

2008 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 a literary work, a minor character, often known as a foil, possesses traits that emphasize, by contrast or comparison, the distinctive characteristics and qualities of the main character. For example, the ideas or behavior of the minor character might be used to highlight the weaknesses or strengths of the main character.

Choose a novel or play in which a minor character serves as a foil to a main character. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the relation between the minor character and the major character illuminates the meaning of the work.

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

The Age of Innocence

Alias Grace

All the King's Men

All the Pretty Horses

Anna Karenina

Billy Budd

The Brothers Karamazov

Catch-22

Cold Mountain

The Color Purple

Don Quixote

Emma

Equus

Frankenstein

Glass Menagerie

Henry IV, Part I

Huckleberry Finn

Invisible Man

King Lear

The Kite Runner

The Misanthrope

The Piano Lesson

Pride and Prejudice

Pygmalion

Reservation Blues

The Sound and the Fury

A Streetcar Named Desire

Sula

A Tale of Two Cities

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Tom Jones

Wuthering Heights

STOP

END OF EXAM

**AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2008 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 3

(Function of a Foil)

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 foil or minor character emphasizes, by contrast or comparison, the distinctive characteristics and qualities of a main character. 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 those scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how a foil emphasizes, by contrast or comparison, the distinctive characteristics and qualities of a main character. They explore that relationship and demonstrate what it contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. These essays show insight and understanding, but the analysis is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific in supporting detail than that of those in the 9–8 range. Generally, essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do 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 on plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. Although the essays attempt to discuss how the foil illuminates the distinctive characteristics and qualities of a main character and how the relationship contributes to the work as a whole, they may demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding of the work. Typically, these responses reveal unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing. They demonstrate adequate control of language, but they may 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 relationship between the foil and a main character. 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 misreading and demonstrate inept writing.
- 2–1** Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they compound the weaknesses of those 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 ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Particularly inept, vacuous, and/or incoherent essays must be scored a 1.
- 0** These essays do no more than make a reference to the task.
- These essays either are left blank or are completely off topic.