(31) [15 points] Cite evidence that the tree on the left is a better description of *The green grass grew* than the tree on the right. Do not cite the textbook or any other authority; base your argument entirely on observations of the English language.
(To approach this question, identify the claims about the sentence that are made by each tree, and then cite evidence indicating which claims are true and which claims are false.)
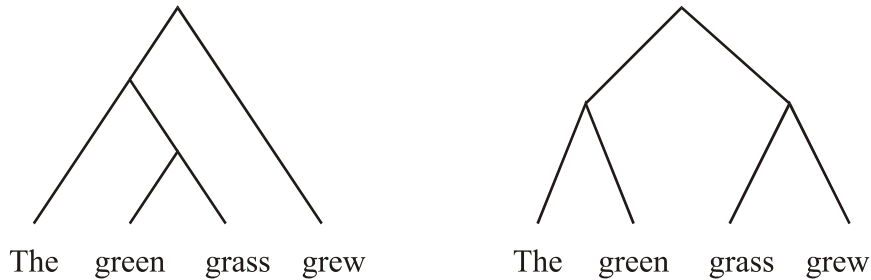
SAMPLE CORRECT ANSWER:

The two trees disagree as to whether "green grass" and "the green grass" are constituents (phrases). The tree on the left says that they are; the tree on the right says that they are not. Instead, it says that "the green" and "grass grew" are constituents, but "green grass" is not.

Constituents can normally be used, by themselves, to answer questions. For example:

"What grew?" "The green grass." / "Green grass."

Here the meanings and relationships of "green," "grass," etc., are the same as in the original sentence. But if we try to use "the green" as the answer to a question, we find that we can only do so by giving it a radically different meaning:

"Where did you go?" "The green." (Part of a village or of a golf course.)

"What paint did you put on the wall?" "The green." (A green substance.)

We cannot construct a question whose answer is "The green" with the same meaning as in the original sentence. Thus, "The green" is apparently not a constituent in the original sentence, and the right-hand tree is wrong.

(This is one of several possible approaches. Note that NO CREDIT was given if all you said was that one tree or the other fits the grammar rules in the book, such as S → NP VP. You can write grammar rules that match any tree; the question is whether they are the right grammar rules to describe the language. Linguistics is a science; it proceeds by observing language, not by following traditions.)