

2023

AP[®]



AP[®] English Language and Composition

Free-Response Questions Set 1

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours and 15 minutes

3 Questions

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 as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Urban rewilding is an effort to restore natural ecological processes and habitats in city environments. Many cities around the world have embraced rewilding as part of larger movements to promote ecological conservation and environmentally friendly design. Now, a movement to promote urban rewilding is beginning to take shape in the United States as well.

Carefully read the six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities to pursue.

- Source A (infographic from Fastnacht)
- Source B (Jepson and Schepers policy brief)
- Source C (NRPA article)
- Source D (Garland article)
- Source E (graph from McDonald et al.)
- Source F (Chatterton book excerpt)

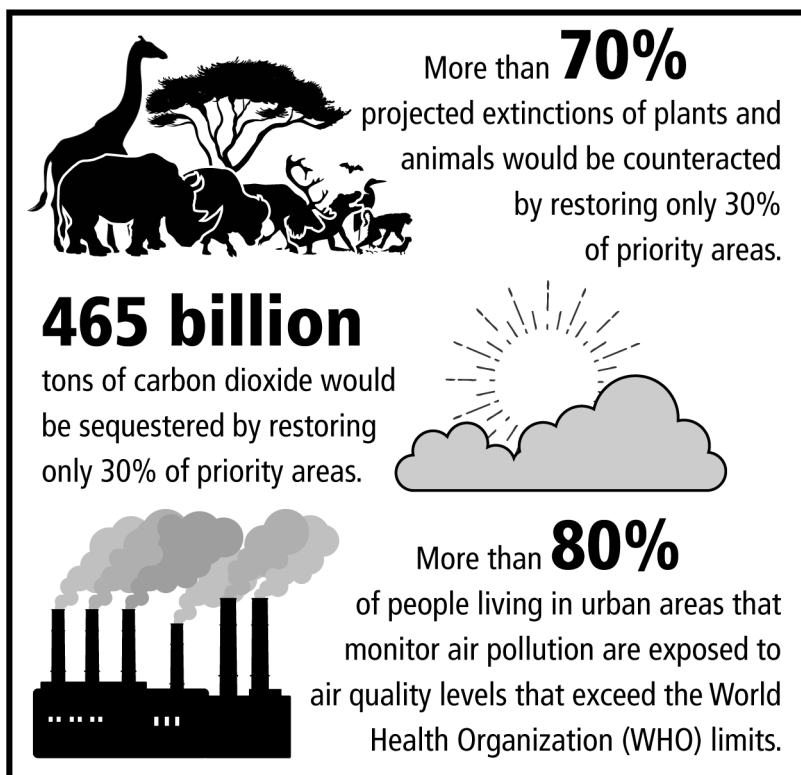
In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Source A

Fastnacht, Sarah. “The Necessity of Rewilding our Cities.” *Makers of Sustainable Spaces*, MOSS, 29 Apr. 2021, moss.amsterdam/2021/04/29/rewilding-our-cities.

The following infographic is based on an image in a blog post published by an architecture and design company that specializes in sustainability.



Note: Priority areas refers to ecosystems identified by researchers as particularly important for biodiversity. Sequestration is the capture of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere so that it does not contribute to global climate change.

Source B

Jepson, Paul, and Frans Schepers. “Making Space for Rewilding: Creating an Enabling Policy Environment.” *Rewilding Europe*, Rewilding Europe, May 2016, www.rewildingeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Making-Space-for-Rewilding-Policy-Brief1.pdf.

The following is excerpted from a policy brief published as a collaboration between the University of Oxford and a nonprofit organization that promotes rewilding in Europe.

Rewilding is a powerful new term in conservation. This may be because it combines a sense of passion and feeling for nature with advances in ecological science. The term resonates with diverse publics and seems to have particular appeal to a younger urban generation and among those who want a voice in shaping a new rural environment. Rewilding is exciting, engaging and challenging: it is promoting debate and deliberation on what is natural and the natures we collectively wish to conserve and shape.

