

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Many works of literature explore a character’s sense of lacking something important in life. The character perceives an unfulfilled need which may be emotional, spiritual, financial, or something the character does not understand or cannot articulate. Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which such a feeling is explored. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character’s sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Antigone

The Awakening

The Bell Jar

Brave New World

Ceremony

Death of a Salesman

Don Quixote

Fences

Frankenstein

The Goldfinch

The Handmaid’s Tale

How the García Girls Lost Their Accents

Howards End

The Hundred Secret Senses

If Beale Street Could Talk

Invisible Man

Jane Eyre

Kindred

Little Fires Everywhere

Macbeth

Moby-Dick

Native Son

On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous

One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest

Passing

A Raisin in the Sun

Sag Harbor

The Scarlet Letter

The Secret Life of Bees

Song of Solomon

Sweat

Swing Time

The Tempest

There There

A Thousand Splendid Suns

To the Lighthouse

The Visit

When the Emperor Was Divine

White Noise

Wuthering Heights

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 3: Literary Argument**6 points**

Many works of literature explore a character’s sense of lacking something important in life. The character perceives an unfulfilled need which may be emotional, spiritual, financial, or something the character does not understand or cannot articulate. Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which such a feeling is explored. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character’s sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0-1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the selected work.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the selected work that doesn't respond to the prompt. 		Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a defensible interpretation of a character's sense of an unfulfilled need in the selected work. OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a claim about how a character's sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.
Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"A common theme in literature is a character who feels like one of their needs has not been met, or they are missing something that they want out of life."</i> Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Gatsby is never really satisfied with anything in his life."</i> • <i>"The Bell Jar follows the life of the protagonist, Esther, through a short period of time in her young adulthood."</i> • <i>"In Ceremony, Tayo feels like something is missing from his life."</i> 		Examples that earn this point: Provides a defensible interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Edna's lack of freedom to pursue her desires, in Chopin's <u>The Awakening</u>, highlights how societal constraints can drive a person to both rebellion and submission."</i> • <i>"In <u>The Bluest Eye</u>, Pecola's need to be loved goes unfulfilled and contributes to the violence of the world in which she lives."</i> • <i>"Throughout <u>The Age of Innocence</u>, Newland Archer believes he needs more excitement than his traditional, comfortable life with his wife provides. This drives him to consider a relationship with Ellen Olenska and makes him realize that this 'unfulfilled need' is really a foolish idea."</i>
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • A thesis that offers a defensible claim about a character's sense of an unfulfilled need in the selected work may earn the point; any reasonable student interpretation of "an unfulfilled need" is acceptable. • For a thesis to be defensible, the selected work must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	Typical responses that earn 1 point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on overarching narrative developments or description of a selected work rather than specific details. 	Typical responses that earn 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. • May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	Typical responses that earn 3 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific details from the selected work to build an interpretation. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	Typical responses that earn 4 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific details from the selected work to build an interpretation. • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response must address the interpretation of the selected work as a whole. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0-1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). • Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the text could be said to...</i>”). • Oversimplify complexities of the topic and/or the selected work. • Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument. 	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the selected work. 2. Illuminating the student’s interpretation 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.
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 		

The American Dream is often depicted in literature as it carries great importance to the understanding of American culture. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic *The Great Gatsby*, the titular character Jay Gatsby exemplifies the unfulfilled needs that have come with the American Dream. Gatsby's sense of being unfulfilled in various aspects of his life, such as romantically, socially, and financially, serve as an example of the potentially destructive culture that America and all it represents exert on individuals. Gatsby's unfulfilled needs represent a larger cultural phenomenon and American attitudes.

