

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2009 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

Question 1

The score should reflect a judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 15 minutes to read the sources and 40 minutes to write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

- 9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for a score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in development, or impressive in their control of language.

8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** argue the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They develop their position by effectively synthesizing* at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and convincing. Their prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

- 7 Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for a score of 6 but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** argue the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They develop their position by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and sufficient. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5 Essays earning a score of 5 argue the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They develop their position by synthesizing at least three sources, but how they use and explain sources is somewhat uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the student's position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas adequately.

4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** argue the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They develop their position by synthesizing at least two sources, but the evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or less convincing. The sources may dominate the student's attempts at development, the link between the argument and the sources may be weak, or the student may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify the sources. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be less consistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

* For the purposes of scoring, *synthesis* means referring to sources to develop a position and citing them accurately.

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Question 1 (continued)

- 3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in arguing the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or their explanation or examples may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in arguing the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to develop a position, or substitute a simpler task by merely summarizing or categorizing the sources or by merely responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose of these essays often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

- 1** Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, weak in their control of writing, or do not cite even one source.
- 0** Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.
- Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.

I am now a junior at my high school. In order to graduate this particular high school, I must take a required course of 'Professional and technical studies.' This doesn't sound at all bad or make it seem like I am being suppressed to conformity, but it actually is.

My interests and goal as a major is to be in the communications area. I requested to take journalism as one of my classes to have experience in that field of study. It was to my dismay that I was no longer able to take that class for my senior year because of a required class I had to take. If schools traditionally have 2 goals, (1) To help each student gain personal fulfillment and (2) To help create good citizens, why are they forcing upon classes that you don't want to take? Why am I not able to take journalism when it is fulfilling my personal goals?

In source A, John Taylor Gatto makes the case that ~~education~~ schools aren't necessarily needed for education. He says, "And plenty of people throughout the world today find a way to educate themselves without resorting to a system of compulsory secondary schools that all too often resemble ~~a~~ prisons." He makes a very true point. Most kids today are living in a world where technology makes learning easy access. I believe I would've done very well at



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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

learning microsoft tutorials online rather than having to ~~sacrifice~~ sacrifice a class that would've helped in college. Education is everywhere, and people learn to find ways to it without having to go to school and be imprisoned for almost 8 hours every day.

we supposedly live in a democratic nation but ~~if~~ it is so often that tyranny and communism is being practiced, especially in schools. The structure of the school day and the classes you must attend are all forced onto students. It is like a routine they must follow, or their futures will be 'destroyed.'

Source B shows a daily bell schedule of a public high school. Each passing time is 4 minutes long and the schedule doesn't even point out lunch. School schedules are so strict and confined, nothing must be out of place. If a student is a minute late they receive even more of a confinement — detention.

Schools should be there to support individuality and only conformity to a certain point. They are trying to ~~standardize~~ ~~is~~ standardized all kids to be the same in order to 'fit into society.' They must all take the required courses, the standardized tests, and sometimes even wear the same attire.

~~Source~~ Source C shows a cover design for a kindergarten class in preparing for standardized tests.



~~Q~~ @ Even at such a young age, are the schools trying to conform the minds from evolving into individuals. Conformity does not always mean it'll ensure socialization among students. Schools should help to ensure or ~~help~~ aid socialization but they should not go ~~so~~ deep as forcing them / students to be all alike. In source D, Neil Postman said, "But the idea of a school is that individuals must learn in a setting which individual needs are subordinated to group interests." In a way, schools should teach the students to get along and cooperate, but they don't need to go to an extreme as to suppress the individual's mind to conform to society. Isn't that what communism is?

Schools are there to teach students the ways to survive in a society and get along. The schools these days are getting stricter and stricter. ~~So~~ school hours are increasing, and students such as I, are being confined longer and longer. ~~It is to~~ school should be a place where students want to go to be educated and develop their own thoughts. Not a place we feel we have to go in order to fit in. The feeling of being watched, controlled, and conformed isn't a feeling of nationalism or a feeling we'd want to have when asked why we defend our country.



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Source G shows the list of expectations a public high school has for their students. All the "expectations" are more like laws a citizen must abide to in a society. "Respect the teacher's position as leader in the classroom -" sounds like a statement of a tyrant. These "expectations" seem forced upon with no freedom. If schools want students to be successful citizens, they should allow students to take the courses they want, ^{let them} breathe.