Rewilding is a multifaceted concept with three broad dimensions that interact with each other: 1) restoring and giving space to natural processes, 2) reconnecting wild(er) nature with the modern economy, and 3) responding to and shaping cosmopolitan perceptions of nature conservation among European society. The following principles are coming to characterise and guide rewilding as a distinct approach to conservation.

1. Restoring natural processes and ecological dynamics—both abiotic such as river flows, and biotic such as the ecological web and food-chain—through reassembling lost guilds¹ of animals in dynamic landscapes.

2. A gradated and situated approach, where the goal is to move up a scale of wildness within the constraints of what is possible, and interacting with local cultural identities.

3. Taking inspiration from the past but not replicating it. Developing new natural heritage and value that evokes the past but shapes the future.

4. Creating self-sustaining, resilient ecosystems (including re-connecting habitats and species populations within the wider landscapes) that provide resilience to external threats and pressures, including the impact of climate change (adaptation).

5. Working towards the ideal of passive management, where once restored, we step back and allow dynamic natural processes to shape conservation outcomes.

6. Creating new natural assets that connect with modern society and economy and promote innovation, enterprise and investment in and around natural areas, leading to new nature-inspired economies.

7. Reconnecting policy with popular conservation sentiment and a recognition that conservation is a culturally dynamic as well as a scientific and technical pursuit.

As a new conservation frame, rewilding brings together established and newer conservation worldviews. People are combining these in different ways creating different ‘shades’ of rewilding, many of which have labels. This is a limitation and opportunity. On the one hand it exposes rewilding to sensationalists media interpretations and charges of a lack of clarity, consensus and evidence by groups within conservation science. On the other

hand it reflects innovation and creates the possibility for a common, but differentiated (situated) mode of conservation: one that is guided by a set of principles that member states or regions can interpret in ways suited to their nature conservation traditions, landscapes, culture and economies.

¹ Groups of organisms that use natural resources in similar ways

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Source C

“Urban Rewilding.” *Parks and Recreation*, National Recreation and Park Association, 1 Nov. 2016, nrrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2016/november/urban-rewilding/.

The following is excerpted from an article in a magazine published by a nonprofit organization that promotes parks and environmental conservation.

“Close your eyes for a moment and picture a place from childhood that’s extremely meaningful,” directed Opening Session keynote speaker Dr. Scott Sampson. “Imagine what it looks like, feels like, who you’re there with, what the smells are.”

By an almost unanimous show of hands, Dr. Scott, host and science advisor of the Emmy-nominated PBS KIDS television series “Dinosaur Train” and author of *How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature*, illustrated how, for a large number in the audience, that extremely meaningful childhood place involves the outdoors. The audience largely consisted of Baby Boomers/Generation Xers who remember enjoying abundant, unstructured outdoor playtime as kids. For many of today’s youth, those childhood places will look much different....

Imagine 25 years from now, he posits, how many hands would be raised in response to the same question about a meaningful childhood place involving the outdoors. “If people don’t spend any time outside, why are they going to care about their local places let alone the national parks in the distance,” he asked.

Dr. Scott suggests that “urban rewilding” in our cities and towns is what’s needed to head off this crisis. Rewilding is a term usually used in connection with reintroducing an apex predator into an ecosystem in an attempt to restore balance. A familiar example of this top-down approach to restoring balance would be the efforts to return wolves to Yellowstone Park. Urban rewilding is a bottom up approach that starts with the simple act of planting mostly native plants. They are critical to attracting native insects, which in turn attract birds and various animals back to the local ecosystem. And, if we do urban rewilding right, cities could become places where nature is welcome. And once that happens, we need to help children develop **NEW** eyes to see nature: to notice it, engage with it—play is an important way for kids to engage with nature and it also allows them to gain some experience with risk-taking, while developing a sense of wonder about it.

