

Question 3

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

Many works of literature explore a character’s sense of lacking something important in life. The character perceives an unfulfilled need which may be emotional, spiritual, financial, or something the character does not understand or cannot articulate. Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which such a feeling is explored. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character’s sense of an unfulfilled need 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.

Antigone
The Awakening
The Bell Jar
Brave New World
Ceremony
Death of a Salesman
Don Quixote
Fences
Frankenstein
The Goldfinch
The Handmaid’s Tale
How the García Girls Lost Their Accents
Howards End
The Hundred Secret Senses
If Beale Street Could Talk
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre
Kindred
Little Fires Everywhere
Macbeth

Moby-Dick
Native Son
On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest
Passing
A Raisin in the Sun
Sag Harbor
The Scarlet Letter
The Secret Life of Bees
Song of Solomon
Sweat
Swing Time
The Tempest
There There
A Thousand Splendid Suns
To the Lighthouse
The Visit
When the Emperor Was Divine
White Noise
Wuthering Heights

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 explore a character’s sense of lacking something important in life. The character perceives an unfulfilled need which may be emotional, spiritual, financial, or something the character does not understand or cannot articulate. Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which such a feeling is explored. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character’s sense of an unfulfilled need 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	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the selected work.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the selected work that doesn't respond to the prompt. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a defensible interpretation of a character's sense of an unfulfilled need in the selected work. 	OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a claim about how a character's sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.
Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A common theme in literature is a character who feels like one of their needs has not been met, or they are missing something that they want out of life.” Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gatsby is never really satisfied with anything in his life.” • “The Bell Jar follows the life of the protagonist, Esther, through a short period of time in her young adulthood.” • “In Ceremony, Tayo feels like something is missing from his life.” 		
Examples that earn this point: Provides a defensible interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Edna’s lack of freedom to pursue her desires, in Chopin’s <i>The Awakening</i>, highlights how societal constraints can drive a person to both rebellion and submission.” • “In <i>The Bluest Eye</i>, Pecola’s need to be loved goes unfulfilled and contributes to the violence of the world in which she lives.” • “Throughout <i>The Age of Innocence</i>, Newland Archer believes he needs more excitement than his traditional, comfortable life with his wife provides. This drives him to consider a relationship with Ellen Olenska and makes him realize that this ‘unfulfilled need’ is really a foolish idea.” 		
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • A thesis that offers a defensible claim about a character’s sense of an unfulfilled need in the selected work may earn the point; any reasonable student interpretation of “an unfulfilled need” is acceptable. • 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. • 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. • 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. 		

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

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>”). 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>”). Oversimplify complexities of the topic and/or the selected work. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument. 		Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the selected work. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the text. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		