

2006 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 passage is an excerpt from *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a play by Oscar Wilde, produced in 1892. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society.

Line DUCHESS OF BERWICK (*shaking hands*). Dear
Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember
Agatha,¹ don't you? How do you do, Lord
Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you
5 are far too wicked.

LORD DARLINGTON. Don't say that, Duchess.
As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there
are lots of people who say I have never really done
anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of
10 course they only say it behind my back.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Isn't he dreadful?
Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you don't
believe a word he says. No, no tea, thank you, dear.
(*Sits on sofa.*) We have just had tea at Lady Markby's.
15 Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at
all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha
is looking forward so much to your ball tonight, dear
Margaret.

LADY WINDERMERE (*seated*). Oh, you musn't
20 think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a
dance in honour of my birthday. A small and early.

LORD DARLINGTON (*standing*). Very small,
very early, and very select, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Of course it's going
25 to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about
your house. It is really one of the few houses in
London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel
perfectly secure about dear Berwick. I don't know
what society is coming to. The most dreadful people
30 seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my
parties—the men get quite furious if one doesn't
ask them. Really, some one should make a stand
against it.

LADY WINDERMERE. I will, Duchess. I will
35 have no one in my house about whom there is any
scandal.

LORD DARLINGTON. Oh, don't say that, Lady
Windermere. I should never be admitted. (*Sitting.*)

¹ the Duchess's daughter

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Oh, men don't matter.
40 With women it is different. We're good. Some of us
are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed
into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our
existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time,
just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right
45 to do so.

LORD DARLINGTON. It's a curious thing,
Duchess, about the game of marriage—a game, by the
way, that is going out of fashion—the wives hold all
the honours² and invariably lose the odd trick.³

50 DUCHESS OF BERWICK. The odd trick? Is that
the husband, Lord Darlington?

LORD DARLINGTON. It would be rather a good
name for the modern husband.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear Lord Darlington,
55 how thoroughly depraved you are!

LADY WINDERMERE. Lord Darlington is trivial.

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, don't say that, Lady
Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. Why do you *talk* so
60 trivially about life, then?

LORD DARLINGTON. Because I think that life
is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously
about it.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. What does he mean?
65 Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington,
just explain to me what you really mean.

LORD DARLINGTON. I think I had better not,
Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found
out. Good-bye! (*Shakes hands with DUCHESS.*) And
70 now—Lady Windermere, good-bye. I may come
tonight, mayn't I? Do let me come.

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes, certainly. But you
are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

LORD DARLINGTON (*smiling*). Ah! you are
75 beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to
reform any one, Lady Windermere. (*Bows and exit.*)

² high cards

³ round of a card game

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 3

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

Many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature. For example, the country may be a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance. Choose a novel or play in which such a setting plays a significant role. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the country setting functions in the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

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

Adam Bede
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
All the Pretty Horses
Anna Karenina
As I Lay Dying
As You Like It
The Bear
Black Boy
Bless Me, Ultima
The Bonesetter's Daughter
Ceremony
The Cherry Orchard
David Copperfield
Don Quixote
East of Eden
Ethan Frome
For Whom the Bell Tolls
Frankenstein

The Grapes of Wrath
House Made of Dawn
King Lear
Madame Bovary
Mansfield Park
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Obasan
O Pioneers!
Out of Africa
The Scarlet Letter
Tess of the D'Urbervilles
Their Eyes Were Watching God
A Thousand Acres
Tom Jones
The Vicar of Wakefield
The Way We Live Now
The Winter's Tale
Wuthering Heights

STOP

END OF EXAM

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2006 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

(Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*)

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 how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society. The students make a strong case for their interpretation of character and situation, developing the relationship between language and values. The students consider literary and dramatic elements such as characterization, diction, and tone, engaging the text through apt and specific references. Although these 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 essays scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society. The students provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to literary and dramatic elements such as characterization, diction, and tone. Although these essays may not be error-free and may be less perceptive or less convincing than 9–8 essays, the students present their 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 playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society. While exhibiting some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how literary elements contribute to the author's purpose may be slight, and support from the passage may be thin or tend toward paraphrase. While these students demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. Generally, essays scored a 5 lack the more effective organization and the more sustained development characteristic of 7–6 papers.
- 4–3** These essays offer a less than thorough understanding of the task or a less than adequate treatment of how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society. Often relying on summary or paraphrase, the students may fail to articulate a convincing basis for understanding the relationship between language and the values of the characters and the nature of their society. They may misread the passage or may present an unfocused or repetitive reading characterized by an absence of textual support or an accumulation of errors. Generally, essays scored a 4 exhibit better control over the elements of composition than those scored a 3.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although an attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the students' ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a 1 are especially inept or incoherent.
- 0** These essays make no more than a reference to the task.
- These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.