

AP

 **CollegeBoard**

AP[®] English Literature and Composition

**2020 Free-Response Scoring Guidelines
applied to the 2019 Exam Questions**

AP English Literature and Composition

2020 Free-Response Scoring Guidelines (applied to 2019 questions)

Question 1: Poetry Analysis

6 points

In the poem “The Landlady” by P.K. Page (published in 1943) found on the [AP English Literature and Composition 2019 Exam \(Question 1\)](#), the speaker gives a complex portrayal of a landlady. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Page uses literary elements and techniques to convey this complex portrayal.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Q1 Poetry Analysis – 2019 Samples

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria - Rubric	
<p>Row A</p> <p>Thesis (0-1 points)</p> <p>7.B</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the poem.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Make a generalized comment about the poem that doesn't respond to the prompt. Describe the poem or features of the poem rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a defensible interpretation of the speaker's complex portrayal of the landlady.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The speaker uses literary techniques in a complex portrayal of the landlady."</i> <p>Are not defensible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The landlady use of elements was to introduce the meaning of the poem and make reader understand the purpose. In the poem is about a woman giving a speech in which many individuals depend for their lifes to be exact." [Sample SS]</i> <p>Describe the poem or features of the poem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"In the poem the speaker describes the landlady using imagery."</i> 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Provide a defensible interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"In the poem 'The Landlady,' a speaker describes how a landlady views her tenants, yet does so in a way that portrays the landlord to be overbearing and much too curious." [Sample V]</i> <i>"In P.K. Page's poem 'The Landlady,' the speaker portrays the landlady as a predator, as if she was stalking her prey. This portrayal is accomplished through the poets use of diction, and tone." [Sample E]</i> <i>"The landlady's complexity makes the audience feel something slightly less intense than condemnation, but also less sympathetic than pity, as reinforced by Page's implementation of active verbs, abrupt punctuation and selective personification." [Sample HH]</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the poem must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Q1 Poetry Analysis – 2019 Samples

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</p> <p>7.A</p> <p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides some specific relevant evidence.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the poem contributes to its meaning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the poem contribute to its meaning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on summary or description of a poem rather than specific details or techniques. <i>[Sample SS]</i> • Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. <i>[Sample E]</i> • May make one point well, but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. <i>[Sample V]</i> • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. <i>[Sample EE]</i> • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. <i>[Sample HH]</i> • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. <i>[Sample OO]</i> • Explain how the writer’s use of multiple literary techniques contributes to the student’s interpretation of the poem. 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the poem. 					

Q1 Poetry Analysis – 2019 Samples

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C</p> <p>Sophistication (0-1 points)</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.</p>
<p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the poem could be said to...</i>”). Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the poem comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. Oversimplify complexities in the poem. <i>[Sample E]</i> Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective because they do not enhance the student’s argument. 	<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the poem. <i>[Sample HH and OO]</i> Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. <i>[Sample OO]</i> Accounting for alternative interpretations of the poem. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

Question 2: Prose Fiction Analysis

6 points

The excerpt found on the [AP English Literature and Composition 2019 Exam \(Question 2\)](#) is from William Dean Howells' novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885). In this passage, the author describes two sisters, Penelope and Irene. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Howells uses literary elements and techniques to portray the complex experience of the two sisters within their family and society.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A</p> <p>Thesis</p> <p>(0-1 points)</p> <p>7.B</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the passage that doesn't respond to the prompt. • Describe the passage or features of the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a defensible interpretation of Howells' portrayal of the complex experience of the two sisters within their family and society.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Howells portrays the experience of the sisters as complex through a variety of literary elements."</i> <p>Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Howells illustrates the importance of fashion."</i> <p>Describe the passage or features of the passage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"From the beginning of the excerpt from 'The Rise of Silas Lapham', William Dean Howell depicts the way of lives of two sisters: Penelope and Irene." [Sample EE]</i> 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Provide a defensible interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"In William Dean Howell's novel, 'The Rise of Silas Lapham, two sisters Penelope and Irene did not care for the views of society but for themselves." [Sample U]</i> • <i>"This excerpt from The Rise of Stilas Lapham discusses the lavish yet helpless lives of sister Irene and Penelope in a satirical way in an attempt to explain the seemingly selfish lives of Laphams "because they did not know how to do otherwise". Author William Dean Howells highlights the clueless and unaware sisters through detailed examples and a satirical tone." [Sample TT]</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</p> <p>7.A</p> <p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides some specific relevant evidence.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the passage contributes to its meaning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the passage contribute to its meaning.</p>
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on overarching narrative developments or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. • Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. • May make one point well, but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an interpretation. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an interpretation. • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. • Explain how the writer’s use of multiple literary techniques contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage.
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the passage. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C</p> <p>Sophistication</p> <p>(0-1 points)</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.</p>
<p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). • Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the passage could be said to...</i>”). • Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the passage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. • Oversimplify complexities in the passage. • Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective because they do not enhance the argument. 	<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage. 2. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. 3. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the passage. 4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

Question 3: Literary Argument

6 points

In his 2004 novel *Magic Seeds*, V. S. Naipaul writes: “It is wrong to have an ideal view of the world. That’s where the mischief starts. That’s where everything starts unravelling.”

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character holds an “ideal view of the world.” Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author’s portrayal of this idealism and its positive or negative consequences contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

The Alchemist

Antigone

The Awakening

The Bluest Eye

Brave New World

Brideshead Revisited

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

Candide

The Catcher in the Rye

Death of a Salesman

Don Quixote

A Gesture Life

Great Expectations

The Great Gatsby

The Handmaid’s Tale

The House of Mirth

The Importance of Being Earnest

Invisible Man

King Lear

Lolita

The Mill on the Floss

My Ántonia

Native Son

Odyssey

The Portrait of a Lady

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

The Sound and the Fury

The Sun Also Rises

The Tempest

To Kill a Mockingbird

When the Emperor Was Divine

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A Thesis (0-1 points)</p> <p>7.B</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent thesis. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the selected work.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Make a generalized comment about the selected work that doesn't respond to the prompt. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a defensible interpretation of the character's idealism and its positive or negative consequences in the selected work. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a claim about how the portrayal of a character's idealism and its positive or negative consequences contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"In Lord of the Flies, Ralph has an ideal view of the world and that has many positive and negative consequences."</i> <p>Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"In Khaled Houssin's novel 'The Kite Runner', the reader follows the life of a boy named Amir, and how his actions and view on life, will affect him as an adult." [Sample ZZ]</i> 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Provides a defensible interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Through McMurphy's idealism, he allows the patients to regain a sense of dignity and he charts the course for his ultimate demise; through this, Kesey is able to show that despite the inevitable negative consequences which will result from idealism, it is a necessary quality to ignite social change." [Sample DD]</i> <i>"Through his character, Ralph, Golding conveys that holding an idealistic view of the world is dangerous: while temporary success can be achieved, it ultimately leads to the destruction of governmental institutions and chaos. He encourages readers to adopt a more realistic view of the world and recognize the inherent evil in all people." [Sample J]</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the selected work must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</p> <p>7.A</p> <p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides some specific relevant evidence.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on overarching narrative developments or description of a selected work rather than specific details. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. • May make one point well, but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific details from the selected work to build an interpretation. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific details from the selected works to build an interpretation. • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response must address the interpretation of the selected work as a whole. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C Sophistication (0-1 points)</p> <p>7.C 7.D 7.E</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the text could be said to...</i>”). Oversimplify complexities of the topic and/or the selected work. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective because they do not enhance the argument. 	<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the selected work. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the text. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

The student responses in this packet were selected from the 2019 Reading and have been rescored using the new rubrics for 2020. Commentaries for each sample are provided in a separate document.

Student responses have been transcribed verbatim; any errors in spelling or grammar appear as they do in the original handwritten response.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample HH

[1] One's predestination for introversion or extroversion – whether due to genetics, trauma, or environment – may seem to be an asset to most, or even passive at the least. In reality, this can be crippling. The Landlady's message as portrayed by P.K. Page, directly addressed the unsettling 'creepiness' of an individual who is dependent on the many worlds that exist around her in the tenants and their personal lives. The landlady's complexity makes the audience feel something slightly less intense than condemnation, but also less sympathetic than pity, as reinforced by Page's implementation of active verbs, abrupt punctuation and selective personification.

[2] The landlady's insatiable dependence on others is more fundamental to her existence than can be understood by anyone with a joyful life of their own. Page equips stanza four with active physical verbs, such as "unlocks" (line 14) and "searches" (line 15), portraying the physical aspect of her reliance on others' lives. She actively gathers physical evidence of their goings-on. Page follows this with active emotional verbs characterizing stanza five. As the landlady "wonders" (line 17) and "dreams" (line 18) of what happens in the unavailable portions of the boarders' lives, her mindscape is established as being shaped by what "they" (lines 17 and 18), the boarders, do. Page then takes this concept to a new depth with the reappearance of the subject-less active verb in line 30 to show that the landlady "prays" based on her hopes with regard to the boarders. This audience in response feels disgusted by the physical violations of privacy and irked by the mental dedication the landlady spends on virtual strangers, but her spiritual reliance on them is apparently not her choice. This can rather be seen as a condition that the landlady is forced to live with, establishing complex conflict in the audience between disapproval and empathy.

[3] The landlady's approach to self-fulfillment is unusually formulaic, like Page's syntax. Abrupt punctuation separates short and direct sentences, such as in stanza two. The first line is 7 words followed by a colon, then the next line is 6 words followed by a semicolon. The poem continues with many more short and direct compositions that reflect a formulaic way of thinking – like the landlady's – rather than the more open-ended nature of long sentences and ideas with many clauses and little punctuation.

[4] Page's personification adds human traits to inanimate objects the same way that the landlady creates an image of people she does not personally know. Line 3 allows the silence to swallow, giving humanistic traits to something that is empty and unfulfilled – a lack of sound. This parallels the landlady's application of 'exciting' sounds to the unexciting silences and reservations of strangers. She, in effect, applies traits and stories to the "impersonal" (line 2) boarders. These parallels between the landlady and Page's use of personification help define the complex nature of what the landlady is trying to do for self-fulfillment.

[5] The futility of the landlady's condition impedes her life in a way that also violates others', leading to a complicated response from the audience. By examining Page's charged active verbs, abrupt punctuation and line structure, and personification, the landlady's actions and motives become clearer, establishing an emptiness inside herself without those around her. Whether or not this is the cause of the landlady's ill wishes in the final line of the poem, the audience is left with a mix of complex emotions between anger and empathy.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample OO

[1] In every person's life there consists a rarely thought of group of acquaintances who despite interacting little in person with an individual, know intimate details of their life. The garbageman, the postal service worker, the landlady – These people enjoy a unique perspective of the populations they serve; they process the things we deem useless and discard, handle the personal messages and financial information we send and receive, they own the homes we foolishly call our own. In P.K. Page's 1943 poem, "The Landlady" he portrays one such woman with intimate knowledge of the lives of others, despite her boarders' attempts to maintain their privacy. Page portrays the landlady as a curious and inquisitive presence who may just have dark motives, using the elements of imagery and tone to convey her complexity.

[2] Page's use of imagery highlights specific body parts with which the landlady conducts her observations, giving her a nearly un-human like presence by isolating each act of invasion. Page compares the landlady's eye to a camera, giving the impression that she attempts to remember and immortalize the things she sees. He describes her as having "tickling ears," implying that she is always listening, ready to overhear whatever private information she can glean. He describes her flesh itself as "curious," as if she not only perceives information, but somehow absorbs it through her skin as well. Page's use of imagery which isolates the Landlady's senses make her feel like she is a machine, designed and engineered for ultimate invasion of privacy and gives her an almost ominous and omnipresent feeling. Additionally, Page describes the actions of the boarders as very cautious and private. Particularly, the image of boarders who "hold the walls about them as they weep or laugh" allows the reader to visualize the type of paranoia the landlady's presence creates.

[3] When portraying the landlady Page employs a very ominous tone, helping to emphasize the potentially dangerous nature of a woman who knows so much. When Page describes boarders' belongings as being "theirs and hers" he gives her a very possessive characteristic, further emphasized by her desire to, "like a lover...know all, all, all." Her curiosity is insatiable to the point that the reader worries what extremes she may go to to know every detail of her boarders' lives. The ominous tone is best exemplified by the speaker's description of her desire to "catch [the boarders] unprepared at last and palm the dreadful riddle of their skulls – hoping the worst." The word "catch" has a very ominous and malicious connotation, as though the landlady is a predator and the darkest secrets of her boarders' her prey.

[4] Page's portrayal of the landlady as an inquisitive and sinister character help to convey the idea that all people, even the seemingly insignificant ones in our lives hold the potential for darkness and danger, if only given the knowledge to exploit that inner darkness.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample T

[1] In their poem, “The Landlady,” P.K. Page illustrates the life of a landlady and how her actions result in her playing multiple roles in the lives of her boarders. Through their use of irony and metaphors, the poet demonstrates that impersonal connections spark curiosity in the other party, revealing the immoral nature of humanity to always lean towards discovering the faults of others.

[2] The irony of the difference between how the landlady describes her relationship with the boarders and the reality of intrusiveness by the landlady reveal her curiosity to always discover more about the boarders. In the first stanza, the landlady states that “the boarders come and go / impersonal as trains.” Trains are a method of transportation, revealing through the simile that the landlady is only providing a temporary stop for her boarders to help them get from one place to another, much like transportation. The temporary quality of the boarder’s time with the landlady supports the idea that their relationship is impersonal. There is no time to form a lasting bond. However, despite establishing this detachment from her boarders the landlady also “searches their rooms for clues when they are out / pricks when they come home late.” Searching her boarders rooms is an invasion of privacy, which is completely unusual and out of place in a relationship that is supposedly impersonal. The irony of this difference reveals that the landlady cannot prevent herself from finding out about the boarders. She cannot suppress her curiosity within an impersonal relationship, which not only paints her character as intrusive, but also reveals that she cannot only be a temporary stop for the boarders. The landlady desires to play another role in her boarder’s lives, which she does by inserting herself in their lives and discovering more about them.

[3] Metaphors involving the landlady’s actions reveal her motivations for her curiosity to find faults in others. The landlady is described to have a “camera eye”. This metaphor portray that they landlady is remembering her boards with a sense of permanance, much like how a photograph makes an event seem permanent. Photographs are also used in investigations; they hold proof of evidence so that it cannot be destroyed. In seeing everything through her camera eye, the landlady is trying to capture every moment in the lives of the boarders, holding onto to evidence of their faults. This is further supported when the landlady “prays she may catch them unprepared at last and palm the dreadful riddle of their skulls – hoping the worst.” The metaphor between the boarder’s thoughts and a riddle again reveal the investigative nature of the landlady, seeing the boarder’s as puzzles she cannot understand. However, the fact she is still hoping the worst reveal that her investigation is not only done out of simple curiosity. Her motivation to find faults in others reveal the immorality of human nature, perhaps caused by pride to be superior to the people around.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample V

[1] In the poem “The Landlady,” a speaker describes how a landlady views her tenants, yet does so in a way that portrays the landlord to be overbearing and much too curious. She seems to want to know the boarders that set up camp in her home yet they wish to keep to themselves. The landlady’s curiosity for those who stay with her and her desire to sift through their things in order to get to know them is express using literary elements such as imagery, metaphors, and similes, and towards the end, it’s clear that she gets to know them more intimately that the boarders probably hoped or expected.

[2] In the first half of the poem before the shift occurs between line 20 and 21, the speaker reveals the landlady’s yearn to know the people the houses. The speaker uses a simile in stanza one to describe closed doors to be “...like shutters on her camera eyes.” Behind the doors is what she wishes to capture, she wishes to see what goes on. But the boarder’s wish for privacy prevents this wish of hers. The people who stay wish to keep their lives personal which is why, “their lives become exact,” and “phone calls are cryptic.” But she just seems a bit curious at first, which is why, “she peers stippled with curious flesh.” The next couple of lines are what she wishes she could do. She wishes she could enter their room and examine their things out of the idea in which she believes she does not know them like she wishes she could. In lines 17 to 20, the poem reads, “Wonders when they are quiet, jumps when they move, dreams they dope or drink, trembles to know the traffic of their brains...”. The use of asyndeton in these lines shows how much the landlady dwells on the boarders and how greatly it seems to affect her that she doesn’t know them when in reality she knows them better than most people do.

[3] At line 21, there is a shift, and at this point in the poem, it is revealed that this landlady is oblivious to how well she actually knows her tenants. The first stanza explains how everything they use and own are essentially hers but in a metaphorical sense. She owns the place in which they stay in, so it’s almost as if she is part owner of their property since she houses them. It states that she “knows when they wash, how frequently their clothes go to the cleaners, what they like to eat...but even so is not content.” The landlady in actuality know more about these people than their closest friends do because she has familiarized herself with their routine. Unfortunately, this is not enough to satisfy her. All she wishes is to... “catch them unprepared” so she can get to know the part of them that is not formulated or controlled. Though she knows more about them than most, it is not enough for her.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample EE

[1] There is always a set of eyes watching, most just simply fail to notice, oblivious to the shadows around them. Such feels like the case in P.K. Page’s poem, “The Landlady.” In it, Page crafts an ominously intimate portrayal of the landlady through the use of techniques like imagery, selection of detail, and tone.

[2] As soon as the poem begins, the speaker begins to use imagery. Phrases like “sepia air” provoke a sense of watching, almost as if the speaker is observing through some sort of film or television. They then continue to elaborate upon this feeling of a lack of privacy when the poem reads, “...Click doors like shutters on her camera eye.” Such a phrase only adds to the notion of the landlady becoming a probing eye. And it is this notion that is also expanded as the poem progresses.

[3] Near the center of the poem, the speaker provides insight as to what the Landlady does while the boarders are not present. Page writes, “Unlocks their keyholes with the wire of sight, searches their rooms for clues when they are out...” But focusing on these details, these actions of the Landlady, the speaker paints her as someone who is nosey, someone who does not mind infiltrating the privacy of others in order to satisfy her own curiosity. Yet, the stanza that follows rebels against this portrayal almost as it reads, “Wonders when they are quiet, jumps when they move...jaywalks their street in clumsy shoes.” At this instance, the speaker makes the Landlady out to be, what seems like, considerate. She wonders about them, moves with them, feels with them, and it even appears she attempts to think like them. In this sense, she does not seem so scary, so probing, but more like a mom of sorts.

[4] Throughout the poem, the tone does fluctuate. Lines like, “Because of her their lives are exact...” are somewhat appreciative and allow readers to discover the Landlady as a caring guardian. However, on the contrary, lines like, “Their private mail, their photographs are theirs and hers,” evoke a frightening tone by making the reader feel as if nothing is sacred, nothing is private, and as if the Landlady is this looming Big Brother type of presence. But then, in the end, the reader finds the tone intimate again with the line, And like a lover must know all, all, all.” By choosing the word “lover” the speaker nearly justifies the Landlady and brings her caringness into the spotlight.

[5] All in all, Page uses a wide variety of techniques in order to craft their portrayal of the Landlady; imagery, selection of detail, and tone just being a few. Yet regardless, it does stand true that the speaker depicts the landlady as someone who shares a sort of ominous intimacy with those who inhabit her rooms, evoking not only fright but also trust.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample E

[1] In P.K. Page's poem "The Land lady," the speaker portrays the landlady as a predator, as if she was stalking her prey. This portrayal is accomplished through the poet's use of diction, and tone.

[2] Throughout the entirety of the poem, diction is used with unsettling negative connotation whenever describing the landlady, or when describing boarders' reactions to the landlady. This is exemplified in many instances, such as when the landlady "peers stippled with curious flesh" (lines 11-12). The word flesh has a creepy connotation, dehumanizing the boarders and painting an image of soulless, lifeless bodies instead. The landlady "trembles" to know her boarders' thoughts, and "jumps" when boarders' move (line 17-18); this diction also suspends for they are descriptive verbs of high energy motions. The negative connotation throughout this poem's diction paints the landlady in an ill, negative light and adds layers of suspense to the reader.

[3] The poet devises a creepy, unsettling, suspenseful tone throughout the poem, in order to convey how the boarders feel about the landlady. The poet describes the measures boarders take to avoid succumbing to the landlady in great detail, painting the landlady as a threat, and the boarders, in turn, as victims. The creepy tone adds suspense to the landlady and boarder's relationship, coming across to the reader as tense and dangerous.

