

Prompt: In 1891, Irish author Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) observed, “Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man’s original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion.”

Wilde claims that disobedience is a valuable human trait and that it promotes social progress. Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Wilde’s claims are valid. Use appropriate examples from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.

2016 Question 3 Student Samples/Anchors

Essays are typed as written by students

***For the purposes of scoring, argument means asserting a claim justified by evidence and/or reasoning.**

Sample E Score 1

During the course of time, rebellion has been establishing greatness and destruction. As Irish author Oscar Wilde said “it is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion.” written in 1891. To my understanding, he is absolutely right. For instance many of our tragic events were caused by this form of act.

Alexander the Great, many believe that European power to gain riches were based on Alexander. A great general yet horrendous in destroying every little thing and gain land. His disobedience promote his with great power and was the greatest conquerer of Europe and throughout Asia. For that reason for many years Europe loved getting land, people, riches and power.

“Meet, Conquer, kill”, three aspects (120 words)

Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation and argument, weak in their control of language, or especially lacking in coherence and development.

Sample Z Score 2

Wilde’s claim that disobedience is a valuable human trait and that it promotes social progress is absolutely valid. America was built on disobedience. If slaves didn’t become disobedient and rebel against their “masters”, no change would have happened. If Harriett Tubman didn’t rebel and do what she felt was right, then neither she nor the slaves she rescued would be free. If Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. didn’t stand up and speak for all African Americans, no one else would have. If Shay’s rebellion and Bacon’s rebellion never happened, then people wouldn’t have payed attention to what was going on around them. If Rosa parks, Ghandi, Malcolm X, Ronald Reagan, Sojourner Truth, and many more didn’t become disobedient and rebel, then American would not be the way it is today. Disobedience and rebellion is very important if America is to continue to grow. (143 words)

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in arguing a position on the extent to which Wilde’s claims are valid. The student may misunderstand the prompt or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of coherence and control.

Sample J Score 3

Disobedience is prominent in human history, in every era of human history there has been atleast a single case of disobedience leading to some sort of charge. Disobedience is just apart of human nature.

Starting from the dawn of mankind, humans have been disobedient. An example of this is the story of Adam and Eve, Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat the fruits from a certain tree. One day Adam and Eve were tempted to eat from the forbidden trees and so they did. This case of disobedience led to god kicking the duo out from the garden, forcing the two to roam the Earth.

Disobdience stems from temptation. As shown from Adam and Eve if they were not tempted to eat the fruit then, they would have never disobeyed god. However, it was temptation that had led them to progress. Another example, is the French revolution. The French was unhappy with their current king at the time and decided to dethrone him. In a sense the king tempted his people through his abuse of power causing them to rebel. This led to a political change in France's history.

Tempting is common in humans, it is part of our nature and this temptation leads us to disobey. All of history has fallen prey to temptation and for that there has been change. Infact, just today I was tempted to stay home. (232 words)

Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in arguing a position on the extent to which Wilde's claims are valid. The essays may show less maturity in their control of writing.

Sample DD Score 4

An irish author once mentioned that "through disobedience progress is made" in the sense that it is human nature and is noted throughout history. I agree with the thought that disobedience is a valuable trait and promotes social progress in the sense that when laws and customs are found to be unjust, it is in their will and right to not bide by such customs. Thus such disobedience would stimulate change and awareness to the harsh realities of such laws. Disobedience used for change is even seen today with a series of strikes for work benefits and a change for budget cuts. The trait of disobedience uprises within people when they sense that following by standards will only do more harm than good.

However disobedience is only justified to an extent of defending a cause known to evoke pain or harm against another. It is not justified when selfish intention is presented or if it is used to negatively effect another. Disobedience influences change as seen in the past through uprisings and strikes that have stimulated awareness in the fault of things such as workers rights. Such acts of defiance are specialized to grand scale issues. However if a person is defiant on the means of simply not wanting to go to school or to even abid by traffic laws, can put them in harms way for not being at the right place at the right time, or can put others in harms way.

