

# AP<sup>®</sup> SUMMER INSTITUTE SCORING NOTES

## 2015 AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

### Question 1

#### Sample Identifier: I

Score: 9

- offers a sophisticated and persuasive analysis of the poem in substantive, elegant, clear sentences
- directly addresses the prompt and maintains this focus throughout the essay; establishes from the outset that the boy's journey to "listen to a storyteller . . . suggests the profound impact that the experience has on the boy's life as he grows up"; couches this insight in appropriately provisional language until the claim is amply argued through textual evidence
- refers to poetic devices and effects (description, mood, figurative language, metaphor, contrast) and analyzes how they contribute to meaning (e.g., "[t]he storyteller is compared to lamplight, to an illuminating spot of light and knowledge in the darkness, and the boys together are rapt listeners, further joined together by their shared wonder")
- analyzes each poetic device and effect purposefully; perceptive in identifying a powerful metaphor "[Sidone's] leaves were the libraries of the Caribbean" and persuasively discusses an analogical link between the storyteller's stories and knowledge more broadly
- uses the structure of the poem purposefully to delineate two separate phases of the speaker's experience (the journey to the storyteller; listening to her stories) and uses this observation to analyze their significance
- moves easily between implicit and explicit textual references and reaches perceptive conclusions about why the setting and journey to the storyteller are significant for the speaker: comparing "the winding road to a snake gives the reader a sense of the wild feeling of the place and its natural mysticism. . . [it] conveys hidden danger . . . reinforced in the line, 'Sunset would threaten us as we climbed closer'. . . The setting is a natural one, potentially dangerous for the two young boys, but this only adds to the weight of the experience for the speaker and its depth in his memory"
- understands the importance of the experience temporally and developmentally for the speaker and uses this understanding to write a brief but effective conclusion stating the speaker's experience has "continued to affect him and follow him throughout his life"

#### Sample Identifier: H

Score: 8

- unlike the 9 essay, which sets a clear direction from the outset, this essay begins unevenly with a lengthy description of setting
- despite the uneven start, the essay ultimately achieves a clear and persuasive analysis of the poem and details the importance of the experience to the speaker
- the focus on setting and the identification of nature as the origin of folk stories yields the insight that nature "is more powerful than humans and society; nature is full of the unknown, just like the storyteller's stories"; the two ideas are linked in the conclusion, which implies that both the fireflies and the storyteller are sources of light
- while the analysis of poetic elements (imagery, personification, word choice, structure) is not as well developed or as well composed as in the 9 essay, this 8 essay does note the shift signaled by line 12 ("There's childhood, and there's childhood's aftermath' . . . [which] stands on its own line, and is the only sentence in the poem's entirety that does not have enjambment"), observing that "this is just the buildup to the actual stories that had such a large impact on his life"
- this essay offers a more thorough analysis of the poem than the 7 essay; it contains both implicit and explicit references to the poem and shows a better command of the conventions of composition than the 7 essay

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**Sample Identifier: G**

**Score: 7**

- this essay offers a reasonable claim that the “storyteller serves as a source of enlightenment in the dark, her stories illuminating the minds of the young boys who listen” but focuses more on the account than on its lasting significance for the speaker
- the essay refers to several poetic devices in the poem, notably, figures and contrast: “[i]n these images, light functions to give a sense of guidance, illumination, and safety in the dark. The sound imagery also lends a feeling of security” and the noise offers a “stark contrast to the mysterious, jungle-like road that leads to the house,” but the initial claim is not thoroughly developed or evidenced through these references; while the essay is insightful, it does not explicitly explain the connections among these devices or how they signify what the essay claims
- the significance of the experience for the speaker is broached intelligently (“The end of the poem finds the boys venturing into the fascinating unknown once more . . . illuminated and captivated by the stories she tells”) but this too is not developed enough to be entirely convincing
- while the essay offers many good insights, its structure is driven by the structure of the poem: it deals with the “first eleven lines of the poem” in the first body paragraph, shifts to “[w]hen the boys find themselves at the storyteller’s home” in the second body paragraph and thence to “[t]he happenings in the storyteller’s house”; while this is a sound method, it yields a more compartmentalized analysis than the 8 and 9 essays

