

## 2001 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.)

One definition of madness is “mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it.” But Emily Dickinson wrote

Much madness is divinest Sense—  
To a discerning Eye—

Novelists and playwrights have often seen madness with a “discerning Eye.” Select a novel or play in which a character’s apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the “madness” to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

You may select a work from the list below or choose another novel or play of literary merit.

*As I Lay Dying*  
*Beloved*  
*Catch-22*  
*The Catcher in the Rye*  
*Ceremony*  
*Coming Through Slaughter*  
*Crime and Punishment*  
*Dancing at Lughnasa*  
*Don Quixote*  
*An Enemy of the People*  
*Equus*  
*The Father*  
*Going After Cacciato*  
*Great Expectations*  
*Gulliver's Travels*

*Heart of Darkness*  
*Invisible Man*  
*King Lear*  
*Medea*  
*Moby-Dick*  
*Native Son*  
*Of Mice and Men*  
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*  
*Pale Fire*  
*The Sound and the Fury*  
*A Streetcar Named Desire*  
*Waiting for Godot*  
*Wuthering Heights*  
*The Zoo Story*

**END OF EXAMINATION**

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**Question 3**

At the AP Reading, faculty consultants were given the following **General Directions**:

- The score you assign each essay should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole.
- Reward the writers for what they do well.
- The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the appropriate score.
- In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

- 9-8** These well-focused essays identify the “madness” or the “irrational behavior” of a character in an appropriate novel or play, and they persuasively explain the nature of this delusion or eccentric behavior and how it might be judged reasonable in the context of the entire work. Using apt and specific textual illustrations but without belaboring the plot, they fully explore not only the nature of the character’s “madness” but also its significance to the work as a whole. These essays need not be flawless, nor must they accomplish all aspects of this complex task equally well. Nonetheless, they exhibit the writer’s ability to discuss a literary work with insight and understanding, to sustain control over a thesis, and to write with clarity and perhaps—in the case of a nine (9) essay—with stylistic flair.
- 7-6** These competent essays describe the nature of the character’s “madness” in an appropriate novel or play, and they discuss how the delusion or eccentric behavior might be judged reasonable, in addition to the significance that delusion or eccentric behavior has to the work as a whole. Although not without insights, the analysis provided by the 7-6 essays is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific than that of the 9-8 papers; references to the text may not be as apt or as persuasive. Papers scored a seven (7) will demonstrate more sophistication in both substance and style, though both 7’s and 6’s will be generally well-written and free from significant or sustained misinterpretation.
- 5** These essays tend to be simplistic in analysis even though they may respond to the assigned task and may offer a plausible discussion of the work. They often rely upon plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. They may discuss a character’s “madness” in a limited manner, or not fully develop its significance to the work as a whole. However, these essays will not accomplish all—or perhaps any—of these tasks with sufficient development. The work itself may be poorly chosen for this essay question; the character’s “madness” and its nature may not be clearly related to reasonable behavior. Typically these essays reveal unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing.

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**Question 3 (cont'd.)**

- 4-3** These lower-half essays reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the work discussed, or they may fail to establish how a character’s “madness” can be judged to be reasonable, or they may fail to discuss how that behavior informs the work as a whole. They may rely on plot summary. 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 observations are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Essays that are especially inexact, vacuous, and/or mechanically unsound should be scored a one (1).
- 0** This is a response with no more than a reference to the task.
- A blank paper or completely off-topic response.