

2019

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AP[®] English Language and Composition

Free-Response Questions

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2019 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours and 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.)

In response to our society's increasing demand for energy, large-scale wind power has drawn attention from governments and consumers as a potential alternative to traditional materials that fuel our power grids, such as coal, oil, natural gas, water, or even newer sources such as nuclear or solar power. Yet the establishment of large-scale, commercial-grade wind farms is often the subject of controversy for a variety of reasons.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize material from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-written essay in which you develop your position on the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm.

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 (photo)
Source B (Layton)
Source C (Seltenrich)
Source D (Brown)
Source E (Rule)
Source F (Molla)

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Source A

Winchell, Joshua. "Wind Turbines." *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Digital Library*, 25 Mar. 2009, digitalmedia.fws.gov/cdm/ref/collection/natdiglib/id/6861.

The photograph below was taken for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.



Source B

Layton, Julia. "How Wind Power Works."
HowStuffWorks, 9 Aug. 2006,
[science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/
 green-science/wind-power.htm](http://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/wind-power.htm).

The following is excerpted from a popular Web site dedicated to explaining various processes.

On a global scale, wind turbines are currently generating about as much electricity as eight large nuclear power plants. That includes not only utility-scale turbines, but also small turbines generating electricity for individual homes or businesses (sometimes used in conjunction with photovoltaic solar energy). A small, 10-kW-capacity turbine can generate up to 16,000 kWh per year, and a typical U.S. household consumes about 10,000 kWh in a year.

A typical large wind turbine can generate up to 1.8 MW* of electricity, or 5.2 million KWh annually, under ideal conditions—enough to power nearly 600 households. Still, nuclear and coal power plants can produce electricity cheaper than wind turbines can. So why use wind energy? The two biggest reasons for using wind to generate electricity are the most obvious ones: Wind power is **clean**, and it's **renewable**. It doesn't release harmful gases like CO₂ and nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere the way coal does . . . and we are in no danger of running out of wind anytime soon. There is also the independence associated with wind energy, as any country can generate it at home with no foreign support. And a wind turbine can bring electricity to remote areas not served by the central power grid.

But there are downsides, too. Wind turbines can't always run at 100 percent power like many other types of power plants, since wind speeds fluctuate. Wind turbines can be noisy if you live close to a wind plant, they can be hazardous to birds and bats, and in hard-packed desert areas there is a risk of land erosion if you dig up the ground to install turbines. Also, since wind is a relatively unreliable source of energy, operators of wind-power plants have to back up the system with a small amount of reliable, non-renewable energy for times when wind speeds die down. Some argue that the use of unclean energy to support the production of clean energy cancels out the benefits, but the wind industry claims that the amount of unclean energy that's necessary to maintain a steady supply of electricity in a wind system is far too small to defeat the benefits of generating wind power.

Potential disadvantages aside, the United States has a good number of wind turbines installed, totaling more than 9,000 MW of generating capacity in 2006. That capacity generates in the area of 25 billion kWh of electricity, which sounds like a lot but is actually less than 1 percent of the power generated in the country each year. As of 2005, U.S. electricity generation breaks down like this:

- **Coal:** 52%
- **Nuclear:** 20%
- **Natural Gas:** 16%
- **Hydropower:** 7%
- **Other** (including wind, biomass, geothermal and solar) 5%

The current total electricity generation in the United States is in the area of 3.6 trillion kWh every year. Wind has the potential to generate far more than 1 percent of that electricity.

*1 MW (megawatt) = 1,000 kWh (kilowatts)

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Source C

Seltenrich, Nate. “Wind Turbines: A Different Breed of Noise?” *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 122, no. 1, Jan. 2014. National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, ehp.niehs.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/122/1/ehp.122-A20.pdf.

The following is excerpted from an article in a peer-reviewed journal published by a federally funded research institute. The numbered notes refer to source information that has been omitted from this excerpt for length.

