

**Question 3**

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

Many works of literature feature a character who may be reluctant to make a decision, unable to make a decision, or is resistant to doing so. This indecision can have broader implications for that character or other characters. Such implications may include changes to a character's relationships, social and/or financial stability, well-being, or any other aspects of the character's existence.

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character delays or avoids making a decision. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the impact of this indecision contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

*The Age of Innocence*  
*An American Marriage*  
*Anna Karenina*  
*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*  
*Beloved*  
*Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*  
*Corelli's Mandolin*  
*Dubliners*  
*Emma*  
*Frankenstein*  
*George Washington Gómez*  
*Indian Horse*  
*Interior Chinatown*  
*Jane Eyre*  
*The Kite Runner*  
*Little Fires Everywhere*  
*A Long Petal of the Sea*  
*Love in the Time of Cholera*  
*Madame Bovary*

*The Metamorphosis*  
*The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez*  
*The Namesake*  
*The Night Watchman*  
*North and South*  
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*  
*Pipeline*  
*The Professor's House*  
*Quicksand*  
*A Raisin in the Sun*  
*Rebecca*  
*A Room with a View*  
*The Stranger*  
*A Tale of Two Cities*  
*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*  
*Topdog/Underdog*  
*Waiting*  
*Whereabouts*  
*Wuthering Heights*

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**Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.**

### Question 3: Literary Argument

6 points

Many works of literature feature a character who may be reluctant to make a decision, unable to make a decision, or is resistant to doing so. This indecision can have broader implications for that character or other characters. Such implications may include changes to a character's relationships, social and/or financial stability, well-being, or any other aspects of the character's existence.

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character delays or avoids making a decision. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the impact of this indecision contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<b>Row A</b> <b>Thesis</b> <b>(0–1 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no defensible thesis.</li> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</li> <li>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the selected work.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Make a generalized comment about the selected work that doesn't respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a defensible interpretation of the impact of a character's indecision.</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a claim about how the impact of a character's indecision contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.</li> </ul>
	<b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b> <b>Restate the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"Decisions are often hard to make. In literature, some characters can't or won't make a decision, and this affects them or the people around them."</i></li> </ul> <b>Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"Characters often make mistakes in literature. Victor Frankenstein allows himself to get swept up in misguided ideas."</i></li> <li><i>"Delaying a decision is often easier than confronting a problem. Many works of literature involve characters who have difficult decisions to make."</i></li> <li><i>"Many of the decisions made in <u>Madame Bovary</u> are made out of boredom."</i></li> </ul>	<b>Examples that earn this point:</b> <b>Provides a defensible interpretation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"Hamlet's prideful inability to decide whether or how to enact revenge on his uncle results in his own downfall."</i></li> <li><i>"In <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>, Holden is frequently indecisive about what he wants from his life. This indecision serves to advance his characterization as an innocent person in a world full of what he calls 'phonies.'"</i></li> <li><i>"In <u>Wuthering Heights</u>, the conflict between Heathcliff's love for Catherine and his own pride render him unable to either move on from her or confess his love. His indecision haunts him both figuratively and literally, and Catherine's ghost acts as a constant reminder of his failure."</i></li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity.</li> <li>The thesis may be anywhere within the response.</li> <li>A thesis that offers a defensible claim about the impact of a character's indecision in the selected work may earn the point; any reasonable student interpretation of "indecision" is acceptable.</li> <li>For a thesis to be defensible, the selected work must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<b>Row B</b> <b>Evidence</b> <b>AND</b> <b>Commentary</b> <b>(0–4 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	<b>1 point</b> <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides evidence that is mostly general.  <b>AND</b>  <b>COMMENTARY:</b> Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the argument.	<b>2 points</b> <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides some specific, relevant evidence.  <b>AND</b>  <b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	<b>3 points</b> <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.  <b>AND</b>  <b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.	<b>4 points</b> <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.  <b>AND</b>  <b>COMMENTARY:</b> Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
	<b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are incoherent or do not address the prompt.</li> <li>May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tend to focus on overarching narrative developments or description of a selected work rather than specific details.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities.</li> <li>May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument.</li> <li>May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim.</li> <li>Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>Focus on the importance of specific details from the selected work to build an interpretation.</li> <li>Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims.</li> <li>Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>Focus on the importance of specific details from the selected work to build an interpretation.</li> <li>Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.</li> <li>To earn the fourth point in this row, the response must address the interpretation of the selected work as a whole.</li> </ul>					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<b>Row C</b> <b>Sophistication</b> <b>(0–1 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”).</li> <li>Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the text could be said to...</i>”).</li> <li>Oversimplify complexities of the topic and/or the selected work.</li> <li>Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument.</li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the selected work.</li> <li>Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context.</li> <li>Accounting for alternative interpretations of the text.</li> <li>Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</li> </ol>
	<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>	