It is observed that when an act of disobedience occurs at a grand scale due to something effecting a large group of people then there is cause to see what progress is not being made. However if one's actions does not catalyze other's like a chain reaction, then there is reason to question the person's motatives. (300 words)

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** argue a position on the extent to which Wilde's claims are valid. The evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or unconvincing. The argument may have lapses in coherence or be inadequately developed. The prose generally conveys the writer's ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

Sample H Score 5

One has been disobedient at least once in their lives. Something as small as stealing a cookie to breaking a law are everyday disobedience. Irish author Oscar Wilde's claims that disobedience is a valuable human trait and promotes social progress are valid. The novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey, the creation of political parties, and the Black Rights Movement of the 1960s are prime examples.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest was a critically acclaimed novel and later movie where a man named McMurphy is admitted to a mental institution and stands up against the current regime. When McMurphy arrives, he immediately had one goal in mind: to make change. Setting out to complete this goal, he begins breaking rules. At first it was gambling, a minor offense. Soon enough the other Acute patients were behind him. They stole a bus to steal a boat in order to go fishing; they snuck girls in at night and partied. It soon escalates to fighting the "black boys" and Nurse Ratched. The story ends with all Acutes except McMurphy and a few others leaving the institution in some way. Nurse Ratched had a fascist regime and oppressed the patients. Human instinct is to fight against oppression in order to be free. McMurphy's disobedience ended the tirade and promoted progress for others.

When George Washington ended his second term as the first President of the United States, he left an important request for his successors, summarized as: "Do Not Form Political Parties." The following election pitted two parties against one another. Washington's request was like a mother telling her kid not to eat a cookie. The kid will end up with the cookie in the end. This disobedient action led to over a hundred years of turmoil between and within the bipartisan system. Despite this conflict, much social change came from it. Wars have been fought and won, movements have shaped our country, agreements have been set in stone, and there's going to be a great wall built to keep us safe.

The Black Rights Movement had civil disobedience and physical disobedience involved. After Lincoln abolished slavery, African Americans suffered through almost a century of segregation and suppression. Many began becoming disobedient, the most valuable trait of this time. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Rosa Parks. The list goes on, and they all acted differently. Parks refused to leave her seat, X incited violence in the population and MLK brought every race together with his extraordinary charisma. The end result was the abolishing of segregation and expanded rights for most minorities.

These are just a few examples of disobedience bring social change, and there will always be more to come. (452 words)

Essays earning a score of 5 argue a position on the extent to which Wilde's claims are valid. The evidence or explanations used may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas.

Sample V Score 6

The idea of disobedience or rebellion, brought on by a social or political injustice, will bring about social progress that will benefit future generations not only by change, but by example.

The idea of Civil Disobedience was brought about by author and activist Henry David Thoreau; Thoreau explored life for meaning and purpose, and was determined to live his own choices and avoid the agendas of others. However isolated he was, he could never fully escape the government - as a pacifist, Thoreau protested wars and violence and thus, during the Mexican American War, refused to fund the violence and weapons, thus refusing to pay his taxes. For this,

Thoreau was then required to spend the night in jail; although his actions seem simple, it illustrates that disobedience can allow for justice - Thoreau later wrote of his imprisonment in his lecture called, "Civil Disobedience", which would influence future readers and leaders to follow their own beliefs and values, even if it requires disobedience or rebellion.

Another example in which disobedience has allowed for social progress is the American Revolution; acts such as boycotts or the Boston Tea Party made way for the creation of a free nation and a new democratic society; the colonists' anger towards British tyrannical rule inspired their fight against injustice that allowed for the foundation of our nation today. Although their actions were rebellious and disobedient to British rule, the colonists thought them necessary for their freedom.

While the American Revolution can be seen as a successful example of social progress due to disobedience, the revolution in France can be seen as a great imbalance. Particularly as it was described in the novel, *Tale of Two Cities*, the Bloody Revolution sought too much revenge against the merciless elite and the amount of beheadings became overbearing; although their cause was just, the French lacked the discipline to balance their newfound rule – however it did allow for a new foundation to support social change.

Another successful example of disobedience can be seen through the Civil Rights movement; Rosa Parks became the face of the movement after she refused to give up her seat to a white man; although her actions were illegal, they were justified and honorable; this sparked peaceful yet rebellious movements like boycotts, sit-ins, marches, and more – all of these were disobedient yet sparked needed social change for equality.

All of these movements and rebellions prove the necessity of disobedience in order to spark progress in that society; however it must be justified and properly balanced to be respected and effective. (426 words)

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** argue a position on the extent to which Wilde's claims are valid. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and sufficient, and the argument is coherent and adequately developed. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

Sample B Score 7

There is no such thing as a perfect society. Mankind has always had a few individuals among the masses who stood for change. This individual likely faced hardships as a result, because people do not generally like change. Most people prefer to do what they are most comfortable with or what is expected. These people may be considered "ideal citizens"; however, change cannot be achieved without disobedience. Disobedience is not simply the refusal to listen, it can also be interpreted as the refusal to abide by the social expectations of society. Certain individuals, events, and works in history illustrate the necessity of change as a result of disobedience. Examples include Rosa Parks, those who went against the rule of the British king during Colonial times, and the events described in the novel, "The Fountainhead" by Ayn Rand.

