

**2006 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 the following poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the poet uses language to describe the scene and to convey mood and meaning.

Evening Hawk

From plane of light to plane, wings dipping through
Geometries and orchids that the sunset builds,
Out of the peak's black angularity of shadow, riding
Line The last tumultuous avalanche of
5 Light above pines and the guttural gorge,
The hawk comes.

His wing
Scythes down another day, his motion
Is that of the honed steel-edge, we hear
The crashless fall of stalks of Time.
10 The head of each stalk is heavy with the gold of our error.

Look! look! he is climbing the last light
Who knows neither Time nor error, and under
Whose eye, unforgiving, the world, unforgiven, swings
Into shadow.

Long now,
15 The last thrush is still, the last bat
Now cruises in his sharp hieroglyphics. His wisdom
Is ancient, too, and immense. The star
Is steady, like Plato,* over the mountain.

If there were no wind we might, we think, hear
20 The earth grind on its axis, or history
Drip in darkness like a leaking pipe in the cellar.

—Robert Penn Warren

*Greek philosopher (427?–347? B.C.)

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Question 2

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

The following passage is an excerpt from *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a play by Oscar Wilde, produced in 1892. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society.

Line DUCHESS OF BERWICK (*shaking hands*). Dear
Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember
Agatha,¹ don't you? How do you do, Lord
Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you
5 are far too wicked.

LORD DARLINGTON. Don't say that, Duchess.
As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there
are lots of people who say I have never really done
anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of
10 course they only say it behind my back.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Isn't he dreadful?
Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you don't
believe a word he says. No, no tea, thank you, dear.
(*Sits on sofa.*) We have just had tea at Lady Markby's.
15 Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at
all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha
is looking forward so much to your ball tonight, dear
Margaret.

LADY WINDERMERE (*seated*). Oh, you musn't
20 think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a
dance in honour of my birthday. A small and early.

LORD DARLINGTON (*standing*). Very small,
very early, and very select, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Of course it's going
25 to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about
your house. It is really one of the few houses in
London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel
perfectly secure about dear Berwick. I don't know
what society is coming to. The most dreadful people
30 seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my
parties—the men get quite furious if one doesn't
ask them. Really, some one should make a stand
against it.

LADY WINDERMERE. I will, Duchess. I will
35 have no one in my house about whom there is any
scandal.

LORD DARLINGTON. Oh, don't say that, Lady
Windermere. I should never be admitted. (*Sitting.*)

¹ the Duchess's daughter

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Oh, men don't matter.
40 With women it is different. We're good. Some of us
are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed
into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our
existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time,
just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right
45 to do so.

LORD DARLINGTON. It's a curious thing,
Duchess, about the game of marriage—a game, by the
way, that is going out of fashion—the wives hold all
the honours² and invariably lose the odd trick.³

50 DUCHESS OF BERWICK. The odd trick? Is that
the husband, Lord Darlington?

LORD DARLINGTON. It would be rather a good
name for the modern husband.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear Lord Darlington,
55 how thoroughly depraved you are!

LADY WINDERMERE. Lord Darlington is trivial.

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, don't say that, Lady
Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. Why do you *talk* so
60 trivially about life, then?

LORD DARLINGTON. Because I think that life
is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously
about it.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. What does he mean?
65 Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington,
just explain to me what you really mean.

LORD DARLINGTON. I think I had better not,
Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found
out. Good-bye! (*Shakes hands with DUCHESS.*) And
70 now—Lady Windermere, good-bye. I may come
tonight, mayn't I? Do let me come.

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes, certainly. But you
are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

LORD DARLINGTON (*smiling*). Ah! you are
75 beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to
reform any one, Lady Windermere. (*Bows and exit.*)

² high cards

³ round of a card game

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2006 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

(Robert Penn Warren's "Evening Hawk")

The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Students are rewarded 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 the language the poet uses to describe the scene and to convey mood and meaning. Although these essays offer a range of interpretations and choose to emphasize different poetic techniques, these papers provide convincing readings of the poem and 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 competent essays offer a reasonable analysis of the language the poet uses to describe the scene and to convey mood and meaning. They are less thorough or less precise in their discussion of the themes and techniques, and their analysis of the relationship between the language and the themes is less convincing. These essays demonstrate the student's ability to express ideas clearly with references to the text, although they do not exhibit the same level of effective writing as the 9–8 papers. While essays scored 7–6 are generally well written, those scored a 7 demonstrate more sophistication in both substance and style.
- 5** These essays may respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the poem, but they may be superficial in analysis of theme and technique. They often rely on paraphrase but paraphrase that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. Their analysis of the language of the poem may be vague, formulaic, or inadequately supported by references to the text. There may be minor misinterpretations. These students demonstrate control of language, but the writing 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 language of the poem. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant. 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 misreadings 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. They may contain serious errors in grammar and mechanics. These essays 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 with no more than a reference to the task.
- These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.