

**2016 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION  
SECTION II  
Total Time—2 hours, 15 minutes**

**Question 1**

**Suggested reading and writing time—55 minutes.**

**It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading the question, analyzing and evaluating the sources, and 40 minutes writing your response.**

**Note: You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over.**

(This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

Over the past several decades, the English language has become increasingly globalized, and it is now seen by many as the dominant language in international finance, science, and politics. Concurrent with the worldwide spread of English is the decline of foreign language learning in English-speaking countries, where monolingualism—the use of a single language—remains the norm.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that argues a clear position on whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today.

Your argument should be the focus of your essay. Use the sources to develop your argument and explain the reasoning for it. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (Berman)

Source B (Thomas)

Source C (Erard)

Source D (Oaks)

Source E (table)

Source F (Cohen)

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### Source A

Berman, Russell A. “Foreign Language for Foreign Policy?” *Inside Higher Ed.* Inside Higher Ed, 23 Nov. 2010. Web. 8 May 2013.

The following is excerpted from an article on a Web site devoted to higher education.

These are troubled times for language programs in the United States, which have been battered by irresponsible cutbacks at all levels. Despite the chatter about globalization and multilateralism that has dominated public discourse in recent years, leaders in government and policy circles continue to live in a bubble of their own making, imagining that we can be global while refusing to learn the languages or learn about the cultures of the rest of the world. So it was surely encouraging that Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations and a fixture of the foreign policy establishment, agreed to deliver the keynote address at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Convention in Boston on November 19.

Haass is a distinguished author, Oberlin- and Oxford-educated, and an influential voice in American debates. The good news is that in his talk, “Language as a Gateway to Global Communities,” Haass expressed strong support for increased foreign language learning opportunities. He recognized the important work that language instructors undertake as well as the crucial connection between language and culture: language learning is not just technical mastery of grammar but rather, in his words, a “gateway” to a thorough understanding of other societies. . . .

Haass claims that in an era of tight budgets, we need convincing arguments to rally support for languages. Of course that’s true, but—and this is the bad news—despite his support for language as a gateway to other cultures, he countenances only a narrowly instrumental defense for foreign language learning, limited to two rationales: national security and global economy. At the risk of schematizing his account too severely, this means: more Arabic for national security and more Mandarin, Hindi, and, en passant, Korean for the economy. It appears that in his view the only compelling arguments for language-learning involve equipping individual Americans to be better vehicles of national interest as defined by Washington. In fact, at a revealing moment in the talk, Haass boiled his own position down to a neat choice: Fallujah or Firenze. We need more Arabic to do better in Fallujah, i.e., so we could have been more effective in the Iraq War (or could be in the next one?), and we need less Italian because Italy (to his mind) is a place that is only about culture.

In this argument, Italian—like other European languages—is a luxury. There was no mention of French as a global language, with its crucial presence in Africa and North America. Haass even seems to regard Spanish as just one more European language, except perhaps that it might be useful to manage instability in Mexico. Such arguments that reduce language learning to foreign policy objectives get too simple too quickly. And they run the risk of destroying the same foreign language learning agenda they claim to defend. Language learning in Haass’s view ultimately becomes just a boot camp for our students to be better soldiers, more efficient in carrying out the projects of the foreign policy establishment. That program stands in stark contrast to a vision of language learning as part of an education of citizens who can think for themselves.

Haass’s account deserves attention: he is influential and thoughtful, and he is by no means alone in reducing the rationale for foreign language learning solely to national foreign policy needs. . . . Yet even on his own instrumental terms, Haass seemed to get it wrong. If language learning were primarily about plugging into large economies more successfully, then we should be offering more Japanese and German (still two very big economies after all), but they barely showed up on his map.

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The much more important issue involves getting beyond instrumental thinking altogether, at least in the educational sphere. Second language acquisition is a key component of education because it builds student ability in language as such. Students who do well in a second language do better in their first language. With the core language skills—abilities to speak and to listen, to read and to write—come higher-order capacities: to interpret and understand, to recognize cultural difference, and, yes, to appreciate traditions, including one’s own. Language learning is not just an instrumental skill, any more than one’s writing ability is merely about learning to type on a keyboard. On the contrary, through language we become better thinkers, and that’s what education is about, at least outside Washington.

**Source B**

Thomas, David. "Why Do the English Need to Speak a Foreign Language When Foreigners All Speak English?" *MailOnline* [UK]. Associated Newspapers Ltd, 23 Jan. 2012. Web. 8 May 2013.

