An excerpt from:

*Breath, Eyes, Memory*

By Edwidge Danticat

“This novel chronicles the coming-to-age of Sophie Caco, a young Haitian woman.

Sophie was raised by her aunt and grandmother in Haiti. Her mother, who lives

in New York City, sent for Sophie when she was twelve. The story describes

Sophie’s struggles as she adjusts from a sheltered childhood in Haiti to the

unknowns of city living in the United States. The following passage is a brief

conversation between Sophie, who has grown to young adulthood, and her mother.”1

“After I (Sophie) got married, I found out that I had something called bulimia,” I said.

“What is that?”

“It’s when you don’t eat at all and then eat a whole lot—bingeing.”

“How does that happen?” she said. “You are so tiny, so very petite. Why would you do that? I have never heard of a Haitian woman getting anything like that. Food, it was so rare when we were growing up. We could not waste it.”

“You are blaming me for it,” I said. “That is part of the problem.”

“You have become very American,’ she said. “I am not blaming you. It is advice. I want to give you some advice. Eat. Food is good for you. It is a luxury. When I just came to this country I gained sixty pounds my first year. I couldn’t believe all the different kinds of apples and ice cream. All the things only the rich eat in Haiti, everyone could eat them here, dirt cheap.”

…Sophie’s mother continues…

“In the beginning, food was a struggle. To have so much to eat and not to eat it all. It took me a while to get used to the idea that the food was going to be there today. When I first came, I used to eat the way we ate at home. I ate for tomorrow and the next day and the day after that, in case I had nothing to eat for the next couple of days. I ate reserves. I would wake up and find the food still there and I would still eat ahead anyway.”

From *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticat, New York: Vintage Books,

1994, page 181.

“About Edwidge Danticat: Born in Port au Prince, Haiti in 1969. Danticat

immigrated to New York City when she was 12 years old. Educated at Barnard

College and Brown University, she is a National Book Award finalist and the

winner of the Pushcart Short Story prize. *Breath, Eyes, Memory* was published in

1994. Other works by this author include: *Krick?Krak!, Behind the Mountain* and

*Farming of Bones*.”2

1Atlanta Community Food Bank. *Hunger 101: Looking Through Stories Windows Representations of Hunger & Poverty in Literature*. Pg. 33. Available URL: <http://www.acfb.org/projects/hunger_101/curricula/modules/Storiescomp.pdf>

2Ibid. Pg. 34.

**Quantitative Reasoning Assessment**

Your instructor has asked you to read the excerpt from *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticatand place the story in context using actual data on health and well-being in Haiti and the United States. You decide to go to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation’s web site to collect data and you obtain the following information. Please answer the following two questions based on these data.

**Health and Well-being Indicators in Haiti and the United States**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Haiti** | **United States** |
| AIDS deaths total (2009) | 7,100 | 17,000 |
| Births attended by skilled midwives (2000-2010) | 26% | 99% |
| Child malnutrition under age five (2000-2009)1 | 18.8% | 1.3% |
| Health expenditure per capita/per person (2008) | $69 | $7,164 |

1 The percentage of children under age five whose weight for age is more than two standard deviations below the WHO Child Growth Standards median.

Source: The Henry J, Kaiser Family Foundation. Available URL: http://www.globalhealthfacts.org/data/factsheet/stepone.aspx

1. **Which of the sources of data, as presented above, is *least* useful for comparing the health and well-being of persons in Haiti and the United States?**

a. ⭘ AIDS deaths total (2009)

b. ⭘ Births attended by skilled midwives (2000-2010)

c. ⭘ Child malnutrition under age five (2000-2009)

d. ⭘ Health expenditure per capita/per person (2008)

1. **Pick the one indicator above (AIDS deaths total, births attended by skilled midwives, child malnutrition under age five, or health expenditures per capita/per person) that most closely relates to the excerpt from *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Please relate the data to the excerpt and interpret what the data/numbers (for Haiti and the US) mean.**

**Grading Guide**

**Question #1**

Did the student pick “A”?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No.  | Yes. |
| 0 points. | 2 points. |

Note: AIDS Deaths Total is pretty meaningless in the absence of information on the total population, so that a rate can be calculated.

**Question #2**

Rubric for Grading Q#2.

Q2 (a): Did the student pick “Child malnutrition under age five (2000-2009)”?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No.  | Yes. |
| 0 points. | 2 points. |

Q2 (b): Did the student relate whatever indicator s/he chose to the story?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No, there was no effort to relate the indicator to material in the story. | Yes, the student related the indicator s/he chose to the story, but the connection was unclear or problematic. | Yes, the student related the indicator and made a clear connection between the indicator and the story. |
| 0 points. | 1 point. | 2 points. |

Q2 (c): Did the student correctly write about and interpret the indicator that s/he chose (i.e., correctly wrote about percentages, per capita spending, etc.?)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No, the student did not correctly write about the indicator s/he chose (for the US and Haiti) and/or misinterpreted it. | Yes, for the most part the student correctly wrote about and interpreted the indicator s/he chose (for the US and Haiti), but the answer was unclear, incomplete and/or had minor mistakes. | Yes, the student wrote about and interpreted the indicator s/he chose (for the US and Haiti) and demonstrated a clear understanding of the measure. |
| 0 points. | 1 point. | 2 points. |

TOTAL POINTS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_