Large-scale wind turbines are a relatively recent innovation, so the body of peer-reviewed research addressing the potential impacts of their unique brand of sound is sparse and particularly unsettled. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests a connection between turbines and a constellation of symptoms including nausea, vertigo, blurred vision, unsteady movement, and difficulty reading, remembering, and thinking.²⁴

The polarizing issue of wind-turbine noise is often framed one of two ways: Turbines are either harmless,²⁵ or they tend to have powerful adverse effects, especially for sensitive individuals.²⁶ According to Jim Cummings, executive director of the nonprofit Acoustic Ecology Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico, most of the reports to date that have concluded turbines are harmless examined “direct” effects of sound on people and tended to discount “indirect” effects moderated by annoyance, sleep disruption, and associated stress. But research that considered indirect pathways has yielded evidence strongly suggesting the potential for harm.

Multiple recent studies, including one coauthored by Daniel Shepherd, senior lecturer at New Zealand’s Auckland University of Technology, have demonstrated that sleep interference gets worse the nearer residents are to turbines.^{20,27} “Sleep is absolutely vital for an organism,” he says. “When we lose a night’s sleep, we become dysfunctional. The brain is an important organ, and if noise is disturbing its functioning, then that is a direct health effect.”

In another recent study, Shepherd made a case for approaching the debate from a social or humanistic standpoint, taking perceived effects seriously even if the potential mechanisms through which they occur remain unclear. Many reasons exist for taking this approach with wind-turbine noise, he wrote.²⁸

First is that turbine noise (that is, the aerodynamic noise produced by air moving around the spinning blades as opposed to any mechanical noise from the motor itself) is often deemed more annoying than the hum or roar of transportation noise because of its repetitive nature and high variability in both level and quality—from “swoosh” to “thump” to silence, all modulated by wind speed and direction. This pulsing, uneven quality enables the noise to repeatedly capture the attention and become more difficult to ignore.^{29,30}

In addition, unlike vehicle traffic, which tends to get quieter after dark, turbines can sound louder overnight. As Cummings explains, “Often at night, wind shear sets in. This creates conditions with moderate winds at hub height and a sharp boundary layer below which winds are much lower, or even near still.” The absolute noise level of the wind farm may be no more than during the day, but it can be 10–20 decibels louder than the quieter nighttime ambient sound levels. This detail has important implications for sleep disruption.

Third, wind turbines generate lower frequencies of sound than traffic. These lower frequencies tend to be judged as more annoying than higher frequencies and are more likely to travel through walls and windows.³¹ Infrasound, or sound frequency lower than 20 Hz—in audible to the human ear—has been associated in some studies with symptoms including fatigue, sleeplessness, and irritability,³² as well as with changes to the physiology of the inner ear that have poorly understood implications.³³

Source D

Brown, Hal. "Blowin' in the Wind: Texas Ranchers Turn to Turbines." *E: The Environmental Magazine*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2008. *Academic Search Premier*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=28052795&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

The following is excerpted from an article in a magazine that features articles on environmental issues.

In sun-seared West Texas, oil and gas producers have driven the regional economy since the mid-1920s. Now there's a new player in town—electricity-generating wind turbines. The turbines are sprouting by the hundreds on the low mesas that dot the desert landscape.

Wind turbines came to the small West Texas town of McCamey with the millennium. Construction began in 2000, and the first machines came on line in 2001. Florida Power and Light (FPL) now runs 688 area turbines.

"There are three things you're going to have to find," says Neil James, production manager for the FPL wind operations around McCamey. "That's the wind, the transmission lines and the land. The McCamey area is very abundant in those three things."

McCamey, population 1,600, has always been blessed with petroleum resources, but the oil business boom-and-bust cycles have taken their toll. Oil production in Upton County dropped almost 25 percent from 1972 (when it was 12.5 million barrels) to 1999 (9.4 million barrels).

Wind power has restored McCamey's economy. It now bills itself as the "Wind Energy Capital of Texas." "It was dying there for a little bit," admits Alicia Sanchez, who heads McCamey's economic development office. "Now taxes have increased 30 percent from 2004 to 2007. All we can see is positive." Texans apparently agree. An FPL-commissioned study released earlier this year said 93 percent support further development of wind energy in the state.