The following is excerpted from an online article in a British newspaper.

Department for Education figures show that fewer and fewer of us are learning a foreign language, while more and more foreigners are becoming multi-lingual. This, say distraught commentators, will condemn us pathetic Little Englanders to a life of dismal isolation while our educated, sophisticated, Euro-competitors chat away to foreign customers and steal all our business as a result.

In fact, I think those pupils who don't learn other languages are making an entirely sensible decision. Learning foreign languages is a pleasant form of intellectual self-improvement: a genteel indulgence like learning to embroider or play the violin. A bit of French or Spanish comes in handy on holiday if you're the sort of person who likes to reassure the natives that you're more sophisticated than the rest of the tourist herd. But there's absolutely no need to learn any one particular language unless you've got a specific professional use for it.

Consider the maths. There are roughly 6,900 living languages in the world. Europe alone has 234 languages spoken on a daily basis. So even if I was fluent in all the languages I've ever even begun to tackle, I'd only be able to speak to a minority of my fellow-Europeans in their mother tongues. And that's before I'd so much as set foot in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

The planet's most common first language is Mandarin Chinese, which has around 850 million speakers. Clearly, anyone seeking to do business in the massive Chinese market would do well to brush up on their Mandarin, although they might need a bit of help with those hundreds of millions of Chinese whose preferred dialect is Cantonese.

The only problem is that Mandarin is not spoken by anyone who is not Chinese, so it's not much use in that equally significant 21st century powerhouse, India. Nor does learning one of the many languages used on the sub-Continent help one communicate with Arab or Turkish or Swahili-speakers.

There is, however, one language that does perform the magic trick of uniting the entire globe. If you ever go, as I have done, to one of the horrendous international junkets which film studios hold to promote their latest blockbusters, you'll encounter a single extraordinary language that, say, the Brazilian, Swedish, Japanese and Italian reporters use both to chat with one another and question the American stars.

This is the language of science, commerce, global politics, aviation, popular music and, above all, the internet. It's the language that 85 per cent of all Europeans learn as their second language; the language that has become the default tongue of the EU; the language that President Sarkozy of France uses with Chancellor Merkel of Germany when plotting how to stitch up the British.

This magical language is English. It unites the whole world in the way no other language can. It's arguably the major reason why our little island has such a disproportionately massive influence on global culture: from Shakespeare to Harry Potter, from James Bond to the Beatles.

All those foreigners who are so admirably learning another language are learning the one we already know. So our school pupils don't need to learn any foreign tongues. They might, of course, do well to become much, much better at speaking, writing, spelling and generally using English correctly. But that's another argument altogether.

Daily Mail.

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### **Source C**

Erard, Michael. “Are We Really Monolingual?”  
*New York Times*. New York Times, 14 Jan. 2012.  
Web. 8 May 2013.

Unfortunately, we do not have the permission  
to reproduce “Are We Really Monolingual?”  
by Michael Erard on this website.

The article was published in the *New York Times*.

**Source D**

Oaks, Ursula. “Foreign-Language Learning: What the United States Is Missing Out On.” *Blog.NAFSA.org*. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 20 April 2010. Web. 8 May 2013.

*The following is excerpted from a Weblog maintained by NAFSA, a leading professional association based in the United States and dedicated to international education.*

It seemed a notably strange coincidence that the day after the *Chronicle of Higher Education*’s fascinating article about foreign-language acquisition and its remarkable contributions to the human mind and to society, *Inside Higher Ed* reported that George Washington University’s arts and sciences faculty had voted by an “overwhelming” margin not only to remove its foreign languages and cultures course requirement, but also to set up the new requirements in such a way that introductory foreign language courses can no longer count toward fulfilling any degree requirement in the college. At the same time, GW’s curricular reform is apparently “designed to promote student learning in areas such as global perspectives and oral communications.”

One wonders how “global perspectives” can happen without foreign language. But Catherine Porter (a former president of the Modern Language Association), writing in the *Chronicle*, puts it rather more bluntly. The lack of foreign-language learning in our society, she states, is “a devastating waste of potential.” Students who learn languages at an early age “consistently display enhanced cognitive abilities relative to their monolingual peers.” This isn’t about being able to impress their parents’ friends by piping up in Chinese at the dinner table—the research is showing that these kids can *think* better. Porter writes: “Demands that the language-learning process makes on the brain . . . make the brain more flexible and incite it to discover new patterns—and thus to create and maintain more circuits.”

