

## General AP Essay Scoring Guide for Free Response Questions

General Directions: The score that you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, style, and mechanics. Reward the writers for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

**9-8** These essays offer a well-focused and persuasive analysis of the work. Using apt and specific textual support, these essays analyze the text in direct reference to the prompt. Although these essays may not be error-free, they make a strong case for their interpretation and discuss the literary work with significant insight and understanding. Essays scored a nine (9) reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an eight (8).

**7-6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of the work in relationship to the prompt. While these papers have insight and understanding, their analysis is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific in supporting detail than that of the 9-8 essays. Essays scored a seven (7) present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a six(6).

**5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading, but they tend to be superficial or thinly developed in analysis. They often rely upon plot summary that contains some analysis, *implicit or explicit*. Although the writer attempts to discuss the work in relationship to the prompt, he or she may demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding of the work, and support from the text may be too general. While these writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7-6 essays.

**4-3** These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the work in relationship to the prompt. The analysis may be partial, unsupported, or irrelevant, and the essays may reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the text. They may not develop an analysis of the work as a whole, or they may rely on plot summary alone. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors; they may lack control over the elements of college-level composition. Essays scored a three (3) may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

**2-1** Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they compound the weakness of the papers in the 4-3 range. Often, they are unacceptably brief or incoherent in presenting their ideas. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. The writer's remarks may be presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Essays scored a one (1) contain little coherent discussion of the text.

**0** These essays give a response with no more than a reference to the task

-- These essays are either left blank or are completely off-topic