From the beginning of the novel, Fitzgerald develops the idea of "otherness" through the narrator, Nick Carraway. Nick is generally distanced from those around him, whether this is by his monetary status in comparison to the wealth around him or his physical distance. However, Nick being an "other" in this world of rich lives makes his interactions with Gatsby reveal just how unfulfilled Gatsby happens to be. If Nick is "othered," then Gatsby in comparison must be one who fits in with the crowd as his dauntingly large mansion and parties seem to express. However, this is proven to not be true. Gatsby, who should be one who is completely fulfilled compared to Nick, a newcomer to the social climate, still is portrayed as longing for something unfulfilled through the metaphor of the green light. Gatsby's concentration on this light, far away from his home yet enticingly close as it lays across the water, represents his desires that have been unfulfilled. The green light is at Daisy's house, an old lover who he wishes to return to.

The green light at Daisy's house exemplifies all the needs of Gatsby: romantic desire, social acceptance, and monetary success. Green is of course most related to money, yet the phrase "green with envy" comes to mind. Gatsby's actions throughout the novel show how envious he can be; Gatsby convinces Daisy to come over privately though she is married, he throws lavish parties in an attempt to look the best, and he scams by illegal means to earn the money to feed his lifestyle. It is apparent that Gatsby is compensating for his feelings of lacking his needs through these excessive measures.

Gatsby's want for Daisy also reflects his past where his needs were not met. Gatsby's backstory, where he was impoverished, made it impossible for him to pursue the rich Daisy. The social attitudes at the time would have made this romantic need hard to fulfill; while Gatsby is in love, economic barriers prevent his desires from coming true. Therefore, his past love for Daisy kickstarted the social acceptance he desired (by being rich, fitting in), the romantic love he needed, and the money he would have to have in order to meet the previous needs.

The present day Gatsby's actions are all due to his hardworking nature, where he tries to fulfill every expectation that American culture has shown, specifically in the rich New York community. His intense efforts to meet his needs, like decorating Nick's home lavishly just for tea with Daisy or earning tons from illegal alcohol sales, represent just how desperate his climate has forced him to become. If it were not for the social expectations placed upon Gatsby (that one should be rich, old money not new, never a bachelor), he may have never found himself in the position he happened to be in. The tenacity in which he followed the

American Dream, where anyone can fulfill their needs in America with hard work, ended up being the demise of many.

Gatsby's actions eventually culminate in the love affair between Tom (Daisy's husband) and Myrtle being heavily complicated by Gatsby's own feelings for Daisy. The normative social expectation that one should be faithful and monogamous has been destroyed by Gatsby's intense needs warping his desires and causing conflict with Tom. Tom's own unfulfilled desires then clash with Gatsby's own, resulting in the death of Myrtle and finally Gatsby. At this point, all semblance of social belonging has been destroyed. The outcasts (new money Gatsby and poor Myrtle) have been eliminated from the rich American social circle Daisy and Tom belong to through their deaths. Even as Gatsby fought to meet his needs and fit in with American culture in the area, it resulted in his own downfall.

The American Dream for Gatsby served as an example of how the expectations and needs imposed by a culture can end up being destructive. Gatsby's failure to successfully meet his needs were due to his social environment, where American expectations were nearly impossible to meet from the start and laborious to follow.

In the book *Fences*, the main character Troy had a very poor childhood and young adult life. His unfortunate circumstances and lack of freedom led him to want that sense of youth back as an adult, which is unfortunately something that can't be restored, and leads to the idea that youth is something that must be taken advantage of at the right time because it only fades away as one grows older.

During the novel, Troy cheats on his wife, Rose, with someone named Alberta, which is later revealed to Rose when he tells her Alberta is going to have a baby. One of the excuses he gives for being unfaithful is that Alberta made him feel something new, something he hadn't really experienced with Rose. Whether Troy knew it or not, this feeling is that of being young and carefree, something he didn't get to experience when he was younger. Being with Alberta gave him a sense of rebellion, one that is often associated with teenagers and younger people wanting to go against the system and do whatever they want. Since he had an extremely strict father, this wasn't something he could ever do, and so he compensates in his older years in hopes of getting to experience it. The consequences are much worse when you're older however, because much more responsibility is in your hands, and Troy learned this the hard way when Rose gave up on him.

