

## **2003 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.)

According to critic Northrop Frye, “Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divine lightning.”

Select a novel or play in which a tragic figure functions as an instrument of the suffering of others. Then write an essay in which you explain how the suffering brought upon others by that figure contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of comparable quality. Avoid mere plot summary.

*An American Tragedy*

*Anna Karenina*

*Antigone*

*Beloved*

*Crime and Punishment*

*Death of a Salesman*

*Ethan Frome*

*Faust*

*Fences*

*For Whom the Bell Tolls*

*Frankenstein*

*Hedda Gabler*

*King Lear*

*Light in August*

*Long Day's Journey into Night*

*Lord Jim*

*Macbeth*

*Medea*

*Moby-Dick*

*Oedipus Rex*

*Phèdre*

*Ragtime*

*Sent for You Yesterday*

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

*Things Fall Apart*

**END OF EXAMINATION**

# AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE 2003 SCORING GUIDELINES

## Question 3

### Tragic Figures as Instruments of the Suffering of Others

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).

- 9–8** These well-focused and persuasive essays identify a tragic character who functions as an instrument of others' suffering. The essays also discuss how that suffering contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole. Using apt textual support, these essays not only explore the nature of the suffering, but they also analyze how that suffering contributes to the work's tragic vision. Although not without flaws, these essays exhibit the writer's ability to analyze a literary work with insight and understanding, 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 competent essays identify a tragic character in an appropriate novel or play and analyze that character's impact on others' suffering. They also attempt to articulate how that suffering he or she brings on others contributes to the work's tragic vision. Although these essays have some insight, the analysis provided by the 7–6 essays is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific in supporting detail than that of the 9–8 essays. References to the text may not be as apt or as persuasive. Essays scored a seven (7) will demonstrate more sophistication in both substance and in style than those scored a six (6), though both 7's and 6's will be generally well written and free from significant or sustained misinterpretations.
- 5** These essays tend to be superficial in analysis even though they may respond to the assigned task and may offer a plausible interpretation of an appropriate novel or play. They often rely upon plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. Although they may obliquely attempt to explain the theme, the tragic vision, they may demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding of it. Typically, these essays reveal unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the work discussed, or they may fail to establish how the tragic figure brings about others' suffering or how that suffering contributes to the work's tragic vision. 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 the stylistic errors; they may also be marred by significant misinterpretation and/or poor development.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. Often, they are unacceptably brief. 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, vacuous, and/or unsound essays must be scored a one (1).
- 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.