

2023



AP[®] English Language and Composition

Scoring Guidelines Set 1

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Synthesis Essay**6 points**

Urban rewilding is an effort to restore natural ecological processes and habitats in city environments. Many cities around the world have embraced rewilding as part of larger movements to promote ecological conservation and environmentally friendly design. Now, a movement to promote urban rewilding is beginning to take shape in the United States as well.

Carefully read the six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities to pursue.

Source A (infographic from Fastnacht)

Source B (Jepson and Schepers policy brief)

Source C (NRPA article)

Source D (Garland article)

Source E (graph from McDonald et al.)

Source F (Chatterton book excerpt)

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- 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: - 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 position.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred. - Equivocate or summarize others’ arguments but not the student’s (e.g., some people say it’s good, some people say it’s bad). - State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.	Responses that earn this point: Respond to the prompt by developing a position on the extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities to pursue, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating there are pros/cons.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt “Having started in Europe, urban rewilding is becoming popular in the United States too.” Address the topic of the prompt but do not take a position “Many experts favor urban rewilding, while others worry about the safety and health issues that might arise.” Address the topic of the prompt but state an obvious fact as a claim “Urban rewilding will allow certain portions of some cities to regain the wildlife that once lived in the area.”	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt “Urban rewilding will cause serious problems in many cities.” “Building new spaces for people in cities to interact with nature is an audacious project that will take careful weighing of the pros and cons. Ultimately, this is an idea worth pursuing.” “The next step in the evolution of cities is to allow residents opportunities to interact with wildlife in their daily lives. This transformation is crucial to keep our cities livable.”
	Additional Notes: - 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 sources 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 references fewer than two of the provided sources.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources. 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 from at least three of the provided sources 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 from at least three of the provided sources 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: - 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: Tend to focus on summary or description of sources rather than specific details.	Typical responses that earn 2 points: - 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: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. - 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: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. - 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: Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.					

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 a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where . . .</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time . . .</i>”). - Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that . . .</i>” OR “<i>Some people say . . .</i>”). - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument.	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: - Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources. - Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or arguments conveyed in the sources) by situating it within a broader context. - Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument throughout the response. - Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Notes: 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.	

Rhetorical Analysis**6 points**

Michelle Obama was the First Lady of the United States during the presidential administration of her husband, Barack Obama (2009–2017). During that administration, she led programs including the Reach Higher Initiative, which encourages students to continue their education after high school. One way it does so is by supporting high school counselors' efforts to get students into college. On January 6, 2017, Obama gave her final speech as First Lady at an event honoring outstanding school counselors. The following passage is an excerpt from that speech. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Obama makes to convey her message about her expectations and hope for young people in the United States.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer's rhetorical choices.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- 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: - 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 defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Fail to address the rhetorical choices the writer of the passage makes. - Describe or repeat the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense. Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <i>“In 2017, then First Lady Michelle Obama delivered her final speech as First Lady at an event honoring school counselors.”</i> Make a claim, but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices <i>“In her 2017 speech to school counselors, Michelle Obama set high expectations for her audience, the young people of America.”</i> Repeat provided information from the passage <i>“Michelle Obama claims in her speech that ‘our glorious diversity’ is what ‘makes us who we are.’”</i>	Responses that earn this point: - Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt <u>and</u> clearly articulate a defensible thesis about the rhetorical choices Obama makes to convey her message about her expectations and hope for young people in the United States. Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices <i>“Michelle Obama uses a friendly tone, inspirational diction, and examples from her own family to convey her message about her expectations and hope for young people in America.”</i> <i>“In her last speech as First Lady, Michelle Obama adopts the persona of a mentor or parental figure, using second person pronouns and giving direct advice, to inspire her audience of young people to ‘rise to their best possible selves.’”</i> <i>“In her inspirational 2017 speech, First Lady Michelle Obama provides multiple examples of her own family to exhort the young people in her audience with a call to action to take their place as positive and productive members of American society.”</i>
	Additional Notes: - 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 passage 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 student’s 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. AND Explains how at least one rhetorical choice in the passage contributes to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.	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. AND Explains how multiple rhetorical choices in the passage contribute to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: - 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: - Tend to focus on summary or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. - Mention rhetorical choices with little or no explanation.	Typical responses that earn 2 points: - 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: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument. - 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: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument. - Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. - Explain how the writer’s use of rhetorical choices contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage.
Additional Notes: - 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 may observe multiple instances of the same rhetorical choice if each instance further contributes to the argument, purpose, or message of the passage.					

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 a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Attempt to contextualize the text, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where . . .</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time . . .</i>”). - Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that . . .</i>” OR “<i>Some people say . . .</i>”). - Examine individual rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the text. - Oversimplify complexities in the text. - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance their analysis.	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: - Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer’s rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation). - Explaining a purpose or function of the passage’s complexities or tensions. - Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Notes: This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.	

Argument Essay

6 points

In a 2016 interview published in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Maxine Hong Kingston, an award-winning writer famous for her novels depicting the experiences of Chinese immigrants in the United States, stated: “I think that individual voices are not as strong as a community of voices. If we can make a community of voices, then we can speak more truth.”

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Kingston’s claim about the importance of creating a community of voices is valid.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- 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: - 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 position.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred. - State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.	Responses that earn this point: Respond to the prompt by taking a position on the extent to which Kingston’s claim about the importance of creating a community of voices is valid, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating that there are pros/cons.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Do not take a position <i>“Communities are a part of people’s daily lives.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but are not defensible—it is an obvious fact stated as a claim <i>“As Kingston notes, it is important for people in society to have a voice.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt. <i>“Kingston’s belief in the strength of a community of voices is completely valid.”</i> <i>“While a community of voices is powerful, the individual voice should not be overlooked. Kingston’s claim is valid only to a certain extent.”</i> <i>“A community of voices is more powerful than individual voices because people are more inclined to listen to others and speak in a unified way, rather than starting individual yelling matches.”</i>
	Additional Notes: - The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. - The thesis may be anywhere within the response. - 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: - Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. - May be just opinion with no evidence or evidence that is irrelevant.	Typical responses that earn 1 point: Tend to focus on summary of evidence rather than specific details.	Typical responses that earn 2 points: - 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: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific details to build an argument. - 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: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific details to build an argument. - 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: Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.					

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 a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (<i>“In a world where . . .” OR “Since the beginning of time . . .”</i>). - Only hint at or suggest other arguments (<i>“While some may argue that . . .” OR “Some people say . . .”</i>). - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument.	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: - Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions. - Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or an argument related to the prompt) by situating it within a broader context. - Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument. - Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Notes: 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.	