But there’s so much more. Porter points out, as many others have, that in diplomatic, military, professional and commercial contexts, being monolingual is a significant handicap. In short, making the United States a more multilingual society would carry with it untold benefits: we would be more effective in global affairs, more comfortable in multicultural environments, and more nimble-minded and productive in daily life.

One of Porter’s most interesting observations, to me, was about how multilingualism enhances “brain fitness.” My own journey in languages is something for which I cannot claim any real foresight or deliberate intention, but by the age of 16, I spoke English, Hungarian, and French fluently. I’ve managed, through travel and personal and family connections, to maintain all three. One thing I know for sure is that when I get on the phone with my mother and talk to her in Hungarian for 20 minutes, or if I have to type out an email to a friend in Paris, afterwards I feel like I’ve had a mental jog on the treadmill: strangely energized, brain-stretched, more ready for any challenge, whether it’s cooking a new dish or drafting an op-ed. And the connective cultural tissue created by deep immersion in another language cannot be overstated. When I went to Hungary during grad school to research my thesis, I figured: no problem, it’s my native tongue. Yes, but I first learned it when I was a toddler, and never since then. The amount of preparation I had to do to be sure I didn’t miss nuance or cultural cues and didn’t draw conclusions based on erroneous translation, was significant, but well worth it. Time and again, I’ve realized how language can transform our interactions with one another. Porter’s article is a wake-up call that neglecting foreign-language learning is hurting our country in more ways than we realize.

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## 2016 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### Source E

“Population 5 Years and Older Who Spoke a Language Other Than English at Home by Language Group and English-Speaking Ability: 2007.” Table in “Language Use in the United States: 2007.” *United States Census Bureau*. United States Census Bureau, April 2010. Web. 8 May 2013.

*The following is adapted from a table in a report from the 2007 American Community Survey (United States Census Bureau) on language use in the United States.*

### **Population 5 Years and Older Who Spoke a Language Other Than English at Home by Language Group and English-Speaking Ability: 2007**

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Characteristic	Total people	English-speaking ability			
		Very well	Well	Not well	Not at all
<b>NUMBER</b>					
<b>Population 5 years and older</b>	<b>280,950,438</b>	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Spoke only English at home	225,505,953	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Spoke a language other than English at home	55,444,485	30,975,474	10,962,722	9,011,298	4,494,991
<b>Spoke a language other than English at home</b>	<b>55,444,485</b>	<b>30,975,474</b>	<b>10,962,722</b>	<b>9,011,298</b>	<b>4,494,991</b>
Spanish or Spanish Creole	34,547,077	18,179,530	6,322,170	6,344,110	3,701,267
Other Indo-European languages	10,320,730	6,936,808	2,018,148	1,072,025	293,749
Asian and Pacific Island languages	8,316,426	4,274,794	2,176,180	1,412,264	453,188
Other languages	2,260,252	1,584,342	446,224	182,899	46,787

(X) Not applicable.

Note: Margins of error for all estimates can be found in Appendix Table 1 at <[www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/language/appendix.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/language/appendix.html)>. For more information on the ACS, see <[www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/)>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey.

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**Source F**

Cohen, Paul. “The Rise and Fall of the American Linguistic Empire.” *Dissent* 59.4 (2012): 20-21.  
Web. 10 Sept. 2013.

Unfortunately, we do not have the permission  
to reproduce “The Rise and Fall of the American  
Linguistic Empire” by Paul Cohen on this website.

The article was published in *Dissent* magazine.

# **AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION 2016 SCORING GUIDELINES**

## **Question 1**

The essay's score should reflect the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 15 minutes to read the sources and 40 minutes to write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards 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 lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into your holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should you give a score higher than a 2 to a paper with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with your understanding of meaning.

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**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 development, or impressive in their control of language.

### **8 – Effective**

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** argue a position on whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today. They develop their argument by effectively synthesizing\* at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and convincing. Their 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 more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

### **6 – Adequate**

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** argue a position on whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today. They develop their argument by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and sufficient. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

**5** – Essays earning a score of 5 argue a position on whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today. They develop their argument by synthesizing at least three sources, but how they use and explain sources may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The student's argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the student's position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. 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** argue a position on whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today. They develop their argument by synthesizing at least two sources, but the evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or unconvincing. The sources may dominate the student's attempts at development, the link between the argument and the sources may be weak, or the student may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify the sources. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

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## **Question 1 (continued)**

**3** – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in arguing a position on whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or their explanation or examples may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in their control of writing.