Federal tax credits, coupled with a Texas mandate requiring that a percentage of electricity come from green power producers, have spurred development. Rick Doehn manages rights of way and surface lands leasing for the state's Permanent University Fund, which supports the University of Texas and other Texas institutions, and also owns 2.1 million acres, chiefly in West Texas. Doehn says wind turbine leases and oil and gas leases often involve the same land. "The electric companies didn't see any problems with oil rigs," he says. "They're towers, but they're only up for a month or two, unless it's a very deep well."

Texas' other historic industry, ranching, loves the turbines. Rancher Ernest Woodward said he can't imagine any harm coming to his livestock from nearby turbines. "Windmills are very clean," Woodward said. "There's nothing that's harmful to the environment that I know of." Bird kills, he says, are not a problem because West Texas fowl have little problem avoiding the slow-moving (20 revolutions per minute) turbine blades.

For some ranchers, wind turbines bring with them an economic incentive that oil and gas do not. "Wind power is a surface activity," Doehn says. "With oil and gas the minerals are underneath, and a lot of ranchers don't own the mineral rights. Many of them sold off the minerals in order to get enough money to retain the surface rights when times were tough."

Woodward, who has both wind leases and oil leases on his ranch between McCamey and Fort Stockton, says there's room enough for both. There are 243 of the big wind turbines turning on Woodward Mesa. He gets a six to eight percent royalty payment on the power the turbines make. "We're just living off the land and whatever else we can do. We're glad to have them," he says.

Source E

Rule, Troy A. *Solar, Wind and Land: Conflicts in Renewable Energy Development*. Routledge, 2014.

The following is excerpted from a recent scholarly book.

Without question, the gargantuan wind turbines installed in today’s commercial wind farms can materially alter a landscape’s appearance. Modern utility-scale wind turbines commonly exceed 400 feet in height, towering well above any other buildings or structures in their vicinities and tall enough to be seen from several miles away. Even in rural areas where population densities are relatively low, turbines can impose significant costs by disrupting territorial views for local residents who may have grown attached to an area’s existing natural backdrop. The presence of turbines continues into the night, when turbine safety lighting often required under federal aviation laws flashes across an otherwise pristine evening sky.

Unfortunately, only so much can be done to disguise commercial wind turbines from view. Because the colors naturally occurring in the sky and on land tend to change with the seasons and time of day, it is often impossible to successfully camouflage turbines with paint such that they blend in with their surroundings. Painting designs on turbines or painting them multiple colors tends to only make them more distracting, and painting them gray can make them seem “dirty” or “associated with an industrial, urban, or military character.” Consequently, most commercial wind turbines are painted white—a color choice based partly on a belief that bright white turbines “convey a positive image” and are “associated with cleanliness.”

Installing smaller, shorter turbines to make them less conspicuous to neighbors is also rarely a viable option. The energy productivity of natural wind tends to increase significantly with altitude, so turbines are purposely designed to stand high above the ground to capture those more productive wind currents. By towering well above the earth’s surface, modern commercial wind turbines also avoid turbulence from nearby buildings and trees that might otherwise diminish their productivity. And the sheer size of a commercial wind turbine’s rotor, which directly affects its generating capacity, requires that the turbine be mounted upon a tall tower.

Unable to camouflage or shrink the size of utility-scale wind turbines, wind energy developers must often find ways to assuage locals’ concerns about the potential visual impacts of these enormous devices. Developers’ ability to do so depends in part on local residents’ subjective views about the attractiveness of the turbines themselves. Indeed, wind turbines are no different from any other structure in that their beauty or ugliness ultimately rests in the eye of their beholder. Some scholars have suggested that wind farms could and should be more commonly viewed as works of art. Citing the widespread depiction of windmills in notable seventeenth-century Dutch paintings and the large-scale environmental art projects of famous artists such as Christo Javacheff, they argue that commercial wind energy projects should be perceived as artistic creations rather than industrial blight.