**Sample Identifier: F**

**Score: 6**

- offers the claim that the storyteller “held a great deal of power in her ability to manipulate a story” and that the speaker learns the power of storytelling through his encounter with her; this claim, while reasonable, is not developed beyond a general assertion of the power of storytelling
- the language of the essay is generally clear; diction is repetitive (e.g., “creepy”) and sometimes inaccurate (e.g., “sinistry”), but, in the main, this does not interfere with the communication of ideas
- the essay engages in a discussion of poetic devices, notably, imagery and detail (“dark reek of moss” and the “black twist” of the path) but comments on these in a cursory and colloquial way to conclude little more than that these references depict the speaker’s experience of the episode as “creepy”
- less nuanced analysis, fewer purposeful references to the poem and less facility with language than the 7 essay
- distinguishable from the 5 essay by a more developed analysis of the significance of storytelling, clearer language and more engagement with of the text

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**Sample Identifier: E**

**Score: 5**

- this paper offers the plausible claim that “[t]hrough . . . vivid imagery and personification, Walcott conveys the significance of the speaker’s visit to the old woman’s home,” but it does not specify in what way the visit is important
- formulaic and repetitive; it does not fully engage the question of the effect of the experience on the speaker and focuses more on the storyteller: “The woman’s wisdom and skill at storytelling mesmerized the two boys, and her stories seemed to come alive,” and “[t]he storyteller’s skill was such that when she told stories, she brought them to life so well that even the inanimate shadows seemed to come alive”
- while the writing is competent, there is little depth to flesh out the identification of poetic devices and thin textual support for the essay’s primary claim
- superficial analysis and paraphrase dominate this essay, and it is not as well conceived as the essays in the 7-6 range

**Sample Identifier: D**

**Score: 4**

- this essay is fairly typical of essays at this score level in that it makes a simple claim—that the poem offers the “potent” moments of an experience so that “both the reader and writer are able to develop. . . an image of childhood”—but offers only limited evidence and partial analysis in support of this claim
- presents little evidence to explain why and how the experience recounted is important to the speaker
- recognizes poetic devices (imagery, personification, alliteration, simile) but the essay offers little analysis of these devices and makes very limited purposeful reference to the poem
- the writing is unsophisticated and the content is unconvincing and underdeveloped and relies on overgeneralization and cliché: “as a whole, Walcott sucessfully [sic] combines his usage of [several literary devices] to construct a piece of literature that fully engrosses the reader”
- observations made about the poem are sometimes unconvincing: “both lines 9 and 10 place a hyphen ‘—’ to stress a pause or even importance of that specific part. . . [this] could easilly [sic] be interpreted as the random pauses that children tend to give to observe the surroundings of an unfamiliar area”
- the essay does not contain as plausible a claim as the essay scored 5, and speculates where the 5 essay evidences, but it is more developed than the 3 essay and exhibits rudimentary organization

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### Sample Identifier: C

Score: 3

- this essay makes the claim that the "encounter with the storyteller . . . opened his eyes to all of his surroundings and nature"
- while this essay elsewhere mentions the effect of the storyteller on the speaker ("In a way, the storyteller influenced Walcott to tell his story") and discerns the immediacy created by the vivid descriptions in the poem, neither of these points is developed
- the essay offers scant analysis of the significance of the episode to the speaker and virtually no textual evidence
- the language of this essay is typical of essays scored a 3: sentences are ungainly and simplistic and they sometimes make purposeless statements about what is *not* in the poem, e.g., "In this poem, Walcott doesn't use rhyming but it flows pretty nicely throughout the reading"
- despite the fact that the essay relies on paraphrase, demonstrates a limited grasp of the conventions of written discourse and resorts to listing devices rather than analyzing how they generate meaning, this essay is more attentive to the prompt and shows a greater understanding of the poem than the essay scored 2

### Sample Identifier: B

Score: 2

- briefly mentions a number of poetic devices (metaphor, simile, personification) and offers ostensibly supporting quotations, but does not go much further than identifying them; chooses irrelevant evidence and fails to analyze the poem; compounds the weaknesses of the essays in the 4-3 range of the scoring guide
- exhibits only the most generalized understanding of one function of imagery in the claim: "He uses imagery to put the reader in the story. He does [sic] by giving extensive detail and painting a picture"; the essay does not explain how this device contributes to conveying the significance of the experience for the speaker
- uses syntax and grammar poorly and shows little understanding of the structure and conventions of the essay form
- offers thin paraphrase in an unacceptably brief response, using language that is virtually incoherent

### Sample Identifier: A

Score: 1

- this scant response presents little discussion of the poem
- attempts to respond to the prompt by listing diction and word choice as techniques employed by the poet; also asserts (without evidence) that the poem uses imagery in a way that "catches the reader's attention"
- lacks clarity and organization