High ideals of politics and freedom don't mean much when there is little to eat but firecake, when it's freezing cold and hard to stay warm, when there aren't enough supplies for us.</p> <p>I try to think on good memories to comfort me: the thrill of our victory at Saratoga last October, the news that the French had joined our cause, the promised supplies and support that would come trickling in not fast enough for me. I try to think on warm memories: just anything warm like hot summer days and big fires in the hearth. I get pulled back into harsh reality with howling... howling of the winter wind through the trees, howling of the wolves after our shrinking food rations, howling of von Steuben as we march like marionette soldiers in some grim show.</p> <p>This von Steuben, I am not sure I like him. He has such an upper class manner and he just looks down his nose at us. He seems to look down on us not only for our lack of German-style discipline, but as an aristocrat looks down on the lower-born. I don't take to that at all. Some of us are in this war to wipe out just that sort of snobbery.</p>	

<b>4</b>	<i>Thoughts of a Valley Forge Soldier A Winter Morning</i>
<b>85</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possesses some dramatic tension and attempts to keep the reader interested.</li> <li>• There is a strong sense of history in the work, but the characters actions in this world seem only marginally involved.</li> <li>• Works in this category may read more like an essay, designed to convey information, than a story that is designed to help the reader experience something.</li> </ul>	<p>It was hard to see the point in these useless drills, day after day. That German and his incessant discipline and marching. Left, right, halt. While the British are encamped in this winter of 1778 warm and snug in Philadelphia, we endure this insufferable winter at Valley Forge.</p> <p>General Washington gives us a pep talk nearly every day, especially since so many have already run off back home to their wives and warm homes far away. He says fresh supplies and money are on their way. He says we'll have a good chance to defeat the British.</p> <p>I try to think on good memories to comfort me: the thrill of our victory at Saratoga last October 1777, St. Leger's defeat at Fort Stanwix, the news that the French had joined our cause, the promised supplies and support that would come trickling in not fast enough for my liking. I try to think on warm memories: just anything warm like hot summer days and big fires in the hearth.</p> <p>This von Steuben, I am not sure I like him. He has such an aristocratic air and he just looks down his nose at us. I don't take to that at all. Some of us are in this war to wipe out just that sort of snobbery.</p>

3		<i>Valley Forge</i>
76	65	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work is a good story outline, but is far too short for what the author seems to be trying to accomplish.</li> <li>• There is a definite beginning, middle, and end, but some elements do not fit well.</li> <li>• Inclusion of historical elements seems "forced" or "contrived".</li> <li>• There may be some anachronisms.</li> <li>• There is very little descriptive writing.</li> </ul>	<p>I was a valley Forge that horrible winter of 1778. The British were warm and safe and well-fed in Philadelphia. We were stuck here with low supplies. Some guys didn't have enough clothes to keep warm.</p> <p>One day, I was walking to the parade grounds, when I met a new face. It was Von Steuben, a Prussian soldier. He has been hired to train us. It is going to be hard, but I think it will help us beat the British.</p> <p>George Washington is a great commander. He's really tall and the men like him. I think he is upset that the Congress doesn't supply us well enough. I bet he's mad that so many guys are deserting.</p> <p>We beat the British at Saratoga last October. That was really great!</p> <p>I know I won't desert. I really believe in freedom and I want to see our country become independent.</p>	

2		<i>Valley Forge</i>
55	44	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work has a beginning, middle, and end.</li> <li>• The work is very short.</li> <li>• There is no dramatic tension or “hook” to interest the reader, and little historical setting or data.</li> </ul>		<p>I was a valley Forge that horrible winter of 1778. We were stuck here with low supplies. Some guys didn't have enough clothes to keep warm.</p> <p>One day, I was walking to the parade grounds, when I met Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian soldier. He has been hired to train us. It is going to be hard, but I think it will help us beat the British.</p> <p>George Washington is a great commander. He's really tall and the men like him. I bet he's mad that so many guys are deserting. I know I won't desert. I really believe in freedom and I want to see our country become independent.</p>