Troy has a son named Cory who is on the football team at his high school. He is very successful and even has a talent agent come to scout him out. When Troy was younger, he played baseball, but due to his skin color, he was never able to go anywhere with it. However, Cory had a very high possibility of getting to play in college, which made Troy jealous and force Cory to stop playing. Baseball was something very important to Troy, and to see somebody else accomplish his own dreams would have been very difficult to witness, even if it was his own son. He longed for the ability to go back and play baseball again, which was evident whenever he went and swung his bat at the tree in their yard. His time in jail when he was a young adult also did not help his chances at going far in baseball, which places more of the blame on himself, that if he stayed out of trouble and tried harder, he could have gone on to play baseball for the pros. Since that time is gone, he can never have that opportunity again.

Troy also has a second son names Lyons. Lyons doesn't have a job that supports him well, and often has to rely on Troy or his girlfriend for support. This is something that makes Troy extremely angry, because he refuses to grow up and get a real job that he can use to be independent. Although part of the reason he is so angry is because Lyons always asks him for money, another is that Lyons is in his thirties and yet still behaving as if he is a teenager. Troy is exasperated at the idea of someone who is a full adult still acting so young, and yet he likely feels a bit jealous that he can't have that as well. He will never be able to retain that youth however, because he has nobody else that he can rely on, since his parents are both dead and he ran away from home when he was younger. He has had to support himself since the beginning, which is unfair in his mind, since his son doesn't need to support himself at all. It becomes something always in the back of his mind, something he really can't unsee, and it hurts because he desperately needs to feel that. He's never had someone take care of him and he needs to feel that, but he can't because his time has passed for that opportunity.

Youth is an extremely coveted thing in many people because many people didn't get to experience being carefree and not having to worry about taking care of yourself from such a young age. This became the thing that Troy needed the most in his adult life, but it is not something he ever was able to get. The things that go along with being young slowly go away as you age until eventually they are out of the picture and no longer possible to achieve.

In the novel *Sing Unburied Sing* the main character Jojo experiences hunger. Throughout the book the idea of not having enough and needing more is common. Jojo comes from a lowerclass family living in rural Mississippi. During the duration of the story Jojo and his little sister Kayla struggle with nourishing themselves and finding people who will help care for them.

In Jojo's life he doesn't have many people to care for him. He lives with his grandparents, mother, and sister. His grandmother is dying, so his grandfather is often busy taking care of her. This leaves his mother, Leonie, to take care of him, but she often neglects his needs and cares more for herself. This is especially shown when Jojo, Kayla, and Leonie take a trip down to Parchman prison to bring Jojo's father back home. They leave for the trip before they get a chance to eat breakfast which leaves the two kids malnourished the entire trip. When they do end up stopping Leonie gives Jojo money to buy her a coke and leaves nothing for him. These examples show how Jojo has no one to care for him and is often left with less than he needs. This paints Leonie in a negative light and makes the reader sympathetic towards Jojo. This view of the characters helps the reader to infer what actions they will take later in the book and how they will respond to hardship.

Throughout the book Jojo sometimes resorts to stealing from others to fulfill his sister and his own needs. On the way to the prison Leonie makes a stop at a friend's house. While there, she declines food and doesn't check on Jojo or Kayla. As a last resort Jojo steals crackers and juice from the house and shares them with his sister in the car. If Jojo had enough to eat he would not need to steal from others. This shows how great these unfulfilled needs are and the lengths he has to go to resolve them. Jojo is seen as independent because he cannot rely on others to care for him.

Unfulfilled needs are commonplace for Jojo throughout the book. This theme of hunger contributes to the overall interpretation by setting up expectations and character actions. This theme allows the reader to read into the complex relationships the characters have with one another and why they act in the way that they do. Without the context of unfulfilled needs the reader wouldn't understand the environment the characters live in.

In the novel *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Tennessee Williams presents characterization and symbolism to convey the interpretation of the story, this illuminates the deep affects that one's desires can have on their life.