This movement to “rewild” or “wild” children touches on all three NRPA Pillars—Conservation, Health and Wellness and Social Equity. However, it’s a movement that requires big thinking about what we want the future to look like and for each community that future will look different. It also will require deep collaboration among multiple organizations that bring their various areas of expertise, each doing their part to achieve the end goal of successful, thriving communities. “We’re at a juncture where the decisions we and the next generation make will determine the course of this planet for thousands of years to come,” Dr. Scott noted. He then challenged us to go out into our communities and think about what those collaborations could be, look like and grow into, and to think big because “that’s where success resides.”

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Source D

Garland, Lincoln. “Let Go of Some Urban Domestication: How Would You Convince the Mayor to Re-wild the City?” *The Nature of Cities*, The Nature of Cities, www.thenatureofcities.com/2017/11/13/re-wilding-make-cities-better-just-wilder/.

The following is excerpted from an online discussion of urban rewilding in the United Kingdom hosted by a nonprofit organization that publishes research and writing about cities. The author is the associate director of an environmental consultancy.

There are certainly opportunities for introducing re-wilding in rural parts of the UK, in particular in upland regions where, without subsidy, agriculture is economically unviable for the most part. With respect to the UK’s cities, nature should also be allowed to take its own path in certain select locations to create some semblance of wildness. I am unconvinced however that re-wilding is the appropriate terminology or the approach to wildlife restoration that we should be pursuing in UK cities at any meaningful scale.

The large expanses of greenspace that would be required to recreate fully functioning *wildwood*, including relatively large numbers of herbivores and viable populations of naturally scarce predators at the top of food chain, are simply not available in our cities, where space is increasingly at a premium. Sustainable urban design should be seeking to avoid low-density sprawl and instead promote compact, transit-oriented, pedestrian-and-bicycle friendly urban development that provides easy access to services. This development model is crucial for tackling congestion and for reducing CO₂ and other harmful emissions. Given this compact city imperative, the proposition of devoting large areas of urban space for re-wilding in anything approaching its true sense is untenable....

Some authors/practitioners respond that there should be no minimum area thresholds for wilderness and re-wilding from an ecological perspective, frequently quoting Aldo Leopold who declared that “*no tract of land is too small for the wilderness idea*”. While it is true that ecosystems can be considered at the microcosm, there really is not the space available to recreate complex self-sustaining food webs, with meaningful ranges of predators and prey, in accordance with the true principles of re-wilding.

Even ignoring the seeming disregard for matters relating to population viability analysis and the principles of island biogeography, other concerns remain. In those small areas where nature can be left to its own devices, many people may have a profound dislike for the outcome that sometimes emerges. Negative comments may be expressed relating to perceptions of safety, the appearance of neglect, reduced accessibility and visual/aesthetic preference. With respect to the last of these concerns, while education programmes can attune people’s valuation patterns, within an urban context a great many people will continue to favour more ordered, manicured environments. Undeniably, a previously accessible urban greenspace that has been left to nature, which then rapidly succeeds into a monoculture of impenetrable bramble or butterfly-bush, is unlikely to be well-received by most local residents....