Rosa Parks remains one of the most influential faces of the Black Civil Rights Movement. Her most famous act of disobedience was refusing to give up her seat on the bus to a white person. During times of segregation, which is when this took place, this was deemed highly disrespectful and punishable by law. This act of hers may seem miniscule at first, but the results were very significant. As a matter of fact, her actions were a part of a much larger resistance organized by the NAACP in efforts to challenge the judicial system. This is the most effective way to attain civil rights. Knowing the consequences of her disobedience, Rosa Parks disobeyed the laws of society.

She knew that the most important result was change, which is what the black community needed. Without her efforts, and others like her, the Civil Rights Movement might have never existed.

Another example of disobedience that brought about change was the Revolutionary War. The colonists were tired of the British's oppression and greed. As a result of England's title of "most powerful nation", many colonists were likely afraid to speak against the will of the English king. Fortunately, there were some who were willing to go against the regime and transform the colonies into something extraordinary. This amount of increasing tension led to the Revolutionary War. The independence of the colonies and the establishment of the United States as a country was, arguably, the most important result of any British conflict. Many other countries, such as France and Spain, were no longer afraid to challenge England. The United States has also brought about many significant improvements of foreign relations and the economy of many countries. The United States would not be possible if not for the disobedience of the British king and the raging fire of rebellion in the spirit of the Revolutionary War's army.

Ayn Rand's novel, "The Fountainhead" had many themes; the most important was individuality. Disobedience expands to independence in that one is required to disconnect himself from others in order to achieve independence. This disconnection often requires disobedience. In the novel, the social structure of collectivism and second handedness is challenged. One of the many speeches made by the character, Howard Roark, establishes that defiance through individualism is the key to the progression of society. He was an architect who specialized in modern styles. In a time when old Renaissance styles were preferred, he faced great difficulty. Society failed to realize that the changing times also required changes in the architecture. Those people were not courageous enough to be disobedient. Those who are courageous enough eventually become leaders that lead society into periods of change and innovation. Eventually, the public began to realize that modern architecture was the best option for society. As time goes on, the world must learn to evolve with the changing times.

Those who do not adapt to change will not survive. Similarly, those who remain stagnant and oppressed, always living the easiest life, will not survive. Disobedience is difficult to accomplish successfully, but it is an inherent trait of man. Change is necessary in order to endure. Social progress is a direct result of social disobedience. In order to change a system, one must first challenge the system. (682 words)

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

Sample BB Score 8

It is in the nature of man to argue and fight and disobey. It is through this sort of rebellion against government, conventional ideal, and other people, that progress is able to be made and people are able to improve. Civil rights movements, and literature throughout history all come in favor of this claim. Human disobedience is a key factor in furthering mankind and is invaluable to social progress, as displayed by the examples of segregation in the 1900's, World War II, and modern social movements.

American history is marked and scarred by its history of racial discrimination. Slavery and segregation, are both markers of such a fact. However, it is through the ideas and the acts of disobedience by key members of the black community that social progress was made and segregation abolished. Rosa Parks is one such example. By refusing to obey the law and give her seat to the white man, she set off a chain of events that led to the abolishment of segregation throughout America. Another prevalent figure is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who disobeyed the

law multiple times, was jailed for his disobedience multiple times, but was still able to lead a peaceful, nonviolent revolution towards true freedom. It is only through their disobedience, their unwillingness to bend to the rules, that they were able to spark revolution and lead humanity closer to true equality.

Another example of human disobedience is not exemplified in World War II. During this time Nazi Germany persecuted the Jews, resulting in a genocide that encompassed the near entire of Europe. As a result, many Jews fled from Germany, finding people willing to help them and help them escape from their intended deaths. It is only through the disobedience of these individuals that thousands of Jews were saved and able to live their lives out once the war had passed. Had they not, Germany would have succeeded in wiping out an entire religious group. It is only through disobedience that the Jews had survived and come to contribute to the modern world. It was also with this line of thinking that progress had been made against religious prosecution, providing a counterexample for the opposing view.

Disobedience can also come in the rejection of social norms. The LGBT community and movement has made leaps and bounds in terms of acceptance in society due to their disobedience. By defying the social restrictions placed on them, they transcend the narrow-mindedness of the modern community and move towards equal rights regardless of sexuality. By flaunting their views and ideas, they also make way for other social movements. Feminism, transgender rights, LGBT rights and fights for equality make room for other voices to chip in and also fight for equal rights and representation. Through this act of disobedience they are also bolstering other minority groups and their fight for rights.

Disobedience is an undeniable characteristic of mankind. However it is through this disobedience, the chaos of fighting and arguing, that we are able to learn and improve. Obedience and peace are ideal in theory, perfect utopian societies void of strife. At the same time, to obey is to stagnate, forcing us to grow complacent. Disobedience is the voice of the underrepresented and the oppressed, expressed time and time again for the sake of social progress. (550 words)

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** argue a position on the extent to which Wilde's claims are valid. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and convincing, and the argument* is especially coherent and well developed. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

Sample P Score 9

Disobedience is a natural human reaction to oppression. Even in our youngest years, disobedience has a major impact in our lives, and is an innate human response to perceived inequality. Whether it's refusing to eat our vegetables or participating in a societal revolution, disobedience challenges established norms and facilitates the changing of our environment. Through disobedience, systems of inequality are toppled and vast societal progress is made, stressing its value as a vital human trait.

The largest leaps in the social progress of mankind have been made through disobedience. Whether through peaceful movements or violent uprisings, societal disobedience has facilitated massive global change throughout the entire history of human society. Likely regarded as the single most influential and impactful societal change, the American Revolution was brought about through widespread disobedience and rejection of an imposed set of rules. This disobedience led to the birth of a new, democratic nation that has dominated world affairs for decades. More recently, the Civil Rights and women's suffrage movements of the 20th century marked the ability of peaceful disobedience to facilitate societal progress. This is not solely an

American phenomenon—disobedience to Spanish rule in the 19th century led to the creation of many autonomous nations in Latin America, and peaceful resistance led by Gandhi in the 20th century guided the nation of India towards independence. These incidents of disobedience have changed the makeup of society, clearly demonstrating the value of disobedience as a vehicle to promote societal change.

A lack of disobedience facilitates the imposed power of unequal institutions. When a lack of dissent or discussion exists or is forced upon a society, this allows tyrannical regimes to flourish. In Nazi Germany, for example, millions of German citizens, while not in support of Hitler's regime, were not willing or too frightened to take action. This allowed for totalitarian rule, and facilitated the calamitous Holocaust. When no common citizens united on a large scale to fight against an unequal institution, widespread murder, disenfranchisement, violence, and injustice were permitted to occur. This serves as a testament to the value and necessity of social disobedience, as a rejection of injustice and a prevention of tyranny.

It is vital to recognize that constant disobedience is almost equally harmful to social progress as is absence of disobedience. Law and order, when just, is an integral and necessary part of human society. Laws should be followed, otherwise lawless and anarchical societies would become widespread and hamper the progress of human society. With the aid of organized law, societies are able to prosper and progress. Additionally, it is important to note that not all disobedience is conducive to social progress. For example, Southern states' disobedience and secession during the Civil War is held in contempt throughout much of the world, representing the abuse of disobedience due to the Confederacy's aim to uphold slavery. When used to support inequality or injustice, disobedience can become the bane of progress. Some disobedience may be enacted in an attempt to promote social progress, but with disastrous results. The French Revolution for example: posed as a movement fighting for democratic government, the widespread disobedience led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocents as well as the institution of Napoleon's imperial regime. Did such disobedience thus truly support progress? It is difficult to judge the ability of disobedience to make change without viewing such movement within the context of the history surrounding them.

Oscar Wilde claims that disobedience is a valuable trait that promotes social progress. This is true, to an extent – disobedience can facilitate change and advancement, but can also lead to chaos, violence, and death. Understanding that there is a necessity for disobedience when justified is vital, but realizing that an excess of disobedience can be equally as harmful to societal progress is unquestionably necessary. Disobedience dictates the fine line between anarchy and tyranny; regardless of its impacts, it is clear that disobedience is the key to making change. As a human trait present in all of us, the tendency to disobey is something that must never be relinquished. It is undeniably valuable, catapulting our species ever-forward in our continued struggle for progress. (691 words)

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