### **2 – Little Success**

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in arguing a position on whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. The student may misread the sources, fail to develop a position, or substitute a simpler task by merely summarizing or categorizing the sources or by merely responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

**1** – Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, weak in their control of writing, or do not allude to or cite even one source.

**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, synthesis means using sources to develop a position and citing them accurately.

## Sample 1A

The world is increasingly globalizing every day. Companies like Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and Uniqlo have spread from their original homes to countries halfway across the globe. In this age of globalization, people of different cultures who speak different languages come into contact frequently, but English speakers have lagged behind the rest of the world in terms of learning these other dialects to be able to interact with a wider swath of people. Monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage in today's world because business practices benefit those who speak multiple languages, they miss out on the culture the rest of the world has to offer, and they don't benefit from the educational benefits that learning a language offers.

As the globe becomes incredibly intertwined, English speakers who can communicate with those who speak other languages are at a great advantage in their professional lives. Richard Haass, the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, explained that America needs more practical bilingual speakers in languages beneficial to American aims like Mandarin, Hindi, Korean, and Arabic. These languages help America extend its military and economic influence and benefit the speaker themselves by both increasing employability and the strength of the American industries they work for. (Source A) The benefits of being multilingual for American businesspeople are not confined, however, to foreign trade alone. America itself is becoming, in a commercial sense, more heterogeneous in terms of language and being multilingual can help businesspeople extend their influence. Writer Paul Cohen explained, "the number of native Spanish speakers in the United States has doubled since 1990, and is spoken at home by 37 million people." Cohen also noted the great resume booster speaking Spanish is in California or Miami. The same can be said about Chinese in lower Manhattan or Korean in San Francisco's K-Town. (Source F)

Being multilingual opens up opportunities in the business world for Americans abroad and at home. Being multilingual not only helps English speakers in the business world, but it also helps them absorb all the world has to offer culturally. Author Cohen also noted the vast multilingualism of the world in a cultural sense. Outside of the major cities of the world, English will get you nowhere, and inside of them, it will only get you so far. For all the culture America and Britain have to offer, English-only speakers miss out on Indian films from the famous Bollywood and Asian cultures in Japan and China. While some English is spoken in these countries, Cohen notes, the cultural benefits can only be gained by those who understand the native tongue. (Source F) While journalist David Thomas believes that English-only speakers are just fine how they are, a logical fallacy exposes a counterargument toward why multilingualism is so beneficial. Thomas notes that there are 6,900 living languages in the world and "Europe alone has 234, spoken on a daily basis." This is true, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't learn any of them. Even if you'd only be able to "speak to a minority of your fellow Europeans in their native languages, that minority's insight into their culture is priceless." (Source B) Being multilingual opens the door to cultural gains otherwise impossible, especially for native English speakers.

Learning languages is also beneficial to the learner in that the art of learning itself has immense educational, personal, and health positives. Educational writer Rasel V. Borman noted that learning a second language strengthens one's ability in their first. Second language acquisition allows one to gain attributes like syntax, grammar, and root analysis that aid in educational fields beyond the foreign language. (Source A) Ursula Daks, a trilingual American, explained that writing in her acquired French or speaking in her familial Hungarian provided a workout for the brain, that "afterwards I feel like I've had a mental jog on the treadmill." (Source D) This educational and mental benefit comes from the learning and utilizing of a second or third language, proving another benefit of multilingualism for Americans.

As our globe creates a spider web of connections in the fields of business, education, and even family, being multilingual is becoming more and more essential. While some rely on English in foreign lands, this reliance leads to a dropping of vital business, cultural, and educational benefits. Multilingualism helps Americans of all backgrounds in all places, benefiting America itself.

## Sample 1B

In schools, many students are taught a foreign language starting in middle school. However, due to budget cuts and heated debates, there is a decline of foreign language learning in English-speaking countries. Contrary to those who believe that English is the dominant language to unify the world, it is imperative for English speakers to learn a foreign language. In the loss of learning another language, English-speaking countries lose the opportunity to improve academic performance, increase interactions with people across the world, and reap economic and political benefits. As a result of not encouraging or providing programs to learn a foreign language, English-speaking countries are remaining stagnant in a global world that is rapidly advancing towards improvement.