[4] The poet uses many devices in order to convey that landlady as a threat and portray her in an "evil" light; these devices include a creepy tone, and negative diction.

Sample SS

[1] "The Landlady" poem analyzes the speaker's complex portrayal by using elements as imagery, diction, and a style of quatrain.

[2] The author organizes the poem in a quatrain form and having a lot of stops at the end of the lines causing thoughts and curiosity. In the first stanza the author included two similes in which compares people with trains and click doors to cameras, these comparisons emphasize the setting in which the poem is trying to imply we can suggest that the setting is a room where they're giving a speech. The people come and go as a train meaning their going in and out from the room.

[3] The word choice of diction creates an image in the reader's mind for example "They hold the walls about them as they weep or laugh" these explain the faces of the public. Also "wonders when they are quiete ...trembles to know the traffic of their brains" these give us an image in how the people is acting physical and mental.

[4] The landlady's use of elements was to introduce the meaning of the poem and make the reader understand the purpose. In the poem is about a woman giving a speech in which many individuals depend for their lives to be exact.

**AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)**

Index of Scores for Samples: Question 1

Sample Reference	Row A	Row B	Row C
HH	1	4	1
OO	1	4	1
T	1	4	0
V	1	3	0
EE	1	3	0
E	1	2	0
SS	0	1	0

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample HH

6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it includes a clear defensible thesis that directly responds to the prompt by recognizing complexity in the landlady’s portrayal and discussing how Page communicates that complexity: “The landlady’s complexity makes the audience feel something less intense than condemnation, but also less sympathetic than pity, as reinforced by Page’s implementation of active verbs, abrupt punctuation and selective personification.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because it provides specific evidence in the body paragraphs that are directly connected to the thesis, and it consistently connects that evidence to the thesis with explicit commentary. For example, in the second paragraph the student notes the active verbs used throughout the poem and explains that those verbs show the landlady is physically dependent on the tenant’s actions for her mental well-being. Although the student appears to struggle at times, for example in paragraph three when the student notes punctuation and sentence structure, the commentary provided even brings that evidence back to the initial thesis, showing that it relates to the landlady’s “formulaic” thinking.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C because it identifies and explores the poem’s complexities throughout the student’s interpretation. The thesis acknowledges how “The landlady’s complexity makes the audience feel something slightly less intense than condemnation, but also less sympathetic than pity” (paragraph 1), and it supports that idea successfully throughout the rest of the response. Additionally, the ideas in the response develop further in complexity as the student notes the mirroring of content and form. In paragraph four, the student writes, “Page’s personification adds human traits to inanimate objects the same way that the landlady creates an image of people she does not personally know.” The response finally returns to the thesis without being repetitious, noting that “the audience is left with a mix of complex emotions between anger and empathy” (paragraph 5).

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample OO

6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis in response to the prompt when it notes that “Page portrays the landlady as a curious and inquisitive presence who may just have dark motives.” Such a statement requires evidence and development and is not simply a statement of fact or a description. The thesis further discusses how Page conveys the landlady’s complexity through “imagery and tone.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because it marshals specific evidence in a clearly organized way that connects directly back to the thesis stated in paragraph one. Paragraph two focuses on the images of body parts, and the response notes the eye of the camera, the “tickling ears” and even the landlady’s “curious” flesh. The commentary builds the connection between those images and the thesis, but then also extends it to new observations: the landlady becomes almost like a machine and, then, also notes how the tenants respond. In the third paragraph, the response again gives examples of how tone is constructed by mentioning possessives, repetition and, finally, diction with its focus on the connotations of the word “catch.” The response provides numerous examples to support its points and offers consistently developed commentary throughout.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the sophistication point in Row C because it explores complexities within the poem throughout the student’s interpretation and because it situates the poem in a larger context at the beginning, noting that the landlady’s position is similar to other workers in our society who have “unique perspectives on populations” (paragraph 1). As the response progresses, the sophistication of thought and complex understanding of the poem become readily apparent through the student’s careful choice of evidence and nuanced commentary. For example, in paragraph two, the student notes that “Page’s use of imagery which isolates the Landlady’s senses make her feel like she is a machine, designed and engineered for ultimate invasion of privacy and gives her an almost ominous and omnipresent feeling.”

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample T

5/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis about the complex portrayal of the landlady: “Through [Page’s] use of irony and metaphors, the poet demonstrates that impersonal connections spark curiosity in the other party revealing the immoral nature of humanity to always lean towards discovering the faults of others.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned all four points in Row B because it provides specific evidence to support the line of reasoning and offers consistent commentary to explain both how the evidence supports the claims and how multiple literary elements contribute to the poem’s meaning. In the second paragraph the response includes a full discussion of irony, noting several different lines from the poem and offering comments about what those lines reveal about the landlady. The third paragraph focuses on metaphors and, again, makes several references to the poem, each of which are connected back to the thesis about the landlady’s behavior. The commentary connected to the “camera eye” is a good example of how a student develops an interpretation with well-chosen evidence and thoughtful explanation.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. While it crafts a complex, defensible thesis, the essay falls short of clearly articulating or successfully proving it. The relationship between the “impersonal connections” and the “immoral nature” is potentially intriguing, but the response does not fully connect the two ideas, relying instead on “irony” to develop the idea of impersonal connections leading to a desire to know something more permanent and then, relying on “metaphors” to question the landlady’s moral motivations. The essay develops the points separately and then simply reasserts the claim without fully integrating the points to prove it.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample V

4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis about the landlady’s relationship with the tenants in response to the prompt. In the first sentence, the response states: “In the poem ‘The Landlady,’ a speaker describes how a landlady views her tenants yet does so in a way that portrays the landlord to be overbearing and much too curious.” By including the ideas of “overbearing” and “much too curious,” the response creates an assertion that needs support, not just a simple description. At the end of the first paragraph, the response also suggests a reasonable line of argument: “The landlady’s curiosity for those who stay with her and her desire to sift through their things in order to get to know them is express using literary elements such as imagery, metaphors, and similes, and towards the end, it’s clear that she gets to know them more intimately than the boarders probably hoped or expected.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earns three points in Row B because it offers specific evidence and connects that evidence to the thesis with clear commentary. The response in paragraph two, for example, refers to the line about “shutters on her camera eye,” and analyzes that image as reflective of the landlady’s desire to know more. That idea is then expanded by the boarders’ attempts to make “their lives become exact.” The response also identifies asyndeton and attempts to connect that device to meaning as well, but the result is more of an assertion than an explanation of how the device works to convey that meaning. The third paragraph, that discusses the “shift” that the response identifies, then, is less clear and less developed, but is not overly simplistic or misinterpreted.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because the plan suggested in the initial paragraph—using “imagery, metaphors, and similes”—is not developed in the essay itself. The response does attempt to identify a “shift” “between line 20 and 21,” but the response has difficulty supporting that claim. Instead, the response seems to reiterate throughout that the landlady wants more knowledge. The result is an essay that does not illustrate sophisticated thinking (the landlady simply wants to know “more about them than most”) nor complex literary argument (the idea of a shift is not clearly developed). Little evidence exists for alternative interpretations or contradictory evidence, and the response does not attempt to position the poem in larger contexts.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample EE

4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

Noting that the portrayal of the landlady is “ominously intimate” as depicted “through the use of techniques like imagery, selection of detail, and tone,” the response immediately establishes a thesis that needs to be defended and suggests some complexity of thought, thereby earning the point in Row A. The thesis is developed and becomes more substantial in the closing paragraph of the essay: “the speaker depicts the landlady as someone who shares a sort of ominous intimacy with those who inhabit her rooms, evoking not only fright but also trust.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points in Row B and follows the tri-part organization (“imagery, selection of detail, and tone”) introduced in the thesis through the rest of the essay. It offers specific evidence that illustrates each of the three literary elements in individual paragraphs and connects those pieces of evidence to the line of reasoning. However, the commentary is uneven, better developed in paragraph three than it is in paragraph two, where the commentary is more limited. Another example of limited commentary would be in paragraph three, where the response notes the “intimacy” of the line “like a lover must know all, all, all,” but then does not comment on the effect of the repeated words to help develop the claim. The response offers specific evidence to support the claims, but in two places the commentary fails to fully support a key claim.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. While it does recognize complexity in the depiction of the landlady (especially in the closing paragraph), it does not present a nuanced understanding of that depiction or handle alternative interpretations. The response, overall, does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or consistently develop a complex literary argument.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample E

3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A with its assertion that the landlady is portrayed as “a predator, as if she was stalking her prey...through the poets use of diction, and tone.” That idea is repeated in the closing of the essay where the landlady is described as a “threat,” portrayed in an “evil light” through the poet’s use of “a creepy tone, and negative diction.”

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because it includes some specific relevant evidence in the second paragraph, but also misreads that evidence. For example, after quoting the description of the landlady who “peers stippled with curious flesh,” the response then suggests that the word “flesh” refers to the boarders instead of the landlady. Additionally, the response notes the “high energy verbs” and suggests that such choice provides “suspense” but does not explain how that connection might be made. The third paragraph discusses tone with no specific evidence and instead becomes repetitious.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought (relying only on the repetition of a single, simple claim) nor does it develop a complex literary argument (unintentionally misreading evidence instead).

Sample SS

1/6 Points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row A as it offers no defensible thesis. What might be a thesis at the end of the essay is a misreading of the poem (the landlady is not the speaker giving a speech) and is not defensible.

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because it does provide general textual references that might, at best, be considered vaguely relevant to each other as evidence. For example, the response notes the structure of the poem and references generally some images from the poem. It also attempts some explanations, but those observations are not developed with clear commentary aimed toward a clear thesis. Still the number of references and the vague attempts at commentary earn the response a point.

Row C: 0/1

The response does not have a thesis to develop and does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or argument.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

The student responses in this packet were selected from the 2019 Reading and have been rescored using the new rubrics for 2020. Commentaries for each sample are provided in a separate document.

Student responses have been transcribed verbatim; any errors in spelling or grammar appear as they do in the original handwritten response.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample C

[1] From an excerpt of his The Rise of Silas Lapham, William Dean Howell portrays sisters Penelope and Irene as dependent on their family yet independent from society through selection of detail, words focused on self-reliance, and a significant shift in tone in order to challenge why we feel the need to constantly seek the acceptance and adoration of others but also warn against the dangers of living an overly sheltered life.

[2] Howell has a careful selection of detail to show how these sisters are different from other girls of that time period. In fact, the excerpt opens with “They were not girls who...” which implies that these sisters deviated from the societal norm. The younger sister Irene “dressed herself very stylish, and spent hours on her toilet every day”, which was not so others could see and admire her, but simply for her own contentment because the Laphams “lived richly to themselves.” Howell shows how in theory there is nothing particularly destructive about the mindset that family can rely on each other and live for each other. In account of the elder daughter, Howell shows how she “went to many church lectures on a vast variety of secular subjects” and “[made] fun of nearly everything,” her wit deterred potential suitors, differentiating her from the marriage-obsessed girls of her day. Through highlighting the sisters’ odd social behavior but apparent contentment and peace, Howell criticizes how most girls and families are obsessed with impressing others and climbing up the social ladder.

[3] Howell also uses words like “self-guided,” “self-improvement,” and “mutual affection” to highlight the strong, but isolated bonds that the Lapham family shares. The Laphams are implied to be not of great social status because “a great gulf divided” them from wealthier families; however, the Laphams “had no skill or courage to make themselves noticed”, but more specifically, “The elder daughter did not care for society apparently.” They are described as “lurk[ing] helplessly... looking on and not knowing how to put themselves forward” in social settings which could be of detriment to the daughters when they want to get married of course a liberal perspective would claim there is no need for the daughters to get married, but as social norms of the day define, it is pure ignorance that the Laphams sheltered their daughters so much from social interaction. Here, Howell warns against overreliance of family and groups for support because once you’re in, you may find it hard to get out.

[4] Howell finally shifts his tone from objective and observant to critical of this excessive sheltering from societal values and mannerisms from line 58 and onwards. Irene attracts the attention of one young man, but is completely at a loss on how to act for “so wholly had she depended on her mother and sister for her opinions”: “she began for the first time to form ideas, which she has not derived from her family.” Howell illustrates the importance in thinking for yourself, for although her family’s nonconformity suited them, Irene was only conforming to her family’s beliefs.

[5] With almost contrasting and ironic messages, Howell calls for his readers to seek a balance of conformity to social norms and individualism, all the while discerning yourself what fraction of each should guide your actions and thoughts.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample GG

[1] People develop understanding of the world and of life in several different ways, depending on who they spend time with and how they spend their time. America has often emphasized learning values from ones family but always making sure to spend time in society to truly cultivate your personality and identity. In his novel "The Rise of Silas Lapham" William Dean Howell portrays an example and experience of two sisters, Penelope and Irene, who [illegible] their main affection and family bond are sheltered from society's attitudes. The social world and the world of the family sit in opposition. The tension between familial intimacy and the inaccessibility of society organize their experience. Howell utilizes descriptors of and imagery of the sisters family life, the metaphor of a flower to describe the younger daughter, and contrasts the younger daughter experience with the young man at Baie St. Joan with her experience at home.

[2] Howells utilizes imagery of the Lapham family life to portray the insular and idealistic nature of family. For example, Howells describes the coordination of the girls and the mother as "[taking] long naps every day, and [sitting] hours together minutely discussing what they saw out of the window." This description set up the image of 3 well dressed, sequestered women who slept for long periods of time and simply stared out the window talking about [illegible] things. His description of them spending "hours" together and taking "long naps" makes them look unusually bonded and surprises the reader, given that in the late 1800s there was a lot occurring in society and work to be done. Rather than actively engaging with what was outside the Laphams stared out the window and wanted in it, including passivity and the lack of readiness to engage with the world around them. Looking through a window is symbolic of the Laphams looking out at the world/life that they could not access or understand.

[3] Furthermore, Howells utilizes the metaphor of vegetable and flower to convey the sisters' natural state and contrast it with the artificially organized social world around them. Howells describes the younger sister as "having an innocence almost vegetable" and as eventually "bloom[ing] and glow[ing] with the unconsciousness of a flower." Through this Howells conveys the importance of engaging with society and actively contributing to it and learning from it; he also lends support to the natural human state, represented by the family. Howells comparing the same girl to a glowing but unconscious flower. The girls beauty was evident but meant little because she had no one to admire her or desire her beauty. Despite her happiness with her family, this shows how her beauty and personality were wasted by her constantly being in the house and with her sibling and family.

[4] Finally Howell utilized the details of the younger daughters interactions to portray the contrast between her home life and the experience she would have interacting with society. The girl's entire perspective of people and her entire mindset was entirely based off two people, showing truly how narrow minded the girl must be and the extent of her narrative. The girls are unable to exist in the world around them or understand its rules. Her interaction with the boy in Baie St. John shows this clearly.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample P

[1] Society's point of view always has a tendency to shape who people are. In the novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, by William Dean Howell, two sisters of different nature both view societal point of view as foreign. Howells uses a plethora of literary devices such as style, tone, and selection of detail when portraying the sisters' conflicted experience due to society's influence. Howell shows that the sisters are isolated from the world outside the home and unable to communicate with the people they meet.

[2] Even though the sisters are different they are both isolated, just in different ways. Irene spends lots of time trying to look good. This can be inferred as the passage says, "Irene dressed herself very stylishly..." (line 7). The style used here can best be described as flashy or appealing in appearance due to the adjective "stylishly". The passage also reads, "...spent hours on her toilet every day." (lines 7-8). When oneself usually spends hours in the bathroom, it is predicted that their physical appearance is of large importance to that person. Penelope on the other hand is the opposite, with her style being much more simpler. This is seen as the passage reads, "Her sister has a simpler taste...might even have slighted dress." (lines 8-10). Even though Irene spends a lot of time on her appearance and Penelope doesn't know how, it ultimately doesn't matter. No one will see either sister because they are unable to enter society: "the Laphams had no skill or courage to make themselves noticed."

[3] The Lapham family differs from the other families when it comes to society as well. The passage says, "where they witnessed the spectacle which such resorts present throughout New England...humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young man..." (lines 32-36). The tone throughout this quote is best described as very picturesque and royal. "Humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young man...", this shows that the family cares about what others think about them. But really, they don't know what to do with society because their family keeps society out: "The very strength of their mutual affection was a barrier to worldly knowledge; they dressed for one another; they equipped their house for their own satisfaction; they lived richly to themselves, not because they were selfish, but because they did not know how to do otherwise." The tone here is best seen as humble.

[4] Because the sisters live in their own world, they have no choice but to live within it, cut off from other people. When one of the sisters meets a boy, she can't really understand what he's saying because she's never seen the world through her own eyes: She took account of everything he did and said, pondering it, and trying to make out exactly what he meant, to the inflection of a syllable, the slightest movement or gesture. In this way she began for the first time to form ideas which she had not derived from her family, and they were none the less her own because they were often mistaken." Because she lives in the world of family, she can't understand.

[5] When describing the sisters experience, Howells uses devices such as style, tone, and selection of detail. Irene and Penelope, two sisters with different interest both find pleasing society as unimportant. Societal point of view usually has a tendency of building the way an individual is, but in the case of Irene and Penelope, this does not apply.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample RR

[1] The two sisters, Penelope and Irene, from William Dean Howell's The Rise of Silas Lapham, have very similar upbringings, yet differ from one another immensely. The author uses selection of detail along with symbolism to convey the differences and similarities between the sister's life experiences.

[2] Both Penelope and Irene are described as girls who had not "abandoned themselves to needle work," meaning they were both young girls; stereotypically, older women took to needle work as a pastime. However, the three year difference between the girls may have made all of the difference in their intellect, as well as their futures. The author includes details on how the two girls dress. Irene spends much of her time shopping for new clothing while Penelope does not see the point in dressing so fancy and preferred a simpler style. The author's choice to include these details on their personal styles serves a purpose – it shows that Penelope has developed the same values as her parents. The two were so secluded during their childhoods, Penelope does not see the point in dressing nice to only impress her mother and sister.

[3] It almost seems as if Irene was from re-living the boring, seclusive life of her parents before it was too late. Irene refers to her life before meeting a new man as "detached," saying she "depended on her mother and sister for her opinions." It's almost as if Irene did not meet this man, in three years she would no longer care about the standards of society, just like her sister.

[4] The family is also projected to be a very shallow simplistic family by the author. At one point, maybe before Penelope closed her mind to the possibility of being intellectual, she spent a period of time going to church services to "find herself." However, it is included that when she came home, she would speak of the lectures "with a comic account for them, and that made more matter of talk for the whole family." The author most likely included this detail to show that at one point, Penelope was intellectually curious, like Irene is today. However, her family's lack of intelligence rubbed off on her before she found a way out like Irene did. At one point, it is even mentioned that "Irene complained that [Penelope] scared away the men they were acquainted with."

[5] The Lapham family is portrayed as an uneducated, unexperienced family with an extremely surface level life through selection of detail. The author includes details that may seem random, such as their vacation preferences, daily habits, and style choices to show how elementary the minds of most of the family members are. Penelope and Irene are only 3 years apart, yet Irene's attractive features allowed her to escape the simple minded family before it was too late. Penelope, who stayed with her parents for just 3 years longer, has almost completely detached herself from society. Society's standards of beauty allowed Irene to live an intellectual life, yet left Penelope in the boring house she grew up in, watching people pass by the window for entertainment and huffing her days away.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample TT

[1] This excerpt from *The Rise of Silas Lapham* discusses the lavish yet helpless lives of sister Irene and Penelope in a satirical way in an attempt to explain the seemingly selfish lives of Laphams “because they did not know how to do otherwise”. Author William Dean Howells highlights the clueless and unaware sisters through detailed examples and a satirical tone.

[2] The many satire-based observations in the excerpts prompt the reader to take pity on the family, especially the Lapham sisters in their interactions with each other and with society. This is exemplified in lines 38-40 when both Irene and Penelope are so focused on each other that they are completely unaware of how to be confident with others, especially with men. Their affection for each other outweighs their affection for anyone outside of their family, which distracts the sisters from focusing on the rest of the world.