As a student, I understand the school wanting to educate us on Microsoft word or Home economics, however forcing these courses on us and then threatening us that we won't be able to graduate if we don't, seems too controlling and unreasonable. Schools should support conformity to a certain level that will push us off into society where from then, our individualism determines our fate. They shouldn't suppress our natural character to what they think is acceptable to become a good citizen. After all, aren't the famous historical figures the ones who spoke out of conformity and embraced their individualistic thoughts? Like Martin Luther King, society and schools taught everyone to be quiet about race, but he didn't, and now look at the impact ~~was~~



Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

1A (5 of 5)

he has left on the world. Individualism is good, and student should embrace it. Schools should recognize the individual ability everyone has, without questioning it, or putting their own twist on it.

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Can a mind learn under bounds?

With such strict rules in schools today, children are facing bounds that strip them of their individuality. So which is more important; conformity or individuality? To succeed one needs freedom; they need to be able to exercise and stretch their reach. Rules that constrict them in to tight spots are killing children's want to learn; uniforms, tight schedules, mandatory classes, dress codes are all taking the children's right to learn freely away. Individuality is more important than conformity and this ~~needs~~, individuality, needs to be recognized more by school.

Conformity does have its benefits. As can be seen in the photo of the young boys singing, conformity is nice on the eyes (Source F). Everyone likes neat and nice, and that is what conformity creates. A pretty eye-pleasing picture where everyone is safe. A ~~short~~ schedule where "1st Bell 8:16a.m" and the beginning of "Period 2" starts at "9:10" ensures order and that children will get equal amount of education (Source B). This is good for some kids,



Question 1

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they cannot get lost or stray off the path. At the same time kids are not being taught how to think for themselves. Instead they are simply showing up when expected and going through the motion as they were told to. They are told to "accept responsibility for their learning" and "cooperate with the specific rules of the school," all without thinking (Source G). Placed into groups and just being told to do, their individuality is being stripped away.

Children are not even allowed to choose their own clothes; they cannot express themselves through their dress no longer. Instead they are told to "dress in appropriate attire which does not distract or offend others" and dress like everyone else. ^(Source G) They are being denied the freedom to show their own style and thoughts, that is exactly what the dress code is doing. By striving to reach conformity they are killing individuality. From even ~~kindergarten~~ kindergarten children are being molded. As seen in the book cover, kindergarteners are taking standardized test (Source C). They are being looked at as part of



a whole, seeing where they stand in the big picture. They are told to brush their hair a certain distinct way or wear a specific color according to their gender. They are not being allowed to explore learn, which is the best possible way for a child to gain knowledge. Instead they are in "a setting in which individual needs are subordinated to group interests" (Source D). They are expected to learn as a group, they are looked down upon if not good enough and not given proper recognition if they can think abstractly or do stuff differently. Conformity is hindering the limits to what a child can learn.

If given freedom, a child can learn an infinite amount of things, but school is taking this freedom away. Tight schedules lock students in; mandatory classes kill motive to learn; boredom endured strips the curiosity; school is teaching them to learn as a group though "groups do not learn; *individuals do" (Source D). When a mind can expand its horizons, wonderful



Question 1

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Things come out of it. Inventions never dreamed of, came about because one thought out of the box. Some of our most revered people in history such as "George Washington, Benjamin Franklin... of them was ever graduated from a secondary school." Instead they were given the freedom to roam and explore, to let their mind wander and come upon its own conclusion. School is not allowing this; they call for certain subjects to be thought of at certain times. They want everyone to look the same; they do not allow the expression of style through clothes. School is harming individuality, which brings wonders, with their conformity.

When bounded, how can one move or do anything? They cannot! This is what schools are doing, they are binding childrens minds; they are not allowing them to think by their own. They need to let the children go, let them free. No more dress codes or mandatory classes. Allow them to study what they want as they so choose. Allow them



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1B (5 of 5)

to dress as they prefer. Free them
to think to their full limits

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There has been much disagreement over the years about the way students are being taught in school. Many people believe that schools should target individuality while others believe that conformity is the way to go. Personally, I believe that schools should focus more on a student's individual interests as opposed to having all students engage in one area of study. A big part of this issue has to do with required classes and the testing that accompanies them. There are many ^{sources} ~~sources~~ that show why these are ~~useless~~ useless and often harmful to students.

