

## **2004 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

### **Question 3**

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

Critic Roland Barthes has said, “Literature is the question minus the answer.” Choose a novel or play and, considering Barthes’ observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers any answers. Explain how the author’s treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

You may select a work from the list below or another novel or play of comparable literary merit.

*Alias Grace*  
*All the King's Men*  
*Candide*  
*Crime and Punishment*  
*Death of a Salesman*  
*Doctor Faustus*  
*Don Quixote*  
*A Gesture Life*  
*Ghosts*  
*Great Expectations*  
*The Great Gatsby*  
*Gulliver's Travels*  
*Heart of Darkness*  
*Invisible Man*  
*Joe Turner's Come and Gone*  
*King Lear*  
*Major Barbara*

*Middlemarch*  
*Moby-Dick*  
*Obasan*  
*Oedipus Rex*  
*Orlando*  
*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  
*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*  
*The Scarlet Letter*  
*Sister Carrie*  
*The Sound and the Fury*  
*Sula*  
*The Sun Also Rises*  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God*  
*The Things They Carried*  
*The Turn of the Screw*  
*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*

**END OF EXAMINATION**

**AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE  
2004 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 3**

**"Literature is the question minus the answer."**

**General Directions:** This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but in problematic cases, please consult your table leader. The score that you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Reward the writers for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

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- 9-8** These essays focus on a central question raised in a novel or play and on the extent to which the work offers answers to it. The writers of these essays use apt references from the selected literary work to persuasively analyze how the author's treatment of the question affects the reader's understanding of the work as a whole. Although not without flaws, these essays exhibit the writer's ability to analyze a literary work perceptively, to control a thesis, and to write with clarity, precision, coherence, and—in the case of a nine (9) essay—with particular persuasiveness and/or stylistic flair.
- 7-6** These essays identify a central question in a novel or play and discuss the extent to which the work offers answers to it. The writers of these essays provide a reasonable analysis of how the author's treatment of the question affects the reader's understanding of the work as a whole. These essays provide some insight, but the analysis is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific than that of the 9-8 essays; references to the work may not be as apt or as persuasive. Although essays scored in the 7-6 range are generally well written, those scored a seven (7) will demonstrate more sophistication in both substance and style.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task, but they tend to be superficial in analysis. They often rely upon plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. Although the writers may attempt to explain the nature of the central question in the work and the extent to which the text offers answers to it, they may demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding. Typically, these essays reveal unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing. The writers demonstrate adequate control of language, but their essays may be marred by surface errors and may lack effective organization.
- 4-3** These lower-half essays reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the work selected, or they may fail to establish how the question raised in a novel or play—and the extent to which the work offers answers to it—contributes to the understanding of the work as a whole. They may rely on plot summary alone. Their assertions may be unsupported or even irrelevant. Often wordy, elliptical, or repetitious, these essays lack control over the elements of college-level composition. Essays scored a three (3) exhibit more than one of these stylistic errors; they may also be marred by significant misinterpretation and/or poor development.

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**Question 3 (cont'd.)**

- 2-1** Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. Often, they are unacceptably brief or are incoherent in presenting their ideas. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. The writer's remarks are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Especially inept and/or unsound essays must be scored a one (1).
- 0** These essays give a response that is no more than a reference to the task.
- Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.