

SOPHISTICATION POINT

AP Literature and Composition

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From the **AP Lit Scoring Rubrics** (Q1, Q2, and Q3)

Row C	0 points	1 point
Sophistication	Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<p>Develops sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument. <i>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing <u>any</u> of the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the text.¹(2) Illuminating the student's interpretations by situating it within a broader context.(3) Accounting for alternative interpretations of the text.(4) Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. <p><i>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.</i></p>

NOTES:

1. The sophistication point is the proverbial icing on the cake: do not strive to make the best icing unless you know how to consistently bake an edible cake. In other words, only strive for the sophistication point *if* you can (a) write a thesis and (b) prove using evidence and commentary.
2. You only have to do **ONE** of the following four items to get the sophistication point, but you have to do it **consistently** throughout your paper (note that *consistently* does NOT mean every sentence, but at least once or twice per paragraph)

Ways to get the sophistication point:

- ★ Demonstrating complexity by **identifying and exploring complexities or tensions** within the text:
 - a common way to get the sophistication point
 - explores some of the following throughout the response (as well as WHY they're significant)
 - subtleties/nuances (not absolutes)
 - shifts
 - irony
 - juxtaposition, contrast, paradox
 - identifies and explores opposing adjectives:
 - __ and __ .
 - __ yet __.
 - __ in this case but __ in this other situation
 - continually explores the WHY (and nuances)
 - exploring shifts, irony, juxtaposition, contrast, and/or paradox
 - identifying what is unpredictable and connecting that to "meaning of the work as a whole"
 - for example, if writing about *Washington Black*, exploring how Titch is emblematic of a "white saviour" who upholds racist ideology could be one way to work toward this point

¹ Text = poem (Q1), passage (Q2), novel or play (Q3)

- ★ Illuminating the student's interpretation by **situating it within a broader context**
 - another relatively common way to get the sophistication point
 - if you think of the text as the subject you're zoomed-in on, zoom-out to a wide angle: take in the society, the time period, different filters/lenses that are relevant to the text's content
 - interpret the text in a wider framework (e.g. this text is not just about the text, but also about something broader, something related to humanity or an aspect of society)
 - situate your response in history: when/where/for whom was it written? (e.g. colonialism, industrialization)
 - situate your response in psychology (e.g. gender ideals, classism, critical race theory)
 - explore archetypes: are there character/setting archetypes? Do they break the mold at all? What is the author's intent in doing that?
 - ★ Accounting for **alternative interpretations** of the text
 - a less common way to get the sophistication point
 - consider sentence starters: "that said...", "Perhaps...", "Some people may see X as __ because of __; however,..." (then back up those claims with evidence and commentary)
 - the key: if you explore an alternative interpretation, PROVE IT using evidence
 - ★ Employing **a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive**
 - a less common way to get the sophistication point
 - arguably, this is the hardest one to teach
 - your prose must be breathtaking
 - regardless, using the following will help your writing to sing
 - anaphora (intentional repetition)
 - varied syntax
 - sentence length: very short, short, medium, long (but not run-on)
 - sentence openers: subject, prepositional, clausal, adverb (-ly), participle (-ing)
 - sentence type (simple, complex, compound, complex-compound)
 - varied punctuation (but DON'T overdo it; use sparingly and intentionally)
 - em-dashes
 - questions, often rhetorical
 - semi-colons
 - parallelism
 - intentional diction
 - use an analogy or extended metaphor
 - assonance, consonance, alliteration
 - connected diction (i.e. a motif): if the Q1 poem is about plants, do a quick brainstorm of plant-words in the margins: vine, grow, die, light, wither, blossom; then use these verbs metaphorically to explore your interpretation of the work as a whole
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