

AP[®] English Literature and Composition

2020 Free-Response Scoring Guidelines

applied to the 2019 Exam Questions

Question 3: Literary Argument

6 points

In his 2004 novel *Magic Seeds*, V. S. Naipaul writes: “It is wrong to have an ideal view of the world. That’s where the mischief starts. That’s where everything starts unravelling.”

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character holds an “ideal view of the world.” Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author’s portrayal of this idealism and its positive or negative consequences 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.

The Alchemist
Antigone
The Awakening
The Bluest Eye
Brave New World
Brideshead Revisited
The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao
Candide
The Catcher in the Rye
Death of a Salesman
Don Quixote
A Gesture Life
Great Expectations
The Great Gatsby
The Handmaid’s Tale
The House of Mirth

The Importance of Being Earnest
Invisible Man
King Lear
Lolita
The Mill on the Floss
My Ántonia
Native Son
Odyssey
The Portrait of a Lady
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
The Sound and the Fury
The Sun Also Rises
The Tempest
To Kill a Mockingbird
When the Emperor Was Divine

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0-1 points) 7.B	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 thesis. 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 the character's idealism and its positive or negative consequences in the selected work. OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a claim about how the portrayal of a character's idealism and its positive or negative consequences 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"> "In Lord of the Flies, Ralph has an ideal view of the world and that has many positive and negative consequences." Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "In Khaled Houssin's novel 'The Kite Runner', the reader follows the life of a boy named Amir, and how his actions and view on life, will affect him as an adult." [Sample ZZ] 	Examples that earn this point: Provides a defensible interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Through McMurphy's idealism, he allows the patients to regain a sense of dignity and he charts the course for his ultimate demise; through this, Kesey is able to show that despite the inevitable negative consequences which will result from idealism, it is a necessary quality to ignite social change." [Sample DD] "Through his character, Ralph, Golding conveys that holding an idealistic view of the world is dangerous: while temporary success can be achieved, it ultimately leads to the destruction of governmental institutions and chaos. He encourages readers to adopt a more realistic view of the world and recognize the inherent evil in all people." [Sample J]
	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. 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) 7.A 7.C 7.D 7.E	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 works 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) 7.C 7.D 7.E	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..." OR "In a world where..." OR "Since the beginning of time..."</i>). Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (<i>"While another reader may see..." OR "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 are ineffective because they do not enhance the 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"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the selected work. Illuminating the student's interpretation by situating it within a broader context. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the text. 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. 	