[4] The sisters’ deceptively self-absorbed nature is simply a manifestation of their contentedness and complacency in every aspect of their lives. This is shown in Howell’s details about private dance lessons and European travel, which the girls did not care about because they did not know about it. This captures the very essence of blissful ignorance, and the role ignorance plays in determining the happiness and success of an individual.

Sample B

[1] In the excerpt from the novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, written by William Dean Howells, it shows how different the two sisters are. Irene and the eldest daughter have two completely different views on life and it is described through style, tone, and selection of detail.

[2] There is a certain style of writing the author is using. Throughout the excerpt, the eldest daughter’s name is not presented anywhere. She is only mentioned as the eldest. The style is also throughout the first paragraph, making it seem as if the two sisters are complete opposites and have nothing in common.

[3] The tone of the excerpt is very “upbeat and happy”. It is also very informative about sister Irene in the final paragraph. The tone isn’t competitive, but it is comparing the two sisters. For example Irene likes to be stylish when the eldest doesn’t really care. The tone is also very “soft” meaning that there really isn’t any darker than that, It’s just normal.

[4] The selection to detail in the excerpt seems to rely on Irene the most. Although she is the youngest, she tried to seem much more mature. For example, it states, “Irene complained that she scared away the young men whom they got acquainted with...” (paragraph 1) to receive the attention of boys. The author gave more detail with Irene, and since he did that, we now realize that Irene and her sister aren’t really the same.

[5] This excerpt portrayed the experiences of the two sisters with style, tone, and the selection of detail. Although the excerpt was mostly about Irene, readers still understood how the two sisters have two different views on life.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample EE

[1] From the beginning of the excerpt from “The Rise of Silas Lapham”, William Dean Howell depicts the way of lives of two sisters: Penelope and Irene.

[2] “They were not girls who embroidered or abandoned themselves to needle-work” (line 1-2) exhibits the contrast of the stereotype of girl with following the girls of with “abundant leisure” (line 3). According to description of first paragraph, the two sisters obsess with shopping. For example, “Irene spent her abundant...far beyond her capacity to wear.” (lines 2-7) Moreover, “They all three took long naps... they saw out of the window.” (line 10-12) shows they have free life and without worrisome. Above description is abundant evidence of their normal life in the family.

[3] On the contrary, they are ignorant in the aspect of European travel. For instance, “they did not know... how to attract it in the sophisticated city fashion.” (line 22-29) It is obvious evidence of their lack of knowledge of outside world.

[4] At next, they coincidentally go to New England; but they had gone about the mountain... humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young man.” (line 30-36) the girls from outside are totally extintive. They are more attractive, manipulate, and elegant. “They lurked helpless” contrast with life in their family.

[5] In the end, the girls who “she could make fun of nearly everything” (lines 17-18) becomes “she had scarcely lived a detached, ...almost her sensation.” Their personality change with big contrast.

Sample U

[1] In William Dean Howell’s novel, “The Rise of Silas Lapham, two sisters Penelope and Irene did not care for the views of society but for themselves. Through the use of a self-satfiicd and detail we gain insight to the sisters experience within their family and society.

[2] In the beginning of the passage we see how the girls act within society

**AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)**

Index of Scores for Samples: Question 2

Sample Reference	Row A	Row B	Row C
C	1	4	0
GG	1	3	1
P	1	3	0
RR	1	2	0
TT	1	2	0
B	1	1	0
EE	0	1	0
U	1	0	0

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample C

5/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible interpretation of the sisters' complex relationship to their family and society. While the thesis is somewhat convoluted, and would be more effective if revised into two sentences, it still makes a defensible claim that responds to the prompt: "From an excerpt of his The Rise of Silas Lapham, William Dean Howell portrays sisters Penelope and Irene as dependent on their family yet independent from society through selection of detail, words focused on self-reliance, and a significant shift in tone in order to challenge why we feel the need to constantly seek the acceptance and adoration of others but also warn against the dangers of living an overly sheltered life." (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because the commentary consistently explains how the specific and well-chosen evidence supports the line of reasoning. In the second paragraph the student integrates short quotations into the response to support the student's claim about the writer's careful selection of detail: "'Irene dressed herself very stylish, and spent hours on her toilet every day', which was not so others could see and admire her, but simply for her own contentment because the Laphams 'lived richly to themselves.'" The argument builds with evidence and commentary depicting this close family's isolation from society and comments on its significance: "In account of the elder daughter, Howell shows how 'she went to many church lectures on a vast variety of secular subjects' and '[made] fun of nearly everything,' her wit deterred potential suitors, differentiating her from the marriage-obsessed girls of her day." Paragraph two concludes with commentary on the irony of the sister's situation and its significance: "Through highlighting the sisters' odd social behavior but apparent contentment and peace, Howell criticizes how most girls and families are obsessed with impressing others and climbing up the social ladder." The response continues engaging specific details from the passage in the subsequent paragraphs to provide evidence in support of the last part of the thesis, that Howell "warn[s] against the dangers of living an overly sheltered life." In each case the commentary is well-developed, explicitly explaining how the selected evidence supports the line of reasoning.

Row C: 0/1

While the thesis statement is ambitious and complex, the evidence and commentary aren't as convincing, clear, and focused as they need to be to maintain that level of complexity in the interpretation and achieve the point for sophistication.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample GG

6/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible interpretation of the passage: “The social world and the world of the family sit in opposition. The tension between familial intimacy and the inaccessibility of society organize their experience.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points in Row B because it provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning, and the corresponding commentary explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. Numerous specific pieces of evidence are included throughout the response. Short textual excerpts are embedded in clear commentary and are continued throughout the response. For example, in paragraph two the student blends specific details with commentary: “[taking] long naps every day, and [sitting] hours together minutely discussing what they saw out of the window.” This description set up the image of 3 well dressed, sequestered women who slept for long periods of time and simply stared out the window talking about [illegible] things. His description of them spending “hours” together and taking “long naps” makes them look unusually bonded and surprises the reader, given that in the late 1800s there was a lot occurring in society and work to be done.” The argument builds in paragraph three with the vegetable metaphor: “Howells describes the younger sister as “having an innocence almost vegetable” and as eventually “bloom[ing] and glow[ing] with the unconsciousness of a flower.” Through this Howell conveys the importance of engaging with society and actively contributing to it and learning from it, he also lends support to the natural human state, represented by the family.” The response approaches four points, but incomplete commentary in paragraph four fails to adequately address its evidence: “The girls are unable to exist in the world around them or understand its rules. Her interaction with the boy in Baie St. John shows this clearly.”

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C because it demonstrates sophistication of thought. Specifically, the response identifies and explores a tension in the passage between the natural “organic” family and the constructed social world that eludes the sisters. For example: “Howell utilizes the metaphor of vegetable and flower to convey the sisters’ natural state and contrast it with the artificially organized social world around them.” The response cites specific literary techniques that reinforce and develop this tension, which structures the larger interpretation and line of reasoning.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample P

4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis in response to the prompt: “In the novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, by William Dean Howells, two sisters of different nature both view societal point of view as foreign. Howells uses a plethora of literary devices such as style, tone, and selection of detail when portraying the sisters’ conflicted experience due to society’s influence. Howells shows that the sisters are isolated from the world outside the home and unable to communicate with the people they meet.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points in Row B because it provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning and the corresponding commentary explains how some of the evidence supports the line of reasoning. The response includes appropriate textual detail in the body paragraphs. For example, in paragraph two, the response notes Irene’s extensive attention to appearance, tying that evidence to the claim that she is nevertheless unable to “enter society.” Similarly, in paragraph three, the response harnesses evidence to assert that the sisters “don’t know what to do with society because their family keeps society out.” That said, the commentary is uneven, particularly when it attempts to unpack literary technique. For example, in paragraph three, the response portrays quoted passages as “royal” and “humble” in their tone, but it isn’t apparent how that observation advances the line of reasoning. The one successful evaluation of literary technique occurs in paragraph two, in which the student observes contrasting characterization to advance a counterintuitive interpretation.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because the response does not explore the complexities of the passage or textual detail in a sustained way. While incisive at moments, those moments are episodic.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample RR

4/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it implies a contrast between the two sisters with the word “yet” and offers a defensible interpretation about how that contrast is portrayed by noting the author’s use of detail and symbolism. The thesis states, “The two sisters, Penelope and Irene, from William Dean Howell’s The Rise of Silas Lapham, have very similar upbringings, yet differ from one another immensely. The author uses selection of detail along with symbolism to convey the differences and similarities between the sister’s life experiences.”

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because it provides some specific and relevant evidence: “The author includes details on how the two girls dress. Irene spends much of her time shopping for new clothing while Penelope does not see the point in dressing so fancy and preferred a simpler style” and explains in the commentary how the evidence supports the thesis: “The author’s choice to include these details on their personal styles serves a purpose – it shows that Penelope has developed the same values as her parents.” While it does make this point well, the response includes other simplistic and inaccurate explanations that don’t strengthen the argument: “The Lapham family is portrayed as an uneducated, unexperienced family with an extremely surface level life through selection of detail. The author includes details that may seem random, such as their vacation preferences, daily habits, and style choices to show how elementary the minds of most of the family members are.” These oversimplifications and inaccuracies prevented the response from earning three points.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. It makes sweeping generalizations at times, for example, “The author uses selection of detail along with symbolism to convey the differences and similarities between the sister’s life experiences” (paragraph 1). The response does not delve into nuanced reasons for the differing behaviors of the sisters within their family or society.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample TT

3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A as it offers a defensible thesis: “This excerpt from *The Rise of Stilas Lapham* discusses the lavish yet helpless lives of sister Irene and Penelope in a satirical way in an attempt to explain the seemingly selfish lives of Laphams ‘because they did not know how to do otherwise’. Author William Dean Howells highlights the clueless and unaware sisters through detailed examples and a satirical tone.”

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because it consists of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities, and it offers only two paraphrased citations: “This is exemplified in lines 38-40 when both Irene and Penelope are so focused on each other” (paragraph 2) and “This is shown in Howell’s details about private dance lessons and European travel” (paragraph 3). Furthermore, the commentary oversimplifies the complex passage: “Their affection for each other outweighs their affection for anyone outside of their family, which distracts the sisters from focusing on the rest of the world” (paragraph 2). While the commentary does not contradict the argument, it does not strengthen it: “[T]he girls did not care about [dance and travel] because they did not know about it. This captures the very essence of blissful ignorance, and the role ignorance plays in determining the happiness and success of an individual.” As a whole, the evidence and commentary are too simplistic and general to reach the level of three points.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because the evidence is too thin and the commentary too general to produce sophisticated and complex thinking.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample B

2/6 Points (A1 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because, while somewhat simplistic, it minimally meets the criteria as it does present an assertion that goes beyond restating the prompt or merely summarizing the text: “Irene and the eldest daughter have two completely different views on life and it is described through style, tone, and selection of detail.”

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because the two pieces of evidence are mostly general and have little to no commentary: “Irene likes to be stylish when the eldest doesn’t really care”(paragraph 2) and “Irene complained that she scared away the young men whom they got acquainted with...” (paragraph 4). For the most part, the response is a series of unsupported assertions which present an analysis of style unrelated to the argument: “[T]he eldest daughter’s name is not presented anywhere”(paragraph 2) and a misconstrued discussion of tone, “The tone is also very “soft” meaning that there really isn’t any darker than that, It’s just normal” (paragraph 3).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C as it oversimplifies the complex relationship the girls have with each other, their parents, and society. The thinking does not move beyond simply asserting that the girls are different from one another.

Sample EE

1/6 Points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row A as it provides a summary of the passage without reference to the complex relationship between the siblings, the family, and society: “From the beginning of the excerpt from “The Rise of Silas Lapham”, William Dean Howell depicts the way of lives of two sisters: Penelope and Irene.” This statement is descriptive rather than defensible.

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because it does offer some examples of textual support that, while not inaccurate, are only vaguely relevant and are not explained through commentary. Since there is no thesis, the examples cannot connect to a controlling idea.

Row C: 0/1

The response does not earn the point in Row C because it does not demonstrate sophisticated and complex thinking.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample U

1/6 Points (A1 – B0 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible interpretation: “In William Dean Howell’s novel, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, two sisters Penelope and Irene did not care for the views of society but for themselves. Through the use of a self-satfiicd and detail we gain insight to the sisters experience within their family and society.”

Row B: 0/1

The response did not earn a point in Row B because it provides neither evidence nor commentary in its one sentence.

Row C: 0/1

The response does not earn the point in row C. The response’s brevity precludes sophisticated thinking.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 3: Literary Argument (2019)
Sample Student Responses

The student responses in this packet were selected from the 2019 Reading and have been rescored using the new rubrics for 2020. Commentaries for each sample are provided in a separate document.

Student responses have been transcribed verbatim; any errors in spelling or grammar appear as they do in the original handwritten response.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 3: Literary Argument (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample DD

[1] In Ken Kesey's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," patients living in a mental institution known as "The Combine" live a weary existence under the tyranny of Nurse Ratched. This dynamic is shifted with the introduction of patient Randle McMurphy. Self-confident and tenacious, McMurphy is uniquely idealistic in his belief that he has the power to oust Nurse Ratched, and thus, alter the dynamic of the ward as a whole. Through McMurphy's idealism, he allows the patients to regain a sense of dignity and he charts the course for his ultimate demise; through this, Kesey is able to show that despite the inevitable negative consequences which will result from idealism, it is a necessary quality to ignite social change.

[2] McMurphy's idealistic belief that he has the power to permanently alter the conditions of the ward compel him to take incredibly risky actions which prove to benefit the patients. Through staging a protest whenever he sits in front of a blank TV in order to demand access to better channels, he is resisting Nurse Ratched in a way no patient around him has ever dared to. As such, he establishes himself as a martyr and a symbol for hope on account of his idealism. This leads to the patients being able to abandon their own cynical perceptions of the world, and latch onto McMurphy's idealism. When McMurphy sneaks the patients out of the ward to go on a fishing trip, he is motivated by the idealistic belief that what he is doing will enact long-term change, and that there will be no consequences. However, these men being able to autonomously catch fish for themselves is uniquely empowering for them; it is because of McMurphy's idealistic actions that these men are able to regain a sense of dignity. Such is specifically shown through the character of Bromden, a man who strives to remain invisible through hallucinating a fog which allows himself to be detached from Ratched and the ward. These actions are propelled by his cynical views and deeply-rooted fears of the world; however, when he meets McMurphy and engages in these risks, the fog in his mind clears, and he no longer has a fervent desire to remain invisible. As a result, idealism is shown to be almost contagious, and to hold unique power in effecting change; it is only when the men saw the merits of holding an optimistic view of the world that they began to regain their identities, which had been stolen from them by Ratched.

[3] However, idealistic perceptions of the world do not come without consequences, as shown through how McMurphy's idealism ultimately leads to his own demise. Due to McMurphy's confidence in his own ability to act as a martyr, Ratched perceives him as a threat to her hold on power, and makes the decision to lobotomize him and reduce him to a vegetable state. This action against McMurphy was specifically taken because of the idealistic actions taken by McMurphy; he truly believed he had an ability to largely evade any consequences which could be imposed on him by Ratched, but is unsuccessful in achieving this goal. However, despite McMurphy's fate, Kesey is still able to convey the positive aspects of idealism; Bromden makes the decision at the end of the novel to euthanize McMurphy and then escape the ward, so that McMurphy did not live forever as a symbol of Ratched's oppression. Had Bromden not been motivated by McMurphy's idealistic nature, he would not have taken this action and would not have seen the value of him regaining his dignity, in and of itself a protest against Ratched's influence. Thus, Kesey is able to show the necessity for realism for vulnerable groups; in order to stand up to oppression in any capacity, there must exist hope for a better future, hope uniquely possessed by McMurphy and then transferred to the patients.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 3: Literary Argument (2019)
Sample Student Responses

[4] Ultimately, through showing how idealism uniquely benefitted the patients on the ward and resulted in long-term, positive ramifications despite McMurphy's tragic end, Kesey is able to convey the key role that idealism plays in effecting social change.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 3: Literary Argument (2019)
Sample Student Responses

Sample J

[1] Oftentimes, when coming from a well-off upbringing, an individual develops an idealistic viewpoint of the world. He or she may believe humans to be innately good or government to be innately focused on the well-being of all. In his novel, Lord of the Flies, Author William Golding presents readers with one such individual whose view of the world is too ideal to be true – a young British boy named Ralph. When an airplane crashes leaving a group of boys stranded on an island, Ralph believes that he can help bring the boys rescue, as long as the others cooperate. He soon finds out, however, that his plan is too optimistic. Through his character, Ralph, Golding conveys that holding an idealistic view of the world is dangerous: while temporary success can be achieved, it ultimately leads to the destruction of governmental institutions and chaos. He encourages readers to adopt a more realistic view of the world and recognize the inherent evil in all people.

[2] From the start, Ralph believes that he can create a direct democracy on the island that can ultimately bring the boys to safety. Shortly after the plane crash, Ralph and his friend Piggy find a conch shell on the beach, and Ralph, calling together the group, designates the conch shell as possessing special power. In particular, whoever holds the conch may speak; whoever does not cannot. It is this conch, then, that becomes a symbol of democracy on the island. At first, Ralph’s plan seems to work. Using the conch shell to assert his leadership, he instructs the group to build a signal fire on the island, so that passing ships can see it and come rescue the boys. Ralph, moreover, instructs the kids to build huts, collect water for the group, and lays out a number of ground rules concerning urinating and other matters. Ralph’s belief in his plan is based on his ideal view of the world; specifically, her believes that the boys – being good, rational beings – will follow the rules and help maintain the signal fire. Ralph also assumes that his democracy is somehow perfect and that all its members will cooperate.

[3] As the novel progresses, however, Ralph begins to understand that his plan – built on idealistic assumptions – will not hold up. Specifically, the boys quickly stop constructing the houses, until it is only Ralph and Simon doing the work. The same carelessness is seen with the signal fire: when a ship passes, Ralph is enraged that the signal fire is out and that the boys are not rescued. Thus, the negative consequences of having an ideal view of the world begin becoming clear: the boys not only miss out on a rescue opportunity but do not even have homes to sleep in at night. Moreover, the democracy that Ralph creates begins crashing as well. At one point, while Ralph is speaking, another boy named Jack interrupts him and refuses to stop talking despite not holding the shell. As seen later on, other boys also complain of the rule imposed by the shell. Symbolically, then, democracy is breaking as well.

[4] It is only near the end of the novel when the worst consequences of Ralph’s naivete are in broad display. At the point, Ralph has virtually lost all of his boys, who have instead run to join Jack – who promises to provide food to the kids and laughs at the prospect of maintaining a signal fire. Jack, who demonizes members of his “government” with physical violence, symbolically embodies a dictator, indicating that Ralph’s idealistic direct democracy collapses to the will of a dictatorship. Furthermore, one of Jack’s sadistic companions named Roger rolls a boulder off a cliff, killing both Piggy (Ralph’s best friend) and shattering the conch shell into a million pieces. The death of Piggy shows the demise of good (Piggy) in the face of evil (Roger), while the shattering of the conch shell shows the completely

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dissolution of Ralph's democracy on the island. Literally and symbolically, evil triumphs over good by the novel's end, and Ralph's optimistic hopes become a bitter reality.

[5] In William Golding's Lord of the Flies, an optimistic, ideal view of the world is exposed by Ralph, who believes a direct democracy and cooperation can bring the boys off the island. When the boys gradually turn away from Ralph and towards Jack – destroying democracy and killing people in the process – the reader comes to understand the negative side of Ralph's optimism. Ralph's ideal view of the world makes his plan extremely precarious and is bound to fail from the beginning. The end result is nothing but violence, destruction of his government, and chaos. Golding therefore urges readers to accept the faults of humanity and the fact that no person or institution is perfect. In so doing, they can begin to create governments that stand strong and plans that work well.

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Sample M

[1] In the novel 1984 by George Orwell, the main character Winston Smith holds an “ideal view of the world” to be able to live and love freely, which yields negative results by eventually leading to his imprisonment and torture, but highlights the meaning of the work as a whole which is to show the effects of control and oppression on a society.

