

AP ESSAY GENERIC SCORING GUIDE

Note to Graders: The more substance and analysis a paper contains, the higher it will be scored. Reward writers for what they do well. Papers with several distracting errors in writing should not be scored higher than a 3. The best papers answer the prompt directly, often in the first sentence. Papers without examples and/or quotations are almost always lower half.

9-8 These superior papers are specific in their references, cogent in their definitions, and profound in their analysis. These essays need not be without flaws, but they demonstrate the writer's ability to discuss the question with insight and understanding and to control a wide range of the elements of effective composition. At all times, they stay focused on the question and the thesis. These papers reflect stylistic flair, exceptional mechanics, and in-depth, original, and concrete supporting details.

7-6 These papers are less thorough, less perceptive or less specific than 9-8 papers. These essays are well-written but with less maturity and control than the top papers. They demonstrate the writer's ability to analyze a literary work, but they reveal a more limited understanding than do the papers in the 9-8 range. Generally, 6 essays present a less sophisticated analysis and less consistent command of the elements of effective writing than essays scored a 7.

5 Safe and shallow, superficiality characterizes these essays. Discussion of meaning may be pedestrian, mechanical, or inadequately related to the chosen details. Typically, these essays reveal simplistic thinking and/or immature writing. They usually demonstrate inconsistent control over the elements of composition and are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as the upper-half papers. On the other hand, the writing is sufficient to convey the writer's ideas and stay focused on the question.

4-3 Discussion is likely to be unpersuasive, perfunctory, underdeveloped or misguided. The meaning they deduce may be inaccurate or insubstantial and not clearly related to the question. They may fall into mere paraphrase or plot summary with almost no analysis. Part of the question may be omitted altogether. The writing may convey the writer's ideas, but reveals weak control over such elements as diction, organization, syntax or grammar. Typically these essays contain significant misinterpretations of the question or the work they discuss; they may also contain little, if any, supporting evidence, and practice paraphrase and plot summary at the expense of analysis.

2-1 These essays compound the weakness of essays in the 4-3 range and are frequently unacceptably brief. They are poorly written on several counts, including many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. Although the writer may have made some effort to answer the question, the views presented have little clarity or coherence.