

1999

The College Board

Advanced Placement Examination

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

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

Read the following two passages about Florida's Okefenokee Swamp carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the distinctive style of each passage reveals the purpose of its writer.

Passage 1

Okefenokee Swamp, primitive swamp and wildlife refuge in southeastern Georgia and northern Florida, is a shallow, saucer-shaped depression approximately 25 mi wide and 40 mi long and covers an area of more than 600 sq mi. Lying about 50 mi inland from the Atlantic Coast, the swamp is bounded on the east by the low, sandy Trail Ridge, which prevents direct drainage into the Atlantic. The swamp is partially drained southward into the Atlantic by the Suwannee and St. Mary's rivers. The Okefenokee Swamp includes low, sandy ridges, wet grassy savannas, small islands (called hummocks) surrounded by marshes, and extensive "prairies," or dark water areas covered by undergrowth and trees. Vegetation is dense in the swamp and includes giant tupelo and bald cypress trees festooned with Spanish moss, brush, and vines: where sandy soil is above the water, pine trees predominate. Meandering channels of open water form an intricate maze. Exotic flowers, among them floating hearts, lilies, and rare orchids, abound. The swamp is populated with diverse and abundant wildlife, with about 175 species of birds and at least 40 species of mammals, which include raccoons, black bear, white-tail deer, bobcats, fox, and otter. Alligators are also present.

(1988)

Passage 2

Vast and primeval, unfathomable, unconquerable, bastion of cottonmouth, rattlesnake and leech, mother of vegetation, father of mosquito, soul of silt, the Okefenokee is the swamp archetypal, the swamp of legend, of racial memory, of Hollywood. It gives birth to two rivers, the St. Mary's and the Suwannee, fanning out over 430,000 leaf-choked acres, every last one as sodden as a sponge. Four hundred and thirty thousand acres of stinging, biting and boring insects, of maiden cane and gum and cypress, of palmetto, slash pine and peat, of muck, mud, slime and ooze. Things fester here, things cook down, decompose, deliquesce. The swamp is home to two hundred and twenty-five species of birds, forty-three of mammals, fifty-eight of reptiles, thirty-two of amphibians and thirty-four of fish—all variously equipped with beaks, talons, claws, teeth, stingers and fangs—not to mention the seething galaxies of gnats and deerflies and no-see-ums, the ticks, mites, hookworms and paramecia that exist only to compound the misery of life. There are alligators here, bears, puma, bobcats and bowfin, there are cooters and snappers, opossum, coon and gar. They feed on one another, in the sludge and muck and on the floating mats of peat they bury eggs, they scratch and stink and sniff at themselves, caterwauling and screeching through every minute of every day and night till the place reverberates like some hellish zoo.

(1990)

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1999 ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Question 2

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

The passage below (on this page and on the following page) is from the opening of an essay, “On Seeing England for the First Time,” by Jamaica Kincaid. Kincaid grew up on the Caribbean island of Antigua before it became independent from England in 1981. Read the entire passage carefully. Then write an essay analyzing the rhetorical strategies Kincaid employs to convey her attitude toward England.

Unfortunately, we have been denied permission to reprint online the passage that accompanies Question 2 of the 1999 AP English Language free-response question. The essay "On Seeing England for the First Time" can be found in *Best American Essays, 1992*, edited by Susan Sontag and published by Ticknor and Fields, 1992.

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AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1999 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

At the AP Reading, faculty consultants were given the following **General Directions**:

- The score you assign each essay should reflect your judgment of its quality as a whole.
- Reward writers for what they do well in response to the question.
- Remember that students had 40 minutes to read and write. The essays should thus be thought of as comparable to essays produced in final exams, not judged by standards appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments.
- All essays, even those scored 8 and 9, are likely to exhibit occasional flaws in analysis or in prose style and mechanics; such lapses should enter into your holistic judgment of the essay's quality.
- In no case should an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than 2.

- 9:** Essays earning a score of 9 meet all the criteria for 8 papers and in addition are especially full or apt in their analysis or demonstrate particularly impressive stylistic control.
- 8:** Essays earning a score of 8 effectively analyze how the differing styles of the two descriptions reveal each writer's purpose. They refer to the texts, directly or indirectly, assessing how selection and organization of detail, tone, point of view, syntax, and diction convey each writer's aim. Their prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.
- 7:** Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but provide more complex analysis or demonstrate more mature prose style.
- 6:** Essays earning a score of 6 clearly understand the relationship between stylistic choice and purpose and adequately analyze that relationship. Referring to the texts, directly or indirectly, these essays compare the writers' use of specific stylistic elements in revealing purpose. A few lapses in diction or syntax may be present, but generally the prose of 6 essays demonstrates control of ideas and writing.
- 5:** Essays earning a score of 5 analyze stylistic techniques, but their discussion of varying styles and purposes in the two passages is limited. They may treat techniques of style in a superficial way or develop ideas about purpose inconsistently. A few lapses in diction or syntax may be present, but usually the prose in 5 essays conveys the writers' ideas.
- 4:** Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately respond to the question's tasks. They may misrepresent or merely touch on purpose, analyze stylistic elements inaccurately, or identify techniques without much development or understanding. The prose of 4 essays may convey the writers' ideas but may suggest immature control over organization, diction, or syntax.
- 3:** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but are less perceptive about how the techniques of style convey varying purposes or less consistent in controlling elements of writing.
- 2:** Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in analyzing the stylistic elements that convey varying purposes in the two passages. They may lack development or substitute simpler tasks by summarizing passages or simply listing stylistic elements. They may misunderstand or ignore purpose. The prose of 2 papers often reveals consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.
- 1:** Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but in addition are especially simplistic in their ideas or weak in their control of language.
- 0:** Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.
- Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.