

2007 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.)

In many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present actions, attitudes, or values of a character. Choose a novel or play in which a character must contend with some aspect of the past, either personal or societal. Then write an essay in which you show how the character’s relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Absalom, Absalom!
All the King’s Men
The American
Atonement
The Awakening
Beloved
The Blind Assassin
The Bonesetter’s Daughter
The Cherry Orchard
Cry, the Beloved Country
Death of a Salesman
An Enemy of the People
Ethan Frome
Fifth Business
The Fixer
Great Expectations
The Great Gatsby
The House of Mirth
Jane Eyre
The Kite Runner

Long Day’s Journey into Night
Lord Jim
Middlemarch
Moby-Dick
The Moor’s Last Sigh
Mrs. Dalloway
Native Speaker
Obasan
A Passage to India
Persuasion
The Piano Lesson
Ragtime
A Separate Peace
A Streetcar Named Desire
The Tempest
Tess of the D’Urbervilles
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
Wuthering Heights

STOP

END OF EXAM

AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2007 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3

(The Effect of Past Events on the Actions, Attitudes, or Values of a Character)

The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Students are rewarded for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

- 9–8** These essays offer a well-focused and persuasive analysis of how a character’s relationship to the past affects the character’s actions, attitudes, or values. Using apt and specific textual support, these essays fully explore that relationship and demonstrate what it contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Although not without flaws, these essays make a strong case for their interpretation and discuss the literary work with significant insight and understanding. Generally, essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how a character’s relationship to the past affects the character’s actions, attitudes, or values. The essays explore that relationship and demonstrate what it contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. These works have insight and understanding, but the analysis is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific in supporting detail than that of the 9–8 essays. Generally, essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than those scored a 6.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading, but they tend to be superficial or underdeveloped in analysis. They often rely upon plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. Although the students attempt to discuss the effect of the past on the actions, attitudes, or values of a character and what that relationship contributes to the work as a whole, they may demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding of the work. Typically, these essays reveal unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing. The students demonstrate adequate control of language, but their essays lack effective organization and may be marred by surface errors.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays offer a less than thorough understanding of the task or a less than adequate treatment of it. They reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the work, or they may fail to establish the nature of the effect of the past on a character’s actions, attitudes, or values. They may not address or develop a response to how that relationship contributes to the work as a whole, or they may rely on plot summary alone. Their assertions may be unsupported or even irrelevant. Often wordy, elliptical, or repetitious, these essays may lack control over the elements of college-level composition. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreadings and demonstrate inept writing.
- 2–1** Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. Often, they are unacceptably brief or are incoherent in presenting their ideas. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. The remarks are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Particularly inept, vacuous, and/or incoherent essays must be scored a 1.
- 0** These essays make no more than a reference to the task.
- These essays either are left blank or are completely off topic.