

## Literary Analysis Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Read Selection 1, “Phaethon and Helios,” and Selection 2, “Handling Hermes.” After reading the selections, complete the writing assignment that follows. You may create a Word document to use for planning, but only the printed essay will be scored.**

Selection 1:

### **“Phaethon and Helios”** by Siri Glasoe

- 1 Long ago in ancient Greece, a teenage boy named Phaethon lived alone with his mother. Although they enjoyed a happy existence, Phaethon felt the absence of his father as he grew older. From a young age, Phaethon had pleaded with his mother to identify his father. Finally, when she felt Phaethon was old enough, Phaethon’s mother confided that his father was the sun god, Helios. Helios could not live with them because he had an important job. He drove the chariot of the sun around the earth to **herald** the arrival of each new day.
- 2 Phaethon was so impressed by this news that he was determined to meet his father. He left his mother and began a long journey to the ends of the earth, where the gods lived. The trip took many months, and Phaethon often thought about turning back, but he kept going. When Phaethon finally located Helios, he introduced himself as the god’s son. Helios, who had not seen Phaethon since he was a baby, was unsure if the youth was his child. Eager to prove he was his father’s son, Phaethon begged Helios to let him drive the chariot.
- 3 Helios hesitated, knowing the horses were too wild and difficult to be controlled by a young and inexperienced boy. He told Phaethon, “Not even Zeus, the king of the gods, is able to **drive** the wild beasts.”
- 4 Still, Phaethon refused to back down. “If you are really my father,” he said, “you will let me try.” Helios finally agreed.
- 5 Helios showed Phaethon how to drive the chariot and made the boy promise to use extreme caution. Phaethon took the reins and started at an easy pace. Ignorant of the skill it took to drive the chariot and overconfident in his abilities, Phaethon soon urged the horses to run faster. The horses stormed across the sky, and the ride quickly turned into a nightmare.
- 6 At first, the horses ran too high in the sky, making the earth cold and dark. Then they got too close to the ground and burned everything in their path. To prevent the earth’s destruction, Helios asked Zeus to throw a thunderbolt to stop the chariot. Frightened by the thunderbolt, the horses stopped and Helios took control of the chariot. Although Phaethon could not control the horses Helios acknowledged that he had attempted to steer them back on course and had not cried out for help. “You are a brave boy,” he said. “And you are truly my son.”

Selection 2:

**“Handling Hermes”**  
by Kelsey Green

- 1        Every year, my dad is the most popular speaker at my school’s career day. He’s a **distinguished** bareback rider in the rodeo, and his riding skills are admired throughout the rodeo circuit. My friends love hearing about his courageous acts during competitions. Did I mention that Dad is a terrific storyteller in addition to being a great rider?
- 2        The downside to having such an amazing father is that he travels frequently for his job, and when he’s not traveling, he’s usually riding somewhere on our property. He believes that to be a great bareback rider, you have to be “one with your horse,” which means he is always riding his prized stallion, Hermes, who is named for a Greek god. I inherited my love of riding from my dad, and I want to be a part of his thrilling world of rodeos one day.
- 3        I had begged Dad to let me ride Hermes many times, but he always responded with a firm no. He’d say, “Sara, a great horse like Hermes is a little bit wild, just like the West.” I believed him because there were many skilled riders on our ranch, but only Dad was able to control Hermes. Even so, I’d been around Hermes since I was a little girl, and I had been riding for almost as long as I had been walking. I was certain that I could handle this horse.
- 4        One day, after another round of **relentless** pleading on my part, Dad agreed to let me sit on Hermes but not ride him. After I successfully mounted Hermes, I foolishly thought I had him under my control. Before I could think about what I was doing, I gently nudged Hermes with my heel. Suddenly, it was like I was riding a tornado. I clung desperately to Hermes’s back as he spun me around, but it was clear who was in charge.
- 5        Just when I thought I would fall, Hermes stumbled slightly on a loose rock in the riding **ring**. Dad’s commands caught his attention, and he slowed to a stop. Dad iced Hermes’s leg and said he’d be fine after a rest, but he was clearly upset with me. I thought it was because I’d hurt Hermes, but Dad explained that all he could think about was what would have happened if I had fallen and been injured. But then he gave me an affectionate smile and said, “You know what I just realized? You stayed on the whole time!”
- 6        After we went back inside, Dad said he would not let me ride Hermes again. I was discouraged but he promised to start teaching me to ride bareback on another horse. One day, I hope I can become a rodeo champion and make my dad proud.

1. You have read the passages *Handling Hermes* and *Phaethon and Helios*. Write an essay that identifies a theme that is found in both texts. In your essay, compare and contrast the approaches each text uses to develop this theme. Be sure to support your response with evidence from both texts.