

## 2010 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### Question 3

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

In his 2004 book, *Status Anxiety*, Alain de Botton argues that the chief aim of humorists is not merely to entertain but “to convey with impunity messages that might be dangerous or impossible to state directly.” Because society allows humorists to say things that other people cannot or will not say, de Botton sees humorists as serving a vital function in society.

Think about the implications of de Botton’s view of the role of humorists (cartoonists, stand-up comics, satirical writers, hosts of television programs, etc.). Then write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies de Botton’s claim about the vital role of humorists. Use specific, appropriate evidence to develop your position.

**STOP**

**END OF EXAM**

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## 2010 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 3

The score should reflect a judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

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- 9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for a score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in their development or particularly impressive in their control of language.

#### 8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** defend, challenge or qualify de Botton's claim about the vital role of humorists. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and convincing, and the argument is especially coherent and well developed. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

- 7 Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for a score of 6 but provide a more complete explanation, more thorough development or a more mature prose style.

#### 6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** defend, challenge or qualify de Botton's claim about the vital role of humorists. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and sufficient, and the argument is adequately developed and coherent. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5 Essays earning a score of 5 defend, challenge or qualify de Botton's claim about the vital role of humorists. The evidence or explanations used may be uneven, inconsistent or limited. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas.

#### 4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** defend, challenge or qualify de Botton's claim about the vital role of humorists. The evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient or less convincing. The argument may be inadequately developed or have lapses in coherence. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be less consistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

- 3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in defending, challenging or qualifying de Botton's claim about the vital role of humorists. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

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### Question 3 (continued)

#### 2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in defending, challenging or qualifying de Botton's claim about the vital role of humorists. These essays may misunderstand the prompt or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of coherence and control.

- 1 Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation and argument, weak in their control of language or especially lacking in coherence and development.

0 Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

— Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.