

2008 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 2

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

In the following passage from *The Great Influenza*, an account of the 1918 flu epidemic, author John M. Barry writes about scientists and their research. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Barry uses rhetorical strategies to characterize scientific research.

Certainty creates strength. Certainty gives one something upon which to lean. Uncertainty creates weakness. Uncertainty makes one tentative if not Line 5 fearful, and tentative steps, even when in the right direction, may not overcome significant obstacles.

To be a scientist requires not only intelligence and curiosity, but passion, patience, creativity, self-sufficiency, and courage. It is not the courage to venture into the unknown. It is the courage to accept—indeed, embrace—uncertainty. For as Line 10 Claude Bernard, the great French physiologist of the nineteenth century, said, “Science teaches us to doubt.”

A scientist must accept the fact that all his or her Line 15 work, even beliefs, may break apart upon the sharp edge of a single laboratory finding. And just as Einstein refused to accept his own theory until his predictions were tested, one must seek out such findings. Ultimately a scientist has nothing to believe in but the process of inquiry. To move forcefully and aggressively even while uncertain requires a confidence and strength deeper than physical courage.

All real scientists exist on the frontier. Even the Line 20 least ambitious among them deal with the unknown, if only one step beyond the known. The best among them move deep into a wilderness region where they know almost nothing, where the very tools and techniques needed to clear the wilderness, to bring order to it, do not exist. There they probe in a Line 25 disciplined way. There a single step can take them through the looking glass into a world that seems entirely different, and if they are at least partly correct their probing acts like a crystal to precipitate an order out of chaos, to create form, structure, and direction. Line 30 A single step can also take one off a cliff.

In the wilderness the scientist must create . . . everything. It is grunt work, tedious work that begins with figuring out what tools one needs and then making them. A shovel can dig up dirt but Line 40 cannot penetrate rock. Would a pick be best, or would dynamite be better—or would dynamite be too indiscriminately destructive? If the rock is impenetrable, if dynamite would destroy what one is looking for, is there another way of getting information about what the rock holds? There is a stream passing over the rock. Would analyzing the water after it passes over the rock reveal anything useful? How would one analyze it?

Ultimately, if the researcher succeeds, a flood Line 45 of colleagues will pave roads over the path laid, and those roads will be orderly and straight, taking an investigator in minutes to a place the pioneer spent months or years looking for. And the perfect tool will be available for purchase, just as laboratory mice can now be ordered from supply houses.

Not all scientific investigators can deal comfortably with uncertainty, and those who can may not be creative enough to understand and design the experiments that will illuminate a subject—to know Line 50 both where and how to look. Others may lack the confidence to persist. Experiments do not simply work. Regardless of design and preparation, experiments—especially at the beginning, when one proceeds by intelligent guesswork—rarely yield the Line 55 results desired. An investigator must make them work. The less known, the more one has to manipulate and even force experiments to yield an answer.

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Question 3

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

For years corporations have sponsored high school sports. Their ads are found on the outfield fence at baseball parks or on the walls of the gymnasium, the football stadium, or even the locker room. Corporate logos are even found on players' uniforms. But some schools have moved beyond corporate sponsorship of sports to allowing “corporate partners” to place their names and ads on all kinds of school facilities—libraries, music rooms, cafeterias. Some schools accept money to require students to watch Channel One, a news program that includes advertising. And schools often negotiate exclusive contracts with soft drink or clothing companies.

Some people argue that corporate partnerships are a necessity for cash-strapped schools. Others argue that schools should provide an environment free from ads and corporate influence. Using appropriate evidence, write an essay in which you evaluate the pros and cons of corporate sponsorship for schools and indicate why you find one position more persuasive than the other.

STOP

END OF EXAM

AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION 2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

The score should reflect a judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write; therefore, the essay is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards that are appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

- 9** Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 essays and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their explanation or demonstrate particularly impressive control of language.

8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** analyze^{*} how Barry uses rhetorical strategies to characterize scientific research. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

- 7** Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but provide a more complete explanation or demonstrate a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** analyze how Barry uses rhetorical strategies to characterize scientific research. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5** Essays earning a score of 5 analyze how Barry uses rhetorical strategies to characterize scientific research. These essays may, however, provide uneven, inconsistent, or limited explanations. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas.

4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** analyze how Barry uses rhetorical strategies to characterize scientific research. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.

- 3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in analyzing the strategies Barry uses to characterize scientific research. The essays may show less control of writing.

* For the purposes of scoring, analysis refers to identifying features of a text and explaining how the author uses these to achieve a particular effect or purpose.

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Question 2 (continued)

2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in analyzing how Barry uses rhetorical strategies to characterize scientific research. These essays may misunderstand the prompt; fail to analyze the strategies Barry uses to characterize scientific research; or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing.

- 1** Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, and/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.