

2017 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.)

The passage below is an excerpt from *Empire of Illusion* by Chris Hedges. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you develop a position on Hedges' argument that “the most essential skill . . . is artifice.” Use appropriate, specific evidence to illustrate and develop your position.

The most essential skill in political theater and a consumer culture is artifice. Political leaders, who use the tools of mass propaganda to create a sense of faux intimacy with citizens, no longer need to be competent, sincere, or honest. They need only to appear to have these qualities. Most of all they need a story, a personal narrative. The reality of the narrative is irrelevant. It can be completely at odds with the facts. The consistency and emotional appeal of the story are paramount. Those who are best at deception succeed. Those who have not mastered the art of entertainment, who fail to create a narrative or do not have one fashioned for them by their handlers, are ignored. They become “unreal.”

An image-based culture communicates through narratives, pictures, and pseudo-drama.

STOP

END OF EXAM

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Question 3

General Directions: This scoring guide is designed so that the same performance expectations are applied to all student responses. It will be useful for most of the essays, but if it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, assistance should be sought from the Table Leader. The Table Leader should always be shown books that seem to have no response or that contain responses that seem unrelated to the question. A score of 0 or — should not be assigned without this consultation.

The essay's score should reflect an evaluation of the essay as a whole. Students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged according to standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. The essay should be evaluated as a draft, and students should be rewarded for what they do well. The evaluation should focus on the evidence and explanations that the student uses to support the response; students should not be penalized for taking a particular perspective.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should a score higher than a 2 be given to an essay with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with understanding of meaning.

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 particularly impressive in their control of language.

8 – Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** develop a position on Hedges' argument that "the most essential skill . . . is artifice." The evidence and explanations appropriately and convincingly support the writer's position, and the argument* is especially coherent and well developed. 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 a more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

6 – Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** develop a position on Hedges' argument that "the most essential skill . . . is artifice." The evidence and explanations appropriately and sufficiently support the writer's position, and the argument is coherent and adequately developed. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 – Essays earning a score of 5 develop a position on Hedges' argument that "the most essential skill . . . is artifice." The evidence and explanations used to support that position may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas.

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Question 3 (continued)

4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** develop a position on Hedges' argument that "the most essential skill . . . is artifice." The evidence and explanations used may inappropriately, insufficiently, or unconvincingly support the writer's position. The argument may have lapses in coherence or be inadequately developed. The prose generally conveys the student'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 developing a position on Hedges' argument that "the most essential skill . . . is artifice." The essays may show less maturity in their control of writing.

2 – Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in developing a position on Hedges' argument that "the most essential skill . . . is artifice." The student may misunderstand the prompt or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated or inaccurate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of coherence and control.

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

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, argument means asserting a claim justified by evidence and/or reasoning.