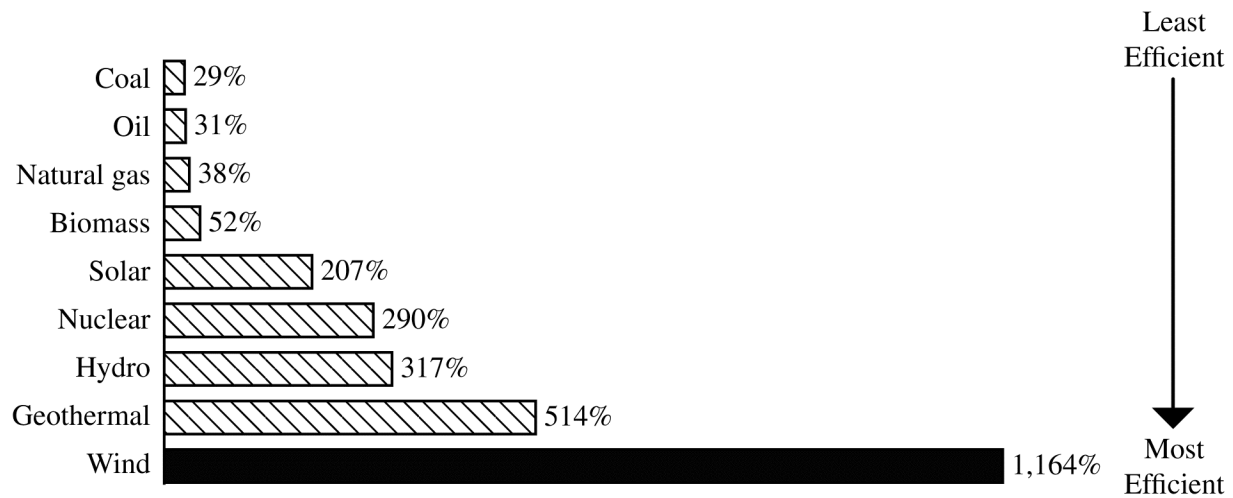
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Source F

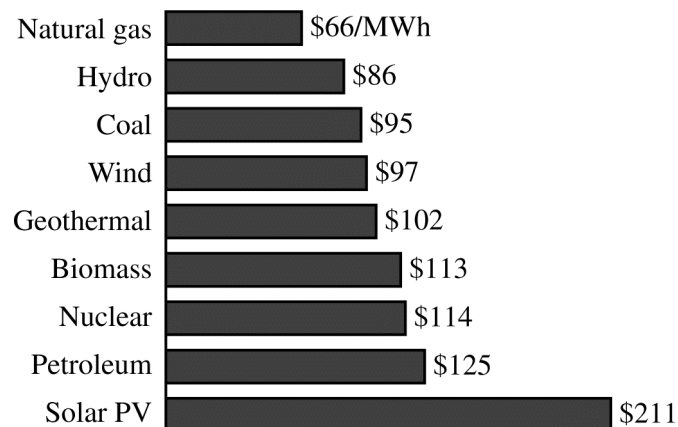
Molla, Rani. "What Is the Most Efficient Source of Electricity?" *Wall Street Journal*, 15 Sept. 2014, blogs.wsj.com/numbers/what-is-the-most-efficient-source-of-electricity-1754/.

The following is excerpted from a blog on a news site that examines the mathematics behind common events.

PERCENTAGE OF ENERGY INPUT RETAINED WHEN CONVERTING FUEL TO ELECTRICITY



COST TO PRODUCE 1 MWh OF ELECTRICITY IN 2009 (United States Dollars)



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Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

Inside:

Free Response Question 1

- ☒ **Scoring Guideline**
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2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

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 read, but if it seems inappropriate for a specific paper, assistance should be sought from the Table Leader. The Table Leader should always be shown booklets 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. The 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 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 development, or impressive in their control of language.

8 – Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** develop a position on the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm. They develop their position by effectively synthesizing* at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and convincingly support the student's position. 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 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 the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm. They develop their position by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and sufficiently support the student's position. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 – Essays earning a score of 5 develop a position on the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm. They develop their position by synthesizing at least three sources, but the evidence and explanations used to support that position 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.

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2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1 (continued)

4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** develop a position on the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm. They develop their position by synthesizing at least two sources, but that position may be inappropriately, insufficiently, or unconvincingly supported by the evidence and explanations used. 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.