[2] Winston Smith, a worker in the News Sector of his society, dreams for a world where he can be free. He wants to be able to have a sexual and emotional relationship with Julia, without having to hide for fear of the consequences. Julia and Winston are in love, which is strictly prohibited in their society. In Winston’s ideal world, he can be in love without fear. Winston also idealizes over being able to do his job freely, without revisions or censoring. In order to control the public, Winston’s government, Big Brother, has people like Winston change history books and destroy old newspapers with goals that were never achieved, predictions or projections that were never reached, and motives of the government that have been switched or abandoned. By doing this, the past is not truly the past, and the news is not the full story. Winston dreams for a world where he does not have to rewrite the past in order to please the government, or change history to fit Big Brother’s agenda. (*1) Winston’s goals and ideals are very high, and motivate him to act out against the government by falling in love and hiding away with Julia, as well as trying to denounce certain government mandated news revisions.

[3] The ideals that Winston has for the world yield negative consequences. When Winston hears about a rebel society that is fighting for what Winston thinks is right, he is immediately attracted. Even though this is strictly illegal he takes a leap of faith and tried to join the society. This is revealed to be a trap, and Winston and Julia are both exposed for trying to undermine Big Brother. They are both arrested, and Winston is tortured with his biggest fear: rats. This torture and mental manipulation by people that he once trusted like O’Brien causes Winston to eventually give in to Big Brother’s ideals. Winston’s will to survive and fight for what is right is destroyed. The negative consequences of his ideals cause him to become a shell of a person, numb to all feeling and events. He no longer opposes Big Brother, he gives into it all, because he has so little mental stamina left. (*2)

[4] This portrays Orwells overall message throughout 1984. In writing this novel, Orwell is trying to show readers the effects of harsh oppression on a society. This over powering of individual rights and control of actions does not lead to a happy society, but instead one filled with rebels, those who are afraid, and those who have been tortured to the point of surrender. Controlling societies spark rebellion and outcry of the public. When Big Brother tried to control the people of Oceania, people were either scared into submission or became rebels. Winston’s ideal views of the world or what it could be lead him to turn against the government and get himself arrested and tortured.

[5] Overall George Orwell’s portrayal of Winston’s ideal world in 1984 and how it leads him to trouble shows the meaning of the work to be the harmful effects of an oppressive society. Big Brother tried to mute creativity, but by muting creativity, it is just given more power and influence over the society as a whole.

(*1) However, this could never happen, Big Brother is too controlling. Orwell’s portrayal of Winston as a big dreamer serves to contrast with the controlling nature of Big Brother, and how they tie

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everyone down. Winston nevertheless is too strongly pushed by his ideals. He thinks he has a chance at living his dream life. He has a secret relationship, and acts out against Big Brother in his job, by not following direct instructions to immediately destroy certain headlines that do not make Big Brother look good.

(*2) If it were not for Winston's strong ideals about the world, he would not have been so motivated to act out. The rules that he violated were clearly prohibited, and his defiance towards the government is motivated by his hopes of a better life. Because he thought the world could be better, and he could live a better life, he ended up in a vegetative and brainwashed state – the exact opposite of what he wanted.

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Sample FF

[1] Many people subscribe to ideal views of the world, be it for better or for worse. In fact, V.S. Naipaul, in his novel Magic Seeds, writes, “It is wrong to hold an ideal view of the world. That’s where the mischief starts. That’s where everything starts unravelling”. While Naipaul argues that holding an ideal view of the world is dangerous, that is not always the case. This is best exemplified by the story of the Joads in John Steinbeck’s classic American novel, Grapes of Wrath. The main characters, a family called the Joads, have an ideal view of life in California, and even though it turns out to be largely untrue, simply holding the ideal view brings positive consequences. Steinbeck uses this idealism of the Joads to illuminate the meaning of the work by portraying the experience of migrant farmers.

[2] Idealism is an essential aspect to the story of the Joads. A family of tenant farmers in Oklahoma, they never lost hope after being forced off their farm. In fact, they all possessed an ideal view of life in California. This ideal view came from a handbill that Ma Joad found proclaiming the abundance of jobs in California. A mere handbill forming the basis for an idealist worldview is questionable at best, but despite running into plenty of obstacles, the Joads never give up on their ideal view of California as a haven of jobs and prosperity. Misguided? Maybe, but this idealism would save their lives.

[3] Contrary to what V.S. Naipaul suggests, idealism was actually very helpful to the Joads and without it, they probably would have died. Their ideal view of California is what inspired their perseverance through break downs, unemployment, violence, discrimination, and death. Had they given up on their ideal view of California, they would have never gotten jobs and the ability to better the family’s prospects. By consistently holding that view, the Joads ensured they would never give up on securing a better future for themselves. So, although dangerous in some cases, an ideal view of the world ensured the Joads’ survival.

[4] The Joads’ idealism, however is not just a plot piece. Steinbeck uses their idealism to illuminate the meaning of the work by portraying the plight of migrant farmers during the Dust Bowl in the 1930’s. Steinbeck was writing a novel that, while telling the individual story of the Joads, also told a larger story of the terrible experience of displaced migrant farmers during the Dust Bowl. Though the Joads’ idealism, Steinbeck displays the idealism in every migrant that was necessary for them to survive. By showing the Joads’ perseverance and the persistence of their idealism, Steinbeck highlights a major theme to the book: the rugged perseverance of the migrant farmers, many of whom would have had nothing without their idealism.

[5] So, while some argue that holding an ideal view of the world can be dangerous, it can also be essential to others. One example is the Joad family from John Steinbeck’s Grapes of Wrath. The Joads consistently hold an idealist view of California, without which they would not have been able to survive and set up a new life. Steinbeck uses this to illuminate the meaning of the novel, highlighting the necessity of an ideal worldview to migrant farmers.

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Sample HH

[1] In *Candide*, Voltaire's satirical style is aimed at the philosophy of the time. He ridicules the enlightenment philosophers and their views of the world. Voltaire projects the target philosophy onto a naïve prince in order to satirize the philosophy. Candide is woefully ignorant and holds an overly optimistic view of human experience. Like his friend and mentor Pangloss, he believes that "everything is for the best in all possible worlds." Candide's ideal view of the world is satirized when he experiences tragedy and portrays the fallacy of believing in idealism. Human experience is cursed by political structures, treatment of women and corrupt human nature. His adherence to the "idealistic philosophy" brings him pain and suffering, and ultimately the abandonment of his philosophy.

[2] Political leaders and laws cause more problems than they solve. With the exception of the leader of El Dorado, virtually every monarch Candide encounters abuses or neglects his people. The book begins because Candide is sent away by the baron. Candide has dinner with six deposed kings and learns how hard it is to govern people. Candide sees many examples of how society doesn't work: brutal war, rape, murder, attempts at torture but justifies it all by believing it is all for the best for much of the text. The only king who can help Candide and his people in El Dorado, which is an imaginary place and therefore not real.

[3] Women are treated very poorly in *Candide*. Even the female figures endowed with moral virtue at the beginning of the book turn bad. Cunégonde becomes ugly and broken when she is enslaved. Candide chooses to marry her because he knows it will anger her brother. Pangloss, Candide's wise friend, is easily distracted by a woman and provides Candide with terrible advice. Thus, the world around them ensures that women are as bad as men.

[4] Voltaire offers a bleak concept of human nature. Every possible negative thing that could happen happens to Candide. He is robbed of his jewels, deceived multiple times and the reader wonders what the next abuse will be in his travels. The book is basically organized by pain and suffering. His friends are enslaved in a chain gang, nearly eaten by the Biglugs, and just escape getting hanged. Humans are almost always cruel to one another.

[5] Candide's idealism is so exaggerated that the reader cannot see any plausibility in the popular philosophy. Candide is so optimistic that horrible events and tragedies are just swept away as devices for the improvement of public good. Voltaire's use of situational irony is so potent that the novel's meaning is incredibly clear to the reader, that optimistic philosophy is ridiculous and fundamentally flawed. There is no way adherence to the philosophy will bring improvement to your life. As we see in Candide's character, only despair comes to him. Candide's ideal world view is ridiculed to remove any credibility from Enlightenment philosophy of idealism. At the end of the book, Candide abandons his philosophy, believing that people need to "tend to their gardens."

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Sample TT

[1] The novel *Crime and Punishment* allows for both a growth in thinking of positives and negatives. The novel's main character, Rodion, goes through a fluxation of difficult choices. The choices made within the novel, shows a gray area between the good and the bad. The characters idealisms both follow the good and bad. The languages and interactions between characters allow for the reveal of the true effects on decisions based on life or death.

[2] The main character of the story begins to believe a certain idealism. An idealism in which he is the one who would one day aid in the advance of humanity. The character begins sickly, which later on can be said to affect his choices. Rodion begins to believe that certain people are better off dead, which later on make him commit murder. The women who he had murder both proposed good and bad consequences.

[3] One of the good consequences would be that he aided his community for the better. The valuables that belonged to Alyona were given to the community, which originally she was going to memorialize herself. Another positive would be that people weren't getting their items taken away anymore in order to be scumneel. At the beginning of the passages, the character has to pawn off valuable trinkets in order to survive, yet is given nearly no money. The people who owed her money would not have to pay her back which led to people being able to eat a bit longer.

[4] The negative portion of Rodion's idealism would be the affect it has on society. The whole reason why he had commited murder was to benefit society. Though and he has done the deed, nothing changed. Citizens were still starving and committing suicide as seen within the novel. Another issue would be that he was only able to attrract the police onto him, leaving his actions to be unjust.

[5] The author of the novel illuminates the idealism of the characters in many ways. Creating an idea in which actions need to be taken by those who are strong willed and can stomach it. Action throughout the plot creates both doubt and hope for the character and his ideals. After committing the deed, the characters world shifted from believing he was chosen, to being a mere sheep. Once that realization set in for Rodion, that was the moment in which the author was able to demonstrate the true affects of Rodions idealism.

[6] The idealism showed within the novel would be able to be connected to modern actions. The action presented within the novel would be presented by world leaders and their justifications showing how devastating actions have both benefits and consequences when it comes to peoples lives. Once one has an ideal world, they expect certain aspects to be in place. Life does not sit down and take command, so that is where the novel shines the most. Showing how one individual could have everything planned out, yet have everything go sideways after.

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Sample N

[1] In the novel the Lord of the Flies a bunch of school boys crash land on a island with no adults. The kids try to form a 'government' in which they have a 'view on the world' from what they think how the island should be ran. This view on the world is what makes the kids lead to their own demise, as they live on the island in chaos.

[2] The kids figured that if they lived / controlled the islands as they thought adults did that the island would be very organized. This ideal would soon lead them to mischief, as where their plan starts to unravel. The kids soon away seemed to be excited to run the island with no rules. Yet they see this as a problem and they try to fix it with trying to live like adults.

[3] Their ideals of the way that we run our society led to the kids downfall. They end up killing another kid. Their own morals and ways of their own life left them as they lived on this island. The kids lost their ways/minds not knowing how to control themselves in a world without rules. Their own ideals lead to their downfall in the end by killing one another and the kids turning into savages.

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Sample ZZ

[1] In Khaled Houssin's novel "The Kite Runner", the reader follows the life of a boy named Amir, and how his actions and view on life, will affect him as an adult.

[2] When Amir was a young boy he has a best friend named Hassan, who was just a servant boy, but Amir did not care at the time. During an annual event, Amir and Hassan were attempting to cut other kites down with their own. When Amir won, Hassan chased after the kite into an alley where the town bully, Assef and his friends cornered him and said that if Hassan didn't apologize and give him the kite, then bad things will happen. When Hassan said no, Assef forced him to the ground and raped him. As Amir caught up to Hassan, he got there at the wrong time. Amir remembered what Assef has said before about Hassan and he was just a servant boy. Amir was faced with two choices, run away and leave Hassan, or go save him. Sadly, Amir chose to run away. Hassan finally gave the kite to Amir, and they never talked about what happened. Amir's view on the world was always the same, there were servant and there were masters, and Amir was not a servant. This scene hurt Amir and Hassan's friendship badly, because things were never the same. On Amir's birthday he received a watch and money. That night Amir put his gifts under Hassan's mattress and said that he stole it. Instead of saying he didn't steal it, Hassan admitted to it, and lied to everyone. This event caused Hassan and his dad to leave forever.

[3] Later in life, after Amir's dad died, and Amir was now an adult and married and living in America, he went back to Kabul, only to find out that Hassan was dead. Amir was heartbroken, because he never got the chance to apologize and make it up to Hassan. When Amir found out that Hassan has a kid, he was determined to give the child the life Hassan never had. When Amir finally found Sohrob, Hassan's child Assef was the one who had him. In order to gain possession over Sohrob, Amir got beaten up really bad by Assef. In Amir's eyes, he has finally repaid his debt to Hassan. When Amir told Sohrob that in order for him to stay with Amir, he had to go back to an orphanage before Amir could adopt him. Sohrob was torn up inside by this news and attempted to kill himself because he would rather die than go back. Amir took Sohrob to a kite running competition in a park and when Sohrob won, Amir chased after the kite and said what Hassan told Amir, "For you a thousand times over." The way Amir saw the world changed when he went to America, he saw everyone as an equal, not anything less.

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Index of Scores for Samples: Question 3

Sample Reference	Row A	Row B	Row C
DD	1	4	1
J	1	4	1
M	1	4	0
FF	1	3	1
HH	1	3	0
TT	1	2	0
N	1	1	0
ZZ	0	1	0

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Sample DD (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*)
6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A by offering a defensible—and quite complex—thesis in the initial paragraph that responds directly to the prompt: “Through McMurphy’s idealism, he allows the patients to regain a sense of dignity and he charts the course for his ultimate demise; through this, Kesey is able to show that despite the inevitable negative consequences which will result from idealism, it is a necessary quality to ignite social change.” The statement also offers a line of reasoning when it notes that it will discuss both the positive and negative consequences of idealism, a plan that will be followed in the organization of the response.

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B by offering specific references to the text that are relevant to the thesis about the positive and negative consequences of McMurphy’s idealism. The response mentions specific plot points in both body paragraphs—McMurphy’s TV watching, his fishing trip, his interaction with Bromden, Ratched’s responses—and offers careful and consistent commentary for each, connecting them not only to each other but back to the thesis to establish the line of reasoning and ultimately offering an interpretation of the work as a whole.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C primarily because the student’s interpretation is nuanced and complex and handles skillfully the textual contradictions and apparent paradoxes throughout the response. It also maintains a style that is appropriate to the argument with careful attention to transitions and connecting ideas. The result is a demonstration of sophisticated thinking and the development of a complex literary argument about the novel.

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Sample J (*Lord of the Flies*)
6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it offers a defensible thesis about the novel that responds directly to the prompt by noting a character’s idealism and its consequences and by offering a potential interpretation of the novel as a whole: “Through his character, Ralph, Golding conveys that holding an idealistic view of the world is dangerous: while temporary success can be achieved, it ultimately leads to the destruction of governmental institutions and chaos. He encourages readers to adopt a more realistic view of the world and recognize the inherent evil in all people.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned all four points in Row B by including well chosen, specific details from the novel and connecting them through consistent commentary to the thesis, thereby establishing the line of reasoning. For example, the response notes the details of the conch shell and the signal fire and show how they illustrate Ralph’s idealistic belief that “democracy is somehow perfect” and that “the boys—being good, rational beings—will follow the rules.” In a later paragraph noting the details of the tragic climax of the novel, the response comments: “The death of Piggy shows the demise of good (Piggy) in the face of evil (Roger), while the shattering of the conch shell shows the completely dissolution of Ralph’s democracy on the island.” Finally, the response concludes with a reading of the novel as a whole by suggesting that “Golding therefore urges readers to accept the faults of humanity and the fact that no person or institution is perfect. In so doing, they can begin to create governments that stand strong and plans that work well.”

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C for its nuanced interpretation which both recognizes complexity in Ralph’s idealism and situates the novel in a broader context (national governmental systems). Finally, its style is vivid and particularly persuasive, demonstrating a clear control over the organization and development. The result is a sophisticated response with a complex literary argument that responds to the prompt.

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Sample M (1984)

5/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A for its clear, inclusive opening sentence: “In the novel 1984 by George Orwell, the main character Winston Smith holds an ‘ideal view of the world’ to be able to live and love freely, which yields negative results by eventually leading to his imprisonment and torture, but highlights the meaning of the work as a whole which is to show the effects of control and oppression on a society.” The sentence establishes a clear thesis—that Smith’s “ideal view of the world . . . yields negative results.” It also ties the thesis to the meaning of the work as a whole.

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B for its specific evidence from the text that are tied consistently back to a defensible interpretation of the meaning of the work as a whole. For example, in paragraph two, the response develops the idea that Winston is idealistic by contrasting Winston’s love for Julia with details about his job in the society and shows how the idealism is a motivating factor for the character. In turn, paragraph three details the negative consequences of such a motivation, again noting some specifics about the consequences of Winston’s actions.

Row C: 0/1

The response failed to earn the point in Row C because the thesis articulated at the beginning differs from the bolder claim made at the end. At the beginning the response seems to be arguing that the “meaning...is to show the effects of control and oppression on a society.” The point that oppressive societies do oppressive things that result in negative consequences for idealistic people seems more self-evident than complex. At the end, the effect that the response focuses on is how, when oppressed, creativity “is just given more power and influence over society as a whole.” In fact, the examples and commentary in the response show just the opposite—how creativity can be crushed. The result is an argument that seems more divided than complex.

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Sample FF (*The Grapes of Wrath*)
5/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a clearly defensible thesis, connected to the prompt: “The main characters, a family called the Joads, have an ideal view of life in California, and even though it turns out to be largely untrue, simply holding the ideal view brings positive consequences.” The thesis recognizes complexity and asserts an interpretation that must be supported.

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points in Row B because it provides specific evidence from the novel to support the line of reasoning and connects that evidence back to the thesis through commentary. For example, the second paragraph mentions the details of the handbill as a way of showing where the Joad’s idealized view of California originated. In the third and fourth paragraphs, however, the evidence becomes broader and less specific, and the commentary becomes less developed as a result. The response does make claims about the effect of the idealism on the novel as a whole, but in paragraph four that discussion makes the broadest of sweeps and offers no specific details for support. The result is commentary that is uneven (detailed in one spot, sweeping in other spots), limited and underdeveloped.

Row C: 1/1

While the commentary may be limited in places, the response earned the point in Row C because it recognizes contradictions and complexities in the text (noting, for example, that the idealism is not always justified, but yet is crucial for survival). It also attempts to position an interpretation of the novel in a broader context: “highlighting the necessity of an ideal worldview to migrant farmers.” Finally, it uses the quotation from the prompt in apt ways to control the development of the response in a style that is especially appropriate to the student’s argument.

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Sample HH (*Candide*)

4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point for its defensible thesis that also articulates a basic line of reasoning: “Candide’s ideal view of the world is satirized when he experiences tragedy and portrays the fallacy of believing in idealism. Human experience is cursed by political structures, treatment of women and corrupt human nature. His adherence to the ‘idealistic philosophy’ brings him pain and suffering, and ultimately the abandonment of his philosophy.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points in Row B because it offers many instances of specific evidence that supports the thesis and line of reasoning. Commentary sometimes explains how evidence supports the line of reasoning, but at times, it fails to articulate the value of the evidence. For example, paragraph two fails to clarify the relationship between women and morality despite including specific evidence related to Cunégonde and Pangloss. Similarly, the essay concludes by citing Candide’s belief that “people ‘need to tend to their gardens,’” but commentary fails to connect the quote with the conclusion that it supports.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it fails to demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument. The response repeats the central idea of how exaggeration helps readers see the ridiculousness of Candide’s stance, but does not explore nuances in the novel or account for alternative interpretations or contradictions. It does position the novel in the broader context of enlightenment philosophy, but that general notion is not concretely developed or supported in the response.

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Sample TT (*Crime and Punishment*)
3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A by including a defensible thesis about the novel: “The choices made within the novel, shows a gray area between the good and the bad. The characters idealisms both follow the good and the bad. The languages and interactions between characters allow for the reveal of the true effects on decisions based on life or death.” While the expression of the thesis is not entirely clear, it does respond to the prompt with an assertive claim about how the elements in the novel show “the good and the bad” nature of idealism.

