2020

AP® CollegeBoard

AP® English Literature and Composition

Scoring Guidelines

Prose Fiction Analysis - Porter

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Question 1: Prose Fiction Analysis — 6 points

The following excerpt is from Katherine Anne Porter's short story "The Fig Tree," published in 1960. In this passage, Miranda, a young child, observes an interaction between her grandmother and great-aunt. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Porter uses literary elements and techniques to convey Miranda's complex reaction as she observes the two older women.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use 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.

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	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 interpretation of the passage.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the passage that doesn't respond to the prompt. • Describe the passage or features of the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense.	**Responses that earn this point:** • Provide a defensible interpretation of Miranda's complex reaction as she observes the two older women.
	Examples that do not earn this point: **Restate the prompt** • *"The author effectively employs literary elements to show Miranda's complex reaction to watching her great-aunt and her grandmother."* **Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment** • *"The author reveals how children often believe their elders were never young themselves."* **Describe the passage or features of the passage** • *"The author uses dialogue and descriptions to show the personalities of the two older women."*	**Examples that earn this point:** **Provide a defensible interpretation** • *"Through the effective use of description and dialogue, the writer reveals that Miranda is surprised to notice for the first time that her Great Aunt Eliza and Grandmother are very different from how she had previously perceived them, and she is now embarrassed by their behavior which seems unrefined."* • *"By contrasting the childish interaction that Miranda observes between her great-aunt and grandmother with Miranda's usual perception of them as authority figures, the author creates a situation in which Miranda begins to question the trappings of adulthood and faces an uncomfortable glimpse into her own future."*
	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 *could* be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis *may* 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.	

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	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 literary element or technique in the passage contributes to its meaning.	**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 literary elements or techniques in the passage contribute to its meaning.
	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 overarching narrative developments or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. • Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques 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 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:** • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage 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. • Explain how the writer's use of multiple literary techniques 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 literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the passage.				

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<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Scoring Criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Row C
Sophistication
(0-1 points)</td><td>0 points
Does not meet the criteria for one point.</td><td>1 point
Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Responses that do not earn this point:
• Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“Human experiences always include…” OR “In a world where…” OR “Since the beginning of time…”).
• Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“While another reader may see…” OR “Though the passage could be said to…”).
• Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the passage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation.
• Oversimplify complexities in the passage.
• Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument.</td><td>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:
1. Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage.
2. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context.
3. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the passage.
4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">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.</td></tr>
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