

2000 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION

Question 2

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

In the following passage, George Orwell uses the example of Gandhi to make an argument for choosing human imperfection over “sainthood.” As you read Orwell’s remarks, note his choice of details and his tone. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Orwell criticizes Gandhi’s position and assess how effectively Orwell develops his own position.

Line
Close friendships, Gandhi¹ says, are dangerous, because “friends react on one another” and through loyalty to a friend one can be led into wrong-doing. This is unquestionably true. Moreover, if one is to love God, or to love humanity as a whole, one cannot give one’s preference to any individual person. This again is true, and it marks the point at which the humanistic and the religious attitude cease to be reconcilable. To an ordinary human being, love means nothing if it does not mean loving some people more than others. The autobiography² leaves it uncertain whether Gandhi behaved in an inconsiderate way to his wife and children, but at any rate it makes clear that on three occasions he was willing to let his wife
5 or a child die rather than administer the animal food prescribed by the doctor. It is true that the threatened death never actually occurred, and also that Gandhi—with, one gathers, a good deal of moral pressure in the opposite direction—always gave the patient the choice of staying alive at the price of committing
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a sin: still, if the decision had been solely his own, he would have forbidden the animal food, whatever the risks might be. There must, he says, be some limit to what we will do in order to remain alive, and
25 the limit is well on this side of chicken broth. This attitude is perhaps a noble one, but, in the sense which—I think—most people would give to the word, it is inhuman. The essence of being human is that one does not seek perfection, that one is sometimes willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty, that one does not push asceticism to the point where it makes friendly intercourse impossible, and that one is prepared in the end to be defeated and broken up
30 by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one’s love upon other human individuals. No doubt alcohol, tobacco, and so forth, are things that a saint must avoid, but sainthood is also a thing that human beings must avoid.
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(1949)

¹ Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948). Political and spiritual leader in India

² Gandhi’s autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*

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Question 3

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

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.

Shakespeare, *King Lear*

The lines above are from a speech by King Lear. Write a carefully reasoned essay in which you briefly paraphrase Lear's statement and then defend, challenge, or qualify his view of the relationship between wealth and justice. Support your argument with specific references to your reading, observation, or experience.

END OF EXAMINATION

2000 English Language Scoring Guidelines

- 1: Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic in their discussion 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.

Question 2

- 9: Essays earning a score of 9 meet all the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are especially full or apt in their analysis or demonstrate particularly impressive control of language.
- 8: Essays earning a score of 8 effectively analyze how Orwell criticizes Gandhi's position and assess how well he develops his own argument. They refer to the passage explicitly or implicitly and analyze the effectiveness of specific strategies such as choice of detail, tone, concession, rebuttal, and logic. Their prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.
- 7: Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but employ more complete analysis or demonstrate a more mature prose style.
- 6: Essays earning a score of 6 adequately analyze how Orwell criticizes Gandhi's position and assess how effectively he develops his own argument. They refer to the passage explicitly or implicitly, but their discussion is more limited. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.
- 5: Essays earning a score of 5 analyze Orwell's strategies, but their discussion is uneven or inconsistent. They may offer superficial explanations of how the techniques work or limited assessment of their effectiveness. While the writing may contain a few lapses in diction or syntax, it usually conveys ideas adequately.
- 4: Essays earning a score of 4 respond to the prompt inadequately. They may misrepresent Orwell's criticism, analyze his strategies inaccurately, or offer little assessment of the effectiveness of specific techniques. The prose generally conveys the writers' ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.
- 3: Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but are less perceptive about Orwell's techniques and their effectiveness, or they are less consistent in controlling the elements of writing.

2000 English Language Scoring Guidelines

- 3: Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of Lear's speech, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.
- 2: Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in understanding Lear's speech or in developing their own position. These essays may misread the passage, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the question tangentially with unrelated or inappropriate evidence. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.
- 1: Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic in their argument or are weak in their control of writing.
- 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.