

### SCORING GUIDE FOR ESSAYS IN A.P. ENGLISH

The following scoring guide is used to evaluate student essays. While the guide does not fit every essay, it does establish the basic standards for scores. In general, teachers reward each essay for what it does well. Thus, the more substance and analysis a paper contains the higher it will be scored. Papers with many distracting errors in writing should be scored no higher than 2.

8-9 papers respond to the assignment clearly, directly and fully. These papers approach the text analytically and illustrate their points with numerous textual references and/or quotations. They show subtlety in their use of the text, and their own style indicates flexibility and mastery. They need not, however, be free from errors.

6-7 papers respond to the assignment clearly and directly but with less development than 8-9 papers. They indicate a good understanding of the text and support their points with appropriate textual references and/or quotations. While their approach is analytic, the analysis is less precise than in 8-9 papers, and use of the text is competent but not subtle. The writing is forceful and clear, but need not be free from errors.

5 papers typically address the assigned question ~~intelligently~~ but do not answer it fully and specifically. They are characterized by a ~~good~~ but general grasp of the text and by the ability to use the text to frame an apt but imprecise response to the assignment. They may use textual references and quotations sparingly or without clearly enough supporting their points. The style of 5 essays is characterized by adequate clarity and organizational divisions, but may be mechanical or banal.

3-4 papers fail in some important way to fulfill the assignment. They may omit some part of the question, fail to provide minimal textual support for their points, or base their analysis on a misreading of some part of the text. Nevertheless, these essays normally present one or more incisive points among others of less value. The writing may be similarly uneven in development, with lapses in organization or clarity.

1-2 papers commonly combine two or more serious failures: they may not address the actual question; they may indicate serious misreading of the text; they may not use textual support—or may use it in a way that suggests failure to understand the text; they may be unclear, badly written or unacceptably brief. The style of these papers is usually marked by egregious errors or by abruptness that suggests the student did not finish; but some may be smoothly written, though devoid of content.

The best papers answer the question directly, often in the first sentence.  
Papers without examples and/or quotations are almost always lower half.

## AP English Language & Composition Scoring Guide

**General Directions:** this scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays you read. If it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, ask your table leader for assistance. Also, consult with your table leader about books that seem to have no response or a response that is unrelated to the question.

Your score should reflect your judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that student had only 40 minutes to read and write. Therefore, the essay is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards that are appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments. Instead, evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain that you **reward students for what they do well.**

All essays, even those scored 8 and 9, are likely to contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. These lapses should enter into your holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. You should not score an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics higher than a 2.

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**9:** Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are **especially full or apt** in their analysis or demonstrate **particularly impressive control of language.**

**8:** Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** accomplish both the reading and writing task called for in the prompt. They reveal the writer's ability to reason with perception and to express ideas clearly and skillfully with **stylistic maturity.** Ideas are **well developed,** supported either explicitly or implicitly by appropriate reference to the text and have a **sense of complexity** and nuance. Their prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

**7:** Essays earning a score of 7 **fit the description of 6** essays but provide a **more complete analysis or demonstrate a more mature prose style.**

**6:** Essays earning a score of 6 demonstrate the writer's ability to **adequately address the prompt.** The **writer expresses ideas clearly** but with less maturity and control than top papers and sometimes with minor flaws in interpretation. These essays refer to text explicitly or implicitly but offer less convincing explanations of how language functions. A few lapses in diction or syntax may be present, but generally the prose **demonstrates control of ideas and writing.**

**5:** Essays earning a score of 5 are **uneven or inconsistent,** the "no-man's land" between upper and lower half papers. They address the prompt but are often **superficial or demonstrate unsophisticated ideas.** These essays may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but their prose conveys the writer's ideas.

**4:** Essays earning a score of 4 offer an **inadequate** response to the prompt. These essays may fail to demonstrate complete or adequate understanding of the prompt. The writer's ideas are **underdeveloped** or lack specific or persuasive evidence from text in support of ideas. The prose conveys the writer's ideas but may be formulaic or suggest **immature control of writing.**

**3:** Essays earning a score of 3 **compound the weaknesses of the 4.** They may be more simplistic or less consistent in controlling the elements of writing.

**2:** Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in addressing the prompt. These essays may offer vague generalizations, lack development or substitute simpler tasks such as **summarizing or listing techniques.** The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.

**1:** Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are **especially brief or simplistic** in their discussion or **weak in their control of language.**