

## 2014 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### Question 2

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

In the following letter, Abigail Adams (1744–1818) writes to her son John Quincy Adams, who is traveling abroad with his father, John Adams, a United States diplomat and later the country’s second president. Read the letter carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, analyze the rhetorical strategies Adams uses to advise her son. Support your analysis with specific references to the text.

12 January, 1780.

MY DEAR SON,

I hope you have had no occasion, either from enemies or the dangers of the sea, to repent your second voyage to France. If I had thought your reluctance arose from proper deliberation, or that you were capable of judging what was most for your own benefit, I should not have urged you to accompany your father and brother when you appeared so averse to the voyage.

You, however, readily submitted to my advice, and, I hope, will never have occasion yourself, nor give me reason, to lament it. Your knowledge of the language must give you greater advantages now than you could possibly have reaped whilst ignorant of it; and as you increase in years, you will find your understanding opening and daily improving.

Some author, that I have met with, compares a judicious traveller to a river, that increases its stream the further it flows from its source; or to certain springs, which, running through rich veins of minerals, improve their qualities as they pass along. It will be expected of you, my son, that, as you are favored with superior advantages under the instructive eye of a tender parent, your improvement should bear some proportion to your advantages. Nothing is wanting with you but attention, diligence, and steady application. Nature has not been deficient.

These are times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life, or the repose of a pacific station, that great characters are formed. Would Cicero have shone so distinguished an orator if he had not been roused, kindled, and inflamed by the

tyranny of Catiline, Verres, and Mark Anthony? The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. All history will convince you of this,

35 and that wisdom and penetration are the fruit of experience, not the lessons of retirement and leisure. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities, which would otherwise lie dormant, wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman. War, tyranny, and desolation are the scourges of the Almighty, and ought no doubt to be deprecated. Yet it is your lot, my son, to be an eyewitness of these calamities in your own native

40 land, and, at the same time, to owe your existence among a people who have made a glorious defence of their invaded liberties, and who, aided by a generous and powerful ally, with the blessing of Heaven, will transmit this inheritance to ages yet unborn.

45 50 Nor ought it to be one of your incitements towards exerting every power and faculty of your mind, that you have a parent who has taken so large and active a share in this contest, and discharged the trust reposed in him with so much satisfaction as to be honored with the important embassy which at present calls him abroad.

55 The strict and inviolable regard you have ever paid to truth, gives me pleasing hopes that you will not swerve from her dictates, but add justice, fortitude, 60 and every manly virtue which can adorn a good citizen, do honor to your country, and render your parents supremely happy, particularly your ever affectionate mother,

A. A.

## **2014 AP® 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.)

Authors Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman published “The Creativity Crisis” in *Newsweek.com* in July 2010. They reported that the Torrance Test, a test of creativity that has been administered to millions of people worldwide in 50 languages, indicates that the public’s “creativity quotient” has steadily crept downward since 1990. In their article, Bronson and Merryman cite the claim of Professor Kyung Hee Kim at the College of William and Mary: “It’s very clear, and the decrease is very significant.” Kim reports that it is the scores of younger children in America—from kindergarten through sixth grade—for whom the decline is “most serious.”

Bronson and Merryman state that “[t]he potential consequences are sweeping. The necessity of human ingenuity is undisputed. A recent IBM poll of 1,500 CEOs identified creativity as the No. 1 ‘leadership competency’ of the future. Yet it’s not just about sustaining our nation’s economic growth. All around us are matters of national and international importance that are crying out for creative solutions, from saving the Gulf of Mexico to bringing peace to Afghanistan to delivering health care. Such solutions emerge from a healthy marketplace of ideas, sustained by a populace constantly contributing original ideas and receptive to the ideas of others.”

One possible approach to this reputed decline in creativity is to explicitly teach creative thinking in school. Write to your school board explaining what you mean by creativity *and* arguing for or against the creation of a class in creativity.

**STOP**

**END OF EXAM**

# AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION 2014 SCORING GUIDELINES

## Question 2

The essay score should reflect 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 a holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics score higher than a 2.

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

### 8 – Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** analyze the rhetorical strategies Adams uses to advise her son. They develop their analysis\* with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and convincing, referring to the passage explicitly or implicitly. 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 the score of 6 but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

### 6 – Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** analyze the rhetorical strategies Adams uses to advise her son. They develop their analysis with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and sufficient, referring to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

**5** – Essays earning a score of 5 analyze the rhetorical strategies Adams uses to advise her son. 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 writer's ideas.

### 4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** analyze the rhetorical strategies Adams uses to advise her son. These essays may misunderstand the passage, misrepresent the strategies Adams uses, or may analyze these strategies insufficiently. The evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or unconvincing. The prose generally conveys the writer's ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

**3** – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in analyzing the rhetorical strategies Adams uses to advise her son. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the passage or Adams's strategies, or the explanations or examples may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

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## **Question 2 (continued)**

### **2 – Little Success**

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in analyzing the rhetorical strategies Adams uses to advise her son. These essays may misunderstand the prompt, misread the passage, fail to analyze the strategies Adams uses, 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 control.

**1** – Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, or weak in their control of language.

**0** – Indicates an off-topic response, one that merely repeats the prompt, an entirely crossed-out response, a drawing, or a response in a language other than English.

— Indicates an entirely blank response.

\* For the purposes of scoring, analysis means explaining the rhetorical choices an author makes in an attempt to achieve a particular effect or purpose.