3 – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in developing a position on the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or the evidence and explanations used may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

2 – Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in developing a position on the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm. 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 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 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

We have 12 years left. Carbon emissions in the atmosphere are at an all-time high. Thousands of species are going endangered and extinct. These are just some of the headlines that have recently made headlines on the news all around the world about humanity's devastating effects on the planet. An abundance of facts evident in our daily lives demand that we make a drastic change before it's too late. Although the change to cleaner, renewable energy sources, such as wind power, is not an easy or simple one, individuals and agencies can not only benefit in the long run, but they also have the obligation to the Earth to make that change.

There's no doubt that in the topic of "going green," many have a strong resistance to change. Businesses and individuals rely heavily on coal and fossil fuels to run their daily lives, and it is difficult to change such a fundamental constant in their routines. However, according to Source F from the Wall Street Journal, converting to wind power appears to be the clear and obvious answer. When converting to electricity, wind power retains 164% of its energy, compared to 29% and 31% of coal and oil respectively. Not only that, but it costs approximately the same to produce 1 MWh of electricity from wind compared to coal (\$97 vs. \$195). Switching to this cleaner alternative of energy shows clear benefits. Not only will people receive much more energy for the same price, but doing so releases much less CO₂ into the atmosphere. Making the change at first may be difficult to initiate and incorporate into the daily lives of the people, but the data presents wind power as the clear and correct choice for the sake of our future.

Even though evidence points to wind power as a positive choice, such a drastic change arouses opposition. Source C states that multiple studies "have demonstrated that sleep interference gets worse the nearer residents are to turbines." The noise produced by wind turbines is proven to be much more annoying than vehicles and much harder, especially at night. The disturbance is a serious argument against wind power, but it is not a deal-breaking detail. When cars were first introduced and large cities were first formed, there were those who demanded a return to quieter and more peaceful times. However, as these people saw the benefit of such innovations first-hand, there was no longer such a negative stigma about them. Instead, they're even romanticized in some materials, such as people referring to a "City that never sleeps." When big corporations decide to make the change to wind power, there will be resistance, criticism, and a call for returning back to fossil fuels. However, the people will get accustomed to the sounds and appearance of turbines, accept them, and eventually embrace them when they witness how it will benefit the planet.

Humanity as a whole has the duty and responsibility of fighting climate change. The immense amounts of pollution, environmental devastation, and deforestation result from the greed of corporations and the people's reliance on fossil fuels for their convenience. Years of this neglect of the planet have led it to where it is today. Scientists have recently found that the carbon count in our atmosphere is about 441 ppm (parts per million), which is higher than ever seen before in human existence. As Source B states, energy from wind power is clean, renewable, and abundant. If humans put forth the effort to make the change, the Earth and the future can still be saved. In addition, as there is an "independence associated with wind energy," the United States will no longer have to rely on fossil fuel importation from other countries, and they're able to expand the accessibility of electricity to virtually anywhere. The benefits are waiting for the people to make a move.

There are many factors for individuals and agencies to consider when switching to cleaner and renewable energy sources. However, the most important thing is this: Do you want a better future? Making this drastic change will call for sacrifices and hard work. However, the long-term effects will be worth it because saving our Earth takes one step at a time.

Sample 1B

As a country, the United States uses approximately 3.6 trillion kilowatts of energy each year, according to the article "How Wind Power Works" published by Julia Layton in 2006. Considering that this data is about 13 years old, it is likely that the energy usage of the constantly developing country has only increased. Traditionally, unprocessed "sucker" coal, oil, natural gas, and water have been the materials used to fuel the power plants. Newer tactics, such as solar power and wind farms, have started to sweep the nation. These factors are better environmentally, as they do not emit the dangerous gases that coal and oil do. However, there is still much controversy over the installation of windmills. Therefore, when an individual or agency is considering whether or not to establish a wind farm, they must examine the environmental and legal aspects, but also how the people in the community will be affected, weighing the pros and cons.