Students gain valuable language skills and cognitive abilities by learning a second language. Students can only benefit from learning a foreign language; not only do students' reading, writing, and listening skills improve, but they are also able to "come to higher order capacities: to interpret and understand." (Doc A)

In education and learning, the mission of a student is not to regurgitate facts and information that is taught. The mission of the student is to understand and analyze the information that is given to them to further their thinking past the classroom and to draw their own conclusions. Through learning a second language, schools are able to promote independent thinking by giving students the skills and abilities to think beyond the classroom setting. It gives the students a connection to the world that is outside of their native country. Also, it has been found that the language learning process "makes the brain more flexible and incites it to discover new patterns." (Doc) The data demonstrates that learning another language can also help the student in other aspects of their life. As a result of exercising the brain, the student is able to think more effectively, which can benefit them throughout their whole lives.

In addition, being multilingual can decrease the language barrier between people and promote more understanding and tolerance of other cultures. Although critics might state that English is used as a standard language among people, for example, English is used by the EU to communicate with all its members (Doc B), this perspective is highly narrow-minded and arrogant. The expectation that others will speak English is illogical because not everyone has been taught English. English is not a universal language and is also not the language with the most speakers. By taking the effort to learn another language, it broadens the probability of being able to communicate with another person. As a result of understanding a language, an individual will not miss nuances or cultural cues (Doc C) and draw conclusions based on erroneous translation. The ability to prevent offense or misfortune is a valuable skill. Also, by learning the native language when immersing in another country helps to be more tolerant. Instead of having a translator or potentially offending others, the speaker is able to have a firsthand experience of what the people and culture offer.

In a growing multilingual world, many English-speaking nations are missing out on economic and political benefits that can be gained by learning a foreign language. In nations such as the United States, multiple languages other than English are commonly used. It is to the advantage of companies and businesses to have multilingual employees. In America, there are 37 million people who speak Spanish, and Univision, which caters to Spanish speakers, has the fifth-largest audience in the country. (Doc D) The data demonstrates the growing presence and market of non-English speakers in America. Marketers and businesses can no longer only cater to English speakers and must be inclusive towards other languages to be successful in a competitive market. Also, in foreign affairs, English speakers are at a disadvantage. Language can be used as a method to protect national security and be effective in dealing with global affairs. (Doc A) Learning the language when there are discussions occurring with a foreign nation can help make compelling arguments. Also, by learning the language of the nation that a

country is involved in a war with can make winning more effective.

In conclusion, it is to the benefit of English speakers to learn a second language. There are numerous benefits that come with learning another language. Students greatly improve their academics, individuals are able to interact with more people, and foreign affairs can be more efficiently dealt with.

## Sample 1C

With the vast numbers of immigrants coming into the U.S., multiple languages need to be known to communicate. Monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage because they fail to appreciate traditions, limit global activity, and hurt their overall intelligence.

All languages encompass a specific culture that monolingual speakers fail to experience. By knowing another language, an individual can dive into a "cultural difference" that can impact their life. Taking in the world around them can deeply change how a person lives and goes through the day. They may find a part of them that is missing through another culture. However, one cannot indulge in another culture without embracing the language. Moreover, knowing other languages and cultures can reassure an individual that their own culture is best for them. An individual can "appreciate traditions, including one's own" through other cultures. Not every culture is right for everyone, so learning another language can prove that the current culture is best. Language and culture go hand-in-hand: one cannot be experienced without the other (Berman).

The lack of knowing multiple languages will limit global activity due to a lack of communication. An industry can be severely hurt by having employees that are solely monolingual. Generally speaking, immigrants will take lower salary jobs compared to Americans. It is easier for bilingual industries to "speak to their employees" that speak another language, thus giving them a competitive advantage (Erard). Learning another language can be financially beneficial for companies to bring in employees that do not speak English. Relations between countries can be a very serious matter and require a middle ground to be able to communicate. Multilingual societies are "more effective in global affairs" compared to monolingual societies (Oaks). Wars and international conflicts can be avoided by knowing another language and not miscommunicating.

Being multilingual enables an individual to be more intelligent. Practicing and maintaining another language causes the brain to work harder and become more efficient. The brain becomes "more flexible" and ready to "discover new patterns." The brain wants to learn more and by challenging it, the brain grows in intelligence. Furthermore, the brain becomes "ready for any challenge." The brain becomes smarter, faster, and wittier, making an individual's overall intelligence skyrocket (Oaks).