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because it provides a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. It ties that evidence, rather simplistically, to good and bad results mentioned in the thesis. The consistent yoking of evidence to that thesis moves the response into the two-point range. The commentary keeps the evidence from being non-specific or vague. However, the commentary is slight and oversimplified which keeps it from the three-point range in this row.

Row C: 0/1

This response does not demonstrate sophistication in thought or the development of a complex literary argument. While it does, in the last paragraph, attempt to contextualize the novel more broadly, the attempt is underdeveloped and added on to the discussion rather than growing from it. The broad statements about “good and bad” do not take into consideration any moral nuances or alternative interpretations in the text.

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Sample N (*Lord of the Flies*)
2/6 Points (A1 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis, initially at the beginning but stated more clearly at the end: “Their own ideals lead to their downfall in the end by killing one another and the kids turning into savages.” This thesis clearly responds to the prompt with an interpretation of the novel.

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because it focuses on overarching narrative developments of the novel, rather than specific evidence and commentary that develop an interpretation in response to the prompt. For example, the response notes that “the kids figured that if they lived / controlled the islands as they thought adults did that the island would be very organized,” and “the kids soon away seemed to be excited to run the island with no rules,” but it offers no clear specific details. However, it does more than simply restate the prompt, and the references are not “incoherent” or “irrelevant.”

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it does not demonstrate sophisticated thought or develop a complex literary argument. Instead, it makes general points. Also, it does not entertain alternative interpretations or paradoxical nuances. While it intimates a larger context for understanding the plot (the “view of the world”), that context is not defined or developed in any clear, coherent way.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 3: Literary Argument
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)

Sample ZZ (*The Kite Runner*)

1/6 Points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

This response did not earn the point in Row A because it includes no defensible thesis about the novel. Instead it offers a description or summary of the plot: “In Khaled Houssin’s novel ‘The Kite Runner’, the reader follows the life of a boy named Amir, and how his actions and view on life, will affect him as an adult.” Such a statement does not indicate whether his view on life is ideal or how such a view would, in fact, affect him.


Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because although it references specific details from the novel, the two body paragraphs simply summarize the plot and do not explain how those details support an argument. The plot details do not seem to serve any defensible thesis.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because no argument is being made about the novel.

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AP[®] English Literature and Composition

**2020 Free-Response Scoring Guidelines
applied to 2018 Exam Questions**

AP English Literature and Composition

2020 Free-Response Scoring Guidelines (applied to 2018 questions)

Question 1: Poetry Analysis

6 points

In the poem “Plants” by Olive Senior (published in 2005) found on the [AP English Literature and Composition 2018 Exam \(Question 1\)](#), Senior portrays complex relationships among the speaker, the implied audience, and plant life. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Senior uses poetic elements and techniques to develop those complex relationships.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Q1 Poetry Analysis – 2018 Samples

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A</p> <p>Thesis (0-1 points)</p> <p>7.B</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the poem.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the poem that doesn't respond to the prompt. • Describe the poem or features of the poem rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a defensible interpretation of Senior's portrayal of the complex relationships among the speaker, the implied audience, and plant life.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"The author uses the literary techniques of syntax, diction, and figurative language in the poem 'Plants.'"</i> <p>Do not relate to the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Olive Senior has a distinct way of writing poems. Seniors structure of his poems are not commonly seen in the poetry world and his diction is straight forward." [Sample B]</i> <p>Describe the poem or features of the poem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"In Olive Senior's poem 'Plants' he compares plants to many life situations among telling the story about what plants do." [Sample C]</i> 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Provide a defensible interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"By demonstrating many similarities between plants and humans, the speaker demonstrates the deception that is present in everyday life. By using the literary techniques of syntax, diction, and figurative language the poet intends to connect humans with nature." [Sample E]</i> • <i>"The speaker believes that the current complex relationship between humans and plants should be changed to prevent plant life from dominating humans." [Sample D]</i> • <i>"One such poet is Olive Senior, who expresses his view of plant life as toxic in his poem 'Plants.'" [Sample J] [Minimally acceptable thesis]</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the poem must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Q1 Poetry Analysis – 2018 Samples

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</p> <p>7.A</p> <p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides some specific relevant evidence.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the poem contributes to its meaning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the poem contribute to its meaning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
	<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. <i>[Sample B]</i> 	<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to focus on summary or description of a poem rather than specific details or techniques. Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation. <i>[Sample C]</i> 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. <i>[Samples D and E]</i> May make one point well, but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. <i>[Sample F]</i> 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. <i>[Sample I]</i> Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. Explain how the writer’s use of multiple literary techniques contributes to the student’s interpretation of the poem.
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the poem. 				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C Sophistication (0-1 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.</p>
<p>7.C 7.D 7.E</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). [Sample H] • Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the poem could be said to...</i>”). • Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the poem comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. [Samples H, F, and G] • Oversimplify complexities in the poem. [Sample F] • Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective because they do not enhance the student’s argument. [Sample G] 	<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the poem. [Samples J and I] 2. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. [Sample I] 3. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the poem. 4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. [Sample J]
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

Question 2: Prose Fiction Analysis

6 points

The excerpt found on the [AP English Literature and Composition 2018 Exam \(Question 2\)](#) is from an 1852 novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne. In this passage, two characters who have been living on the Blithedale farm—a community designed to promote an ideal of equality achieved through communal rural living—are about to part ways. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hawthorne uses literary elements and techniques to portray the narrator’s complex attitude toward Zenobia.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A</p> <p>Thesis (0-1 points)</p> <p>7.B</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Make a generalized comment about the passage that doesn't respond to the prompt. Describe the passage or features of the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a defensible interpretation of Hawthorne's portrayal of the narrator's attitude toward Zenobia.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude toward Zenobia through a variety of literary techniques." <p>Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Hawthorne illustrates the importance of wealth and beauty." <p>Describe the passage or features of the passage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The passage makes skilled use of diction, imagery, and details." 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Provide a defensible interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Through the use of strongly unfavorable diction to underscore Zenobia's unpleasant and false disposition and repeated insinuations on her actions as performance, Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia as one of contempt and disapproval." [Sample E] "The narrator feels as though Zenobia may not be entirely authentic." [Sample B] [Minimally acceptable thesis]
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</p> <p>7.A</p> <p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides some specific relevant evidence.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the passage contributes to its meaning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the passage contribute to its meaning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 		<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on overarching narrative developments or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. • Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation. <i>[Sample B]</i> 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. • May make one point well, but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an interpretation. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an interpretation. • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. • Explain how the writer’s use of multiple literary techniques contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage.
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the passage. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C</p> <p>Sophistication (0-1 points)</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.</p>
<p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the passage could be said to...</i>”). Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the passage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. Oversimplify complexities in the passage. <i>[Sample I]</i> Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective because they do not enhance the argument. 	<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage. <i>[Sample E]</i> Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the passage. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. <i>[Sample E]</i>
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

Question 3: Literary Argument

6 points

Many works of literature feature characters who have been given a literal or figurative gift. The gift may be an object, or it may be a quality such as uncommon beauty, significant social position, great mental or imaginative faculties, or extraordinary physical powers. Yet, this gift is often also a burden or a handicap. Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character has been given a gift that is both an advantage and a problem. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the complex nature of the gift contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

The Aeneid
Alias Grace
All the Light We Cannot See
Beloved
Beowulf
Crime and Punishment
Death in Venice
Dracula
Frankenstein
The Goldfinch
Great Expectations
Heart of Darkness
Homegoing
The Iliad
Kindred

King Lear
Madame Bovary
Mama Day
Man and Superman
The Metamorphosis
Midnight's Children
A Passage to India
The Picture of Dorian Gray
The Portrait of a Lady
The Power of One
A Raisin in the Sun
The Return of the Native
The Tempest
Things Fall Apart
To the Lighthouse

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A</p> <p>Thesis</p> <p>(0-1 points)</p> <p>7.B</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent thesis. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the selected work.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the selected work that doesn't respond to the prompt. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a defensible interpretation of the complex nature of a gift in the selected work. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a claim about how the complex nature of the gift contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"There are many novels and plays in which something important is gifted to a character."</i> • <i>"A novel that has a character with a literal of figurative gift was the main character in Frankenstein. He was given a gift that was a burden, but also an advantage and a problem."</i> [Sample B] <p>Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"In the story of 'The Tempest' by Shakespeare there is a wizard who was casted away with his infant daughter to an inhibited island for years. This wizard has special powers, with them he was able to free someone from a spell and make them a servant."</i> [Sample C] 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Provides a defensible interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"In Ian McEwan's Atonement, Briony has the gift of prolific writing at a young age, but when she begins to attempt to solve her own problems through writing happy endings, McEwan shows the reader that Briony's attempt to play God is not only futile but also destructive."</i> [Sample G] • <i>"Elizabeth's frustration at the way she is stereotyped demonstrates that—for women trapped in strictly-enforced gender roles—traditional beauty is a double-edged sword."</i> [Sample H] • <i>"Although the 'gift' of metaphorical invisibility, as shown through the novel's varied characters, can be utilized to (arguably) bolster freedom, -freedom in terms of anonymity – Ellison, through the 'Invisible Man's' reflections, asserts that such invisibility is immensely impairing, as it stubbornly prevents its victims from making an impact on society as they're imprisoned in oppressive expectations. Ellison ultimately implies that an acceptance of one's invisibility, rather than a firm ideology on how to relieve it, is the path to self-understanding."</i> [Sample I]
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the selected work must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</p> <p>7.A</p> <p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides some specific relevant evidence.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on overarching narrative developments or description of a selected work rather than specific details. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. • May make one point well, but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific details from the selected work to build an interpretation. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific details from the selected works to build an interpretation. <i>[Sample I]</i> • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response must address the interpretation of the selected work as a whole. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C</p> <p>Sophistication</p> <p>(0-1 points)</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.</p>
<p>7.C</p> <p>7.D</p> <p>7.E</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). [Sample E] Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the text could be said to...</i>”). [Sample G] Oversimplify complexities of the topic and/or the selected work. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective because they do not enhance the argument. 	<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the selected work. [Sample I] Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. [Sample H] Accounting for alternative interpretations of the text. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. [Samples H and I]
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample J

[1] The natural surroundings of human beings have often been the subject of introspection on how they relate to human society. However, while many idolize nature for its beauty, others see negative patterns that echo human behavior in the natural world. One such poet is Olive Senior, who exposes his view of plant life as toxic in his poem "Plants." Senior assumes the role of an enlightened intellectual who warns his audience, general mankind, of the insidious behaviors of plants – their widespread and ever-spreading nature, in both political (military) and sexual comparisons to human society. Though his comparisons to easily accessible imaging, Senior's claim becomes more effective to the general audience he seeks.

[2] Throughout the poem, Senior has comparisons of plant life to military terms and strategies, suggesting their reproduction is like an invasion that should be repulsed. Martial metaphors abound in the poem, all of which Senior points out using his superior, inside knowledge as insidious, heightening the audience's fear of being conquered. "Perhaps you've regarded, / as beneath your notice, armies of mangrove / on the march" (9-11), Senior notes, commencing his invading army imagery. He elaborates further in the following stanzas with word such as "conquest," "invasive," "explosive," "capsules," "colonizing" and "parochuting" (13-20). The close juxtaposition of those words with benignant connotations aid the mood of the audience as a people about to be overwhelmed. This is a clear use of pathos, instilling emotions in an audience, to hold their control and persuade them, establishing Senior still with the narrative power and persuasive hold over the audience he is attempting enlighten. Deepening the audience's fear of the plant life, Senior includes references to espionage, opening the poem with "Plants are deceptive" (1) and elaborating with a metaphorical comparison of flowers to special agents. As flowers are something often enjoyed, this apparent deception makes the audience more paranoid that these sinister, "imperialistic" (9) ambitions of plants are present where humans previously found enjoyment. This distrust established between humans and their surroundings, Senior has prepared his audience for his ultimate goal, to make them contemplate what such imperialistic designs could be hiding in human society.

[3] Another weapon in Senior's arsenal is his general structure and syntax throughout the poem. Increasingly, Senior turns to enjambments, sometimes even overflowing stanzas, such as in "imperialistic/ grand design" (8-9). This flow mimics the imagery of overflowing conquest and invading armies to overwhelm the reader, alas supporting the pathos of fear. These enjambments, however, are still confined within a 4-line stanza structure that remains [ILLEGIBLE]-able throughout the poem. This structure represents the normal, day-to-day structure of society beneath which the demons of conquest hide; thus, Senior extends the impact of his paranoia. Also, common in Senior's sentence structure are informal addresses and questions as are especially evident when Senior calls the reader out for trusting flowers – "don't deny it, my dear, I've seen you / sniff and exclaim" (25-26). Here, Senior refers to his reader in a condescending and informal way, almost like a parent speaking to a child ("my

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dear”). This established position of power in a benevolent-seeming way. Also to hold his general audience’s attention, Senior’s colloquial language and direct addresses help broaden his appeal and the accessibility as a speaker. Therefore, his audience is more likely to hear his pleas.

[4] Finally, Senior evokes a final emotion – that of shame – to persuade his audience by using language with sexual connotations. “Yet from the way they breed (excuse me!) / and twine” (5-6) suggests that flowers and plants, in their conquest, are also animalistic in their rapid reproduction in a shameful manner. Indeed, Senior adds (excuse me!) to heighten the shame of referring to sex and reproduction, making his audience even less inclined to behave themselves in the manner of the plants.

[5] Finally having established himself as a credible, benevolent speaker showing his unenlightened audience the dangers of plants, Senior concluded by stating the plants will “always outlast us, they were always there” (33), implying the moral deficiencies of imperialistic reproduction of the plants, and by extension, society, are minute traits that till always be there. Therefore, as Senior’s fear – inducing phrases such as “one step ahead of us” simply, humans must always be on alert.

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Sample I

[1] Nature has been & will continue to be in existence for millions of years; it is one of the few constants in the history of our Earth. In his 2005 poem "Plants," poet Olive Senior attempts to create a discussion regarding the perpetuity of plant life & the relationship it shares with those around it. Senior establishes said relationship with poetic devices such as syntax, diction, figurative language, & more.

[2] Senior initiates the conversation with an analysis of the true nature of Flora. Senior claims that himself as well as the audience, the human race, must make the inference that a plant's "grand design" is one that is "sinister & imperialistic" based on the manner in which they breed & spread. The use of the words with inherently negative connotations in discussing the goals of plants allows the audience to infer only negative intention on the part of the plant. From lines 13-16, Senior creates a comparison of the plants to invaders & conquistadors through the personification of the shoots as being "bent on conquest" & the seedlings as "invasive." The author also compels his audience to only examine the nature surrounding them by inquiring as to whether they've regarded the mechanisms of the plant life owned them through the uses of a rhetorical question. By soliciting an answer from his audience, Senior implores them to truly take the malevolent nature of nature into consideration.

[3] Starting in Line 17, Senior concedes that his audience may have not payed much regarding to what may seem to be the minute of mechanisms through which plants enact their "colonizing ambitions." Following said concession, Senior creates a list of aforementioned mechanisms in order to finally have attention drown to them. Senior then shifts to a discussion regarding "those special agents called flowers" (line 22) in which he delves into the flower's tricks for seducing. Senior remarks that flowers are specifically made for romancing creatures, & includes "even you" to signify to the audience that they are not an exception when it comes to falling for the flower's tricks. The author states that he has witnessed people fall prey to the enticing elements of the flower & seeks to remind he who he refers to as "Innocent" through apostrophe that those elements of a flower to which he is attracted are solely created in the pursuance of the seduction of more innocents into spreading their progeny. Plants have induced the development of a "cosmic program" that enables them to perpetuate themselves as generation of humans die & become "plant food," signifying superiority of flora in relation to humans & our lack of ability to break the cycle in which we are trapped.

[4] Lines 1-4 & 33-36 serve as an initiation & a conclusion to the piece. The poem begins with a broad statement referring to plants a being deceptive & as knowing their places & concludes with an analysis of the plants inevitable infiniteness due to their being "always there one step ahead of us." Senior seeks to establish the power held over us by plant life & their nature as stagnant & constant in the lives of those around them & in the history of the Earth. Senior concludes the poem by simply referring to plants as "weed," finalizing the negative

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relationship that had previously been established between plants and humans through the use of a word with a strongly negative connotation.

[5] Nature has proved to us time & time again that it will always be there as we pass from generation to generation. Olive Senior provides his audience with a thorough analysis of this stagnancy through his poems his apt selection of literary devices. Plants are simply (masters of the) devices of seduction & invasion & colonization which go unnoticed by humans, which is why they have managed to outlast us & been witness to our faults over the centuries.

Sample H

[1] Olive Senior's poem "Plants" describes the organisms that are all around us as sentient beings with nefarious motivations. While seemingly a humorous piece, the poem contributes to a larger cautionary tale of social upheaval. Through his use of a sinister tone to convey the gravity of the situation and figurative language likening plants to humans, Senior warns the reader to be wary of those that seem harmless.

[2] Senior's use of a sinister tone throughout the piece, even when describing plants, emphasizes the didactic nature of his words. By portraying plants as scary, the author is able to open the mind of the reader to a new perspective in which the seemingly-harmless are actually dangerous. The very first sentence of the poem begins with deception, establishing a direct statement about the nature and attitude towards plants from the start. By beginning his poem on a sinister; yet somewhat ridiculous note, Senior sets up the rest of his poem to comment on what plants represent, portrayed in a negative light. He is enabled to use plants and their "deceptive" nature as a metaphor for humans. The dark tone continues even in the most innocent of plant functions, breeding, as the author states, "we must infer a sinister not to say imperialistic grand design." The ridiculously-serious tone when describing what the reader perceives as harmless serve to make the reader aware of a greater message, and to not take the poem literally in its commentary on plants, but rather to search for a greater meaning. Indeed, the speaker directly addresses the reader, saying "maybe you haven't quite taken in the colonizing ambitions" of plants and "don't deny it, my dear, I've seen you" smell flowers. This direct comment to the reader calls the reader to notice his or her own lack of suspicion towards plants. The speaker even calls the reader "Innocent" for not suspecting those who appear "beneath your notice." By implementing a sinister tone and addressing the audience directly, Senior alerts the reader to a greater critique on the lack of social awareness prevalent in society.

[3] Senior also utilizes figurative language to describe plants as having nefarious purposes in order to characterize them as an unnoticed threat. Senior personifies the plants as having "colonizing ambitions" and as being that are "bent on conquest." This personification causes the reader to understand that the speaker is truly speaking about people, and is simply using plant life as a metaphor. He uses metaphors of weaponry, of "explosive dispersal in capsules and seed cases" and "armies of mangrove" to represent guns and warfare that is the intrinsic nature of plants. He likens flowers to an "instrument to seduce you into scattering plant progeny" and "special agents." This comparison warns the reader that even the most innocent-looking being, a flower, plots to overthrow people until "we become plant food." The transformation of plants into sentient, violently-motivated beings draws parallels to repressed, ignored groups of humans. Through his use of figurative language, Senior cautions the reader to be wary of the inconspicuous.

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[4] Plants, everywhere, overlooked, are likened to humans in Senior's poem. He cautions the reader to stay vigilant, because it is their motivation to overthrow humans. Senior's message applies to society as a whole concerning public policy. In order to retain peace, we must recognize the desires of those we deem beneath our notice, lest they overthrow us.

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Sample G

[1] In Olive Senior's "Plants," plant life is characterized as a deceptive, single minded, and ambitious. "Plants" features descriptions of plants that make them seem like they have their own goals and are a force to be reckoned with against humans. The speaker utilizes direct characterization and descriptive imagery of the plant life to warn his or her loved one not to succumb to the deceiving powers of plants, illustrating the man versus plant life struggle encapsulated in "Plants."

[2] The speaker's inclusion of personification of the behavior plants beyond their normal abilities and roles shows that the speaker is wary of plant life and distrusts their existence. The way that the speaker perceives plants, as "armies of mangrove on the march" and "shoots on bent on a conquest" illuminates the fact that the speaker sees plants as more than just harmless flora: The speaker rather feels threatened that the "armies of mangrove" might take over the human world. The indirect characterization of plants as "invasive seedlings seeking wide open spaces" also implies that plants want to establish themselves on Earth and not be confined to one area or region, as humans maybe want them to be. The personification of plants as armies and invaders also suggest that the speaker is trying to warn his audience that plants are evil. Their audience may be unaware of the supposed militaristic qualities of plants, otherwise the speaker may not feel the need to divulge in them. Inclusion of warlike words – "colonizing", "explosive", "armies", and "conquest" – further establish the speaker's distrust of plant life.