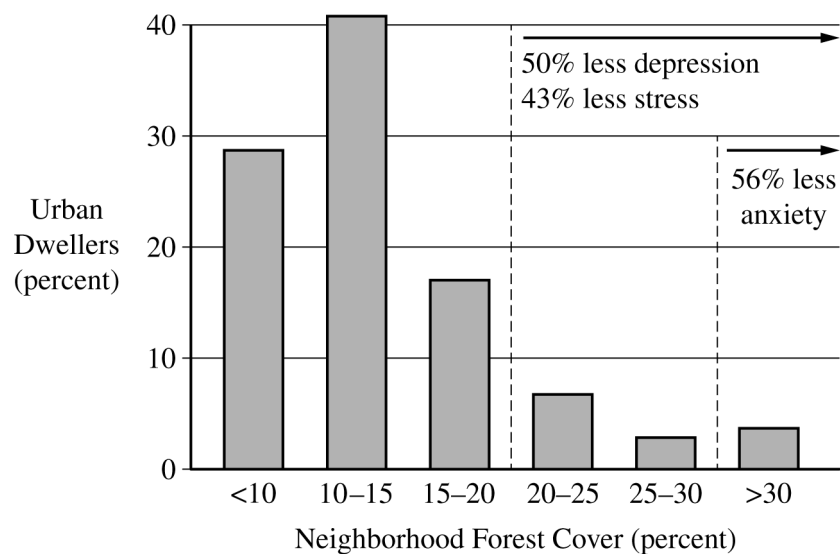
The disturbed nature of urban soils is likely to be another major limiting factor, impoverished as they frequently are in terms of seedbank, organic material and soil organisms. Without active management newly emerging urban woodland would also be subject to degradation by trampling, visual and noise disturbance, fire, invasive species, effects of predatory pets etc. To reiterate, unencumbered natural succession may well produce landscapes in urban areas dramatically less visually and ecologically appealing than anticipated.

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Source E

McDonald, Robert Ian, et al. “The Green Soul of the Concrete Jungle: The Urban Century, the Urban Psychological Penalty, and the Role of Nature.” *Sustainable Earth*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2018, sustainableearth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s42055-018-0002-5.

The following is based on a graph published in a community-focused academic journal dedicated to advancing environmental sustainability. It shows responses from a survey conducted in three towns in the United Kingdom.



Forest cover in urban neighborhoods and its impact on mental health. The bar chart shows the fraction of urban dwellers who live in neighborhoods with varying levels of forest cover.

Source F

Chatterton, Paul. *Unlocking Sustainable Cities: A Manifesto for Real Change*. Pluto Press, 2019.

The following is an excerpt from a book exploring the benefits of urban rewilding.

We are beginning to see a proliferation of hybrid natural and built forms through, for example, living walls, rooftop farms, vertical or sky gardens and breathing buildings. These can have significant beneficial effects. For example, urban street canyons refer to the effect created by high buildings lining a street, which can become hotspots for harmful pollutants, such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. A study by Thomas Pugh and colleagues from the Lancaster Environment Centre suggests that strategic placement of vegetation in street canyons can cut air pollution by up to 30 per cent. They can also stop urban overheating and provide effective insulation and shading for buildings, as well as reducing noise pollution. And of course, there are the psychological and aesthetic benefits of being proximate to an abundance of natural greenery.

Green corridors and linear parks can be retrofitted into the existing city. For example, the High Line project in New York transformed an old rail line into a nearly two-mile urban park. It opened in 2014 and became a short cut for walkers and one of the city's favourite parks featuring art installations and places for hanging out. Other cities are following suit including Chicago's 606 Park and Toronto's Bentway, which has slotted 55 outdoor rooms under its Gardiner Expressway featuring farmers' markets, performance spaces and a children's garden. Miami is also building the Underline, a nine-mile linear park underneath its metrorail line. In my own city of Leeds, a community group is attempting to do the same thing on one of Leeds' abandoned Victorian train viaducts. The Madrid Rio project was one of the most exciting urban reclamation projects in Europe—burying a former ring road to create over 600 hectares of parkland. Efforts are being made not just to create greenspaces, but to create interconnected green corridors. For example, the All London Green Grid (ALGG) is the green infrastructure strategy for London, which sets out a vision to create an interconnected network of green and blue spaces across the entire city. It is this interconnection that is so important in terms of creating space for biodiversity to move more extensively.

Singapore is one of the pioneers of placing nature at the heart of its planning and urban design process. As a self-labelled garden city, it now prefers to call itself 'the city in a garden'. To realize this vision of living in an urban park, Singapore implemented a landscape replacement policy whereby any greenery removed during construction has to be reinstated as part of the development. It is estimated that the amount of urban greenery has been at least doubled, but mainly through sky gardens. The city has also built nearly 300km of park connectors to create deeper connections between parks and neighbourhoods.

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.