Monolingual societies are, in fact, at a disadvantage because they miss out on all the opportunities to better themselves and their country.

# **AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

## **2016 SCORING COMMENTARY**

### **Question 1**

#### **Overview**

As in years past, the 2016 “Synthesis Question” asked students to integrate supplied sources into their arguments regarding whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage in the world today. The skills necessary to do well on this question include not only the ability to persuade an audience to the students’ positions, but also to read, analyze, and integrate the supplied sources into the students’ arguments. As observed in last year’s Student Performance Q&A report, the skills necessary to do well with the question can be categorized as “1) comprehension of the prompt; 2) comprehension and critique of individual verbal and visual texts; 3) synthetic or ‘holistic’ comprehension of a multiperspectival inquiry — the ‘academic conversation’ represented by the sources collectively; 4) academic argumentation, the student’s own entry into the conversation; 5) acknowledgement and explanation of other sources’ contributions to the students’ argument.”

This year’s prompt began by acknowledging the global spread of the English language in various fields and disciplines that has occurred simultaneously with a decrease in the study of foreign languages in English-speaking countries. Instead of asking students why foreign language study might be valuable, the prompt took a different perspective, asking “whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today.” With the direction that the student’s “argument should be the focus of [the] essay,” the prompt made clear that students should not “merely summarize[e] the sources.” In fact, while Question 3 is termed the “Argument Question,” Question 1 is no less an argument question: the difference is that Question 1 provides sources that the students must synthesize into their support. Therefore, students must quote, paraphrase, or summarize the sources, but each of these should be used in service of providing support for the students’ arguments, or (as the prompt states) the sources should be used “to develop [the] argument and explain the reasoning for it.” With this direction, the prompt did not preclude the students’ use of support from their own experiences or knowledge, nor did the prompt encourage students to accept all the given sources as acceptable. In fact, the provided sources disagree and contradict one another; therefore, excelling students evaluated the quality of the sources as well as the logic used within them.

#### **Sample: 1A**

#### **Score: 8**

This essay offers an effective and organized argument on the disadvantages of monolingualism, presenting the financial, cultural, and educational benefits of multilingualism as evidence. The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the sources and ably employs them in the service of the position. For example, the student’s treatment of Sources A and F in the second paragraph provides appropriate support for the merits of multilingualism and culminates in a convincing summary statement: “Being multilingual opens up opportunity in the business world for Americans abroad and at home.” In the following paragraph, the student effectively synthesizes material from the sources to argue for the cultural importance of multilingualism and presents an articulate refutation of the stance taken in Source B about the perceived dismissal of that importance: “Even if you’d only be able to ‘speak to a minority of … fellow-Europeans in their native tongues,’ that minority’s insight into their culture is priceless.” The essay then transitions smoothly to the fourth paragraph to promote the educational benefits of multilingualism with an effective treatment of Sources A and D. The prose of the essay demonstrates full control of a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

# **AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

## **2016 SCORING COMMENTARY**

### **Question 1 (continued)**

#### **Sample: 1B**

**Score: 6**

This essay adequately argues a position using multiple sources to sufficiently advance and develop its position. The essay presents the case for the cognitive benefits of second language learning in the second paragraph, using Sources A and D to adequately argue the point: “As a result of exercising the brain, the student is able to think more effectively which can benefit them throughout their whole lives.” In the third paragraph, the essay again adequately argues for the importance of language in a cultural context. It addresses a counterargument by presenting the perspective given in source B and ultimately classifying it as “highly narrow-minded and arrogant.” The essay demonstrates an understanding of all of the sources, sustaining and developing an argument that is sometimes repetitious but ultimately sufficient and adequate. While there are occasional lapses in the essay’s control of language, it is generally clear and purposeful.

#### **Sample: 1C**

**Score: 4**

This essay presents an inadequate argument about the disadvantages of monolingualism. The argument makes very general points about linguistic disadvantages, often presenting inappropriate explanations (“Not every culture is right for everyone, so learning another language can prove that the current culture is best”). The student consistently presents a series of assertions that are inadequately and insufficiently explained (“Wars and international conflict can be avoided by knowing another language and not miscommunicating”). The essay uses three sources and shows some understanding of them, even correctly quoting them with some fluidity, but the argument remains insufficient and unconvincing. The concluding paragraph reinforces the very general scope of the essay and its overall inadequacy.