[3] In addition to the speaker's personification of plants as warlike beings, the speaker utilizes descriptive imagery to warn their audience, supposedly a loved one, of the deceptive nature of plants. The speaker quickly establishes to "[his] dear" that the inconspicuously dressed, perfumed" plants are using their sweet appearances to "seduce [people]" into dispersing their seeds and multiplying their population. Inclusion of the description of seeds as "sweet fruit" ... "made up for romancing" suggests that the speaker has a very distrustful view of the façade plants put up. The speaker tells his "innocent" audience of the real agenda of plants presumably because he is trying to prevent his audience from becoming victims to the "vast cosmic program" plants have underway.

[4] The speaker in Olive Senior's "Plants" makes it clear from the very first line that he believes "plants are deceptive." A general distrust of the appearance of plants culminates into the speaker boldly asserting to his audience that plants will "outlast us" and will ultimately be victors over humans. "Plants" explores the man versus flora relationship that the speaker seems to have with plants through the speaker's hyperbolic personifications of plants and beautiful descriptions of their deceiving looks. The speaker's ultimate goal appears to be furrowing a protective wedge of knowledge of plants' deceptive nature between his audience and plants, revealing that man and nature may have irrepressible, mutual distrustful, antagonistic feelings against one another.

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Sample F

[1] In Olive Senior's 2005 poem "Plants," Senior effectively portrays a unique relationship between humans and plants in which plants have formed a hierarchy over humankind. Senior effectively portrays his ideas through a combined use of imagery and metaphor.

[2] To begin, Senior introduces that plants as a "deceptive" group. Senior capitalizes on the idea that a plant may seem rooted and as if it may never have the desire to spread or "breed" like a human. However, in order to introduce the exponentially-growing plant kingdom's nature, Senior uses a series of words that convey a deeper meaning Senior says, "armies of Mangrove on the march, roots in the air, clinging tendrils anchoring themselves everywhere" are all appearing before our very eyes and we do not even notice them. Through this effective use of imagery, Senior is able to introduce the idea that plants are forming, or have had, a superior status to humans. Senior is conveying the message that plants will continue to grow and humans can do nothing about it. Plants are conveyed as having a superior "mindset" than humans and are also portrayed as doing more than humans are aware of.

[3] Senior adds to the idea that plants are superior to humankind by giving examples of how plants are slowly but surely being incorporated into our lives more and more. Senior uses the metaphor of flowers being mere "special agents" used for romancing "insects, bats, birds, bees, and even you." Senior compares flower to special agents in order to convey the message that they are capable of changing your mood and are used to make one feel romance. Senior adds to the extended metaphor by alluding to the idea the "berry" is nothing but "an ovary" used to seduce humans. Senior's metaphors provide as examples that support his overall idea that plants are superior and have formed a hierarchy over humans.

[4] Senior's portrayal of the relationship between plants and humans is unique and very specific. However, through his strategic use of imagery and metaphor, Senior is able to effectively portray his idea that plants have has, do have, and will continue to have a hierarchy formed over humankind.

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Sample E

[1] In the poem, Olive Senior personifies plants to portray the complex relationships among the speaker, the implied audience, and the plant life. The speaker of the poem is Senior, while the intended audience is the reader. By demonstrating many similarities between plants and humans, the speaker demonstrated the deception that is present in everyday life. By using the literary techniques of syntax, diction, and figurative language, the poet intends to connect humans with nature.

[2] The use of syntax is significant because it provides a connection between plant life and human life. The poem contains nine stanzas that each have 4 lines. The separation of the stanzas is symbolic of the different stages of life. Just like life, the content of the next stanza is differing from the previous one. As the poem progresses, the poet models a relationship between the implied audience and plants by discussing mature content. In the beginning, the poet uses short, simple sentences to highlight the simplicity of life at birth. As the poem progresses, the poet models a relationship between the implied audience and plants by discussing mature content. In the beginning, the poet uses short, simple sentences to highlight the simplicity of life at birth. As the poem is read, the sentences become more and more complex and elongated to portray the difficulties and trials of life.

[3] By using a sophisticated diction, the poet demonstrates the serious connections that can be made between plants and humans. By using words like “profligate, extravagant, reckless,” and “improvident” the poet simplifies the complex relationship humans have with plants by relating a similarity of characteristics. The diction of the poem portrays and relates a sense of respect for the existence of plants. Just like the speaker, and audience, plants also fulfill a purpose on earth. In similarity to humans, plants were specifically and uniquely created to have a specific function.

[4] Lastly, the poet uses figurative language to connect plant life to human experience and emotion. Throughout the course of the poem, Senior uses personification to give plants human-like qualities. In the first stanza, plants are personified as having the human ability to run. The poet is trying to demonstrate that humans are never satisfied. The poet compared flowers to being an instrument of seductive power. Often times, humans associate sexual desires with plants. Flowers present beauty and are often used to express emotion.

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Sample D

[1] Oliver Senior's poem, *Plants*, discusses the importance that plants play in the lives of animals. In his work, Senior is addressing plants towards humans and their behavior through the narrator.

[2] The speaker who is undoubtedly a human, seems as though he is a plant. His speech addresses humans as unaware of plants capabilities. The speaker indirectly states that plants are for more intelligent and superior to humans as "they'll outlast us, they were always there one step ahead of us" (Senior 33) The speaker's diction allows humans to see what plants are capable of doing. The author gives these plants traits to make them appear aware of what humans do to them. "Plants are deceptive...And what about those special agents called flowers" (Senior 1, 21) As though they work for a government agency like the CIA, plants are intelligent and act as a high figure that is lacked in respect. "The world is free of shoots bent on conquest invasive seedlings seeking wide open spaces" (Senior 14) The comparison between plants and humans is unbalanced, where the humans dominate at the top of the food chain. The speaker believes that the current complex relationship between humans and plants should be changed to prevent plant life from dominating humans.

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Sample C

[1] In Olive Senior's poem "Plants," he compares plants to many life situations among telling the story about what plants do. He goes through each stanza giving a comparison to everyday life and what humans actually see.

[2] Through the first Stanza (lines 1-4) "Plants... traces," he is comparing plants to humans. Discussing how they can trick you and they may root in one place however like humans that is subject to change.

[3] Continuing through the poem the author begins to give real life characteristics to the plant. He conveys this message through words such as "mangrove on the march" in (line 10-11), and "hitchhiking burrs on your sweater" in (line 18-19). Senior is using personification in this specific scenario.

[4] Rhythmic is another literary element in this passage. In lines 14 and 16, also in lines 34 and 36. Senior uses a rhyme scheme in these two positions of the poem. Senior uses a selective word choice throughout the whole poem. Describing and analyzing scenarios to help the reader visualize his text. Using these action words draw the reader in and help them comprehend the message he is conveying.

[5] Olive Senior conveyed this first message with a very informative text also. He expressed that plants have many similar qualities comparing towards humans and life.

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Sample B

[1] Olive Senior has a distinct way of writing poems. Seniors structure of his poems are not commonly seen in the poetry world and his diction is straight forward.

[2] The poem “plants” has stanzas where each one picks up from the previous one. the beginning of each stanza finishes the previous of the last ones. The authors technique of setting his poem like this makes it more powerful for the diction. Senior talks to the readers directly by saying ...you.”

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F	1	3	0
E	1	2	0
D	1	2	0
C	0	1	0
B	0	0	0

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Sample J

Score: 6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis that offers an interpretation in response to the prompt: “One such poet is Olive Senior, who expresses his view of plant life as toxic in his poem ‘Plants’... Though his comparisons to easily accessible imaging, Senior’s claim becomes more effective to the general audience he seeks” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

The response earned all four points in Row B because it provides specific evidence, commentary that explains consistently how the evidence supports the line of reasoning, and analysis of Senior’s literary technique. The response notes in paragraph two that “Martial metaphors abound in the poem...heightening the audience’s fear of being conquered” and quotes these metaphors (““armies of mangrove / on the march’ (9-11)”) as well as particular words which extend the “invading army imagery” (““conquest,’ ‘invasive,’ ‘explosive,’ ‘capsules,’ ‘colonizing,’ and parachuting”). Ample support in the form of well-integrated military references, insightful commentary, and the discussion of sexual imagery in paragraphs two and three reinforce the claim that easily accessible images underlie the comparison between plants and humans; the response thereby builds to the conclusion that “as Senior’s fear-inducing phrases such as ‘one step ahead of us’ imply, humans must always be on the alert” against the imperialistic designs of plants” (paragraph 5).

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C because it effectively describes the complexities and tensions within the poem, and it uses prose that is vivid and persuasive; e.g., the student notes Senior’s technique of addressing the reader directly and the effect it has on “establish[ing] [a] position of power in a benevolent-seeming way” all while clarifying Senior’s implication of “the moral deficiencies of imperialistic reproduction of the plants, and by extension society” (paragraph 5). In these ways, the response demonstrates sophisticated thought and presents a complex literary argument that accounts for the broader relationships among speaker, plants, and audience.

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Sample I

Score: 6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis that offers an interpretation in response to the prompt, "the perpetuity of plant life & the relationship it shares with those around it. Senior establishes said relationship with poetic devices such as syntax, diction, figurative language, & more" (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/ 4

The response earned all four of the points in Row B because the commentary consistently explains how the chosen evidence supports a line of reasoning and analyzes how multiple literary devices, such as rhetorical questions, figurative language, and diction, contribute to the poem's meaning. For example, the student writes, "The author also compels his audience to truly examine the nature surrounding them by inquiring as to whether they've regarded the mechanisms of the plant life around them through the use of a rhetorical question. By soliciting an answer from his audience, Senior implores them to truly take the malevolent nature of nature into consideration" (paragraph 3). The response builds on its thesis through persuasive commentary that engages carefully selected and significant details from throughout the poem and thereby builds to the conclusion that: "Plants are simply (masters of the) devices of seduction & invasion & colonization which go unnoticed by humans, which is why they have managed to outlast us & bear witness to our faults over the centuries" (paragraph 5).

Row C: 1 /1

The response earned the point in Row C because it demonstrates a sophistication of thought and develops a complex literary argument by explaining the significance of its interpretation within a broader context: "Plants have induced the development of a 'cosmic program' that enables them to perpetuate themselves as generations of humans die & become 'plant food', signifying the superiority of flora in relation to humans and our lack of ability to break the cycle in which we are all trapped" (paragraph 3). The expression of ideas through the prose is generally clear and succinct, e.g., "Senior initiates the conversation with an analysis of the true nature of Flora" (paragraph 2), and "Senior concludes the poem by simply referring to plants as 'weed,' finalizing the negative relationship that had previously been established" (paragraph 4).

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Sample H

Score: 5/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis that offers an interpretation in response to the prompt: “The poem contributes to a larger cautionary tale of social upheaval. Through his use of a sinister tone to convey the gravity of the situation and figurative language likening plants to humans, Senior warns the reader to be wary of those that seem harmless” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because the commentary both consistently and explicitly connects many pieces of evidence directly to the thesis, e.g., “The very first sentence of the poem begins with deception, establishing a direct statement about the nature and attitude towards plants from the start” (paragraph 2). The commentary also analyzes how multiple literary elements, such as tone and figurative language, contribute to an interpretation of the poem: e.g., “The dark tone continues even in the most innocent of plant functions, breeding, as the author states, ‘we must infer a sinister not to say imperialistic grand design.’ The ridiculously-serious tone when describing what the reader perceives as harmless serves to make the reader aware of a great message, and to not take the poem literally in its commentary on plants, but rather to search for a greater meaning” (paragraph 2).

Row C: 0 /1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because, while it attempts to provide a context for its interpretation, this takes the form of an overly generalized statement: “Senior alerts the reader to a greater critique on the lack of social awareness prevalent in society” (paragraph 4), but that critique is not consistently referred to, developed, or maintained throughout the response.

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Sample G

Score: 5/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis that offers an interpretation in response to the prompt: “The speaker utilizes direct characterization and descriptive imagery of the plant life to warn his or her loved one not to succumb to the deceiving powers of plants, illustrating the man versus plant life struggle encapsulated in ‘Plants’” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

The response earned all four points in Row B because it provides ample evidence that is specific and relevant to the thesis, consistently explains through commentary how that evidence supports the line of reasoning, and explains how multiple literary elements contribute to the poem’s meaning: e.g., the “personification of the behavior of plants beyond their normal abilities and roles shows that the speaker is wary of plant life and distrusts their existence” (paragraph 2); “Inclusion of warlike words— ‘colonizing’, ‘explosive’, ‘armies’, and ‘conquest’ further establish the speaker’s distrust of plant life” (paragraph 2); “the speaker utilizes descriptive imagery to warn their audience, supposedly a loved one, of the deceptive nature of plants. The speaker quickly establishes to ‘[his] dear’ that that the inconspicuously ‘dressed, perfumed’ plants are using their sweet appearances to ‘seduce [people]’ into dispersing their seeds and multiplying their population” (paragraph 3).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. It does not consistently maintain its thematic interpretation and the language in which it is expressed is at times unclear, e.g., “Inclusion of the description of seeds as ‘sweet fruit’... ‘made up for romancing’ suggests that the speaker has a very distrustful view of the façade plants put up” (paragraph 3) and “‘Plants’ explores the man versus flora relationship that the speaker seems to have with plants through the speakers hyperbolic personifications of plants and beautiful descriptions of their deceiving looks” (paragraph 4).

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Sample F

Score: 4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis that offers an interpretation in response to the prompt: “Senior effectively portrays a unique relationship between humans and plants in which plants have formed a hierarchy over mankind. Senior effectively portrays his ideas through a combined use of imagery and metaphor” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points in Row B because it offers specific evidence and explains how that evidence supports a line of reasoning, while also explaining how two literary techniques, imagery and metaphor, convey the poem’s meaning. For example, the student cites Senior’s description of the plants as “armies of Mangrove on the march, roots in the air, clinging tendrils anchoring themselves everywhere” and explains how “Through this effective use of imagery, Senior is able to introduce the idea that plants are forming, or have had, a superior status to humans” (paragraph 2). Additionally, the student notes that “Senior compares flower to special agents in order to convey the message that they are capable of changing your mood and are used to make one feel romance” (paragraph 3). While the commentary here generally connects back to the line of reasoning, it is not as clear, focused, and developed as it needs to be to earn four points.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. It does not demonstrate sophistication of thought and offers only a single statement about the “hierarchy” plants have formed over mankind. The response oversimplifies the complexities of the poem, e.g., “Through this effective use of imagery, Senior is able to introduce the idea that plants are forming or have had a superior status to humans. Senior conveys the message that plants will continue to grow, and humans can do nothing about it” (paragraph 3).

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Sample E

Score: 3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis that offers an interpretation in response to the prompt: “By demonstrating many similarities between plants and humans, the speaker demonstrates the deception that is present in everyday life. By using the literary techniques of syntax, diction, and figurative language, the poet intends to connect humans with nature” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because it provides some specific relevant evidence, but the commentary is oversimplified or misinterprets the evidence. As a result, the line of reasoning is faulty. For example, the response attempts to discuss the form and structure of the poem, but the commentary is too general to build toward an accurate interpretation of the poem: “The separation of the stanzas is symbolic of the different stages of life. Just like life, the content of the next stanza is differing from the previous one” (paragraph 2). The commentary also misinterprets cited evidence, such as when the student claims that Senior’s use of personification implies “that humans are never satisfied” (paragraph 4).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. It does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument—it makes sweeping generalizations such as “[j]ust like the speaker, and audience, plants also fulfill a purpose on earth” (paragraph 3) and “[f]lowers present beauty and are often used to express emotion” (paragraph 4), and it oversimplifies the complexities of the poem.

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Sample D

Score: 3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis that offers an interpretation in response to the prompt: “The speaker believes that the current complex relationship between humans and plants should be changed to prevent plant life from dominating humans” (paragraph 2). The thesis comments on the relationship between plants and humans but does not suggest a line of reasoning for the analysis.

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because it provides some evidence that is relevant to the thesis and offers commentary on that evidence. However, the commentary is mostly comprised of simplistic explanations that do not strengthen the argument, and no clear line of reasoning is established. For example, after quoting lines one and twenty-one from the poem about how “Plants are deceptive” and flowers are like “special agents,” the commentary paraphrases those ideas: “As though they work for a government agency like the CIA, plants are intelligent” (paragraph 2) and does not explain the relationship between the evidence and thesis. The response also contains significant inaccuracies, e.g., “[t]he speaker who is undoubtedly a human, seems as though he is a plant” (paragraph 2).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. It oversimplifies the complexities of the poem, e.g., “[t]he speaker believes that the current complex relationship between humans and plants should be changed to prevent plant life from dominating humans” (paragraph 2), and its language often results in an unclear presentation of ideas: “Senior is addressing plants towards humans and their behavior through the narrator” (paragraph 1).

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample C

Score: 1/6 Points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row A. It does not offer a defensible thesis and instead describes the poem: “In Olive Senior's poem, ‘Plants,’ he compares plants to many life situations among telling the story about what plants do” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because, though it includes evidence from the poem, it provides little in the way of commentary so the evidence remains only vaguely relevant to the prompt, e.g., “Through the first stanza (lines 1-4) ‘Plants... traces,’ he is comparing plants to humans. Discussing how they can trick you and they may root in one place however like humans that is subject to change” (paragraph 2). The response also mentions literary devices with little explanation as to how they contribute to the poem’s meaning, e.g., “Senior is using personification in this specific scenario” (paragraph 2) and “[r]hyming is another literary element in this passage” (paragraph 3).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample B

Score: 0/6 Points (A0 – B0 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row A because it does not offer a defensible thesis that presents an interpretation in response to the prompt. Instead, it offers the claims that: “Olive Senior has a distinct way of writing poems. Seniors structure of his poems are not commonly seen in the poetry world and his diction is straight forward” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 0/4

The response did not earn the point in Row B because it provides examples that are irrelevant and that do not address the prompt, e.g., “The beginning of each stanza finishes the previous of the last ones” (paragraph 2) and almost incoherent, e.g., “[t]he authors techniques of setting his poem like the makes it more powerful for the diction” (paragraph 2).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C.

Sample E

[1] How do you reconcile your former understanding of someone with the new person she appears to be? In the given passage, Nathaniel Hawthorne's narrator struggles to accept the seemingly new version of Zenobia, and frustrated with the superficiality she employs, attempts to break her façade and to gauge a more honest understanding of who she has become. Through the use of strongly unfavorable diction to underscore Zenobia's unpleasant and false disposition and repeated insinuations on her actions as performance, Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia as one of contempt and disapproval.

[2] The passage opens with the narrator observing, in awe, the luxuries of Zenobia's home. It is beautiful, "the fulfillment of every fantasy of the imagination," but although the narrator is "dazzled," he is uneasy and feels a "bitter sense of shame." Hawthorne magnifies this feeling of shame through terms such as "costly self-indulgence" and "redundance of personal ornament," the narrator expresses his disapproval of Zenobia's overly-indulgent lifestyle, which is fundamentally different from the values of his own community. He further states his dislike of Zenobia when he says he "malevolently [beholds] her true character," implying Zenobia has been hiding her true personality. By claiming she is a "passionate, luxurious" woman "lacking simplicity, not deeply refined, incapable of pure and perfect taste," the narrator harshly criticizes her debauchery and makes evident his disapproval.

[3] Throughout the passage, the narrator's contempt for Zenobia is also stated by his criticism of her superficiality. He describes her as an "illusion," "a great action," underscoring her habit of hiding her true self and authentic emotions. The narrator repeatedly states that Zenobia "[seems] to be acting" and wonders when, or if ever, he has "beheld [her] in her truest attitude." Evidently, this defining falseness causes the narrator to both distrust and detest Zenobia. He longs to witness and genuine reaction from her, whether good or bad, simply to learn if she is capable and willing of any form of emotional vulnerability. This thirst for "a glimpse of something true" reveals his struggle to accept this new version of the woman he once knew, who has now become "self-complacent, condescending," and inauthentic.

