

**2006 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION  
SECTION II  
Total time—2 hours**

**Question 1**

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

The passage below is an excerpt from Jennifer Price's recent essay "The Plastic Pink Flamingo: A Natural History." The essay examines the popularity of the plastic pink flamingo in the 1950s. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture.

When the pink flamingo splashed into the fifties market, it staked two major claims to boldness. First, it was a *flamingo*. Since the 1930s, vacationing Americans had been flocking to Florida and returning home with flamingo souvenirs. In the 1910s and 1920s, Miami Beach's first grand hotel, the Flamingo, had made the bird synonymous with wealth and pizzazz. . . . [Later], developers built hundreds of more modest hotels to cater to an eager middle class served by new train lines—and in South Beach, especially, architects employed the playful Art Deco style, replete with bright pinks and flamingo motifs.

This was a little ironic, since Americans had hunted flamingos to extinction in Florida in the late 1800s, for plumes and meat. But no matter. In the 1950s, the new interstates would draw working-class tourists down, too. Back in New Jersey, the Union Products flamingo inscribed one's lawn emphatically with Florida's cachet of leisure and extravagance. The bird acquired an extra fillip of boldness, too, from the direction of Las Vegas—the flamboyant oasis of instant riches that the gangster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel had conjured from the desert in 1946 with his Flamingo Hotel. Anyone who has seen Las Vegas knows that a flamingo stands out in a desert even more strikingly than on a lawn. In the 1950s, namesake Flamingo motels, restaurants, and lounges cropped up across the country like a line of semiotic sprouts.

And the flamingo was *pink*—a second and commensurate claim to boldness. The plastics industries of the fifties favored flashy colors, which

Tom Wolfe called "the new electrochemical pastels of the Florida littoral: tangerine, broiling magenta, livid pink, incarnadine, fuchsia demure, Congo ruby, methyl green." The hues were forward-looking rather than old-fashioned, just right for a generation, raised in the Depression, that was ready to celebrate its new affluence. And as Karal Ann Marling has written, the "sassy pinks" were "the hottest color of the decade." Washing machines, cars, and kitchen counters proliferated in passion pink, sunset pink, and Bermuda pink. In 1956, right after he signed his first recording contract, Elvis Presley bought a pink Cadillac.

Why, after all, call the birds "pink flamingos"—as if they could be blue or green? The plastic flamingo is a hotter pink than a real flamingo, and even a real flamingo is brighter than anything else around it. There are five species, all of which feed in flocks on algae and invertebrates in saline and alkaline lakes in mostly warm habitats around the world. The people who have lived near these places have always singled out the flamingo as special. Early Christians associated it with the red phoenix. In ancient Egypt, it symbolized the sun god Ra. In Mexico and the Caribbean, it remains a major motif in art, dance, and literature. No wonder that the subtropical species stood out so loudly when Americans in temperate New England reproduced it, brightened it, and sent it wading across an inland sea of grass.

*The American Scholar*, Spring 1999

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**Question 2**

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

The passage below is an excerpt from “On the Want of Money,” an essay written by nineteenth-century author William Hazlitt. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies Hazlitt uses to develop his position about money.

Literally and truly, one cannot get on well in the world without money. To be in want of it, is to pass through life with little credit or pleasure; it is to live out of the world, or to be despised if you come into it;  
Line 5 it is not to be sent for to court, or asked out to dinner, or noticed in the street; it is not to have your opinion consulted or else rejected with contempt, to have your acquirements carp'd at and doubted, your good things disparaged, and at last to lose the wit and the spirit to  
10 say them; it is to be scrutinized by strangers, and neglected by friends; it is to be a thrall to circumstances, an exile in one's own country; to forego leisure, freedom, ease of body and mind, to be dependent on the good-will and caprice of others, or  
15 earn a precarious and irksome livelihood by some laborious employment; it is to be compelled to stand behind a counter, or to sit at a desk in some public office, or to marry your landlady, or not the person you would wish; or to go out to the East or West  
20 Indies, or to get a situation as judge abroad, and return home with a liver-complaint; or to be a law-stationer, or a scrivener or scavenger, or newspaper reporter; or to read law and sit in court without a brief; or to be deprived of the use of your fingers by transcribing  
25 Greek manuscripts, or to be a seal-engraver and pore yourself blind; or to go upon the stage, or try some of

the Fine Arts; with all your pains, anxiety, and hopes, and most probably to fail, or, if you succeed, after the exertions of years, and undergoing constant distress of  
30 mind and fortune, to be assailed on every side with envy, back-biting, and falsehood, or to be a favourite with the public for awhile, and then thrown into the background—or a gaol,\* by the fickleness of taste and some new favourite; to be full of enthusiasm and  
35 extravagance in youth, of chagrin and disappointment in after-life; to be jostled by the rabble because you do not ride in your coach, or avoided by those who know your worth and shrink from it as a claim on their respect or their purse; to be a burden to your  
40 relations, or unable to do anything for them; to be ashamed to venture into crowds; to have cold comfort at home; to lose by degrees your confidence and any talent you might possess; to grow crabbed, morose, and querulous, dissatisfied with every one, but most  
45 so with yourself; and plagued out of your life, to look about for a place to die in, and quit the world without any one's asking after your will. The *wiseacres* will possibly, however, crowd round your coffin, and raise a monument at a considerable expense, and after a  
50 lapse of time, to commemorate your genius and your misfortunes!

(1827)

\*jail

# AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION 2006 SCORING GUIDELINES

## Question 1

The score should reflect a judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole. Students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

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- 9** Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 essays and, in addition, are especially full or apt in their analysis or demonstrate particularly impressive control of language.

### 8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 respond to the prompt **effectively**. They effectively analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture. These essays may refer to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

- 7** Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but provide a more complete analysis or demonstrate a more mature prose style.

### 6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 respond to the prompt **adequately**. They adequately analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture. These essays may refer to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5** Essays earning a score of 5 analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture but do so unevenly, inconsistently, or insufficiently. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas.

### 4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 respond to the prompt **inadequately**. They may offer little discussion of how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture, misrepresent her view, or analyze the passage incorrectly. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.

- 3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but are less perceptive about how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture and/or less consistent in controlling the elements of writing.

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**Question 1 (continued)**

**2 Little Success**

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in analyzing how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture. These essays may misunderstand the prompt, offer vague generalizations, substitute simpler tasks such as summarizing the passage, or simply list strategies. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing.

- 1** Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their analysis, or weak in their control of language.
- 0** Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.
- Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.