Throughout the story, readers learn in depth about each character and understand how they contribute to the meaning of that story. Blanche plays the biggest role of the story and constantly sees her character changing. Williams uses her characterization to prove that one's desires will cause them to crash and burn. Her need to be liked by others around her and always be seen as beautiful caused her to build up plenty of lies and bridges that ultimately collapsed around her, which led to her being seen as crazy and being forced into a mental institute. Another character that helps readers interpret the story's meaning is Blanche's sister, Stella. Stella's desire to feel the love of her husband Stanley and failure to react to the signs her sister tried to warn her about caused her to be stuck with someone who is very temperamental. This proves to enforce the story's overall theme because Stella's lack of sense and listening caused her sister to be taken against her will.

William's futhers the characters identities through use of symbolism. Blanche lets her desires control her actions and it causes her to build up a wall of lies to protect it. Her continual bathing throughout the novel is very significant because it shows that she wants to keep herself "clean" in the eyes of others so that they view her in the way she wants. This helps push the theme of the story because her desire to be loved by many and to keep her youth causes her to continue to lie. These lies in turn make her feel dirty which explains why she is always bathing.

Within *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo feels a sense of unfulfilled need. With this need it drives him to go and try to defy fate by falling in love with Juliet. This contributes to the theme of the play as it shows how inevitable fate is no matter how hard a character can try to change it.

For example Romeo throughout the play is shown to be smitten with Juliet who is with the rival family. Due to this they are fated to be enemies instead of star crossed lovers. This is evident with how Romeo interacts with the side characters. This can be seen with Romeo interacting with Juliet's cousin Tybalt. Tybalt is very aggressive against Romeo's family due to the rivalry which highlights how fate cannot be changed.

Moreover within the final moments of the play, Romeo arrives too late to the meeting place and assumes Juliet is dead. This causes him to take his life, and which has Juliet waking up from the coma-like status. Upon waking up she sees Romeo dead next to her, which shows how they are destined to not be together.

All in all *Romeo and Juliet* is a prime example of how a character's sense of an unfulfilled need can contribute to the interpretation of the theme within the work.

Question 3 – Literary Argument

Sample Identifier: A

Score: 1-4-1

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This essay astutely analyzes Jay Gatsby’s sense of unfulfilled needs as conveyed in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel, *The Great Gatsby*.
- The essay responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the selected work. The thesis, “Gatsby’s sense of being unfulfilled in various aspects of his life, such as romantically, socially, and financially, serve as an example of the potentially destructive culture that America and all it represents exert on individuals,” appears in the first paragraph of the essay and earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 4

- The response provides specific evidence to support the line of reasoning that focuses on the connection between Gatsby’s unfulfilled needs and “a larger cultural phenomenon and American attitudes” (paragraph 1). The evidence centers around specific details from the novel to build an interpretation. For example, paragraph 2 makes a claim about Nick Carraway’s “being an ‘other’ in this world of rich lives” and supports the claim by noting Nick’s lack of “monetary status,” especially in comparison to Gatsby’s “dauntingly large mansion and parties.” Paragraph 3 builds on the argument about Gatsby’s desire to reconnect with Daisy by describing how “The green light at Daisy’s house exemplifies all the needs of Gatsby: romantic desire, social acceptance, and monetary success.” Additionally, paragraph 5 offers the evidence that Gatsby’s “intense efforts to meet his needs like decorating Nick’s home lavishly just for tea with Daisy or earning tons from illegal alcohol sales, represent just how desperate his climate has forced him to become.” By focusing on specific details from the text, the line of reasoning is clearly developed.
- The commentary in the essay consistently explains how the evidence supports the line of reasoning. For instance, in paragraph 3 after a detailed description of Gatsby’s efforts to win over Daisy, the essay contends, “It is apparent that Gatsby is compensating for his feelings of lacking his needs through these excessive measures.” Additionally, the commentary supporting the significance of Gatsby’s unfulfilled needs in paragraph 6 explains, “Even as Gatsby fought to meet his needs and fit in with American culture in the area, it resulted in his own downfall.” Finally, the concluding paragraph begins with the statement, “The American Dream for Gatsby served as an example of how the expectations and needs imposed by a culture can end up being destructive.” This commentary displays a keen awareness of the complexity of achieving the American dream as presented in the thesis. The essay’s effective combination of specific evidence and consistent commentary thoroughly supports the line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. This essay, therefore, earned 1 point in Row B.

