

2016 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

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

Read carefully the following poem by Richard Wilbur, first published in 1949. Then, write an essay in which you analyze how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. You may wish to consider poetic elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone.

Unfortunately, we do not have permission
to reproduce “Juggler” by Richard Wilbur
on this website.

The poem is published in Wilbur’s
New and Collected Poems.

Question 2

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

In this excerpt from Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), Michael Henchard and his daughter Elizabeth-Jane are reunited after years of estrangement. During this separation, Henchard has risen from poor seasonal farmworker to wealthy mayor of a small country town, while Elizabeth has supported herself by waiting on tables at a tavern.

Read the passage carefully. Paying particular attention to tone, word choice, and selection of detail, compose a well-written essay in which you analyze Hardy's portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters.

Line
5 Of all the enigmas which ever confronted a girl there can have been seldom one like that which followed Henchard's announcement of himself to Elizabeth as her father. He had done it in an ardour and an agitation which had half carried the point of affection with her; yet, behold, from the next morning onwards his manner was constrained as she had never seen it before.

10 The coldness soon broke out into open chiding.
One grievous failing of Elizabeth's was her occasional pretty and picturesque use of dialect words—those terrible marks of the beast to the truly genteel.

15 It was dinner-time—they never met except at meals—and she happened to say when he was rising from table, wishing to show him something, "If you'll bide where you be a minute, Father, I'll get it."

20 "Bide where you be," he echoed sharply. "Good God, are you only fit to carry wash to a pig-trough, that ye use such words as those?"

She reddened with shame and sadness.

"I meant 'Stay where you are,' Father," she said, in a low, humble voice. "I ought to have been more careful."

25 He made no reply, and went out of the room.

The sharp reprimand was not lost upon her, and in time it came to pass that for "fay" she said "succeed"; that she no longer spoke of "dumbledores" but of "humble-bees"; no longer said of young men and women that they "walked together," but that they were "engaged"; that she grew to talk of "greggles" as "wild hyacinths"; that when she had not slept she did not quaintly tell the servants next morning that she had been "hag-rid," but that she had "suffered from indigestion."

35 These improvements, however, are somewhat in advance of the story. Henchard, being uncultivated himself, was the bitterest critic the fair girl could possibly have had of her own lapses—really slight now, for she read omnivorously. A gratuitous ordeal

was in store for her in the matter of her handwriting. She was passing the dining-room door one evening, and she had occasion to go in for something. It was not till she had opened the door that she knew the
45 Mayor was there in the company of a man with whom he transacted business.

"Here, Elizabeth-Jane," he said, looking round at her, "just write down what I tell you—a few words of an agreement for me and this gentleman to sign. I am
50 a poor tool with a pen."

"Be jowned, and so be I," said the gentleman.

She brought forward blotting-book, paper, and ink, and sat down.

55 "Now then—An agreement entered into this sixteenth day of October—write that first."

She started the pen in an elephantine march across the sheet. It was a splendid round, bold hand of her own conception, a style that would have stamped a woman as Minerva's own in more recent days. But
60 other ideas reigned then: Henchard's creed was that proper young girls wrote ladies'-hand—nay, he believed that bristling characters were as innate and inseparable a part of refined womanhood as sex itself. Hence when, instead of scribbling like the
65 Princess Ida,

In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East,

Elizabeth-Jane produced a line of chain-shot and sandbags, he reddened in angry shame for her, and,
70 peremptorily saying, "Never mind—I'll finish it," dismissed her there and then.

Her considerate disposition became a pitfall to her now. She was, it must be admitted, sometimes provokingly and unnecessarily willing to saddle herself with manual labors. She would go to the kitchen instead of ringing, "not to make Phoebe come up twice." She went down on her knees, shovel in hand, when the cat overturned the coal-scuttle;

AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2016 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1: Richard Wilbur, “Juggler”

The score should reflect the quality of the essay as a whole — its content, style, and mechanics. **Reward the students for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

9–8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of Wilbur’s use of poetic elements to convey how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. The writers of these essays offer a range of interpretations. They provide convincing readings of the description of the juggler, what it reveals about the speaker, and Wilbur’s use of poetic elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone. They demonstrate consistent and effective control over the elements of composition in language appropriate to the analysis of poetry. Their textual references are apt and specific. Though they may not be error-free, these essays are perceptive in their analysis and demonstrate writing that is clear and sophisticated, and in the case of a 9 essay, especially persuasive.

7–6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of Wilbur’s use of poetic elements to convey how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. They are less thorough or less precise in their analysis of Wilbur’s description of the juggler and what it reveals about the speaker, and their analysis of Wilbur’s use of poetic elements is less thorough or convincing. These essays demonstrate the student’s ability to express ideas clearly, making references to the text, although they do not exhibit the same level of effective writing as the 9–8 essays. Essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible analysis of Wilbur’s use of poetic elements to describe the juggler and what the description reveals about the speaker, but they tend to be superficial or pedestrian in their analysis of the description and of the use of poetic elements. They often rely on paraphrase, which may contain some analysis, implicit or explicit. Their analysis of the description and what it reveals or of Wilbur’s use of poetic elements may be vague, formulaic, or minimally supported by references to the text. There may be minor misinterpretations of the poem. These writers demonstrate some control of language, but their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7–6 essays.

4–3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the use of poetic elements to describe the juggler and what it reveals about the speaker. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant, or it may ignore the description, what it reveals about the speaker, or Wilbur’s use of poetic elements. Evidence from the poem may be slight or misconstrued, or the essays may rely on paraphrase only. The writing often demonstrates a lack of control over the conventions of composition: inadequate development of ideas, accumulation of errors, or a focus that is unclear, inconsistent, or repetitive. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

2–1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the student’s assertions are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the poem. These essays may contain serious errors in grammar and mechanics. They may offer a complete misreading or be unacceptably brief. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the poem.

0 These essays give a response that is completely off topic or inadequate; there may be some mark or a drawing or a brief reference to the task.

— These essays are entirely blank.