

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

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

In the following poem by Caribbean writer Derek Walcott, the speaker recalls a childhood experience of visiting an elderly woman storyteller. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, discuss the speaker's recollection and analyze how Walcott uses poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience.

XIV

With the frenzy of an old snake shedding its skin,
 the speckled road, scored with ruts, smelling of mold,
 twisted on itself and reentered the forest
 where the dasheen¹ leaves thicken and folk stories begin.
 5 Sunset would threaten us as we climbed closer
 to her house up the asphalt hill road, whose yam vines
 wrangled over gutters with the dark reek of moss,
 the shutters closing like the eyelids of that mimosa²
 called Ti-Marie; then—lucent as paper lanterns,
 10 lamplight glowed through the ribs, house after house—
 there was her own lamp at the black twist of the path.
 There's childhood, and there's childhood's aftermath.
 She began to remember at the minute of the fireflies,
 to the sound of pipe water banging in kerosene tins,
 15 stories she told to my brother and myself.
 Her leaves were the libraries of the Caribbean.
 The luck that was ours, those fragrant origins!
 Her head was magnificent, Sidone. In the gully of her voice
 shadows stood up and walked, her voice travels my shelves.
 20 She was the lamplight in the stare of two mesmerized boys
 still joined in one shadow, indivisible twins.

¹ dasheen: tropical plant with large leaves

² mimosa: tropical plant whose leaves close or droop when touched or shaken

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Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from the opening of *The Beet Queen*, a 1986 novel by Louise Erdrich. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children. You may wish to consider such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view.

Unfortunately, we do not have permission to reproduce the excerpt from Louise Erdrich's *The Beet Queen* on this website.

The excerpt consists of the first six paragraphs of the novel.

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

(Derek Walcott, "XIV")

The score should reflect the quality of the essay as a whole — its content, style, and mechanics. **Reward the students for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one 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 discussion of the speaker's recollection and a persuasive analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience. These essays offer a range of interpretations; they provide a convincing discussion of the recollection and a convincing analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience. They demonstrate consistent and effective control over the elements of composition in language appropriate to the analysis of poetry. Their textual references are apt and specific. Though they may not be error-free, these essays are perceptive in their analysis and demonstrate writing that is clear and sophisticated, and in the case of a 9 essay, especially persuasive.

7–6 These essays offer a reasonable discussion of the speaker's recollection and a reasonable analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience. They are less thorough or less precise in their discussion of the recollection and Walcott's use of poetic devices. Their analysis of the relationship among the recollection, the devices, and the significance of the experience is less convincing. These essays demonstrate the student's ability to express ideas clearly, making references to the text, although they do not exhibit the same level of effective writing as the 9–8 papers. 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 discussion of the speaker's recollection and a plausible analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience, but they tend to be superficial in their discussion and analysis. They often rely on paraphrase, which may contain some analysis, implicit or explicit. Their discussion of the speaker's recollection or the analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices may be vague, formulaic, or minimally supported by references to the text. There may be minor misinterpretations of the poem. These essays demonstrate some control of language, but they may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7–6 essays.

4–3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the poem. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant, or it may ignore the speaker's recollection or the analysis of Walcott's use of poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience. Evidence from the poem may be slight or misconstrued, or the essays may rely on paraphrase only. The writing often demonstrates a lack of control over the conventions of composition: inadequate development of ideas, accumulation of errors, or a focus that is unclear, inconsistent, or repetitive. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

2–1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the student's assertions are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the poem. These essays may contain serious errors in grammar and mechanics. They may offer a complete misreading or be unacceptably brief. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the poem.

0 These essays give a response that is completely off topic or inadequate; there may be some mark or a drawing or a brief reference to the task.

— These essays are entirely blank.