

# AP English Literature and Composition ~ General Rubric

The AP score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its effectiveness, & its mechanics. *Students are rewarded for what they do well.* The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly (or insufficiently) written essay be scored higher than a 3.

- 9 Highly effective and stylistically impressive.** Essays earning the score of 9 meet all the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are particularly persuasive, artfully reasoned, &/or demonstrate **exceptional** stylistic control. These essays offer a **well-focused and persuasive analysis**. Using **apt and specific textual support**, these essays fully explore *both* the **intent** of the prompt and the greater value, or meaning, of the literary text. This essay successfully demonstrates what the individual elements of the text contribute to the overall meaning of the work as a whole. [Although not entirely without flaws, these essays make a strong case for their interpretation and discuss the literary work with **significant insight and understanding**. Generally, essays scored as a 9 reveal a more **sophisticated analysis and a more effective control of language** than do essays scored an 8.]
- 8 Effective and consistent.** These essays offer a **focused and complete analysis** of the text. Using **specific textual support**, these essays explore the **central focus** of the prompt and **effectively** demonstrate their interpretation of the meaning of the work, as a whole. Although not necessarily “flawlessly consistent” in its execution, these essays demonstrate a very detailed and seemingly **polished (or deliberate) progression** throughout their analysis of the text. The organization of this essay aids in the understanding of its literary evaluation. The essay also combines the student’s own original connections and their narrative voice to **effectively convince** readers of their conclusions.
- 7 Complete and cogent.** These essays offer a **solid & reasonable analysis** of the provided prompt/text. These essays explore the scope of the prompt and demonstrate a complete effort to address **both** the **implicit** and the **explicit** tasks. The essay provides clear statements that depict what the components of the literary text contribute to the work, as a whole. These essays have **both insight and understanding**, but the analysis is *less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific* in supporting detail than that of the 9-8 essays. [However, generally, essays scored as a 7 present better-developed analysis and more a consistent command of the elements of effective composition than those scored as a 6.]
- 6 Coherent and generally sound.** These essays offer a **genuine and hearty** attempt to fully address the prompt; however, either the depth or breadth of the discussion is lacking in fully completing the assigned tasks. These essays are **solidly constructed** and provide a clear progression within their discussion that enhances the effect of their analysis. These essays both **identify**, and **support**, the central task of the prompt. Examples from the text are **relevant and offer some insight**. Although insufficient in its development, or depth, this is a complete attempt to achieve the tasks within the prompt.

- 5 Inconsistently effective.** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible interpretation of the reading, but they **tend to be superficial or underdeveloped in their analysis**. They offer **moments of insight**, but they are diminished by **moments of weakness or inaccuracy**. They often rely more upon plot summary or generic generalizations than meaningful observations and connections. Although the students **attempt to fully discuss the prompt**, and how it contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole, they may demonstrate a rather **simplistic understanding of the work**. Typically, these essays also reveal **unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing**. The students may demonstrate **adequate control of language, but their essays may lack effective organization** and may be marred by surface errors.
- 4 Wholly insufficient and inadequate.** These essays offer a **less than complete understanding** of the task or a **less than an adequate treatment** of it. They reflect a **partial or oversimplified** understanding of the work, or they may fail to clearly establish the nature of the prompt's central intent. They also may not directly address or develop a response to how the elements of the text contribute to the work as a whole, or they may rely on **generalized or superficial** plot summary in place of evidence and commentary. Their **assertions may be unsupported or even irrelevant**. Often wordy, elliptical, or repetitious, these essays show a **clear lack of control** over the elements of college-level composition.
- 3 Incomplete, incoherent, or vague.** Essays scored as a 3 typically contain **significant misreadings, a detrimental (or absent) organization, and/or demonstrate inept writing**. These essays are particularly unimpressive and unpersuasive in their attempt to develop a position. They are also **particularly inconsistent** in their control of the basic elements of college-level composition writing. These essays are incomplete, fail to take a clear position on the intent of the prompt, or wander off task in their commentary. Plot summary usually substitutes for any legitimate attempts to support a literary analysis.
- 2** These essays demonstrate **little or no success** in discussing the ideas presented in the prompt. Although these essays **make some attempt to respond to the prompt**, they significantly compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. Often, they are **unacceptably brief or are incoherent** in presenting their ideas. They may be **poorly written** on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. The remarks are presented with **little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence**.
- 1** **These essays are particularly inept, vacuous, and/or incoherent & must be scored as a 1.** They are particularly simplistic, or particularly weak, in their control of composition writing.
- 0** These essays make no more than a brief reference to the task, but demonstrate no discernable effort to achieve it.