

2009 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 2

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

The following selection is the opening of Ann Petry's 1946 novel, *The Street*. Read the selection carefully and then write an essay analyzing how Petry establishes Lutie Johnson's relationship to the urban setting through the use of such literary devices as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language.

Line
There was a cold November wind blowing through
116th Street. It rattled the tops of garbage cans,
sucked window shades out through the top of opened
windows and set them flapping back against the
5 windows; and it drove most of the people off the
street in the block between Seventh and Eighth
Avenues except for a few hurried pedestrians who
bent double in an effort to offer the least possible
exposed surface to its violent assault.

10 It found every scrap of paper along the street—
theater throwaways, announcements of dances and
lodge meetings, the heavy waxed paper that loaves
of bread had been wrapped in, the thinner waxed
paper that had enclosed sandwiches, old envelopes,
15 newspapers. Fingering its way along the curb, the
wind set the bits of paper to dancing high in the air,
so that a barrage of paper swirled into the faces of the
people on the street. It even took time to rush into
doorways and areaways and find chicken bones and
20 pork-chop bones and pushed them along the curb.

It did everything it could to discourage the people
walking along the street. It found all the dirt and dust
and grime on the sidewalk and lifted it up so that the
dirt got into their noses, making it difficult to breathe;
25 the dust got into their eyes and blinded them; and the
grit stung their skins. It wrapped newspaper around
their feet entangling them until the people cursed
deep in their throats, stamped their feet, kicked at the
paper. The wind blew it back again and again until
30 they were forced to stoop and dislodge the paper with
their hands. And then the wind grabbed their hats,

pried their scarves from around their necks, stuck its
fingers inside their coat collars, blew their coats away
from their bodies.

- 35 The wind lifted Lutie Johnson's hair away from the
back of her neck so that she felt suddenly naked and
bald, for her hair had been resting softly and warmly
against her skin. She shivered as the cold fingers of
40 the wind touched the back of her neck, explored the
sides of her head. It even blew her eyelashes away
from her eyes so that her eyeballs were bathed in a
rush of coldness and she had to blink in order to read
the words on the sign swaying back and forth over her
head.
45 Each time she thought she had the sign in focus,
the wind pushed it away from her so that she wasn't
certain whether it said three rooms or two rooms. If
it was three, why, she would go in and ask to see it,
but if it said two—why, there wasn't any point. Even
50 with the wind twisting the sign away from her, she
could see that it had been there for a long time
because its original coat of white paint was streaked
with rust where years of rain and snow had finally
55 eaten the paint off down to the metal and the metal
had slowly rusted, making a dark red stain like blood.
It was three rooms. The wind held it still for an
instant in front of her and then swooped it away until
it was standing at an impossible angle on the rod that
suspected it from the building. She read it rapidly.
60 Three rooms, steam heat, parquet floors, respectable
tenants. Reasonable.

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Question 3

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

A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning.

Select a novel or play and, focusing on one symbol, write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

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

As I Lay Dying
The Awakening
Beloved
Bleak House
Cat's Eye
The Cherry Orchard
The Color Purple
Crime and Punishment
The Crossing
The Crucible
A Doll House
Equus
A Farewell to Arms
Fences
The Glass Menagerie
The Golden Bowl
The Grapes of Wrath
The Hairy Ape
Heart of Darkness
Invisible Man
Jude the Obscure

The Kite Runner
Lady Windermere's Fan
Macbeth
Madame Bovary
The Memory Keeper's Daughter
Moby-Dick
The Namesake
Nineteen Eighty-four
Our Town
The Plague
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
A Prayer for Owen Meany
A Raisin in the Sun
Reservation Blues
Snow
A Streetcar Named Desire
Things Fall Apart
Waiting for Godot
Wise Blood
The Women of Brewster Place

STOP

END OF EXAM

AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2009 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

(Ann Petry's *The Street*)

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 persuasive analysis of Petry's use of literary devices to establish Lutie Johnson's relationship to the urban setting and provide strong support for the students' interpretation of the passage. They explore the urban setting as it affects the character; consider devices such as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language; and engage the text through apt and specific references. Although the essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear, precise, and effectively organized. 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 the author uses literary devices to establish Lutie Johnson's relationship to the urban setting. They provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to devices such as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than those in the 9–8 range, they present ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Generally, essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage but tend to be superficial or undeveloped in their treatment of how the author uses literary devices to characterize the relationship between Lutie Johnson and the urban setting. While containing some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how literary devices contribute to the relationship between character and setting may be slight, and support from the passage may be thin or tend toward summary or paraphrase. While these essays demonstrate adequate control of language, they may be marred by surface errors. They are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as essays in the 7–6 range.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; students may ignore Lutie Johnson or Petry's use of literary devices to establish Lutie's relationship to the setting. The essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Generally, essays scored a 3 exhibit less control over the elements of composition and may contain weaker or less-developed readings than those scored a 4.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of those in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. The essays may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays that are especially incompetent or incoherent are scored a 1.
- 0** These essays do no more than make a reference to the task.
- These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.