[4] Throughout the passage, the narrator's criticism of Zenobia and her extravagant lifestyle reveal his attitude towards her to be one of extreme disapproval and contempt. It is clear that he is deeply frustrated at her false exterior and long for her to abandon such toxic superficiality and unabashedly expose her true character. Although the narrator momentarily succeeds in getting Zenobia to "show [him] the true flesh and blood of her heart," however, she quickly returns to her "proud" and "self-processed" act and shows that she desires to continue her life of pretense.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample I

[1] There is often a great divide in society between the selfish and the selfless. It takes a noble courage and sometimes self sacrifice to be selfless, especially because it can be deliciously easy to give in to selfishness. Hawthorne, in these two characters, has created an analysis of both sides options and revealed how one looks to the other.

[2] The narrator, a selfless character living in equality on the Blithedale farm, appears at first lost in the opulence and decadence of Zenobia's house. She struggles at first to "bear up against the effect which Zenobia sought to impose on [her]". Though disgusted by the excess of luxury, the narrator cares briefly to the conflicting sides with herself, and momentarily accepts the belief that Zenobia has every right to "make herself as gorgeous as she pleased," and indulge herself however she wishes. Though the narrator begins confused by the "illusion" and act that Zenobia puts on, she is able to resolve her internal conflict.

[3] The shift and internal resolution that the narrator experiences create a resolution in her attitude towards Zenobia. Where at first she was complacent in her acceptance of Zenobia's opulent lifestyle, she turns scornful and resentful as she regains control over Zenobia's proud aura and farad. She even calls to exorcise her of the connotated demonic clutches of this selfishness that she has given into. Though disdainful of Zenobia's luxurious life, the narrator believes that deep down she is ashamed of this selfishness, and endeavors to catch a "glimpse of something true; some nature, some passion, no matter whether right or wrong, provided it were real". And thus with the execution of this endeavor, the narrator's ultimate view of Zenobia is reached. The metaphor of lightening and flame used to describe Zenobia's actions reveal not only the power of her true emotions, but also the sense of victory the narrator feels in her selfrighteousness.

[4] The narrator, though portrayed as selfless, is not perfect in her opinions, and Zenobia's selfishness is not wholly consuming either. The shifts of the narrators attitudes towards Zenobia, first submissive and accepting, then irritated, and lastly righteous and sure, help create the realization that labels, such as selfish or selfless, are not perfect, and people cannot be defined by just one word.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample F

[1] As a species, humans are proud. They are often selfish, narrow minded, and, despite strong efforts to prove otherwise, morally unsound. This is not to say that mankind is evil, or bad, but simply human: a species that is characterizes by these and many more truths. This excerpt from Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1852 novel creates a compelling display on mankind's view of human nature. The narrator's attitude towards their companion, Zenobia, is characterized by their view of her as lofty and exuberant. The narrator is disgusted by the mask she wears to hide her true nature. Hawthorne employs disapproving diction and a scornful tone to convey the narrators cold, distasteful attitude towards Zenobia in this excerpt.

[2] The narrator describes their _____ on Zenobia's current situation as being "self-indulgent," "brilliant", & "costly." The diction used creates a sense that the narrator is in awe of what Zenobia has surrounded herself with. However, they also see these furnishings as a reflection on Zenobia being "proud," "imposing" and "incapable of pure and perfect taste." Through the diction used to describe Zenobia's ornate ornamentations, it is clear that the narrator sees them as too beautiful and impressive. They stated that the narrator saw through the "gorgeousness with which she [Zenobia] had surrounded herself" to her true nature, of which she was using the beauty as a mask to hide.

[3] The tone with which the narrator addresses Zenobia is scornful, showing their disapproval of the beautiful mask & mantle she has adorned and hidden herself with. They speak to her with an "inverted" tone, and coolly scorns her so that she reveals her true nature is an unbecoming, passionate moment. The narrator characterizes Zenobia as being "proud", "self-possessed", "lacking simplicity" and "condescending" Through their tone & disapproving diction it is clear that the narrator is dissatisfied and disgusted by Zenobias' true nature.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample A

[1] In the given by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the two contrasting characters of the narrator and Zenobia undoubtedly have a complex and deeply developed relationship. These complexities stem mainly from the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia and their corresponding actions, most clearly expressed through Hawthorne's use of parallel contrasts and character monologue. It is through these techniques that it is revealed that although the narrator is fond of Zenobia, they are also criticizing of the choices she has made.

[2] The beauty of the room in which the characters are found in is the main focus of the first paragraph. It is described as "gorgeous" and as having many "shapes of luxury", most notably expensive vases and chandeliers. In the same paragraph, the farm house which the pair come from is described as "homely", containing only a "few wicker chairs in the best parlor," providing a stark contrast to the marble and riches of the new house. This description is paralleled with the similar contrast of Zenobia constantly being described as "gorgeous" in following paragraphs and the assumed plainness of the narrator having from the farmhouse. This description of Zenobia unveils the narrator's fondness for her (or at least her appearance) However his disdain for the house as expressed through the narrator preferring to stay at the farm and suggesting Zenobia do the same, reflects his disdain for her actions. In this case, the farm is representative of the narrator and the lavish house of Zenobia, so therefore, the narrator's critique of Zenobia's excessive wants.

[3] In paragraphs 7 and 8 after a brief conversation between characters, the narrator is not afraid to voice his criticism. Hawthorne has him do so in a brief monologue directed at Zenobia. It is within this monologue that his true feelings come out, and have a strong affect on Zenobia's state, causing her to become flustered. By having the narrator express his criticism in the form of a monologue, a stronger effect is delivered on the audience, and, in this case, Zenobia. This reflects the narrator's strong attitude towards Zenobia.

[4] Ultimately, the narrator does not approve of Zenobia's delusion of leaving the farm to live a luxurious life, and he does not allow his high opinion of her and her beauty prevent him from speaking his true feelings on the subject in a way that reflects how he truly feels about the situation.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample D

[1] In the following interchange, excerpted from Nathaniel Hawthorne novel portrays the narrator's love and obsession for Zenobia. Throughout the section, the author uses a lot of diction and imagery to signify the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia.

[2] The first sentence of the interchange caught the narrator's eye for Zenobia. "Her manner bewildered me" and being "dazzled by the brilliancy of the room" already shows the reader that Zenobia stands out with her well-being and wealth. The diction used is positive towards Zenobia. She has a "proud figure", "passionate", "luxurious", "lack of simplicity". Everything about Zenobia that the narrator thinks is perfect. The narrators attitude towards her is compelling since "she was too powerful for all my opposing struggles". Zenobia didn't think too much of others since she already had everything. However, her god-like figure made the narrator curious about her true well-being. If all of this is fake and if she has another side. He wanted to know if "she seemed to be acting". Soon enough with the diction, it soon broke her.

[3] The imagery in this interchange is full with rich details. The description throughout this section shows how powerful Zenobia seems and how wealth controls one-self. Although the narrator doesn't say much about wealth, the first paragraph of the interchange says it all. Zenobia wasn't introduced yet but the detail of the Blithedale farm already hinted out how hi attitude was going to be towards her. It starts with the chandelier that glowed with so many lights. The furniture was "exceedingly rich". It was fresh and it chocked the narrator that "the fulfillment of every fantasy of an imagination", something everybody dreams of. The pictures, marbles, vases etc were everything that's luxurious. It revelled the "methods of costly self-indulgence and splendid ease". The imagery of the form shows the wealth and power Zenobia has.

[4] Nathaniel Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia through the use of literary techniques. Two big devices were diction and imagery with the help of the narrators thoughts and emotions towards Zenobia.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample B

[1] Nathaniel Hawthorne shows the way the narrator feels about Zenobia in the se few paragraphs. The narrator feels as though Zenobia may not be entirely authentic. He feels spite towards her and her new life after Blithedale. Hawthorne is able to portray these feelings through the use of first person point of view and sophisticated diction. These literary techniques establish the tense tone of the excerpt.

[2] The first person point of view gives the reader insight on how they narrator is feeling. The reader is able to see the betrayal and disgust the narrator begins to feel for Zenobia and the façade she is attempting to create. He does not know the tree Zenobia and even states, “To this day, however, I hardly know whether I then beheld Zenobia in her truest attitude, or whether that were the truer one in which she had presented herself at Blithedale.” The narrator is unaware of what Zenobia is truly like. The narrator is openly discussing his feelings towards Zenobia. He seems to believe that she is fake.

Sample C

[1] In the excerpt of the novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hawthorne portrayed the narrator’s attitude twords Zenobia as a liar or as an unhoneat person through the use of the literary techniques such as imagery and violent diction.

[2] Hawthorne’s use of imagery is vital twords his attitude. For example in the last paragraph when he gives the reader a clear image of how Zenobia looks when he discovers the truth about her.

**AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)**

Index of Scores for Samples: Question 2

Sample Reference	Row A	Row B	Row C
E	1	4	1
I	1	3	0
F	1	3	0
A	1	2	0
D	1	2	0
B	1	1	0
C	1	0	0

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample E

Score: 6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis: "Through the use of strongly unfavorable diction to underscore Zenobia's unpleasant and false disposition and repeated insinuations on her actions as performance, Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude toward Zenobia as one of contempt and disapproval" (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because its commentary consistently explains how the numerous pieces of evidence support the line of reasoning. Specific evidence is accompanied by clear commentary throughout the response, e.g., the narrator "stresses his dislike of Zenobia when he says he 'malevolently [beholds] her true character,' implying Zenobia has been hiding her true personality. By claiming she is a 'passionate, luxurious' woman 'lacking simplicity, not deeply refined, incapable of pure and perfect taste,' the narrator harshly criticizes her debauchery and makes evident his disapproval" (paragraph 2). The commentary continues to engage significant details from the entire passage to build toward conclusions: Zenobia's "defining falseness causes the narrator to both distrust and detest Zenobia" (paragraph 3), and "[t]hroughout the passage, the narrator's criticism of Zenobia and her extravagant lifestyle reveal his attitude toward her to be one of extreme contempt and disapproval" (paragraph 4). The response advances the line of reasoning at each turn with focused commentary on the significance of particular words and details.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C because its complex literary argument demonstrates sophisticated thought and is rendered in persuasive prose. It recognizes contradictory aspects of the narrator's attitude (frustration, attraction, dislike, distrust, contempt) toward Zenobia and his attempt to break what he deems her façade: the narrator "longs to witness a genuine reaction from her, good or bad, simply to learn if she is capable and willing of any form of emotional vulnerability. This thirst for 'a glimpse of something true' reveals his struggle to accept this new version of the woman he once knew, who has now become 'self-complacent, condescending,' and inauthentic."

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample I

Score: 4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that presents an interpretation of Hawthorne’s portrayal of the narrator’s attitude toward Zenobia: “The shift and internal resolution that the narrator experiences create a resolution in her attitude towards Zenobia. Where at first she was complacent in her acceptance of Zenobia’s opulent lifestyle, she turns scornful and resentful as she regains control over Zenobia’s proud aura and facade” (paragraph 3).

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three of the four points available in Row B because its commentary is uneven in its support of the thesis. It attempts to develop two arguments, one that interprets the passage as a discourse on selfishness and selflessness (“The narrator, though portrayed as selfless, is not perfect in her opinions, and Zenobia’s selfishness is not wholly consuming either” [paragraph 1]) and the other, cited in Row A above, that responds more directly to the prompt. The essay does not fully integrate one of these claims into the other. Nevertheless, the response does provide specific evidence to support these claims and the commentary does explain the relationship between these pieces of evidence and the thesis. For example, in paragraph two, the student notes how the narrator “appears at first lost in the opulence and decadence of Zenobia’s house.... Though disgusted by the extent of luxury, the narrator caves briefly to the conflicting sides within herself, and momentarily accepts the belief that Zenobia has every right to ‘make herself as gorgeous as she pleased’” to illustrate the narrator’s “complacent...acceptance of Zenobia’s opulent lifestyle,” and then in paragraph three reveals the narrator’s shift in perspective by explaining how “[t]he metaphor of lightning and flame used to describe Zenobia’s actions reveal not only the power of her true emotions, but also the victory the narrator feels in her selfrighteousness.”

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C, because, while it does identify the shifts in the narrator’s attitude toward Zenobia and attempts to provide a broader context for its interpretation of the passage in the claim about selfishness and selflessness, it oversimplifies the complexities of the passage; e.g., “shifts of the narrators attitudes... help create the realization that labels, such as selfish or selfless, are not perfect, and people cannot be defined by just one word.” Because of these oversimplifications, it does not ultimately display the sophistication of thought needed to earn the point.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample F

Score: 4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it takes a clear position that responds to the prompt with an interpretation: “Hawthorne employs disapproving diction and a scornful tone to convey the narrators cold, distasteful attitude towards Zenobia in this excerpt” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points in Row B because it offers specific evidence, provides some commentary to explain the relationship between the evidence and the line of reasoning, and analyzes how two literary elements, diction and tone, contribute to the interpretation of Zenobia’s attitude. Some of the commentary is limited in its explanation, but the response highlights particular words: “proud,” “imposing,” and “incapable of pure and perfect taste” (paragraph 2), to illustrate the narrator’s disapproval of Zenobia’s “mask.” The third paragraph attempts to describe the effect of the tone in the passage, but it falls short of distinguishing tone from diction; yet the paragraph does continue to build on the argument about the narrator’s disapproval of Zenobia, and therefore continues the line of reasoning, even if it is flawed.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because, although there is some attempt to contextualize the interpretation, this attempt consists of a sweeping generalization: “...humans are proud. They are often selfish, narrow minded and... morally unsound” (paragraph 1). The relationship between this statement and the thesis about the narrator's attitude toward Zenobia is not developed and the response oversimplifies the complexities of the passage.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample A

Score: 3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis: “The narrator's attitude toward Zenobia and their corresponding actions [are] most clearly expressed through Hawthorne's use of parallel contrasts and character monologue. It is through these techniques that it is revealed that although the narrator is fond of Zenobia, they are also criticizing of the choices she has made” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because, although it provides some specific evidence to support the thesis, it misinterprets cited evidence, e.g., an observation about the contrast between Zenobia's "gorgeous" house and the "homely" farmhouse leads to a conclusion about “the assumed plainness of the narrator hailing from the farmhouse” (paragraph 2). Conclusions are asserted rather than explained, they tend to be oversimplified and rely on inference, and they do not strengthen the argument: “the narrator's critique of the excessive house can be translated to his critique of Zenobia's excessive wants” (paragraph 2); “by having the narrator express his criticism in the form of a monologue, a stronger effect is created” (paragraph 3).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because, while it communicates ideas clearly (as shown in the examples cited above in Row A and B, ultimately, it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument, and it oversimplifies the complexities of the passage.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample D

Score: 3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a simple, defensible thesis that presents an interpretation of the passage: the passage “portrays the narrator’s love and obsession for Zenobia. Throughout the section, the author uses a lot of diction and imagery to signify the narrator’s attitude towards Zenobia” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because, while it provides some specific and relevant evidence relating to description, imagery, and setting, the commentary provides scant, and often oversimplified, explanations of how this evidence supports the thesis; e.g., “The diction used is positive toward Zenobia. She has a ‘proud figure’, ‘passionate’, ‘luxurious’, ‘lack of simplicity’. Everything about Zenobia that the narrator thinks is perfect” (paragraph 2). Additionally, the response cites details from the passage into its commentary, but that commentary offers more description than analysis, and so the line of reasoning remains unclear; e.g., “The furniture was ‘exceedingly rich’. It was very fresh and it shocked the narrator that ‘the fulfillment of every fantasy of an imagination’, something everybody dreams of” (paragraph 3).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. While it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis and attempts to flesh out its position, it does not consistently focus on that thesis about the narrator’s “love and obsession for Zenobia” (paragraph 1). The response contains language that is ineffective and interferes with the communication of ideas; e.g., “The first sentence of the interchange caught the narrator’s eye for Zenobia” (paragraph 2); “Soon enough with the diction, it soon broke her” (paragraph 2).

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample B

Score: 2/6 Points (A1 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a simple defensible position that responds to the prompt with an interpretation of the narrator’s attitude: "The narrator feels as though Zenobia may not be entirely authentic...Hawthorne is able to portray these feelings through the use of first person point of view and sophisticated diction" (paragraph 1).

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because it offers only one specific piece of evidence from the passage: "To this day, however, I hardly know whether I then beheld Zenobia in her truest attitude, or whether that were the truer one in which she has presented herself" (paragraph 2). While the one piece of evidence is specific, the commentary for that evidence is scant and doesn’t fully make the connection between the evidence and the thesis. Additionally, the response does not extend further to discuss the other claims laid out in the thesis about diction and how both the "first person point of view and sophisticated diction establish the tense tone of the excerpt" (paragraph 1).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. It responds to the prompt with a defensible position and attempts to flesh out its thesis, but it oversimplifies complexities in the passage.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample C

Score: 1/6 Points (A1 – B0 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a simple, defensible position that responds to the prompt: “Hawthorne portrayed the narrator’s attitude towards Zenobia as a liar or as an dishonest person through the use of literary techniques such as imagery and violent diction” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 0/4

The response did not earn any points in Row B because it provides thin evidence for the line of reasoning and provides no commentary: the narrator “gives the reader a clear image of how Zenobia looks when he discovers the truth about her” (paragraph 2). While the essay points to “the last paragraph” as evidence, that reference is too general to understand the point that the response wants to make.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. While it responds to the prompt with a defensible position, it does not exhibit sophisticated thought or develop a complex literary argument; and the writing contains substantial compositional errors (such as those shown in Row A) that do not enhance the argument and impede the clear communication of even simple ideas.

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 3: Literary Argument (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample I

[1] During the height of World War II, Ralph Ellison began his seven-year journey of writing the immensely complex, genre-bending, and influential novel, Invisible Man (1952). Ellison, mirroring the efforts of the Pittsburgh courier's "Double V Campaign," a movement advocating African-American victory in the war abroad, and in terms of racial injustice at home, focused on the African-American's struggle to combat ubiquitous prejudice while attaining self-understanding. The African-American narrator symbolically unnamed for the entirety of the novel, introduces himself as an "invisible man." Yet, his invisibility is rather than akin to that of a heroic archetype who spies on criminals with literal transparency, metaphorical in its nature. He claims to be "invisible," on the basis that his humanity, throughout his experience, is never seen. In the world of racism that America encapsulates – especially in the mid-20th century – he is only perceived as a façade of confining stereotypes imposed on African-Americans. Although the "gift" of metaphorical invisibility, as shown through the novel's varied characters, can be utilized to (arguably) bolster freedom – freedom in terms of anonymity – Ellison, through the "Invisible Man's" reflections, asserts that such invisibility is immensely impairing, as it stubbornly presents its victims from making an impact on society as they're imprisoned in oppressive expectations. Ellison ultimately implies that an acceptance of one's invisibility, rather than a firm ideology on how to relieve it, is the path to self-understanding.

[2] It becomes clear early in the novel that, although presented with a tone of pessimism, this metaphorical invisibility can, in some ways, be advantageous. The narrator himself, for example, steals electricity to power his 1,369 lightbulbs that decorate his underground home – such an obsession with light reflects his urge to be seen. Similarly, his own grandfather (a former slave) held an optimistic approach to invisibility, arguing that one could "Overcom'em with yesses, undermin'em with grins, [and] agree'em to death and destruction" – that a subtle mockery of prejudice – simply accepting his position of absurdity – would bring contentment and relief from oppression (talking the moral high ground). Similarly living with his "head in the lion's mouth" (an emblem of oppression) a mysterious veteran that the narrator meets at the Golden Day (a bar populated by mentally unstable veterans) advocates the acceptance of invisibility, arguing that it is a "gift" allowing one to flow freely through society anonymously, secure from the strict demands of social reputations and influence.