Forcing students to take classes that do not interest them is a waste of time for everyone, students and teachers alike. The same goes for required testing. Forcing students to do these things makes school seem like a prison (Source E, Source A). Take source F for example. The picture shows students singing in music class. Now that class would be much more enjoyable if the students in it wanted to learn as opposed to being forced to learn. I personally believe that student's individual needs should be catered to by letting them select classes that suit their fancy. Required testing goes along with required classes in my opinion, it's not needed. Making a student take a difficult test on a



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Subject that doesn't interest them is ridiculous. Of course they're going to perform poorly, because they don't care. Now I don't think it's fair that a student gets held back or ~~punished~~ punished^{for} that. I think standardized tests should be banned completely (including in kindergarten which is clearly shown in source c), but if they must remain a part of the schooling system, then they should at least be based on classes that let students explore their individual interests. That way students have a greater chance of ~~achieving a better outcome~~ ^{a better outcome}.

Overall, I believe that schools should focus more ^{on the} individual needs of students and less on having them conform to one main idea or way of learning. Sources show that ~~the~~ students are happier when school is centered more to their interests, and I personally believe that this, as opposed to conformity, makes ~~the~~ students happier and ^{will make} them better members of society in the future.

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**AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2009 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)**

Question 1

Sample: 1A

Score: 8

This essay effectively forms the qualified argument that schools should support conformity only to a certain degree, after which individualism should be allowed to rule. The student chooses to discuss mandatory coursework as exemplary of the problem of too much conformity in public schools. Personal evidence—the student’s own experience of not being able to take a class deemed necessary for the student’s academic development because of a required class—is appropriately used as a springboard for the student to address the question: “Why am I not able to take journalism when it is fulfilling my personal goals?” The student continues to demonstrate effective strategies of development by successfully synthesizing several sources into the discussion. For instance, the essay responds to Source A by elaboration rather than by repetition of the source, tying it to the student’s own assertion that one could cover mandatory coursework in an online unit rather than physically sitting through a traditional course. The student also responds to implicit counterarguments in Source D, noting that mere conformity does not guarantee genuine socialization, which must be freely chosen to be trustworthy. Synthesis of the other sources used (Sources C and G), while brief, is nonetheless effective and germane to the argument, as in the student’s use of the cover design (Source C) to illustrate how “[e]ven at such a young age, are the schools trying to conform the minds from evolving into individuals.” Although the student’s prose is not particularly impressive and contains several flaws, the essay generally demonstrates a consistent control of language.

Sample: 1B

Score: 6

This adequate response develops the argument that schools need to recognize students’ individuality and place less emphasis on conformity. The essay demonstrates adequate control in developing its response to the prompt, relying most heavily on the sources supporting the student’s thesis (Sources D and G), but also addressing the sources that are interpreted as running contrary to the student’s argument (Sources F and B). The student unifies the treatment of these sources in discussion, a demonstration of the core synthesis task. The essay is strongest when it discusses the ways in which schools are perceived to be preventing the development of independent thought, as when the student argues that “[t]ight schedules lock students in; mandatory classes kill [the] motive to learn; boredom endured strips the curiosity [*sic*].” While the control of language does display some lapses, and the sources are never explored or developed as fully as they could be, the student’s prose is generally clear and the central argument adequately supported, making this a good example of a response that merited a score of 6.

Sample: 1C

Score: 3

Although this essay does develop a position—namely, that schools should focus on the individual needs of the students instead of making them conform to a set course of study—it does not adequately synthesize the sources used as evidence. The essay makes only tangential reference to Sources E and A and is less perceptive in its interpretation of Source F (the photo of a music class). After this limited attempt at synthesis, the student finishes the essay with a series of assertions with little support: “Making a student take a difficult test on a subject that doesn’t interest them is ridicuolos [*sic*],” “I think standardized tests should be banned completely,” and so on. Finally, the essay shows less maturity in its control of writing, with simplistic language such as “conformity is the way to go” and errors in diction, syntax, and mechanics, such as in the sentence that says, “Required testing goes along with required classes in my opinion, its not needed.”