Environmentally, windmills clearly have a better effect compared to some of the more typical sources. Simply put, "wind power is clean, and it's renewable. It doesn't release harmful gases into the atmosphere the way coal does" (source B). This is especially important in today's society, where carbon emissions are beginning to show negative impacts such as global warming across the globe. Wind power is also renewable, as the source B notes, wind, which is not something that will potentially run out. Additionally, wind power is by far the most efficient source of electricity, with 164% of wind energy retained when it is converted to energy. Its runner-up, geothermal energy, is retained less than half of that percentage, at only 54% of the time. Coal, oil, and natural gases show an enormous gap, as the range of energy input between the three is retained a mere 29-38% of the time (Source F). Evidently, wind energy has positive effects when being examined environmentally based on efficiency, and yet there are still many worries.

Though wind farms can be a good source of energy for a community, they can also cause disruption to the people of the community. The primary issue is sleep. "Sleep interference gets worse the nearer residents are to turbines" (Source C). This adds a new concern that must be considered when deciding whether or not to establish a wind farm. The best location for a wind plant would be away from local residences, so as not to disturb the inhabitants. If the wind plant would be located near many homes, the question is, is it worth it? Is it worth the complaints of the locals? Is it worth putting the health of those nearby at risk by affecting their sleep, which is "absolutely vital for an organism" (Source C)? That is for those establishing the wind plant to decide, and they are considerations that should weigh heavily. There is also the aesthetic issue, as "it is often impossible to successfully camouflage turbines to blend in with their surroundings" (Source E). Though this may not seem like the most pressing matter, it is still important, because their presence could ultimately decrease the value of homes nearby and the likelihood of people to live in them.

Furthermore, there are many factors to consider when a group or individual is deciding whether or not to establish a wind farm. Some of the most pressing matters include the environmental betterment and location. These two aspects can either lead to great success for a community, or many issues. Environmentally, windmills will typically serve the community well. Location can either be of harm or have no impact. If the location is distanced from the community, and wind plants would reduce the use of more harmful energy sources like coal, then establishing a wind farm would probably greatly aid the community.

Sample 1C

Today's society is starting to focus on environmental problems that are becoming a huge global crisis, such as oil, gas emissions, and other pollutants that significantly harm Earth. There have been many solutions that could potentially help the planet return to its original form. One high candidate for better power, especially in renewable energy, is wind turbines. This innovation is designed to capture wind in high altitudes of Earth's atmosphere. There has been controversy about whether or not wind turbines are the best solution to our environmental crisis. The most important factors to consider when establishing a wind farm would be the potential high cost, the amount of power it can produce, and health issues that come along with this technology. These are important because they will determine if wind turbines are actually worth a try to help with energy demand. When it comes to power consumption, wind turbines are the best at producing the most power in a cost-effective way, costing less than \$100 per MWh.

Regarding energy, humans want it at the moment they need it, and to support that, we have wind turbines that produce a lot of energy. It is said that "a typical large wind turbine can generate up to 6 MW of electricity, or 5.2 million kWh annually, enough to power 600 households" (Source B, Layton). This amount of energy can be especially beneficial when it comes from just one wind turbine. Assuming a wind turbine farm is created, just imagine the amount of electricity it would produce for a big city like New York; it would be surprisingly high. Not only do wind turbines produce that much electricity, but it "is clean and it's renewable" (Layton). Switching from using coal as a main power source to wind turbines is growing for sure because it will only cost about \$97/MWh while producing electricity (Source F, Molla). This will significantly help society use clean energy to support a large population.

Wind turbines are found to be pretty loud when it comes to producing electricity because of their low frequencies, which can potentially have harmful effects on vital organs like our brain. Although wind turbines produce a lot of energy at a low cost, they can directly impact our health. It is said that "when we lose a night's sleep, we become dysfunctional. The brain is an important organ, and if noise is disturbing its functioning, then that is a direct health effect" (Source C, Soltarich). Since this comes from the Wellwood Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, it is important to consider this factor. But a way to fix this problem is to move turbines to a different area where fewer people won't be within the range of a wind turbine. Possibly moving to places like deserts, where people appreciate cleaner power and can't be that close to wind turbines due to the high currents of electricity. As Mc Clumay says, "It's a sin to write a decent royalty payment on the power the turbines make!" This will incentivize people to support wind turbines because it could potentially come with a little more cash in your pocket (Source D, Brown). Therefore, wind turbines should be the next move towards a better environment with clean energy.