[3] Although the narrator's invisibility may act as a gift in certain situations, it ultimately acts as an immense burden standing between himself and his goals, as well as his urgency to live an impactful life. A symbolic experience with buttered yams in Harlem outlines the confining nature of stereotype-driven invisibility. Biting into a hot yam, saying "I yam what I am," thus conforming to the stereotypes of African-Americans, the narrator feels free, he has escaped the prison of expectations for "proper" or "good" blacks set by white society, unlike Dr. Bledsoe (a leader at an all-black college) who is shameful of his deep urge to eat chitterlings

AP English Literature and Composition
Question 3: Literary Argument (2018)
Sample Student Responses

and lose his “proper” reputation. The negative influence of invisibility is also emphasized in the symbolic inclusion of Sambo dolls. Tod Clifton, a former member of the Brotherhood – a social activism group – ironically sells Sambo dolls on the street and ends up being murdered by a policeman for his disobedience. The dolls act as symbols for the power of stereotypes to control behavior – “Sambo” is the epitome of a stereotypical character. Just as the transparent strings control the dolls’ gestures, stereotypes, often unconsciously, control the actions of the groups that they’re imposed on – they are, in essence, the transparent strings that fuel the embodiment of stereotypes. In addition, the narrator’s invisibility, paired with the metaphorical blindness of the Brotherhood (who acted as if they cared about blacks for their own moral fulfillment while simultaneously using the narrator as a tool for their agenda) get in the way of his desire to preach his ideals – he is thus rendered incapable of making a social impact because his audience fails to see his message.

[4] Ultimately, the invisible man’s metaphorical invisibility can be seen as a tool for freedom in anonymity. However, as made obvious by the many roadblocks that it presented in his life, it is simultaneously incapacitating – an invisible man with a blind audience is futile. With such ideas in mind, Ellison implied that it takes an acceptance of one’s invisibility to feel fulfilled in a world of oppression. At the same time, however, it is vastly important to find one’s own approach to life, as clashing ideologies tend to worsen the dilemma (the college, the Brotherhood, and Ras the Exhorter). Thus, in that the invisible man learned that he must find his own way to adapt to his environment, and his own self, he “on the lower frequencies,” speaks for everyone.

Sample H

[1] Beautiful women seem to have it all. Especially in Hollywood, beautiful actresses become “it girls” and leading ladies. Yet a beautiful actress is hardly ever permitted to play roles such as the laughable sidekick or the terrifying ex-convict (if they do so, it is often with prosthetics to detract from their beauty!). Beautiful Hollywood women, it seems, land less interesting roles. In Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway, Elizabeth Dalloway finds herself in a less interesting “role” by virtue of her beauty. Though her contrast with characters such as Miss Kilman reveals that beauty is necessary to attain success, Elizabeth’s frustration at the way she is stereotyped demonstrates that – for women trapped in strictly-enforced gender roles – traditional beauty is a double-edged sword.

[2] The relationship between Miss Kilman and Elizabeth enables the latter to see what her life would be like without beauty or wealth. A social pariah by virtue of her appearance and political beliefs, Miss Kilman earns the scorn of almost everyone in Mrs. Dalloway save Elizabeth. Miss Kilman thus turns up her nose at beauty and society, deigning herself to be above such pursuits. Yet her social status and isolation compared to other characters in the novel make it clear that these pursuits are, to some degree, necessary. Even so, Elizabeth idolizes Miss Kilman, failing to notice the cost of her teacher’s social station. Miss Kilman is the antithesis of the world in which Elizabeth feel trapped, causing Elizabeth to believe that a loss of beauty or class will solve her problems.

[3] Frequent comparisons between Elizabeth and flowers draw attention to the ways Elizabeth is dismissed as more than a pretty face. While boarding the omnibus after her lunch with Miss Kilman, Elizabeth bemoans that people seem to always compare her to hyacinths, lilies, or other flowers. Indeed, Clarissa and Sally both compare Elizabeth to a hyacinth and a lily, respectively, at different points in the novel. Flowers are passive and immobile creatures, plucked and admired for their beauty, but lacking any other qualities. Thus, comparisons to flowers reduce Elizabeth to the single external quality of her beauty. Idolizing qualities such as intelligence and verve in Miss Kilman, Elizabeth does not welcome this attention to her appearance. However, older figures like Clarissa and Sally understand that beauty holds the key to social success in their society, and so view comparisons to flowers as the highest compliment.

[4] Unjust gender roles have placed Elizabeth in a double-bind. Without her beauty, she would be ridiculed, isolated and reduced to Miss Kilman’s social station. With beauty, Elizabeth is pegged as a passive flower and relegated to traditional women’s roles. The two strongest mentors in her life – her mother and Miss Kilman – wish her to pick one path or the other. Elizabeth’s ultimate appearance at Clarissa’s party suggests that perhaps she chooses beauty and society – but was it even a choice at all, with the cost of eschewing these qualities so great?

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[5] Elizabeth Dalloway no doubt possesses extraordinary beauty, but whether this beauty is to her benefit or detriment is another question entirely. Elizabeth's appearance has cast her in the role of gorgeous inguene. Like beautiful Hollywood actresses, Elizabeth faces a long battle against gender norms if she wishes to break out of her typecasting.

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Sample Student Responses

Sample G

[1] Though each person is dually blessed and burdened with a multitude of gifts, how we choose to utilize what we are given is completely determined by ourselves. In Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, Briony has the gift of prolific writing at a young age, but when she begins to attempt to solve her own problems through writing happy endings, McEwan shows the reader that Briony's attempt to play God is not only futile but also destructive, not at all telling of reality.

[2] At a young age, Briony's attempt to assert control over her younger cousins through her play, "The Trials of Arabella" briefly introduces the detrimental effects Briony's gift can have on the Tallis family. While Briony has a very specific outcome planned for the play, her cousins, more specifically Lola, "thwarts" Briony's vision, and she becomes petulant and immaturely takes out her anger on plants in a field near her house. In a chain of unfortunate events, Briony asserts her power over Robbie, when she accuses him of raping Lola, to show that she, indeed, is more powerful than her cousin. In a way, this is Briony's attempt to show Lola that although, as director of "The Trials of Arabella," she gave Lola that leading role of Arabella, she still holds all the control in the palm of her hands and can throw it around whenever she chooses to. In this stage of Briony's life, her writing can be seen as a gift, since through her assertion of control over her cousins through both of her writing and the "resolution" of a heinous crime, Briony is portrayed as a hero.

[3] When both Robbie and Cecilia are dead due to the second world war, Briony again attempts to use her writing in a childish endeavor to regain control over the situation; only this time, McEwan does not allow Briony to accomplish what she had done so many years ago. In this stage of Briony's life, her writing becomes more of a burden to her: although she tries tirelessly to write a happy ending for Robbie and Cecilia to be reunited and live happily ever after after the war, she is unable to finish the book because she develops vascular dementia and begins to lose her memory.

[4] Briony's gift of writing serves as a reminder that although we may attempt to assert control over every aspect of our life, we need to realize that life is messy and it is impossible to truly mold life to perfection, or our own terms. This is clear first through Briony's unsuccessful attempt to coerce her cousins into enthusiastically and satisfactorily fulfilling her vision of "The Trials of Arabella," then further through McEwan's punishment of vascular dementia. Further, the chain of events in *Atonement*, beginning all with Briony's accidental viewing of Robbie and Cecilia having sex, leading to the both of their deaths in World War II goes to show that full control of life is truly unattainable. The complex nature of Briony's gift is conveyed through her benevolent intentions paired with the unexpected or tragic outcomes.

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[5] In conclusion, through Briony's gift of writing, McEwan conveys the message to readers that despite our desire to want the world a certain way, we cannot assert out control unnecessarily, because the results may not be as we expect.

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Sample Student Responses

Sample E

[1] Time and time again, works of literature have featured characters who are given/possess a literal or figurative gift. The gift may hold high measures, and hold great power through the literature piece but also, at times, the gift often holds a burden on the character or causes a problem in the piece of work. The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde shows a young man, Dorian Gray, who does not age, and although at first this seems like a blessing to him, it quickly begins to burden him and arise problems.

[2] Dorian Gray is a young man obsessed with beauty. When his painter friend paints a portrait of Dorian Gray, Gray finds it so beautiful he bursts out in tears and wishes to stay this beautiful, as a painting, forever. This arises many problems, how Dorian's nature of being so self-concided leads to the other around him feeling unworthy to be with him. Many of Gray's friends die and his lover kills herself. Dorian blames all his problems to his youth and beauty, one he quickly becomes aware is his curse.

[3] Wilde uses Dorian Gray's gift to portray the overall meaning of the book that youth and beauty are not everything, that being vain will only arise problems with not onl yourself, but with those around you as well. In the novel, Wilde, right from the beginning, establishes Dorian Gray's vain character and foreshadows the inevitable destruction of the painting that started it all. Beauty and youth are Dorian Gray's main priority /purpose in his life, that it keeps him from forming real relationships. Prince Henry is immediately attracted to Dorian from his [Dorian] beauty but eventually as time went on and everyone (except Dorian) aged, problems arose when people began to notice Dorian not aging. In the end, it causes' Dorian to cry in agony, wishing to never have been "cursed" with the beauty and youth ha had originally wished for Wilde's work holds meaning to this day by showing Dorian's struggle with everlasting youth and beauty Wilde portrays that being to self-concided and vain leads to inevitable misery.

[4] Many works of literature often portray a character with a literal or figurative gift. This gift may have positive influences at first, yet many times it serves as an advantage and disadvantage, causing problems. In The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde, Dorian Gray is given the gift of beauty and youth, and with this gift it attracts people towerds Dorian. Although Dorian becomes extremely vain and disregards other very quickly. This gift of eternal youth and beauty leads to the death of his friends and broken relationships with others – leading Dorian Gray to be miserable. Wilde uses Dorian's gift and the whole novel to portray the message that beauty is not everything and how it can lead to many problems and misery.

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Sample Student Responses

Sample C

[1] In the story of “The Tempest” by Shakespeare there is a wizard who was casted away with his infant daughter to an inhibited island for years.

[2] This wizard has special powers, with them he was able to free someone from a spell and make them a servant. He had so much power he created a tempest when someone from the land he was casted away how cane in a boat. The power of this wizard was strong, but he could not keep his daughter on his side. When the ship was shipwrecked onto the island his daughter finds a handsome man from the boat and falls in love. Even though he wanted to hurt and punish those who casted him away, his daughter was able to stop him.

[3] No matter the power or wisdom the wizard had, his weakness was his daughter and his love for her. His daughter who was once the thing that kept him going fell in love with the son of the king, which led to the wizard having to stop himself to keep his daughters happiness.

[4] A powerful wizard has the gift of his daughter, which turns into a problem when she falls in love with the son of the king. This leads to him following his daughters wishes.

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Sample B

[1] A novel that has a character with a literal of figurative gift was the main character in Frankenstein. He was given a gift that was a burden, but also an advantage and a problem.

[2] Frankenstein was created by a mad scientist. He was created for evil. He was also created to be hideous. Frankenstein terrorized the town. Everyone in the village was terrified. This became a burden when he never meant to do harm to the small community. He was seen as a monster. The advantage that this created was that the mad scientist was able to successfully use this as he wished.

[3] The gift that he was given contributed to the story by teaching a lesson to not judge someone based on looks. Frankenstein was made as an ugly hideous and terrifying character, but never meant to do any harm.

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Sample Student Responses

Sample A

[1] In the story of Metamorphosis, the main character under goes a huge physical change that impacts the entirety of his life. Although many saw his change as purely a burden, the change revealed a lot to the main character which could've been perceived as a gift.

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Index of Scores for Samples: Question 3

Sample Reference	Row A	Row B	Row C
I	1	4	1
H	1	4	1
G	1	4	0
E	1	2	0
C	0	1	0
B	0	1	0
A	0	0	0

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Sample 1 (*Invisible Man*)

Score: 6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt by identifying a character’s gift that is both advantageous and problematic, presents a strong defensible thesis, and offers an interpretation of the significance of that gift to the meaning of the work as a whole: “Although the ‘gift’ of metaphorical invisibility, as shown through the novel’s varied characters, can be utilized to (arguably) bolster freedom—freedom in terms of anonymity—Ellison, through the ‘Invisible Man’s’ reflections, asserts that such invisibility is immensely impairing, as it stubbornly prevents its victims from making an impact [sic] on society as they’re imprisoned in oppressive expectation. Ellison ultimately implies that an acceptance of one’s invisibility, rather than a firm ideology on how to relieve it, is the path to self-understanding” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because it integrates specific evidence from *Invisible Man* and consistently provides well-developed commentary to support a line of reasoning about how the complex nature of the gift contributes to the meaning of the novel as a whole. The student references how the gift can be an advantage because it allows the unnamed narrator to steal electricity, his grandfather to subtly mock prejudice without recourse, and a veteran to move “through society anonymously secure from the strict demands of social reputations and influence” (paragraph 2). The student then explains in detail the disadvantages of the complex gift of invisibility with well-integrated evidence of “stereotype-driven invisibility” in paragraph three (the narrator’s eating of buttered yams, a black activist’s ironic selling of “Sambo dolls” controlled by “transparent strings” and that activist’s murder by a policeman for disobedience) and explicit commentary that builds toward a convincing interpretation about the meaning of the work as a whole.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C because it identifies and explores complexities and tensions within the selected work. The response clearly recognizes and accounts for contradictory aspects of the gift as it examines the gift “as a tool for freedom and anonymity” while also admitting “it is simultaneously incapacitating” and creates “many roadblocks” (paragraph 4). Examination of this complexity also helps to situate the response in the specific context of “the African-American’s struggle to combat ubiquitous prejudice while attaining self-understanding” in the “world of racism that America encapsulates—especially in the mid-20th-century” (paragraph 4). Lastly, the prose is rendered in a style that is vivid and persuasive.

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Sample H (*Mrs. Dalloway*)

Score: 6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt by presenting a defensible thesis that offers an interpretation about the complex nature of a character’s gift: “Elizabeth’s frustration at the way she is stereotyped demonstrates that—for women trapped in strictly-enforced gender role—traditional beauty is a double-edged sword” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because it integrates specific evidence to support consistently well-developed commentary, explaining the relationship between thesis and evidence and establishing a strong line of reasoning as a result. The response builds to an interpretation of the work as a whole by comparing Miss Kilman, a “social pariah” who deems “herself above such pursuits” as beauty and wealth, and Elizabeth’s friends who believe “beauty holds the key to social success in their society, and so view comparisons to flowers [‘passive and immobile’] as the highest compliment.” In paragraph four, the response provides a clear interpretation of the work as a whole: “Unjust gender roles have placed Elizabeth in a double-bind. Without her beauty, she would be ridiculed, isolated and reduced to Miss. Kilman’s [low] status. With beauty, Elizabeth is pegged as a passive flower and relegated to traditional women’s roles...Elizabeth’s ultimate appearance at Clarissa’s party suggests that perhaps she chooses beauty and society—but was it even a choice at all, with the cost of eschewing these qualities so great?”

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C because it both develops a complex literary argument about gender norms and women’s status in the novel and establishes that the world of the novel offers insights into the broader context of modern society. In the first paragraph, the response introduces a fitting analogy of beautiful actresses who become typecast to explain the similarities between real and fictional worlds and returns to that analogy to conclude that: “Elizabeth’s appearance has cast her in the role of a gorgeous [ingenue]. Like beautiful Hollywood actresses, Elizabeth faces a long battle against gender norms if she wishes to break out of her typecasting” (paragraph 5). The response explores the complexities and tensions of Elizabeth’s “double-bind” within the text, as well as that of women in the broader context of modern society. In addition to the sophistication of thought demonstrated in this interpretation, the response employs a style that is vivid and persuasive throughout.

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Sample G (*Atonement*)

Score: 5/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt and presents a defensible thesis. By identifying Briony’s gift as the “gift of prolific writing at a young age,” the response focuses on a considerable skill as her gift but then establishes a complexity related to that gift as her “attempts to solve her own problems through writing happy endings” prove “not only futile but also destructive” (paragraph one). This also suggests an interpretation of the work as a whole which the response later attempts to expound upon: “despite our desire to want the world a certain way, we cannot assert out control unnecessarily” (paragraph 5).

Row B: 4/ 4

The response earned four points in Row B because it incorporates specific evidence to directly support the thesis and supporting claims and it provides well-developed commentary that explains the relationship between the evidence and claims thereby establishing the line of reasoning. It argues that Briony’s attempts to assert control over her cousins through writing a play introduces “the detrimental effects Briony’s gift can have on the Tallis family” (paragraph 2) and that Briony’s gift “becomes more of a burden” (paragraph three) later in the novel since McEwan punishes her with vascular dementia for misusing her gift so that she is no longer able to write. The line of reasoning continues to build toward an interpretation of the novel as a whole in paragraph five, where the student writes, “McEwan conveys the message to readers that despite our desire to want the world a certain way, we cannot assert our own control unnecessarily because the results may not be what we expect.”

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it makes a statement about how the complex gift relates to a possible meaning of the work as a whole but does not consistently maintain that interpretation, and its attempt to contextualize its interpretation results in generalization: “Briony’s gift of writing serves as a reminder that although we may attempt to assert control over every aspect of our life, we need to realize that life is messy and it is impossible to truly mold life to perfection, or our own terms” (paragraph 4).

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Sample E (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*)

Score: 4/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt by identifying a character's complex gift and presents a defensible thesis that offers claims about the gift itself, explaining that Gray “does not age and although at first this seems like a blessing to him, it quickly begins to burden him and arise [*sic*] problems” (paragraph 1). This does address the complex nature of Dorian’s gift as it “seems like a blessing” but “quickly begins to burden him.” While the thesis verges on plot summary, the framing of Dorian’s agelessness as a complex gift renders it barely acceptable.

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B. While it makes some specific references to the text and provides commentary, that commentary is limited and almost uniformly under-developed. Like paragraph two, for example, much of the commentary is shot through with plot summary. Similarly, interpretation frequently lapses into cliché: “Wilde uses Dorian Gray's gift to portray the overall meaning of the book that youth and beauty are not everything, that being vain will only arise problems with not only yourself [*sic*], but with those around you as well” (paragraph 3).

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it does not demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument. It offers overly generalized claims such as “Wilde portrays that being to self-conceded [*sic*] and vain leads to inevitable [*sic*] misery” (paragraph 3) and “beauty is not everything and how it can lead to many problems and misery” (paragraph 4). It uses language that is ineffective in that it does not enhance the argument and interferes with the clear communication of ideas. While the response does address how the complex nature of “[t]he gift of eternal youth and beauty leads to the death of his friends and broken relationships with others—leading Dorian Gray to be miserable” (paragraph 4), it does not consistently address or examine it elsewhere.

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Sample C (*The Tempest*)

Score: 1/6 Points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row A. It attempts to identify multiple gifts in *The Tempest* – the wizards’ “special powers” (paragraph 1) and “the gift of his daughter” (paragraph 4), but which gift is being argued in the response is vague. Consequently, it remains unclear how either gift contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because it provides only vague references to the text: “This wizard has special powers, with them he was able to free someone from a spell and make them a servant” (paragraph 2). It summarizes a vague outline of the plot, but the plot summary does not rise to the level of an explanation of how it might serve the claim.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it does not meet the criteria called for in the rubric.

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Sample B (*Frankenstein*)

Score: 1/6 Points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row A. The intended thesis restates the prompt and simply inserts the novel’s title and main character: “A novel that had a character with a literal or figurative gift was the main character in *Frankenstein*. He was given a gift that was a burden, but also an advantage and a problem” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because it provides evidence that is mostly general, and it presents thin plot summary that does not serve a defensible claim or rise to the level of commentary or explanation: “*Frankenstein* was created by a mad scientist. He was created for evil. He was also created to be hideous. *Frankenstein* terrorized the town. Everyone in the village was terrified. He became a burden when he never meant to do harm” (paragraph 2). In paragraph three, the response does offer an observation, but this is not related to the idea of how gifts are complex: “The gift that he was given contributes to the story by teaching a lesson to not judge someone based on looks.”

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it does not meet the criteria called for in the rubric.

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Sample A (*Metamorphosis*)

Score: 0/0 Points (A0 – B0 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The two-sentence response did not earn the point in Row A. It offers no thesis and merely mentions the prompt's concept, a gift that is advantageous and disadvantageous, in extremely vague terms: In *Metamorphosis* “[a]lthough many saw his change as purely a burden, the change revealed a lot about the main character which could've been perceived as a gift” (sentence 2).

Row B: 0/4

The response did not earn any points in Row B because it merely repeats from the prompt the concept of a gift that is an advantage and a handicap and offers neither further commentary on a gift nor textual references.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it does not meet the criteria called for in the rubric.