

# 2000 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

### SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

#### Question 1

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

In the following passage from her autobiography, *One Writer's Beginnings*, Eudora Welty recalls early experiences of reading and books that had later impact on her craft as a writer of fiction. In a well-organized essay, analyze how Welty's language conveys the intensity and value of these experiences.

Line I never knew anyone who'd grown up in Jackson  
without being afraid of Mrs. Calloway, our librarian.  
She ran the Library absolutely by herself, from the  
5 desk where she sat with her back to the books and  
facing the stairs, her dragon eye on the front door,  
where who knew what kind of person might come in  
from the public? SILENCE in big black letters was  
on signs tacked up everywhere. She herself spoke in  
her normally commanding voice; every word could  
10 be heard all over the Library above a steady seething  
sound coming from her electric fan; it was the only  
fan in the Library and stood on her desk, turned  
directly onto her streaming face.

As you came in from the bright outside, if you  
15 were a girl, she sent her strong eyes down the stair-  
way to test you; if she could see through your skirt  
she sent you straight back home: you could just put  
on another petticoat if you wanted a book that badly  
from the public library. I was willing; I would do  
20 anything to read.

My mother was not afraid of Mrs. Calloway. She  
wished me to have my own library card to check out  
books for myself. She took me in to introduce me and  
I saw I had met a witch. "Eudora is nine years old and  
25 has my permission to read any book she wants from  
the shelves, children or adult," Mother said. "With  
the exception of *Elsie Dinsmore*,"\* she added. Later  
she explained to me that she'd made this rule because  
Elsie the heroine, being made by her father to practice  
30 too long and hard at the piano, fainted and fell off the  
piano stool. "You're too impressionable, dear," she  
told me. "You'd read that and the very first thing  
you'd do, you'd fall off the piano stool." "Impres-  
sionable" was a new word. I never hear it yet without  
35 the image that comes with it of falling straight off the  
piano stool.

Mrs. Calloway made her own rules about books.  
You could not take back a book to the Library on the  
same day you'd taken it out; it made no difference  
40 to her that you'd read every word in it and needed  
another to start. You could take out two books at a  
time and two only; this applied as long as you were  
a child and also for the rest of your life, to my mother  
as severely as to me. So two by two, I read library  
45 books as fast as I could go, rushing them home in  
the basket of my bicycle. From the minute I reached  
our house, I started to read. Every book I seized on,  
from *Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue at Camp Rest-  
a-While* to *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*,  
50 stood for the devouring wish to read being instantly  
granted. I knew this was bliss, knew it at the time.  
Taste isn't nearly so important; it comes in its own  
time. I wanted to read *immediately*. The only fear was  
that of books coming to an end.

My mother was very sharing of this feeling of  
insatiability. Now, I think of her as reading so much  
of the time while doing something else. In my mind's  
eye *The Origin of Species* is lying on the shelf in the  
pantry under a light dusting of flour—my mother was  
55 a bread maker; she'd pick it up, sit by the kitchen  
window and find her place, with one eye on the oven.  
I remember her picking up *The Man in Lower Ten*  
while my hair got dry enough to unroll from a load  
of kid curlers trying to make me like my idol, Mary  
Pickford. A generation later, when my brother Walter  
was away in the Navy and his two little girls often  
spent the day in our house, I remember Mother read-  
ing the new issue of *Time* magazine while taking  
the part of the Wolf in a game of "Little Red Riding  
65 Hood" with the children. She'd just look up at the  
right time, long enough to answer—in character—  
"The better to eat you with, my dear," and go back to  
her place in the war news.

(1983)

\*Elsie Dinsmore was the long-suffering young heroine in a popular series of children's books written by Martha Finley and first published in 1868.

# 2000 AP<sup>®</sup> 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, Gandhi<sup>1</sup> says, are dangerous,  
because “friends react on one another” and through  
loyalty to a friend one can be led into wrong-doing.  
5      This is unquestionably true. Moreover, if one is to  
love God, or to love humanity as a whole, one can-  
not 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  
10      nothing if it does not mean loving some people more  
than others. The autobiography<sup>2</sup> 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  
15      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  
20      choice of staying alive at the price of committing

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* some-  
times willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty,  
30      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  
by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one’s  
love upon other human individuals. No doubt alcohol,  
35      tobacco, and so forth, are things that a saint must  
avoid, but sainthood is also a thing that human beings  
must avoid.

(1949)

<sup>1</sup> Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948). Political and spiritual leader in India

<sup>2</sup> Gandhi’s autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*

## 2000 English Language Scoring Guidelines

### **Question 1**

- 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 Welty's language conveys the intensity and value of her childhood experiences of reading. They refer to the text, explicitly or implicitly, assessing how specific elements such as concrete detail, anecdote, hyperbole, juxtaposition, and figurative language help Welty capture the intensity and value of this experience. 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 provide more complete analysis or demonstrate a more mature prose style.
- 6: Essays earning a score of 6 demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of Welty's language to the intensity and value it conveys, but their discussion is more limited. While the essays refer to the text, explicitly or implicitly, they offer a less convincing explanation of how its language functions. A few lapses in diction or syntax may be present, but generally the prose demonstrates control of ideas and writing.
- 5: Essays earning a score of 5 analyze Welty's use of language, but their discussion is uneven or inconsistent. They may treat her style in a superficial way or demonstrate unsophisticated ideas about the relationship between language and the intensity and value it conveys. These essays may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but their prose conveys the writer's ideas.
- 4: Essays earning a score of 4 offer an inadequate response to the prompt. They may misrepresent or merely touch on the relationship between Welty's language and the way in which it conveys intensity and value or identify techniques without providing relevant discussion about their function. The prose generally conveys the writer's 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 the techniques Welty uses to convey intensity and value or less consistent in controlling the elements of writing.
- 2: Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in analyzing how Welty's language conveys intensity and value. These essays may offer vague generalizations about her use of language. They may lack development or substitute simpler tasks such as summarizing the passage or simply listing techniques. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.