C. Sophistication Score: 1

- This response demonstrates sophistication of thought through its ability to situate Gatsby’s lack of fulfillment within a broader context, stating that “The American Dream

for *Gatsby* served as an example of how the expectations and needs imposed by a culture can end up being destructive” (paragraph 7). This sentence supports the response’s earlier claim in paragraph 1 that “*Gatsby*’s unfulfilled needs represent a larger cultural phenomenon and American attitudes” and situates the argument within a broader context. Additionally, the essay identifies and explores complexities or tensions within the novel by concluding, “*Gatsby*’s failure to successfully meet his needs were due to his social environment, where American expectations were nearly impossible to meet from the start and laborious to follow” (paragraph 7). For these reasons, the essay earned 1 point in Row C.

Sample Identifier: B**Score: 1-4-0****A. Thesis Score: 1**

- The essay earned 1 point in Row A. This essay clearly examines the lack of fulfillment that haunts the character Troy Maxson as portrayed in August Wilson’s play, *Fences*.
- The response offers a defensible interpretation of the play in the first paragraph where it states, “In the book *Fences*, the main character Troy had a very poor childhood and young adult life. His unfortunate circumstances and lack of freedom led him to want that sense of youth back as an adult, which is unfortunately something that can’t be restored, and leads to the idea that youth is something that must be taken advantage of at the right time because it only fades away as one grows older.” The essay, therefore, earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 4

- The essay offers specific details from the play to build a line of reasoning that focuses on Troy’s regrets about his lost youth and his lack of fulfillment with his current life. The response focuses primarily on Troy’s relationships with his wife, Rose, and his sons, Cory and Lyons. Specific evidence of Troy’s unhappiness is offered in paragraph 2, which states, “One of the excuses he gives for being unfaithful is that Alberta made him feel something new, something he hadn’t really experienced with Rose.” In paragraph 3, the essay offers further evidence of Troy’s regrets about his lost youth when it cites, “He longed for the ability to go back and play baseball again, which was evident whenever he went and swung his bat at the tree in their yard.” In presenting Troy’s relationship with his son Lyons, the essay offers the example that “Lyons doesn’t have a job that supports him well, and often has to rely on Troy or his girlfriend for support” (paragraph 4), which supports the claim in paragraph 4 about Troy being “exasperated at the idea of someone who is a full adult still acting so young, and yet he likely feels a bit jealous that he can’t have that as well.”
- The commentary of the essay consistently explains how the evidence supports the line of reasoning. In paragraph 2, for example, the commentary contemplates why Troy had an affair with Alberta: “Being with Alberta gave him a sense of rebellion, one that is often associated with teenagers and younger people wanting to go against the system and do whatever they want.” Additionally, paragraph 3 presents an explanation of the significance of Troy’s jail time when it states, “His time in jail when he was a young adult

also did not help his chances at going far in baseball, which places more of the blame on himself, that if he stayed out of trouble and tried harder, he could have gone on to play baseball for the pros. Since that time is gone, he can never have that opportunity again.” Because the essay provides specific evidence to support all claims in its line of reasoning and consistently explains how the evidence supports it, the essay earned 4 points in Row B.

C. Sophistication Score: 0

- While this essay makes a persuasive argument, it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument. The essay does not address complexities within the play, and while it attempts to situate the interpretation in a broader context of youth, it does not develop “the idea of youth” (paragraph 1) beyond generalities. This essay, therefore, did not earn the point in Row C.

