

# SOPHISTICATION POINT

## AP Literature and Composition

NAME:

CLASS:

DATE:

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

Row C	0 points	1 point
<b>Sophistication</b>	Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<p>Develops sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument. 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the text.<sup>1</sup></li><li>(2) Illuminating the student's interpretations by situating it within a broader context.</li><li>(3) Accounting for alternative interpretations of the text.</li><li>(4) Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</li></ol> <p><i>This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is <b>part of the student's argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</b></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 MOTWAAW
  - 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

<sup>1</sup> 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