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2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

This year’s synthesis question asked students to use material from the six provided sources and develop a “position on the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm.” To achieve this task, students needed to read all the sources, drawing support from the information to write their essay. To do well, students were expected to understand that they were, in essence, creating an argument using the supplied information as well as knowledge that they already possessed. Students also needed to understand that, with sources arguing among one another, students did not have to accept each source as “correct”; instead, the students needed to evaluate the provided information based on their own knowledge and perceptions of the world.

Responses were expected to integrate the information with the students’ positions, not merely repeat the information. Therefore, students were expected to understand how to integrate the support for competing arguments into their own.

Sample: 1A

Score: 8

This essay effectively develops a position framing the factors singularly as an “obligation to the Earth.” While the response does not explicitly list the “factors,” it is clear from the introduction that environmental impact is the primary factor, and the efficiency of wind power falls within the overriding concerns. The response does not simply assert without substantiation that environmental factors should be considered but supports each point with evidence from the sources. The response also presents a convincing case for examining other factors, like cost, as secondary (e.g., “Not only will the people receive much more energy for the same price, but doing so releases much less CO₂ into the atmosphere”). Energy independence (“no longer hav[ing] to rely on fossil fuel importation from other countries”) and the accessibility of the energy source are other secondary factors discussed in the response. The student acknowledges the potential opposition to wind power but credibly argues that the negatives, such as noise, are not the factors that matter. Using the analogies of cars and large cities, the student provides a relevant and interesting discussion of how humans adapt to innovations (like wind farms) and come to accept them because of their benefits (i.e., “as these people saw the benefit to such innovations first-hand, there was no longer such a negative stigma about them”). The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of effective writing but is not flawless (e.g., “Even though evidence points to wind power as a positive choice, such a darastic change rouses opposition”).

Sample: 1B

Score: 6

This essay begins with a lengthy introduction that demonstrates some confusion on factors (“Newer tactics, such as solar power and wind farms have started to sweep the nation. These factors are better environmentally”); however, the response goes on to adequately develop a position that “when an individual or agency is considering whether or not to establish a wind farm, they must examine the environmental aspects, but also how the people in the community will be affected weighing the pros and cons.” The essay adequately synthesizes sources with appropriate and sufficient evidence and explanations. For example, in discussing the factor of the “asethic issue,” the response explains that the presence of wind farms “could ultimately decrease the value of homes nearby and the likelihood of people to live in them.” When referencing Source C, the

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Question 1 (continued)

student demonstrates a clear understanding of the factors but becomes mired in the discussion of those factors (e.g., “Is it worth the complaints of the locals? Is it worth putting the health of those nearby at risk?”), thereby keeping the response from being more than adequate. The lengthy presentation of source F followed by the statement that “wind energy has positive effects when being examined environmentally” is likewise adequate but does not rise above that level. The writing contains some lapses, but the prose is generally clear (e.g., “If the location is distanced from the community, and wind plants would reduce the use of more harmful energy producers like coal, then establishing a wind farm would probably greatly aide the community”).

Sample: 1C

Score: 4

The essay develops a seemingly clear but inadequately developed position that the “most important factor when it comes to consideration about wind turbines when establishing a wind farm would be potential cost, the amount of power it can produce and health issues that come along with that technology.” The response attempts to synthesize Sources B and F in the second paragraph, but the link between the argument and the sources is weak (e.g., “When it comes to energy humans want it out the moment they need it so to support that we need wind turbines that produce a lot of energy”). The essay presents simplistic explanations that are not sufficient or convincing enough to adequately develop the position (e.g., “turbines will be great for society because it will only cost \$97/MWh while producing electricity” and “[p]eople can move to places like Texas where people appreciate wind power and aren’t that close to wind turbines”). Additionally, the response demonstrates a misunderstanding of what wind turbines are and how they work (i.e., “This innovation is used to capture natural wind in high altitudes of earths atmosphere”). The prose does generally convey the student’s ideas, but it is inconsistent in its control of the elements of effective writing (e.g., “Wind turbines are pretty loud when it comes to producing electricity because of it low frequencies, it can potentially harm people’s vital organs like our brain”).