Sample Identifier: C

Score: 1-3-0

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This response analyzes how Jojo, a character in Jesmyn Ward’s novel, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, deals with a sense of physical hunger and a larger unfulfilled need to be cared for.
- The concluding paragraph of the essay presents the thesis, “Unfulfilled needs are commonplace for Jojo throughout the book. This theme of hunger contributes to the overall interpretation by setting up expectations and character actions.” Because the thesis presents a defensible interpretation of the novel, the essay earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 3

- The response provides specific evidence to support its line of reasoning that focuses on Jojo’s unfulfilled need for people to care for him. Evidence includes Jojo’s relationship with his mother who “often neglects his needs and cares more for herself” (paragraph 2). The essay adds the specific details about their “trip down to parchman prison to bring Jojo’s father back home. They leave for the trip before they get a chance to eat breakfast which leaves the two kids malnourished the entire trip” (paragraph 2). Additionally, in paragraph 3, the response further develops the claim about malnourishment by observing that “As a last resort Jojo steals crackers and juice from the house and shares them with his sister in the car.”
- Commentary is incorporated to explain how some evidence supports the line of reasoning. For example, the essay follows up examples of Jojo’s hunger with the observation that “Jojo has no one to care for him and is often left with less than he needs” (paragraph 2). The response, however, does not consistently explain how all the evidence supports the line of reasoning. In the third paragraph, for example, the claim about Jojo’s independence (“Jojo is seen as independent because he cannot rely on others to care for him”) is underdeveloped. The conclusion also asserts, “This theme allows the reader to read into the complex relationships the characters have with one another and why they

act in the way that they do,” but again this point is not clearly related to the line of reasoning. For these reasons, the essay earned 3 points in Row B.

C. Sophistication Score: 0

- The essay does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument; therefore, it did not earn the point in Row C.

Sample Identifier: D

Score: 1-2-0

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This essay considers the sense of unfulfillment found in the character of Blanche DuBois, a character in Tennessee Williams’s play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
- The essay responds to the prompt with a thesis located in paragraph 2: “Williams uses her characterization to prove that one’s desires will cause them to crash and burn.” Because the response offers a defensible interpretation of the play, it earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 2

- The response provides some specific, relevant evidence, such as “Her need to be liked by others around her and always be seen as beautiful caused her to build up plenty of lies and bridges that ultimately collapsed around her, which led to her being seen as crazy and being forced into a mental institute” (paragraph 2). Paragraph 3 suggests Blanche’s “continual bathing throughout the novel is very significant because it shows that she wants to keep herself ‘clean’ in the eyes of others so that they view her in the way she wants.”
- While these details are presented in an attempt to develop a line of reasoning around the danger of pursuing one’s desire to fulfill a need, the commentary fails to make the connection clear. The claims in paragraph 2, “Throughout the story, readers learn in depth about each character and understand how they contribute to the meaning of that story,” and in paragraph 3, “William’s fathers the characters identities through use of symbolism,” do not adequately support the thesis. The essay refers to literary devices, such as characterization, symbolism, and theme but does not explain how they contribute to the interpretation of the work as a whole. The response therefore received 2 points in Row B.

C. Sophistication Score: 0

- Because the essay does not develop a complex literary argument or demonstrate sophistication of thought, it did not earn the point in Row C.

Sample Identifier: E

Score: 1-1-0

A. Thesis Score: 1

- This essay considers Romeo’s sense of lacking something important in his life as depicted in William Shakespeare’s play, *Romeo and Juliet*.
- The essay offers a defensible interpretation in the opening paragraph where it states, “With this need it drives him to go and try to defy fate by falling in love with Juliet. This contributes to the theme of the play as it shows how inevitable fate is no matter how hard a character can try to change it.” This thesis earned 1 point in Row A.

B. Evidence Score: 1

- The evidence provided in the essay is primarily general and consists largely of plot summary: “Tybalt is very aggressive against Romeo's family due to the rivalry which highlights how fate cannot be changed” (paragraph 2) and “Upon waking up she sees Romeo dead next to her” (paragraph 3).
- No line of reasoning is established because the commentary summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the argument. The essay attempts to connect fate and an unfulfilled need through commentary such as, “which highlights how fate cannot be changed” (paragraph 2) and “which shows how they are destined to not be together” (paragraph 3), but the relationship is never clarified.

C. Sophistication Score: 0

- The response did not earn the point in Row C because it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument.